

THE PENNSYLVANIA PRESS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

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IN MANY respects the Civil War is America's Trojan war. From it has emerged a folklore of heroes and stirring deeds of which the American people seem never to tire of hearing. Here in Gettysburg the memories of the Civil War are especially green. The decisive battle of that unfortunate holocaust was fought here; the commanding general on the Union side was a Pennsylvanian; and one of the principal heroes of the bloody conflict was John F. Reynolds of neighboring Lancaster, who fell during the first day's fighting. So it is fitting that today we turn our attention once more to that great sectional struggle and review a chapter that may be unfamiliar to some—the rôle that Pennsylvania's newspapers played in that war.

First let us make a running survey of the Pennsylvania press in 1861. According to figures published in the federal census of 1860 there were 28 daily and 242 weekly newspapers in the state.¹ Dailies were to be found only in the largest cities, such as Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Reading, Lancaster, Harrisburg, and Easton. Some of the country weeklies were ably edited, however, and some were more than locally influential.

In Philadelphia the outstanding newspapers were the *Public Ledger*, the *Inquirer*, the *Press*, the *Evening Bulletin*, the *North American*, the *Daily News*, the *Pennsylvanian*, and the *Evening Journal*.² The *Public Ledger* had the largest circulation of all. It was a penny paper, independent politically and conservative in its views on the war. The *Inquirer* was in many respects the best

¹ U. S. Bureau of Census, *Statistics of the United States in 1860 Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census*, Book 4 of 8th Census, 1860 (Washington, D. C., 1866), p. 321.

² For a more complete account of Philadelphia journalism during the Civil War period see Elwyn Burns Robinson, *The Public Press of Philadelphia during the Civil War*, an unpublished doctoral dissertation (Western Reserve University, 1936).

newspaper published in Philadelphia.³ At the beginning of the conflict it called itself an independent paper, but it generally supported the policies of the administration. It was also regarded in Philadelphia as the organ of the great banker, Jay Cooke.⁴ The *Press*, President Lincoln's Philadelphia organ, was the leading Republican newspaper in Pennsylvania. The *Evening Bulletin* was particularly friendly to Simon Cameron, Republican boss of Pennsylvania and Lincoln's first secretary of war. It was identified with the radical wing of the Republican party and was the first Philadelphia paper to take a definite stand against slavery. The *North American* was completely in sympathy with the commercial and industrial interests of eastern Pennsylvania. As their main spokesman it ignored the slavery question and concentrated on the tariff. In fact, it was probably the most vehement tariff journal in Pennsylvania if not the most rabid in the whole country. The *Daily News* likewise was a pro-tariff Republican paper, which attempted to straddle the slavery question. The *Pennsylvanian*, the leading Democratic newspaper in Philadelphia before the Civil War, suspended publication in April, 1861, for lack of political patronage and left the way open for the *Evening Journal* to figure as the Democratic organ of the Quaker metropolis. For one reason or another the policy of the paper did not suit the Democratic leaders, and not until the *Philadelphia Age* was launched by Adam Glossbrenner in March, 1863, did Philadelphia have an aggressive Democratic organ again.

The Pittsburgh newspaper field at the outbreak of the war was dominated by the *Gazette*,⁵ the *Commercial Journal*, the *Chronicle*, the *Dispatch*, the *Post*, and the *Freiheits Freund*. The *Gazette* was a Republican paper in the narrowest sense of the term, a high-tariff organ with strong abolitionist leanings. The *Commercial Journal*, another Republican paper, was merged with it in May, 1861. The *Chronicle*, although Republican, was more moderate in its tone. The *Dispatch*, a penny paper, probably had the largest circulation of any of the Pittsburgh newspapers. It

³ Edward Dicey, an English traveler, referred to it in 1863 as the leading newspaper published in Pennsylvania. Dicey, *Six Months in the Federal States* (London, 1863), I, 42-3.

⁴ Ellis Paxson Oberholtzer, *Jay Cooke, the Financier of the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1907), I, 232.

⁵ The Civil War career of this paper is treated in detail in J. Cutler Andrews, *Pittsburgh's Post-Gazette, "The First Newspaper West of the Alleghenies"* (Boston, 1936), pp. 153-162.

was unique in being independent in both local and national politics. The *Post* was the leading Democratic newspaper in western Pennsylvania. The *Freiheits Freund*, a Republican paper, was the principal German newspaper of the same area.

At Harrisburg were to be found the state organs of the Republican and the Democratic parties, the *Pennsylvania Telegraph* and the *Patriot and Union*. Each had a vigorous editorial policy and was widely copied throughout the state. In Lancaster there was the *Intelligencer*, the so-called "home organ of Buchanan" and the oldest Democratic paper in Pennsylvania. Also worthy of mention are the Reading *Adler*, often referred to as "the Berks County Bible"; the *Franklin Repository* of Chambersburg, the personal organ of Colonel A. K. McClure during the latter part of the war; and the Erie *Observer*, the leading Democratic newspaper of northwestern Pennsylvania.

Although Pennsylvania had no Civil War editor whose reputation was equal to that of Horace Greeley or Samuel Bowles, several of her editors were conspicuous in national affairs at this time. Among the foremost Republican journalists of the state were Colonel John W. Forney of the Philadelphia *Press*, Morton McMichael of the *North American*, and Colonel McClure of the *Franklin Repository*. Forney, the leading Republican editor of Philadelphia, was of German extraction, with curly hair, a big nose, and a receding chin. His face, an open face, was a curious combination of strength and weakness. His journalistic career started with the *Intelligencer* in Lancaster, where he became the protégé of James Buchanan and was pushed along by him. He founded the Philadelphia *Press* in 1857 as a Democratic paper, but difficulties with Buchanan, then president, over an appointment which Forney coveted and a difference of opinion on the Kansas question estranged the two men. The editor first turned to Stephen A. Douglas and finally went all the way over to the Republican camp. During the war he entertained lavishly at his Washington quarters in the Mills House; army officers, preachers, actors, journalists, cabinet officers, and even Lincoln attended his soirées. His Washington organ, the *Chronicle*, added spice to the Washington news in the *Press*. Forney himself wrote the Washington letter, using the pseudonym "Occasional." He enjoyed public speaking, especially his own, and frequently went on the

stump. The Democrats detested him cordially and called him a renegade when they called him no worse.⁶

McMichael, who had been a Philadelphia editor for thirty-five years and president of the Pennsylvania Editorial Union in 1860, was of Ulster Irish stock, round-faced and smooth-shaven, with drooping mustaches and heavy eyebrows. A leading Democratic editor said of him in 1861: "As speaker and writer Mr. McMichael is without a superior in the state."⁷ Forney, who knew him well, enlarged upon his great ability as an extemporaneous speaker, his full command of choicest language, his musical voice and magnetic presence, and his inexhaustible store of humor.⁸ During the war he made many speeches not only in Philadelphia but also at war meetings in various parts of the state. By concerning himself with issues and refusing to take part in personal abuse he did much to improve the tone of the newspaper press.⁹

McClure, a man of singularly pleasing presence with massive leonine head and broad shoulders, was, in contrast to Forney, no friend of Cameron's. His association with Andrew Curtin, the war governor of Pennsylvania and Cameron's great political adversary, predated the war considerably. In 1861 McClure was not in the newspaper field, although he had previously been editor of three different Pennsylvania newspapers. In 1863 he re-entered the journalistic field by purchasing the *Franklin Repository* and making it resound with Republican campaign arguments. He was a power in the councils of the Republican party, both state and national. In 1860 he and Curtin had helped to swing Pennsylvania's vote to Lincoln in the Chicago convention, and as chairman of the Republican state committee he had conducted the Republican campaign in Pennsylvania that fall and was personally as much responsible for the election of Lincoln as any other one man. First as chairman of the state Senate Committee on Military Affairs and later as state supervisor of the draft, he was the backbone of Pennsylvania's war effort. All through the conflict he acted as the liaison man between Governor Curtin and the

⁶ Forney's career is summarized in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, VI, 526-7. See also Frank Luther Mott, *American Journalism* (New York, 1941), p. 347.

⁷ *Lancaster Intelligencer*, September 24, 1861.

⁸ John Wien Forney, *Anecdotes of Public Men* (New York, 1873-1881), II, 119.

⁹ *Dictionary of American Biography*, XII, 142-3.

administration in Washington. His enthusiasm was unquenchable; within three weeks after his paper was burned out by rebel raiders in July, 1864, he was back on the job casting confusion into the ranks of the opposition with his vigorous editorials.¹⁰

On the Democratic side James P. Barr and George Sanderson were the outstanding figures. The former, an Irish American with a twinkling Celtic countenance, was the foremost Democratic editor in western Pennsylvania as the latter was in the eastern part of the state. Allegheny county was a forlorn spot for a Democratic editor, for it had long been a Whig and Republican stronghold, but Barr did not belie his blood. He had fought grimly but unsuccessfully for Douglas in 1860. During the war he backed the administration at first but veered off as the radical wing of the Republican party became dominant.¹¹

Sanderson, also an old newspaper man, had been editor of the *American Volunteer* in Carlisle before coming to Lancaster to take over the *Intelligencer*. He was mayor of Lancaster all through the Civil War period, and in 1863 he was seriously considered for the gubernatorial nomination. When the Democratic editors of Pennsylvania met in convention to inaugurate the state campaign of that year, they showed their regard for Sanderson by asking him to preside over the convention.¹²

Some other interesting figures in Pennsylvania war journalism were William W. Harding, owner of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, who made his paper the rival of the *New York Herald* in news enterprise; William McKean, his chief editor during the war and one of the ablest journalists in Philadelphia; Alexander Cummings of the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, a brigadier general who never saw the battlefield, who became seriously involved in the War Department scandals of 1861 and afterwards lost control of the *Bulletin*; William Swain, who was popularly credited with having made a fortune of \$3,000,000 out of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* and was described as having "an unquestionably dubious face, to which his cold frowning habit of countenance gave an almost sinister

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, XI, 593-4; J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1884), III, 2047-2051.

¹¹ The obituary notice of Barr's death in the *Pittsburgh Post*, September 15, 1886, is reprinted along with other newspaper obituaries in *In Memoriam James P. Barr* (Pittsburgh, 1887).

¹² Alexander Harris, *A Biographical History of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania* (Lancaster, Pa., 1872), p. 311; *Harrisburg Patriot and Union*, June 18, 1863.

expression"¹³; J. Heron Foster of the *Dispatch*, the oldest newspaper publisher connected with the Pittsburgh press; Robert G. Harper of the *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), who claimed to be the oldest editor in Pennsylvania in active service;¹⁴ Benjamin Franklin Meyers, the peppery editor of the *Bedford Gazette*, whose first journalistic experience was an assignment to cover a speech by Stephen A. Douglas on the Kansas-Nebraska bill; Franklin Weirick, the fire-and-brimstone "copperhead" editor of the *Selinsgrove Times*; and George F. Baer of the *Somerset Democrat*, years later the author of an unfortunate letter which had a great deal to do with the outcome of the great anthracite-coal strike.¹⁵

During the war the Pennsylvania press continued to mold public opinion in accordance with the dictates of party leaders and business enterprise. Contracts for government printing and advertising cemented the alliance. With rare exceptions the only criticisms of war profiteering and official speculation came from the opposition papers. When the Hopkins committee presented its report¹⁶ to the lower house of the legislature in 1862 containing evidence that Thomas A. Scott, vice president of the Pennsylvania Railroad and assistant secretary of war, had offered the editor of the *Brownsville Clipper* three or four hundred dollars in return for his support of the tonnage bill and that attempts had been made to corrupt other Pennsylvania editors for the same purpose, the report was promptly smothered by the press, and doubtless few Pennsylvanians ever heard anything about it.

Many Pennsylvania editors held political office during the war. It was Lincoln's usual practice to fill the principal post-office appointments from the editorial fraternity; some editors held seats in the state legislature; Barr was elected surveyor-general in 1862 and continued in office until the end of the war; Russell Errett of the *Pittsburgh Gazette* was clerk of the state senate during the 1860-1861 session; and J. Heron Foster became provost general of the twenty-second district of Pennsylvania¹⁷ just be-

¹³ James D. Reid, *The Telegraph in America* (New York, 1879), p. 131.

¹⁴ *Adams Sentinel* (Gettysburg), November 10, 1863.

¹⁵ Mark Sullivan, *Our Times; the United States, 1900-1925* (New York, 1926-1935), II, 424-7.

¹⁶ *Report of the Select Committee of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, in Relation to the Passage of the Act for the Commutation of Tonnage Duties* (Harrisburg, 1862), 56p.

¹⁷ U. S. War Department, *Report of Secretary of War, 1865*, Appendix, pt. 2, p. 142.

fore the entrance of his paper into the factional fight against the renomination of Curtin for governor.

Throughout the war Republican editors were active in recruiting, pushing Jay Cooke's bond drives,¹⁸ securing donations for subsistence and sanitary committees, "boosting" sanitary fairs, organizing union leagues, looking after the interests of Pennsylvania soldiers, and exposing the nefarious schemes of the copperheads. No opportunity was lost to identify the Democratic party with the rebel cause.

Most of the Democratic papers momentarily rallied behind the national administration but became lukewarm in their support as the war took on the aspect of a thinly disguised abolitionist crusade. They objected to the so-called "despotic" acts of the national government: the suspension of habeas corpus by executive action, the seizure of private telegraphic dispatches, and, above all, arbitrary arrests of Democratic editors. From the point of view of the war party the abuse of Lincoln in the Democratic press was equally inexcusable. The Lancaster *Intelligencer*, for example, referred to him as "a miserable low buffoon [who] disgraces the presidential chair."¹⁹ The Harrisburg *Patriot and Union* thought he acted "more like a well-trained monkey than a man of sense and a gentleman,"²⁰ while the Bedford *Gazette* railed at "that wholesale slaughter of the King's English so characteristic of Mr. Lincoln's literary efforts."²¹ Most extreme of all was the Selinsgrove *Times*, which denounced Lincoln in its Christmas Day editorial of 1863 as

one of the most deceptive, cold-blooded, unfeeling, and basest men. . . . He is a liar, a thief, a robber, a brigand, a pirate, a perjurer, a traitor, a coward, a hypocrite, a

¹⁸ The active part which the Pennsylvania press took in this field is set forth in Henrietta Larson, *Jay Cooke, Private Banker* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), pp. 127-8; 453; Oberholtzer, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 232; 581-2; E. B. Robinson, "The Dynamics of American Journalism from 1787 to 1865," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXI (October, 1937), 444-5. In his *Autobiography* (Philadelphia, 1920), pp. 92-3, Wilmer Atkinson, one of the Civil War editors of the Norristown *Republican*, tells of receiving a letter from the great banker with a check for one hundred dollars enclosed. "Jay Cooke owed us nothing, we had done no business with him, and he did not personally know us nor we him. He lived in our county, though, and doubtless heard that we were upholding the Union cause, and wished to encourage us."

¹⁹ Lancaster *Intelligencer*, July 28, 1864.

²⁰ Harrisburg *Patriot and Union*, June 13, 1864.

²¹ Bedford *Gazette*, January 16, 1863.

cheat, a trickster, a murderer, a tyrant, an unmitigated scoundrel, and an infernal fool.²²

In such an atmosphere of name calling epithets like "copperhead," "niggerhead," and "tory" were exchanged freely.

On three occasions Democratic editors in this state were arrested and transported to Washington for investigation. Time and again angry mobs gathered in the streets outside the offices of "disloyal" publications. Sometimes presses were smashed and printing offices gutted. Among the newspapers so visited were the *Easton Sentinel*, the *West Chester Jeffersonian*, the *American Volunteer* of Carlisle, the *Kittanning Mentor*, the *Huntingdon Monitor*, the *Northumberland County Democrat* of Sunbury, and the *Crawford Democrat* of Meadville. The following description of an attack on the office of the *Huntingdon Monitor* illustrates the character of such disturbances:

Some were engaged in tearing the papers into shreds, others in demolishing the cases and furniture, a few stalwart fellows were breaking the press to pieces with hammers and axes, many were scattering the types through the streets, one was industriously engaged in sweeping the office, and all were shouting as if their throats would crack, the principal cry being, "Down with Copperhead Traitors!" "How are you, Copperbottoms!" &c &c.²³

At least once during the war a state meeting of Democratic editors drew up resolutions denouncing attempts to interfere with freedom of speech and of the press and expressing their surprise that Republican editors had not only stood by and seen these precious rights violated but had actually approved and endorsed their violation.²⁴

When the war began, most Pennsylvania journals (as they were usually styled) were dull contraptions printed on one sheet folded to make four pages. The principal stock in trade was political news. But the war wrought a revolution in news gathering. Paced by the New York papers and the Philadelphia *Inquirer*, the

²² Quoted in William A. Russ, Jr., "Franklin Weirick: 'Copperhead' of Central Pennsylvania," *PENNSYLVANIA HISTORY*, V (October, 1938), 245-6.

²³ *Huntingdon Journal and American*, May 27, 1863.

²⁴ *Lancaster Intelligencer*, August 18, 1863.

press of Pennsylvania bestirred itself to furnish the public with war news. In some cases daily newspapers put out both morning and evening editions. Country weeklies resorted to semiweekly half sheets. Publishing costs rose along with circulation. Newspapers were peppered with taxes from all sides—taxes on advertisements, taxes on telegraphic dispatches, taxes on ink and paper. The greatest problem was to secure paper. None of the Pennsylvania journals was reduced to using wall paper (as some of the southern newspapers were), but some of them substituted a bleached straw paper, brown in color, for the white cotton-rag variety which had been customary. Advertising and subscription rates rose sharply. The *Philadelphia Press*, published at the two-cent level in 1861, increased its price first to three cents and then to four. The *Inquirer* reluctantly went to three and back to two again. The *Ledger* sustained heavy financial losses before it raised its price to two cents in 1864.²⁵ The only penny papers left in Pennsylvania at the end of the war were the *Philadelphia Daily News* and the *Pittsburgh Dispatch*.²⁶

Only the Philadelphia papers in Pennsylvania were large enough to engage professional war correspondents, but most of the smaller papers were able to get one or more soldiers from their localities to send back army letters from the field. The *Lancaster Express* and the *Pittsburgh Chronicle* probably carried more army correspondence than any other newspapers outside Philadelphia. The *Inquirer*, the *Press*, and the *Bulletin* led the Philadelphia press in this respect. The *Inquirer* boasted the largest corps of correspondents attached to any American newspaper with the exception of the *New York Herald*.²⁷ Among its ace writers were Uriah H. Painter and Henry Bentley. Painter represented the paper at Bull Run, and when the Union troops retreated, in his great eagerness to see everything he was trapped inside the Confederate lines. With great presence of mind he passed himself off as a hospital attendant. Then, watching his chance, he intercepted a wounded army horse dashing through the woods without saddle or bridle and rode away on it clinging to the mane of the animal. In company with E. C. Stedman of the *New York World* he reached Washington at dawn the morning after the battle.

²⁵ George W. Childs, *Recollections* (Philadelphia, 1890), pp. 14-15.

²⁶ Robinson, *Public Press of Philadelphia*, p. 137; Thomas Cushing and others, *History of Allegheny County, Pennsylvania* (Chicago, 1889), p. 658.

²⁷ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 3, 1862.

When he found that the censors would not pass his story over the wires, he boarded the first train going north and slept on the floor of a baggage car until he pulled into Philadelphia. At the *Inquirer* office he was met with angry queries. What was he doing there? Why wasn't he with the army on the way to Richmond? Painter patiently explained. As the bulletins appeared on the *Inquirer* window telling about the defeat of the Union army, crowds gathered threatening to wreck the *Inquirer* office for spreading copperhead news. Painter staked his life on the truth of his statements, and before nightfall it was only too clear that he was right.²⁸

Bentley, too, had some exciting experiences. His "Letters from a Balloon" appealed to the popular imagination. At Shiloh he had the bad luck to be captured at the breakfast table as the battle was beginning. His breakfast companions were killed, and he was robbed of everything except his pantaloons and boots. Later he made his escape, but not soon enough to give his newspaper a "scoop" on the account of the battle.²⁹

Probably the most widely known correspondent of the Philadelphia *Press* was John Russell Young, who alternated between the editorial sanctum and the field. His account of Bull Run was one of the best printed, but after the battle of Williamsburg he was stricken with typhoid fever and sent home.³⁰ The *Press* was probably the only newspaper during the war to employ a colored war correspondent, who was attached to General Butler's command. Forney sent him to Richmond at the end of the war, and while writing for the *Press* in the state house he was insulted by an angry Confederate, whom he promptly knocked down and soundly thrashed.³¹

The news to be found in the press from day to day probably became less and less reliable as the war dragged on. The increasing severity of the censorship, mounting war phobia, and the flow of stock-market canards tended to produce this result. On De-

²⁸ Oberholtzer, *op. cit.*, I, 146-7.

²⁹ Philadelphia *Inquirer*, April 14, 1862.

³⁰ Leland M. Williamson and others (ed.), *Prominent and Progressive Pennsylvanians of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia, 1898), I, 529-31.

³¹ Forney, *op. cit.*, II, 217; New York *Herald*, August 10, 1864; Morris Chester to John Russell Young (undated), John Russell Young Papers.

cember 16, 1862, for example, the managing editor of the Philadelphia *Press* received a telegram from Forney which said, "Don't treat the affair at Fredericksburg as a disaster." The next morning the *Press* informed its readers that "we are gratified beyond measure in being enabled to assure the country . . . that the wild rumors of defeat and disaster are without foundation."³² And yet it was the worst defeat that the Union army suffered during the entire conflict. The Civil War, like every war, produced its atrocity stories—stories of the brutalities inflicted on Union prisoners, stories of the use of the white flag as a decoy. A "yarn" went the rounds about the skulls of the Union dead at Bull Run being converted into drinking cups by the enemy.³³ Only a month before the war ended, Philadelphia was characterized in a New York newspaper editorial as "the great mother of false intelligence, windy rumors and sidewalk stories."³⁴

Thrice during the war the soil of Pennsylvania was invaded by the enemy—in 1862, in 1863, and again in 1864. The second invasion culminated in the battle of Gettysburg. Some remarks concerning the way in which the battle was reported by the Pennsylvania press may be of interest. Probably the best account was written by Whitelaw Reid, who was not connected with any Pennsylvania newspaper. But, although the fighting terminated on the third of July, no connected account of it appeared in the nation's press before the sixth. Before the battle and for some time after it Gettysburg was isolated from the rest of the country. Only the military telegraph was functioning, and some of the correspondents were marooned in Harrisburg by an order from General Couch.³⁵ The Gettysburg papers especially were handicapped in reporting the battle. The printing office of the *Star* was ransacked and the type destroyed before the engagement even began.³⁶ The editor of the *Compiler* was arrested on a trumped-up charge by the Federal authorities the day after the battle and hustled off to Fort McHenry in Baltimore.³⁷ Robert Harper, the editor of the only other Gettysburg paper, the *Adams Sentinel*, had to act as his own war correspondent. He printed

³² John Russell Young Papers; Philadelphia *Press*, December 17, 1862.

³³ See for example the Philadelphia *Press*, June 6, 1863.

³⁴ New York *Tribune*, March 8, 1865.

³⁵ Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*, July 1, 1863.

³⁶ *Central Press* (Bellefonte), July 31, 1863.

³⁷ Gettysburg *Compiler*, July 13, 1863.

his story as local news on page 2 of his July 7 issue with an apology for having skipped an issue.³⁸ The description of the battle printed in the *Philadelphia Age* was copied by the Democratic press all over the state, but the most vivid account in any Pennsylvania newspaper appeared in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*.

On what a spectacle the sun of Thursday rose, the memory of at least that portion of our forces who witnessed it from Cemetery Hill will linger forever. From its crest the muzzles of fifty cannon pointed toward the hills beyond the town. From the bluffs to the right and left additional artillery frowned, and away on either side, in a graceful and majestic curve, thousands of infantry moved into battle line, their bayonets gleaming like serpent's scales. The roofs of Gettysburg in the valley below, the rifts [sic] of woodland along the borders of Rock creek, the orchards far down on the left, the fields green and beautiful, in which the cattle were calmly grazing, composed a scene of such peace as it appeared was never made to be marred by the clangor of battle. I strolled out to the cemetery ere the dew was yet melted from the grass, and leaned against a monument to listen to the singing of the birds. One note, milder than the rest, had just broken from the throat of an oriole in the foliage above me when the sullen rattle of musketry on the left told that skirmishing had begun. . . .

Then, as the smoke beyond the village was lightly borne to the eastward, the woods on the left were seen filled with dark masses of infantry, three columns deep, who advanced at a quick-step. Magnificent! Such a charge by such a force—full 45,000 men, under Hill and Longstreet—even though it threatened to pierce and annihilate the 3d Corps, against which it was directed, drew forth cries of admiration from all who beheld it. General Sickles and his splendid command withstood the shock with a determination that checked, but could not fully restrain it. Back, inch by inch, fighting, falling, dying, cheering, the men retired. The rebels came on more furiously, halting at intervals, pouring volleys that struck our troops down in scores. General Sickles, fighting desperately, was struck in the leg and fell. . . . Faltering for an instant, the rebel columns seemed about to recede before the tempest. But their officers, who could be seen

³⁸ A feature story about this episode appeared in *Time*, February 12, 1940, just after the old Ramage hand press on which the story was printed was donated to the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia.

through the smoke of the conflict galloping and swinging their swords along the lines, rallied them anew, and the next instant the whole line sprang forward as if to break through our own by mere weight of numbers. . . .

THE BATTLE OF FRIDAY

As one who stands in a tower and looks down upon a lengthy pageant marching through a thoroughfare, finds it impossible at the close to recall in order the appearances and the incidents of the scene, so I, who sit this evening on a camp stool beside the ruins of the monument against which I leaned listening to the robin of yesterday, find it impossible to recall with distinctness the details of the unparalleled battle just closed. The conflict, waged by 160,000 men, which has occupied with scarcely an interval of rest the entire day, from 4 A.M. until 6 o'clock this evening, contains so much, so *near*, and such voluminous matter of interest as one mind cannot grasp without time for reflection.

This last engagement has been the fiercest and most sanguinary of the war. It was begun at daylight by Gen. Slocum, whose troops, maddened by the loss of many comrades, and eager to retrieve the position lost by them on the preceding evening, advanced and delivered a destructive fire against the rebels under Ewell. That general's entire force responded with a charge that is memorable even beyond those made by them yesterday. It was desperation against courage! . . . It seemed as if the gray-uniformed troops, who were advanced and re-advanced by their officers up to the very edge of the line of smoke in front of our infantry, were impelled by some terror in their rear, which they were as unable to withstand as they were to make headway against the fire in their front. It was hard to believe such desperation voluntary. It was harder to believe that the courage which withstood and defeated it was mortal. . . .

Disordered, routed, and confused, his whole force retreated, and at 11 o'clock the battle ceased and the stillness of death ensued. This silence continued until 2 P.M. At this moment the rebel artillery from all points, in a circle radiating around our own, began a terrific and concentrated fire on Cemetery Hill. . . . The flock of pigeons, which not ten minutes previously had darkened the sky above, were scarcely thicker than the flock of horrible missiles that now, instead of sailing harmlessly above, descended upon our position. The atmosphere was thick with shot and shell. The storm broke upon us so suddenly

that soldiers and officers—who leaped, as it began, from their tents, or from lazy siestas on the grass—were stricken in their rising with mortal wounds and died, some with cigars between their teeth, some with pieces of food in their fingers, and one at least—a pale young German from Pennsylvania—with a miniature of his sister in his hands, that seemed more meet to grasp an artist's pencil than a musket. Horses fell, shrieking such awful cries as Cooper told of, and writhing about in helpless agony. The boards of fences, scattered by the explosion, flew in splinters through the sky. The earth, torn up in clouds, blinded the eyes of hurrying men; and through the branches of the trees and among the grave-stones of the cemetery a shower of destruction crashed ceaselessly.³⁹

The description of Pickett's charge is disappointingly brief. It includes mention of cowardice on the part of some who took part in it. And so the story ends with the triumph belonging at last to "the noble Army of the Potomac."

A second battle of Gettysburg was occasioned by some extremely plain writing on the part of a *New York Times* correspondent, L. L. Crounse, who in a letter to his paper charged the male population of Gettysburg with "craven-hearted meanness." Most of the men, he stated, fled in advance of the battle, leaving their wives and children to the mercy of the enemy, and on their return instead of helping to care for the wounded immediately ran to the military authorities with bills for damages sustained during the invasion.⁴⁰ The Gettysburg papers fiercely denied these "foul slanders" and submitted in rebuttal a long statement signed by a body of clergymen.⁴¹

Late in the fall of 1863 Gettysburg was again the focus of national interest when a group of notables gathered there for the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery. Edward Everett was the orator of the occasion; as the echoes of his voice died away in the distance, a tall, gaunt figure slouched to the front of the platform.

³⁹ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, July 9, 1863. This account was reprinted in the *Raftsmen's Journal* (Clearfield), July 15, 1863, and in the *Franklin Repository*, July 22, 1863, and probably in other Pennsylvania papers as well.

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, July 9, 1863.

⁴¹ *Adams Sentinel*, July 14, 1863; *Gettysburg Compiler*, July 27, 1863.

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty . . . [and] we here highly resolve . . . that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

In the crowd which anxiously faced the president was Mary Leader, covering an assignment for the *Hanover Spectator*. Unlike most of the other reporters, she was enthusiastic over the words she had heard. When her story was printed, it was almost unique in expressing the conviction that the Lincoln address would be one that the world would "long remember." Today in Hanover a campaign has just succeeded in raising \$500 for a suitable memorial to Mary Leader, "Pennsylvania's first girl reporter."

The Civil War left a deep impression upon American journalism. After 1865 there was probably as much news in one issue of the average daily as there had been in the issues of a whole week before 1860. The economic revolution inaugurated by the war was to bring about further changes in the collection and dissemination of news. In these benefits Pennsylvania was destined to share along with her sister states in the days of reconstruction ahead.