

PHILADELPHIA IN CRISIS: JUNE-JULY, 1863

BY WILLIAM L. CALDERHEAD*

IF ONE had lived in the nineteenth century one might on several occasions have heard something like the following: "The time to talk has passed. It is now the time to act! Stop the loom, silence the anvil, let the plow rest in the furrow. The enemy comes. Let us go forward to meet him."¹

These were the words of an inhabitant of a great city thought to be on the verge of siege and destruction in a long and costly war. The city could have been Vienna in 1805, or Moscow in 1812, or Paris in 1870. The scene, however, was an American one—Philadelphia in June, 1863. The people of the metropolis were rushing to arms, fully convinced that the Confederate army would shortly be upon them.

That army, to many, was undefeatable. Since the summer of 1862, it had fought five major battles and had won or come off well in every one of them. Soon there would be a sixth, and it was felt by some observers that it would end as the others had—in northern defeat.² After many months of warfare the city of Philadelphia knew full well the temper of the enemy that threatened her safety. The stage was set for the Confederate invasion; the resulting actions of a great city of 500,000 people in one of the critical periods of its long life would now be clearly seen.

Ironically enough, this fateful month in Philadelphia's history began almost in boredom. The war had just entered its third year and the initial thrill and glory of conflict, particularly after so many defeats, had become a thing of the past. The newspapers of

* William L. Calderhead is an Assistant Professor of History at the U. S. Naval Academy. He is an alumnus of the University of Pennsylvania where he completed his graduate work in American History.

¹ *The Press* (Philadelphia), June 17, 1863.

² Much evidence exists to show the city's gloomy viewpoint during the months preceding the invasion. Some citizens even attempted suicide. Such information can be found in Philadelphia newspapers: *The North American and United States Gazette*, *The Daily Evening Bulletin*, *The Public Ledger*; also in E. P. Oberholtzer, *Philadelphia, A History of the City and its People* (Philadelphia, 1912), 372.

the Quaker City were growing monotonous with their articles on the returning wounded, on troop movements, the changes of command, and the many Union defeats. Although men of military age were anxiously eyeing another draft, it was generally believed that the end of the war was almost in sight.³ News from the army at the front did not necessarily reflect this view, but still there seemed little to be alarmed at. The two warring forces faced one another along the Maryland-Virginia border as they had been doing for over two years, and in the latter part of May were recovering from the effects of the battle recently fought at Chancellorsville.

Unknown to the North and to Philadelphia, however, plans were underway by early June in the Confederate camp to carry the fighting into northern territory. The element of surprise was important. Yet, despite precautionary measures, the North was soon aware of some hidden danger now posed by the enemy, and on June 3 hushed rumors spread through Philadelphia that Lee was planning a raid on Pennsylvania.⁴ It was to be several more days though before any large units moved northward.⁵

Once the Confederate army got underway, it moved swiftly. Its first major problem was crossing the upper Potomac into Maryland, an action which the leading corps, numbering 23,000 men, undertook on June 16. Next the border area beyond the Union army's right flank had to be tested. This was done on June 15-16 when a Confederate cavalry unit swept over the Pennsylvania border, entered Chambersburg to collect cattle and horses, and then fell back to rejoin the army in Maryland.⁶

By June 10 Philadelphia knew that Lee's army was on the move. Varying degrees of concern were exhibited by many citizens, but the city as a whole showed no particular alarm.⁷ Then on June 15 the real news broke. A confirmed report reached the city that the Confederates were on their way to raid Pennsylvania.⁸ Alexander Henry, mayor of Philadelphia, verified this report and

³ *The Press; The Public Ledger* (Philadelphia), May, *passim*, 1863.

⁴ These were unauthenticated rumors. Entry of June 3, 1863, Diary of George Wolff Fahnestock in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. (All diaries, letterbooks, or journals in manuscript cited hereafter are in the HSP.)

⁵ Freeman, Douglas S., *Lee's Lieutenants* (New York, 1944), II, 714-715.

⁶ Stackpole, E. J., *They Met at Gettysburg* (Harrisburg, 1956), 15.

⁷ *The Press*, June 11-14, 1863; Entry of June 14, 1863, Diary of S. George Fisher.

⁸ *The Public Ledger, The Press*, June 16, 1863.

aroused the fears of the citizenry by warning that the city was in imminent peril.⁹ Shortly afterwards President Lincoln called for 100,000 men in the emergency, one half to be from Pennsylvania.¹⁰

As this news came in over the wires, tension mounted in the metropolis. Large crowds formed around the newspaper offices to wait for the latest bulletins. Major streets, such as Chestnut Street, were jammed with excited Philadelphians.¹¹ At various points in the city people gathered to hear exhortations from civic and military leaders. Independence Square in particular was the focal point for those citizens who were in or near city center.¹²

Soon after the invasion news arrived, numerous groups in Philadelphia began to respond to the threat now facing them by making organized plans for resistance. Among those who took action were the mayor and city councils. They busied themselves with the details of sending men to defend Harrisburg, agreed to proclaim martial law when and if the situation warranted it, spoke of preparing a plan to defend Philadelphia itself if necessary, called out the Home Guard under General Pleasonton, and issued a special defense poster to assist in this endeavor.¹³ Various private groups also contributed their efforts. An assemblage of bank presidents, for example, offered the governor a million dollars to pay recruits bounties before they left their homes. Noteworthy too was a meeting of the veterans of the War of 1812, many of whom were now in their seventies. They planned to form a company of "old timers" to set an example for the younger men.¹⁴

Individual citizens were less organized and reacted in different ways to the invasion threat. There were some people who were completely apathetic while others, appreciating the threat, felt that there was little cause for alarm as yet.¹⁵ However, one diarist recorded that he could hear late into the night the sound of locomotive bells, recruiting drums, and trunks being moved in private homes, since many families were packing their valuables to move

⁹ Alexander Henry to the Citizens of Philadelphia, June 15, 1863, Alexander Henry Papers.

¹⁰ *The Press*, June 16, 1863.

¹¹ *The Press*, June 17, 1863.

¹² *The Public Ledger*, June 16-17, 1863; *The Sunday Dispatch*, June 21, 1863.

¹³ *The Press*, June 18-19, 1863.

¹⁴ *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 16-20, 1863.

¹⁵ Entry of June 21, 1863, Journal of John Pennington.

DEFENCE

OF THE

CITY OF PHILADELPHIA



Office of the Mayor of the City of Philadelphia.

BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY vested in me, by the Act of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, entitled, "An Act relating to the Home Guard of the City of Philadelphia, Approved the Sixteenth day of May Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and sixty one.

I do hereby require Brigadier General A. J. PLEASANTON, Commander of the HOME GUARD, to order out (and into the service of the City of Philadelphia,) THE WHOLE OF THE SAID GUARD, for the preservation of the public peace AND THE DEFENCE OF THE CITY. And I hereby call upon all persons within the limits of the said City, to yield a PROMPT AND READY OBEDIENCE to the Orders of the said Commander of the HOME GUARD, and of those acting under his authority in the execution of his and their said duties.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Corporate Seal of the City of Philadelphia, to be affixed, this sixteenth day of June, A. D., one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three.

ALEXANDER HENRY,
Mayor of Philadelphia.

BEFORE GETTYSBURG, THE HOME GUARD ON DUTY.

(From a war time poster.)

them to a safer place.¹⁶ Such actions pleased another group of citizens. These were the Peace Democrats, a constant reminder that the city had always had an active pro-southern element.¹⁷ When the invasion came, this segment was "gleefully aroused." One citizen chronicled that "they walk our streets today radiant with joy, led on by Reed, Ingersoll, Wharton, and a horde of others."¹⁸ Yet their parading the streets and attempting to create local disturbances, while annoying, were generally insignificant. Most Philadelphians ignored them in the early bustle of preparations for defense.

It soon became apparent that the most effective of these preparations was the local recruitment of men for immediate use to stem the invasion of the state.¹⁹ These were to be sent to General Couch at Harrisburg and were composed of two categories: emergency militia who were temporarily part of the national forces, and 90-day militia whose terms were limited and who were to defend only the state of Pennsylvania. By June 19, three regiments and several companies of these newly enlisted troops were on the way to Harrisburg²⁰ to serve as reinforcements wherever needed.²¹

By the end of the week (June 21) the fears of Philadelphia concerning the Confederate threat to Pennsylvania had momentarily subsided. The great city had been stirred, but as yet only a minimum contribution to its defense had been made. Many citizens had shown alarm; and some, disloyalty. A number of organizations had offered their services, and perhaps three thousand recruits had been sent westward.²² Now an ominous spirit of apathy began to set in among the citizenry, particularly when the enemy did not appear immediately after the first days of crisis.

Philadelphians did not have long to wait, however, for the threat to return. Confirmed news bulletins beginning the following

¹⁶ Entry of June 16, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

¹⁷ Gray, Wood, *Hidden Civil War: The Story of the Copperheads* (New York, 1942), *passim*.

¹⁸ Entry of June 15, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock; the Ingersoll brothers, Charles and Edward, were later tried for treasonable activity and imprisoned at Fort Delaware. Frank Taylor, *Philadelphia in the Civil War* (Philadelphia, 1913), 199.

¹⁹ See Weigley, Russell F., "Emergency Troops in the Gettysburg Campaign," *Pennsylvania History*, XXV, 1 (January, 1958).

²⁰ Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 247-248.

²¹ Actually only one unit, the 17th Regiment, faced the enemy under fire while defending Harrisburg during the crisis.

²² *The Press, The Public Ledger*, June 16-20, 1860.

week, Monday, June 22, declared that the Confederate forces were at last in Pennsylvania. This time it was not just a skirmishing force of Confederate cavalry but a whole corps of the Confederate army. This threat was now reinforced by the first appearance of valuables and of refugees from the border towns of Chambersburg, Mercersburg, and Gettysburg.²³ These refugees were "coming in on foot with their small effects in every variety of package and bundle that could be carried by hand."²⁴ Moving in the opposite direction toward Harrisburg many Philadelphians noticed regular army forces, including the New York "Fighting Sixty-Ninth" that had been despatched for the emergency.²⁵

For the second time in just over a week the city was sharply aroused. Once again the city councils met and decided to order all business houses closed at three o'clock in the afternoon, so that all employees could drill. Further, since no plans had yet been made to erect fortifications, it was agreed that a good commander be obtained to supervise the work of defending the city.²⁶ The Federal government on June 26 chose Major General Napoleon J. T. Dana for this purpose.²⁷ After his appointment Dana made an immediate assessment of the city's security and found it "almost defenseless" with only 400 men on guard and two pieces of artillery and just 500 stands of arms in the city.²⁸

With such conditions prevailing, individual citizens were growing more apprehensive. On June 25 a great stir was created in the city when word spread that the Rebels were closing in on Harrisburg. One Philadelphian stated. "Reports of the most exaggerated character flew from mouth to mouth, and it grew so improbable towards evening that I was obliged to resort to argument to convince the children that the Rebels were not astride the telegraph wires." It was on this same evening that the more timid souls began leaving the city. The diarist referred to earlier observed, "Mother came in this evening, greatly excited about the war news.

²³ Stackpole, E. J., *op. cit.*, 19.

²⁴ Brainerd, Mary, *Life of Reverend Thomas Brainerd* (Philadelphia, 1870), 303.

²⁵ *The Press*, June 23-24, 1863.

²⁶ *The Press*, June 26, 1863.

²⁷ *Official Records*, XXVII, Ser. I, Part III, 347, Special Order No. 16, from Adjutant General's office of Major General Couch, June 26, 1863.

²⁸ *Official Records*, XXVII, Ser. 1, Part III, 365, General Dana to the Adjutant General, Department of Susquehanna, June 27, 1863.

She was for packing up and starting off for some place of safety.”²⁹

On the following day news concerning the enemy's movements did not improve and Governor Curtin made an urgent appeal to the state to supply him with 60,000 men to repel the Confederate invasion.³⁰ It was possibly because of this plea that another group in the city, heretofore silent in the war, was to play its role during this emergency. These were the Negroes of Philadelphia. Until the Battle of Gettysburg, Negro troops had not played a prominent part in the northern armies. Pennsylvania had had no colored units enlisted, and in Philadelphia as elsewhere there had been strong prejudice against recruiting Negroes.³¹ But the invasion crisis changed this picture. A number of local leaders now formed a committee for raising colored regiments, and on June 23 Camp William Penn was set up beyond the city limits in Cheltenham Township as a rendezvous for the new Negro recruits. Several days later Governor Curtin indirectly aided this recruitment by sending word to Philadelphia that although he did not favor employing Negro soldiers, the need for men at this time was so overwhelming that he would now agree to their use.³² One Negro company which had been rejected a week previously and had returned to Philadelphia was now accepted at Harrisburg. In the remaining months of the war nearly 11,000 men (from all over the state) were mustered at Camp William Penn.³³

While this entirely new development was taking place, the city's inhabitants at the end of the second week were beginning to lapse into a second but more pronounced state of listlessness, since the initial shock was apparently wearing off. Noting this, one diarist recorded, "The people display entire apathy that the state is invaded. . . . I can see nothing to prevent the march of the enemy upon the city and of course it will be surrendered."³⁴ Another citizen commenting on the lack of defenses prophesied, "A handful of Rebels might capture the city."³⁵ To some residents, like the

²⁹ Entry of June 25, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

³⁰ Proclamation, June 26, 1863. *Pennsylvania Archives*, Papers of the Governors, 4th Series, VIII, 502-504.

³¹ Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 187.

³² Papers of the Supervisory Commission for the Recruitment of Colored Regiments, 1863-1864 (located in the HSP).

³³ Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 189.

³⁴ Entry of June 25, 1863, Diary of S. George Fisher.

³⁵ Entry of June 25-27, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

Peace Democrats, this idea was not an unpleasant one.³⁶ In this situation word began to spread that if Harrisburg fell, Philadelphia should be surrendered, since there were no adequate forces for its defense!³⁷

Twelve days had passed since the city had been first warned of the Confederate approach, and few really practical measures had been taken for meeting the local threat. Nearly all available troops and equipment had been lost to the city by being sent to Harrisburg. No defenses had been prepared, and the newly appointed director for defense, General Dana, was faced with a lack of sufficient administrative help, both civilian and military, and lukewarm cooperation from many businesses.³⁸ By the end of the week a willing but fearful civilian populace was suffering from inertia and defeatism.³⁹

But what of Lee and the Confederate army? By the last week in June these enemy forces had successfully moved beyond the flank of the Union army and were busily collecting provisions along the Pennsylvania border. Unknown to Philadelphia, Lee never included the capture of the city in his plans. As for Harrisburg the matter was entirely different. Lee had ordered General Ewell to seize it, if it came within his means, and several days later sent his two remaining corps to support Ewell in this venture. Only two factors prevented the Confederate capture of Harrisburg. One was the rapid assembly southeast of Gettysburg of the scattered corps of the Union army.⁴⁰ The other was the assemblage of over 50,000 emergency soldiers (about 15 per cent from Philadelphia) under General Couch at Harrisburg.⁴¹ Although only a small number of these saw action against the enemy, they undoubtedly had a tremendous moral effect on both sides.⁴² Whether or not Philadelphia would have surrendered, after the seizure of Harrisburg, is impossible to determine. Certainly the thought existed and a dangerous precedent for such action was set at York

³⁶ Entry of June 27, 1863, Diary of S. George Fisher.

³⁷ Entry of June 28, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

³⁸ Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 244-247; Mary Brainerd, *op. cit.*, 303-304.

³⁹ *The Press*, June 25-27, 1863.

⁴⁰ Montgomery, James S., *The Shaping of a Battle* (Philadelphia, 1959), 36.

⁴¹ Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 246.

⁴² The Confederates under General Early, for example, were thwarted at Wrightsville by the militia. In addition, General Meade spoke on several occasions of relying on these forces. Montgomery, James S., *op. cit.*, 18-36.

when civic leaders sent a special delegation on June 27 to find Lee and surrender to him.⁴³

While the three corps of the Confederate army were on their way to seize Harrisburg, the city of Philadelphia had temporarily lost track of the enemy and by the weekend of June 27-28 no one in the Quaker City was sure where Lee was, although as usual many were speculating publicly concerning his whereabouts. Then sometime in the morning of Sunday, June 28, news was received by telegraph—Lee's entire army of 80,000 veteran troops was now marching on Harrisburg.⁴⁴

With the receipt of this news, a torrent of feeling was let loose in the city. As soon as anyone left his home, he became part of the furor. Churchgoers talked about nothing except the invasion. The clergy reacted, too. From the pulpits came many appeals to the people to "gird on their armor." In the streets all over the city the same spirit prevailed. People gathered in knots especially at Chestnut and Third Streets and near Independence Square. Large groups milled around the various newspaper offices and hotels, and stayed until late at night. Even though it was Sunday, one could see and hear occasional drummers, followed by young boys, passing through the groups of waiting people, bearing cards stating, "Corn Exchange Guards, Immediate Service." Such scenes caught the eye of thousands of bystanders.⁴⁵

Individual citizens, as well as the excited masses, were infected by the frenzy. One witness recorded, "'To Arms! To Arms!' the cry here."⁴⁶ Another wrote, "I feel more depressed at this present writing than at any previous period of the war."⁴⁷ No longer did only a few think the city was to be overrun; now many held that view. Another citizen wrote, "The intention of the Rebel leaders to march upon and seize the city has become so manifest that it would be madness or imbecility to longer doubt the intentions of the foe."⁴⁸ The populace was also aroused by the actions of the city

⁴³ *Official Records*, XXVII, Ser. I, Part III, 389, Henry Palmer, Surgeon, to Major General Couch, June 28, 1863.

⁴⁴ *The Press*, June 29, 1863.

⁴⁵ *The Public Ledger*, June 29, 1863.

⁴⁶ Entry of June 28, 1863, Diary of Henry B. Benners.

⁴⁷ Entry of June 28, 1863, Journal of John Penington.

⁴⁸ *The Press*, June 29, 1863.

authorities. The mayor, in consultation with his advisors, had a special circular issued on the following morning, reading:

The undersigned do hereby enroll themselves as volunteers under three months' service and will assemble on the 29th at ----- District Station for organization.

A similar sheet was prepared for those who wished to enroll for city defense only. Soon policemen equipped with these circulars were in the streets securing pledges from all who would sign. They were helped by bystanders who urged everyone to enlist.⁴⁹

As Sunday drew to a close, the city was completely aroused. Bailey and Company (Bailey, Banks, and Biddle) began circulating a statement warning that it could not now be responsible for any silverware or other valuables that had been deposited for safe-keeping with the company. Actually many valuables were already being sent out of the city to avoid danger.⁵⁰ One witness records that the records and archives of the state were loaded in railroad cars and were resting upon sidings in West Philadelphia, dangerously near large quantities of petroleum.⁵¹ As yet, however, the people themselves were not ready to leave the metropolis. Some were in fact very firm in their determination to stay and were anxiously looking forward to Monday.⁵²

On Monday (June 29) the suspense continued to mount. The news in the morning papers increased the general hysteria of the city. In these papers the reader was faced with three proclamations. The first was from the mayor declaring that the Rebels "may in a few days" enter Philadelphia. To prevent this the city's 50,000 able-bodied men were to report at nine o'clock that morning at various rendezvous in the metropolis to organize for defense. The next dispatch was from General Dana, the director of the city defense. "The Confederate strategy," he declared, "is sufficiently well understood to make it certain that their object is Philadelphia. Arise now in your might. I urge all manufactories to close at noon, all other places at three. Devote the rest of the day to military organization." The last proclamation was from Governor Curtin

⁴⁹ *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 29, 1863.

⁵⁰ Entry of June 28, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Entry of June 28, 1863, Diary of S. George Fisher.

at Harrisburg. He demanded 60,000 troops. Philadelphia's quota was 8,000.⁵³ The War Department in Washington was also alarmed, and Secretary Stanton telegraphed General Dana to make certain that the machinery of factories making arms for the government would be put beyond the reach of the enemy.⁵⁴

In response to these proclamations several thousand citizens appeared at Independence Square to hear General Dana speak. He asked for 40,000 minute men for local defense. Thousands of laborers would be needed, he explained, to work on the fortifications which would soon begin. He concluded by adding that for the present martial law would not be imposed.⁵⁵ The great mass now broke up, but large numbers stayed in the streets, and eager thousands waited for hourly bulletins from the newspapers.⁵⁶

Reactions of private citizens on Monday were similar to what they had been on the day before. One writer, owner of a glass-making plant, recorded that he had put his furnace out of blast.⁵⁷ Another was disturbed that his friends were treating the affair somewhat lightly. To him the city stood a good chance of being taken, and he added that many would be happy if the enemy came.⁵⁸ Much more aroused was a third diarist who wrote, "This I may safely chronicle is the most trying day for Philadelphia since the War of the Revolution. . . . All day long a deep excitement has been apparent in all directions. . . . In the abandonment of hope I can only repeat to myself the 46th Psalm. . . . To quiet my family I sent up boxes to Mother's and my house in which a few valuables may be packed and in necessity sent to [safety]. . . . Mother's greatly excited and has all her servants busy packing clothing and all her valuables which will fill a cart or two. I may pack my silver and send it away for safekeeping."⁵⁹

This same idea was in the minds of a large number of people, and on the following day many families actually left and more were sending away their valuables.⁶⁰ The banks were taking action, too. At one bank the directors counted and sealed up the valuable

⁵³ *The Press*, June 29, 1863.

⁵⁴ *Official Records*, XXVII, Ser. I, Part III, 408, Edwin Stanton to General Dana, June 29, 1863.

⁵⁵ *The Press*, June 30, 1863.

⁵⁶ *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 30, 1863.

⁵⁷ Entry of June 29, 1863, Diary of H. B. Benners.

⁵⁸ Entry of June 29, 1863, Diary of S. G. Fisher.

⁵⁹ Entry of June 28, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

⁶⁰ Entries of June 30, 1863, Diaries of Fisher, Fahnestock, and Benners.

assets and placed them in a vault ready to be moved in case the need arose.⁶¹ On the streets there was less confusion and turmoil than there had been on the day before. Many stores and shops continued to remain closed, but this was not universally the case. Some proprietors kept their stores open, declaring that if their clerks left for defense duties they would be replaced.⁶² But such threats were useless since the city was now busily engaged in defense.

By July 1, thousands were drilling either for home or state defense. There was little unusual commotion in the streets except for the sound of drums and the appearance of companies moving in all directions. Among these were a number of the new Negro companies that had been formed for the emergency.⁶³ Needless to say, the day was not without its bad news. First, three regiments of Maine troops refused to help in city defense. They had been passing through the city homeward-bound after their enlistments had expired, and fervent appeals from local ministers, plus an offer of \$50 each if they would remain in Philadelphia just ten days, were to no avail. Some of the men and most of the officers were willing to help in the crisis, but the majority refused and the three regiments finally entrained for New York.⁶⁴ More disturbing was a telegram from the Governor stating that no part of Philadelphia's new quota had reached Harrisburg, while other areas had responded beyond expectations. At six o'clock the Governor arrived in the city. News of his coming spread, and before dark several thousand people had surrounded his hotel. A talented Negro singer was prevailed upon to sing the national anthem. When the chorus was reached, the crowd joined in, and the notes echoed over the darkening streets. Governor Curtin now appeared and spoke. He announced that he had come to get Philadelphia's quota⁶⁵ indicating that at Gettysburg a day of heavy fighting had just ended with the final outcome still in doubt.

At this stage in the crisis various business organizations such as banks, coalyards, metalshops, refineries, and shipyards began to raise companies of recruits for emergency service. Even the

⁶¹ Entry of June 30, 1863, Diary of G. W. Fahnestock.

⁶² *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 30, 1863.

⁶³ Entry of June 30, 1863, Journal of Edward Waln.

⁶⁴ Brainerd, Mary, *op. cit.*, 305-306.

⁶⁵ *The Press*, July 2, 1863.

newspapers were affected, and one, *The Dial*, lost so many workers that it was forced to close. Yet despite these actions there were some who felt that local efforts would not be enough. The Union League voiced this feeling by telegraphing Stanton concerning the "peril of the city" and requested him to urge all state governors east of Philadelphia to "quickly send us troops."⁶⁶ Perhaps the most moving demonstration of patriotism, however, was the action taken by the clergy of the city. At a mass meeting at the Church of the Epiphany, churchmen from over a hundred denominations agreed unanimously that in the existing peril they would offer their services not as clerics but "as citizens and men." Believing that they could not ask others to help until they themselves had shown the way, they agreed to carry guns, dig trenches, or perform any task necessary to stop the enemy. When their offer was presented to the mayor, he was deeply touched and stated that their action would certainly arouse the populace.⁶⁷

While the clergy were meeting for defense, the city's manufacturers were also meeting to map out their plans. There was to be compulsory closure of stores, all clerks were to drill, and, it was hoped, all drinking establishments were to be closed—at least from noon until midnight. Similar action was taken by the city government. Provisions were made for equipment, enlistment, drilling, and entrenchments, and the councils resolved to give their undivided support to General Dana during the emergency.⁶⁸

The most important problem of defense dealt with fortifications. This was the most significant work the people undertook in the name of defense, for without earthworks an army of militia would be no match for Lee if he were to defeat the Federals at Gettysburg. Many in the city were aware of this fact and their clamorings had finally brought action. On June 29, General Dana had taken the first definite steps by requesting the mayor to give him 2,000 men to erect entrenchments. The first contingent consisted of 200 laborers and the 100 clergymen who had previously volunteered. By Wednesday 700 men were working on the city's defenses. General Dana had chosen three strategic sites situated as follows: the first was below the Pennsylvania Railroad Bridge

⁶⁶ *Official Record*, XXVII, Ser. I, Part III, 480, Union League to Edwin Stanton, July 1, 1863.

⁶⁷ *Daily Evening Bulletin*, June 30, 1863.

⁶⁸ *The Press*, June 30, 1863, July 1, 1863.

on the east side of the Schuylkill, between the river and Gray's Ferry Road. A battery was to be placed there so that it could command the railroad bridge, the river and the heights beyond, above and below, for some distance. It was to be an inner line of works and a formidable one. The second entrenchment (which was not started until July 4) was located at the falls of the Schuylkill near School House Lane and Ridge Road. It was named Fort Dana and was to hold two hundred Parrott guns. As an added protection, redoubts were to be thrown up a short distance in front of the bastion. The third location, chosen at the same time, was to be on the crest of the hill opposite Gray's Ferry Bridge. Here was a commanding position, giving the works an immense value. With these provisions, plans were at last underway to defend the city.⁶⁹

Meanwhile the Battle of Gettysburg was being fought. During the three days of heavy fighting, rumors of the battle reached Philadelphia and their uncertain and contradictory character caused alarm to rise to a climactic pitch. The nation's birthday, July 4, passed without the customary celebration. The only sounds were the tramp of marching men and the rattle of moving wagons. Then on July 5, two days after the battle had ended, the news of the withdrawal of the Confederate army arrived through Meade's dispatches and through reports from the wounded, now flowing into the city. The news was received with great relief and joy, tempered by fears for the safety of local soldiers in the battle. Then on July 7, the word of Vicksburg's fall was announced. With the receipt of this news the Quaker City burst into tremendous rejoicing. Gettysburg, ironically, was considered an indecisive engagement, while the capture of Vicksburg was thought of as a major turning point in the war. The city's fortifications, the only permanent monuments to her defense in the hour of crisis, were discontinued when the news of Lee's retreat was confirmed. While the smaller works were removed at the end of the war, the two major ones, the Grey's Ferry fort and Fort Dana, remained undisturbed for a number of years⁷⁰ and served as grim reminders of the days of crisis, and as evidence of the preparations that were taken to meet an enemy that never came.

⁶⁹ *The Press*, July 1-4, 1863; Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 245.

⁷⁰ Scharf, J. Thomas, and Thompson Westcott, *History of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1884), II, 1029; Taylor, Frank, *op. cit.*, 245-246.