

## *“We Stand on the Same Battlefield”: The Gettysburg Centenary and the Shadow of Race*

ON NOVEMBER 19, 1962, acclaimed Civil War historian Bruce Catton delivered an address to an eager audience at Gettysburg College. That evening, instead of offering listeners installments from his popular *New York Times Magazine* series, which chronicled the “great turning points” of the Civil War, the fifty-five-year-old editor of *American Heritage* addressed the ongoing centennial commemoration of the conflict. Well aware that the very next year the greater Gettysburg community would observe the one hundredth anniversary of the conflict’s most celebrated battle, Catton came to urge both caution and careful consideration in the looming ceremonials. “If we are not careful,” he declared, “we may become prisoners of the Civil War—prisoners of its romance, of its legendry, of the odd, heart-warming, and ever-living impulses which its people, its flags, its songs and its stories send tingling along the spine.”<sup>1</sup>

What troubled Catton was not the propensity of his fellow Americans to look back on the conflict, but the “irresistible force of sentiment” that overwhelmed any discussion of the causes and consequences of the war. “As we proceed with the centennial observances, there is grave danger that a sentimental haze will cloud the landscape so that we fail to see the deep, tragic issues and the profound lessons which were involved,” he said. “If we treat the whole business as a bright and moving pageant we

The author wishes to thank Matthew Norman, the three anonymous readers of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, and journal editor Tamara Gaskell for their comments on early drafts of this essay.

<sup>1</sup> See Bruce Catton, “The Irrepressible Centennial,” lecture delivered Nov. 19, 1962, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, PA, reprinted in the *Gettysburg Times*, Centennial Edition, June 28, 1963; for further details on the lecture, see the Gettysburg College *Spectrum* for 1963 in Gettysburg College’s Musselman Library, Special Collections; on Catton’s series for the *New York Times Magazine*, see, for example, Bruce Catton, “Gettysburg: Great Turning Point,” *New York Times*, June 30, 1963. For biographical and contextual details on Catton, see Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2007), 19.

will waste the whole centennial period, turning what should be a time for sober reflection into a gay party at a colorful musical comedy.”<sup>2</sup>

Catton maintained that 1960s Americans could not allow the clutter of commercialism and the sentimental spectacle of reenactment to cheapen the Civil War centennial. A nation beset by a new generation of internecine conflict about race needed to reflect on the deepest meaning of the nation’s fratricidal conflict. “We are looking back at the greatest single event in American history, trying to see what it means to us today,” Catton continued. “It is that central meaning which is the real reason why we commemorate the Civil War’s centennial. The Civil War was about something. It was fought for something. And let us never forget that it won something. Under everything else, the war was about Negro slavery.”<sup>3</sup>

Despite Catton’s admonition, the sanitized commemorative exercises marking the centennial of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1963 revealed the continuing appeal of what the historian David W. Blight has called the “reconciliatory strain” of Civil War memory. Blight determined that in the half century immediately following the war, sectional reconciliation was ultimately about race. To generate national healing, both the racially prejudiced North and the formerly slaveholding South needed to wittingly forget the conflict’s ideological origins. Notwithstanding the tenacity of “emancipationists,” who faithfully remembered an “abolition war” and sued for an “abolition peace,” reconciliationists merged with white supremacists to excise African Americans from the nation’s collective memory of the conflict. The romance of the “brother’s war,” in which Union and Confederate soldiers were equally heroic, not only obscured the war’s horrific realities, but also facilitated healing at the expense of justice.<sup>4</sup>

Remarkably little had changed in the half century since Gettysburg’s fiftieth anniversary in 1913. As Blight revealed, the jubilee reunion was a neatly packaged festival of reconciliation. It was also a segregated affair, in which the only role for African Americans was distributing blankets to the grizzled, white veterans of what President Woodrow Wilson, a segrega-

<sup>2</sup> Catton, “Irrepressible Centennial.”

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.; on the state of the civil rights movement in 1963, see Jack Bell, “Civil Rights Faces Rocky House Future,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 20, 1963; A. F. Mahan, “Freedom Walk Set on Sunday for Detroit,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 19, 1963; Francis Stille, “Integration Troubles Sweeping Nation,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 27, 1963.

<sup>4</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA, 2001).

tionist, called a “quarrel forgotten.” In 1963, even as civil rights activists laid bare the Civil War’s unfinished racial business, centennial planners carefully omitted emancipationist memories from the Gettysburg celebration. The profit-minded planners instead embraced the enduring romance of a nationally redeeming brother’s war. Especially during the Cold War, it was reconciliation, not racial recrimination, that sold.

For many Americans, post-Civil War sectional reunion ordained the nation for global leadership—domestic racial injustices aside. Historian Mary L. Dudziak has argued that during the Cold War, as lynchings, race violence, and racial segregation marred the image of the United States overseas, the government choreographed “a narrative of race and democracy.” Attempting to defend democracy’s “moral superiority” to the world, government propagandists developed a progressive story about the history of race in America. The moral of this story was that only democratic change made social justice possible, however slow or gradual. Numerous public service announcements, films, and pamphlets disseminated at home and around the globe marveled at the progress made by and for blacks since emancipation. Cold Warriors used Gettysburg, a site of national tragedy and a site of national healing, to stage another stirring pageant of American exceptionalism.<sup>5</sup>

Admittedly, not all Americans overlooked Catton’s recommendations. Many national periodicals and newspaper editorial pages questioned the value of “celebrating” the anniversary without reflecting on the issues of race and equality. On the first day of the ceremonies, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president of the University of Notre Dame and a member of the US Commission on Civil Rights, demanded basic rights for African Americans in a Memorial Field Mass at the Eternal Peace Memorial. Messages delivered by progressive northern governors echoed Hesburgh’s call for Americans to become emancipators. But these pleas were drowned out in the roar of prerecorded cannons, bellowing out their own message as more than five hundred gray-clad reenactors charged toward Cemetery Ridge—rebel banners to the breeze. “A century after the last musket echoed across the green hills of southern Pennsylvania,” *Newsweek* observed, “the ceremonies at Gettysburg dramatized the

<sup>5</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 383–89; Mary L. Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton, NJ, 2000), 11–15, 47–78; see also Deborah Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (Jackson, MS, 1998). On Gettysburg’s place in the cultural nationalism of the Cold War, see Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton, NJ, 2003), 142–44.

unhappy and ironic truth that many of the same passions that divided the nation 100 years ago divide it still.”<sup>6</sup>

As Americans prepared to celebrate the Civil War centennial, “emancipationists” recognized that the freedom and equality allegedly consecrated by the Civil War remained elusive. NAACP president Roy Wilkins held that the war was not the triumph of American ideals, but the nation’s unfinished race war. “As every Negro knows, the Civil War is still being fought, and play acting battles of the current centennial celebration are merely historical backdrops for the continuing action downstage.” By situating the Gettysburg centenary in the context of the Cold War and the black struggle for freedom, this essay demonstrates that the past, as Roy Wilkins recognized, is always selectively remembered and conditioned by the exigencies of the present. By providing the first detailed investigation of how the struggle over the meaning of the Civil War played out in Gettysburg during the summer of 1963, this article lends depth and texture to the growing literature on Civil War commemoration in the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup>

*“Out of the Grim Necessity”: The Making of the Gettysburg Centennial*

On April 20, 1956, preparations for the centennial celebration were set in motion with an act of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The legislation authorized George M. Leader, governor of Pennsylvania, to appoint a nine-member state commission to consider and arrange plans for “proper and fitting recognition and observance at Gettysburg.”<sup>8</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> “Gettysburg: ‘The Task Remaining,’” *Newsweek*, July 15, 1963, 18.

<sup>7</sup> Roy Wilkins as quoted in L. Jesse Lemisch, “Who Won the Civil War, Anyway?” *Nation*, Apr. 8, 1961, 301. The Gettysburg centennial exercises have been treated by several historians, but only in passing and without the benefit of the materials housed at the Adams County Historical Society. See Jon Weiner, “Civil War, Cold War, Civil Rights: The Civil War Centennial in Context, 1961–1965,” in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, ed. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill, NC, 2004), 237–57, and Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana, IL, 1991), 98–100. An emerging literature on Civil War memory in the twentieth century includes Robert Cook’s history of the US Civil War Centennial Commission, *Troubled Commemoration, The American Civil War Centennial, 1961–1965* (Baton Rouge, LA, 2007); Gary W. Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know about the Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2008); and Jim Cullen, *The Civil War in Popular Culture: A Reusable Past* (Washington, DC, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Pennsylvania General Assembly Act No. 487, approved Apr. 20, 1956, in *Gettysburg 1963: An Account of the Centennial Commemoration*, ed. Louis N. Simon (Harrisburg, PA, 1964), 62, copy in manuscript box 190, “Battle of Gettysburg: 100th Anniversary 1963,” Adams County Historical

governor announced his appointments over the course of the following year. In an attempt to underscore the vitality of American arms, military officers—including Lt. Gen. Milton Baker, superintendent of Valley Forge Military Academy; Lt. Gen. Willard S. Paul, president of Gettysburg College; Col. John S. Rice, chair of the seventy-fifth anniversary ceremonials; and Lt. Gen. Edward Stackpole, a military historian of the Civil War—dominated the panel. Governor Leader tapped Maj. Gen. Anthony Biddle Jr. to serve as commission chairperson.<sup>9</sup>

When the panel met for the first time on November 20, 1957, it agreed that the anniversary “should take the form of a pageant,” dedicated to the twin goals of national unity and “keeping peace through international understanding.” The panel quickly appropriated Gettysburg as a battlefield in the Cold War. “It is not only because Gettysburg was the greatest battle ever to have been fought on American soil—nor that it was the turning point of the war . . . that we commemorate it,” the commission secretary wrote. “It is rather that out of the grim necessity of burying thousands of dead, there arose an eloquent and enduring expression of these United States.”<sup>10</sup>

Alongside the specter of communism, however, racial tensions escalated across the nation. In April 1961, racial anxieties were so heightened that even the plenary meeting of the federal Civil War Centennial Commission in Charleston, South Carolina, resulted in a political imbroglio. The crisis erupted when the hotel hosting the meeting denied accommodation to an African American member of New Jersey’s Civil War Centennial Commission. Responding swiftly in the hope of salvaging a peaceful period of remembrance, President Kennedy moved the meeting to a federal naval base outside of the city.<sup>11</sup> African Americans used the incident to address the meaning and the potential of the Civil War centennial. In a public statement released after a mass meeting at

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Society (hereafter cited as ACHS), Gettysburg, PA. The Gettysburg Centennial Commission charged Simon, its secretary, with authoring this official report of activities for the commonwealth.

<sup>9</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 1–3. Other members of the commission included Postmaster J. Mark Good of Williamsport; Donald Swope, an attorney from Gettysburg; Dr. Clarence O. Walton, dean of school administration at Duquesne University; and state senator Charles Weiner of Philadelphia.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, ix, 3–4.

<sup>11</sup> See Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 88–103; US Civil War Centennial Commission, *The Civil War Centennial: A Report to Congress* (Washington, DC, 1968), 6; “Case Protests Segregation Rule in Sumter Civil War Centennial,” *New York Times*, Mar. 15, 1961; NAACP president Roy Wilkins to Karl Betts, telegram, Mar. 16, 1961, in NAACP Papers, box III:A76, “Civil War Centennial” folder, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 5–6.

Charleston's Emanuel AME Church on April 11, the NAACP leadership called for Americans "of democratic mind to take the occasion of this centennial as a period of national mourning . . . for the suffering and the stigma and the sin of slavery which this nation countenanced for two centuries and a half." Sober reflection would be meaningless, however, if not accompanied by substantive work to achieve racial equality. "Let the period of this centennial be a time for binding up the wounds, erasing the barriers, and for establishing that justice and equality which were the dream of the founding fathers," the statement concluded. Marked by pause instead of pageantry, the mode of Civil War commemoration favored by African Americans renewed Lincoln's appeal for a new birth of freedom—to "fulfill the present world's hope that this is, indeed, the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.'"<sup>12</sup>

The Gettysburg Centennial Commission also responded to the Charleston debacle, adopting a resolution seemingly committed to equality for all. "In programming . . . the Commission has emphasized the theme of unity and brotherhood—the unity and brotherhood that grew out of the Civil War, and that necessarily entails equality of opportunity for all. . . . It is the sense of the meeting that we insist upon equality of opportunity as a condition for our participation in any meetings or events in connection with the Civil War Centennial observance." Waging the Cold War demanded that the nation—and the Gettysburg Centennial Commission—place race relations in "the best possible light for dissemination abroad."<sup>13</sup>

Soon after the adoption of this resolution, the commission acquired a new look. That April, Chairman Biddle resigned his position to accept the ambassadorship to Spain. On July 6, 1961, Governor Leader's Democratic successor, David Lawrence, selected Maj. Gen. Malcolm Hay, the adjutant general of the commonwealth, to serve as chair. Within a few weeks, the commission's ranks diminished further. President Kennedy appointed Col. Rice ambassador to the Netherlands. Upon leaving the presidency of Gettysburg College, Gen. Paul resigned from the panel. Governor Lawrence tapped Secretary of the Commonwealth E.

<sup>12</sup> NAACP Statement, Apr. 11, 1961, issued at mass meeting, Emanuel AME Church, Charleston, SC, in NAACP Papers, box III:A76, "Civil War Centennial" folder, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

<sup>13</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 5–6; Dudziak, *Cold War Civil Rights*, 49.

James Trimarchi to replace Rice, and on August 21 Henry M. Scharf, manager of the Hotel Gettysburg, assumed the seat vacated by Paul.<sup>14</sup>

While members of the first Gettysburg panel permitted their martial attitudes to influence anniversary plans, the succeeding commissioners were attentive to the anniversary's market value. After World War II, as the historian Lizabeth Cohen has demonstrated, the roles of citizens and consumers converged in American culture, creating a nation dedicated to mass consumption. Thus, being a good citizen meant not only embracing a comforting narrative of America's past, but also consuming it.<sup>15</sup> "With more and more tourists coming in, we think we should look the way people expect us to look," one local booster remarked. As the historian Jim Weeks demonstrated in his examination of Gettysburg's role in American culture, the battlefield was never at odds with the marketplace; entrepreneurs and promoters began attracting pilgrims almost immediately after the battle. Gettysburg, according to one centennial-era magazine article, boasted "the mystique of a magic name" and a "great historic value to many people." By the 1960s, a Gettysburg sightseer could visit the National Park Service's newly opened Visitor Center and Cyclorama complex on Cemetery Ridge; tour the battlefield by automobile, bus, or helicopter; and purchase "Real Civil War Bullets" for thirty cents. By 1963, more than two million visitors inundated the borough each year, a statistic that caused one town official to ask, "how on earth could we do without them?"<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, at the request of Chairman Hay, Harold Swenson, who administered the Travel Bureau of the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce, joined the commission at its August 24, 1961, meeting at Indiantown Gap Military Reservation. Representatives from both the

<sup>14</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer's Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg*; Scott Hart, "Gettysburg Today: A Past Worth \$10 Million," *Washington World*, Nov. 18, 1963; Robert P. Jordan, "Gettysburg and Vicksburg: The Battle Towns Today," *National Geographic*, July 1963, 4–57; John W. Stepp, "A New Look for Gettysburg," *Washington Post Sunday Star Magazine*, Feb. 11, 1962; "Gettysburg Visit Center Opening Set," *Hanover (PA) Evening Sun*, Mar. 11, 1962; "Gettysburg's Gain," *New York Times*, May 6, 1962; Benjamin Eshleman to Henry M. Scharf, Dec. 18, 1958, in manuscript box 190, ACHS. The planning for the centennial coincided with Governor Lawrence's aggressive initiative to increase tourism in the Keystone State. By the end of 1962, the governor installed some forty-five "Tourist Promotional Bureaus" across the commonwealth. See David Lawrence, "45 'On the Spot' Tourist Bureaus to Serve the Pleasure Traveler," *Penn Rambles*, Nov.–Dec. 1962, 1.

Gettysburg National Military Park and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission also attended to pledge their “complete cooperation” in luring tourists to the centennial celebration. Perhaps even more demonstrative of the new emphasis on commercialization, the panel, now officially known as the Gettysburg Centennial Corporation, asked for and received a \$100,000 operating budget from the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Some of these funds underwrote the manufacture of keepsake silver and bronze medallions, which would go on sale to the public the following summer. In addition, the commission earmarked \$12,500 to retain the services of Adele Gutman Nathan, a New York City-based children’s author and theatrical production consultant. Nathan drafted the plans for a series of live “vignettes,” intended to “bring out sidelights of human interest.” Nathan selected Betty Gifford, a Gettysburg resident and member of the Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission, to select the incidents, write the scenarios, and recruit the actors.<sup>17</sup>

With substantial funds secured from the state legislature, more comprehensive planning could proceed. By the end of summer 1962, commissioners had a tentative program in place, perfectly melding the military might embodied by the first commission with the commercial tendencies of the new panel. Each day of the planned four-day commemoration would address a larger theme. On July 1, “Our Heritage Day” would commence at the Eternal Light Peace Memorial, featuring speeches by local and state officials and performances by bands and choirs. A two-hour parade of historical reenactors and modern warriors would celebrate “Strength through Unity” on July 2. The next day, the anniversary of the battle’s “High Water Mark,” reenactors would recreate Pickett’s Charge, in conjunction with an exhibition of contemporary military equipment by the Pennsylvania National Guard. Finally, on Independence Day, following in the footsteps of two predecessors (Woodrow Wilson at the jubilee in 1913 and FDR at the battle’s seventy-fifth anniversary in 1938), President Kennedy would deliver a battle anniversary address to the nation on the theme “Forever Free.” Only this final event on the program was in doubt. “Though the White

<sup>17</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 7–9; “Battle Commission Tells How Its Funds Are Spent,” *Gettysburg Times*, undated clipping, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives, Gettysburg, PA; obituary for Adele Nathan, *Gettysburg Times*, July 24, 1986, clipping in the Gifford Family Collection, ACHS; “Symbolic Re-Enactments, Pageantry, Parade, to Be Features of July,” *Gettysburg Times*, undated clipping, in Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, ACHS.



House cannot confirm any engagement so far in advance,” commissioners noted, “it is unlikely that the precedent will not be followed.”<sup>18</sup>

Thus, when Bruce Catton arrived that autumn for the anniversary of the Gettysburg Address, the commissioners’ work was well underway. On November 20, the day after Catton delivered his remarks at Gettysburg College, the commissioners met at the Hotel Gettysburg to announce their plans to the public. Though lacking confirmation that Kennedy would come to Gettysburg, Mayor William G. Weaver was nevertheless proud to announce that borough resident and former president Dwight D. Eisenhower would speak at a memorial ceremony hosted by the Gettysburg Fire Department on June 30.<sup>19</sup>

Excitement for the observances swelled when the New Year arrived. Virtually every state and local civic organization, scouting group, and business wanted to find a way to participate in or to promote the activities. The Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission printed a glossy new brochure that featured a panel on the battle. “Throughout 1963, Americans will observe the great Civil War Battle of Gettysburg, which took place during the first days of July, 1863. Turnpike exits 16 and 17 should be used to reach the site.” The American Automobile Association announced that it would cover the battlefield with tourist information booths and offered to train local citizens to staff them. Area motel proprietors also cheerfully raised the centennial banner; by April, most motor inns boasted no vacancies. “As for accommodations, that is a grave problem here,” Betty Gifford admitted in a letter to one prospective visitor. “All hotels, motels, and rooms have been reserved in and around Gettysburg for a radius of sixty miles, since early spring.” In addition to the support of the hospitality industry, Clayton Jester, president of the Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission, stated that some eighty retail merchants and places of worship promised to promote centennial activities. With the sanction of the state commission, Jester established a coordinating committee charged with maintaining these alliances and training and recruiting an army of local volunteers.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 7–9; “Kennedy Invited to Gettysburg Centenary,” *Penn Rambles*, Nov.–Dec. 1962, 1, 3; “Centennial Set at Gettysburg,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Dec. 2, 1962; preliminary program of the Gettysburg Centennial Commemoration, in manuscript box 190, ACHS.

<sup>19</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 15–16.

<sup>20</sup> See 1963 Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission brochure in manuscript box 190, ACHS; “A New Birth of Freedom,” *Reading Automobile Club Magazine*, June 1963, 6–7, 20–21; Minutes of the Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission, meeting held Mar. 19, 1963, and “To

In response to mounting public interest in the anniversary, the commissioners employed George Kabusk as a full-time press secretary. This was not the only modification in commission personnel, as the inauguration of Republican William Scranton as governor meant the departure of Governor Lawrence's cabinet officers from the panel. Scranton elevated Lt. Gen. Baker to the position of chairperson and selected Maj. Gen. Thomas R. White and John Tabor, Pennsylvania secretary of commerce, to fill the vacant seats. These newcomers would provide the logistical support required to stage an already well-choreographed pageant.

Only one program item remained unsettled: the appearance of President Kennedy. Despite dogged attempts to secure a commitment from the White House, the president disappointed the commissioners. In a letter dated April 26, 1963, the White House explained that since "the Battle of Gettysburg commemoration comes shortly after he will have returned from his trip to Europe, the President feels he just cannot promise to participate in this observance." Although his motives remain indiscernible, it is reasonable to surmise that the president wished to avoid the Civil War passions still dividing the nation. Considering that Kennedy dispatched United Nations ambassador Adlai M. Stevenson to a September 1962 Lincoln Memorial event marking the one hundredth anniversary of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, his failure to appear in Gettysburg may have been predictable.<sup>21</sup>

Consequently, the disappointed Gettysburg commissioners opted to shorten the ceremonials, abandoning "Forever Free" Day. Though the "freedom" celebration conceived by organizers was hardly the "freedom"

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Coordinate Groups for July Fete," *Gettysburg Times*, undated clipping, both in Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, ACHS; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 20; Betty Gifford to Michael West, May 6, 1963, in Gifford Family Collection, ACHS.

<sup>21</sup> It is also important to consider that Kennedy was well aware of his need to make an appearance at the Gettysburg battle site in 1963. On March 31, Kennedy drove his family and weekend guests from Camp David in nearby Thurmont, Maryland, to Gettysburg for a tour. When the presidential party arrived in Kennedy's black Mercury convertible, legendary guide Jacob Sheads interpreted the history of the battle—making stops that allowed the president to admire the North Carolina Monument, the vista afforded by Little Round Top, and the fields of Pickett's Charge. This trip suggests that if Kennedy recognized the significance of the Civil War in the civil rights movement, he chose to make that connection privately—not publicly. See "Kennedy and Family Tour Battlefield at Gettysburg," *New York Times*, Apr. 1, 1963; "President and Family Visit Field Sunday," *Gettysburg Times*, Apr. 1, 1963; "The Pressures," *New York Times*, June 2, 1963; Drew Pearson, "LBJ Carries the Ball on Rights," *Washington Post*, June 9, 1963; James Marlow, "Kennedy Faces Hottest Summer in White House," *Gettysburg Times*, July 6, 1963. On the September 1962 Lincoln Memorial event, see Weiner's marvelous essay, "Civil War, Cold War, Civil Rights."

being championed by civil rights advocates, discarding this theme restricted the potential of the event.<sup>22</sup>

Just a few months before the president declined to attend, Governor Scranton announced that he was sending invitations to the twenty-eight governors whose states supplied men to Gettysburg armies. What would the second meeting of these charged forces at the crossroads of Gettysburg mean? Although the commissioners and coordinators spent years preparing for the centennial, they were unprepared to answer that question when the observances commenced.

*“Ever-Living Impulses”: Sentimentality and the Gettysburg Centennial*

“We who live here bid you welcome to history, and to more than history. Far too many see here but a collection of monuments, some magnificent, some utilitarian, marking the record and the taste of an almost forgotten generation, our great-grandfathers,” Mayor Weaver declared in a greeting to centennial goers. “We urge you not to hurry your visit, but to open your imagination and your emotions to the voice of the past. . . . We hope you find America here.” The thousands of visitors who traveled to the battlefield during the centennial summer experienced no shortage of sentimentality. Beginning in late June and continuing into July, local organizations sponsored a host of commemorative activities to frame the three-day observance—including a pageant and parade in Carlisle and reenactments of minor Civil War clashes in nearby Waynesboro, Hanover, and Westminster. No cavalry skirmish or infantry engagement was too insignificant to be staged by modern reenactors donning Sears and Roebuck blue and gray.<sup>23</sup>

On June 27, 1963, Gettysburg hosted one of these performances. Sponsored by the Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission, over six hundred Confederate reenactors attempted to recreate the scenes

<sup>22</sup> George Kabusk, “Gettysburg Prepares for 100th,” *Civil War Times Illustrated*, May 1963, 20–21; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 17–18, 21; “JFK Declines Local Invitation,” *Gettysburg Times*, undated clipping, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-45a, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; “Battle of Gettysburg 100th Anniversary July 1–3,” final brochure produced by the Gettysburg Centennial Commission, in manuscript box 190, ACHS.

<sup>23</sup> William G. Weaver, “Welcome to Gettysburg,” in *Historic Gettysburg Tourist Guide*, Centennial Issue (Gettysburg, PA, 1963), and 1963 Calendar of Events for the 100th Anniversary of the Civil War in Adams County, both in “Battle of Gettysburg—Anniversaries, 1963” lateral file, ACHS.

of a century ago. On June 26, 1863, Maj. Gen. Jubal Early's division pressed east from Caledonia, Pennsylvania, intending to cross the Susquehanna at Wrightsville. Late that afternoon, Early's men marched into Gettysburg, pushed away the Twenty-Sixth Pennsylvania Emergency Militia Regiment, and ransomed the town.<sup>24</sup> Now, with spectators watching from a reviewing stand erected at the corner of Baltimore and East Middle streets, the Confederate troops invaded the borough, demanding provisions from the grandson of David Kendlehart, the council president confronted by Early in 1863. A narrator provided the "historical context," proclaiming that the Confederates harbored "no intention of burning, or even harming Gettysburg." These mawkish tributes to the invaders, described fraternally as "handsome, brave, and true leaders," were devastating in their denial of the pillage and plunder visited on Gettysburg civilians. "The people of the town found the Confederates were just as human as they," the narration informed.<sup>25</sup>

Odes to the "brother's war" persisted as the observances continued. Bidders at an auction sponsored by the local Junior Chamber of Commerce used facsimile Confederate money to vie for prizes. The Gettysburg National Bank commissioned an original, oil-on-canvas painting of Generals Meade and Lee standing together, united by common conviction. The bank provided its depositors with keepsake postcards of the painting. General Lee, these postcards instructed, was not only "universally revered by friend and foe alike," but also "a symbol of the true spirit of America. Talented, generous, devoted to duty; persevering . . . he belongs to all of us." Around the corner from the bank, the Hotel Gettysburg added hominy grits to its menu in an effort "to make the folks from Dixie feel at home in a town where they were not exactly comfortable 100 years ago."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> "Early Takes Gettysburg after Sharp Fighting in the Town Square on Thursday," *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1863. On Early's ransom of Gettysburg, see Steven E. Woodworth, *Beneath a Northern Sky: A Short History of the Gettysburg Campaign*, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD, 2008), 30.

<sup>25</sup> "Early Takes Gettysburg," June 28, 1863; "Town to Stage Early Affair Re-Enactment," *Gettysburg Times*, June 19, 1863; "County Group Plans June 27 Events Here," *Gettysburg Times*, June 12, 1863; Minutes of the Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission, meeting held May 14, 1863, in Adams County Civil War Centennial Commission Collection, ACHS; "Early Captures Gettysburg," text of the pageant narration, in manuscript box 190, ACHS.

<sup>26</sup> "Rebel Money Auction" note and Gettysburg National Bank "Meade-Lee" postcard, originals in manuscript box 190, ACHS. The remarks about Lee are taken from the Gettysburg National Bank's advertisement in the Centennial Edition of the *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1863; "Grits on Menu in Gettysburg," *Greensboro (NC) Daily News*, July 1, 1863.

The advertisements of a wide array of businesses and organizations, ranging from Hankey's Grocery on Washington Street to Zerfing's Hardware in Littlestown, spoke to the visitors in the distinct dialect of sectional reconciliation. "Much more is to be gained by clasping hands than by crackling guns . . . friendship and progress go hand-in-hand!" noted a quarter-page ad from the Gettysburg Retail Merchants Association. Obediently, Lee and Grant extended their hands across one bulletin sponsored by the Sico Company of nearby Mount Joy. The Adams County Democratic Party extolled the "benign," "quiet," and "prayerful" way that the armies "achieved peace," while the A&P Supermarket paid "tribute to the Blue and the Grey," Americans all who were "fighting for a cause in which they believed." The Plaza Restaurant fashioned a full-page advertisement commemorating "The Spirit of Gettysburg," a force that included a struggle of "mutual sacrifice," the peaceful convergence of "the colors of the Blue and the Gray" upon the "altar of a stone wall," and the resulting national "unity." Finally, Chambersburg's Osterman House Restaurant celebrated the erasure of "the scars of a battle that saw brother fight against brother."<sup>27</sup> Such maudlin messages carried the inevitable air of celebration. "Centennial," noted a commercial for the Bendersville National Bank, "is a word that often goes with 'celebration.'" The neighboring town of New Oxford, Pennsylvania, extended its "best wishes . . . in celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg." Bruce Catton's caution had fallen upon deaf ears.<sup>28</sup>

Yet nowhere was the cloying spirit of sectional reconciliation more pronounced than in the series of battlefield vignettes written by Betty Gifford and produced by Adele Gutman Nathan. From nine o'clock until noon on the first three days of July, "a series of episodes dealing with the daily behavior of men under the stress of battle" were "dramatized continuously." Gifford selected seven scenes—some more apocryphal than accurate—for amateur actors to stage at various locations around the battlefield. "Brother Captures Brother" recalled the afternoon of July 1, when a detail of the Forty-Fifth New York led by Corporal Rudolph Schwarz captured some Confederate soldiers—including one of Schwarz's brothers. "A Life Saved by a Gentleman" depicted Confederate general John B.

<sup>27</sup> There were 546 display advertisements in the 144 pages and eight special sections of the Centennial Edition of the *Gettysburg Times*, which appeared on June 28, 1963.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

Gordon's discovery of Union general Francis Barlow, advising the audience of their alleged postwar friendship. "Friendly Enemies" instructed that "mercy replaced violence when the battle was over," and that "the thirsty and wounded of both armies in the area of Spangler's Spring shared the common supply of water." Another scene dramatized the nest of Confederate sharpshooters ensconced between the boulders of Devil's Den on the battle's second day, while the final act of the sequence paid tribute to "A Valiant General, A Noble Man," Robert E. Lee. Only two of Betty Gifford's scenes recalled Union personalities; none of them addressed the deepest meaning of the war.<sup>29</sup>

For an estimated fifty thousand onlookers, though, the vignettes were the central attraction of the observances. "The Vignettes which you conceived, wrote and executed were, in my opinion, the finest contribution that was made to the entire affair," Louis Simon, the executive secretary of the commission, wrote in a letter to Gifford. "You and the directors who worked with you deserve special commendation for the way in which you carried out the job." The National Park Service likewise piled accolades on Gifford. "I would like to congratulate you and the members of your vignette casts for putting on such an attractive show," wrote Kittridge A. Wing, superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park. "We hear many complimentary remarks from visitors, and are also getting letters praising the presentation." Commissioner Scharf, in his capacity as manager of the Hotel Gettysburg, overheard several guests praising the vignettes: "We came in contact with many scores of people at the hotel and, without exception, they declared the 'Vignettes' to be outstanding and certainly one of the real attractions of the entire Centennial observance." Yet, perhaps Nathan best captured the meaning of the vignettes. In a March interview with the *Baltimore Sun*, the pageant producer was asked to critique the ongoing work of the Gettysburg Centennial Commission. "These people [the commission members]," she explained as she began her assessment, "They know history. But they don't know show business, and that is what this is."<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "Battle of Gettysburg 100th Anniversary July 1-3"; Betty Gifford's typescripts and handwritten notes for the "Vignettes of History," in Gifford Family Collection, ACHS; "80 Local Citizens Offer 7 Historical Vignettes during Centennial Days," *Gettysburg Times*, June 18, 1963; Adele Gutman Nathan, "Description of Events," in Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection, ser. I, box 9, folder 251, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

<sup>30</sup> "Claim 50,000 Saw Vignettes," *Gettysburg Times*, July 11, 1963; Louis M. Simon to Betty Gifford, July 11, 1963; Kittridge A. Wing to Gifford, July 9, 1963; Henry Scharf to Gifford, July 5, 1963; Adele Nathan to Gifford, July 10, 1963; see also Frank Skidmore to Gifford, July 9, 1963, and

*“Strength and Solidarity”:  
The Gettysburg Centennial as a Cold War Pageant*

Another important role of sentimentality at the Gettysburg commemoration was to express a distinct brand of Cold War American exceptionalism. “When you return home, you will have a truer, more intense feeling of how this country looks, of what it suffered trying to find out what it was, and of what it must forever be,” state commissioners suggested in one brochure. “May we be ever mindful of the heroism and dedication that have made possible America’s strength and solidarity,” admonished an advertisement for one Gettysburg clothier. In a brief column hoping to lure visitors to the battlefield, Commissioner Tabor suggested that children “will gain a new conception of the meaning of their priceless heritage of American citizenship.” He posited that the struggle at Gettysburg allowed the nation to “emerge into the bright sunshine of freedom. . . . The observance . . . is a fitting and timely reminder to all people in these days of world-wide strife that the freedoms we enjoy are not won easily nor to be taken lightly.”<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, “taking advantage of the occasion” on the eve of the battle anniversary, Gettysburg resident and former president Dwight D. Eisenhower cited modern “perils to liberty.” Speaking for nearly an hour to an outdoor crowd at Gettysburg High School, Eisenhower declared that risks, “as real in 1963 as they were a century ago,” continued to endanger democracy. “Much of the world lives under dictatorships—largely Communist dictatorships that outspokenly declare their intention of destroying the concept of individual liberty and the right of people to govern themselves,” he said. The lesson of “citizen self-reliance,” what Eisenhower called the logic of refusing favors from paternalistic governments, was the most important message from the battle, itself “a supreme example of courage, endurance, determination and loyalty that animated all the forces of the North and of the South.” In one last demonstration

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Marie C. Tressing to Gifford, July 5, 1963, all in the Gifford Family Collection, ACHS; Adele Nathan as quoted in *Baltimore Sun*, Mar. 3, 1963, in Adele Gutman Nathan Theatrical Collection, ser. I, box 9, folder 250, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

<sup>31</sup> John K. Tabor, “Gettysburg,” in *Penn Rambles*, June–July 1963, 2; “The Civil War,” centennial brochure produced by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in “Battle of Gettysburg—Anniversaries, 1963” lateral file, ACHS. The quote is from Paul Engle, “Centennial Tour of the Civil War,” *Better Homes and Gardens*, Oct. 1960. For the advertisement, see the Centennial Edition of the *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1963.

of the spirit of mutual respect and strength, Eisenhower concluded his remarks by presenting centennial medallions to Robert E. Lee IV, and George Gordon Meade III, descendants of the army commanders.<sup>32</sup>

Eisenhower's evasion of a direct reference to civil rights in a speech assessing contemporary threats to liberty was not lost on some observers. "Mr. Eisenhower did not mention the big issue of this 100th year after Gettysburg—the Negro and his civil rights," Jean White editorialized in the *Washington Post*. *Newsweek* complained that the former president simply made "a bland reference to the need for furthering 'equality of opportunity among all citizens.'" Rather than ceremonially presiding over the observances, Eisenhower slipped quickly and quietly out of town, returning to his boyhood home of Abilene, Kansas, for a celebration of his own.<sup>33</sup>

The commemoration that Eisenhower left began on July 1 with Our Heritage Day. Following the posting of state and national flags and opening remarks from Governor Scranton, the first day's issue of the five-cent Gettysburg postage stamp, the third in a series of Civil War centennial commemoratives, was unveiled. In his remarks, the postmaster general, J. Edward Day, declared "the deeper significance of Gettysburg" to be "the testing of the democratic idea and the endurance of government by the people." Day continued:

Gettysburg was decisive for our present day American role as the top world power. . . . In today's world of a divided Germany, a divided Europe, a divided China, Gettysburg provides a beacon light of hope for reunification. In the face of disappointments and failures in our American efforts for a nuclear test ban treaty and for disarmament, Gettysburg should remind us never to lose heart, because the stakes are so momentous in the effort for peace. . . . And we can be grateful that in today's world of uncertain, unstable, and makeshift governments, that we Americans are blessed with a stable and effective system of government as we pursue our national ideals. . . . I hope that the 130 million Gettysburg stamps we are issuing

<sup>32</sup> Edith Evans Asbury, "Eisenhower Cites Perils to Liberty," *New York Times*, July 1, 1963; Jean White, "Eisenhower Preaches Self-Reliance in Speech at Gettysburg Battlefield," and "Text of Eisenhower's Address at Gettysburg Observance," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1963; "Battle Anniversary Commemorative Service, June 30, 1963, Gettysburg, PA," in 109 Cong. Rec., 11512–13 (July 8, 1963), copies in manuscript box 190, ACHS; "Meade and Lee Receive Medallions," *Gettysburg Times*, July 1, 1963; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 10, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Jean White, "Eisenhower Preaches Self-Reliance in Speech at Gettysburg Battlefield," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1963; "Gettysburg: 'The Task Remaining,'" July 15, 1963, 19; Donald Janson, "Eisenhower Pays Visit to Abilene—General Returns Quietly to Boyhood Kansas Home," *New York Times*, July 3, 1963.



following this dedication today will remind Americans not of bitterness and internecine strife, but of the preservation of the Union and of the freedom and of the greatness of the United States.<sup>34</sup>

Nonetheless, it was the second day of the centennial exercises that literally put these ideas on the march. The afternoon of July 2, an estimated thirty-five thousand ("the biggest parade crowd in 25 years") lined the narrow borough sidewalks to observe "the longest and most spectacular parade held in the community since the 75th anniversary of the battle." Even heavy rains could not displace anxious spectators. The parade formed south of town at Codori Farm, its route passing through the flag-festooned town square to Eisenhower Elementary School.<sup>35</sup>

When the rain relented, the procession began. Accompanied by a fly-over of two air force jets, "the procession itself was a display of the nation's military might from the Civil War to the present time." Four police officers on motorcycles and six mounted state troopers escorted the parade, accompanied as far as the viewing stand by the grand marshal, Maj. Gen. Henry K. Fluck, and his aides, Brig. Gen. Herbert Vernet Jr.; Capt. Albert Kuhn; and Lt. Frederick H. Heitefuss. More than five thousand members of the Pennsylvania National Guard, including the 28th Division and the 104th Armored Cavalry, represented modern enlisted men. Depictions of contemporary military strength were wide and varied. Parade floats exhibited a rifle team in attack position; emergency surgery stations; mobile machine shops; jeeps; helicopters; tanks and mortars. For many, the most memorable float was that of the 228th Supply-Transportation Unit of the National Guard, featuring a mobile field bath

<sup>34</sup> Remarks by J. Edward Day, Postmaster General, at the Dedication of 5-Cent Gettysburg Commemorative Stamp, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in General Release No. 109, Information Service—Post Office Department, Washington DC (July 1, 1963), copy in manuscript box 190, ACHS; see also remarks in 109 Cong. Rec., 11790–91 (July 11, 1963), copy in manuscript box 190, ACHS; "Gettysburg Commemorative Stamp Is Dedicated; 20 Acres of Battle Land Given to U.S.; Scranton Talks Monday," undated, unmarked clipping in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12–58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; see also Charles Sopkin, "Which Stamp Wins the Battle of Gettysburg?" *This Week Magazine*, Feb. 10, 1963, 10, 12; see also "Unity Is Theme of Centennial at Gettysburg," *Minneapolis (MN) Morning Tribune*, July 2, 1863.

<sup>35</sup> Edith Evans Asbury, "Gettysburg Fete Depicts 2 Armies," *New York Times*, July 3, 1963; "Parade Marks 2nd Day at Gettysburg," *Akron (OH) Beacon Journal*, July 2, 1963; "Highlights of Centennial Parade," and "Crowd of More Than 35,000 View Centennial Parade on Tuesday; Rain Delays Start," undated, unmarked clippings in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12–58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; see also typescripts and schematics from the Office of the Grand Marshal, Gettysburg Centennial Parade, May 20, 1963, in "Battle of Gettysburg—Anniversaries, 1963" lateral file, ACHS.

with a soldier enjoying a shower throughout the parade. The US Navy, Coast Guard, ROTC, and Civilian Air Patrol followed behind, striding to the cadences of the US Air Force Drum and Bugle Corps and the US Air Force Band. "Many people expressed concern about a sudden military attack on Pennsylvania as unit after unit of the Keystone guardians of peace did themselves proud in a parade which was about 98 percent military," one reporter observed wryly.<sup>36</sup>

Union and Confederate reenacting units also took part in the procession. Some reactivated Confederates collaborated on a float bearing an intricate, life-size replica of the *H. L. Hunley*, the famous Confederate submarine. Many men grew beards for the occasion, and women wore long, calico dresses. There were those who assumed specific historical identities—including Dr. Samuel Kirkpatrick of Hanover, who portrayed the purple-plumed Confederate Maj. Gen. J. E. B. Stuart—as well as other gray-clad reenactors who moved toward the town square without shoes, impressing onlookers with Lost Cause sensibilities. According to one newspaper account, though, the "loudest applause" of the entire parade erupted when the jeep carrying Robert E. Lee IV passed by the viewing stand. The past and the present merged in this costumed celebration of valor and vitality.<sup>37</sup>

*"I've Got Political Enemies in Alabama, But I Haven't Met Any Here":  
The Gettysburg Centennial as a Gathering of Governors*

Watching the parade pass the viewing stand was a diverse collection of the nation's governors. Nine state executives accepted Governor Scranton's invitation: the freshly inaugurated Republican John Chafee of Rhode Island; the liberal Democrats and civil rights supporters Elbert Carvel of Delaware, Richard Hughes of New Jersey, Endicott Peabody of Massachusetts, and Karl Rolvaag of Minnesota; moderate Democrats Terry Sanford of North Carolina and Millard Tawes of Maryland; and

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. As if the parade was not enough of an exposition, the US Army also opened an exhibit, housed in the gymnasium of Gettysburg High School, which portrayed scenes of famous military exploits from the Civil War through the Korean conflict. See "Army Show Offers Prize War Display," undated, unmarked clipping in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 31–32; see also "Reactivated Confederates," *Gettysburg Times*, July 1, 1963; Harlan D. Unrau, *Administrative History of Gettysburg National Military Park and Gettysburg National Cemetery, Pennsylvania* (Washington, DC, 1991), 263; "Rebel Yells and Dixie Belles Are Part of Spectacle at Gettysburg," *Chattanooga (TN) Daily Times*, July 3, 1963.

Democrat civil rights opponents Donald Russell of South Carolina and George Corley Wallace of Alabama. The remaining state executives sent official representatives to the ceremonials, bearing official public statements that underscored the potency of sectional differences in 1963.<sup>38</sup>

Paradoxically, by embracing the Cold War “narrative of race and democracy” to muffle racial injustice, many southern governors delivered stirring odes to the strength and unity of the United States. “We all learned a costly and tragic lesson in that conflict between *brothers*,” Oral Faubus wrote, ignoring the issues that brought Arkansas to the national limelight in 1957. “We learned that our one great nation under God is, in fact, indivisible, and that we must remain united if we are to endure as a nation in this world of turmoil and external dissension.” Ross Barnett, governor of Mississippi, conveniently overlooking his defiance during the battle at Ole Miss, declared, “Mississippians, like citizens of other states, share the common hope that peace will be eternal in a nation united—a nation united on the basic principles essential to national security and worldwide leadership.” Governor Russell acknowledged that the United States was “the leading democracy in history,” while John Connally, governor of Texas, thought the Gettysburg centenary a fitting occasion to “commemorate a century of solidarity.”<sup>39</sup>

Nonetheless, southern governors could not resist the opportunity the centennial presented to address the struggle for civil rights. “We believe that all Americans should recognize legitimate differences in problems of the states, and leave to the states the powers originally authorized by the United States Constitution,” Barnett vowed. “It is essential to our progress and security that state sovereignty be maintained . . . the same government which survived a tragic civil war and became the foundation for the greatest nation in the history of mankind.” Frank Clement of Tennessee thought he would “consider the part which Tennessee has played, both in that conflict and in the century which has elapsed.” The Volunteer State, Governor Clement alleged, merely left the Union “when

<sup>38</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 20–21; “9 Governors Will Attend Program Here,” undated clipping from the *Gettysburg Times*, ACHS; for a listing of the special representatives, see the official program, copy in “Battle of Gettysburg—Anniversaries, 1963” lateral file, ACHS; “Chafee in Gettysburg for Centennial’s Start,” *Providence (RI) Journal*, July 2, 1963.

<sup>39</sup> These messages, submitted to Paul L. Roy, the editor of the *Gettysburg Times*, were reproduced in a special section of the Centennial Edition of that newspaper, published June 28, 1963. See Oral Faubus to Roy, May 7, 1963; Donald Russell to Roy, Apr. 29, 1963; John Connally to Roy, undated message; Ross Barnett to Roy, May 13, 1963.

it became apparent that the Central Government intended to use coercion to force the seceded states back in," and her gallant sons fought in defense of "its rightful place as a sovereign state." The governor assured centennial goers that this "defense of the Constitution" would continue. Governor Wallace echoed Clement's proclamation. "We must do our part to see that we remain a nation united in peace, retaining individual rights and liberties," Wallace declared. "We must resist regimentation. Individual liberties must be safeguarded, for without freedom and liberty for each of us, we are traveling down the dead-end road of destructive centralization."<sup>40</sup>

Unlike the other governors, Wallace's politicking continued beyond his prepared message. Boasting of his Confederate heritage, the Alabama chief executive relished the time he spent in Gettysburg. "This is a solemn occasion," he told a Montgomery reporter before his private plane departed for Pennsylvania. "We stand with the descendants of the brave men who fought for the North and South, and we will take our stand for the defense of the Constitution." When Wallace arrived in Gettysburg on July 1, he promptly placed a wreath at the Alabama Monument on West Confederate Avenue.<sup>41</sup>

Later that afternoon, he took a seat with the eight other governors on the steps of the Eternal Light Peace Memorial to participate in the observance's opening exercises. His recent "stand in the schoolhouse door" at the University of Alabama made him such a political celebrity that the Pennsylvania State Police assigned two troopers to function as bodyguards. "As the governors or their representatives were introduced at a wreath-laying ceremony under a 100-degree sun, Alabama's chief executive easily outscored all others in applause from the crowd," a journalist observed. When the program concluded, the spectators dotting Oak Hill mobbed the governor, pleading for his autograph. "I think I am safer here than I am at home," Wallace commented. "I've got political enemies in Alabama, but I haven't met any here." To be sure, the following spring, though he never made a campaign stop within the commonwealth, Wallace's long-shot bid for the Democratic presidential nomination attracted the primary ballots of more than twelve thousand

<sup>40</sup> Ross Barnett to Roy, May 13, 1963; Frank G. Clement to Roy, May 22, 1963; George C. Wallace to Roy, June 18, 1963, all in *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1963.

<sup>41</sup> "Wallace Honors Gettysburg Dead," *Birmingham (AL) News*, July 1, 1963; "Gettysburg Visit Set by Wallace," *Montgomery (AL) Advertiser*, July 1, 1963.

Pennsylvanians.<sup>42</sup>

The fawning over Wallace continued as he prepared to review the parade on July 2. "I don't know when I have ever enjoyed anything more," Wallace later wrote to one correspondent. In the Hotel Gettysburg lobby, "northerners and southerners alike" peppered him with requests for autographs on centennial souvenir items. Finally making his way through the crowds and out the doors, the governor advised one journalist that all "must join together to save the country from centralized socialist government."<sup>43</sup>

That afternoon, when the parade concluded, Wallace's personal security detail whisked him off to West Confederate Avenue once more—this time for the dedication of the newly completed South Carolina Monument. Already, the new memorial was responsible for a heated debate in the upper echelons of the National Park Service. Initially, the NPS, which sanctioned all new monuments erected on the battlefield, refused to allow construction to go forward because the South Carolinians did not submit for review the text of inscriptions proposed for the memorial. Then, when park officials finally received the text, they balked at the plan to inscribe "Confederate War Centennial" on the reverse face of the monument. After months of squabbling, the NPS yielded to the South Carolinians and allowed their shrine to be erected as planned.<sup>44</sup>

But the controversy threatened to renew itself when the Alabama governor delivered remarks at the dedication ceremony. Following introductory comments by Governor Russell and South Carolina congressman John A. May, Wallace continued his assault on centralized government. "South Carolina and Alabama stand for constitutional government and millions throughout the nation look to the South to lead in the fight to restore constitutional rights and the rights of states and indi-

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.; "Belle of the Ball at Gettysburg," and Bill Rasco, "Wallace Popular at Gettysburg," both in *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 2, 1963. See also "Wallace Stands Taller in Eyes of Many since His Showdown on Racial Issue," *Birmingham News*, July 3, 1963; "Gov. Wallace Enjoys Visit," *Gettysburg Times*, July 3, 1963; on Wallace's 1964 campaign, see Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (New York, 1995), 202–22.

<sup>43</sup> Wallace to Pat Bailey, July 15, 1963, as quoted in Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 200; "Wallace Stands Taller," July 3, 1963.

<sup>44</sup> On the South Carolina Monument conflicts, see Payne Williams to Kittridge A. Wing, Apr. 3, 1963; Wing to Williams, Mar. 28, 1963; Wing to Regional Director, NPS, Apr. 5 and 11, 1963; Edward Peetz, Acting Chief, Master Plan Coordination, to Regional Director, NPS, Apr. 12, 1963, in "South Carolina Monument" lateral file, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; see also digital copy in the Battle of Gettysburg Research Center, ACHS.

viduals," he bellowed. Defending his stand in defiance of a federal order to integrate the University of Alabama, Wallace claimed that he stood in the schoolhouse door "because I know my people." The comments earned Wallace a standing ovation. "[F]or a brief moment," noted the *Gettysburg Times*, "it seemed as though the Civil War might start all over again."<sup>45</sup>

That evening, Wallace made a surprise visit to the Confederate reenactors bivouac. The reactivated Southern troops immediately rushed the governor, surrounding him for a chance at an autographed kepi, drum, or flag. Wallace posed for dozens of pictures with individual soldiers. By all accounts, rebel yells abounded. "We are ready to come when you call!" one reenactor excitedly shouted. Others, imploring the governor to launch a bid for the White House, yelled, "See you in '64!" and "On to Washington!" A distinct "Wallace for President Movement in the Confederate forces bivouac even seemed in the making Tuesday," the *Montgomery Advertiser* commented.<sup>46</sup>

Of course, Wallace was not the only governor in Gettysburg honoring the Confederate dead. North Carolina's J. Terry Sanford hosted a "Rebel Rally" at the Tarheel State's monument on Seminary Ridge. A crowd of nearly one thousand people, including many gray-clad reenactors, surrounded sculptor Gutzon Borglum's memorial honoring the thousands of North Carolinians who fell in the battle. State senator Hector MacLean, son of the governor who appropriated the funds for the monument in 1927, delivered a stirring address to a crowd waving rebel flags. The "great victory of the men who followed Gen. Lee came after they had met what the world called defeat," MacLean began. "By following his advice and example when they set their hands to the given task of rebuilding their homes," MacLean argued, they regained "their wasted strength and fortunes." The South could be proud because individual states were capable of dealing with their own problems.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 32; Unrau, *Administrative History*, 263; "Gettysburg Monuments Slated," *New York Times*, June 27, 1963; "S.C. Memorial Dedicated by Gov. Russell," *Gettysburg Times*, July 3, 1963; "Nation Needs Southerner in White House, Says Wallace," *Gettysburg Times*, July 3, 1963; "S.C. Memorial Dedicated," *Charleston (SC) News and Courier*, July 3, 1963; *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 3, 1963.

<sup>46</sup> Bill Rasco, "Gettysburg Poet Praises Gov. Wallace," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 3, 1963; "Gov. Wallace Back Home; Plans Rest," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 4, 1963.

<sup>47</sup> "Rebel Rally Features N.C. Field Rites," undated *Gettysburg Times* clipping, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; "State Prepares to Honor Dead," *Greensboro Daily News*, July 1, 1963; "Tar Heels Rededicate Marker," *Raleigh (NC) News and Observer*, July 2, 1963.

*“What Does All of This Drama Mean to Us?”  
Emancipationists and the Gettysburg Centennial*

Conversely, the progressive northern governors who descended upon Gettysburg attempted to use the observance to discuss the progress of the civil rights movement. These governors, joined by several other officials, both sacred and secular, came to “rededicate themselves” to America’s unfinished promises of liberty and equality. Governor Edmund Brown of California deliberately critiqued one of the centennial’s central themes in his message. “The greatest social revolution in the history of the Free World has been taking place in America for more than a hundred years now,” he declared, “and still we have no ‘Peace Eternal in a Nation United.’” Iowa’s Governor Harold E. Hughes posited that although Americans had “attained a solidified Union of peaceful states,” they “must continue to battle for a solidified Union of men at peace with one another.” Governors Chafee of Rhode Island, Peabody of Massachusetts, Hughes of New Jersey, Nelson Rockefeller of New York, and John N. Dempsey of Connecticut commented that the time was “particularly appropriate” for America to embrace, at last, “liberty, justice and human rights for all men.”<sup>48</sup>

These very issues became the focus of a battlefield mass sponsored by the University of Notre Dame, staged before the beginning of the official ceremonies. Intended to celebrate the life and services of Father William Corby, the celebrated Civil War chaplain who gave the Irish Brigade absolution before it went into action on the battle’s second day, organizers noted that the June 29 service would be an “offering of peace to the souls of the dead.” Assisted by bishops from three neighboring dioceses, Patrick O’Boyle, archbishop of Washington, officiated under a brilliant crimson and gold canopy erected on the steps of the Peace Memorial. Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, the president of the university, delivered the sermon.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Edmund Brown to Paul Roy, May 15, 1963; Harold Hughes to Roy, undated message; John Chafee to Roy, May 21, 1963; Endicott Peabody to Roy, May 20, 1963; Richard Hughes to Roy, May 23, 1963; Nelson Rockefeller to Roy, May 24, 1963; John N. Dempsey to Roy, Apr. 29, 1963, all reproduced in the Centennial Edition of the *Gettysburg Times*, June 28, 1963.

<sup>49</sup> “Gettysburg Mass Will Honor Dead,” *Washington Post*, June 22, 1963; “Eisenhowers Will Join Catholic Dignitaries at Field Mass Here June 29,” *Gettysburg Times*, May 30, 1963; “Gettysburg Fete,” *Washington Post*, May 30, 1963; see also *Notre Dame at Gettysburg* (Notre Dame, IN, 1964), copy at ACHS; see also “Field Mass Attracts 5,000; Rev. Hesburgh Calls for Americans to Be Emancipators,” *Gettysburg Times*, July 1, 1963.

Flanked by vases of gold chrysanthemums and red gladiolas, Hesburgh made a dramatic call for all Americans to become emancipators. First, he questioned the utility of the centennial clamor. "What does all of this drama mean to us, a hundred years later, as *we stand on the same battlefield*? The least that might be expected is that we would understand today, what Fr. Corby called the noble object for which they fought." The Civil War, Hesburgh said, "was fought for the Negroes' liberty, but that remains 'unfinished business.'" The centennial summer was a time for serious reflection. "What better place to ponder our unfinished business this morning than at Gettysburg, where so much of the blood and sweat and tears, that are the price of freedom, were paid? Gettysburg is not just a battlefield," he said, "it is a sacred shrine of freedom won again, in new proportion, for a nation 'conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.'"<sup>50</sup>

Hesburgh was cognizant of the festive air around him. "It may not have occurred to you, but each one of us must be, in these our times, great emancipators, to finish up in this centenary year as completely and as dramatically as possible, in all our own communities across the land, the unfinished business of which Lincoln spoke here: the work of freedom." Hesburgh went on to lament the "appalling dearth of freedom . . . in voting, in employment, in housing, in education, in public accommodations, and in the administration of justice." This was the "true challenge of Gettysburg today." Reenactment and pageantry, Hesburgh maintained, elided confrontation with the deepest meaning of the Civil War. "The sounds of battle have died away," the minister said as he swelled toward his conclusion. "The heroic deeds are done. Gettysburg is cloaked in peace. But the issue raised and bloodily engaged here still clamors for a final answer. . . . Can we finally make freedom live for all Americans?"<sup>51</sup>

Other participants in the observances echoed Hesburgh's homily, though they rarely matched his eloquence. "For a hundred years, the equality defined on these fields has been withheld from millions of our fellow citizens," remarked John A. Carver Jr., assistant secretary of the interior, on July 1, accepting the deed to additional battlefield acres purchased for the NPS. "What they once patiently awaited, they now

<sup>50</sup> "Field Mass Attracts 5,000," July 1, 1963; *Notre Dame at Gettysburg*.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.; "Negroes' Liberty Held 'Unfinished,'" *New York Times*, June 30, 1963; "Priest Calls for Negro Freedom," *Washington Post*, June 30, 1963; Hesburgh, "Gettysburg: Yesterday and Today," speech transcript in 109 Cong. Rec., A4254-55 (July 9, 1963), copies in manuscript box 190, ACHS.



demand as a matter of right. Unrest is at large over the Nation—and over nothing that was not basically at issue here a century ago.” This was the real reason for marking the anniversary. “Man has an infinite capacity to commemorate his works of war, so a century later we gather on the same field. But surely commemoration of a battle cannot be our real purpose for assembling. . . . Americans can learn from what happened here.”<sup>52</sup>

Later that afternoon, as the official ceremonies commenced, host Governor Scranton, looking out across the first day’s battlefield, called upon his fellow Americans to drive out racial prejudice. “Life without liberty is not really life at all,” he declared. Nonetheless, the governor attempted to mediate between the divided ranks of visitors in town by embracing the rhetoric of American exceptionalism: “Those who fell on this battlefield have not died in vain because our nation today is great enough to keep trying.”<sup>53</sup>

Unlike Scranton, progressive leaders offered realistic assessments of the nation’s progress on race. Governor Peabody of Massachusetts spoke in the Gettysburg National Cemetery and placed a wreath at the base of the Soldiers’ National Monument. “The plain fact of the matter is that America . . . has failed, to date, in its expressed purpose of achieving a real democracy for all its citizens,” he said. “So I think the Gettysburg Centennial, which observes the greatest single action of disunity which this country has ever experienced, should well serve as a time for reaffirming our mutual bonds and our common interests *and* for rededicating ourselves to working together to make its victory complete.”<sup>54</sup>

A few hundred yards away, at the monument to Brig. Gen. Alfred T. A. Torbert’s New Jersey Brigade, Governor Hughes also likened the contemporary struggle for civil rights to the Civil War. The New Jersey governor charged the nation with a century of “moral failure” to aid African Americans. “The Civil War was not fought to preserve the Union ‘lily

<sup>52</sup> See Remarks of the Assistant Secretary of the Interior John A. Carver Jr., United States Department of the Interior Press Release, copy in manuscript box 190, ACHS; see also transcript in 109 Cong. Rec., 11790–91 (July 11, 1963), copies in manuscript box 190, ACHS.

<sup>53</sup> Raymond J. Crowley, “Crowds Flock to Centenary Battle Scene,” undated clipping in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives; “Freedom’s Business Is Never Done, Gov. Scranton Says in Address Opening Centennial,” *Gettysburg Times*, July 2, 1963; “End of Prejudice Urged by Governor,” *Greensboro Daily News*, July 2, 1963; “Gettysburg Centennial Begins,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 1, 1963.

<sup>54</sup> C. R. Owens, “Take Up Negro Rights Cause, Says Peabody at Gettysburg,” *Boston Globe*, July 1, 1963; Peabody as quoted in “2 Saplings are Planted in Cemetery,” undated *Gettysburg Times* clipping, in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives.

white' or 'Jim Crow'; it was fought for liberty and justice for all." Only when racial prejudice no longer limited the opportunities afforded to African Americans, he declared, could "the warriors of Gettysburg sleep."<sup>55</sup>

Editorial comments from newspapers and periodicals around the country likewise assumed an emancipationist tone, frequently invoking the Gettysburg Address. Max Freedman's syndicated column implored readers to "listen" to Gettysburg. "The lesson of Gettysburg," he argued, "is to be found not in the glory of any soldier, no matter how brave or enduring, but in the still greater grandeur of Lincoln . . . [who] could never have been the friend of injustice and inequality. . . . Gettysburg has its admonition to all factions in the current controversy, if only they will consent to listen." The *Baltimore Sun* engaged Lincoln's flawed affirmation that the world would "little note nor long remember" what he said in Gettysburg. "The world took special note and vividly remembers what was done at Gettysburg a century ago and what was said there a few months later. . . . To think in 1963 of 1863 Gettysburg is painful on any terms, but less painful than if nothing were being done about unfinished business." Confounded by the celebration of George Wallace in Gettysburg, *Newsweek* published the most stinging indictment of the ceremonials. "Last week, as the nation paused to commemorate the centennial of the Battle of Gettysburg, Abraham Lincoln's measured phrases had a faintly hollow ring. . . . The question remained: how long will it take Americans of this generation to achieve their own stillness at Appomattox and fulfill 'the great task remaining before us'?"<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> "Pledge of Equality Is Unfulfilled, Gettysburg Fete Visitors Told," *Washington Post*, July 2, 1963; Edith Evans Asbury, "Hughes Charges Moral Failure to Aid Negroes since Civil War," *New York Times*, July 2, 1963; "Hughes Sees War Promise Unfulfilled," *Gettysburg Times*, July 2, 1963; see also *Rededication Program Honoring the Memory of the 4,500 Gallant New Jersey Men Who Fought in the Battle of Gettysburg* (Trenton, NJ, 1963), copy at ACHS. In the introduction to this program booklet, Governor Hughes outlined four goals for the centenary; the first goal was to "achieve lasting values from the Centennial, notably an improved understanding and unity within our Nation, section by section and race by race."

<sup>56</sup> Max Freedman, "Listen to Gettysburg: It Has an Admonition in Today's Controversy," *Minneapolis Star*, July 4, 1963; "Gettysburg," *Baltimore Sun*, July 1, 1963; "Gettysburg: 'The Task Remaining,'" July 15, 1963, 18–19; for additional editorial comments, see also "Gettysburgh," *New York Times*, June 30, 1963; *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 4, 1963; "100 Years since Gettysburg," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1963; "A Meeting Engagement," *Boston Globe*, July 1, 1963; John McClave, "For the Next One Hundred Years," letter to the editor, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, undated clipping in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives.

Columnist Ted Lippman took a final swipe at Governor Wallace's appearance in Gettysburg. "His Excellency stood on a hill in Gettysburg this week and said the fight would continue," he wrote. Lippman remained confident that the civil rights movement would succeed, in spite of Wallace's stubborn determination. "You begin to lose confidence in a man when he stands at a place like Gettysburg and says the fight goes on. What would you think of a Briton who stood on a dock in Boston Harbor and said that the price of tea was going up? What would you think of Chiang Kai-shek if he said he was going to recapture mainland China?"<sup>57</sup>

Conversely, all of the major African American newspapers simply refused to comment on the commemoration. Even two regional papers boasting national readerships, the *Baltimore Afro-American* and the *Philadelphia Tribune*, overlooked the anniversary. Conceivably, this silence was strategic—a way to deny legitimacy to the entire observance. African Americans, segregated from the memory of the Civil War for so long, no longer felt the need to add their voices to the discussion or their participation to the observances. As historian Margaret Creighton observed in her account of the battle's "forgotten history," twentieth-century African American Gettysburgians avoided the battlefield "almost entirely," uninterested in monuments celebrating the Confederate cause or in consorting with tourists waving souvenir Confederate flags.<sup>58</sup>

*"One Last Charge Up at Gettysburg"*<sup>59</sup>

Considering the conclusion to the centenary, it is unsurprising that African Americans avoided mentioning the observances. In many ways, the final day of the official observances was microcosmic of the Civil War's troubled relationship with the civil rights movement. During the afternoon of July 3, over five hundred gray-clad reenactors emerged from the woods along Seminary Ridge. These modern rebels crossed the open fields undulating before the Union position on Cemetery Ridge, where an estimated forty-five thousand spectators gathered, cameras in hand. For

<sup>57</sup> Ted Lippman, "One Last Charge Up at Gettysburg," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 3, 1963.

<sup>58</sup> I surveyed the *Philadelphia Tribune*, (*Los Angeles*) *California Eagle*, *Washington Afro-American*, *Chicago Defender*, *Baltimore Afro-American*, *Detroit Tribune*, and *Pittsburgh Courier* without uncovering a single comment on the Gettysburg centennial exercises; Margaret Creighton, *The Colors of Courage: Immigrants, Women, and African Americans in the Civil War's Defining Battle* (New York, 2005), 227.

<sup>59</sup> Lippman, "One Last Charge Up at Gettysburg," July 3, 1963.

the first time during the observances, the weather was favorable—the clear, dry air was able to flutter some sixty rebel banners.<sup>60</sup>

In their program booklets, visitors read the sentimental stanzas of James H. Van Alen's poem about Pickett's Charge: "For two full days before from dawn till dark those flags had flown / Above sons of America locked fast in mortal strife / Each fighting for a principle, the height of courage shown / The North to save the Union and the South its way of life." In Van Alen's poem, Pickett's "gallant line" prayed to God and won "eternal fame" on the fields of Gettysburg against a Union army "dazed and drained by battle, glad to let them go."<sup>61</sup> The poem swelled to a predictable conclusion: "Americans North and South may justly think with pride / Forever on the way both Blue and Gray fought on that day. / From start until the bitter end their courage never died / Our nation's loss such bravery had so high a price to pay." Although he dedicated the stanzas to the memory of his namesake and great-grandfather, an officer in the Third New York Volunteer Cavalry, Van Alen vocalized his Confederate sympathies and opinions about the civil rights movement. "From what I know about Governor Wallace," the poet laureate of the Gettysburg centenary explained to a crowd gathered at the Alabama Monument, "he is 100 percent American, and it is nice to know someone who is a true American. I know he believes in the Constitution and in the Bill of Rights, and he is going to fight to protect them." Van Alen demonstrated that a century later, race and reunion remained trapped in their tragic, mutual dependence.<sup>62</sup>

At about three o'clock that afternoon, spectators turned away from their program booklets and gazed toward Seminary Ridge, as directed by the voice of film and stage actor Walter Abel. The Gettysburg Centennial Commission retained the former vice president of the Screen Actors Guild to provide a historical narrative for the audience. Spanning nearly a half

<sup>60</sup> Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 35–36; Edith Evans Asbury, "Blue, Gray Battle Anew at Gettysburg," *Atlanta Constitution*, July 4, 1963; Major Wade Lucas, "Longest Mile at Gettysburg," *Raleigh News and Observer*, July 4, 1963; Jean M. White, "Small-Town Festivities Highlight Day's Celebration in Gettysburg," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1963; Robert Wallace, "Recharge at Gettysburg," *Life*, July 5, 1963, 14, 16; "Even Girls Get in on 'Pickett's Charge,'" *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 4, 1963; Jean M. White, "40,000 Watch Pickett Charge Again at Gettysburg," *Washington Post*, July 4, 1963.

<sup>61</sup> James Van Alen, "Pickett's Charge," poem, in *Official Program of the Battle of Gettysburg centennial*, in "Battle of Gettysburg—Anniversaries, 1963" lateral file, ACHS.

<sup>62</sup> Bill Rasco, "Gettysburg Poet Praises Gov. Wallace," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 3, 1963; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 5.

mile, fifty outdoor speakers carried Abel's bright voice across the battlefield. Once his narration concluded, the charge stepped off. The plenary commission paid a New York producer \$3,500 to generate a stereophonic tape of roaring cannon, cracking rifles, and popping pistols. Elaborate machinery produced a wall of acrid, sulphurous battle smoke. "This time there was to be no struggle—not even the firing of a blank cartridge. The din of battle was to be simulated by an elaborate stereophonic system for the benefit of the audience gathered on Cemetery Ridge," an Ohio newspaper reporter observed. Military analyst George Fielding Eliot took the microphone from Abel and presented a tactical microhistory of Pickett's Charge, punctuated by artificial gunfire. "On they came, their scarlet blue-crossed battle flags waving proudly about them," Eliot announced. "It doesn't seem possible that human beings can cross over open ground and drive home an attack under the storm of shot and shell and leaden bullets that these men of General Lee's are going to face."<sup>63</sup>

The Confederate reenactors charged the historic fields, approaching the audience and former Union army position on Cemetery Ridge. "Now they've reached the rising ground that slopes up toward our position," Eliot continued. The rebels halted about fifty feet from the low, stonewall on Cemetery Ridge for the benefit of the photographers—both on the ground and circling above in a helicopter. Tempers flared as members of the crowd maneuvered to capture a photograph or two. "I wish you had directed the Pickett's Charge," visitor Dorothy Elderdice of Westminster, Maryland, complained to Betty Gifford. "Perhaps more of us might have been able to see and to hear what was going on. All I could hear was the hovering helicopter—and all I could see was flags coming through the smoke screen."<sup>64</sup>

With some photographs snapped, the Confederates advanced to the stone wall to meet their blue-clad opponents. After shaking hands, they stood at attention in a semicircle centered on the Angle. The US Navy Band offered up the "Star-Spangled Banner" as a symbol of national

<sup>63</sup> Raymond J. Crowley, "Gettysburg again Sees Rebel Charge," *Akron Beacon Journal*, July 4, 1963; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 35; see also "Battle Commission Tells How Its Funds Are Spent," *Gettysburg Times*, July 2, 1963; "Sons of Veterans Will Present Symbolic Attack on Battlefield July 3rd," and "Troopers from 24 States Staged Lively Spectacle in Full-dress Re-creation," undated, unmarked clippings in Gettysburg Newspaper Clippings, vol. 12-58b, Gettysburg National Military Park Archives.

<sup>64</sup> Crowley, "Gettysburg again Sees Rebel Charge," July 4, 1963; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 35; Dorothy Elderdice to Betty Gifford, July 8, 1963, in Gifford Family Collection, ACHS.

unity—the Union and Confederate reenactors were brothers, one and all. It was the concluding spectacle of the centenary, “an emotion filled,” dramatic climax to a complicated observance.<sup>65</sup>

And spectacle it certainly was. It was a festival of pomp and pageantry; of gushing sentiment and human feeling, a moment when Confederates were celebrated, not condemned; a moment when mutual heroism replaced ideological reflection, with rebel banners waving freely. It was a commercialized event, expensive for both hosts and guests. In the midst of the Cold War, it was a showcase of military might and national unity, broadcasting America’s greatness to the world while denying consideration of the injustices within. Such selective Civil War memories created a stark juxtaposition with ongoing racial strife. Some perceptive observers billed the ceremonies as a “mixture of corn and carnival”; a “vulgar show”; and, finally, an “outward manifestation of business.” As Adele Nathan wrote to Gifford several weeks after the anniversary, “I am afraid the town of Gettysburg came off very badly.”<sup>66</sup>

Perhaps “lost opportunity” is the most appropriate label for the Gettysburg centenary. In the shadow of the civil rights movement and the Cold War, commemoration of the war that ended slavery provided an occasion for both advocates and opponents of racial equality to reflect on what was lost and won. Yet, rather than casting a critical gaze on the “the tragedy lingering on the margins and infesting the heart of American history”—the reality that national healing after the war was achieved by resubjugating the people it purportedly freed—most white Americans continued to reduce the Civil War to mere pageantry.<sup>67</sup> A century after the war, most white Americans were unable to see through the sentimental haze, even as some progressive voices attempted to reassert the eclipsed legacy of emancipation. Thus, the Gettysburg ceremony proved the “high water mark” of the Civil War centennial; there were no rebels to fete and no uplifting tales to repeat by commemorating the horrors of the Wilderness, the miseries of the Petersburg trenches, or the atrocities of

<sup>65</sup> Crowley, “Gettysburg Again Sees Rebel Charge,” July 4, 1983; Simon, *Gettysburg 1963*, 35.

<sup>66</sup> “Editorial,” *Gettysburg Times*, July 5, 1963; “Gettysburg: ‘The Task Remaining,’” July 15, 1963, 19; John M. Cummings, “Gettysburg: Blue and Gray,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 2, 1963; Cummings, “Chickenfeed and History,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 1, 1963; “Vulgar Show at Gettysburg,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, July 14, 1963; Adele Nathan to Betty Gifford, July 16, 1963, in Gifford Family Collection, ACHS.

<sup>67</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 3.

Andersonville. As the sesquicentennial of the Civil War commences, we need to consider not only what transpired at Gettysburg one hundred and fifty years ago, but what did not happen a century later.

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