

THE ANTIETAM JOURNAL

Vol. VII
September 2024

A Publication of the Antietam Institute



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Kevin R. Pawlak
Editor

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ISBN-13: 979-8-218-48982-3

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The Antietam Journal is a biannual publication of the latest research, interpretation, and stories of the Maryland Campaign of September 1862 that highlights the participants involved—soldier and civilian—and the lasting impact of the campaign on American history.

The Antietam Institute was established in 2021 as a member-based, educational, and philanthropic 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Institute educates the public on the central role of the Maryland Campaign of 1862 and Battle of Antietam as a major turning point of the Civil War that directly resulted in the issuance of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Antietam Institute-sponsored conferences, symposiums, publications, and leadership forums facilitate collaborative learning and knowledge exchange, create unique opportunities for discovery and inspire further historical research.

Manuscript Submissions

Send manuscript submissions to the editor at editor2@antietaminstitute.org. Feature articles should be approximately 10,000 words in length (including footnotes).

Cover image: Courtesy of Chris Heisey.

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The Editor's Column

by Kevin R. Pawlak

Each September, as we approach the anniversary of the Maryland Campaign, I think back on previous Septembers and previous anniversary commemorations that have taken place since I first began seriously studying the campaign in 2011. Of course, that was on the eve of the campaign's sesquicentennial (150th) anniversary. Antietam's sesquicentennial commemoration was an incredible experience for those who observed it and participated in it. As we approach the 162nd anniversary of the battle—those 12 years have flown by—I wonder how future, landmark anniversaries of the battle—like the 175th and 200th—will be remembered. But dwelling on the 150th, I cannot help but think how much has changed just about Antietam in that timeframe. Preservation successes, new books, a remodeled Antietam National Battlefield Visitor Center, new organizations, and more. Antietam continues to attract people. Whether people study the battlefield for its cultural or natural features, visitors are continually drawn to it. We can only be hopeful that this will continue to be the case 13 and 38 years from now, and beyond.

I hope the biannual *Antietam Journal* has been a welcome contribution to the increased interest in the Maryland Campaign. It is hard to believe that seven issues have been printed, with more already in the works. This latest edition adds more to the growing knowledge and conversation about the events of September 1862.

Steven R. Stotemyer knows more about the South Mountain battlefield than anyone I know. His feature article lays out the terrain and action of the closing battle at Fox's Gap on September 14, 1862 in incredible detail.

Antietam's history extends beyond September 1862. The story of the battlefield's establishment has received more attention recently, but is still woefully understudied. Tom and Colleen McMillan tag-team an article sharing one of the darker tales from the early days of Antietam National Battlefield.

Antietam sage John Schildt shares the little-known story of the Deaner family and their experience during those chaotic days in September 1862.

Newcomer to *The Antietam Journal* Andy Cardinal shares a harrowing account from the 7th South Carolina Infantry. These Palmetto Staters participated in intense fighting around the Dunker Church on the late

morning of September 17.

Joe Stahl brings a piece from his excellent ID tag collection to the journal, as well as the story of the soldier who wore it at Antietam, the 34th New York Infantry's John Johnson.

Take a walk on the fields of the Final Attack, accompanied by J. O. Smith's latest "In Antietam's Footsteps" article.

Then sit down to read Laura Marfut's interview with Civil War blogger and Beyond Antietam podcast co-host John Banks.

Mike Doyle, a frequent tramper and photographer of the Antietam battlefield, kicks off a new section for the journal: a then and now comparison of the battlefield.

Lastly, we have our book review section. Flip to that section to catch up on the latest books about the Maryland Campaign.

As always, I want to hear from you, the readers. What would you like to see in future issues of *The Antietam Journal*? Or, if you want to write an article, sent it to me at editor2@antietaminstitute.org.

Kevin R. Pawlak

Antietam Institute Announcements

***Roads to Antietam* has been released!**

Roads to Antietam by John Schildt was one of the first treatments of the Maryland Campaign not written by a participant of the battle. The Antietam Institute recently released a new and updated version of Schildt's book on the days leading up to the Battle of Antietam.

Roads to Antietam is the story of two armies marching to battle in September 1862 and what that experience was like for the men in the ranks and the civilians along the routes. Clouds of dust, marching men, the rumble of wagons, and the late summer heat and haze added to the noise and confusion of hundreds of units snaking their way up from Virginia and the camps around Washington, D.C. Soldiers from the North and South wondered where they were going as they marched along the roads of Maryland. What would Lee do? What was McClellan's plan? Frederick and Hagerstown lay ahead, but what was beyond? None of them could anticipate their bloody meeting in the fields around Sharpsburg, Maryland, and on the banks of Antietam Creek. This book depicts the feelings and actions of those who participated in those stirring events of the Maryland Campaign.

An informative guide to the actual routes followed by armies of both North and South and the experiences of the men before and after the crucial battle.

Antietam Institute Historical Research Center

We live in a digital age with thousands of sources at our fingertips. Unfortunately, there is rarely one place to go to find everything we are looking for. The Antietam Institute's website is now home to the Historic Research Center, a repository to collect and share digital copies of historical and contemporary material about the Battle of Antietam and the related Maryland Campaign.

The Historical Research Center has sources grouped into three categories: unit histories, images, and documents. This is a living resource that will continue to have sources added to it, so continue to visit the page to find more resources. Visit the Historical Research Center at <https://antietaminstitute.org/hrc/s/HRC/page/welcome> to find these valuable resources or to submit some of your own items for inclusion in this exciting digital resource.

“The Commanders of Antietam” Speaker Series in the Pry Barn

Institute historians are back at the Pry House this summer for our “Commanders of Antietam” speaker series. Come to the Pry House to hear the contributors of the *Commanders of Antietam* discuss in detail some of the commanders that fought in the 1862 Maryland Campaign. The series is sponsored by the Antietam Institute and hosted by the National Museum of Civil War Medicine. The presentations begin in the Pry Barn at 2:00 p.m. and is a pay-what-you-please event. There is a \$3.00 suggested donation to tour the Pry House Field Hospital Museum. Visit our website for a complete schedule.

The Pry House is open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays, from June 1 through October 26. The Pry House Field Hospital Museum is located at 18906 Shepherdstown Pike, Keedysville, MD 21756.

Commanders of Antietam

We are pleased to announce that our next Membership incentive book will be *Commanders of Antietam*.

Commanders of Antietam, the Union and Confederate Commanders at the Battle of Antietam is a comprehensive look at the biographies of both armies’ high command during the Maryland Campaign of September 1862. This treatment focuses on the lives of Union and Confederate commanders from the brigade level up to the army commanders, Robert E. Lee and George B. McClellan.

Each commander’s biography is broken into three sections: Before the Maryland Campaign; During the Maryland Campaign; and After the Maryland Campaign. This is the most complete volume of commanders’ biographies in the Maryland Campaign.

This book has been written by a collaboration of Antietam Battlefield Guides, National Park Service Rangers and volunteers, and Civil War historians. Kevin Pawlak and Brad Gottfried are the editors of this volume. It is the third in a series of books focused on different aspects of the campaign, including *Brigades of Antietam* (edited by Bradley Gottfried) and *Artillery of Antietam* (by James A. Rosebrock), both published by the Antietam Institute.

2025 Spring Symposium Dates Set for April 11-12, 2025

The 2025 Spring Symposium, “*Defending it to the Last Extremity: Harpers Ferry and the Road to Antietam*,” will focus on leadership and Harpers Ferry in September 1862. An optional excursion the afternoon before the Saturday Symposium will explore the Siege of Harpers Ferry.

Registration will open on September 27, 2024.

Hood's Final Attack at Fox's Gap

by Steven R. Stotelmyer

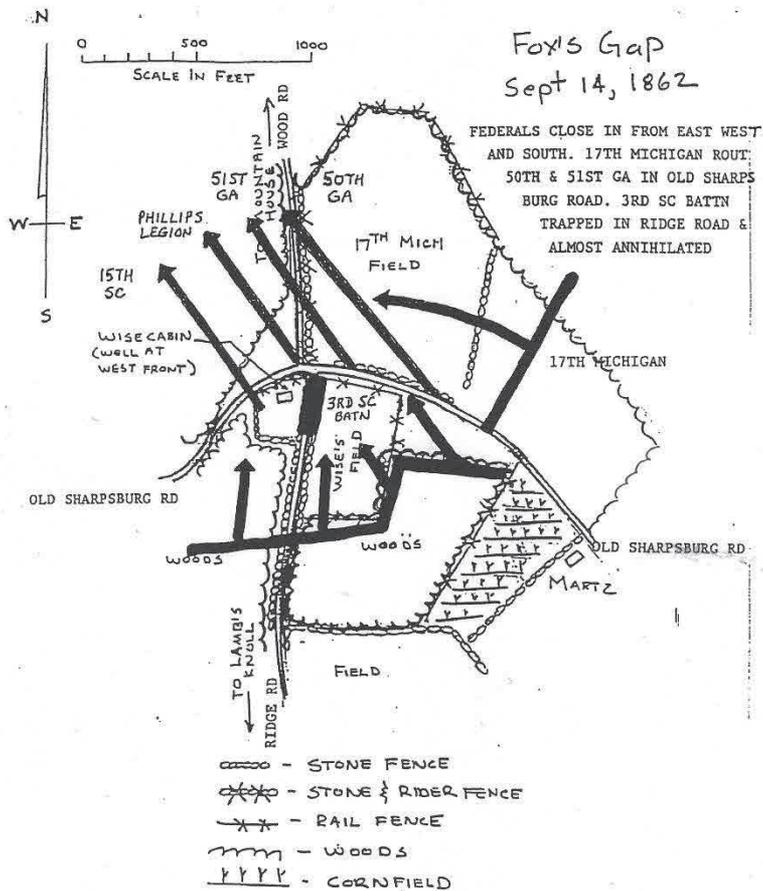
Late on September 14, 1862, at Fox's Gap during the Battle of South Mountain, the Confederate brigade of Brigadier General Thomas F. Drayton suffered a devastating assault by elements of the Union 9th Army Corps. It is estimated that Drayton lost over half his command in the assault. When the end came for Drayton's Georgians and South Carolinians, it was swift and overwhelming, forcing them to flee Fox's Gap.¹ A mile to the north at Turner's Gap, the news of a disaster on his right flank reached the overall Confederate commander, Major General Daniel Harvey Hill. Around this time Major General James Longstreet, after a forced march from Hagerstown, arrived with much needed reinforcements. As senior officer, Longstreet assumed command of Confederate forces on the mountain and entrusted the responsibility of meeting the enemy threat at Fox's Gap to a battle-hardened professional soldier, Brigadier General John B. Hood.²

Hood moved from Turner's Gap to the south and encountered the remnants of "General Drayton's brigade" as they were coming out of Fox's Gap. From them he learned "the enemy had succeeded in passing to their rear." At the close of the battle, in the murky dusk of twilight, General Hood succeeded in "regaining all of our lost ground."³ In the historical record, Drayton's lost ground regained by Hood has always been understood to be the terrain around Fox's Gap at the crest of South

1 Steven R. Stotelmyer, *Too Useful To Sacrifice, Reconsidering George B. McClellan's Generalship in the Maryland Campaign from South Mountain to Antietam*, (El Dorado Hills, CA, Savas Beatie, 2019), 70-74.

2 Ezra A. Carman, *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862, Vol. I: South Mountain*, 3 vols., Thomas G. Clemens ed. (New York, NY, Savas Beatie, 2010), 1:342-43; John Michael Priest, *Before Antietam, The Battle For South Mountain* (Shippensburg, PA, White Mane, 1992), 218; Brian M. Jordan, *Unholy Sabbath, The Battle of South Mountain in History and Memory* (New York, NY, Savas Beatie, 2012), 176; D. Scott Hartwig, *To Antietam Creek, The Maryland Campaign of September 1862* (Baltimore, MD, The John Hopkins University Press, 2012), 362-63; Steven R. Stotelmyer, *From Frederick To Sharpsburg, People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam* (Sharpsburg, MD, Antietam Institute, 2023), 232.

3 *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 volumes (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), all references are to Series 1 unless otherwise noted, hereafter. OR 19/1: 922. See Map 1: Confederate Forces Overwhelmed by Federals, Approximately 4:45 p.m. to 5:15 p.m. (Graham and Stotelmyer, base map provided by Stotelmyer),



Confederate Forces Overwhelmed by Federals

Approximately 4:45 PM to 5:15 PM

Map 1

The "Lost Ground" of Drayton's Brigade at Fox's Gap (note position of Phillips' Legion). (Graham and Stotemyer)

Mountain. Perhaps the most succinct statement of this historical fact came from a wounded veteran and “Fighting Chaplain” in one of Drayton’s five regiments, the Phillips Georgia Legion. After the war, Reverend George G. Smith simply stated, “As we came out Hood’s division went in.”⁴

And so, it was accepted until recently with the publication of *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap, Prelude to Emancipation*. In it, author Curtis L. Older purports to present a “significant discovery” that undeniably refutes the historical record and proves that “Hood’s command suffered a decisive defeat one half-mile west of Fox’s Gap.” Furthermore, Older states he has not found any “credible primary source evidence” to support Hood’s final attack at Fox’s Gap and declares, “Authors have incorrectly reported the movement of Hood’s two brigades during this aspect of the battle for the 160 years since its occurrence.”⁵

The foundation of the “significant discovery” revealed in *Hood’s Defeat* is entirely based on Older’s interpretation of a postwar statement by Jacob D. Cox. Students of the Battle of South Mountain will immediately recognize Cox as the former commander of the Kanawha Division who took command of the 9th Corps upon the death of Major General Jesse Lee Reno. In his *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, published in 1900, Cox wrote:

The order came to me as the senior officer upon the line, and the signal was given. On the left, Longstreet’s men were pushed down the mountainside beyond the Rohrersville and Sharpsburg roads, and the contest there was ended.⁶

The “primary objective” of *Hood’s Defeat* is to confirm that Cox was referring to the intersection 900 yards west of Fox’s Gap as the location where:

4 George G. Smith, “A Fighting Chaplain,” *Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes* (Springfield, MA, King, Richardson & Co., 1890), 149.

5 Curtis L. Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap, Prelude to Emancipation* (Philadelphia, PA, Casemate Publishers, 2023), 5, 89, 148.

6 Jacob D. Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 2 vols. (New York, NY, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1900), 1:290.

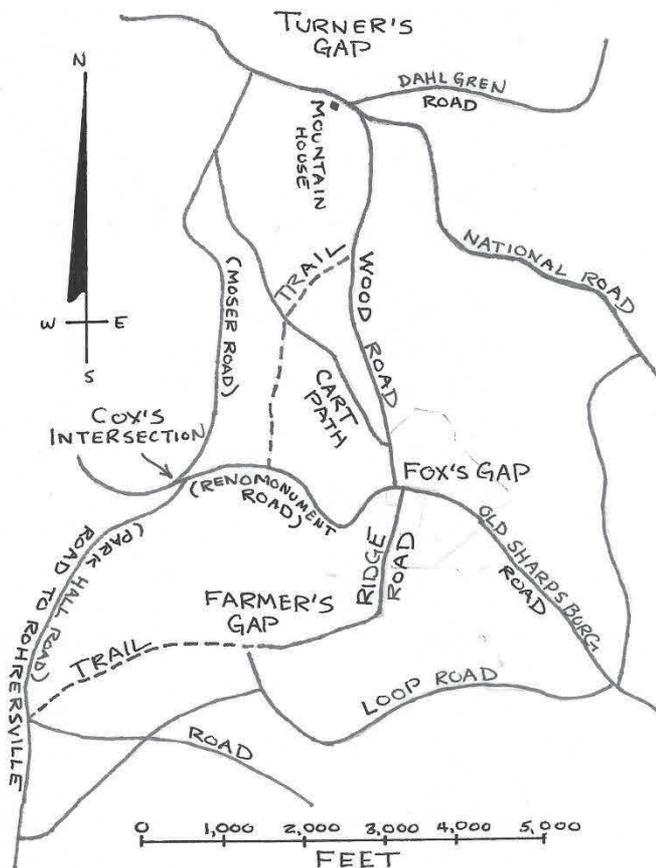
Brigadier General John Bell Hood attacked with his two brigades about dark on September 14, 1862, where Hood lost many men killed and wounded, and as Cox said, where the battle ended.⁷

Throughout *Hood's Defeat*, the author extensively utilizes brackets to insert text into quotations. Although the use of brackets to sometimes correct, explain, translate, or comment is acceptable, their use to change the meaning of a quotation is another matter entirely. Cox's statement regarding his "left" provides an example of alteration: "On the left [west], Longstreet's men were pushed down the mountainside beyond the Rohrersville [Cox's Intersection] and Sharpsburg Roads, and the contest ended." The descriptive term "left" has been altered to mean "west" with no explanation or context offered to explain why Cox meant that specific compass point. Furthermore, the descriptive name "Cox's Intersection," created by Older and never used by Cox, has also been added to the quotation. It is no exaggeration to state that almost every block citation in *Hood's Defeat* uses brackets to insert text to support the author's "significant discovery," sometimes putting words never said into the mouths of primary sources.⁸

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to define some terms and locations, especially for those not familiar with Fox's Gap and South Mountain. "Cox's Intersection" is the term used in *Hood's Defeat* to describe the intersection of present-day Moser Road, Park Hall Road, and Reno Monument Road. Park Hall Road is the Civil War road referred to by Cox as the "Road to Rohrersville." During the Civil War the Reno Monument Road was known as the Old Sharpsburg Road (it crossed over the mountain crest at Fox's Gap). The evidence suggests that Moser Road had no official name at the time. "Wood Road" describes the road connecting Fox's Gap with Turner's Gap one mile to the north (presently part of the Appalachian Trail). Mountain House refers to a turnpike tavern at Turner's Gap used by D. H. Hill as his headquarters. The description "17th Michigan (Miller's) Field" refers to the open field northeast of the intersection between the Wood Road and the Old Sharpsburg Road. Most battlefield trekkers know it as the 17th Michigan Field (or Wise's North Field), but Older refers to it as Miller's Field.

7 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 19, 21.

8 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 133. Other altered citations of the same passage appear on pages 19, 58, and 149.



ROAD NAMES, TERMS, AND LOCATIONS.
 BASE MAP: 1872 WAR DEPARTMENT ATLAS.

Map 2

Road names, terms, and locations used in this essay. Road geometry is based upon the 1872 War Department Atlas Map and does not accurately reflect modern locations and geometry. (Stotemyer)

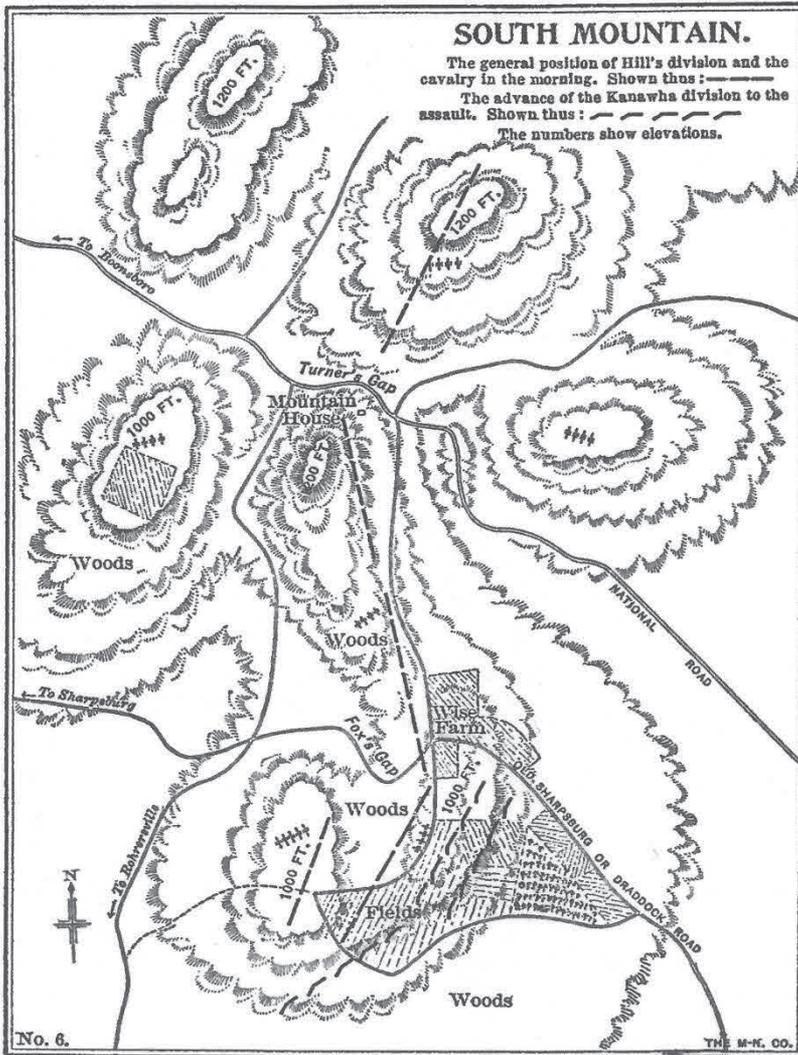
At the time of the battle a whitewashed log cabin occupied by the family of Daniel Wise, and known as the "Wise Cabin," was situated at Fox's Gap. Although erected after the war, the Reno Monument was placed at

Fox's Gap to commemorate the death of 9th Corps commander Jesse Lee Reno. The Ridge Road generally followed the crest of South Mountain 800 yards southwesterly from Fox's Gap to the intersection with Loop Road. Finally, the "Loop Road" was a Civil War era road that ran generally south of Fox's Gap. It intersected the Ridge Road and continued down the western slope of the mountain to intersect the Road to Rohrersville. Some battlefield trekkers refer to the location where Loop Road crosses over the mountain crest as "Farmer's Gap" to distinguish it from Fox's Gap.

The base map used extensively throughout *Hood's Defeat* is the 1872 War Department map of South Mountain prepared by the United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers (hereafter referred to as *Atlas Map*). The *Atlas Map* purports to show "the positions of the forces of the United States and the enemy during the battle fought by the Army of the Potomac under the command of Major General G. B. McClellan, Sept. 14th 1862." It is one map showing the terrain of the three mountain gaps (Turner's, Fox's, and Crampton's) over six miles at a scale of one-inch equals 1,000 feet. Contour lines at elevation intervals of 100 feet are provided. The map represents the level of accuracy attainable by survey methods in the mid to later part of the nineteenth century. Consequently, topography, road geometry, and feature locations do not necessarily represent actual or modern conditions. Furthermore, it is at once apparent to anyone familiar with the fourteen War Department maps of Antietam that South Mountain did not get the same level of attention to detail of those maps. Whereas troop positions are accurately shown at the regimental level on the Antietam maps (and topography with ten-foot elevation contour intervals), the South Mountain maps show them at the divisional level. Furthermore, most of the positions shown are simply wrong. However, the value of the South Mountain map is found not only in the rough geometrical layout of the roads in use at the time of the battle, but also in the land use of the terrain (homesteads, farms, forest, orchards, etc.).⁹

What did Cox really mean when he referred to his "left?" Cox's Kanawha Division was involved in three distinct actions on September 14, 1862. During the morning, they fought against Brigadier General Samuel Garland's brigade. The area of combat was initially between Fox's Gap and Farmer's Gap. The axis of battle was north to south with the Kanawha Division facing west. In that action, Garland was killed and replaced by

⁹ The opinions expressed in this paragraph are based upon my years of employment as a Civil Engineer and my study of the Battle of South Mountain.



Map 3

South Mountain by Jacob D. Cox. Map published in Cox's Reminiscences of the Civil War (1:279). Cox's "Left" at lower bottom. Note Atlas Map Trail leading down western slope to the road "To Rohrersville." (Atlas Map, Charles Scribner's Sons.)

Colonel Duncan K. McRae.¹⁰ During midday, elements of the Kanawha Division fought on Wise's Farm at Fox's Gap against elements of McRae's command reinforced by the brigade of Brigadier General George B.

Anderson. The axis of battle was east to west with Cox's troops facing north.¹¹ By late afternoon, with the arrival of 9th Corps reinforcements, Cox shifted back to the morning's area where he had first encountered Garland's brigade between Fox's Gap and Farmer's Gap. This placed Cox's command on the left flank of the 9th Corps. The axis of battle was once again north to south with Cox (and the 9th Corps) facing west. During the entire day, the 23rd Ohio Infantry of Cox's command stayed in the same general location: the southern extreme position near Farmer's Gap. During the morning and late afternoon, Cox would have observed the position of the 23rd Ohio on his left.¹²

Since Hood arrived late in the day near dusk, it is the third action that garners our attention. The divisions of brigadier generals Orlando B. Willcox, Samuel D. Sturgis, and Isaac P. Rodman arrived and deployed to reinforce Cox. Willcox and Sturgis occupied the slope on Cox's right, east of and below Fox's Gap. Elements of Willcox's left connected with elements of Cox's right. Rodman was the last to arrive. Colonel Edward Harland's brigade was positioned on the right and Colonel Harrison S. Fairchild's brigade was sent to the left to reinforce Cox's left. The attacks of Willcox, followed by Sturgis, resulted in Drayton's repulse.

This provides the context of Jacob D. Cox's comment cited in *Hood's Defeat*:

Longstreet's corps was already forming with its right outflanking my left... A warm skirmishing fight was continued along the whole of our line, our purpose being to hold fast my extreme left which was well advanced upon and over the mountain crest... report came from the extreme left that the enemy was stretching beyond our flank, I sent Fairchild's brigade to assist our men there... At the center and right, whilst we held Fox's Gap, the high and rocky summit at the Mountain House was still in the enemy's possession. *The order came to me as the senior officer upon the line, and the signal given. On the left, Longstreet's men were pushed down the mountainside beyond the Rohrer'sville and Sharpsburg roads, and the contest there was ended.*¹³

10 Bradley M. Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam* (El Dorado Hills, CA, Savas Beatie, 2012), 26-35.

11 Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam*, 36-37.

12 Gottfried, *The Maps of Antietam*, 38-41.

13 Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 1:287-88, 290. Italics by Stotelmyer.

Cox's language is clear. The axis of battle was north to south. From his perspective, the "right" was at Turner's Gap (Mountain House), the "center" was at Fox's Gap, and Cox's "left" was at Farmer's Gap. His troops held the mountain crest at Farmer's Gap.

Colonel Duncan K. McRae first described the Loop Road that passed "over the mountain crest" at Farmer's Gap in his October 18, 1862, report. McRae stated that the Ridge Road, which ran south from Fox's Gap, was "intersected by a road which, passing from the direction of Middletown, runs parallel with the base of one of the mountains of the range, and at the point of intersection with the ridge road turns off in a southwesterly direction towards Sharpsburg, and from this road several wagon roads lead down the mountain into the valley below."¹⁴

In postwar correspondence with D. H. Hill, McRae wrote that when he reached the summit with the 5th North Carolina Infantry early in the morning, he "took position on the right of our line," and "covered a road leading down the mountain towards Sharpsburg, good for Artillery and general transportation." In the same location, in postwar writing other than his *Reminiscences*, Cox also mentioned the Loop Road at Farmer's Gap. He described it as a "country road behind the wall on top of the ridge." Massachusetts historian Fred Wilder Cross visited South Mountain four times between 1919 and 1924. In his manuscript notebook he observed the road at Farmer's Gap was "little used" and described it as "an old pass over the mountain 800 or 1,000 yards southwest of Fox's Gap."¹⁵

Cox believed that all the Confederate troops he faced on September 14, 1862 were those of Longstreet, but the enemy infantry on his left actually belonged to George Burgwyn Anderson's brigade of D. H. Hill's division.¹⁶ The *Atlas Map* incorrectly shows ten Confederate units from Fox's Gap to Farmer's Gap labeled as "Rebels Under Gen. Garland." Regardless, as D. H. Hill was detached and acting as Longstreet's rear-guard, Cox was correct in referring to any of Hill's troops as belonging to Longstreet. Late in the day, after a circuitous and arduous movement up

14 OR 19/1:1039-40.

15 McRae to Hill, August 21, 1885, Hill Papers, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA; Cox, "Forcing Fox's Gap And Turner's Gap," *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, North to Antietam*, 4 vols., Robert U. Johnson and Clarence Buell eds. (New York, Castle Books, 1956) hereafter *B&L*, 2:587; Fred Wilder Cross, "South Mountain," manuscript notebook August 1925, Antietam National Battlefield Library (ANBL), Sharpsburg, MD.

16 Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 1:285.

the western slope of the mountain, G. B. Anderson reached Ridge Road some distance beyond Cox's extreme left. Anderson's skirmishers sighted the four-gun battery of Captain Joseph Clark. His four 10-lb. Parrott rifles had been detached from Sturgis' division "by Major-General Reno, and sent to support the left of General Cox's division, then supposed to be hotly pressed." Fairchild's brigade was "ordered to the left, and to form line of battle on General Cox's division."¹⁷

Anderson's skirmishers reported the enemy artillery as being unsupported and, sensing an opportunity, he attacked. Unfortunately for Anderson, the assault stepped off just as Fairchild's infantry were coming into position. The Federals then repulsed Anderson's North Carolinians with great loss. Private Burton Hine, of the 89th New York Infantry, recorded in his diary on September 14, 1862, "We were ordered to the top of the hill but had just got into line when the rebels opened fire on our left." Private Charles K. Crofut, also with the 89th, wrote his sister a few days after the battle, "Our brigade took their posish [position] on the extreme left in the edge of a cornfield." Matthew J. Graham of the 9th New York Infantry remembered that his regiment, "filed into a narrow and rocky road leading to the summit... Being on the extreme left of the army."¹⁸

Finally, we shall consider the account of Second Lieutenant Henry J. Spooner with the 4th Rhode Island Infantry:

The Fourth...pressed up the rough mountain road... We hurried forward and almost or quite at the top of the mountain defiled to the left of the road, formed line of battle, and advanced briskly to the support of an Ohio regiment in our near front, which was sharply engaged with the enemy. I think that regiment was the Twenty-third Ohio, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes, subsequently President, who was there severely wounded. The Confederates, at that part of their line, occupied a position in the rear of a stone wall on the edge of the woods, and our forces advanced upon them over an open field... As the

17 Carman, *Maryland Campaign*, 1:339, 341; James A. Rosebrock, *Artillery of Antietam* (Sharpsburg, MD, Antietam Institute, 2023), 174, 176; Sturgis' report, September 22, 1862, OR 19/1:443; Fairchild's report, September 23, 1862, OR 19/1:450.

18 Burton Hine, typescript copy of diary, Regimental Files, ANBL; Charles K. Crofut to Sister Mira, September 28, 1862, Regimental Files, ANBL; Mathew J. Graham, *The Ninth Regiment New York Volunteers (Hawkins Zouaves)* (New York, NY, E. P. Coby & Co., 1900), 270-71.

describing the position of his left on the crest where the Loop Road runs through Farmer's Gap. He said as much in his September 20, 1862, report, noting that "About dark a brisk attack was made by the enemy upon the extreme left, but was quickly repulsed by Colonel Fairchild's brigade." The *Atlas Map* clearly shows a "Trail" and two "Roads" that G. B. Anderson's brigade (Longstreet's men to Cox) used to push "down the mountainside beyond the Rohrersville and Sharpsburg roads." The "significant discovery" in Hood's Defeat, therefore, is little more than an erroneous interpretation of a single passage in Cox's *Reminiscences of the Civil War* modified with text in brackets and taken out of context.²⁰

Older makes several other related errors to place Hood's attack at Cox's Intersection. If the final Confederate attack occurred 900 yards west of Fox's Gap, which Union 9th Corps troops engaged Hood? According to the "significant discovery" in *Hood's Defeat*, "Sturgis' Division then occupied Cox's Intersection."²¹ Older then further asserts that Sturgis' location at Cox's Intersection presented difficulty for G. B. Anderson during his retreat from the Farmer's Gap action on Cox's left. Claiming that "G. B. Anderson's Brigade suffered significant casualties, apparently at Cox's intersection," Older concludes this took place after G. B. Anderson had been "defeated earlier at the Ridge-Loop Intersection." Evidently, these casualties resulted from combat with the 51st New York and 51st Pennsylvania of Ferrero's brigade, Sturgis' division.²²

The historical record does not support the idea of any combat between G. B. Anderson and any Union troops at "Cox's Intersection." His assault against Fairchild's brigade at Farmer's Gap was the second time that day that G. B. Anderson's men had been engaged. Earlier in the day, his troops had reinforced remnants of Garland's brigade while taking a defensive stand at the northern edge of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field at Fox's Gap.²³

Regarding the assault against Cox's left at Farmer's Gap, Captain A. J. Griffith, 14th North Carolina Infantry, wrote a report which stated:

The whole line then moved forward on the enemy, who had taken position on the mountain. Before coming upon the enemy the second time, it being nearly night, it received orders to fall

20 Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 1:290, OR 19/1:460.

21 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 36, 43, 111, 112, 126.

22 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 61, 72, 86, 126, 129.

23 Carman, *Maryland Campaign*, 1:326, 329, 332.

back to an old road, with only 1 man wounded, and await orders to re-enforce General Ripley, if necessary. No orders arriving, the regiment was not called into action.²⁴

Captain Edwin A. Osborne of the 4th North Carolina Infantry echoed the lack of combat while Anderson's brigade withdrew to "Cox's Intersection" after the "second" assault. In a postwar history of the regiment, Osborne stated, "[S]oon night drew on and put a stop to the engagement. We then returned to the road from whence we had started early in the afternoon." George B. Anderson's brigade began the "second" assault from the foot of the mountain very near "Cox's Intersection." They returned unmolested to that same location after the action at Farmer's Gap. Since no 9th Corps troops ever occupied "Cox's Intersection," it makes sense why Griffith and Osborne reported neither an engagement nor significant casualties.²⁵

Before examining the movements of Sturgis' division at Fox's Gap, one undeniable historical fact regarding Major General Jesse Lee Reno must be mentioned. Reno was mortally wounded during the last combat of the day at Fox's Gap. Older wholeheartedly accepts the fact that Reno was shot in the vicinity of Fox's Gap, writing, "The shooting of Reno occurred about 6:30 p.m. immediately south of Miller's Field." Remember that Older's term "Miller's Field" is the same place as the "17th Michigan Field." The field south of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field is commonly known as "Wise's South Field," or simply "Wise's Field." According to Maryland Campaign historian Ezra A. Carman, Reno was shot "in the immediate vicinity of the Wise House" when "Hood's men opened fire from behind the stone fence" along the Wood Road. However, in *Hood's Defeat*, Older states, "None of Hood's men were near Wood Road or the area near Miller's Field where they could have shot Reno." Older disagrees on the identity of the shooter and accepts the claim that it was a member of the 23rd North Carolina rather than one of Hood's soldiers. In that respect he is not too different from the 9th Corps veterans who erected the Reno Monument. Although the veterans could not agree on the exact spot of his mortal wounding, or if it was enemy or friendly fire, they all knew, just like Older, that "Reno was shot at Fox's Gap." Who

24 OR 19/1:1050.

25 Edwin A. Osborne, "Fourth Regiment," *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in the Great War 1861-65*, Walter Clark ed. (Raleigh, NC, E.M. Uzzell, 1901), 246.

shot Reno is not germane to the analysis of the erroneous interpretation found in *Hood's Defeat*, but, as will be demonstrated, the location of Reno's shooting is crucially important.²⁶

Drayton's brigade engaged the division of Brigadier General Willcox late in the day. Older does not contest this or the presence of Willcox on the field at Fox's Gap. Brigadier General Samuel D. Sturgis' division reinforced Willcox, with his two brigades participating in the closing minutes of the assault against Drayton. As Cox noted of this action, "As the easiest mode of getting Sturgis' fresh men into position, Willcox made room on his left for Ferrero's brigade supported by Nagle's." In *Hood's Defeat* we are repeatedly told that, "Evidence proves that Sturgis' 2nd Division was near Cox's Intersection." The evidence cited by Older purportedly comes from primary sources in the division, mainly those of the 2nd Maryland Infantry, 51st Pennsylvania Infantry, 51st New York Infantry, and the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry. An integral part of the "significant discovery" in *Hood's Defeat* is that "Sturgis's Division occupied Cox's Intersection at the foot of the mountain."²⁷

Shortly after their arrival at South Mountain, General Reno personally detached the 2nd Maryland Infantry and the 6th New Hampshire Infantry and sent them along the National Road toward Turner's Gap to protect Sturgis' flank. The 2nd Maryland rejoined their brigade just before dark. As Second Lieutenant Benjamin F. Taylor of that regiment remembered, he found Nagle's brigade, "on the firing line on the crest, their right resting on the Fox Gap or Braddock Road, the line running with the edge of the wood opposite the stone fence, on the crest at the Wise House, where the enemy made their last stand and their dead lay thickest." Clearly, the 2nd Maryland Infantry was at the crest at Fox's Gap and not at "Cox's Intersection" at the foot of the mountain.²⁸

In the regimental history of the 51st Pennsylvania, Thomas H. Parker, a veteran of the regiment, wrote, "The 51st was then ordered further up the road, toward the summit of the Mountain...The 51st, along with the other

26 Carman, *Maryland Campaign*, 1:343; Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 118, 138. For a comprehensive analysis of Reno's shooting see Stotemyer, "Whose Bullet: The Death of General Jesse Lee Reno," *From Frederick To Sharpsburg*, 204-53.

27 Cox, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 1:290; Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 36, 41, 43, 56, 60, 72, 111, 112, 126, 128, 139. Quotations: 128, 139.

28 Carman, *Maryland Campaign*, 1:338; Benjamin F. Taylor, Typescript History of the Second Maryland Volunteer Infantry, Colonel Benjamin Franklin Taylor Collection, MS 1863, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD. By war's end Lieutenant Colonel Taylor was the commanding officer of the 2nd Maryland.

part of the brigade, was in a small field of about three acres, on the left hand side of the road in going to the top of the mountain... Gen. Reno rode up to Col. Hartranft and told him to take his 'regiment across the road into that other field.'" Another veteran, Captain William J. Bolton, noted in his journal on September 14: "About 4 o'clock P.M. our division commenced to ascend the mountain which was steep and very rugged ... The enemy were well posted on the very top of the mountain ... the 51st was soon ordered to advance towards the summit of the mountain ... on the crest of the mountain ran a narrow lane protected by a stone fence on either side."²⁹

Bolton's comrade, E. V. Richards of Company K, remembered, "The Fifty-first Pennsylvania did most of their work while intrenched in a lane, along both sides of which ran a stone wall ... General Reno during that time was on an elevation in the rear of our right...The lane I speak of was on the left of the main road, looking towards Antietam." The small field Tom Parker wrote about could not be anything other than Wise's Field. The other field across the road was the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field. Likewise, the lane both Bolton and Richards described was Ridge Road. Both Parker and Richards place Reno with or near the 51st, and as noted, *Hood's Defeat* does not contest that Reno was shot at Fox's Gap. Clearly the 51st Pennsylvania Infantry was at Fox's Gap and not at "Cox's Intersection" at the foot of the mountain.³⁰

Older considers Cox's statement about his "left" the foundation of his argument revising Hood's final attack. He also uses a letter by Lieutenant George W. Whitman of the 51st New York Infantry to cement that foundation. Whitman, the brother of poet Walt Whitman, wrote a letter to his mother on September 21, 1862, that is used throughout *Hood's Defeat* to prove the identity of the 9th Corps troops at "Cox's Intersection." Whitman briefly described the battle to his mother, and then wrote, "[T]he enemy falling back slowly until night, when we found ourselves, on the opposite side of the mountains and about a mile from where the fight commenced." Older accepts this statement at face value, arguing, "Whitman disclosed that at the end of the day he was a mile from

29 Thomas A. Parker, *History of the 51st Regiment of P.V. and V.V.* (Philadelphia, PA, King & Baird, 1869), 224-25; William J. Bolton Typescript War Journal, War Library Museum, Philadelphia PA. My copy of Bolton's journal courtesy of Dr. Richard A. Sauers, Sept. 2, 1994.

30 E.V. Richards, "A Pennsylvania Soldier's Opinion," *National Tribune*, August 23, 1883. Richards was writing regarding a friendly fire controversy surrounding Reno's shooting.

where the battle began.” He then declares, “Whitman was on the west side of Fox’s Gap near Cox’s Intersection.” The possibility strongly exists, however, that Whitman may have been referring simply to the area south of Fox’s Gap, near Farmers Gap, where the 23rd Ohio began the battle. Yet, Older summarily dismisses this explanation in *Hood’s Defeat*. “Did he imply where the battle began with Lieutenant Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes?” writes Older. “[T]he problem with this interpretation was that Whitman had no way of knowing when this battle began: he arrived at the battlefield much later in the day with Sturgis’ Division.”

There are two aspects of Whitman’s letter that argue for him being at Fox’s Gap. First, Whitman wrote his letter seven days after the battle. He had plenty of time to talk to other soldiers in the 9th Corps about the Battle of South Mountain. As he told his mother in the same letter regarding the days between September 15-21, “I took a walk over part of the battlefield...I have talked with a number of rebel prisoners lately.” There was plenty of opportunity for Whitman to learn where the battle actually began. Secondly, there is an essential sentence of Whitman’s that Older omitted. It does not appear anywhere in the text of *Hood’s Defeat*. This sentence leaves absolutely no doubt that Whitman was at Fox’s Gap: “General Reno was killed soon after we went into action and while he was looking at our position.”³¹

In his report, Colonel Robert B. Potter, commander of the 51st New York, stated:

Our division (Sturgis’) was now brought forward and joined in the open ground just at the top of the gap... General Reno, who had been reconnoitering the ground in front, now rode back to us and ordered Colonel Hartranft to move to the right of the road... General Reno stopped now, with one or two of his staff officers, to speak to me.³²

Bugler Robert West of the 51st New York remembered:

31 George W. Whitman, *Civil War Letters of George Washington Whitman*, Jerome M. Loving ed. (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1975), 65-69; Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 40, 60.

32 Robert B. Potter, Report of Robert B. Potter, Carman Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. This report, in Carman’s cursive handwriting, was made after the war when Potter was promoted major general in September 1865.

The brigade then marched into the road and up the mountain. Arriving at the summit, we found evidence of the battle...The road at this point runs through a deep cut...There was a small clearing on the right and left of the road, and a log house used as a hospital for the wounded... General Reno and staff rode to the front to look the battle-ground over, as I supposed everything at that time being quiet. I was standing in the rear and center of the regiment...when, looking up, I saw General Reno and staff coming back from the front. They were riding along by the right of the regiment, in the same clearing that we were in.³³

Without a doubt, Bugler West was describing the Old Sharpsburg Road where it passes over the summit of Fox's Gap (also known as the Sunken Road to the 9th Corps veterans), the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field, and Wise's Field. He also observed Wise's log cabin, which was used as a hospital after the battle. In addition to the references "*top of the gap*," "*summit*," and "*log house*," Whitman, Potter, and West placed Reno with or near the 51st and as noted, *Hood's Defeat* does not contest that Reno was shot at Fox's Gap. These sources make it clear that the 51st New York Infantry was at Fox's Gap and not at "Cox's Intersection" at the foot of the mountain.

Another primary source Older uses extensively throughout *Hood's Defeat* in support of his "significant discovery" comes from Captain James Wren of the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry. Before considering Wren's testimony, it is worth reviewing two other primary sources from the 48th Pennsylvania: Captain Oliver C. Bosbyshell and Quartermaster Sergeant Joseph Gould.

Captain Bosbyshell recalled that as his regiment moved up the Old Sharpsburg Road, it turned "to the left, into a cornfield," and pushed "up the hill through the cornstalks." The 48th Pennsylvania arrived at "a little wooden knoll overlooking Fox's Pass." The regiment advanced "to the front line along the fence which surrounded the little triangular field overlooking the house and garden." According to Bosbyshell, in "The gathering shades of night...the gallant Reno rode down the line of the regiment from left to right," and halted a short distance from the right.

³³ Robert West, "Reno's Death," *National Tribune*, August 9, 1883. West was writing regarding a friendly fire controversy surrounding Reno's shooting.

Although he mistakenly described the field around the house as triangular, there is no doubt Bosbyshell was looking at the Wise House and garden.³⁴

Sergeant Gould similarly remembered that as the 48th moved up the Old Sharpsburg Road, “we turned from the road by the left, into a field of growing corn.” This standing field of corn was located approximately 350 yards from Ridge Road on the eastern slope of the mountain (it is also well documented by several other primary sources). On September 15, Sergeant Gould, like many others, walked over the ground and noticed “immediately on our front” the peculiar sight of a dead Confederate soldier: “One fellow hung upon the fence opposite, an arm or leg on either side, literally riddled with bullets.” Gould also noted the Wise Cabin and described it as a “log house near by.”³⁵

Now back to the diary of Captain James Wren. As with the letter written by George W. Whitman to his mother, Wren’s diary is a mainstay in Older’s assertion that Sturgis’ division advanced all the way to “Cox’s Intersection.” Captain Wren commanded a “line of skirmishers with the 51st New York” that engaged “the enemy’s skirmish Line.” Wren’s men exchanged fire with the enemy several times, then fell back and reported to Lieutenant Colonel Joshua K. Siegfried, commanding the regiment. “Our regiment remained in the battle until they had expended all their ammunition,” noted Wren, “& we fell back & the 2nd Maryland relieved us.” According to Wren, “We then rested in a cornfield.” The value of Wren’s September 14 diary entry for the “significant discovery” in *Hood’s Defeat* is the mention of the 51st New York and the 2nd Maryland Infantry Regiments. Because Older maintains that Whitman’s letter provides evidence the 51st New York was at Cox’s Intersection, it also proves to him that the 48th Pennsylvania and the 2nd Maryland were there as well.³⁶

34 Oliver Christian Bosbyshell, *The 48th In The War* (Philadelphia, PA, Avil Printing Company, 1895), 75-76. Bosbyshell’s “little wooden knoll” is a real place. From the 1970’s into the early 2000’s it was the site of a private dwelling. The land was purchased by the NPS Appalachian Trail, and the house was demolished. It is public land and is accessible along the earthen cut of the old driveway. It is heavily wooded, but during a site visit on March 4, 2024, I was able to see the Reno Monument and the 17th Michigan Field across the depression of the Reno Monument Road (Old Sharpsburg Road).

35 Joseph Gould, *The Story of The Forty-Eighth* (Mt. Carmel, PA, Regimental Association, 1908), 78.

36 James Wren, *Captain James Wren’s Diary From New Bern To Fredericksburg*, John Michael Priest ed. (Shippensburg, PA, White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., 1990), 65-66; Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 42-43.

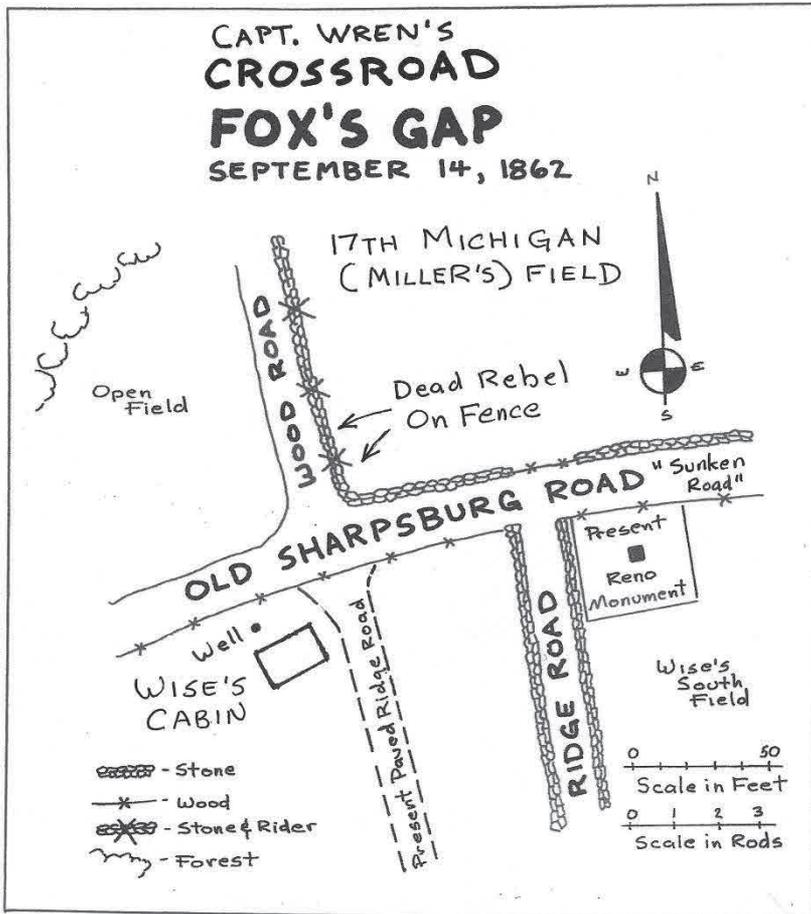
Wren's observations on September 15 are also cited as evidence cementing "Cox's Intersection" as the location of Sturgis' division. According to Older, Wren provides a physical description of his skirmish line in relation to a crossroads that identifies "the most significant discovery on the Battlefield of South Mountain in the past 160 years." According to Wren, "Just to the right of my skirmish line of yesterday war two Cross roads in the shape of an 'X' & on our frunt thear was a stone fence & behind that fence & in the 'X' road the enemy lay very thick."

Older freely admits that Wren's description of two crossroads may be interpreted either of two ways. It could truly mean two different crossroads. On the other hand, it could mean two unaligned roads. He states that is the case with "Cox's Intersection" as shown on the *Atlas Map*. The two roads do not flow through the intersection with the Old Sharpsburg Road in a straight line. According to Older:

The only location on the Fox's Gap battlefield where two roads crossed was at Cox's Intersection. The Wood Road and Ridge Road connections with Old Sharpsburg Road did not create an 'X,' as did Cox's Intersection. If Wren had meant the Wood Road and Ridge Road intersections along Old Sharpsburg Road, he most likely would have identified it by referencing the Wise Cabin.³⁷

However, Wren does mention the location of the two "X" roads. Just as Older did with Whitman's letter to his mother, he omits a crucial sentence in Wren's diary. It is the very next sentence: "One rebel, in Crossing the fence was Killed in the act & his Clothing Caught & he was hanging on the fence." It was the same dead Confederate "hung upon the fence" by the "log house" described by Sergeant Gould. It is the same dead Confederate seen on the fence by several 9th Corps veterans, including the regimental historian for the 9th New Hampshire Infantry: "Clearly too, does one remember the strangely lifelike position of that dead Confederate soldier, sitting astride the stone wall near Wise's house." With the dead

37 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 44-45; Wren, *Captain James Wren's Diary From New Bern To Fredericksburg*, 68. The Wren citation provided includes Wren's original spelling and syntax. Older's citation includes spelling corrections and brackets: "...just to the right of my skirmish line of yesterday was two crossroads [Park Hall Road and Old Sharpsburg Road] in the shape of an 'X,' & and on our front, there was a stone fence [between Park Hall Road and Dog Creek] & behind that fence & in the 'X' road [Cox's Intersection] the enemy lay very thick."



Map 5

Captain Wren's "Stone Fence" and "X" roads. (Stotelmeyer)

Confederate soldier hung up on the fence "Just to the right" of his skirmish line, the front of Wren's skirmish line was clearly near Wise's Cabin at Fox's Gap.³⁸

Another primary source referencing the unaligned crossroads at Fox's Gap is the regimental history of the 30th Ohio Infantry. In that history,

published in 1863, Lieutenant Henry R. Brinkerhoff describes the regiment's participation in the late afternoon's assault against Drayton's brigade. Brinkerhoff noted the position of the 30th Ohio in Wise's Field, describing it as an "open field...directly upon the summit of the mountain." In a clear reference to the sunken nature of the Old Sharpsburg Road passing over the crest, he wrote, "On the north side of the field was the road, which here struck a deep ravine." Brinkerhoff noted Drayton's position "at a stone fence and behind it in a cross road lay a Brigade of rebel infantry." Regarding the end of the assault against Drayton's brigade, when the Confederates were overwhelmed, Lieutenant Brinkerhoff stated, "the enemy fell back in the cross road behind the stone wall."³⁹

Yet another primary source also notes the unaligned crossroads at Fox's Gap. It comes to us from the regimental history of the 35th Massachusetts Infantry. A description of the regiment's action after Drayton's repulse (near the close of battle at the end of the day) records how "Immediately we started by the right flank and passed on the double-quick the cross-roads made by the sunken road, passing over the hill, meeting the road following the ridge." Clearly, this is a reference to the Old Sharpsburg Road and the Ridge Road at Fox's Gap. It is the same "X" intersection mentioned by Wren. It is the same "cross road" mentioned by Brinkerhoff. This unaligned crossroad was located at Fox's Gap, not at "Cox's Intersection" at the foot of the mountain.⁴⁰

Captain Wren's cornfield presents an inconvenient truth for Older's "significant discovery." The *Atlas Map* does not show any cornfield at "Cox's Intersection," only a large rectangular open area on the north side of the Old Sharpsburg Road, near the Lampert homestead. Older admits that Wren's use of the term "cornfield" could imply that the corn in the field was still standing. But he then declares, "The better conclusion was that the corn was no longer standing." It may be the better conclusion for *Hood's Defeat*, but it is thoroughly contradicted by the historical record.⁴¹

38 Wren, *Captain James Wren's Diary From New Bern To Fredericksburg*, 68; Gould, *The Story of The Forty-Eighth*, 78; Edward O. Lord, ed., *History of the Ninth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers* (Concord, NH, Regimental Press Association, 1895), 90.

39 Henry R. Brinkerhoff, *History of the Thirtieth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry* (Columbus, OH, James W. Osgood Printer, 1863), 42-43. Although Brinkerhoff referred to the field as "Lamb's Field," and the gap as "Farmer's Gap," the 30th Ohio was part of Drayton's repulse at Fox's Gap. See Gottfried, *Maps of Antietam*, 40-47.

40 Committee of the Regimental Association, *History of the Thirty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers* (Boston, MA, Mills, Knight & Co., 1884), 28.

41 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 44.

The standing field of corn on the eastern slope of South Mountain observed by Captain Wren is well documented. In the assault against Drayton's brigade, the 45th Pennsylvania Infantry of Willcox's division suffered more casualties in Wise's Field "near an old log house" than any other engagement of the entire war. As noted by the regimental historian, when the 45th began their assault, "Between us and the enemy was a cornfield ... It must have been some twenty rods through the cornfield." The 17th Michigan Infantry, also in Willcox's division, followed the 45th Pennsylvania, and for a time was "under fire in a cornfield on the left of the road—the old Sharpsburg road." As Captain Gabriel Campbell recalled, the enemy fire was "cutting off the leaves of corn until we were quite thoroughly covered." Remember, both Bosbyshell and Gould placed the 48th Pennsylvania in that same field of "growing corn."⁴²

Because there is no cornfield at "Cox's Intersection," Older dismisses Wren's observation, writing, "The better conclusion was that the corn was no longer standing. In a typical year, Maryland farmers often harvested corn by September 15." First and foremost, this statement ignores that with over 100,000 soldiers tramping through the Maryland countryside trying to kill each other in September 1862, it was anything other than a typical year. Furthermore, due to an extremely wet and cold spring, corn planting was delayed later than was typical. Regardless, September was not the traditional harvest month for corn north of the Potomac River, the harvest month for corn was October. In the final analysis Older's conclusion is rendered moot three days later by the most famous field of standing corn in American history: Miller's Cornfield at Antietam. Yet this does not stop Older from concluding, "Wren was not in a cornfield near the Wise Cabin, as suggested by other authors."⁴³

Let there be no doubt: Bosbyshell, Gould, and Wren were at one time in a cornfield approximately 350 yards east of Wise's Cabin. Both Gould and Wren (and at least a half dozen other 9th Corps veterans) commented

42 Allen D. Albert, *History of the Forty-Fifth Regiment, Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteer Infantry 1861-1865* (Williamsburg, PA, Grit Publishing Company 1912), 51, 54, 56; Irwin Shepard to Ezra A. Carman, January 4, 1900, Carman Correspondence, New York Public Library, New York; Gabriel Campbell to Ezra A. Carman, August 23, 1899, ANBL; Bosbyshell, *The 48th In The War*, 75; Gould, *The Story of The Forty-Eighth*, 78.

43 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 44; Kenneth Noe, *The Howling Storm: Weather, Climate, and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge, LA, Louisiana State University Press, 2020), 163-64; Bradley Graham, *The Antietam Effect, The Backstory of the Antietam Campaign of 1862* (Gettysburg, PA, Media Magic, 2012), 107.

on the dead Confederate soldier hung up on the stone wall near Wise's Cabin.⁴⁴ Furthermore, both Bosbyshell and Gould observed Reno riding past and as noted, *Hood's Defeat* does not contest that Reno was shot at Fox's Gap. Clearly, the 48th Pennsylvania Infantry fought at Fox's Gap, not at "Cox's Intersection" at the foot of the mountain.

The 9th New Hampshire Infantry was also easily located at Fox's Gap, as is Sturgis' division, to which the 9th belonged. Their regimental history states the following:

[T]hrough the cornfield!... through the wood that crowns the height! Across the road and into a scrubby growth among the scattered trees beyond... The Ninth had reached the slope, but no enemy is in sight—they have outrun their pursuers... The regiment was quickly reformed... The line of battle had been left a quarter of a mile behind... Plainly the regiment must go back... the regiment retired across Wise's field. Near the eastern edge of this field it swung into line *in front of the other regiments of the division*, which had advanced to that point. The men rested on their arms for a few minutes, and then General Reno, riding up to Colonel Fellows as he was standing at the left of the regiment, shook him warmly by the hand.⁴⁵

Private James M. Stone with the 21st Massachusetts Infantry, also in Strugis' division, remembered how, "When we got up to the fighting line the Johnnies were falling back and we simply followed them to the top of the range...The fight in our part of the field was then over and our brigade was resting in a field at the top of the range in Fox's Gap."⁴⁶

Another soldier in the 21st, Private George A. Hitchcock, in his diary entry of September 14, 1862, noted:

We are ordered across the road to the left which is called Fox's Gap. The sunken road is literally packed with dead and dying rebels... Our brigade is moved forward into an open field on the

44 For other 9th Corps veteran's observations of the dead Confederate soldier hung up on the fence see Stotemyer, *From Frederick To Sharpsburg*, 180-81.

45 Lord, ed., *History of the Ninth Regiment New Hampshire Volunteers*, 73-74. Italics by Stotemyer.

46 James Madison Stone, *Personal Recollections of the Civil War* (Boston, MA, Published by the Author, 1898), 86-87.

summit of the mountain between two wooded pieces... Captain Richardson... orders us back to the woods in our rear and not finding any superior officers, we retreat still further to a corn field... We learn that General Reno has just been killed.⁴⁷

Captain Charles F. Walcott, the regimental historian of the 21st, also mentioned the 35th Massachusetts Infantry:

The 35th went a little way into the woods, were not disturbed, and coming out, reported that there was no enemy in our front. It was now fast growing dark... when, with the most startling suddenness, a line of flashes ran along the edge of the woods from which the 35th had just emerged, and the rebel bullets hissed through our ranks. *Longstreet's men had come to retake the summit.*

In his history, Walcott notes: "The rebels who made this night attack were two brigades of General J. B. Hood's Division." While it is true that regimental histories, like postwar memoirs, should usually be taken with a grain of salt, it is also true that Walcott was a combat veteran of the battle. He was there, as well as the day after, and he no doubt consulted with other veterans when compiling his history of the regiment. If Walcott's history was the only source placing Hood at Fox's Gap, one might justifiably suspect his veracity. But, as will be shown, Walcott is not the only primary source, Union or Confederate, that placed Hood at Fox's Gap.⁴⁸

The 6th New Hampshire Infantry did not rejoin Sturgis' division until the following day. But as we have seen, the rest of the division, the 2nd Maryland, the 51st Pennsylvania, the 51st New York, the 48th Pennsylvania, the 9th New Hampshire, the 21st Massachusetts, and the 35th Massachusetts were all at the crest of the mountain at Fox's Gap. This is verified by General Sturgis himself in his report: "Arriving near the crest of the mountain... The infantry fire had now become so warm and the ground so stubbornly disputed that General Nagle's brigade was brought

47 George A. Hitchcock, *The Civil War Diary and Reminiscences of George A. Hitchcock* (Campbell, CA, Savas Publishing Co., 1997), 19.

48 Charles F. Walcott, *History of the Twenty-First Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers* (Boston, MA, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882), 190. Italics by Walcott.

forward, and the whole line engaged... and we occupied the highest point of the mountain.”⁴⁹

Since the alleged “significant discovery” in *Hood’s Defeat* is based on a postwar statement by Jacob D. Cox, it is fitting to end this analysis of Sturgis’ position with another postwar statement by Cox. On January 27, 1897, Cox wrote to Ezra A. Carman regarding the death of Reno: “He came up about sunset to see for himself why Sturgis and Wilcox [*sic*] could not get the point at the Mountain House. He went out on Sturgis’ skirmish line and in a very few moments was brought back dead.” General Willcox also confirmed this afterwards, writing, “My people were relieved by General Sturgis’s division, late in the afternoon, General Reno went forward to a tree in front of the skirmish line to reconnoiter.” According to Cox and Willcox, Reno’s shooting occurred on Sturgis’ skirmish line and, as noted, *Hood’s Defeat* does not contest that Reno was shot at Fox’s Gap. Clearly then, Sturgis’ division must have been at Fox’s Gap, not at “Cox’s Intersection” at the foot of the mountain.⁵⁰

In his report, General Willcox noted:

Sturgis’ regiments relieved my division in the front as soon as our ammunition was exhausted... A large number of prisoners and the wounded were collected. After dark the enemy opened fire on Sturgis with musketry, in which the beloved and gallant Reno was killed... Still later a heavy fire of musketry opened on us, the enemy (as was learned from a prisoner) being re-enforced by a brigade of Whiting’s division.

The “Whiting” referred to by Willcox was Brigadier General William Henry Chase Whiting. After the Seven Days Battle (June 26 to July 1, 1862) Whiting was ordered to North Carolina. In General Longstreet’s report dated October 10, 1862, he stated that “Whiting’s brigade” was under the command of Colonel Evander M. Law. Law’s brigade was part of Hood’s division. The confusion between a Union general and a Confederate general over division versus brigade is not relevant. What is germane is that Willcox’s report is another primary source, in addition to

49 OR 19/1:443.

50 Jacob D. Cox to Ezra A. Carman, January 22, 1897, NYPL, Ezra A. Carman Papers, Box 2 Folder 4; Orlando B. Willcox, *Forgotten Valor: The Memoirs, Journals, & Civil War Letters of Orlando B. Willcox*, Robert Garth Scott ed. (Kent, OH, The Kent State University Press, 1999), 355.

Walcott's comment about Longstreet's men, placing Hood at Fox's Gap. And it would have been just as easy for Walcott with the 21st Massachusetts to learn the same from a prisoner as it was for Willcox.⁵¹

Now let us look at the area around Fox's Gap from the Confederate point of view and how they understood the road network in that vicinity. General D. H. Hill, and Major John Ratchford of his staff, used the Wood Road very early on the morning of September 14 for their reconnaissance of Fox's Gap. Garland's brigade also used the road during its initial deployment that morning, as did Bondurant's Battery of the Jeff Davis Artillery. John Purifoy, a member of Bondurant's Battery, described the Wood Road as a "rough mountain road." George B. Anderson's, Roswell Ripley's, George T. Anderson's, and Drayton's brigades all then used it later in the day.⁵²

After their defeat, the South Carolinians and Georgians of Drayton's brigade had several escape routes from their positions at Fox's Gap. The Old Sharpsburg Road was one route and Wood Road certainly was another. Near the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field, the Wood Road forked. The right fork led to Turner's Gap and the left fork traveled northwesterly down the western slope of the mountain. While it is true that the Old Sharpsburg Road eventually led to "Cox's Intersection," it is also true that upon leaving Fox's Gap, it made a turn to the right and traveled northwest for approximately one-quarter mile. In between the Old Sharpsburg Road and the Wood Road, just north of the Wise Cabin, was a small open field of about one acre backed by dense woods. The general direction of escape for Drayton's brigade was north and northwest through those dense woods.⁵³

Towards the end of the action, Drayton probably occupied some defensive position of relative safety from which he observed the combat around Fox's Gap. A location in or near Wood Road at the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field best fits that requirement. The Wood

51 OR 19/1:429, 839; Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray, Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA, The Louisiana State University Press, 1959) 334-35.

52 Daniel Harvey Hill, "The Battle of South Mountain, Or Boonsboro," *B&L*, 562; John Purifoy to Ezra A. Carman, July 15, 1899, NARA RG 94 Antietam Studies Box 2; Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1:326,332.

53 Kurt Graham, "Death of a Brigade: Drayton's Brigade at Fox's Gap, September 14, 1862," *Society of the Descendants of Frederick Fox Newsletter*, June 1, 2000, 9 (see Map 1); Road geometry based upon *Atlas Map*; Department of the Interior U.S. Geological Survey, Maryland-Virginia-West Virginia Antietam Quadrangle, Edition of 1910, Middletown Quadrangle, 1953, Photorevised 1979.

Road was a sunken road bordered on the east by a stone and rider fence. As an officer, it can safely be assumed Drayton was on horseback with a field of view higher than the infantry in the road. Despite the defensive nature of the Wood Road, Drayton deployed his forces elsewhere and his brigade's position was soon abandoned when they were overwhelmed and routed. As a commanding officer of a brigade, it is assumed Drayton attempted to return to headquarters at the Mountain House to report to his superiors. If true, that meant returning to Turner's Gap by the only path he knew, the Wood Road.⁵⁴

As for General Hood, his two brigades marched directly on the National Road (or Turnpike) from Boonsboro to Turner's Gap. When Hood arrived at the Mountain House, D. H. Hill and Longstreet faced a crisis in the form of a powerful Federal attack at Frostown just over one mile to the northeast. Hill's lone brigade, commanded by Brigadier General Robert E. Rodes, engaged in desperate combat the entire 1st Corps division of Brigadier General George G. Meade. Simultaneously, Brigadier General John P. Hatch's division launched another assault in the same area. Hill had no troops available to throw against Hatch because he had already committed the bulk of his command to defending Fox's Gap. Then, at last, after a circuitous, confusing, and exhausting march, the three brigades of Brigadier General James L. Kemper, Brigadier General Richard B. Garnett, and Colonel Joseph Walker arrived at Turner's Gap.⁵⁵

Longstreet later described in his memoir the exhausting march of these three particular brigades:

As the three brigades under Generals Kemper, Garnett, and Colonel Walker (Jenkins's brigade) approached the mountain, a report reached general head-quarters that the enemy was forcing

⁵⁴ On March 17, 2024, I conducted a site visit to area in the northern section of the 17th Michigan Field. Since the Wood Road is part of the Appalachian Trail and the field is owned by NPS, it is public ground and easily accessible. Coincidentally, this is the same general area that Graham (Death of a Brigade) placed Bondurant's Battery. As expected, I was able to see the Reno Monument to the south. To my surprise I was also able to observe automobile traffic to the southeast of the monument near the present-day driveway to the modern garage building (this ground is owned by the State of Maryland and is also public). At the time of the battle the modern driveway was the location of the stone wall where Drayton initially posted his three Georgia regiments. Consequently, the site visit confirmed to my satisfaction, that from this position, Drayton (and Bondurant) had a clear line of sight view of the battlefield at Fox's Gap.

⁵⁵ Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1: 348-50, 356-60.

his way down the mountain by the Old Sharpsburg Road. To meet this General Lee ordered those brigades to the right, and they marched a mile and more down a rugged way along the base of the mountain before the report was found to be erroneous, when the brigades were ordered back to make their way to the pike and to the top of the mountain in double time...the five brigades that made direct ascent of the mountain were in good order. The three that marched south of the turnpike, *along a narrow mountain trail part of the way, through woodlands and over boulders*, returning, then *up the mountain*, the last march at *double time*, were thinned to skeletons of three or four hundred men to a brigade when they reached the Mountain House.⁵⁶

Hood's two brigades were among these five brigades that made a "direct ascent of the mountain." His division did not follow the circuitous path of Kemper, Garnett, and Walker. In his report of September 27, 1862, regarding his arrival at Turner's Gap, Hood wrote, "By direction of the general commanding, I took up my position immediately on the left of the pike. Soon, orders came to change over to the right, as our troops on that side were giving way to superior numbers."⁵⁷

As Hood later wrote in his memoir:

Before long Major Fairfax of Longstreet's staff, came to me in haste with orders to move to the right of the pike, as our troops on that part of the field had been driven back. He accompanied me to the pike, and here turned his horse to leave, when I naturally asked if he would not guide me. He replied, 'No, I can only say, go to the right.'⁵⁸

Major Fairfax's purported statement certainly reflects the "disjointed" situation described by Longstreet upon his arrival at Turner's Gap.⁵⁹ The first of Longstreet's Command, the brigades of G. T. Anderson and

⁵⁶ James Longstreet, *From Manassas To Appomattox, Memoirs Of The Civil War in America* (Philadelphia, PA, The Blue And Gray Press, 1896), 224, 226. Italics by Stotemyer.

⁵⁷ OR 19/1:922.

⁵⁸ John Bell Hood, *Advance and Retreat, Personal Experiences in the United States and Confederate States Armies* (New Orleans, LA, Hood Orphan Memorial Fund, 1880), 40.

⁵⁹ Longstreet, "The Invasion of Maryland," *B&L*, 666.

Drayton, had arrived and were personally led by D. H. Hill via the Wood Road to Fox's Gap. Hill then returned to Turner's Gap, where he learned of the new Federal assault by Hatch at Frostown. When Longstreet arrived at the Mountain House, the brigade of Brigadier General Nathan G. "Shanks" Evans followed him. Longstreet, as senior officer, assumed overall command. No doubt much valuable time was lost and confusion arose as he familiarized himself with the operational situation.

As Ezra A. Carman explained regarding Evans' brigade:

Evans marched that day from Hagerstown in command of a 'provisional' division, composing the two brigades of Hood's division and his own South Carolina Brigade. When nearing the Mountain House he was informed that Hood's two brigades were to be detached to support the right at Fox's Gap, and that he with his own brigade, was to support Rodes' and hold the position assigned him on the left of the National Road, and that reinforcements would be sent him... When Evans was sent to help Rodes he was given to understand that the interval between his right and the National Road would be filled, The only troops available for that purpose were the brigades of Kemper, Garnett and Jenkins.

Longstreet ordered Evans' troops to report to D. H. Hill and had them conducted to him by Major John W. Fairfax of his staff.⁶⁰

With this confusing situation in mind, it is understandable why Fairfax would tell Hood he could not guide him. Unstated in Hood's anecdote is the likely expectation by Fairfax that a capable officer like Hood would be able to find the nearby road that every other Confederate commander at Turner's Gap had previously used to move to the right. In *Hood's Defeat*, however, this purported statement by Fairfax is used to question Hood's use of the Wood Road to access Fox's Gap. According to Older, with his only directions coming from Fairfax, "Hood was unaware Wood Road existed."⁶¹

Major Fairfax was not the only staff officer near the Mountain House. Longstreet, D. H. Hill, Hood, and every brigade commander on the mountain had several subordinate officers on their staff. This is made abundantly clear by a postwar statement regarding the combat of Brigadier

60 Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1: 354-56.

61 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 96, 97.

General Alfred Colquitt's troops at day's end just east of the Mountain House. In a postwar letter to Longstreet, Hill wrote, "You remember probably, how my staff officers would laugh & clap their hands and shout, 'hurrah for Georgia,'" whenever the cheers of these brave men told that they were getting the better of the enemy."⁶²

In other words, the Mountain House was not an empty building on September 14. It was D. H. Hill's headquarters and, while D. H. Hill may not have been there all day, members of his staff certainly were. Couriers arrived and departed with dispatches, reconnaissance patrols reported their observations, and prisoners were interrogated there. Major Ratchford, D. H. Hill's chief of staff, had also accompanied Hill earlier that day to Fox's Gap. He certainly knew about the Wood Road. In addition, the Confederates used the Mountain House as a field hospital. After his death at Fox's Gap, men from Brigadier General Garland's brigade brought his body to the Mountain House via the Wood Road. To employ a metaphor, it was a beehive of activity. Yet, readers are expected to believe that no one on Hood's staff, nor Hood himself, stopped at the Mountain House to at least inquire about the tactical and logistical situation? And even if one of Hood's staff did visit headquarters, Older expects us to believe that no one there knew enough about the Wood Road to describe it.⁶³

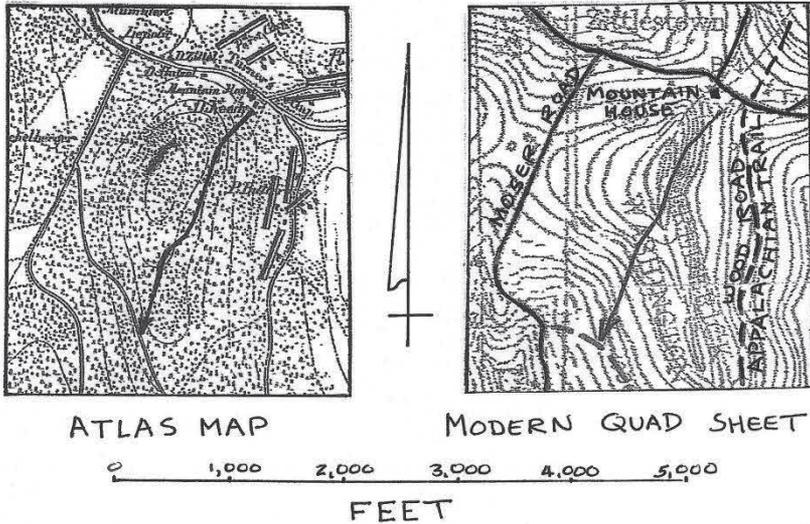
Instead of Wood Road, Older argues that Hood "moved directly south" using the steep slope behind the Mountain House, somewhere between the crest of South Mountain and the Wood Road, to move his division to the Confederate right.⁶⁴ Older cites the memoir history of the 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment by Lieutenant Robert T. Coles, Jr. In that book, Coles states:

[W]e were ordered to the right through an orchard, the trees growing among huge boulders luxuriantly, many loaded with tempting fruit and not a minute to spare to eat a single apple.

62 D. H. Hill to James Longstreet, February 11, 1885, Longstreet Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, NC.

63 Lemoin Cree, *A Brief History of South Mountain House* (Middletown, MD, Mitchell H. Dodson Publisher, 1963), 17-18; Byron L. Williams, *The Old South Mountain Inn, An Informal History* (Shippensburg, PA, Beidel Printing House, Inc., 1990), 45.

64 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 120.



“Hood’s Initial Movement South,” on Atlas Map (per Hood’s Defeat, page 95) and by Stotelmeyer on Modern Quad Sheet (per Hood’s Defeat, page 95). (Stotelmeyer)

There we met Drayton’s brigade falling back in confusion, stating that they had been flanked.⁶⁵

The *Atlas Map* shows three orchards enclosed by fences in the area near the Mountain House. Of these, Older decided to choose the orchard “halfway between the Mountain House and the Wood Road intersection,” and adamantly maintains “Hood’s men were not on Wood Road at this early stage.” The orchard used by Older is identified on the *Atlas Map* as the property of D. Keedy.⁶⁶

Several aspects of Hood’s proposed route in *Hood’s Defeat* warrant examination. First and foremost is the extreme slope of the ground as shown on the *Atlas Map*. Part of the path shown by Older crosses two contour intervals of 100 feet. From one contour line to another represents a vertical elevation difference of 100 feet above sea level. At one point on

65 Robert T. Coles, Jr., *From Huntsville to Appomattox, R. T. Cole’s History Of 4th Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A., Army Of Northern Virginia*, Jeffrey D. Stocker ed. (Knoxville, TN, The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 63. Coles wrote the memoir history between 1909-10.

66 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 121.

Hood's route, he crosses two contours at a horizontal distance of 100 feet. The reader needs to pause for a moment and consider the physical difficulty of such a climb. A difference of 100 vertical feet in a horizontal distance of 100 feet represents a direct ratio of 1:1 (100%). Civil engineers often express this ratio as "Rise over Run." For a real-world comparison, consider that the Maryland State Highway Administration requires guardrails be installed beside roadways with ground alongside them that have a 1:2 (50%) slope or greater. Such a slope of 1:1 (100%) would make it literally impossible for Hood's infantry to stand upright without holding on to trees, let alone march in column.⁶⁷

For argument's sake, assuming Hood began his movement to the right from the Keedy orchard means that it was directly within the viewshed of the Mountain House. Older completely overlooks this fact, expecting the reader to believe that nobody at the Mountain House, or the congested area of Turner's Gap, saw Hood leading his division of 2,000 soldiers straight up the hill behind the Mountain House. Similarly, no one attempted to stop him, call his attention to the Wood Road, or report the situation to Hill or Longstreet. How odd would it have seemed to Longstreet, Fairfax, D. H. Hill, Ratchford, or any lowly infantryman, that a West Point trained professional combat veteran such as Hood, rather than take the road used by everyone else that day, would have arbitrarily struck out on his own uphill over such difficult terrain. Furthermore, we are asked to believe that while his division was climbing that mountain they ran into remnants of Drayton's brigade coming at them down the steep slope.

Older argues in *Hood's Defeat* that General Longstreet provided "critical information" consistent with Hood not using the Wood Road in his movement to the right. "As regards Hood's two brigades," he writes, "Longstreet proclaimed they followed '*a narrow mountain trail part of the way and then through woodlands and over boulders.*'" To Older, the most telling part of Longstreet's memoir is that "Hood's two brigades returned '*up the mountain*' and '*at double time.*'" To be absolutely clear, Longstreet never wrote any such thing regarding the two brigades of Hood. If the text in italics seems familiar to the reader, it is because you have seen it before in a previous citation of Longstreet used to describe the movements of the brigades of Kemper, Garnett, and Walker. By inserting "Drayton,

67 When laid out on a modern topographic map the slope becomes 1:3 (33%) which is a little more manageable. Still, a 1:3 (33%) slope is the steepest one dare mow grass with a riding mower and not have the mower tip over.

Wofford, Law” in brackets (putting words in Longstreet’s mouth he never said), Older tries to convince the reader that Longstreet’s quotation refers not only to Drayton, but also Hood’s two brigades.⁶⁸

The more likely explanation, not requiring the manipulation of any text, is that the orchard Coles and the 4th Alabama Infantry passed through on Hood’s movement to the right was 350 yards south of the Mountain House at the “P. Butler” homestead. The four-acre lot shown on the *Atlas Map* was certainly large enough to contain an orchard. Furthermore, the Butler lot was located on the western side of the Wood Road.⁶⁹

As remembered by Coles, it was in an orchard where Hood’s troops encountered “Drayton’s brigade.” Coles then stated, “We moved still further to the right, and secured a position to meet the advancing enemy.” This is backed up by General Hood in his September 27 report. Hood did not mention an orchard, but he did note, “On the march to the right, I met General Drayton’s brigade coming out, saying the enemy had succeeded in passing to their rear. I at once inclined more to the right over a very rugged country and succeeded in getting in a position to receive the enemy.” In his memoir Hood added, “The wood and undergrowth were dense, and nothing but a pig path seemed to lead in the direction in which I was ordered. Nevertheless, I conducted my troops obliquely by the right flank.”⁷⁰

There is another primary source that corroborates both Coles and Hood; the 1863 reminiscence of Reverend Nickolas A. Davis, chaplain of the 4th Texas Infantry. In his book, Davis recalled how “Hood ... On his march to the right he met General Drayton coming out, saying the enemy had succeeded in passing to his rear. At this information, Hood immediately inclined his command still further to the right, over a rugged country, and hastily put his men in position to meet them.”⁷¹

68 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 113, 130. Italics by Stotelmyer. The complete citation by Longstreet is altered by Older with text in brackets: “...The three [Drayton, Wofford, Law] that marched south of the turnpike...”

69 The Dahlgren Backpacker Camp is located on the site of the old Butler homestead. It is the location where the Appalachian Trail enters the remaining roadbed of the Wood Road. Since it is part of the Trail it is accessible to the public and a site visit will reveal the “boulders” remembered by Coles.

70 Coles, *From Huntsville to Appomattox*, 63; OR 19/1:922; Hood, *Advance and Retreat*, 40.

71 Nickolas A. Davis, *Campaign from Texas to Maryland* (Houston, TX, [Second Edition] Telegraph Book and Job Establishment, 1863), 51.

The sequence of events that Coles, Hood, and Davis agree on is that after meeting Drayton's brigade, Hood's division inclined farther to the right. According to Chaplain Davis, Hood not only met Drayton's brigade, but conferred with Drayton himself. If Davis' veracity as a reverend can be trusted, it appears Drayton reported personally to Hood about the situation at Fox's Gap.⁷² This meeting is especially important if we remember that Drayton, on horseback, was probably attempting to return to headquarters at the Mountain House by the only route he knew, the Wood Road. Admittedly, this is conjecture, but it fits the situation. Older, by contrast, uses Hood's pig path comment to prove the general was not on the Wood Road. Even taking into consideration the rough nature of Civil War roads, the phrase "pig path" seems like an extremely harsh description of the "rough mountain road" described by Purifoy.⁷³ The question then becomes, was Hood referring to the Wood Road or to some other path that led off the Wood Road to the right? Did some other rough path in the area fork obliquely to the right?

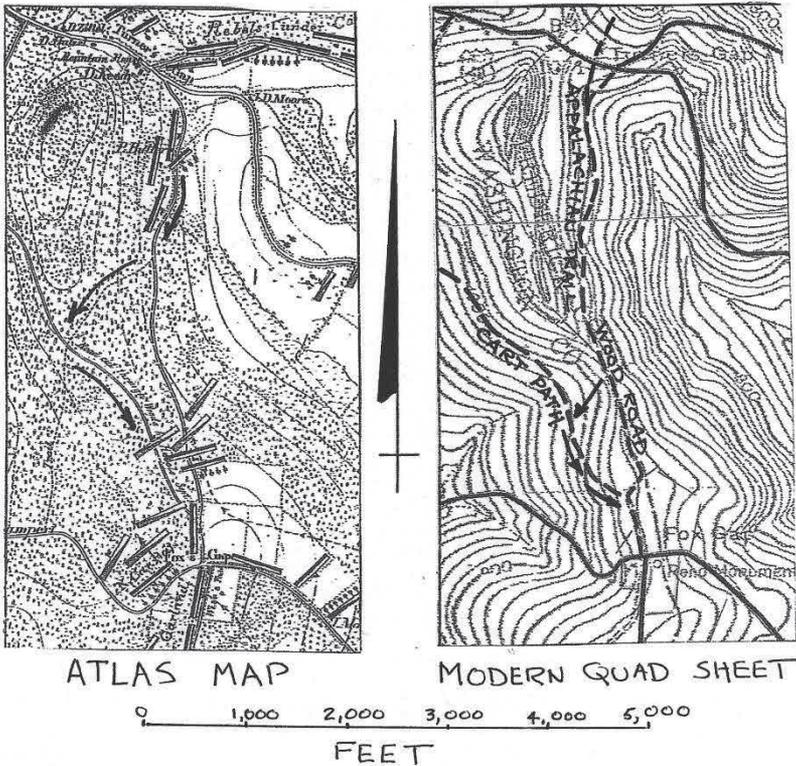
The answer is yes. On the *Atlas Map*, a little over a hundred yards from the Butler homestead is a dashed line labeled "Trail." This trail does exactly what Coles, Hood, and Davis describe; it obliques to the right. A trail is also consistent with Hood's description of the passage as a "pig path." It is important to note that the trail intersects with another road that leads back to Fox's Gap. Before considering the implications of this, we must return to Fox's Gap and examine the movements of the 35th Massachusetts Infantry because they bear directly on the path of Drayton's retreat and the lost ground regained by Hood.

The 35th Massachusetts Infantry was a new regiment in Sturgis' division, and South Mountain was their first battle. The new recruits barely knew how to march on a parade ground, let alone a battlefield. It was nearly sunset when the last of Drayton's brigade fled Fox's Gap and the small arms fire temporarily ceased. Second Lieutenant John B. Stickney, with the 35th Massachusetts, wrote his parents a few days afterwards, "As we gained the summit the Rebels were just retreating, and we were deployed immediately as skirmishers to clear out the woods of sharpshooters."⁷⁴

72 Although Davis is cited several times by Older, the text by Davis relating Hood actually meeting Drayton is nowhere to be found in *Hood's Defeat*.

73 John Purifoy to Ezra A. Carman, July 15, 1899, NARA RG 94 Antietam Studies Box 2.

74 John B. Stickney to Parents, September 28, 1862, John Clinton Frye Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.



Hood's probable movement to Fox's Gap. Atlas Map and Modern Quad Sheet. Before land acquisition that allowed the Appalachian Trail to relocate through Fox's Gap, it "obliqued" to the right at a location in a low point, or saddle, about 2,000 feet north of the gap. That location is shown on the Modern Quad Sheet. From this location one could move southwest downhill without having to move uphill first over very steep rugged ground. (Stotelnier)

Stickney's brigade commander, Brigadier General Edward Ferrero, wanted a reconnaissance of the woods northwest of the gap and he chose the green troops of the 35th Massachusetts to carry it out. After the war, the regimental historian described this movement:

We... tried to push through the tangled mass of vines and brambles, in line of battle, on down the west side of the mountain. The thicket was so close that only here and there could a passage be forced through, and, as a consequence, the regiment, instead of advancing in line, broke into sections or

smaller parties, which moved forward... Some ways down we halted... Knowing nothing of positions, however, and in doubt what to do, the sections, coming more together, marched back up the hill into the ridge road again. Here was a scene of unavoidable confusion, as the different parties came out of the woods and sought to recover their positions in line. Such a shouting of company letters... was never heard before or since.⁷⁵

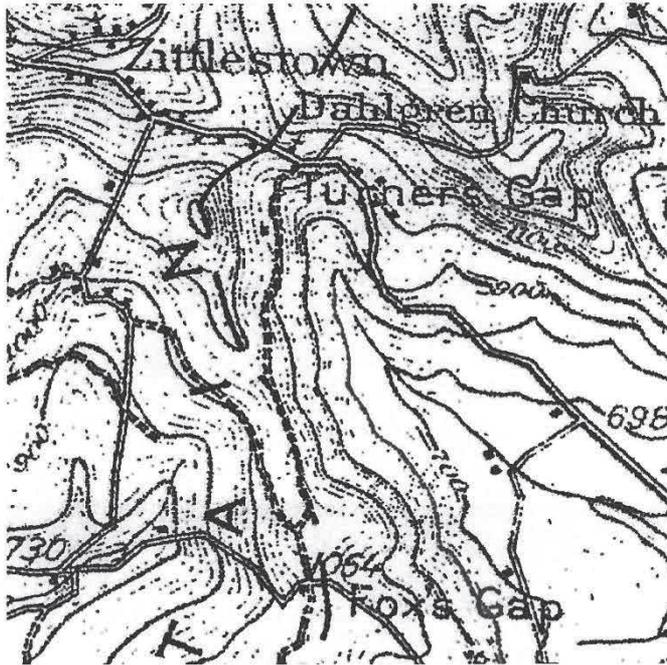
In his journal entry for September 14, Second Lieutenant Albert A. Pope not only provided evidence that the 35th followed the same route used by Drayton's brigade, he also offered a valuable clue regarding Hood's final attack at Fox's Gap:

We were then ordered to charge through the thickest woods I ever saw ... The rebels were piled up in the woods pretty thick, we had to step over them and walk through rebel blood. We saw a number there who were not dead, and took some prisoners. After a tedious march, we came out into an open cart-path. The rebels blankets, haversacks, guns and canteens were strewn along our path, and the rebels were all around us, but we did not know it at the time. The rebels intended to take us all prisoners, but some how or other they did not. When we came out of the woods we saw about five thousand of our men, drawn up in line of battle and facing us. We did not know what to make of it at first, but finally we saw the position we were in, right inside the rebel lines. We however got out of there as fast as we could, and got in the open field, where we formed in line of battle.⁷⁶

Both the regimental historian and Second Lieutenant Pope show that the 35th Massachusetts went into the woods some distance, moved down the western slope of the mountain, met no enemy, halted, and came back to Fox's Gap. According to the regimental historian they were noisy, as would be expected of green recruits. Pope thought the Confederates were all around them but provided no reason why he thought this was the case. His observation of the enemy's dead, wounded, and abandoned

⁷⁵ Committee of the Regimental Association, *History of the Thirty-Fifth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers*, 28-29.

⁷⁶ Albert A. Pope, Manuscript Journal Entry September 14, 1862, Manuscript Department, U. S. Army Heritage and Education Center (USAHEC), Carlisle, PA.



1910 United States Geological Survey map enlargement of “Wood Road” and “Cart Path” area between Turner’s and Fox’s Gaps. The Standard Symbols Key defines the dashed lines as “Poor motor or private road.” (Department of the Interior)

equipment clearly indicated, however, that the 35th Massachusetts had passed over the ground lost by Drayton. Of special significance is Pope’s comment of the “open cart-path.” This would suggest a rough mountain road suitable for the passage of a cart or wagon.

The *Atlas Map* does show such a road. Instead, it is labeled “Road cut through woods by Rebels Sept.” Confederate troops were not in the vicinity of Boonsboro long enough to clear cut a roadway suitable for wagon traffic almost a mile long through a thickly wooded mass of tangled vines and brambles. Therefore, the inference must be it was an existing road, or cart path, that Pope observed. A glance at the *Atlas Map* additionally reveals the cart path intersects the aforementioned trail leading to the right from the Wood Road, which comes south from the Mountain House. No matter what one chooses to call it, the cart path provided a route back to Fox’s Gap from the trail. It then becomes the

previously mentioned left fork of the Wood Road (going north from Fox's Gap) at the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field.⁷⁷

Also of importance is Pope's observation when he came out of the woods: "we saw about five thousand of our men, drawn up in line of battle and facing us." This statement is significant because it disproves another unfounded assertion in *Hood's Defeat* that, "Before Reno's shooting, the Union forces had at least a dozen cannon in Miller's Field and near the Wise Cabin." As evidence for this claim, Older mainly relies on a statement in Captain William J. Bolton's journal regarding Reno. Bolton, with the 51st Pennsylvania, wrote that late in the afternoon Reno came on the field and "ordered Durrell's battery to limber up and go in a gallop up the narrow road leading to the crest of the mountain."⁷⁸

Because Bolton also wrote that Federal artillery "cleared the mountain of the enemy," and because in *Hood's Defeat* Sturgis' division is at "Cox's Intersection," Older interprets Bolton's journal entry to mean that in the early evening fight around Wise's Cabin at Fox's Gap, "the Union 9th Corps possessed many cannons near Miller's Field." According to Older, the alleged artillery units in the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field consisted of "the two-gun artillery sections under the commands of Lieutenant John Coffin, Lieutenant Asa Cook, Lieutenant Daniel Glassie, and two six-gun batteries under Lieutenant Charles Muhlenberg and Captain George Durrell." If true, this would place 18 guns, 18 caissons, 36 limbers, 108 horses, and at least 288 cannoners in the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field.⁷⁹

A history of Durrell's Battery describes the deployment on the crest of the mountain:

77 Pope's cart path is referred to as "Cut Road" in *Hood's Defeat*. It, and the Wood Road, are clearly shown with dashed lines on the 1910 Quad Sheet. In the map legend of "Standard Symbols" the dashed line is labeled, "Poor motor or private road." The roadbed of the cart path at the fork at the northern end of the 17th Michigan Field is still observable at present. The local farmers in the nineteenth century used the wooded areas of South Mountain for fuel and building material, and the slopes of the mountain were dotted with logging roads, just open enough to allow the removal of harvested timber (either as individual logs or several logs on sleds or carts). It takes no great leap of imagination to envision a stranger in a strange land during the dusk of twilight on the mountain slope describing such a logging road as a cart path or even a pig path.

78 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 33; Bolton Typescript War Journal, War Library Museum, Philadelphia PA.

79 Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 53; Rosebrock, *Artillery of Antietam*, 43-44; Bolton Typescript War Journal, War Library Museum, Philadelphia PA.

Soon after the darkness of night had set in, the Confederates made another assault upon Cox's Division, which held the left of the Union line, and a fierce battle raged for half an hour, when it ended in a repulse of the enemy. The battery was in this action.

The evidence shows that Cox's left occupied the area of G. B. Anderson's assault at Farmer's Gap, not Fox's Gap. According to the unit's historian, after Anderson's repulse there, "all the guns of the battery were ordered to retire down the mountain except the two pieces of the left section." Then, sometime around midnight, Durrell received orders to advance one gun to the picket line at Fox's Gap. The single artillery piece proceeded up the Old Sharpsburg Road, and:

It was necessary for the cannoneers to proceed in advance of the horses and pick up the dead bodies lying in the sunken road, and place them on either bank of the roadside...a turn to the left was made from the road into a field dotted with the forms of the dead. Orders were given that there should be no speaking above a whisper and that the movements of the horses and gun-carriage be made as slowly and noiselessly as possible...It was a trying state of suspense to the men, and above all, distressing to hear the groans and cries, of the wounded lying behind the lines, calling for help...The detachment was held in this position, possibly fifteen or twenty minutes, though it seemed an hour, when it was ordered to retire to its former position.⁸⁰

Clearly, Durrell's single gun passed briefly through Wise's Field. Eighteen Federal guns did not occupy the field opposite it. In the immediate area of Fox's Gap, the 51st Pennsylvania, 17th Michigan, and 79th New York were deployed in the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field. The 51st New York and the 21st Massachusetts (soon to be joined by the 35th Massachusetts) occupied Wise's Field. Lieutenant Pope had observed these elements of Willcox's and Sturgis' divisions, and in the gathering gloom of twilight it is entirely believable that he placed their number at 5,000.⁸¹

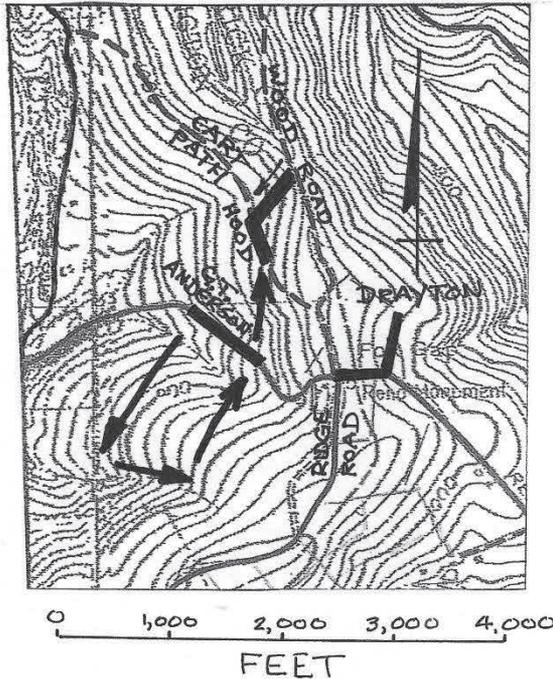
80 Charles A. Cuffel, *Durrell's Battery in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, PA, Craig, Finley, & Co., 1903), 75.

81 Pope, Manuscript Journal Entry September 14, 1862, Manuscript Department, USAHEC, Carlisle, PA; Gottfried, *The Maps Of Antietam*, 53.

In his memoirs, regarding his movement to the right, Hood wrote, “while I advanced I could hear the shouts of the Federals, as they swept down the mountain upon our side.” This statement implies that enemy troops held positions uphill from Hood. In his September 27 report, Hood stated he “succeeded in getting in a position to receive the enemy.” In his history, Coles echoed Hood’s statement, writing that the 4th Alabama “secured a position to meet the advancing enemy.” For argument’s sake, assume Hood used the *Atlas Map* trail and arrived at the intersection with the cart path. Assume again this took place near the position described by both Hood and Coles. This location would place Hood about 300 yards northwest of the Wood Road/cart path fork at the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller’s) Field. Taking such a position would also place Hood’s two brigades on the ground below Fox’s Gap. From the intersection of the trail and cart path, Hood would have been able to hear the noise of the 35th Massachusetts “as they swept down the mountain,” and be in position to “receive” them.⁸²

Returning to the beginning of the Federal assault against Drayton, George T. Anderson’s brigade stood in the Old Sharpsburg Road facing southwest “separated at least 300 yards from General Drayton’s right.” General Ripley ordered him to move into the woods on his front, which he did. “Having moved some distance over the mountainside,” Anderson halted, and “finding that the fire of the enemy was more to my left than front, I changed front forward on the left.” His brigade then advanced southeast “to find the enemy.” Anderson soon received a report that the enemy had turned Drayton’s position and was on his “left and rear.” Consequently, he ordered his brigade “to move by the left flank and recross the road in our original rear.” In other words, Anderson’s brigade made two left turns and ended up moving 180 degrees back in the direction from which it had started. Upon reaching his “original” position, Anderson reformed his line of battle, only to find “the enemy were crossing the road in considerable force on my left flank.” To a Confederate officer like G. T. Anderson who commanded a brigade scarcely above 500 men, a new regiment near full strength (almost 800 men) such as the 35th Massachusetts would seem to be a considerable force. “Seeing this myself,” wrote Anderson in his September 30 report, “I moved by the left diagonally to the rear to intercept them, and at this time found General Hood’s two brigades coming up to support that part

82 Hood, *Advance And Retreat*, 40; OR 19/1:922; Coles, *From Huntsville to Appomattox*, 63.



Hood's and G. T. Anderson's late afternoon movements relative to Drayton's original position. (Stotelmeyer)

of the line.” Anderson reported to Hood for orders and was told to protect his left flank. Anderson’s report thus shows that he met Hood in the general area where the cart path intersected the Wood Road north of the 17th Michigan (Miller’s) Field.”⁸³

George T. Anderson’s brigade was one of three brigades in line on the Old Sharpsburg Road when the Federal assault on Drayton began, the other two brigades were those of Ripley and George B. Anderson. These troops were part of a late afternoon movement ordered by D. H. Hill that was intended to clear Union troops from the Ridge Road crest. This action, incompetently commanded by Ripley, is one of the most confusing parts of the late afternoon/early evening combat at Fox’s Gap. The confusion results partly from two brigades bearing the name of Anderson plus the time and nature of the terrain: twilight and darkness over rugged wooded mountainous slopes.

83 OR 19/1: 908-09. Strength of G. T. Anderson and 35th Massachusetts from Carman, *The Maryland Campaign of September 1862, Vol. II: Antietam*, 2: 580, 589n126.

Confusion resulted also from a muddled chain of command. Colonel William L. DeRosset commanded the 3rd North Carolina Infantry of Ripley's brigade. Due to his "desperate wounds" received at Antietam, DeRosset never filed an official report about either South Mountain or Antietam. However, in postwar correspondence with D. H. Hill, DeRosset described the regiment's part in the action near Fox's Gap. According to this letter, the 3rd North Carolina moved "near the top of the mountain," was ordered "to fall back down the mountain," then moved forward again, "and were supposed to be supporting Drayton." Major Stephen D. Thruston assumed command of the 3rd North Carolina after DeRosset's wounding at Antietam. In his September 27 report, Thruston echoed DeRosset's description, stating that when the 3rd North Carolina moved back up the mountain, it halted at "the top of said mountain. It being now 9 p.m., we rested in this position within 200 yards of the enemy." In his correspondence with D. H. Hill and other postwar writing, DeRosset stated that Ripley directed him to take command of the entire brigade. Therefore, DeRosset left no doubt that not only the 3rd North Carolina, but the entire brigade, moved after nightfall "to the support of General Drayton."⁸⁴

Ripley, in his confusing September 21 report, made no mention of giving DeRosset command of the brigade. However, there are parts of Ripley's report that not only supports DeRosset's claim that the brigade moved to the support of Drayton, but also sheds light on Hood's location near Fox's Gap:

[M]y own brigade pushing forward through dense thickets and up very steep acclivities to outflank the enemy and come into General Drayton's support... had pressed up to within a short distance of the crest of the heights... Soon after, Brigadier General Hood's command came from the main pass, and, forming upon my left, the troops pressed up the road, driving the enemy before them until they occupied their first position and darkness put an end to the operations.⁸⁵

84 William L. DeRosset to D. H. Hill, June 16, 1885, NYPL, Ezra A. Carman Papers, Box 2 Folder 4; DeRosset, "Ripley's Brigade at South Mountain," *Century Magazine*, Vol. 33, 1886, 309; Stephen Decatur Thruston, *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Vol. 3, Serial No.3 (Wilmington, NC, Broadfoot Publishing Company, 1994), 585.

85 OR 19/1:1032.

The question now becomes what road Hood's troops used when they "pressed up" to drive the enemy back to their first position? Assuming the enemy was the 35th Massachusetts and its first position was Fox's Gap, the answer is Lieutenant Pope's cart path. One may reasonably speculate that Hood departed from the Wood Road, obliqued to the right downhill on something similar to the *Atlas Map* Trail, intersected the cart path, and then pressed uphill to the intersection with the Wood Road near the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field.⁸⁶

However, there is no need to speculate further over how Hood arrived at Fox's Gap, because several primary sources, both Union and Confederate, place his division at Fox's Gap. Hood approached the area of Drayton's earlier flank and, as Maryland Campaign historian Ezra A. Carman noted, "came to the stone fence running north from the Wise house." That stone fence was located on the eastern border of the Wood Road with the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field.⁸⁷

As General Hood approached the Wood Road intersection, he observed the same spectacle of thousands of Union troops "drawn up in line of battle" in Wise's Field that greeted Lieutenant Pope and the 35th Massachusetts only a few minutes earlier.⁸⁸ Hood intended to engage the enemy and regain the "lost ground."⁸⁹ The evidence shows that Hood turned to his right in the immediate vicinity of the intersection and moved his division south near the Wood Road, and southwest along the edge of the woods north of the Wise Cabin. Hood ordered G. T. Anderson "to protect his left flank."⁹⁰ This order brought Anderson's Georgians to the edge of the timber bordering the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller's) Field.

Lieutenant Robert Coles, with the 4th Alabama, stated that after securing the position to meet the advancing enemy, Hood's division moved forward

86 Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1:342. In the later part of the twentieth century, before the acquisition of land that allowed it to relocate through Fox's Gap, the Appalachian Trail "obliqued" to the right at the location shown on Map 7 and Map 9. The right turn was located in a depression, or saddle, in the Wood Road. This original location allowed one to move directly downhill without having to move uphill over very rugged and steep terrain first.

87 *Ibid.*

88 Pope, Manuscript Journal Entry September 14, 1862, Manuscript Department, USAHEC, Carlisle, PA.

89 OR 19/1:922.

90 OR 19/1:909

with bayonets fixed, “driving the enemy and regaining all of our lost ground.” He next recalled:

It was now dark and the 4th Alabama, for better protection, was transferred to a sunken road running obliquely across the gap, the enemy still keeping up an incessant firing, inflicting but little damage, as the road afforded good protection. On the embankment next to the enemy was a fence, on the opposite side was a dense laurel thicket. The bullets of the enemy striking the laurel leaves caused a loud report, and created the impression the enemy were firing explosive bullets. During the heaviest part of this night engagement, Colonel McLemore climbed upon the fence in our front to reconnoitre. He soon fell back into the road, shot through the shoulder.

In *Hood's Defeat*, Older claims that Coles was near “Cox’s Intersection” in the Old Sharpsburg Road because, “the only sunken road was Old Sharpsburg Road.” This statement ignores the fact that Wood Road was also a sunken road. There is also nothing inconsistent in Coles’ history with him “driving” the 35th Massachusetts and then moving into Wood Road. Immediately west of the Wood Road intersection, Old Sharpsburg Road makes an abrupt turn northwest. To an observer in the dark, it certainly would have seemed the two roads were not at right angles to each other, especially if the observer was a stranger in a strange land in evening twilight or darkness who had never been there before. A stone fence bordered Wood Road on the east, while thick woods with laurel bushes hemmed in parts of the road to the west. Because the military crest was about 40 yards east, Coles’ account of Colonel McLemore trying to get a better look is also consistent with a location on the Wood Road.

While all of this may seem conjecture, Coles does provide proof of his position in the Wood Road. Specifically, Captain H. L. Scruggs replaced McLemore upon his wounding. The 4th Alabama was running low on ammunition and Scruggs, “went down on our right to the 2nd Mississippi, the nearest regiment, to prevail upon Colonel Stone to divide ammunition with us.”⁹¹

91 Coles, *From Huntsville to Appomattox*, 64; Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 122. Lieutenant Colonel Owen K. McLemore’s wound was mortal. He died on September 30, 1862.

Coles' mention of the 2nd Mississippi Infantry conclusively locates the 4th Alabama on the Wood Road because in a postwar letter to John M. Gould, former Private George W. Bynum of the 2nd Mississippi stated, "[W]e fought at Boonsboro or South Mountain at Wise residence." This is a clear and unambiguous reference to the Wise Cabin at Fox's Gap.⁹²

The 4th Alabama and the 2nd Mississippi belonged to Law's brigade, as did the 6th North Carolina Infantry. A few years after the war, Major Richard W. York, a veteran of the 6th North Carolina wrote an article about General Hood for a publication dedicated to North Carolina history. According to York it was "About nightfall," when Hood "drove back the enemy, and retook some important ground from which we had been driven by the overpowering numbers of the enemy." Major York then described his journey to the battlefield, "Through the woods, over brush, rocks, ravines, and almost every other conceivable obstruction, we reached the scene of Garland's fierce conflict." Even the greenest neophyte student of the Battle of South Mountain should recognize the connection between the name Garland and Fox's Gap.⁹³

Private Andrew J. Baker, with the 11th Mississippi Infantry, another soldier belonging to Law's brigade, also corresponded with John M. Gould after the war. "Proceeding up the west slope of the mountain," wrote Baker, "we met the skirmish line of the federals on top of the mountain." According to Private Baker, "Each of the skirmish lines lay there all night within 50 yards of each other."⁹⁴

Additional evidence appears in a letter from a veteran of the Hampton (South Carolina) Legion in William Wofford's brigade of Hood's division. On September 22, 1862, Sergeant Stephen E. Welch wrote to assure his parents that he was alright because, "Doubtless you have seen by the papers that I am among the wounded of the battle fought in Maryland." Welch briefly described his march back from Hagerstown to Boonsboro and the "top" of South Mountain on "Sunday, the 14th." Welch then stated, "A call was then made for 3 volunteer skirmishers & Brandes, Gelling & I step out. Under one of the Lts. We pushed ahead and on reaching the crest of the mountain we saw a line of bluecoats not 30 yards

92 George W. Bynum to John M. Gould, July 28, 1897, John M. Gould Papers, Dartmouth College, Andover, NH.

93 Richard W. York, "Gen. Hood's Release From Arrest- An Incident of the Battle of Boonsboro," *Our Living And Our Dead*, Vol II March to August, 1875 (Raleigh, NC, S.D. Pool, 1875), 422, Major York incorrectly stated he was at Crampton's Gap, a not uncommon mistake by veterans in their postwar writing.

94 Andrew J. Baker to John M. Gould, June 17, 1897, Regimental Files, ANBL.

from us.” Undoubtedly, the “bluecoats” Welch saw were those of Sturgis’ division holding Fox’s Gap.⁹⁵

Further testimony is provided by several Texas veterans of Wofford’s brigade. “On the 14th of September our army was again in motion,” wrote Private Nicholas Pomeroy with the 5th Texas Infantry. Pomeroy stated that Hood’s division marched “in the lead” of Longstreet’s troops and added that they “had a sharp fight in forcing our way through a pass in South Mountain.” This was echoed by Captain George T. Todd with the 1st Texas Infantry, “[W]e began our return march towards Boonsboro Gap in South Mountains and on evening of 14th we met the enemy on Boonsboro mountain and repulsed him.” The commanding officer of the 1st Texas, Lieutenant Colonel Philip A. Work, corroborated both Pomeroy and Todd. “The Brigade late in the evening ascended...to the crest of the ridge of South Mountain,” stated Work, “in time to repel and drive back a force of the enemy.”⁹⁶

Sunken road, cross road, gap, pass, log house, Wise House, Wise residence, Garland, top of the mountain, crest, summit, and ridge are all terms and names used by veterans of the battle from both Sturgis’ and Hood’s divisions. These descriptions are associated with Fox’s Gap. No doubt, this explains how a courier on the staff of Confederate Colonel Evander M. Law bluntly declared after the war that Hood’s division “held Fox’s Gap, on South Mountain.”⁹⁷ The evidence shows beyond any reasonable doubt that no combatants on either side advanced one half-mile west at the end of the battle and occupied “Cox’s Intersection” at the foot of the mountain.

According to *Hood’s Defeat*, “Nothing in Hood’s account indicated he received orders to move south to reclaim Drayton’s lost ground,” and “[W]e cannot assume that Hood’s objective was to retake the ground lost

95 Stephen E. Welch, *Stephen Elliott Welch of the Hampton Legion*, John Michael Priest ed. (Shippensburg, PA, Burd Street Press, 1994), 5-6. Sergeant Welch was wounded at Antietam at the Hagerstown Turnpike near the Cornfield. Welch’s letter does not mention a stone wall/fence. This implies a clear field of view, and this certainly infers a location at edge of the woods north of the Wise Cabin.

96 Nicholas Pomeroy, “The Memoirs of Nicholas Pomeroy,” Manuscript, Regimental Files, ANBL; George T. Todd, *Sketch of History, The First Texas Regiment, Hood’s Brigade A. N. VA* (Bethesda, MD, University Publications of America, 1990), 10; Philip A. Work, “The 1st Texas Regiment of the Texas Brigade of the Army of Northern Virginia at the Battles of Boonsboro Pass or Gap and Sharpsburg or Antietam,” Manuscript, Regimental Files, ANBL.

97 Rev. J.S. Johnston, “A Reminiscence of Sharpsburg,” *Southern Historical Society Papers* (Volume 8, January to December, 1880), 526-27.

by Drayton.” On the surface this seems reasonable as there is scant information in the historical record regarding Hood’s orders from Longstreet or D. H. Hill. Longstreet simply said that Hood arrived soon after Sturgis’ division came into the fight and added, “The last reinforcement braced the Confederate fight to a successful stand, and held it till after night in hot contest.” In his report, D. H. Hill stated Hood had “gone in at the right.”⁹⁸

Older does raise the possibility that “Perhaps Hood had a chance to discuss the military situation with Longstreet and Hill upon his arrival at Turner’s Gap.” If this is true, and it likely was, then D. H. Hill certainly told Hood about the Old Sharpsburg Road and its potential to allow an enemy force to get over the mountain, move to the rear, and turn the position at Turner’s Gap. It is also likely D. H. Hill mentioned the Wood Road to Hood at this time. In all probability, Hood received verbal orders issued in the heat of the moment that directed him to move to the right to prevent a potential Federal turning movement. This certainly would have meant “getting into a position to receive the enemy,” as Hood phrased it in his report.⁹⁹

It is stated as fact in *Hood’s Defeat* that “Hood had no way of knowing what ground Drayton’s men nor any other Confederates had lost earlier in the battle.” Yet, it will be remembered that Chaplain Davis with the 4th Texas Infantry told us Hood met Drayton as his brigade was leaving Fox’s Gap. In that meeting Hood certainly learned what ground Drayton had lost. Chaplain Davis testified to this also, writing, “[O]ur lines were restored upon the ground which had been lost.” Coles of the 4th Alabama and York of the 6th North Carolina Infantry also echoed this regaining of lost ground in their recollections.¹⁰⁰

In his September 27 report, Hood clearly stated he regained “all of our lost ground.” In his postwar memoir, Hood added, “Night closed in with not only our dead and wounded, together with those of our adversary in our possession, but with the mountain, on the right, within our lines.” The first part of Hood’s postwar statement is consistent with the more contemporary account of 2nd Lieutenant Pope of the 35th Massachusetts.

98 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 96, 121; Longstreet, *From Manassas to Appomattox*, 222; OR 19/1:1021.

99 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 106; OR 19/1:922.

100 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 105; Davis, *Campaign from Texas to Maryland*, 51; OR 19/1:922; Coles, *From Huntsville To Appomattox*, 63; York, “Gen. Hood’s Release From Arrest—An Incident of the Battle of Boonsboro,” *Our Living And Our Dead*, 422.

“The rebels were piled up in the woods pretty thick,” recalled Pope, “We saw a number there who were not dead, and took some prisoners.” Both Hood and Pope provide testimony for Confederate dead and wounded, or “rebel blood” as Pope phrased it.¹⁰¹

Casualty figures for the 35th Massachusetts may be found in the *Official Records*. The recruits of the 35th suffered 63 casualties in their baptism of fire at South Mountain. Of note regarding Hood’s statement is that, in addition to the seven killed and 33 wounded, there were 23 missing from the ranks of the 35th Massachusetts. It is perfectly reasonable to assume that those missing in action may represent the adversary’s dead and wounded mentioned in Hood’s memoir. Hood’s statement about the mountain on the right being within Confederate lines need be no more complicated than a statement regarding his being sent to the Confederate right to prevent an enemy turning movement.¹⁰²

Despite abundant primary sources to the contrary, Older declares it to be a fact that, “Hood never regained any of the Confederates’ lost ground near the Wise Cabin.” However, the Confederates lost no other occupied ground south of the Mountain House during the late afternoon/early evening other than that taken from Drayton’s brigade by the 9th Corps in the vicinity of the Wise Cabin. Once again, there can absolutely be no doubt that Hood’s final attack of the day on September 14, 1862 took place at Fox’s Gap.¹⁰³

One last point of controversy centers on the nature of Hood’s final attack. In his report, Hood maintained that he commanded Wofford and Law “to move forward with bayonets fixed... driving the enemy.” After the war, Hood claimed, “[T]he Federals were driven back pell mell, over and beyond the mountain.” Hood’s postwar statement seems to be corroborated by a more contemporary source in Wofford’s brigade. Lieutenant James L. Lemon with the 18th Georgia Infantry noted in his diary, “On the 14th inst we fought a sharp fight & drove the yanks down the mountain with the bayonet as darkness fell.”¹⁰⁴

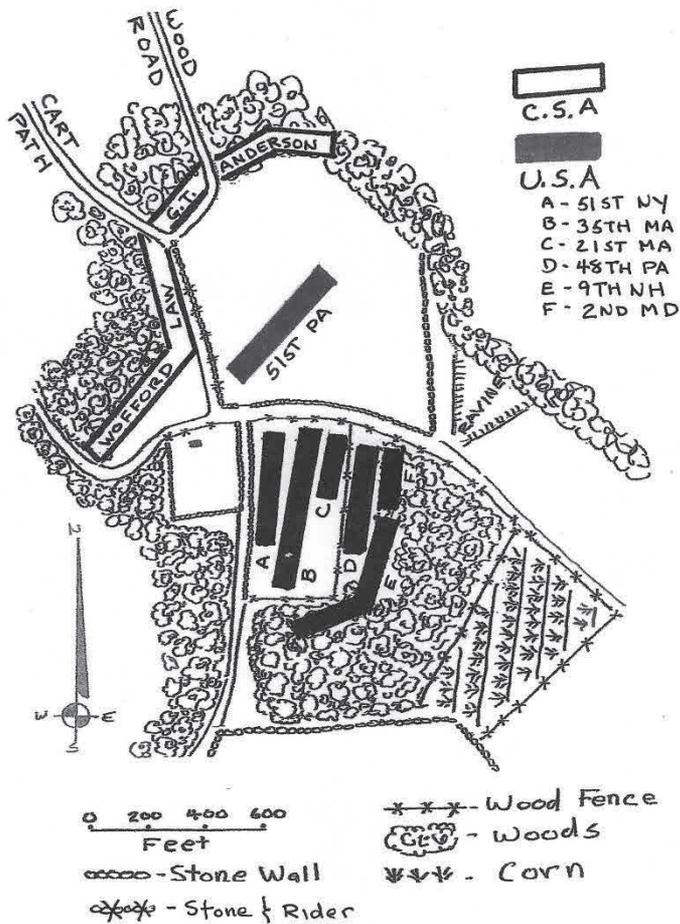
However, this is not corroborated by 9th Corps veterans. “[W]e were opened upon with a tremendous volley of musketry,” wrote Stickney of

101 OR 19/1:922, Hood, *Advance and Retreat*, 41; Pope, Manuscript Journal Entry September 14, 1862, Manuscript Department, USAHEC, Carlisle, PA.

102 OR 19/1:187.

103 Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 113.

104 OR 19/1:443, 922; Hood, *Advance And Retreat*, 40-41; James L. Lemon, Manuscript Diary Entry September 18, 1862, Regimental Files, ANBL.



Map 10

Final positions of Hood and Sturgis at the close of day. (Stotemyer)

the 35th Massachusetts. While many 9th Corps veterans mention volleys of musketry coming from the woods opposite the Wise Cabin at the close of day, they are noticeably quiet about enemy bayonet charges. First, the fixing of bayonets preparatory to infantry assaults was a common practice on both sides in the Civil War and as such, probably did not warrant

special mention by Union soldiers. Secondly, a reason for Hood's and his soldiers' perceptions that the Federals were being driven down the mountain, especially in the dim light of sunset, may easily be found by their perspective on the mountain crest at Fox's Gap. As we have seen, several Union regiments, such as the 21st Massachusetts and the 48th Pennsylvania, sought shelter in the woods and cornfield east of Wise's Field. Since these locations were at a lower elevation than the military crest at the Wood Road, the Confederate perception that the Yankees were fleeing "down the mountain" as Lieutenant Lemon noted in his diary, was a direct result stemming from their elevated position. This controversy proves to be yet another piece of evidence showing that Hood was not at the foot of the mountain.¹⁰⁵

Hood's troops did not drive the 9th Corps from Fox's Gap. As Jacob D. Cox wrote to his wife on September 16, "They made several strong efforts to retake the crest, but I was well supported by the divisions of the corps, and after an all day fight, lasting till ten o'clock at night, we were completely victorious, the enemy retiring hastily leaving us in possession of the field." A few days afterwards, in his report, Cox stated:

"The enemy made several attempts to retake the crest... About 7 o'clock still another effort to regain the lost ground was made by the rebels in front of the position of General Sturgis' division... This attack was more persistent, and a very lively fire was kept up for about an hour, but they were again repulsed, and, under cover of night retreated from our entire front."¹⁰⁶

It is a mainstay of the historical record that the soldiers in Willcox's and Sturgis' divisions slept on their arms the night of September 14, on ground at Fox's Gap they had taken earlier in the afternoon. It may have seemed to Hood that he drove the 35th Massachusetts back to Fox's Gap, but he certainly did not drive the 9th Corps "over and beyond the mountain." As Sturgis noted in his report, "[O]ur valiant troops slept on the ground and on their arms." General D. H. Hill knew this to be true and he took Hood to task on the subject after the war. "Both Generals Burnside and Willcox say that the fight was continued until 10 o'clock at night," wrote Hill,

105 Stickney to Parents, September 28, 1862, John Clinton Frye Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

106 Cox, *Dearest Lilla: Letters Home From Civil War General Jacob D. Cox* (Knoxville, TN, The University of Tennessee Press, 2023), 86; OR 19/1:459-60.

“Hood was mistaken then, in thinking that he had driven back the Federal advance.”¹⁰⁷

The engagement at the close of day at Fox’s Gap was somewhat unique in that darkness did not bring an end to the combat. Sunset on September 14, 1862, occurred at 6:11 p.m. According to Jacob D. Cox, in his letter to his wife and his report, there was combat in the dark between 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Given the accuracy of Civil War timekeeping, this is corroborated more or less by Lieutenant Stickney of the 35th Massachusetts, “The fighting now became fearful. Darkness had come on and...the firing was incessant for nearly two hours.”¹⁰⁸

According to Brigadier General Willcox:

Tattoo had sounded about 8 1/2 o’clock that night and so dark that from my horse’s back I could scarcely discern the men squatting in groups on the ground, when all at once there came a roar and blaze of musketry... I shouted, “Steady boys, fire at the blaze.” Fortunately I had not lost my head, and the bullets were whistling around me and above the men who... began pegging away, and the attack was miraculously repulsed... Although the bullets came like a hailstorm.¹⁰⁹

Although Colonel G. T. Anderson wrote that his men “were not engaged in the fight,” he did also admit there were casualties. This seeming contradiction stems from the fact that G. T. Anderson’s brigade was not actively engaged in the late afternoon movement ordered by D. H. Hill or Hood’s alleged bayonet charge. However, after meeting Hood and taking position on his left flank, G. T. Anderson’s soldiers were engaged in the darkness and were suffering casualties. While historian Ezra A. Carman stated that G. T. Anderson informed him “his loss...was six or seven men wounded and missing,” a soldier with the 1st Georgia Regulars stated,

107 Hill, “The Battle Of South Mountain, Or Boonsboro,” *B&L*, 571. In his report (OR 19/1:1021) Hill stated, “Hood...drove back the Yankees.” However, there is no mention in Hill’s report about Hood driving the enemy over and beyond Fox’s Gap.

108 Joseph L. Harsh, *Sounding the Shadows, A Confederate Companion for the Maryland Campaign of 1862* (Kent, OH, The Kent State University Press, 2000), 16; Cox, *Dearest Lilla: Letters Home From Civil War General Jacob D. Cox*, 86; OR 19/1:460; Stickney to Parents, September 28, 1862, John Clinton Frye Western Maryland Room, Washington County Free Library, Hagerstown, MD.

109 Willcox, *Forgotten Valor: The Memoirs, Journals, & Civil War Letters of Orlando B. Willcox*, 356.

“The regiment went into the battle...with 85 men; and lost 7.” Since the 1st Georgia was only one of the four regiments of Anderson’s brigade engaged, this implies total brigade losses may have been higher.¹¹⁰

Regarding the night-time combat, Sergeant William H. Andrews with the 1st Georgia recalled, “Sometime after dark Lieutenant F. B. Palmer of my company was wounded in the hand and I went with him back through the gap in search of a surgeon.” The “gap” mentioned by Andrews was Turner’s Gap. It was the same location upon which the regiment had a few days earlier “passed through the Blue Ridge...to Boonsboro.” As we have seen, G. T. Anderson was on Hood’s left, and this placed them at the northern end of the 17th Michigan (Miller’s) Field. Anderson’s troops were familiar with Wood Road as that was their route from Turner’s Gap to Fox’s Gap earlier that afternoon. It makes perfect sense for Sergeant Andrews to have used that same route back to Turner’s Gap in search of a surgeon for his wounded comrade.¹¹¹

It also makes sense for G. T. Anderson’s brigade to have used the same road back when the time came to withdraw from Fox’s Gap. In *Hood’s Defeat*, Older acknowledges this possibility, “[T]roops under G. T. Anderson were aware of Wood Road and may have retreated along a part of that road during the Confederate night retreat.” However, when the time came to withdraw in the dark, Hood’s troops sought different routes. “When the order did come for us to retire about midnight,” wrote Lieutenant Coles with the 4th Alabama Infantry, “the men...were ordered to go quietly one at a time down to the main road.” According to Private Baker with the 11th Mississippi Infantry, “[W]e moved quietly, in fact noiselessly to the left, reaching the Pike just about halfway down the mountain on the west side.” Lieutenant Colonel Work, commanding the 1st Texas Infantry reported, “We continued to occupy this position until a late hour of the night, when we were withdrawn to the valley below and to the turnpike road.” Obviously, *down*, *halfway down*, and *valley below*

110 OR 19/1:909; Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1:377n74; “1st Georgia Regulars,” *Columbus Daily Enquirer*, Columbus, GA, October 3, 1862. The 11th Georgia Infantry was left in Hagerstown to assist Longstreet’s wagon train. This left G. T. Anderson with four infantry regiments at South Mountain. See OR 19/1:885.

111 William H. Andrews, “Tige Anderson’s Brigade Ap Crompton’s Gap [*sic*],” *Atlanta Journal*, Atlanta, GA, July 27, 1907. Andrews (or the editor of the *Journal*) included typos and misspellings in the title. As with other Confederates, Turner’s Gap was misidentified as Crampton’s Gap.

describes movement from a *crest, ridge, or summit*, and not from the foot of the mountain.¹¹²

In his Maryland Campaign history, Ezra A. Carman stated, “Hood’s two brigades and G. T. Anderson withdrew from Fox’s Gap about 1 a.m. of the 15th.” Yet, because he thinks that “Hood’s two brigades were not within a quarter-mile of Fox’s Gap,” Older specifically warns readers that “We must be cautious in evaluating this statement by Carman.” There are several other occasions in *Hood’s Defeat* when Older questions Carman’s veracity. He claims, for example, that Carman displays a “lack of knowledge,” because he cites no sources and/or presents no evidence. Older’s major reason for doubting Carman regarding Fox’s Gap is that “Ezra Carman, an Antietam historian, was himself not a primary source of evidence.”¹¹³

First, many historians in the nineteenth century did not document sources as do modern historians. It simply was not the literary practice of the day. Second, while it is true that Colonel Ezra A. Carman commanded the 13th New Jersey Infantry at Antietam, to call him an “Antietam historian” is somewhat shortsighted. Carman was a Maryland Campaign historian. He wrote an 1,800-page manuscript on the Maryland Campaign of 1862. He served as a member of the Antietam Cemetery board and was appointed to the War Department’s Antietam Battlefield Board in 1894. He was primarily responsible for writing the cast iron tablets explaining troop positions and actions at both Antietam and South Mountain. To facilitate this immense responsibility and to ensure his text on the tablets was correct, Carman walked the battlefield and corresponded with veterans of both sides. After receiving nearly 2,000 letters from veterans of the campaign, Carman’s friend and fellow historian John M. Gould gave him access to more than 1,000 additional letters. If one adds to this the *Official Records*, postwar regimental histories, publications, and memoirs, it demonstrates that Ezra A. Carman had access to a staggering amount of primary firsthand material. Therefore, while Carman himself may not be a primary source for areas of the campaign other than Miller’s cornfield,

112 Older, *Hood’s Defeat*, 84; Coles, Jr., *From Huntsville To Appomattox*, R.T. Cole’s *History Of 4th Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry*, 64; Baker to John M. Gould, June 17, 1897, Regimental Files, ANBL; Work, “The 1st Texas Regiment of the Texas Brigade of the Army of Northern Virginia at the Battles of Boonsboro Pass or Gap and Sharpsburg or Antietam,” Manuscript, Regimental Files, ANBL.

113 Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1:389; Older, *Hood’s Defeat Near Fox’s Gap*, 106, 118, 127, 128, 129, 148.

his cast iron tablets are considered primary sources in scholastic research and academic writing.¹¹⁴

Carman was intimately familiar with Fox's Gap. In 1896, the Antietam Battlefield Board submitted an estimated budget to Congress which included not only a "Cannon Ball monument to Gen. Reno," but also 32 "Federal and Confederate" cast iron tablets at both Turner's and Fox's Gap.¹¹⁵ Sometime around 1897 Carman was endeavoring to place a monument at Fox's Gap dedicated to Confederate General Samuel Garland. This would certainly indicate walking the ground, perhaps with Confederate veterans, to choose a site for both the tablets and monument. The location he chose for the Garland monument was situated on land owned by Madeline V. Dahlgren, and she politely refused to have it placed there, writing,

Your letter of June 14 is received, wishing to know if I will give the government permission to erect on my property at Fox's Gap a memorial to General Garland, C.S.A. With thanks for your courtesy, I regret I have to say that I can never willingly consent that such a marker be erected on property owned by me.¹¹⁶

In 1899, Carman corresponded with John Purifoy regarding the location of Bondurant's Battery at Fox's Gap. "I judge that the last position held by the battery is," wrote Purifoy, "where the Confederate battery is shown in the map, where Hood's brigade is." This shows that not only was Carman in correspondence with Confederate veterans concerning Fox's Gap, but that he also had a working map showing Hood's position there as well. Carman was not infallible. He made minor mistakes, but he was seldom flat out wrong regarding unit placements and actions. Most of his writing is based on the observations of fellow veterans. If Carman placed Hood at Fox's Gap, it is certain he had valid primary sources backing it up.¹¹⁷

114 Ted Alexander and Thomas G. Clemens, in Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1: vii-x.

115 Charles W. Snell and Sharon A. Brown, *Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery, Sharpsburg, Maryland, An Administrative History* (Washington, DC, U.S. Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1986), 103-04. Obviously, the plan was never implemented as only six cast iron tablets were placed at Turner's Gap.

116 Madeline Vinton Dahlgren to General E.A. Carman, June 16, 1897, NYPL, Ezra A. Carman Papers, Box2, Folder 4.

117 Purifoy to Carman, July 21, 1900, NARA RG 94 Antietam Studies Box 2.

Jacob D. Cox and Ezra A. Carman were not strangers. For a time after the war, Cox was Secretary of the Interior during the Grant Administration, and Carman was working for the Agriculture Department under Cox's leadership. Sources show that both men walked the battlefield of Antietam, and most likely South Mountain as well. One of Carman's minor foibles in his Maryland Campaign manuscript was that he seemed to assume that Cox's views were entirely correct. Therefore, if Cox told or wrote to Carman about Sturgis and Hood ending the day's combat on September 14 at "Cox's Intersection," as Older incorrectly conjectures they did from Cox's postwar memoirs, one would expect to see it reflected in Carman's manuscript; however, we do not. Just the opposite appears to be true. Cox's postwar correspondence with Carman is part of the historical record placing Sturgis and Hood at Fox's Gap.¹¹⁸

Correcting history that is clearly incorrect, faulty or biased is one thing. Completely rewriting history whole cloth based on an erroneous interpretation of a postwar statement made by Jacob D. Cox 38 years after the event is quite another. The last combat of the day at Fox's Gap on September 14, 1862, involved Sturgis' and Hood's divisions, just as the veterans and respected historians of the event have always told us. "Cox's Intersection" as a site of combat on the battlefield of South Mountain exists only in the pages of *Hood's Defeat* and nowhere else in the 160 plus years of the historical record.

In the final analysis, Chaplain George G. Smith with the Philips Georgia Legion of Drayton's brigade, did indeed provide the most succinct statement regarding the up to now non-existent controversy, "As we came out Hood's division went in."¹¹⁹

118 Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue* (Baton Rouge, LA, Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 97-98; Clemens, in Carman, *The Maryland Campaign*, 1:409n21; Older, *Hood's Defeat Near Fox's Gap*, 19; Cox to Carman, January 22, 1897, NYPL, Ezra A. Carman Papers, Box 2 Folder 4.

119 Smith, "A Fighting Chaplain," *Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes*, 149.

Mystery and Murder at Antietam by Tom and Colleen McMillan

No one knows if Civil War cemeteries are haunted by spirits and ghosts, but one thing is certain: The lodge at the Antietam National Cemetery is haunted by mystery.

The story of the lodge and some of its early occupants teem with cold-blooded killing, illicit affairs, inner-family squabbles, court proceedings, threats of violence, and a dizzying series of extended small-town connections that seem too bizarre to believe. A cemetery superintendent was accused of infidelity that led to murder. A battlefield superintendent was killed in a clash with a member of the same family. Civil War veterans were drawn into the controversies by seemingly petty personal feuds. Also involved, at least tangentially, are the Burnside Bridge, the William McKinley monument, the road from the bridge to the monument, and a twentieth-century descendant of the star-crossed Benner family with the remarkable name of John Burnside Benner.

The facts are these: On July 27, 1879, Ida Estelle (Marmaduke) Benner shot and killed her husband, Thomas, in the sitting room of the Antietam National Cemetery lodge, where they were tenants. Thomas Benner worked as a laborer for cemetery superintendent George A. Haverfield, and Benner had accused his wife of having an affair with Haverfield, who also lived at the lodge.¹

More than thirty years later, on June 6, 1912, Charles Benner, one of Thomas's siblings, shot and killed Antietam National Battlefield superintendent Charles W. Adams while Adams was walking along the road to the Burnside Bridge. News reports about the murder indicate Benner had been threatening Adams in a dispute related to the McKinley monument, a veteran of the 23rd Ohio, on the hill above the bridge. John Benner, father of the Benner brothers, sold the land and right-of-way access to the government in 1902.

The mind-boggling Adams murder scene, as reported by an eyewitness, was worthy of a modern-day Hollywood thriller. Staggering but still alive after being struck by several bullets, Adams pleaded, "Don't shoot me again, Charlie," but Benner had an "uncontrollable

1 "Man Shot By Wife," *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, MD), July 30 1879, 2; "Out on Habeas Corpus," *The Herald and Torch Light*, August 6, 1879, 2.

temper” and continued firing until Adams, a Civil War veteran, fell mortally wounded. He died within an hour. A still-raging Benner then looked for other targets. Finding none, he returned to his house “at the edge of town” in Sharpsburg and took his own life.²

* * *

Work on a new Antietam National Cemetery was well underway in June 1867 when the cemetery board appointed an executive committee to “procure designs for a Lodge House,” with the understanding that “said Keeper’s Lodge” would be completed and ready for occupancy by November 1, 1867.

The architect chosen was Paul J. Pelz. According to records at the National Archives which were obtained for a National Park Service study in 1986:

His commission at Antietam, a H-story residence with a tall square tower, was in the castellated ‘Gothic style’ and was the only lodge of its kind to be erected in a national cemetery. Constructed of native limestone, the six-room house had three rooms, including the cemetery office, on the first floor and three more rooms on the second. There was a partial cellar under the kitchen entry, and tower. The gable roof and its four dormers were covered with slate.³

Little did anyone know that the lodge at such a solemn, respectful cemetery would become a relentless source of mystery and intrigue.

The drama began in April 1879 when George A. Haverfield was hired to replace the original “keeper,” Hiram H. Siess, due to a technicality. The United States War Department required that superintendents be “honorably discharged disabled soldiers of the United States,” and although Siess had served three years as a sergeant in the 1st Maryland Regiment, Potomac Home Brigade, he was never listed as wounded; his claim of suffering from “a severe case of hemorrhoids” did not appease

2 “Foul Murder in Sharpsburg: Charles W. Adams Killed by Charles H. Benner, Who Commits Suicide,” *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2.

3 Charles W. Snell and Sharon A. Brown, “Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History, *National Park Service*, 17-18, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>.

department officials. Haverfield, by contrast, *was* qualified. He fought with the 126th Ohio and suffered legitimately “severe” wounds at the Battle of Cedar Creek in 1864, leading to the amputation of his right leg. He also had relevant experience, having worked as superintendent at Fort McPherson National Cemetery in Nebraska since 1876.⁴

What War Department officials did not know was that Haverfield had a sketchy past. Prior to his stint at Fort McPherson, he bought and operated the Central Hotel in Cadiz, Ohio, making extensive renovations until he was accused of multiple incidents of forgery, illegally using the names of his father and brothers. A local newspaper reported on November 18, 1875 that Haverfield “suddenly disappeared” and was last seen “on the train going west”—no doubt heading to Nebraska. He talked up his Civil War service and was hired at Fort McPherson on May 4, 1876, qualifying easily because of his wooden leg. His mortified wife, who was left behind in Ohio (and, as an aside, never joined him in Sharpsburg), made arrangements to repay the forgery victims by executing a deed to the hotel property.⁵

It was only a few days after reaching Antietam National Cemetery in April 1879 that Haverfield hired Thomas Benner, a 28-year-old Sharpsburg native, as a cemetery laborer. Thomas had married 16-year-old Ida Estelle Marmaduke just eight months earlier, and, as much for convenience as anything else, the couple took up residence in the lodge house, where Haverfield, as superintendent, also lived. (One of the astonishing quirks of fate is that Ida was born in Sharpsburg on September 17, 1862, literally *during* the Battle of Antietam).

The marriage was rocky from the start—it was opposed in advance by Ida’s parents—and the living arrangement only added to the tension. It was not long after the Benners moved in that Thomas accused her of “criminal intimacy” with Haverfield. The couple quarreled often, and at one point, after she forgot to wash a pair of his overalls, Thomas said she “should have a good whipping, and it would make her a better

4 Ibid., 45, 47-48; *The North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune* (North Platte, NB), September 2, 1910, 8; Wallace Taylor, “A Genealogy and Brief History of the Haverfield Family of the United States,” 264-265, <https://www.seekingmyroots.com/members/files/G003466.pdf>.

5 “Heavy Forgeries at Cadiz,” *The Stark County Democrat* (Canton, OH), November 18, 1875, 1; *The North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune* (North Platte, NB), September 2, 1910, 8.

woman.” He also threw a stick of wood at her, hitting her in the side and causing her, as Haverfield recalled, to miss meals for several days.⁶

On Sunday morning, July 29, barely three months after Haverfield’s arrival, Ida Benner later testified that she came downstairs at the lodge and saw her husband laying on the floor. “The moment he saw me, he commenced cursing and abusing me fearful,” she recalled. “He said, ‘Ida, if you don’t confess that Lieutenant Haverfield has the advantage of you, I’ll kill you.’ I said, ‘Tom, I have nothing to confess. I am as innocent of this accusation as the angels.’ He immediately left the room.”

Ida said that Benner returned with a two-foot-long piece of wood in one hand and a black-handled knife in the other. She walked slowly to a corner of the room where they kept a gun, a rusty carbine, and “I saw from his face that he was going to kill me. He said, ‘if you do not confess, I will kill you.’ I told him I had nothing to confess.” Terrified, she grabbed the gun and warned him not to raise his knife. When he refused to comply, she pulled the trigger and hit him from close range, making a hole in his left breast “about the size of a hen’s egg.” One news account said he “fell upon his face weltering in his blood, which flowed out in a pool about him,” and died less than a minute after the shooting.⁷

Ida Benner, now 17, was arrested by Constable John R. Poffenberger and taken to Hagerstown for initial detention. Her attorney was Henry Kyd Douglas of nearby Shepherdstown, a former Confederate officer who famously rode with Stonewall Jackson. After obtaining a writ of habeas corpus, Douglas said he would not offer testimony to disprove the shooting but merely wanted to fix bail before a hearing. The Sharpsburg community was sympathetic to Mrs. Benner, and a grand jury in November chose not to indict her, ruling that “the killing was one of self-defense.”⁸

Shortly thereafter, on December 13 she gave birth to a son, James Douglas Benner, meaning that she was several months pregnant at the time of the murder—a fact that, astoundingly, was not mentioned in

6 “The Sharpsburg Tragedy,” *Public Weekly Opinion* (Chambersburg, PA), August 9, 1879, 1

7 *Ibid.*; “Man Shot By Wife,” *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, MD), July 30 1879, 2.

8 *Shepherdstown Register*, November 29, 1879, 3; “Man Shot By Wife,” *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, MD), July 30 1879, 2.

contemporary news reports. The identity of the father was never revealed. The young man eventually took the surname of his stepfather, Edward Fisher, whom Ida married in 1889, and was known through life as J. Douglas Fisher.⁹

Haverfield testified at the hearing, supporting Ida's story while denying romantic involvement, and continued to serve at Antietam until March 1880, when he left for a similar position in Natchez, Mississippi.¹⁰

Thomas Benner was buried at Mountain View Cemetery in Sharpsburg, directly across the road from the site of his murder. A jury that held an inquest into his death included members of the Piper and Mumma families—interesting enough, given their connection to the battle—but also Charles W. Adams, an upstanding local citizen and Civil War veteran who would one day become superintendent of Antietam National Battlefield.¹¹

* * *

The period following Thomas's death was difficult for members of the Benner family—the parents, John and Eliza, and two adult children, Charles and Ida Frances—but they soon resumed their normal lives in Sharpsburg.¹²

John Benner was an innkeeper in town and had acquired substantial farmland over the years. Various census reports listed his occupations as shoemaker, day laborer, farmer, and, by 1880, “retired farmer.” Shortly after the Battle of Antietam, he aggressively expanded his holdings by buying land from the Rohrbach, Mumma and Sherrick families in the vicinity of the creek and the Burnside Bridge. The Benners also owned

9 1880 U.S. Census for Sharpsburg, Washington County, Maryland (Ida E. Benner). James D. Benner is listed as being 5 ½ months old when the census was taken in June; <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/167556102/douglass-fisher>.

10 Snell and Brown, “Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History, *National Park Service*, 48, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>; Taylor, “A Genealogy and Brief History of the Haverfield Family of the United States,” 265, <https://www.seekingmyroots.com/members/files/G003466.pdf>.

11 “Man Shot By Wife,” *The Herald and Torch Light* (Hagerstown, Md.), July 30 1879, 2.

12 Charles and Thomas Benner were born to John and his first wife, Susan, who died in 1861. Ida Frances was the daughter of John and his second wife, Eliza.

multiple lots and buildings on Antietam, Mechanic and Chapline Streets.¹³

Happy news arrived on August 8, 1899 when Charles Benner's wife, Clara, gave birth to a son, named John Burnside Benner—in honor of both his grandfather and the Civil War general made famous at Antietam. Perhaps, it seemed, the family's luck had finally turned.¹⁴

But fate intervened in a most unexpected way on September 14, 1901 when President William McKinley, a veteran of the Battle of Antietam, died from an assassin's bullet in Buffalo, New York. Fellow veterans from Ohio wanted to honor him with a monument at Antietam, ideally near the Burnside Bridge, where a 19-year-old McKinley served as commissary sergeant, taking coffee and warm food “to every man in the regiment” while under fire.¹⁵ Most battlefield land was in private hands at the time, but McKinley's backers received good news on October 15, 1902, when elderly John Benner agreed to sell a 900-square-foot plot for the monument and a 16 foot right-of-way leading up from the bridge. This was part of the land he purchased from Henry C. Mumma back in 1863. According to the deed, it was transferred to the United States government “in consideration of three hundred dollars, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged” by Benner and his wife.¹⁶

Benner was 81 years old at the time and signed the deed with an “X,” perhaps because he was enfeebled (multiple census reports indicated that he was literate). He died early in 1907 of “general debility.”¹⁷

13 “John Benner” (obituary), *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1907, 10; Land Record of Washington County. Liber No. 118, folio 14; “The Farmsteads of Antietam—The Joseph Sherrick Farm,” Jacob Rohrbach Inn, <https://jacob-rohrbach-inn.com/blog/2020/04/the-farmsteads-of-antietam-the-joseph-sherrick-farm/>; various sequential U.S. Census reports for Sharpsburg, Washington County, Maryland (1850, 1860, 1870, 1880).

14 1890 U.S. Census for Sharpsburg, Washington, Maryland; U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-18, for John Burnside Benner, <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/1020233:6482> (lists date of birth).

15 “Presidents in the Making, Buckeyes in the Heat of Battle,” American Battlefield Trust, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/head-tilting-history/presidents-making-buckeyes-heat-battle>; William McKinley monument at Antietam National Battlefield, National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/anti/learn/historyculture/mnt-mckinley.htm>.

16 Land Record of Washington County. Liber No. 118, folio 14.

17 *Ibid.*; “John Benner” (obituary), *Baltimore Sun*, February 18, 1907, 10. Multiple accounts referenced a 1931 interview with Benner's granddaughter, who said he was illiterate, but there are no records to confirm that. He was paralyzed several years

* * *

It was about the time of John Benner's death that relations with officials at Antietam National Battlefield began to cool. The Benner family, led by Charles, claimed that money for the land had never been paid, even after the monument to President McKinley was built and dedicated in 1903.

Charles soon was at odds with the battlefield's first superintendent, Charles Adams. Not only did Adams terminate Benner's employment as a battlefield laborer, sparking tension, but he served as an executor of John Benner's will. It was rumored around town that "Mr. Adams displeased the man, who wanted a greater share of [his father's] estate than the court would allow."¹⁸

Charles Adams was a native of Washington County, Maryland, and a distinguished long-time resident of Sharpsburg. He served in the Civil War with Alexander's Battery, Baltimore Light Artillery and was severely wounded in the knee at Winchester in June 1863. Adams ran a mercantile business in Sharpsburg after the war, was active in local politics, served as county tax collector, owned a pro- Republican newspaper, *The Herald and Torch Light*, and was appointed doorkeeper of the United States House of Representatives for two years (1889-1891). He was hired for the newly-created position of superintendent of Antietam National Battlefield on June 14, 1900.¹⁹

This is not to say that all was rosy for a man called "Sharpsburg's most prominent citizen." There were hard feelings and occasional feuds over politics, and he ruffled feathers as a demanding boss with a penchant for details. On May 24, 1905, it was formally recommended "that Charles W. Adams, the present superintendent ... be discharged at the end of the month, and that Gen. E. A. Carman be made superintendent in his place." Ezra Carman, of course, had served on the Antietam National Cemetery Association Board from 1866 to 1877 as a "historical expert,"

before his death and likely was suffering physically when the land was sold. She also claimed the family had been owed \$750.

18 "Foul Murder in Sharpsburg," *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2.

19 Ibid.; 1870 and 1880 U. S. Census reports for Sharpsburg, Washington County, Maryland; Snell and Brown, "Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History," *National Park Service*, 117, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>.

and as a member of the War Department's board for the Antietam National Battlefield Site from 1895 to 1897; he held substantial political power. But United States Secretary of War William Howard Taft overruled the decision and reinstated Adams as superintendent on May 31.²⁰

It was over the next several years that Charles Benner, now living on Antietam Street, became a problem—not just for Adams, but for other Sharpsburg residents and even members of his own family. Like his late brother, Thomas, he displayed a boiling temper and did not shy away from verbal taunts or physical violence. As far back as 1896, during a scrape involving alcohol at the City Hotel in Sharpsburg, Charles pulled his gun and shot canal boatman Clinton Swain twice in the leg, inflicting minor wounds. (Swain was the aggressor, however, and had at one point knocked Benner to the ground, so a judge, after hearing testimony, dismissed the charges).²¹

An even more disturbing incident took place on March 20, 1909, when Charles quarreled with and attacked his brother-in-law, Mathias Spong, another Civil War veteran. Spong had served with the 1st Maryland Infantry, Potomac Home Brigade and was taken prisoner by Confederate troops at Harpers Ferry, two days before the Battle of Antietam. The altercation grew out of yet another dispute over John Benner's estate, with Charles feeling he did not receive as much property as he deserved. Spong was arrested after firing four shots, two of them hitting Charles in the hip and arm. He claimed self-defense, noting that Charles had charged and choked him until his "tongue hung out."

The *Shepherdstown Register* reported that "public sympathy seems to be with Spong, who is a crippled man and a Civil War veteran," while adding that "about ten years ago, Benner shot and badly wounded Clinton Swain in a rumpus at a hotel in Sharpsburg." Another paper said that Swain had "nearly died" as a result. Those incorrect statements about the severity of the wounds likely stemmed from Benner's

20 Snell and Brown, "Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History, *National Park Service*, 118, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>.

21 "Shooting Scrape at Sharpsburg," *Shepherdstown Register*, December 24, 1896, 3; "Charge Dismissed," *Baltimore Sun*, December 28, 1896, 6.

increasingly sullied reputation, because 1896 news accounts referenced only slight injuries to Swain.²²

Spong was tried before a jury and acquitted on May 21, as predicted. Forty witnesses testified, and among those siding with Spong—and against Benner—were Charles Adams and one of Spong’s neighbors, Jacob McGraw. A later report said Benner “frequently made threats” against Adams, Spong, and McGraw, declaring that “he would ‘get them’ some time,” although “comparatively little attention was paid to him.” But Benner continued to stew about perceived injustice as time went on.²³

This all came to a head on the morning of June 6, 1912, as the superintendent, now 69 years old, was walking along “the road leading from town to Burnside’s bridge” to supervise some road work. A local resident named Charles F. Gross was working at a farm along the route and said Adams spoke to him pleasantly as he passed. Gross became concerned only when he spotted 60-year-old Charles Benner walking briskly, almost at a light trot, trying to catch up and overtake Adams. It was well-known in town that Benner “caused the superintendent ... much trouble from the time of constructing the road” from the bridge to the monument, and that Adams had testified against Benner in the 1909 Spong trial.

Benner barely acknowledged Gross, addressing him “curtly” as he brushed by. The witness noticed that one of Benner’s arms “was swinging as he walked” but the other “was held closely to his side.” Unaware of any danger, Adams “calmly walked along the road, with the

22 “Sharpsburg Shooting,” *The Cumberland (MD) Times*, March 22, 1909, 1; “A Shooting at Sharpsburg,” *Shepherdstown Register*, March 25, 1909, 3; “Jury Acquits Old Soldier: Mathias Spong Freed from Charge of Shooting Brother-in-Law,” *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1909, 3; “William Bauman and Cindy Spong, “Mathias Spong Family History,” C & O Canal Association, <https://candocanal.org/histdocs/Spong-Family-History.pdf>, 8, 11, 17-18. After the 1st Maryland’s enlistments ran out in 1864, re-enlisting veterans became part of the 13th Maryland, which is the regiment referenced in the family history. Mathias served throughout the war although frequently was away without leave.

23 “Foul Murder in Sharpsburg,” *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2; “Jury Acquits Old Soldier: Mathias Spong Freed from Charge of Shooting Brother-in-Law,” *The Washington Post*, May 21, 1909, 3.

green fields on either side, the birds singing in the trees along the way, and the sun smiling in radiance on the scene.”²⁴

Benner then strode within 15 feet of Adams and shot him in the back.

According to an account Gross gave to the *Shepherdstown Register*, Adams stumbled down a slight bank, keeping himself upright only by clinging to a fence. Benner drew closer and fired three more times, striking him in the back and side. Bleeding profusely, Adams managed to stagger toward the roadway, pleading “don’t shoot me again, Charlie, you have done enough already,” but Benner was unrepentant and continued to point his gun. “You tried to ruin me in the Hagerstown courts,” he bellowed, “and I’m going to give you plenty now.”²⁵

Adams saw Gross standing nearby and cried out, “For God’s sake, come and help me,” but when Gross approached the two men, Benner spun and pointed a second pistol at *him*. “Let me be,” Benner snapped, “or I will give you what I have given Adams.” Mercilessly, he fired even more bullets into the superintendent, hitting him a total of 11 times.

Adams remained conscious for a few minutes, lamenting that his wife, Margaret, would have to see such a horrid sight. “I know that this is my end,” he muttered softly, weakly, to Gross. “It is hard to die by the act of such a scoundrel as Benner.” The superintendent slipped into a coma and died within the hour from massive “internal hemorrhages,” according to his son-in-law, Dr. E. M. Garrott, who had rushed to his aid in vain.²⁶

Benner fled the scene while others attended to Adams, but he was not finished with his planned shooting spree. He hunted for Spong and McGraw, “against both of whom he had a grudge, and whom it is believed he meant to also kill,” but, fortunately, neither could be found. Benner then returned home, telling his wife, Clara, and twelve-year-old son, John Burnside Benner, that he had shot Adams and soon would be sought by local authorities. “Shocked and horrified at his crime, and

24 “Foul Murder in Sharpsburg,” *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2; Snell and Brown, “Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History,” *National Park Service*, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>, 123-24.

25 In its June 13 publication, referenced throughout, the *Register* reported that Gross gave “a clear and intelligent account of the affair soon after it had taken place.” Most of the remaining details also come from the *Register’s* report, which appeared exactly a week after the shooting.

26 “Foul Murder in Sharpsburg,” *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2; Charles W. Adams Civil War Pension File, National Archives.

further alarmed by his threats,” the *Register* reported, “Mrs. Benner and her son were in a pitiable state of grief and excitement. When Benner left the house, they locked themselves in.”

He retreated to an outbuilding on the property that served as a summer kitchen. A growing group of concerned citizens gathered nearby, waiting nervously, until they heard a single, haunting gunshot ring out. Benner was found moments later in a pool of his own blood, slumped near a chair with a bullet hole above the eye, having ended the terrible carnage in a final burst of self-inflicted terror. “A feeling of relief came over the community,” the *Register* said, “when it was known that the wretched man had by his own act spared further horrors.”²⁷ It was over.

* * *

The funeral for Charles Adams was held at his family’s home the next day, Saturday, June 8. “The whole town seemed in mourning,” the *Register* reported, as “business places were closed and every mark of respect was manifested.” The service was followed by a procession to Mountain View Cemetery, “where the scene was one of solemnity, as the body was consigned to the earth.” It was such an elaborate ceremony that there were two ministers from different denominations, six pallbearers, eight honorary pallbearers, and “leading men from Hagerstown and city and county officials.”

Benner’s funeral on Sunday, June 9 was smaller and far less conspicuous, but he too, was buried at Mountain View—near the same resting place as his victim, Adams, and his brother, Thomas, who had been killed at the lodge more than thirty years earlier. Eerily, the tombstones of Adams and Charles Benner are less than one hundred yards apart.

Antietam National Battlefield acted quickly to fill the void in leadership, and George H. Graham of Harpers Ferry, a veteran of the 144th New York Infantry, was named superintendent one month later, in July 1912. But if War Department officials thought the drama in Sharpsburg was behind them, they were badly misled.

²⁷ “Captain Adams Killed: Antietam Battle Field Superintendent Shot For a Grudge,” *Baltimore Sun*, June 7, 1912; “Foul Murder in Sharpsburg,” *Shepherdstown Register*, June 13, 1912, 2.

Things *seemed* to go smoothly for the first seven months of Graham's tenure until, as one formal government report put it, "all hell broke loose." The new superintendent was accused of no less than eight illicit activities, ranging from public drunkenness to stealing money from maintenance men to threatening park visitors and residents with firearms. As if that weren't enough, according to the report, "Graham's wife, whom he had left residing in Harpers Ferry, visited his house on Bloody Lane in 1913 and found him 'living in adultery on the battlefield with a human from Hagerstown.' Moreover, she charged that when she attempted to enter his residence, her husband threw her out."

Graham claimed the charges were made by political enemies, blaming it all on "the old Adams battlefield gang," but after a mandatory government hearing that stretched until January 1914, he was formally dismissed by the secretary of war. Officials briefly promoted John L. Cook but eventually settled on Jacob Manath, who served without apparent incident from 1915-1925 and was the last Civil War veteran to hold the position.

"Graham was a difficult act to follow," the report concluded, but "fortunately for the War Department, none of the succeeding superintendents at Antietam National Battlefield Site had to be discharged." It was a low bar to meet after several exhausting and tempestuous decades at the top.²⁸

28 Snell and Brown, "Antietam National Battlefield and National Cemetery: An Administrative History, *National Park Service*, 118, <http://npshistory.com/publications/anti/adhi.pdf>, 124-28, 560.

Earrings and Dinner at the Deaners

by John W. Schildt

A light mist was falling as the 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac, formed on the line of departure at dawn on September 17, 1862. The mist would help wash away the blood that would soon be shed on the fields of Sharpsburg and along Antietam Creek. Their objective, a small white church and the high ground to the east.¹

The church was a mile away to the south, and in front of the 1st Corps was David R. Miller's unharvested cornfield, beyond which lay Major General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's troops. The cornfield was bordered by woodlots, known after the battle as the East and West Woods. The 1st Corps attacked at dawn and the 12th Corps entered the fray at approximately 7:30 a.m. The early action resulted in a stalemate.

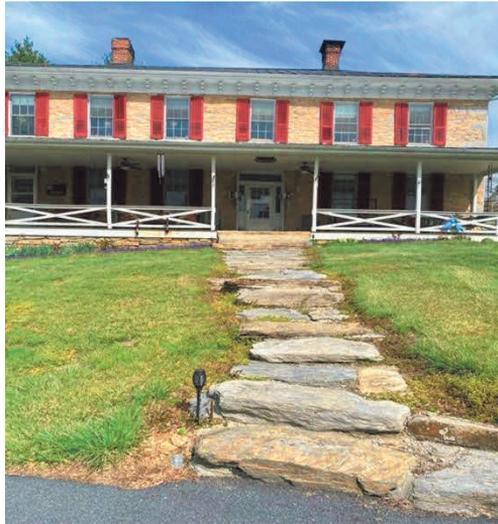
Then, at 9 a.m., 5,000 troops under Major General John Sedgwick, fondly known as "Uncle John," advanced over twice fought ground, careful not to step on dead and wounded bodies. Entering the West Woods, they were out-flanked by superior numbers. Thirty minutes later, 2,200 had fallen to the grim reaper or horrible wounds.

On this 75th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, the fate of the nation hung in the balance. The struggle was to see if the nation "could long endure." The price was high. North of Sharpsburg, in an area less than a square mile, nearly 12,000 had already fallen and it was just 10 a.m.²

The Union hospitals near the fields of combat west of Antietam Creek quickly overflowed, so sites east of Antietam Creek became Islands of Mercy and Centers of Hope. The number of wounded was unprecedented, yet the evacuation of the wounded from the field was not as chaotic as the aftermath of previous battles. Thanks to Major General George McClellan's medical director, Dr. Jonathan Letterman, trained ambulance crews knew to take the wounded to farms and fields designated for specific units. Slowly, the wounded from Sedgwick's division made their way, one way or another, back to the eastern side of

1 United States War Department: *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 128 Volumes* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1890-1901), volume 19, pt. 1, 218.

2 Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865, *The Gettysburg Address and Other Speeches* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995).



Deaner farm. (John Schildt)

Antietam Creek to the Deaner farm—“Sedgwick Hospital”—on Mount Hebron Road in the little town of Keedysville.

The Deaner farm shared its history with Keedysville. In 1796, Yost Deaner purchased a tract of land just east of Keedysville. The acreage was along an old Native American trail leading from current Dog Street Road to Keedysville, with the Little Antietam Creek to the west. Over time, the old trail was expanded to a primitive road called Mount Hebron. On the west side of the road there stood an old log structure with a dirt floor. It was a combination school and church, and was known as the Geeting Meeting House. It was the first house of worship for the Church of the United Brethren in Christ. In 1845, a new church replaced the log house. It was named Mount Hebron Church. The Deaners were members of that church and Yost and several others are buried in the church cemetery.³

A grandson of Yost was born in 1825. He was named Jonas. In 1848, he married Ann Maria Baker. To this union were born five children over the next 11 years. Only three reached to adulthood, including the oldest, Eugenia, who was born in 1849.⁴

³ Washington County Land Records, Washington County Court House, Hagerstown, Maryland; Keedysville Town Hall, Keedysville, Maryland; Mount Hebron Cemetery Records, Keedysville, Maryland.

⁴United States Census, 1850 and 1860; <https://ancestors.familysearch.org/en/K8NZ-K2B/jonas-simon-deaner-1825-1904>, accessed March 17, 2024;

The life of Mount Hebron Church was short lived. In 1870, a new church named Salem United Brethren Church was erected near the Little Antietam Creek in the center of the village of the growing town of Keedysville.⁵

On September 14, 1862, the Deaners heard and saw the unfolding battle of Fox's Gap on the South Mountain range only four miles to the east. With their home being a considerable distance from Dog Street Road and the road through Keedysville, it is unlikely they heard the rumble of the horse drawn equipment and tramp, tramp, tramp of Robert E. Lee's army retreating from South Mountain during the night of September 14th and into the morning of the 15th. However, there was no escaping the build-up of troops from McClellan's Army of the Potomac, which had pursued Lee as far as the east bank of Antietam Creek. They were certainly aware of the gathering of the military hosts on the 15th, and soon they would be in the eye of the storm. As author Steve Cowie wrote, "Hell was coming to Sharpsburg."⁶

Then came September 17, and the bloodiest day of all American military history.

In the first four hours of the day, 12,000 young Americans became casualties in a cornfield, woods, and around a little white brick church in an area less than a square mile on the northern part of the battlefield. As the day progressed, 11,000 more would meet the same fate in a sunken farm lane, a stone-arched bridge, and farm fields on the southern half of the battlefield.

Both General Sedgwick and a 28-year-old relative, William Sedgwick, were among the fallen in the early hours of the battle. The general's wounds were not mortal, but there was little hope for William. He had been shot in the back with a musket ball. The Sedgwicks and many other young men from the division were taken in jolting, jarring ambulances to

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54929010/samuel_deaner, accessed March 17, 2024.

⁵ Salem United Methodist Church records, Keedysville, Maryland; *The Morning Herald* newspaper, Hagerstown, Maryland, June 2, 1949, <https://www.newspapers.com/article/the-morning-herald-mt-hebron-church-inf/19039666/>, accessed March 15, 2024; Washington County Land Records. Salem Church is now United Methodist.

⁶ Steven Cowie, *When Hell Came to Sharpsburg: The Battle of Antietam and Its Impact on the Civilians Who Called It Home* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, July 2022). Endnote references the book title.



Major William Sedgwick. (MOLLUS)

Keedysville, most going to the Deaner farm which was quickly designated as the Sedgwick Hospital.

The barn, sheds, and houses were soon overrun with the wounded. A captain in the medical corps wrote, “Every room in the house was filled with wounded, and every spot almost in the yard.” The general and William were undoubtedly brought inside the Deaner home.⁷

Many of the men were troops from Massachusetts, including three well-known officers of the 20th Massachusetts Infantry: future Supreme Court Justice Captain Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.; Colonel Paul Revere, grandson of the Revolutionary War era legend; and Captain N. Penrose Hallowell, who would command one of the first black regiments, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, the following summer after its original commander, Colonel Robert Gould Shaw, was killed. It is not known if

⁷ Louis C. Duncan, Captain, Medical Corps, U.S. Army, unpublished collection, c. 1916, pp. 26-27, 45 (Antietam on the Web citation 28767).

Colonel Revere was aware that his brother, Dr. Edward Revere, had been killed in action in the West Woods.⁸

William Sedgwick's condition worsened. His wife being in Europe, his mother and sister hastened to the Deaner farm to be with the dying officer. Always at their beck and call was perhaps Antietam's youngest nurse, 12-year-old Eugenia Deaner. Despite the loving care of Major Sedgwick's family members and young Eugenia, the major expired at the Deaner home on September 29.

At Christmas 1862, as the Deaner family sought to recover from those horrible days in the fall, they received a letter and a package from the major's widow, who had been unaware of her husband's death until her return from England. The letter expressed her gratitude for the Deaner family's care of her late husband. The package contained a pair of earrings for Eugenia. Mrs. Louisa Sedgwick related in her letter that her most difficult task was trying to answer a question her three daughters were constantly asking: "Mommy, when is daddy coming home?" Such is the savagery of war.⁹

While the men of Sedgwick's division were being transported to the Deaner farm, fresh combat was raging at a sunken country road, soon to be renamed Bloody Lane. In the action, 25-year-old Colonel Francis Barlow was wounded while leading the 61st and 64th New York Infantry regiments into action. He too was taken to the Deaner farm.

On the 18th he wrote to his mother saying he was all right, but wounded in the groin area and was uncomfortable. He urged her not to come, as the roads were congested. However, Arabella, his 37-year-old wife, a nurse with the Sanitary Commission, hastened to his side. While there, Barlow received news of his promotion to the rank of brigadier general for his actions at Antietam. Arabella went into Keedysville and purchased items for a celebratory lunch. There was then a dinner in honor of his promotion.¹⁰

8 Norwood Penrose Hallowell Papers, 1850-1914. Written at the request of his wife for their children. Copy given to the late Fred Remsburg of Sharpsburg. Hallowell brought his bride to Antietam shortly after their marriage to show here where he was wounded and then treated.

9 The letter from Louisa Sedgwick is in the Bast Museum of History, Boonsboro, Maryland.

10 Francis C. Barlow, Christian Samito, ed., *Fear Was Not in Him: The Civil War Letters of Major General Francis C. Barlow, U.S.A.* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 117-118.

Postscript:

As more and more of the Deaner family faded from the scenes of earth, Eugenia Deaner Neikirk, the last surviving member of the Deaner family, remained on the farm until her death on January 1, 1926. Her executor sold the farm to Mr. and Mrs. Howard Burtner. Thus, after almost 130 years the farm along Mount Hebron Road changed hands. After 98 years, the Burtners still own the farm. Much of the material in this article came from interviews with Mrs. Emma Burtner, who for many years was also the Keedysville historian.

Francis Palfrey had been wounded and captured at Antietam. He was held for a short time, then brought to the Deaner farm where surgery was performed by the 20th Massachusetts regimental surgeon, D. Nathan Hayward. His wounds were so bad he had to retire. Antietam ended Palfrey's military career. He later wrote the first book on Antietam, *The Antietam and Fredericksburg*.¹¹

¹¹ Francis W. Palfrey, *The Antietam and Fredericksburg* (Wendell, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing, January 1, 1989).

In Their Own Words: “It seemed almost whole lines would melt away at once”

by Andy Cardinal

Sergeant J. J. McDaniel enlisted in Company M of the 7th South Carolina in March 1862. The 7th South Carolina, commanded by Colonel D. Wyatt Aiken, fought with Brigadier General Joseph Kershaw’s brigade in Major General Lafayette McLaws’ division during the Maryland Campaign. After participating in the capture of Harpers Ferry, McLaws’ division hurried toward Sharpsburg on September 16, crossing the Potomac back into Maryland at dawn on the morning of September 17. Here is Sergeant McDaniel’s account of his part in the battle.¹

* * *

At daylight on Wednesday, 17th, we were again fording the river at Shepherdstown. We were now pushed on towards Sharpsburg, some 3 miles distant. We could now distinctly see the bursting shells and clouds of smoke which told of the fearful struggle into which we were rapidly hastening. Arriving within a mile of the battle ground, we were halted, and stacked arms. About 9 o’clock we were ordered forward. Soon the shells were flying fast and thick about us. The nearer we approached the line of battle the faster we went, and the last half mile at double-quick. Our knapsacks were now thrown off as we run, making our route look more like a retreat than an advance. We met Hood’s Brigade, that had withstood the shock of battle since daylight, retiring. As we were being placed in line of battle, Hood rode up to us and said, “If I had received these troops this morning this thing would have been over.” We were now on the left wing of our army, where the enemy had been, and were still, making desperate efforts to force us back and turn our centre. Had he done this, from the nature of our position, our army would have been

1 J. J. McDaniel’s unpublished account, “Diary of battles, marches and incidents of the Seventh S.C. regiment,” can be found online at <https://www.loc.gov/item/03032940/>. It is also available on Internet Archive. More information about McDaniel can be found in Glen Allan Swain, *The Bloody Seventh* (Wilmington, North Carolina: Broadfoot Publishing Company, 2014), 571; and at Antietam on the Web (https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=20075).

in a critical situation. Kershaw's Brigade occupied the right of the division—the 2d and 3d regiments in front—the 8th and 7th in the rear and a little to the right. Our line of battle extended along a ravine and the edge of some woods, which were some 800 yards wide, and extending in length some distance.² The 7th and 8th Regiments were a little to the right of these woods, and had just got into position when an officer came galloping back, saying, "The enemy are advancing." The arrival of McLaws' Division was timely, and saved the left wing of our army from being driven back upon the centre. Although that wing was being forced back by overwhelming numbers, the slain of the enemy attested the stubbornness of the resistance. But the enemy now advancing in heavy columns of fresh troops, expected to sweep Jackson's wearied and reduced veterans before them.³ They did not know that our division had arrived. Gen. Kershaw had just placed the 2d and 3d Regiments in position in our front. The enemy came within 75 yards of these before they could see them, and were received with such a volley that thinned their ranks and stopped their advance; these volleys were now rolling along our entire line. Soon the long dark lines of the enemy were seen staggering back, broken and confused.⁴

At this moment the 7th and 8th were ordered to advance. The routed enemy were flying through the woods, while we were pouring volleys into their retreating lines. Soon we had driven them entirely through the woods, over a fence, into a field, to the top of a hill. By this time they were so thoroughly disorganized that every one seemed to be running his best, and fast disappeared in a large corn field in front. By the time we reached the top of the hill they had gotten out of the way of their batteries placed some 2 or 300 yards down the slope. No sooner did we gain the top of the hill, than they opened a most murderous fire of grape and shells from batteries on our right, front and left. Of all the cannonading I ever experienced, this was the most destructive. It seemed almost whole

² The West Woods.

³ Sedgwick's division was then advancing into the West Woods.

⁴ The 2nd South Carolina pursued as the surviving members of the 125th Pennsylvania and 34th New York fled across the Hagerstown Turnpike. The 3rd South Carolina also crossed the pike farther to the north, while the 7th and 8th South Carolina remained in position just south of the Dunker Church. The 2nd Carolina was stopped by artillery fire and soon fell back across the Hagerstown Pike, rejoining their sister regiments in the woods (the 3rd South Carolina did not rejoin the brigade until later in the day.) Bradley M. Gottfried, ed., *Brigades of Antietam: The Union and Confederate Brigades at the Battle of Antietam* (Sharpsburg, MD: The Press of the Antietam Institute, n. d.), 226.

lines would melt away at once—still the cry was “onward men, onward.” A portion of us had nearly reached the batteries in front—killed and driven off most of the gunners. But at this juncture we discovered that we could not hold these batteries.⁵ We had no supports, while the enemy had new lines in their rear, while we were enfiladed by their batteries on the right and left. We now fell back to our first line, the 7th Regiment having lost 169 killed and wounded, being half the men carried into action. Company “M” lost 17 of 29 carried into action. The other regiments of the Brigade also suffered severely.

In falling back I met Col. Aiken coming out of the battle. Together with several others, we took refuge behind a pile of cut wood in the woods, to determine where to rally the Regiment, as a hurricane of balls were now passing through the forest. Having decided upon a ravine in the edge of the woods, each of us started out to inform those we met where the new line would be formed. We had proceeded but a short distance, before the Colonel was shot through the body, falling on the field, but I did not know it (as we had separated) until late in the evening. He has since recovered.⁶ Our Major was killed on the hill, where many of our noble officers and men reposed in the cold embrace of death.⁷ But the enemy’s

5 The 7th South Carolina attacked just to the left of Captain John A. Tompkins’ Battery A, 1st Rhode Island Artillery. Captain Tompkins turned his guns to face the attackers and fired double charges of canister. The South Carolinians got to within 30 yards of the battery and briefly drove the artillerymen from some of the guns. Tompkins’ infantry supports (111th Pennsylvania of Stainrook’s brigade and 28th Pennsylvania of Tyndale’s brigade) rushed forward and hand-to-hand fighting ensued in and around the guns before the South Carolinians were forced to retreat back into the West Woods. James A. Rosebrock, *Artillery of Antietam* (Sharpsburg, MD: The Antietam Institute, 2023), 110-111. See also Chris Bryan, *From Cedar Mountain to Antietam* (El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2022), 305-308; D. Scott Hartwig, *I Dread the Thought of the Place* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2023), 276-279.

6 Colonel Aiken was shot through a lung. His brother Augustus (serving as a member of McLaws’ staff), and his body servant carried Aiken to Shepherdstown that night. He fell into Federal hands when the army retreated and was paroled. Although he was not expected to survive, he recovered sufficiently to return to his regiment and led the 7th South Carolina at Gettysburg. His wound continued to plague him, however, and he served on light duty in South Carolina before resigning his commission in 1864 to become a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives (https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=784). Most accounts state Aiken was wounded before the regiment left the woods or during the attack on the Dunker Church plateau, contrary to McDaniel’s statement here.

7 William Capers White had been elected major during the regimental reorganization on May 14, 1862. He was initially buried in the Sharpsburg town cemetery. https://antietam.aotw.org/officers.php?officer_id=1216.

loss far exceeded ours. I almost agree with a newspaper correspondent, who said, "In a piece of woods through which McLaws' Division fought, you could walk on the enemy's dead for 3 acres." The piles of their slain exceeded anything I ever saw, while but few of our men were killed, till we rose the hill in front of the batteries. Our batteries were of little service to us on the left. Had the ground admitted of their advance as we made our grand charge, the right of the enemy would have been swept from the field.

Antietam Artifacts: Sergeant John Johnson's ID Tag by Joseph Stahl

The 34th New York's monument on the field at Antietam is located on the north end of battlefield on the modern road through what was the West Woods in 1862. Note that there is large cloverleaf on the monument. It is the symbol of the 2nd Corps under the Corps Badge system. Corps Badges were ordered to be worn by the troops in March 1863 by General Joseph Hooker when he took command of the Army of the Potomac. General Hooker did this for two reasons, first to develop unit pride and second to allow fast identification of units by their commanders. Therefore, the symbol was not actually in use at the time of the Battle of Antietam. However, the men of the 34th New York were proud of their association with the 2nd Corps and had the badge placed on their monument. Who were these men from New York?

In June 1861, the 34th New York Infantry, also known as the "Herkimer Regiment" because it was recruited in Herkimer County, mustered into the service of the Union for two years. It left for Washington in July and was assigned to the Second Brigade of General Stone's division. The 34th spent the next few months in the vicinity of Washington. In late March 1862, they moved to join General McClellan's Peninsula Campaign. They saw action at the siege of Yorktown, Fair Oaks, and the Seven Days Battles. At Antietam, the regiment suffered its largest losses 150 killed, wounded, and missing out of 311. After Antietam it was engaged at Fredericksburg and at Chancellorsville. The 34th left for home on June 9 and was mustered out on June 30 at Albany, New York.¹

The ID tag of Sergeant John Johnson of Company K of the 34th New York is typical of Civil War ID tags that were sold to the soldiers. It is brass and has a shield with the words "Against Rebellion 1861" on one side. On the reverse, Sergeant Johnson had his name, rank, company, unit, and a list of battles that he fought in stamped on it. Having battles on their ID tag was not common, but some soldiers were obviously

1 *The Union Army* (Madison, WI: Federal Publishing Company, 1908), vol. 2, 73.



Sergeant Johnson's ID Tag. (Joe Stahl)

proud of their service and had the battles they participated in stamped on their tags. This is shown in the first photograph.

Examining the type, it appears Sergeant Johnson had “Fair Oaks, 7 Days Bat’s” and “Antietam” stamped on it at one time, probably when he bought it after September 17, 1862, when the Battle of Antietam was fought. Also, since it has his rank of Sergeant on it, he bought it after June 1, 1862 the date of his promotion to Sergeant. It looks like he had “Fredericksburg” added to the list. In looking closely at the ID tag, you can see that the sutler stamped “Ch” and then went back over them with “Fr.” Did the sutler start to stamp Chancellorsville and catch the mistake? He may have not had Chancellorsville put on it because of space limits.

Who was Sergeant Johnson? A copy of his service records acquired from the National Archives provided the following information.² John Johnson had mustered in on June 15, 1861 at Albany as a Corporal in Company K and he gave his age as 24. The records show that from June 1861 to April 1862 it is “not stated” as to whether he is with his unit (this is not uncommon for this period). He is shown as “present” from May 1862 until his discharge on June 30, 1863. The records also show that on June 1, 1862, he was promoted to sergeant. Based on his being “present” for all the rest of his service means he saw combat in all the actions the 34th New York was involved in during his enlistment.³

To know that many years ago Sergeant Johnson was on this same ground under very different circumstances is to touch history. The report for the Battle of Antietam, written by Colonel James Suiter, the commander of the 34th at Antietam says:

Arriving at the open field, we were again ordered in line of battle, being still at double-quick. We moved over this field to the pike road leading to Sharpsburg. Fronting this was a piece of timber land, into which I moved my command, still at double-quick, arriving at about 20 yards in rear of a school-house, when I discovered the enemy under the hill. I immediately ordered my command to fire, which they did in gallant order.

Later, Suiter learned:

² Military service records can be obtained from the National Archives for most Civil War soldiers if you know their name and unit.

³ John Johnson, Military Service Records, Company K, 34th New York Volunteer Infantry, National Archives and Records Administration.

the enemy were moving upon my left flank with a strong force. I turned and discovered Lieut. Richard Gorman, of Gen. Gorman's staff, and requested him to inform the general that the enemy were flanking me. He immediately returned for that purpose. Presently Gen. Sedgwick arrived upon the ground. Moving down my line, he discovered the situation of my command, and that the point could not be held by me, and gave the order for me to retire, which I did. Rallying my command, I formed them in line of battle, supporting a battery some 400 yards in rear of the battle-field.

In this engagement the casualties were as follows, viz: 32 killed, 109 wounded, and 9 missing.⁴

Sergeant Johnson was one of the lucky ones who made it through the battle and all the following actions. Sergeant Johnson went home with the unit and in October 1891 filed for an Invalid Pension. On his "Declaration for Pension" form dated June 8, 1912, he gives his description at enlistment as 5 feet, 6 inches tall, complexion as dark, dark eyes, dark hair and that he was a carpenter. Sergeant Johnson states that he was born on April 17, 1837 in Little Falls, New York. His pension files show that he married Cathrine A. Bateman on November 14, 1866. They had two boys: Lester, born on August 17, 1867, and Harry, born on March 4, 1874. He received his pension and lived until July 2, 1913. He spent his final years in the National Home for Disabled Soldiers in Tennessee. Kate survived him for another eight years passing away on October 11, 1921. The only other item in his files describes how his left hand was crushed between two railroad cars while he was working as a brakeman on the Military Railroad near Meads Station, Virginia in March 1865. It seems sad that Sergeant Johnson survived all the dangers of combat and then got hurt while working for the government at almost the end of the war! It is strange how the fates work.⁵

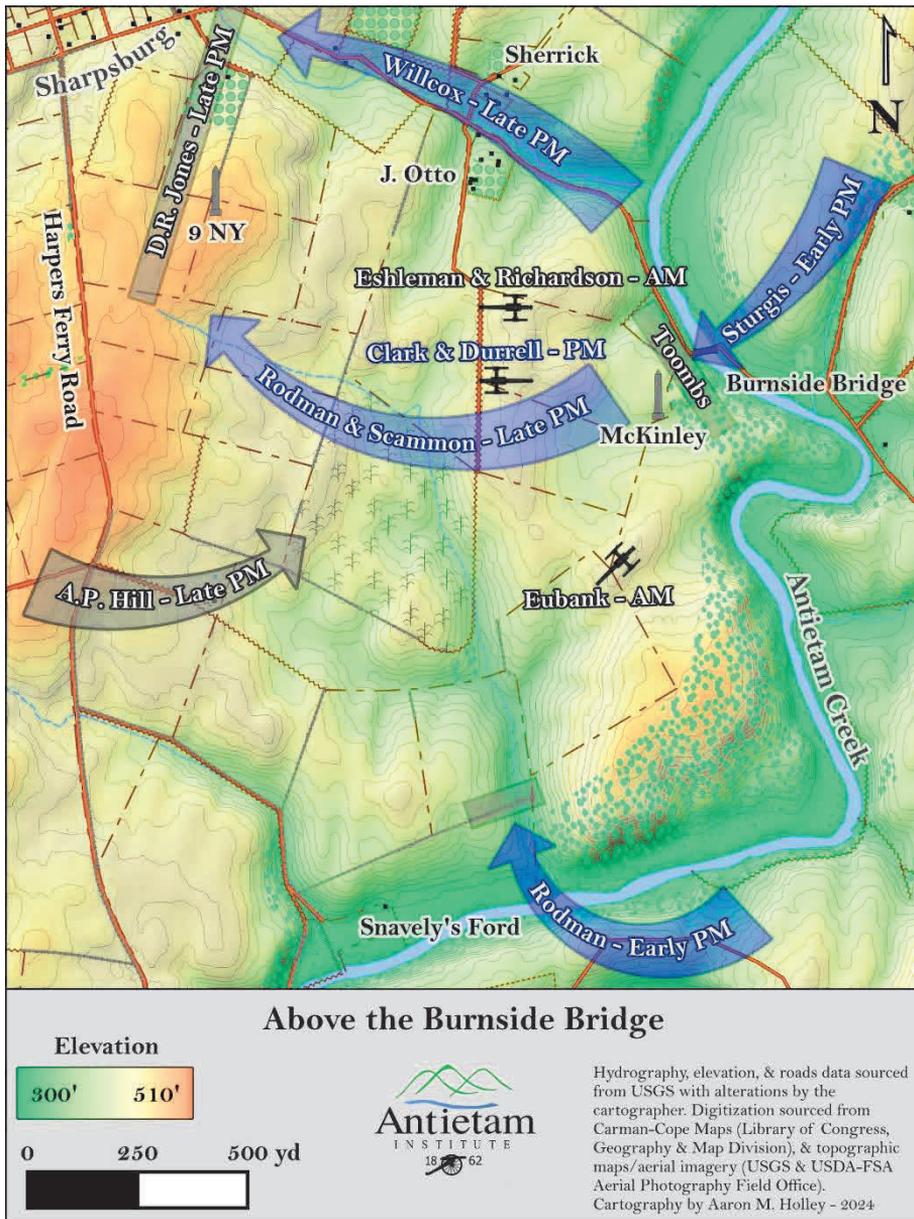
4 *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 315-16.

5 Pension File, John Johnson, 34th New York Volunteer Infantry, National Archives and Records Administration.

In Antietam's Footsteps: Above the Burnside Bridge by J. O. Smith

Ken Burns reminded us that the Civil War was fought in 10,000 places. On a battlefield like Antietam, there are a multitude of places and at least 10,000 stories, many of which lie beneath the traditional narrative of familiar locales such as the Cornfield, Sunken Road or Burnside Bridge. A can't-miss stop at Antietam, the Burnside Bridge offers a scenic view of the creek and a stark contrast to the farm fields and rolling terrain found on much of the rest of the field. Attempts by the 9th Corps under Major General Ambrose Burnside to take the bridge became the subject of much debate and criticism from almost the time the battle ended. The "Burnside" moniker mocks what many through the years have viewed as a bungled operation in which Burnside's entire force of 12,000 men stalled before a few hundred Georgians for several hours, affording time for A. P. Hill to make a dramatic arrival later in the day. But there is more to this part of the battlefield than the attack and defense of the bridge. Though there is little in the way of interpretation that does not relate to the fight for the bridge, the visitor who spends some extra time in this area—away from the creek—may find greater understanding of the fighting which occurred after Union troops seized the bridge.

Robert E. Lee's defense of the right end of his line looked very different at daybreak on September 17 than it did just a few hours later. The division of Brigadier General John Walker held high ground above Snavelly's Ford but was called to Lee's left early that morning. Meanwhile, Confederate artillery positioned around the bridge shelled Burnside's troops on the east side of the creek in the early morning hours and disrupted the 9th Corps' advance before it started. Captain John L. Eubank's guns were on the high ground a few hundred yards south of the bridge. Though trees obscure the view across the creek today, Eubank's gunners would have had a clear field of fire on 9th Corps soldiers waking up on the morning of the 17th. To Eubank's left rear and arrayed along a prominent ridgeline, accessible by a trail from the bridge parking lot, two more Confederate batteries under captains Benjamin F. Eshleman and John B. Richardson pelted Burnside's men during the morning as they approached Antietam Creek. Of the early morning fire, 9th Corps brigade commander Colonel Harrison Fairchild recorded: "The enemy having at daylight discovered our position, we were saluted by the bullets of their sharpshooters, who were stationed in the woods on the hill on



Above the Burnside Bridge. (Aaron Holley)

the opposite shore of the creek. This was followed by a brisk shelling from the enemy's battery, also stationed on the opposite side of the creek." Though this fire did not produce the carnage found on other parts of the field, it helped delay the 9th Corps advance across the creek, Fairchild writing that his men moved to the "left and rear" to rest and

refresh for “some two hours.” Indeed, there was more to Burnside’s delay than failed attempts to take the bridge.¹

From the gravel path coming up from Snavely’s Ford on the west side of Antietam Creek, a view to the west looks across the staging area of the afternoon assault by the 9th Corps and provides an appreciation of the terrain facing the Federals. Confederate and later Federal artillery occupied the closest ridgeline to the west, Richardson’s and Eshleman’s Confederate guns pointing east in the morning and captains George W. Durrell’s and Joseph C. Clark’s Federal guns pointing west in the afternoon. Today, the National Park Service marks the position with two 10-lb. Parrott rifles pointing west. During the early afternoon hours, Brigadier General Isaac Rodman’s division waited behind this ridge. They had crossed Antietam Creek at Snavely’s Ford and taken position here in preparation for the grand assault on the Confederate right along the heights of Sharpsburg. About 200 yards south of the entrance to the overflow parking lot, a glimpse to the west beyond the ridgeline brings into view (foliage permitting) the obelisk monument of the 9th New York Infantry, roughly 1,100 yards away and what turned out to be the high-water mark of the Final Attack. Between here and the monument, Rodman’s division continued its climb up from the creek. Fairchild’s brigade, on Rodman’s right, suffered close to 50% casualties, among the highest of any brigade on the field that day. One of Fairchild’s regiments, the 9th New York lost more than 60% of its men. Before going forward, however, Fairchild’s men waited, out of the direct line of Confederate fire but exposed to overshots aimed at the Federal guns up above. Private Charles F. Johnson of the 9th New York remembered:

Our troops took up a new position under a hill, and from over its top we could hear the whizzing of musket and rifle balls piercing the air. Soon the cannon balls mingled with the sharp play of small arms, and I noticed one of them coming like an

1 <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3842am.gcw0248000>, “Atlas of the battlefield of Antietam, prepared under the direction of the Antietam Battlefield Board, lieutenant colonel Geo. W. Davis, U.S.A., president, general E.A. Carman, U.S.V., general H. Heth, C.S.A. Surveyed by lieutenant colonel E.B. Cope, engineer, H.W. Mattern, assistant engineer, of the Gettysburg National Park. Drawn by Charles H. Ourand, 1899. Position of troops by general E. A. Carman. Published by authority of the Secretary of War, under the direction of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, 1908”; James A. Rosebrock, *Artillery of Antietam: The Union and Confederate Batteries at the Battle of Antietam* (Sharpsburg, MD: The Antietam Institute, 2023), 235, 361; *OR*, vol. 19, pt. 1, 450-51.

india-rubber ball through the air. It struck the top of the hill, boring up a mass of earth, and then bounded high in the air, passing over our heads with a noise I can liken to nothing but the savage yell of some inhuman monster.

Lieutenant Matthew J. Graham, also of the 9th New York, recalled “lying on my back, supported by my elbows, watching the shells explode overhead and speculating as to how long I could hold up my finger before it would be shot off, for the very air seemed full of bullets, when the order to get up was given.” Though the brigade’s heaviest fighting was still to come, the men had to endure nerve wracking minutes under fire before they went forward.²

Also waiting to go forward was the 23rd Ohio Infantry in the brigade of Colonel Hugh Ewing. The brigade had seen heavy combat three days earlier at South Mountain. Among the 23rd Ohio’s casualties on September 14 was their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Rutherford B. Hayes, who suffered a severe wound to the arm that forced him to miss Antietam. From this ground, the regiment would go forward in support of Rodman’s division and grapple with A. P. Hill’s division along what is today Branch Avenue. Before that, however, “[u]nder a trying fire from the enemy’s batteries for some time,” Ewing’s brigade gathered here after crossing the creek at a ford downstream from the bridge and upstream from Snavely’s Ford. Colonel Carr B. White, also of Ewing’s brigade, reported that “[w]hile lying in this position the enemy shelled us severely for about two hours.” As told by the prominent monument next to the parking lot, Sergeant William McKinley of the 23rd served coffee and food to the men of his regiment in this area. Major James Comly, in command of the regiment at Antietam in place of Hayes, wrote that McKinley “showed ability and energy of the first class in not only keeping us fully supplied with rations throughout the fight, but in having them fully prepared for eating also.... He delivered them to us under fire, in two instances, with perfect method and coolness....”³ Like the men of Fairchild’s brigade, Ewing’s men waited around the bridge as Confederate artillery rounds dropped among them, a prelude to the fire

² Charles F. Johnson, *The Long Roll* (East Aurora, New York: The Roycrofters, 1911), 192; Matthew J. Graham, *The Ninth Regiment, New York Volunteers (Hawkins’ Zouaves)* (New York: E. P. Coby & Co., 1900), 293.

³ *OR 19*, pt. 1, 463, 466; quoted in Kevin R. Pawlak and Dan Welch, *Ohio at Antietam: The Buckeye State’s Sacrifice on America’s Bloodiest Day* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2021), 134.

they would face later in the afternoon. Other than the McKinley monument, their story in this area, like that of the morning artillery fire across the creek and Rodman's men waiting to advance, remains out of immediate view, and it might be easy enough to stop here, look at the creek and the bridge and bring your Antietam visit to a close. But a 360-degree survey of the picturesque Burnside Bridge environs will present a wealth of stories to paint a rich history of the battle that goes far beyond a fight to cross Antietam Creek.

The Burnside Bridge stop is Stop 8 on the Antietam National Battlefield driving tour. N 39.44986, W 77.73260.

Institute Interview: Sitting Down with John Banks

by Laura Marfut

For years, John Banks has been unveiling hidden stories from the banks of Antietam Creek for students of the Maryland Campaign through his blog and books. He has inspired pilgrimages to places many didn't know existed and given voice to local residents with their own stories to tell.

John grew up in Pennsylvania, where a family trip to Gettysburg and a trip to the souvenir shop made a lasting mark. He attended West Virginia University, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism. He is the author of three books on the Civil War; *A Civil War Road Trip of a Lifetime*, *Connecticut Yankees at Antietam* and *Hidden History of Connecticut Union Soldiers*, and the popular John Banks Civil War Blog. A longtime journalist with *The Dallas Morning News* and ESPN, his work has been published in *The New York Times*, *Civil War Times*, *Civil War Monitor*, *Civil War News*, *America's Civil War*, and *Military Images*. He also co-hosts *The Antietam and Beyond* podcast with Antietam Institute board member Tom McMillan.

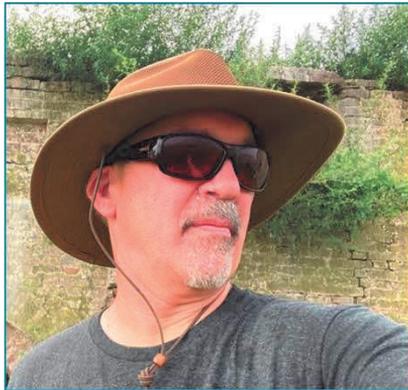
Currently, John is secretary-treasurer of The Center for Civil War Photography (CCWP) and a board member of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF) and Battle of Nashville Trust. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife Carol, whom he affectionately refers to as "Mrs. B."

LM: What sparked your interest in the Civil War and, in particular, Antietam and Gettysburg?

JB: *Reading is fundamental!* I relished reading as a kid—the daily newspaper, books, magazine, you name it. It started a virtuous cycle—I'd read about Gettysburg and other historic sites and then dreamed of visiting them. Then I'd visit those places and it would inspire me to read more about them. Kinda cool.

As an adult, I followed the same, virtuous cycle. At the very least, it kept me out of trouble.

I was 12 when my parents took me and my younger sister and brother to Gettysburg for a vacation. When you grow up in Pennsylvania—I'm from Mount Lebanon, a Pittsburgh suburb—it's almost a rite of passage to visit Gettysburg. Dad bought us a sleeve of real, honest-to-gawd (I think) Civil War bullets for a souvenir. My siblings had little interest, but they served as rocket fuel for a passion that remains to this day.



As far as Antietam goes, well, my first newspaper gig out of college was in Martinsburg, West Virginia, roughly 12 miles from Sharpsburg. While there, I reported a story on what relics could be found on the battlefield. I interviewed the Cullers, the family who had farmed Miller's Cornfield for decades. This was well before the ground became part of the national military park.

The visit remains embedded in my brain: I parked in the driveway leading to the farmhouse. On a long table, Paul Culler had placed artifacts that his family had turned up while farming the field over the years—gun parts, bullets, artillery fragments and more.

I was hooked.

LM: You've written two books on Connecticut soldiers in the Civil War, and your favorite spot on the Antietam Battlefield is the 16th Connecticut monument... but you are from Pennsylvania and live in Tennessee. What's your connection to Connecticut?

JB: In 2006, I took a job in Connecticut as supervisor of NFL coverage for ESPN.com. At the time, I knew little about Connecticut's ties to the Civil War. Across the road from our house in Avon was a cemetery that included graves of Civil War soldiers—including one for a 16th Connecticut captain who had suffered a wound in the 40-acre cornfield at Antietam and another for a soldier in the 16th who had endured Andersonville and ended up dying from effects of his imprisonment at his house near where we lived.

While we lived in Connecticut, I often spent weekends visiting cemeteries with ties to Antietam soldiers. It was oddly relaxing way to get away from a strenuous gig. The highlight was finding the remarkable grave of John Griswold, an officer in the 11th Connecticut who had suffered a mortal wound in the attack at Burnside Bridge. He came from a prominent Connecticut family. A Hartford newspaper in the summer of

1863 raved about the beauty of his marker in Old Lyme Cemetery, near Long Island Sound.

“We have never seen a monument more strikingly beautiful; more earnestly expressive in the design contemplated,” the newspaper wrote. “It is truly a finished production, giving evidence of the wonderful skill of the artist.”

I started digging into stories about Connecticut Civil War soldiers, met descendants of soldiers, tapped into musty archives—and the ol’ virtuous circle thing started all over again.

LM: What inspired you to launch “The Antietam and Beyond Podcast” with Tom McMillan in the fall of 2023? What is your vision for the series?

JB: That’s all Tom, whom I met for beers and dinner for the first time in a Boonsboro, Maryland, restaurant—Dan’s Restaurant and Tap House (now closed)—in April 2023. We have similar backgrounds. We’re each from the Pittsburgh area and we both have ties to sports and journalism. It’s wild that we had never met before April 2023.

Tom and I love to tell stories—in print (he’s a published author, too) and on the podcast. He pitched doing the podcast, I immediately agreed and the rest is ... history.

The vision? Shine a light on people who have expertise on the battle and on stories that might have been pushed to the margins of history. We’ve already had on Scott Hartwig, the well-known historian and author of the epic *I Dread the Thought of the Place* about the Battle of Antietam. But we’ve also had on Emilie Amt, who told us fascinating stories about Antietam and African Americans, and Richard Clem, a longtime Washington County resident and former relic hunter. I call him the “Babe Ruth of storytellers.”

LM: You have a knack for meeting locals everywhere you go who end up showing you places nobody knows about. What led you to some of your discoveries in and around Antietam?

JB: Schmoozing. I have told our two daughters that schmoozing is 98.6 percent of life and the other 10 percent is just BS. 😊

Once you show people who live on battlefields—Antietam or elsewhere—of your keen interest in the Civil War and beyond-a-surface level grasp of the place they live, they tend to open up. Plus, I’m not a relic hunter and have no interest in recovering artifacts from their property. They like that, I think.

One of my favorite people at Antietam, Ann Corcoran, owns property overlooking the Sharpsburg-Boonsboro pike. The Union 9th Corps

camped all over the area. Union artillery fired from where her horse barn stands. James Gibson photographed the Middle Bridge from her property. It's just a fabulous perspective from that ground.

I LOVE the nooks-and-crammies places.

LM: Dedicating a year to travel to Civil War sites sounds like a dream to many of us. Tell us about the making of your book, *A Civil War Road Trip of a Lifetime*.

JB: Well, this was more of a “dancing in between the raindrops” thing than a pure year of travel. I weaved in the road trips in between working and other activities. (After ESPN, I toiled as an editor for the History Channel and now am managing editor for a sports web site called Yardbarker.)

The stories in the book were part-planned, part-serendipity. The latter are often the best kind.

Here's an example: En route to Richmond for a story about the Battle of New Market Heights, I spotted one of those ubiquitous brown markers on the interstate denoting the Trevilian Station battlefield. I always get sucked in by those signs—it's like putting a hunk of fresh meat in front of a shark.

Anywho, I went there, met a couple about to drag a bed into a replica of the tavern that stood on the battlefield during the war. It was a dreadfully hot day. I ended up helping them haul the bed inside, quite a feat for someone like me who's unfamiliar with manual labor. The couple served as docents at the house nearby that was George Armstrong Custer's headquarters during the battle—they gave me a deluxe tour of it. Later, I discovered that during the battle, the Rebels confiscated Custer's love letters to his wife and a wagon that included his underwear.

And thus, a story was born.

LM: The Center for Civil War Photography is a useful resource for students of the Maryland Campaign. For those who might not be familiar with it, what is the Center's purpose and how can it be accessed?

JB: Pure and simple, the CCWP is all about the micro-study of Civil War photographs and the places the photographers took them. It's a great group, somewhat nerdy, but they're my kind of people. The CCWP holds annual events at Civil War sites—Antietam was site of the 2022 event, and it was fabulous.

The father of Civil War Photography study, the great William Frassanito, attended an event at the end of the Antietam seminar. His book, *Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest*, also

served as rocket fuel for my Antietam interest, as it has for thousands of others.

To learn more about the group, visit the CCWP's excellent web site here: <https://www.civilwarphotography.org/>

LM: One of your favorite Civil War photos is that of a lone Rebel soldier dead on the field at Antietam. What sets that particular photograph apart from the others?

JB: All the images of Antietam by Alexander Gardner are special, but that image of a dead Confederate soldier is so compelling. He's just a kid, apparently, and appears to be asleep. He's surrounded by scraps of paper, all unreadable, which is intriguing. Of course, I wonder who he was. Did he really want to be in western Maryland with the rest of his comrades? Where was he from? So many questions.

There's no glory in war. That photo proves it.

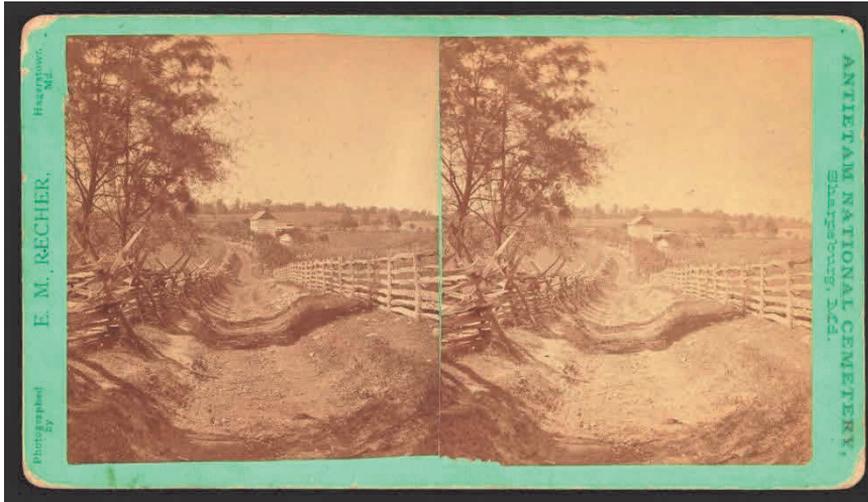
LM: As a Save Historic Antietam Foundation board member, what are some of the most important emerging needs at Antietam?

JB: Building awareness that protecting, preserving and saving battlefield land comes with a price. We always need help—monetary as well as muscle (for annual workday) and brain power. SHAF today builds on the work started by Tom Clemens, Dennis Frye, John Schildt and many others decades ago. I'm grateful to be along for the ride.

You can learn more about SHAF here: <http://www.shaf.org/>

Antietam: Then and Now

by Mike Doyle



1877 photo by Hagerstown photographer E. M. Recher showing postwar house along the Sunken Road. In 1918, the property was purchased by Charles and Charette Lohman. The Lohmans eventually established the souvenir stand on the corner of the property near the 130th Pennsylvania Monument. In 1974, the National Park Service acquired the property and the buildings were removed. (Library of Congress)



Book Review

Rossino, Alexander B. *Calamity at Fredrick. Robert E. Lee, Special Orders No. 191, and Confederate Misfortune on the Road to Antietam.* El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2023 Softcover, 155 pages, 10 maps, 2 appendices, notes, bibliography, index.
ISBN: 978-1-61121-690-5. \$18.95.

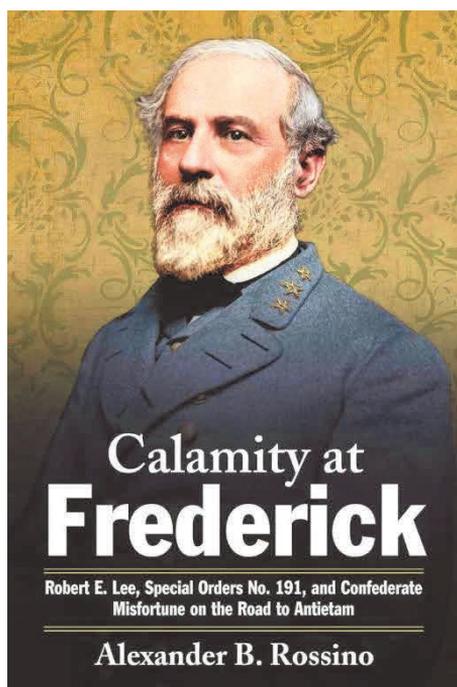
Review by Jay H. Ferris

Special Orders No. 191 is part of the fabric and lore of the 1862 Maryland Campaign. It would be impossible to write a history of the campaign without discussing Special Orders No. 191, the famous “Lost Orders.” As author Alexander Rossino states in the introduction to this book, “There is probably no other document in the history of the American Civil War with which even casual readers are so familiar” (xi).

Opinions vary greatly about the numerous details surrounding the story of the Lost Orders. The discovery of the Lost Orders has been called the greatest intelligence coup by the Union army during the Civil War. Others downplay the discovery, saying that very little changed as a result. The location where they were found and, most importantly, who lost them, are also debated. Daniel Harvey Hill has traditionally been labeled as the man who lost the orders. He went to his grave fighting these accusations. (Visiting his grave in January 2024, I was disappointed the phrase “I did not lose the orders” is not inscribed on his tombstone.)

In this book Rossino examines the story of the Lost Orders in detail. The first four chapters discuss why and how the orders were written and how the copies were distributed to the generals. He gives an overview of the beginning of the campaign and discusses Lee’s motives and his goals for the invasion of Maryland. This includes Lee’s discovery that Union troops had not evacuated Harpers Ferry, which surprised him. Lee’s plan to eliminate this threat to his supply line through the Shenandoah Valley was the catalyst for Special Orders No. 191.

The next two chapters go into great detail about where the orders were found and who probably lost them. He presents a new interpretation on where soldiers of the 27th Indiana found the Lost Orders. Rossino then goes down the list of possible culprits who may have lost the orders and eliminates them one at a time until he names the person he considers most likely to be responsible. He then writes about how that person may



have covered up his culpability. The final chapter looks at the impact the discovery of the Lost Orders had on the plans of Robert E. Lee and the Confederate army.

In the two appendices, Rossino first examines who wrote the Lost Orders. Although it is generally assumed that Robert H. Chilton wrote them, Rossino shows through a comparison of handwriting that this is very unlikely. In Appendix B, Rossino compares the Lost Orders with Special Orders No. 190, which is the first draft of the order and basically the headquarters copy.

This is a well-researched book. Rossino uses the *Official Records*, letters, diaries, unit histories, newspapers, and other sources to back up his claims and interpretations. For example, he uses old maps of Frederick, Maryland combined with a lesson from *Hardee's Tactics* on the deployment of skirmishers when he explains his opinion of where the Lost Orders were found.

Rossino knows that some of his conclusions will be controversial. In the preface he states, "There are parts of the Confederate story which by their very nature require speculation to handle. I have done my best to ensure that speculation is not idle, but is based on evidence, and that readers know when what they are reading is informed conjecture" (viii).

Later he writes, “Readers steeped in the existing history may find this interpretation provocative” (xi).

I enjoyed this book and highly recommend it. Rossino presents a well-argued case for the conclusions that he reaches. Obviously, not everyone will agree with his conclusions. As mentioned above, Rossino is very aware of this. Even if one does not agree with his analysis, this book will make the reader think about how the histories of the Lost Order and of the Maryland Campaign are written and interpreted. Since most history is the interpretation of past events, (and none of us were there during the Civil War to know exactly what happened), the object of any good book should be to make the reader think, not simply repeat the familiar stories. Rossino’s book certainly meets this criterion. Whether you are an expert on the Maryland Campaign or a casual student, this book ought to be on your reading list.

Contributor Biographies

Steven R. Stotelmyer is a native of Hagerstown, Maryland. He first visited Antietam National Battlefield as a child picnicking with his family in the Philadelphia Brigade Park. He has been fascinated with Antietam ever since. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Frostburg State College and a Master of Arts from Hood College in Frederick. Mr. Stotelmyer was employed as a teacher in Washington County. The high point of the school year in the spring for his students was the all-day field trip to Antietam. After ten years teaching Steve made a career change into surveying, and civil engineering, in Frederick County. His daily commute took him over the South Mountain Battlefield. This travel, and the 25 years in “Fredericktowne” expanded his curiosity into the Maryland Campaign. He returned to Washington County and was employed by county government in the Public Works Department. Steve retired in 2014 and has since been pursuing his lifetime avocation at Antietam. In 1989 Stotelmyer was a founding member of the Central Maryland Heritage League, a non-profit land trust which helped preserve some of the South Mountain Battlefield. During his tenure with CMHL he discovered significant information regarding the Battle of South Mountain and the Legend of Wise’s Well. This led to the publication of *The Bivouacs of the Dead: The Story of Those Who Died at Antietam and South Mountain* (Toomey Press, 1992). In 2019 Stotelmyer authored *Too Useful to Sacrifice, Reconsidering George B. McClellan’s Generalship in the Maryland Campaign from South Mountain to Antietam*. (Savas Beatie, 2019). Currently, Steve is a National Park Service Volunteer as well as a NPS Certified Antietam and South Mountain Battlefield Tour Guide. His most recent book, *From Frederick to Sharpsburg: People, Places, and Events of the Maryland Campaign Before Antietam*, was published by the Antietam Institute.

Tom McMillan has served on the board of trustees of Pittsburgh’s Heinz History Center, the board of directors of the Friends of Flight 93 National Memorial, and the marketing committee of the Gettysburg Foundation. He has written four books, including *Flight 93: The Story, The Aftermath, and the Legacy of American Courage on 9/11* and the newly released *Our Flag Was Still There*. McMillan recently retired after a 43 career in sports communications, which included 25 years as

VP/Communications for the NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins. He has a journalism degree from Point Park University and resides with his family in Pittsburgh.

Colleen McMillan is a Battlefield Ambassador at Antietam National Battlefield and a member of the Antietam Institute's Honor Guard. She retired last year after a 37 year career with the Federal court in Pittsburgh, including 15 years as chief deputy clerk.

John W. Schildt was writing Civil War articles for local newspapers while still in high school. His *September Echoes*, published in 1960, was the first Civil War book on Antietam in 80 years. Since then, he has written 32 books and hundreds of articles, given thousands of tours, talks, and lectures, and pioneered public education in Civil War field medicine. He is a pastor, Antietam Battlefield Guide, and founding member of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine, Save Historic Antietam Foundation, and the Antietam Institute. Along with *September Echoes*, his books include *Drums Along the Antietam*, *Roads from Gettysburg*, *These Honored Dead*, *Islands of Mercy*, *Hunter Holmes McGuire*, *Stonewall Day by Day*, and *Roads to Antietam*.

Andy Cardinal has had a lifelong interest in the Civil War. After graduating from Hiram College with a BA in history, he has spent the last 28 years as a public school teacher and administrator in Ohio. He lives in Garrettsville, Ohio, with his wife Melissa and two children, Mandy and Jared. This is the first time he has been published. He would like to thank Jare Cardinal for her assistance in transcribing the text.

Joseph Stahl retired from the Institute for Defense Analyses. He is active in the Civil War community and has authored more than two dozen articles. He has coauthored five books, including most recently *Faces of Union Soldiers at Culp's Hill: Gettysburg's Critical Defense*.

J. O. Smith has a master's degree in history from the University of Georgia and undergraduate and law degrees from Duke University. He is an attorney and lives with his family near Annapolis, Maryland. He has been a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide since 2018.

Laura L. Marfut is a retired U.S. Army colonel with master's degrees in International Relations and Education, and a Master of Strategic

Studies degree from the U.S. Army War College. She has been a Certified Antietam Battlefield Guide since 2019.

Mike Doyle was born in Hagerstown, and at an early age moved to the west base of South Mountain about six miles north of Frostown Gap. On a 3rd Grade field trip, Mike went to Antietam National Battlefield where he first saw the Gardner photos that sparked his fascination for old photos. After graduating from Boonsboro High School, Mike started a career in masonry construction. His first job was on the historic Ecker farm that looked over the battlefield. Mike started doing Ranger-led hikes, and researching old pictures which led him to the idea of making Then and Now posts on his Facebook page.

Jay H. Ferris is a graduate of Tennessee Wesleyan College with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. He lives near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and is retired.

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