SEVENTEEN REMAINED ALIVE to answer the call. For the second time in nearly fifty years, veterans of the War of 1812 shouldered muskets and offered service to their state. The youngest was sixty-eight; the oldest seventy-six. They had gray hair and bowed frames but, as they marched in parade through Harrisburg in 1863, managed fife and drum while carrying an old and tattered silk flag recalling the regiment’s earlier defense of liberty in the Battle of Trenton. They had only two conditions for service: they preferred to be placed behind entrenchments and wanted to be armed with the flintlock muskets of their youth.¹

Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin gladly accepted their offer of help. Although the 1812 veterans would be assigned to move the state’s archives rather than fight, Curtin welcomed any volunteers. It was June 1863. Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia was heading north. Open to the 70,000 Confederates were lush Pennsylvania fields, naked of defense. For the second year in a row, Curtin scrambled to organize emergency troops. Hampering the effort were a cumbersome militia system and the differing goals of federal and state authorities. Worse yet, the volunteer spirit so desperately needed was slow to manifest itself.²

The raid by Lee’s army came at an inopportune time to rally volunteers for defense. Mistrust of the government had mounted, fueled by the recent conscription act. Violence occurred in the northeastern coal region as well as in rural, mountainous areas in some central and southern counties. Arbitrary arrests of citizens criticizing

¹ Samuel P. Bates, History of Pennsylvania Volunteers (5 vols., Harrisburg, 1869), 5:1225; Wilbur S. Nye, Here Come the Rebels! (1965, rpt. ed., Dayton, 1988), 155. The veterans of 1812 carried a flag from the Battle of Trenton, of the Revolutionary war, as a legacy from their ancestors, symbolically linking the Civil War with the American Revolution’s call to patriotism.

the administration added to tensions and increased the furor of editorials in Democratic newspapers. Internal conflicts surfaced in instances such as the May 20 mob attack on the Huntingdon Monitor newspaper office. The gubernatorial race applied further heat to this cauldron. As Confederates headed north, Democrats gathered in Harrisburg to select an opponent to run against Curtin. The heavier hand of government and the accusations in partisan newspapers created suspicion that increased the governor’s problems with organizing a defense. Critics judged Pennsylvania too severely. Curtin’s only recourse for troops lay with the militia. The state maintained no National Guard or reserve corps of trained citizens to respond to emergencies. In 1863 the governor could depend on a few veterans who had served their terms and an Invalid Corps of wounded soldiers unable to return to full duty. Like most states, Pennsylvania had few contingencies for meeting raids. It is doubtful that any militia, no matter how well-trained, would have stopped the veterans in the Army of Northern Virginia. As it was, one Confederate general after the war said the soldiers facing him in 1863 offered only “a source of amusement to my troops.” In fact, the military department performed useful service for the War Department by providing valuable information on Lee’s movements.

Yet there is no denying that the rush to the colors came sporadically, with most men volunteering only when it became clear that service would last solely for the emergency and within the state’s borders. It may be only partially correct to attribute the lackluster spirit to disloyalty or antiwar sentiment. As more recent studies of Civil War dissent

3 For arrests, see the Gettysburg Compiler, June 1, 1863; and the York Gazette, June 2, 1863. For assessment that dissent occurred more in mountainous, agricultural, or coal regions, see Arnold M. Shankman, The Pennsylvania Antiwar Movement, 1861-1865 (Cranbury, 1980), 143-48; Philip S. Klein and Ari Hoogenboom, A History of Pennsylvania (New York, 1973), 250; and Grace Palladino, Another Civil War: Labor, Capital, and the State in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1840-1868 (Urbana and Chicago, 1990), 5. For the Huntingdon Monitor destruction, see the Gettysburg Compiler, June 8, 1863; and the York Gazette, June 2, 1863.

4 Jubal Anderson Early, Autobiographical Sketch and Narrative of the War Between the States (1867, rpt. ed., Wilmington, 1989), 264.
have shown, the poor response might have reflected internal class conflicts of a citizenry experiencing rapid changes in the structure of the economy and the reach of government.⁵

The Pennsylvania landscape created conflicting emotions in Confederate Brigadier General John B. Gordon. Before him lay a region whose “broad grain-fields, clad in golden garb, were waving their welcome to the reapers and binders . . . On every side, as far as our alert vision could reach, all aspects and conditions conspired to make this fertile and carefully tilled region a panorama both interesting and enchanting.” The valley reminded him of Virginia before it had been ravaged by war. The “melancholy contrast” of the two regions evoked a touch of sadness.⁶

The ripe Pennsylvania fields that Gordon noted presented one of the reasons the army went north. Lee decided to retain the initiative after Chancellorsville, looking for a chance to defeat the Army of the Potomac. He also hoped to provision hungry men from bountiful Pennsylvania farms.⁷ Additionally, Lee pondered the damage he could inflict on northern morale. He believed that a successful raid might add momentum to a nascent northern peace movement. Pennsylvania formed a key link in the Republican chain, but Curtin faced a Democratic majority in the legislature. Pennsylvania Democrats likely would (and did) nominate for governor state Supreme Court Judge George W. Woodward, suspected of favoring secession and harboring peace sentiments. President Abraham Lincoln worried about reverses the fall elections might bring.⁸

Lee set his force in motion in early June. Northern military leaders knew something was up but were unsure how large a force was on the


move or its destination. Curtin pressed for a new organization to lessen the state’s vulnerability. On June 9, Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton established the Department of the Monongahela for the western portion of Pennsylvania and the Department of the Susquehanna to defend the state east of Johnstown.⁹ Stanton at first thought Pittsburgh would be a target. While troops in that department saw limited action in Ohio and West Virginia, the Department of the Susquehanna faced the enormous chore of meeting Lee’s army head-on.

The commander of the department was a sound choice. Major General Darius N. Couch had led a corps in the Army of the Potomac. He had become disenchanted with Major General Joseph Hooker during the Chancellorsville campaign and requested a change of assignment. By June 10, he hurried to his headquarters in Harrisburg to direct the defenses for his portion of the state.¹⁰

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Couch's experience could not overcome all the obstacles he would face, particularly civilian reluctance to serve beyond the emergency. Stanton hoped the volunteers would become the core of units that would remain prepared to respond to emergencies and then return home. He wanted the volunteers, unlike state militia, to be under national control and to be called out "during the pleasure of the President or the continuance of war." Volunteers could also transfer into the federal service for three years. Stanton's plan would have replaced a poor system with one that was sound militarily.

However, too few citizens trusted the government. The notion prevailed that volunteers could be retained at any length of time or that the administration could quash dissent by pushing troublesome Copperheads into the military. Curtin issued proclamations for troops on June 12, 15, and 26. When the first two failed to prompt an adequate response, Curtin chided: "Philadelphia has not responded. Meanwhile the enemy is 6 miles this side of Chambersburg, and advancing rapidly. Our capital is threatened, and we may be disgraced by its fall, while the men who could be driving these outlaws from our soil are quarreling about the possible term of service for six months." The next day, the governor visited Camp Curtin—an important assembly point for the Union army throughout the Northeast—in an attempt to retain those troops who had shown. He met with mixed success. Many went home, unhappy with the prospects of serving for six months despite assurances to the contrary by Curtin.

A number of factors contributed to the poor showing. Prior patriotism and agricultural needs made an impact. Two years of war had thinned the military-age population: by the end of 1862, Pennsylvania had sent more than 200,000 men to war. The most enthusiastic supporters had responded in 1861 and in late summer and early fall

11 Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 134 35, O R, 27, pt 3 44
13 Order printed in Harrisburg Evening Telegraph, June 17, 1863
14 "Governor Curtin and the Volunteers," Gettysburg Compiler, June 29, 1863 On the importance of Camp Curtin, see William J Miller, The Training of an Army Camp Curtin and the North's Civil War (Shippensburg, 1990)
1862. Those in the agricultural regions who could fill the ranks in 1863 had more at stake in tending crops nearly ready for harvest. At least one community attempted to address this concern by providing relief to families of volunteers. Lancaster commissioners authorized two dollars per week to be paid out of county funds to residents who answered the governor's call.

Mistrust and war weariness fostered the belief that a Confederate threat was illogical. The Harrisburg *Patriot and Union*, a Democratic organ, on July 12 greeted the creation of two military departments in the state with acid sarcasm:

> Why this danger should exist with nearly, if not quite, 200,000 troops in Washington and within forty or fifty miles of it, we are at a loss to conceive, unless the authorities consider it a military necessity to permit it. However, we no longer pretend to understand things, and as we are assured of the fact by the Governor and the War Department, take it for granted, against all reason that it is so.

Another critic, newspaper editor Peter Gray Meek of Bellefonte (Curtin’s hometown), thought he saw a more personal motive. Meek editorialized that Lincoln wanted the state’s troops in Washington “to protect his cowardly carcass” and that Curtin was nothing more than a “truckling, fawning, sycophant” who hoped “to lick the dust from the feet of the imbecile at Washington.”

Concern for community safety superseded state or national needs. Many believed Pennsylvania troops should remain home to defend the state. Militia members acted out this opinion by refusing to cross the state line into Maryland. At the instigation of Couch’s aides who probably thought some defense better than none, communities formed their own safety committees to organize defenses. Gettysburg’s committee called for minutemen to bring their own rifles, shotguns, and ammunition and be led by the members of the committee. York’s safety committee won from the town council bounties to be paid to

16 York Gazette, July 7, 1863.
17 Bellefonte *Democrat Watchman*, June 26, 1863.
volunteers. Citizens in counties bordering the Juniata River did not even bother with the details of organization. About five thousand served as bushwhackers commanded by former army officers. 19

Unfortunately, Curtin’s calls for volunteers coincided with resistance to enrollment under the conscription act. Passed only three months before Lee’s raid, the draft sparked tempers that had not yet cooled. The most prominent instances occurred in the coal-mining regions, but violence and intimidation against enrollment officers were reported in agricultural communities as well. 20 In Curtin’s home county of Centre, farmers in Penns Valley gave draft officers a hard time. On June 11, an enrollment officer claimed someone threatened to shoot him. A posse hauled off the offender, but this incited a crowd to march toward the courthouse at Bellefonte. The marchers lost their zeal when they learned that approximately one-hundred armed men would contest their approach. No showdown occurred. A sign posted in Penn Township warned anyone trying to enroll militia “under the present unconstitutional conscript law, that he will be in danger now and hereafter, of having a bloody head and empty veins.” The sign offered the following opinion of Lincoln’s emancipation efforts: “We will sooner see our blood streaming on our own property than go and fight for freeing negroes.” Fulton County resisters greeted enrollment officers with threats, rotten eggs, and gunshots and burned the barn of an official in Thompson Township. 21

Such sentiments did not prevent others from answering the call in both city and countryside. Sixty students of the Pennsylvania College in Gettysburg formed a company that left for Harrisburg on June 18. Philadelphians, at first slow to respond, rallied as coal dealers closed businesses so employees could volunteer. Merchants there devised ways to raise money for bounties and salaries of employees who left to defend the state. Mill owners in Pittsburgh received permission to arm employees they had organized and drilled in militia companies.

20 Shankman, Pennsylvania Antirwar Movement, 143-46. For an overview that places Pennsylvania’s problems in context with the other northern states, see William B. Hesseltine, Lincoln and the War Governors (New York, 1948), chap. 14.
21 Richard Wion, “Centre County in the Civil War” (M.A. thesis, Pennsylvania State College, 1938), 82-83; Bellefonte Democrat Watchman, June 26, 1863; Bellefonte Central Press, June 19 and 12, 1863; and The Adams Sentinel, June 16, 1863.
And in the center of the state, a company of seventy men left Bellefonte on June 17.22 The volunteers did not always meet with a sympathetic reception. As the Centre County units headed west, they were “greeted with cheers by some of the citizens, while others greeted us with sullen looks and words of discouragement.” Upon reaching Altoona, the soldiers found that some merchants were “a regular set of sharpers” who tried to take advantage of the men. However, the soldier writing the account for home-town readers admitted that others treated the troops just fine.23 Perhaps the worst snub was felt by soldiers in the 23rd New Jersey. These veterans of Chancellorsville were being mustered out but volunteered to travel from their home state to Harrisburg to help during the crisis. They became disgusted with the attitude of people in the Pennsylvania capital and went home instead.24

Curtin had to be concerned with this mixed showing, especially because he faced reelection that fall. Poor health drained his strength, causing him at one point in 1863 to withdraw from running for a second term. Curtin hoped to unite Democrats and Republicans behind a war platform with a single, hand-picked nominee for governor, but the political scene proved too unstable. Democrats were not the only threat. Within his own party, the governor faced a rival in Simon Cameron, the former Secretary of War who seized control of Pennsylvania politics shortly after the Civil War. Although voters rewarded Curtin with a second term, the margin was a slim 15,000 out of approximately 500,000 votes cast. Political and social circumstances, more than military necessity, dictated how Curtin could appeal for volunteers to face Lee’s army.25

Meanwhile, Stanton had to be more concerned with military matters on a far broader front. Although he continued to push for a militia system that would meet all emergencies, Stanton could also be reason-

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23 Bellefonte Central Press, July 3, 1863.
24 Harrisburg Evening Telegraph, June 20, 1863; Harrisburg Patriot and Union, June 22, 1863; Miller, Camp Curtin, 161-63.
able. He told Simon Cameron that if the emergency ended before the six-month term of service, then troops could be discharged. Stanton would not commit officially to less than six months for two reasons: first, the law mandated that federal militia served for no less; second and probably more important, no one could tell how long it would take to drive the rebels out of Pennsylvania. Stanton needed to ensure that the Union could muster enough men for as long as necessary.

The differing perspectives of Stanton and Curtin made clashes likely. Both also could be equally stubborn. Stanton had little patience with Pennsylvania officials who in his opinion pestered the War Department more than other states. Lincoln contributed to the hard feelings by siding on several occasions with the governor against the Secretary of War. Stanton supported the governor’s reelection campaign, but relations between the two remained cool. This exacerbated tensions during the Gettysburg campaign. When Curtin unsuccessfully pressed Stanton to change his terms, the frustrated governor bypassed Stanton and dispatched Thomas A. Scott—a former Assistant Secretary of War and president of the vital Pennsylvania Central Railroad—to carry a personal message to Lincoln.

Curtin attempted to shift the burden to the federal government for calling on Pennsylvania to furnish troops. The state’s volatile political atmosphere made this the safest course. Curtin pressed for the terms to last only for the duration of the emergency, but Lincoln remained bound by the Militia Act prohibiting the calling of troops for less than six months. Scott suggested that Lincoln call out a total of 100,000 troops for six months from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and West Virginia. Lincoln agreed, leaving an escape clause that could let troops return home before the six months elapsed. Curtin—as pragmatic as the chief executive—agreed with the new plan, telling Scott: “Get the most liberal arrangements you can. I remark, however, that the danger is so imminent it is no time to be technical.” The next day, June 15, Lincoln issued his proclamation for 100,000 volunteers “to

26 O.R., 27, pt. 3:141-42.
27 Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln’s Secretary of War (New York, 1962), 272; McClure, Lincoln and Men of War-Times, 259-60.
serve for the period of six months from the date of such muster into said service, unless sooner discharged."\textsuperscript{29}

June 15 became a watershed. The day before, Confederate forces under Major General Richard S. Ewell captured a large portion of the command under Major General Robert H. Milroy in Winchester, Virginia. Survivors streamed north with the news. Blacks and others fleeing the Confederate army clogged the roads. Harrisburg newspapers that had been skeptical about the emergency now compelled citizens to answer the call to arms. The battle at Winchester and Lincoln's proclamation awoke Pennsylvanians to the reality of the danger.\textsuperscript{30}

Regiments from New York, mustered from militia companies that were better organized, were quickly shipped to Harrisburg. New York's performance shamed Pennsylvania. The first men arrived from the Empire State before any Pennsylvania regiment had been completely filled.\textsuperscript{31} Some New Jersey troops subsequently joined the New Yorkers. On June 19, the mood around the capital remained too "listless" for one soldier of the Brooklyn 23rd: "Hundreds of strong men in the prime of life loitered in the public thoroughfares, and gaped at our passing columns as indifferently as if we had come as conquerors, to take possession of the city, they cravenly submitting to the yoke."\textsuperscript{32} A young Samuel Pennypacker, who would later become governor of the state, observed that men congregated on street corners seemingly with no cause for alarm. Making for an even cooler reception was the Democratic state convention at the Capitol. Volunteers spending the night on the stone steps outside overheard the debates of the "Copperheads." A few punches were exchanged as the Demo-

\textsuperscript{29} O.R., 27, pt. 3:136-37. Pennsylvania's quota would be the 50,000 Curtin had requested. Other quotas included: Ohio, 30,000; Maryland, 10,000; West Virginia, 10,000.

\textsuperscript{30} Harrisburg Evening Telegraph, June 15, 1863; Harrisburg Patriot and Union, June 16, 1863.

\textsuperscript{31} William H. Egle, History of the Counties of Dauphin and Lebanon (Philadelphia, 1883), 145. The first troops were about 800 men serving under Brigadier General Joseph F. Knipe. See Jacob Hoke, The Great Invasion of 1863; or, General Lee in Pennsylvania . . . (Dayton, 1887), 120. Even as late as mid-July, New York units made up more than half of the largest field force that Couch could muster. See his report for July 11, 1863, in O.R., 27, pt. 3:642.

\textsuperscript{32} John Lockwood, Our Campaign Around Gettysburg (Brooklyn, 1864), 23.
crats filed out about 1 a.m., stepping over the groggy bodies they had kept awake.  

At least troops had begun flowing into the department. By June 22, the numbers were great enough to impress a local journal: "Troops are continually pouring into this city; Camp Curtin (the mustering in point at Harrisburg), Capitol Hill, the court-house, and every available avenue is filled with men." By June 24, the 26th Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia organized and became the first state regiment to take the field. Arguments about length of service—and who should be responsible for supply—continued until June 26 when Curtin finally recognized that the federal government would not do what he wanted. Military demands overcame political pressures. Curtin summoned the militia under the state's banner:

The calls already made for volunteer militia in the exigency, have not been met as fully as the crisis requires. I, therefore, now issue this my proclamation, calling for SIXTY THOUSAND MEN to come promptly forward to defend the State. They will be mustered into the service of the State for the period of NINETY DAYS, but will be required to serve only so much of the period of muster as the safety of our people and honor of our State may require.

More squabbling among Stanton, Curtin, and Couch had resulted in this action. For the second time, Scott traveled to Washington to circumvent the Secretary of War, but the attempt failed. Lincoln left matters up to Stanton, who budged no further. Curtin realized he had to call out the militia as a state, not federal, organization.

Administrative confusion and lack of clarity about term of service exacted a toll, causing some of the volunteers to go home. Pennypacker recalled that industries that had offered bounties to employees to rally to the state flag for the emergency also wanted no workers to enter federal service. The Phoenix Iron Company, for example, warned its employees stationed at Camp Curtin that they would lose their bounties if sworn in to federal service. Worse, the company refused to reserve

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33 Pennypacker, Historical and Biographical Sketches, 312.
34 Quoted in Egle, Dauphin and Lebanon, 145.
36 Kamm, Thomas A. Scott, 154.
the jobs of those who joined the federal service. Curtin on June 20 personally appealed to the men, pledging that they would serve no longer than the emergency required. Only a portion believed him or would risk the loss of their jobs.37

Logistical problems added to the confusion. Once enlisted, volunteers needed clothing and equipment. Curtin had no authority from the legislature to spend Pennsylvania dollars on such an endeavor. He did not want to waste the time or risk political problems of calling the legislature into session to receive the necessary approval. Sorting out such matters prevented the smooth flow of soldiers to the field. Troops in Reading refused to be mustered without the proper outfits. Curtin appealed to Lincoln to resolve the problem. A weary Stanton agreed to let Couch equip any of the men who reported.38

Curtin mounted an enormous effort to pull troops together, traveling to various portions of the state to check defenses and seek funding from businessmen. But he could not overcome the civilian attitudes and administrative problems that slowed the forming of regiments. Even though the Pennsylvania adjutant general bragged in his 1863 report that 31,422 men served in the Department of the Susquehanna that summer (with New York supplying 6,385), Couch reported on June 22 that he had in the field only two New York regiments numbering 800 men at Carlisle, one Pennsylvania regiment near Gettysburg, and about 3,800 men reorganizing with Milroy and his remnants near Bedford. By June 29, circumstances were not much better when Couch told Stanton: “My whole force, organized is, perhaps, 16,000 men. Five thousand regulars will whip them all to pieces in an open field.” As the battle of Gettysburg raged, Lorenzo Thomas informed the War Department that Couch had the impossible task of stretching his small force to cover a front of 250 miles. And nearly two weeks after the fighting ended, the editor of the newspaper in Chambersburg—where rebels had passed through—moaned that the people of Franklin County intended to do nothing to defend their homes, adding: “While New York and New Jersey and other portions of our own State are sending men to our relief, shall Franklin County

37 Pennypacker, Historical and Biographical Sketches, 318-19.
On the whole, Couch organized his department as well as could be expected. He established communications that worked to the advantage of Major General George Gordon Meade, who took command of the Army of the Potomac on June 28. The contribution of the Department of the Susquehanna came in the information fed to Washington and Meade rather than any battle performance.

Sporadic fighting broke out across Pennsylvania during Lee’s advance. Clashes between regular soldiers mostly involved the cavalry. A handful of skirmishes occurred between Confederate infantry and emergency troops organized by Curtin and Couch. Typical was the

40 Glenn Edward Billet, “The Department of the Susquehanna” (M.A. thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1959), 26. Kamm also gives credit for this invaluable service, although playing up the role of the railroad. See Kamm, Thomas A. Scott, 156.
41 Accounts of the militia’s performance can be found in Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 146-52; Nye, Here Come the Rebels!, 272-97; and Weigley, “Emergency Troops in the Gettysburg Campaign,” 39-57.
brush between the 26th Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia near Gettysburg and the vanguard of the Army of Northern Virginia. Under orders from Couch, Colonel William W. Jennings took more than 700 men to scout the gaps of South Mountains. The militia spent a day bivouacked north of Gettysburg before marching through the town and setting up in a field near Marsh Creek, off the Cashtown Pike. Scouting ahead that June 26, Jennings observed a startling scene—thousands of men from the division commanded by Major General Jubal A. Early advancing toward town. Jennings correctly reasoned that his men would be no match for such a force. His attempts to turn them around only partially succeeded. Later that afternoon, Confederate cavalry overtook the green regiment, scattering it and capturing 174 men. The prisoners were quickly paroled. The rest of the men made their way back, soaked by rain, splattered with mud, numbed by fatigue and fright. When the remnants stumbled into Harrisburg on June 28, they looked as if they had been out a year.\(^2\)

The militia acquitted itself better in defending the bridge between Wrightsville and Columbia. The span over the Susquehanna provided access to Lancaster and offered Confederates a way to flank the defenses at Harrisburg, a day’s march to the north, or push on to Philadelphia. The 27th Pennsylvania under Colonel Jacob Frick anchored the defense, supported by an eclectic group of troops that included the 20th Pennsylvania, a number of unattached militia, and a company of black volunteers. Frick positioned his men in rifle pits one-half mile ahead of Wrightsville on the western shore. By 6 p.m. on June 28, his 1,400 men watched the deployment of 2,500 veterans of Major General John B. Gordon. The Confederates worked their way around both flanks of the emergency troops who did not have enough soldiers to cover adequately the entire line. Rebel artillery, which fired forty rounds or so from the high ground commanding both flanks, convinced Frick to retire across the bridge to Columbia. The militia torched the span, and its glow could be seen in Harrisburg. By holding Gordon’s men off and then burning the bridge, the militia denied the Confederates an easy crossing of the Susquehanna. Before Gordon could mount

\(^2\) Gettysburg Compiler, June 29, 1863; Miller, Camp Curtin, 163; Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 167; Nye, Here Come the Rebels!, 271-78; Pennypacker, Historical and Biographical Sketches, 327-59; O.R., 27, pt. 2:213.
a concerted effort, Lee ordered his army to concentrate near Gettysburg.  

Emergency troops brushed with the Confederates a few more times. On June 29 about 150 men from the 23rd, 8th, and 56th New York regiments were shelled while on picket duty at Oyster Point (now Camp Hill) about three miles west of Harrisburg. No one was injured in what amounted to a patrol by the rebels. This action was the closest Confederate troops came to the capital. By July 1, the danger was over for most of the emergency troops, although Fitzhugh Lee’s artillery fired parting shots into Carlisle, where veteran Major General William F. Smith had a division of soldiers—more than half of them New

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Yorkers—organized under the Department of the Susquehanna. Union General-in-Chief Henry W. Halleck and Meade urged Couch to use his forces to harass rebels and support the Army of the Potomac. Couch was willing, but the movement proved impossible. Discipline was difficult, prompting warnings against pillaging. Couch also could not untangle supply problems, to which civilian intransigence contributed. A staff officer complained to Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs that he could not hire any transportation, adding, "The people seem disinclined to do anything, and General Couch is not willing to use coercive measures."  

The Northeast reacted harshly to Pennsylvania's lackluster spirit. Some thought the state harbored greedy shirkers. *Harper's Weekly* stated that the militia system itself was flawed and suggested a home guard be formed that could check further raids. Another periodical claimed Pennsylvania had not learned the lessons of 1862 and decried evidence of rebel sympathizers. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., commented that Pennsylvanians let the Army of the Potomac "fight it out, and win or lose with Lee, without the aid or a man or musket, and before the battle devoted their energies to running away, or buying immunity for their precious goods by giving aid and comfort to the enemy and, after the battle, turned to with all their souls to make money out of their defenders by selling soldiers bread at twenty-five cents a loaf and milk at fifteen cents a canteen."  

John Codman Ropes, a Massachusetts attorney who would distinguish himself as a military historian, thought: "The utter imbecility of the people of Pennsylvania is becoming disgusting. One can have no sympathy for such a mean-spirited people. . . . I really think it would do them good to get a little touch of the horrors of war. . . . A little ravishing and burning might wake up the lummoxes."  

It was not one of the state's finest hours.  

Reputations, however, rarely provide a complete portrait. Pennsylvania deserved much, but not all, of the characterization for 1863.

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Curtin proved a savvy politician in keeping his party in power, fighting factions within its ranks, and providing consistent support to the Lincoln administration. The raising of militia before Gettysburg proceeded about as well as one could expect given the nature of the emergency, the confusion of the system, and the competing priorities of state and national officials.

Curtin's main sin was that he did not learn enough from the chaos of 1863. The security of having Couch continue in the Department of the Susquehanna lulled the state and left it vulnerable to a raid in 1864 that resulted in the burning of Chambersburg by Confederate cavalry. Needed was something more on the order of Stanton's original plan—a home force that would eventually evolve into the National Guard system later in the nineteenth century. Curtin's sin was small and forgivable. After Lee was turned away, citizens felt secure. Political realities would have made the installation of a National Guard system—complete with federal standards and coordination—an uphill battle.

Critics of the state pointed to New York as an example of better military preparedness and to the citizens of Maryland for their manners with Union troops. New York did have a more efficient militia system. But more typical was the less than adequate performance of states such as Ohio, which escaped criticism because the emergency occurred outside its borders.

Some might have wanted to find Pennsylvania deficient partly because of the perceived ethnic makeup of its inhabitants—particularly the German settlers in the Cumberland Valley. When a New York woman heard that Pennsylvania troops had performed poorly at a different engagement in the spring of 1863, she attributed the circumstance to a flaw in German courage. A Centre County man wrote about the same time that his region contained a good many Copperheads, especially "in the German Townships [where] a larger percentage of the people have imbibed in those traitorous ideas and prejudices." The country might not have traveled far from the Know Nothingism of the 1850s.

46 Coddington, Gettysburg Campaign, 151.
47 Maria Lydig Daly, Diary of a Union Lady, 1861-1865, ed. Harold E. Hammond (New York, 1962), 221; James M. Thompson to Col. James A. Beaver, March 18, 1863, Box 15, folder 1, James Addams Beaver Collection (Historical Collections and Labor Archives, Pennsylvania State University); also see in same folder an October 17, 1863, letter from
Nevertheless, the attitudes of Pennsylvania civilians seem to have conflicted. Judging by 1863 election returns, the state had nearly an even mix of support and opposition to the progress of the war. Was the sentiment of that opposition antiwar, apathy, or something else? Iver Bernstein, in his examination of the New York City draft riots, concludes that many of the rioters vented hostility fomented by broader changes occurring in American society. Wartime issues exacerbated class, ethnic, and political tensions that had long simmered beneath the surface. Grace Palladino, in her study of the coal regions, argues that the disruptions of miners should be viewed as labor conflicts unrelated to conscription. She suggests that violent outbreaks may “have more to tell us about the development of the industrial capitalist system, its relation to class conflict, and the process of building a national state than they do about disloyalty.”

Considering that some of the most sluggish response to Curtin’s calls occurred in agricultural regions, how do farmers fit into this picture? German immigrants settled in many of the townships, yet ethnicity makes an uneven yardstick by which to measure wartime “patriotism.” A study of two New York townships indicated that immigrants were as likely as not to support the war depending on how deep their roots ran in a community. The pacifist tenets of certain religions (Quakers, Mennonites, Dunkards) might provide part of the answer for the lack of response along the southern tier. Additionally, farmers had practical reasons for remaining home: extended absence threatened the economic and personal security of their families.

One final suggestion presents itself and reinforces Palladino’s work. With the exception of the attitudes of Harrisburg civilians, the geographical nature of Pennsylvania’s lethargic spirit suggests that com-

H.M. McAllister to James A. Beaver after the election that notes all went “admirably except in the German townships in which the people would neither read or hear—We could therefore make no impression upon them.” Confederates also had the idea that the state was inhabited mostly by Pennsylvania Dutch, “that the German language was mostly spoken, and that the people lived on sauerkraut and lager-beer, and many and rich were the jokes they got off against some of our people of Teutonic form and appearance.” See Hoke, The Great Invasion, 209.

48 Palladino, Another Civil War, 8.
munities that remained homogeneous and resistant to change were the least responsive to Curtin's call for troops. These could have been the island communities Robert Wiebe described in *The Search for Order*. Residents perhaps enjoyed the non-market relations and exchanges, which created a community tied to town or regional trade but with personal and economic relationships that resisted intrusions from outsiders. These attitudes were similar, although not identical, to those in the Georgia upcountry studied by Steven Hahn and the various rural areas researched by those scholars interested in the transition to capitalism. The new presence of government during the Civil War and nascent national markets threatened the balance of these communities—not just of farmers but of small producers such as the owners of the Phoenix Iron Company who pressured employees not to enter federal service. This picture, however, must remain speculative, pending more studies of Pennsylvania's development through the mid-nineteenth century.

Most of the emergency troops were mustered out by August 1863. Neither the state nor the federal government authorized payment to the militiamen for their services. During July, Curtin arranged, through Philadelphia bankers, a loan of $700,000 to cover the costs. In a public address he assured the state that he had been promised reimbursement by the national government. He was still waiting for the payment in 1865.

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51 Small ironmakers throughout the state may have held mixed opinions about the war. Although iron production boomed in the nation, it declined at the Eagle Furnace in Centre County, which maintained profits primarily via price increases. The exigencies of war periodically disrupted operations by siphoning manpower or forcing shutdowns during emergencies such as the Confederate raid. This suggests that large producers, such as those at Pittsburgh, gained the most because of economies of scale. It also means that large mill owners and financiers whose fate seemed tied to the administration would be likely to rally during an emergency, which happened in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia (see discussion above). The experience of the Eagle Furnace is detailed by Arthur R. Jarvis, Jr., "Curtin Village and the Civil War" (unpublished paper presented to the Pennsylvania Eastern Regional Meeting of Phi Alpha Theta in April 1989).

During the 1863 raid, the militia accomplished little on the battlefield. The militia, however, had been politically important to Curtin in allowing civilians productive activity to ease anxiety. To the men who answered their state’s call during the crisis, the action seemed big enough—and would grow larger as the years passed and the stories of service were retold many times. By 1892 Pennypacker inflated his experience in the 26th Pennsylvania Militia into “the first serious resistance Lee’s army encountered before the coming of the Army of the Potomac. They were the opening shots of the battle of Gettysburg.” He conveniently omitted how the unit had been routed, how some volunteers exchanged uniforms for civilian garb, and how others tossed away rifles and supplies in the rush back to Harrisburg. His later statements differed greatly from his impressions a year after the invasion: “In my opinion there is not the least doubt that in one day [Lee’s army] would have entered Harrisburg.”

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54 Account of action in Pennypacker, Historical and Biographical Sketches, 337-55 (p. 357 quotation).