TO GUARD IN PEACE: THE COMMEMORATION HISTORY OF THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM, 1862-1937

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ABSTRACT

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The following essay covers the commemoration and history of remembrance of the Battle of Antietam from immediately following the battle to its seventy-fifth anniversary celebration. In some respects, this work is a case study of larger themes and topics on Civil War memory in that it attempts to shed light on how memory of the war evolved and reflected the time in which it took place. Throughout the work I focus on a few key themes. One of those central themes is the politicization of Antietam’s commemoration. During the seventy-five year period covered in the following essay, politicians and partisans used commemoration and monumentalization as an avenue to express both sectional and party political rhetoric. However, the central argument I put forth revolves around the issue of anti-southern sentiment among Union veterans. Previous and contemporary historians argue that during the 1880s and 1890s a spirit of reunion and reconciliation swept across the American landscape and with the culminating effect of the Spanish-American War, the chasm between the North and South closed. Conversely, I argue that although reconciliation dominated the late nineteenth-century, anti-southern sentiment and rhetoric persisted well into the twentieth-century. I attempt to trace the history and persistence of anti-southern sentiment throughout the seventy-five year period covered in the essay.

The first chapter covers the early commemoration history of Antietam, including the photographs taken by Alexander Gardner as well as the dedication and creation of
Antietam National Cemetery. The second chapter examines the extensive
monumentalizing of the Antietam battlefield, including both state and regimental
monuments. The third and final chapter looks at the semicentennial and seventy-fifth
anniversary celebrations of the Battle of Antietam.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

An adequate acknowledgment of the individuals who aided in the formulation of this project would undoubtedly produce a list equal in length to the manuscript itself. I shall, however, make a modest attempt. My interest in the Civil War began with a high school English teacher/Civil War buff. I am forever indebted to Gwynette Hammond for sparking my interest in not only the Civil War but history as an academic field. Additionally, I would not be in a position to write a thesis had it not been for the encouragement and support of the history department at Marietta College, including such fine scholars, mentors and friends as Matthew Young and James O’Donnell.

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My family and friends offered the support and foundation from which such a project could launch. Their interest in my research was genuine and, at many times, gave me the opportunity to use them as an invaluable sounding board. My parents have always supported me in all of my pursuits and my thesis was no different.

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INTRODUCTION

The Civil War is perhaps the most commemorated and memorialized event in American history. There are thousands of monuments and memorials that dot battlefields, urban centers, and cemeteries across the American landscape. Memorial Day originated in postbellum American society and continues as a prime example of the persistence and proliferation of Civil War remembrance. The Civil War is the most widely written about topic in the historiography of United States history and, relatively recently, the field of Civil War memory studies has begun to establish its place among that scholarship. This essay attempts to place a modest analysis of the commemoration of the Battle of Antietam within that scholarship.

The central purpose of this work is to use the commemoration and remembrance of the Battle of Antietam as a case study for the larger remembrance and memory of the Civil War in order to demonstrate how that remembrance evolved and reflected the society and time in which it took place. The essay strives to portray a perhaps relatively obvious, at least on the surface, point but one in which previous historians and scholars on Civil War memory have only cursorily referenced, that is the widespread politicization of Civil War commemoration and remembrance. Politicians and lawmakers often initiated, or at the very least supported financially, most of the commemorative ceremonies and memorials devoted to the soldiers who fought in the Civil War. Political leaders would use Civil War remembrance as a means to tout one’s own platform or condemn that of his enemy’s. Political newspapers would critique the memorial addresses of opposite-party presidents, indicting their ignorance of omitted Civil War heroes displayed in their speeches or their lack of reverence for veterans and the fallen.
The politicizing and partisan associations of Antietam’s commemoration evolved over time. The height of the political overtones evident in the commemoration ceremonies and press coverage coincided with Reconstruction and the immediate postwar era. Tensions, both sectional and political, remained elevated in postbellum American society and commemoration provided an outlet for those tensions to be released, or at the very least expressed. The heightened partisan nature of commemoration slowly dissipated and by the 1930s, few partisans targeted their attacks during commemoration and reunion ceremonies. Although fewer political partisan criticisms continued into the twentieth-century, as the following essay attempts to elucidate, many veterans continued to harbor sectional resentment for the remainder of their lives.

Despite the importance of this theme to history of Antietam’s commemoration, another forms the crux of the essay’s argument on Civil War memory. The following discussion attempts to shed light on a persistent anti-southern sentiment that pervaded the North and the memory of its citizens and veterans long after the war concluded. Anti-northern sentiment in postbellum society is well covered through works on the Lost Cause narrative, such as The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History edited by Gary Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan as well as David Blight’s chapter devoted to the same issue in his work Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory, yet no such extensive study exists devoted to anti-southern sentiment in the North. This work attempts, albeit modestly, to address this gap. In particular, the following essay attempts to challenge the often referenced and stated, but not usually elaborated upon, principle that “the Spanish-American War…testified to the true patriotism of the maltreated ex-
Confederate states and heightened the spirit of reconciliation across America.”

Although the Spanish-American War undoubtedly aided in the sectional reconciliation of the United States from a military and government standpoint, as a study of Antietam commemoration several years after the war reveals, the Civil War was not yet fully reconciled in the memory of many Northern veterans.

Many Union veterans challenged reconciliation on the grounds of racial equality, however, as the history of Antietam’s commemoration demonstrates, a significant number of veterans espoused resentment-filled rhetoric for the South and ex-Confederates while simultaneously omitting references to racial equality or slavery. These former soldiers dissented from reconciliation but not on explicitly stated racial grounds. However, the soldiers who abstained from mentioning race did not necessarily view the Civil War’s impact on race relations as insignificant. Rather, they implied the evilness of slavery and the importance of abolition when they discussed the morality of the war, the righteousness of the Union, and the inherent evilness of the Confederacy. Therefore, it is inferable that the great majority of those who expressed a continually irreconcilable viewpoint considered the Confederacy’s position on slavery as immoral.

This does not, however, imply that the former Union soldiers only harbored persistent anti-southern sentiments over issues of race relations and racial quality. Conversely, veterans of the North expressed a myriad of reasons for their resentment and race, while a critical reason, is only one.

Although the purpose and scope of the forthcoming essay focuses exclusively on remembrance and commemoration of the Battle of Antietam, it nonetheless attempts to

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state something about Civil War memory more broadly. Like others before, this essay attempts to portray the Reconstruction period from the war to 1880 as a time marked with a tension between reconciliationist and anti-reconciliation positions. However, where this author departs from other historians is in an analysis of the post-1880 period, specifically 1880-1898, as a reconciliationist-dominated period. David Blight is perhaps the most prominent proponent of this perspective. He argues that during the 1880s and 1890s, “the practice of reconciliation and fraternalism emerged as dominant in veterans’ culture” and that “the prevailing theme was the equality of soldiers’ sacrifice on both sides.” It is difficult to argue that reconciliation was not the predominate sentiment of many veterans of the Civil War but there was undoubtedly notable exceptions. In response to this notion, Blight concedes that “Unyielding partisanship still wafted from an occasional Northern or Southern reunion speech or a campfire war paper.”2 Paul H. Buck posited this view more than sixty years prior to Blight. In his pioneering work Road to Reunion, Buck notes that although sentiments of reconciliation dominated the late nineteenth-century, “important qualifications necessarily appear.”3 In many ways, it is the “occasional Northern” speeches and “important qualifications” that this essay seeks to rescue from a mere mention then dismissal. When one evaluates the remembrance and commemoration of the Battle of Antietam as indicative of larger remembrance of veterans on the Civil War, it becomes apparent that a more complete reconciliation did not take place until much later and that the ‘occasional’ resister to reconciliation perhaps appears more frequently in the narrative of Civil War memory than first suggested.

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2 Blight, 198.
The essay’s organizational structure follows a chorological progression inspired by the work of David Blight, Timothy B. Smith, and Thomas J. Brown. The remainder of the introduction presents a brief account of the battle itself, its significance in the war, and early efforts at reporting and commemorating it. The first chapter, “Early Commemoration and Dedication of Antietam National Cemetery, 1862-1867” focuses on the most immediate forms of remembrance of the Battle of Antietam during war and the height of Reconstruction, including photographs of the aftermath as well as the dedication of Antietam National Cemetery. This chapter fits within the work of the leading Civil War memory historian David Blight who notes that the early period of commemoration and memory consisted of a tension and contested struggle between Reconstruction and reconciliation. This struggle inevitably created a highly politicized landscape on which commemoration would take place. The second chapter, “The “Golden Age” of Antietam Commemoration, 1870-1920” borrows its name from Timothy B. Smith’s work *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation* and focuses on the monumentalization of the Antietam battlefield. Smith’s central arguments as to why the period around the turn of the century was a “golden age” for battlefield preservation can be applied, in many ways, to explain why the same period was a golden age for battlefield commemoration. The third and final chapter, “The Changing Form of Antietam Commemoration, 1912-1937,” centers on the semicentennial and seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam and fits within Thomas Brown’s concept that after 1915 monumentalization decreased in favor of other forms of commemoration and remembrance. The essay concludes with a brief synopsis of the development of more contemporary commemoration and remembrance of Antietam and the Civil War.
The Battle of Antietam

The Battle of Antietam, fought on September 17, 1862, is often referred to as the bloodiest day in American military history. Over 70,000 Federal troops participated in the conflict and of those soldiers, approximately 13,000 were killed, wounded, or missing; the casualty number of the 35,000 Confederate troops that fought in the battle is similar to that of the Union Army. The result of the battle was a technical draw but a tactical and strategic victory for the Union forces as it thwarted General Lee’s first invasion into northern territory and his Maryland campaign of 1862.

As expectations and predictions that the war would be brief dissipated, the success and confidence of the Confederacy swelled during the first year of the Civil War. The Army of Northern Virginia, under the leadership of General Robert E. Lee and his two most trusted subordinate commanders Generals Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson and James Longstreet, rattled off numerous victories in Virginia in 1862, aiding in the protection and security of the Confederate capital in Richmond and to most observers “appeared poised to capture Washington.” The success of Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley and Lee in the Seven Day’s Battles and the Battle of Second Bull Run helped fuel Lee’s decision to move north and his confidence that such a move would prove successful.

The Battle of Antietam is best understood broken down into the three chronological and thematic phases of the battle. The phases of the battle consisted of fighting along the Confederate right flank, left flank, and center position and corresponded, albeit roughly, to the progression of the day from morning, midday, and

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afternoon. The fighting began in the early morning of September 17 with the previously delayed attack of General Hooker and his I Corps.

The morning phase of the battle consisted of three Union offensive attacks on the left flank of the Confederate line. The first assault was that of the I Corps which Lee, despite being outnumbered, was well prepared for. Despite the initial advance, Hooker and his force fell back as a result of Jackson’s counterattack, which only halted due to the firing of Federal artillery. As Hooker and his men retreated, the XII Corps under the leadership of Major General Joseph Mansfield launched a second attack on the left flank of the Confederate line with a force of around 7200 men. General Samuel Crawford led the division on the right through the East and North Woods and was sent reeling by General Hood in the Cornfield and by Jackson’s covered force west of Hagerstown Pike. On the left, General George S. Greene led the other division through the East Woods and pushed all the way to the Dunker Church had to slow his advance and stop on a ridge near Dunker Church due in part to a Confederate stand near the church as well as a lack of ammunition. The final Union attack of the morning phase was the advancement of the II Corps led by Major Generals Edwin V. Sumner and John Sedgwick toward the West Woods and the open field beyond the wooded area which resulted in one of, if not the worst, exchanges of the entire war. Sedgwick’s Corps suffered almost 2500 causalities in a timeframe of fewer than 20 minutes.⁵

The majority of the fighting during the midday phase took place on the center line of the Confederate Army along a lane known as the Sunken Road because of its high embankments and low base due to years of erosion and large wagon traveling through the

⁵ George R. Large and Joe A. Swisher, Battle of Antietam: The Official History by the Antietam Battlefield Board, (Shippensburg: Burd Street Press, 1998), 53-56.
Confederate General Hill positioned the brigades of Generals Rodes and Anderson on left and right of the road, respectively. A few other brigades that participated in the morning fighting in the Cornfield and the East Woods moved in to support Hill and his left flank. Despite the additional support, General Hill only had a force of around 2500 men at his disposal to confront Union General William H. French and his II Corps consisting of approximately 5700 men. Hill, however, possessed the advantage of a strong defensive position and the benefit of a breastwork of fence along his line. Additionally, Lee moved Major General Richard H. Anderson’s division of 3400 to support General Hill at the Sunken Road. After almost three and a half hours of fighting on and around the Sunken Road, 3000 Union and over 2500 Confederate soldiers laid wounded or dead at the battlefield near the small town of Sharpsburg.6

The fighting that occurred during the afternoon phase of the battle took place on the right flank on the Confederate line and lasted from 1:00pm to 5:30pm. The majority of the fighting centered on the lower bridge over the Antietam Creek that would, because of the events of the afternoon, become known as Burnside Bridge. The IX Corps, under the leadership of General Ambrose Burnside, carried out the attack on the Confederate

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6 Ibid., 113-115.
right. The IX Corps overwhelmed General David Jones’s humble force despite the fact that the Confederates possessed the high ground and effective artillery placement. The Union advance pushed the Confederates back through Sharpsburg and their left flank was beginning to fold. Hill’s division arrived at 3:40pm and halted the Federal advance and with the addition of Hill’s force, the Confederates were able to put the Union troops on the defensive by 4:30pm and pushed them back to Antietam Creek by the end of the day but not back across it.\textsuperscript{7}

On the morning of September 18 Lee wanted to continue the fighting that took place on the previous day but after evaluating the situation and position of both armies Lee was persuaded by his subordinate officers to abandon any hope of reengaging the enemy. McClellan on the other hand did not possess any desire to continue the fighting despite the fact that he received reinforcements and more troops were on the way to support him in any potential exchanges. Lee decided to re-cross the Potomac River and end his campaign in Maryland under the cover of darkness on the night of September 18. McClellan decided on an ultimately controversial decision to not pursue the retreating Army of Northern Virginia the next morning.\textsuperscript{8}

Newspapers were quick to relay the events of the day to the public, including the Herald of Freedom and Torch Light, a local newspaper printed out of Hagerstown, Maryland. The newspaper, in reference to the aftermath of the battle, noted that “heap upon heap lay piled the dead and wounded” and “in one field where their advance was checked lay 1,217 rebel dead, while on the hill beyond a number of nearly as great of our own men were left to the mercy of the enemy.” The author of the article praised the

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 141-144.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 187.
Union Army for its performance during the battle and stated that “consummate valor marked the actions of every division in the field.” The article is also evidence that questioning McClellan’s decision making during the Battle of Antietam began immediately after the conclusion of the confrontation. The author noted that “there are those who blame McClellan for granting the armistice, yet his course was a wise one.” The questioning of McClellan and his seemingly evident pacification and hesitancy would not dissipate in the few days after the last shots at Antietam. McClellan’s leadership became a point of controversy for many years to come and posed perhaps the greatest difficulty for President Abraham Lincoln. The article concluded with the statement that “the rebels have been driven out of the State, and we believe that the footsteps of not a single one of them now pollutes the soil of Maryland.”

The reactions to the battle in newspapers and the graphic photographs taken the next day represent early forms of commemoration, recollection, and remembrance, but President Abraham Lincoln’s visit to the battlefield and his decision to issue the Emancipation Proclamation were the most significant. Lincoln was waiting for an opportune time to make his decree of emancipation public and incorporate it into the cause of preserving the Union. Lincoln, however, needed a substantial Union victory in the war in order to establish the credibility and practicality of emancipation. Antietam provided Lincoln with that victory. With the Union forces’ thwarting of Lee’s campaign into Maryland, Lincoln could tie the war to emancipation.

In an address delivered at the ninth reunion of the Society of the Army of West Virginia on September 17, 1885 in Portsmouth, Ohio the orator acknowledged the significance of Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation shortly after the Battle of

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Antietam. The speaker noted the devastation of the battle by speculating on the casualty number but continued by stating that “tremendous as that fact appears, it sinks into insignificance compared with the event that Abraham Lincoln connected with the Battle of Antietam.” The speaker at the reunion ceremony and celebration recalled that Lincoln waited several days to make sure the battle had its desired effect of sending Lee back across the Potomac and then “did an act which made this great war illustrious forever.”

Already by 1885, the author of the speech realized the significance of Lincoln issuing the Emancipation Proclamation had on the present and future commemoration and remembrance of the Battle of Antietam noting that “forever the great act of emancipation is connected with the battle of Antietam, fought twenty-three years ago today, in which you and I bore our part.”

Even one hundred years after the battle, historian Robert Cook notes that during the struggle of the civil rights movement “black and their northern white allies” developed several proposals to officially commemorate the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation by Lincoln “in the wake of the strategic Union victory at Antietam in September 1862.” President Lincoln also helped the beginning perpetuation of the commemoration of the battle when he visited the battlefield two weeks after its conclusion, one week after he issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Lincoln was the first official tourist to the battlefield and he spent four days touring the field and speaking with General McClellan as well as visiting the wounded of the both Union Army and the Confederate Army.

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10 Address at the Ninth Reunion of the Society of the Army West Virginia, September 17, 1885, (Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center).
It did not, of course, take one hundred years for the commemoration of the Battle of Antietam to commence. Remembrance of the battle began long before the war concluded. Beyond the written response by various newspapers and the photographs taken by Alexander Gardner, individual soldiers who fought and fell in the battle were being remembered, such is the case of 1st Lieutenant Marvin Wait who participated in the Battle of Antietam and died from wounds suffered on the battlefield on September 17, 1862 at the age of only 19. Jacob Eaton, a fellow officer of the 8th Connecticut Volunteers, authored the written memorial. The tribute to Wait was full of praise for his service and the respect he garnered from both enlisted men and his colleagues. Eaton noted that “during the terrible and mighty conflict at Antietam,” Lieutenant Wait’s “courage, valor, and patriotism, reached their sad but sublime consummation.” Wait ultimately fell dead on the battlefield after receiving multiple bullet wounds. The commemoration of the battle, including memorials, recollections, and photographs, that took place while the war was still raging represent only one small fraction of the future forms and reasons for commemorating the Battle of Antietam.

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CHAPTER 1: EARLY COMMEMORATION AND DEDICATION OF ANTIETAM NATIONAL CEMETERY, 1862-1867

Before the dedication of Antietam National Cemetery in 1867, the Board of Trustees faced the issue of what to do with ‘Lee’s Rock.’ ‘Lee’s Rock’ was a simple stone located within the boundary of the cemetery grounds but created a dilemma for the Trustees. According to legend, Lee stood on the ‘rock’ to watch the progress of his army during the Battle of Antietam. The Board wavered back and forth on the issue of whether or not to retain ‘Lee’s Rock.’ The majority opinion depended greatly upon which members were in attendance at the meetings, specifically whether or not there was a Republican majority in attendance. Popular opinion of what to with ‘Lee’s Rock’ and its appropriateness within the enclosure of Antietam National Cemetery was also varied. An article featured in the Lancaster Intelligencer referred to Lee’s Rock as a “memorable spot” and upheld its historical significance.\(^ {14}\) The author of a *New York Times* article on the national cemetery analyzed the controversy over ‘Lee’s Rock’ as follows:

There has been a difference of opinion among the gentlemen having control of the cemetery whether this rock should be allowed to remain. We believe it has been decided not to disturb it. Whatever is calculated to perpetuate the historic associations of the place should be preserved. Although the rock has been pressed by traitor footsteps there will be few pilgrims to this spot, now made sacred by the nation’s soldiers, who will not stand upon it and recall the scene which Gen. Lee gazed upon that bright September morning.\(^ {15}\)

Conversely, a visitor to the cemetery reported in the *Boonsboro Odd Fellow* of the visitors removing chunks of the rock and keeping them as their own personal souvenirs.

He concluded his discussion on the topic by clearly showing his disdain for the stone

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\(^ {14}\) *Lancaster Intelligencer*, May 10, 1865.

\(^ {15}\) *The New York Times*, July 3, 1866.
with the words, “Lee’s Rock!—Bah!!!” The controversy surrounding whether or not to retain ‘Lee’s Rock’ eventually dissipated and the Board of Trustees ordered the removal of the rock.

The issue of ‘Lee’s Rock’ serves as a foreshadowing and characterization of the tensions that came to fruition not only during the official dedication of Antietam National Cemetery on September 17, 1867, the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam but also during the immediate postbellum period. The controversy over the small rock depicts the continued conflict and struggle between Democrats and Republicans, North and South, as well as reconciliation and anti-Confederate sentiments.

“The Dead of Antietam”

The earliest and perhaps most graphic form of commemoration began just two days after the Battle of Antietam. On September 19, 1862 Matthew Brady’s staff photographers Alexander Gardner and James F. Gibson photographed the aftermath of the battle. There is no evidence as to where Gardner and Gibson stayed on the night of September 18 but it is clear that Gardner began taking photographs on September 19, most likely in the early morning. Dunker Church, the small unassuming white church located “in the heart of the battlefield” was the first site Gardner photographed. The first series of pictures taken by Gardner centered on several dead Confederate soldiers lying in an open field in front of the church with a cluster of trees in the background. Gardner and Gibson had to confront the issue of time and race against soldiers hastily burying the dead on the battlefield. Taking photographs on a remote battlefield was a time

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16 Boonsboro Odd Fellow, October 11, 1866, quoted in Susan W. Trail, Remembering Antietam: Commemoration and Preservation of a Civil War Battlefield, (University of Maryland, PhD dissertation, 2005), 83.
17 Trail, 85.
consuming process. Gibson probably helped prepare the plates while Gardner operated and setup the camera. After photographing around Dunker Church and near a fence line along Hagerstown Pike, Gardner and Gibson made their way to the Sunken Road, later to be remembered as “Bloody Lane.” At the Sunken Road, Gardner and Gibson exposed the final three plates in the late afternoon of September 19.18

Photographs of Civil War dead were primarily of fallen Confederates as Union soldiers often buried their fallen comrades when they held the field. Manipulation of Civil War photographs and scenes was prevalent among post-battle images. Photographers employed manipulation as a way to “appeal to a sentimental, even romantic, sense in public attitude.” Gardner and his assistants moved one Confederate soldier at Gettysburg over forty yards to a barricade in order to make it appear as if the soldier was a sharpshooter. Gardner then placed a rifle carefully over the soldier’s body; the use of props to add to the emotional imagery was a common tactic used in photographic manipulation. Although Gardner later employed manipulation in his subsequent photographs of Civil war dead, there is no evidence of manipulation in his photographs taken at Antietam, most likely because he did not yet realize the potential market value of sensationalized images.19

Gardner and Gibson brought the photographs to Brady in Washington and by the middle of October the images were on display in Brady’s gallery on Broadway, under the title of “The Dead of Antietam.” Crowds flocked into the second-floor reception room to gaze at a spectacle never before seen in the United States. As historian Bob Zeller notes,

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“The photographs of the dead of Antietam were the first American images of the carnage of war.”

One visitor to the gallery, a New York Times reporter, put forth his interpretation of the display in an article entitled “BRADY’S PHOTOGRAPHYS; Pictures of the Dead at Antietam” published on October 20, 1862. The unknown reporter began his article by acknowledging the distance and disconnect between the home front and the front lines. Historian Earl Hess referred to this disconnect as the “gulf of experience” that existed between soldiers and home front civilians.

![Confederate dead in front of Dunker Church (courtesy of the Library of Congress).](image)

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20 Zeller, 65, 80.
The reporter noted that the citizens living on the home front “recognize the battle-field as a reality, but it stands as a remote one” and they “see the list [of fallen soldiers] in the morning paper at breakfast, but dismiss its recollection with the coffee” much like when a funeral took place next door, “it attracts your attention, but does not enlist your sympathy.” The author speculated on how different the perception or reality of war would be if the dead “fresh from the field, laid along the pavement” of Broadway or if the corpse of a fallen soldier “is carried out over your own threshold.”

According to the New York Times reporter, Matthew Brady’s gallery of the fallen of Antietam served to “bring home…the terrible reality and earnestness of war” even though he did not literally bring the bodies home and lay them in “dooryards” or “along the streets”, he did “something very like it.” The reporter anticipated a feeling of “repulsiveness” but was surprised that when he experienced a “terrible fascination” that
drew him near the pictures and made him “loath to leave them.” The author observed “hushed, reverend groups standing around these weird copies of carnage, bending down to look in the pale faces of the dead, chained by the strange spell that dwells in the dead men’s eyes.”

Although the reporter recognized that the photographs possessed “a terrible distinctness” and the “very features of the slain” could be distinguished with “aid of the magnifying glass”, he made one interesting point as to what the detailed photographs could not capture. The one aspect that eluded the skill of the photographer was the “background of widows and orphans, torn from the bosom of their natural protectors.” The suffering of those who survived was not present in the photographs of slain. The reporter concluded that “all of this desolation imagination must paint—broken hearts cannot be photographed.”

When Lincoln visited the battlefield in early October, Gardner returned to Antietam to take more photographs, this time of several prominent Union generals along with the president. Brady made his first visit to the site shortly thereafter in late October and took his own pictures of Union soldiers not far from the site of the original battle. The photographs taken of Lincoln as well as the dead of Antietam are still prevalent to this day. The photographs are common among various American history and Civil War textbooks and are even featured in Ken Burns’s The Civil War (1990). The photographs of soldiers who fell on the field at Antietam taken by Gardner perpetuated the tragic, graphic, and timeless remembrance of the Battle of Antietam in 1862 and continue to do so almost 150 years later.

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22 New York Times, October 20, 1862.
23 Zeller, 77.
Creation and Dedication of Antietam National Cemetery

As is the case with most Civil War battlefields, including most notably Gettysburg, Antietam’s formal commemoration and preservation history began with the call for a national cemetery on the battlefield. Maryland State Senator Lewis P. Firey introduced a proposition to the Maryland legislature for a state and national cemetery honoring the fallen soldiers of the Battle of Antietam in early 1864, before the war’s conclusion.24 In Firey’s resolution for a cemetery on the Antietam battlefield, he requested:

A portion of the battle-field of Antietam, not exceeding twenty acres, for the purposes of a State and National Cemetery, in which the bodies of our heroes who fell in that great struggle and are now bleaching in the upturned furrows, may be gathered for a decent burial, and their memories embalmed in some suitable memorial.25

Shortly after the appointment of the committee for the proposed cemetery, the committee members visited the battlefield and “selected that most eligible and beautiful site where the National Cemetery is now located.” They also received a “positive offer of sale” from the property owner on that same trip.26 On March 10, 1864 the General Assembly of the State of Maryland unanimously passed an act which approved $5000 for the purchase of lands for the cemetery and the cemetery’s enclosure. The act also gave the governor permission to hire an agent in charge of supervising the construction of the cemetery’s enclosure as well as the exhuming of the bodies. Additionally, the act provided “that those who fell in the army of General Lee should be buried in a separate

25 History of Antietam National Cemetery including A Descriptive List of all the Loyal Soldiers Buried Therein: Together with the Ceremonies and Address on the Occasion of the Dedication of the Grounds, September 17th, 1867, (Baltimore: John W. Woods, Steam Printer, 1869), 7.
26 Ibid., 7-8.
portion of the Cemetery from that, designed for those who fell under General McClellan.”

The burial of Confederate dead at the Antietam cemetery developed into a point of controversy during the period before and after the cemetery’s official dedication on September 17, 1867. The issues and controversy surrounding the establishment and dedication of Antietam National Cemetery are indicative of the larger complexities and disparities in the remembrance and commemoration of the Battle of Antietam, particularly during the period of Reconstruction. In many ways, the dedication of the cemetery serves as a foundation for the persistent anti-Confederate sentiment that frequents the history of Antietam remembrance and commemoration.

Although the act passed by the Maryland legislature called for the incorporation of Confederate dead in the cemetery, the Maryland trustees of the Antietam National Cemetery Association decided to exclude Confederate burials from the Board’s initial plans. This decision was more than likely a result of the strong anti-Confederate sentiment that still pervaded the society in the Sharpsburg area. Several months after the cemetery’s dedication, an article printed in the Hagerstown Herald and Torch Light revealed the community’s anti-Confederate attitude:

> We remember that one of the Maryland Commissioners from the vicinity of Antietam declared that if any attempt should be then made to thus honor the remains of those who had devastated their homes and spread ruin through the surrounding country, the people there would seize them and burn them to ashes.  

> The Board of Trustees continued to table and ignore motions and resolutions put forth to enact plans for the reburial of fallen Confederate soldiers within the enclosure of the Antietam National Cemetery. A final proposal calling for the purchase of lands for a

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27 Ibid., 8.
28 Trail, 77.
29 Baltimore American, reprinted in Hagerstown Herald and Torch Light, December 25, 1867, quoted in Remembering Antietam, 77.
separate Confederate cemetery failed, marking the conclusion of the struggle to incorporate Confederate dead in the cemetery. No soldiers of the Confederate Army were ever buried at Antietam National Cemetery. The Maryland legislature approved the creation of a separate burial ground for fallen Confederate soldiers several miles from the Antietam cemetery in 1870.

The formal dedication of Antietam National Cemetery was held on September 17, 1867 and was attended by, among other notables, President Andrew Johnson, his Cabinet members, and seven governors. A crowd of 10,000 to 15,000 gathered to witness the ceremonies at Antietam. The ceremony included several speeches and addresses, the reading of a poem written for the occasion, and the laying of the cornerstone of the Private Soldier Monument by the Free Masons. The dedication of the cemetery represents a significant example of the Reconstruction period tensions that were present in Maryland during the late-1860s.

One of the central recurring themes during the cemetery’s dedication was the romanticization, glorification, and honoring of the Battle of Antietam and the soldiers who fought and fell during the battle. The anonymous author of *History of Antietam National Cemetery* opened his work by classifying and mythologizing the Battle of Antietam as one of fiercest of the war stating that “the battle on this spot for the preservation of the Union, whilst it was one of the most indecisive of the war, was also one of the hardest fought and most sanguinary.” The unknown author also recalled the smell and appearance of the dead that remained on the battlefield after the battle’s

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30 Trail, 108.
32 Ibid., 91.
conclusion with great sensory detail. In reference to the smell that enveloped the field after the battle, the author wrote that it “was so powerful that the surrounding atmosphere was heavily tainted by the effluvia which emanated from the effete and decaying matter.”

In his analysis of the difficulty in identifying the bodies of the dead that remained on the battlefield, the author invoked a heavy-handed emotional prose:

> Sometimes a soiled and crumpled letter found on the body, its characters scarcely decipherable on the well-worn and tear-stained page, would indicate the name, or the torn shred of an old handkerchief, or a ragged piece of garment on which had been wrought, by loving ones at home, the name of the departed.

The ceremony itself also included a substantial amount of romanticizing in the speeches and poetry delivered during the proceedings. Augustus Williamson Bradford, ex-governor of Maryland, offered up his own opinion on how to best honor the fallen of Antietam near the end of his lengthy address. He claimed that “statues or monuments” are limited in their ability to commemorate the sacrifice of fallen soldiers; rather, the most effective way to honor the fallen was through “that pure, spontaneous and unaffected gratitude and devotion of the people that enshrines the memory of the honored one in the heart, and transmits if from age to age long after such costly structures have disappeared.”

Clarence F. Buhler of New York authored the winning poem which was read at the dedication ceremony by G. I. Cranmer, the Trustee from West Virginia, on account of Buhler’s illness. The poem is full of emotional appeals and interpretations of glory and heroism. However, the last two lines sum up what the participants in the fifth anniversary ceremony and the cemetery’s official dedication believed about the land on which they were standing and how the battle and soldiers would be remembered:

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34 Ibid., 6.
35 Ibid., 11.
36 Ibid., 44.
This consecrated spot will be
A sacred Mecca of the free.

Although glorifying and tales of heroism played a prominent role in ceremony’s proceedings, the most poignant theme that ran throughout the dedication was the controversy of reconciliation advocacy contrasted with anti-Confederate sentiment. Many of the speeches delivered by the orators of the dedication ceremony, including that of the President and several governors, called for reconciliation and a mending of the wounds that developed during the war and persisted into postbellum American society. There were also those who expressed anti-Confederate feelings in both subtle and obvious ways in their speeches. The disparity in the tenor of the various speeches offered during the proceedings sheds light on the larger issues of how the Civil War was to be remembered and how it shaped American society during the period of Reconstruction. Remembrance of the Civil War during Reconstruction provides a conduit through which sectional and political divide during the period can be seen. Radical Republicans and Southern Democrats used commemoration and remembrance as an opportunity to set forth political ideology and challenge those of the opposition with Radical Republicans often espousing pro-Reconstruction policies and anti-reconciliation sentiments and Southern Democrats calling for reconciliation.

Thomas Swann, the governor of Maryland at the time of the dedication, opened the ceremony with a short address welcoming those in attendance, namely the prominent guests participating in proceedings. Although his speech was brief, the central theme running throughout was an appeal for reconciliation between Unionists and past Confederates and Copperheads. Swann was a Democrat and in many ways his speech
represents a common sentiment among the Democratic Party during Reconstruction.

Swann concluded his address with the following:

    May I not, in this solemn hour, invoke the interposition of Almighty God for a speedy restoration of harmony and brotherly love throughout this broad land; and the North, South, East and West, laying aside the animosities of the past, we may stand together hereafter, and in all future time, as one people, having a common origin and bound together by a common destiny? May this Union be perpetual.37

    President Andrew Johnson expressed similar thoughts in his own speech at the dedication. Johnson stated in his address that he did not want to comment on the meaning and inspiration prompted by the prayers, addresses, and hymns. Instead, Johnson implored the citizens of the United States to “live together in friendship and peace” and “to restore harmony to our distracted and divided country.” Although the cemetery interned only Union dead, the president made sure to note in his address that when he looked upon the battlefield he thought of “the brave men on both sides” who lost their lives during the conflict.38

    Johnson’s reconciliationist speech must not have come as a surprise to those present at the cemetery on September 17, 1867. Prior to 1867, Johnson demonstrated his views of Reconstruction through the policies he enacted, most notably his proclamations of May 29, 1865. The first proclamation granted amnesty as well as pardoned former Confederates who claimed their loyalty to the Union and the cause of emancipation. Johnson excluded slaves in his presidential Reconstruction proclamations. Former Confederates possessing taxable property worth more than $20,000 had to apply for individual Presidential pardons. There was a disagreement about Johnson’s intentions in including the $20,000 clause. Some argued that he included the clause to prevent ex-

37 Ibid., 22-23.
38 Ibid., 54.
Confederate elite from having a significant voice in the Reconstruction process and instead pushed for “yeomen to shape Reconstruction.” Others believed Johnson incorporated the clause to persuade the Southern ‘aristocracy’ to agree to his terms and policies for Reconstruction. Despite his rationale, Johnson’s proclamations of 1865 demonstrate his far reaching policies of amnesty and reconciliation, way beyond that ever envisioned by Lincoln.  

The author of the History of Antietam National Cemetery recorded that many of Johnson’s comments received applause from the crowd; however, several newspapers noted a much different account of the crowd’s reaction to Johnson and other proponents of reconciliation. The Philadelphia paper, the Daily Evening Bulletin, noted that:

The impatience of the great concourse of the spectators at the manifest indignity offered to the loyal North could not be restrained, and before the programme was concluded, it was interrupted by loud cries for Governor Geary, and that gallant soldier was at last compelled to come to the rescue of the managers, and quiet the generous tumult of the loyal audience which even Governor Swann had not been able to keep away.

The author of the article interpreted the reconciliationist tone that ran through many of the speeches as anti-Union and anti-North. Obviously the Daily Evening Bulletin would praise Governor Geary, born in Pennsylvania and at the time, the state’s active governor. However, the Boonsboro Odd Fellow, published out of Maryland, corroborated the story published by the Daily Evening Bulletin:

As soon as Johnson was done, some man jumped up and in most indecent haste pronounced the benediction. But the people were not to be snubbed in this manner, and Geary was again loudly called for. He came forward amid most enthusiastic cheering, and said: ‘It seems that myself and others of a like stamp are not in the programme. Had this occurred in Pennsylvania, the programme would have been that whoever the people desired to hear, should have spoken.

40 Daily Evening Bulletin, September 18, 1867.
But if I am not in the programme, I am pleased to know that I am in the hearts of the loyal people."\(^{41}\)

The newspapers also expressed their own reactions to the reconciliationist speeches delivered at the ceremony. Many Republican and Unionist newspapers were quick in their criticism of the proceedings. The Waynesboro Village Record opened its account of the dedication by stating that “the idea of turning a solemn ceremony into a political ovation is repulsive to every patriot, but it was doubly so to-day when all the incidents connected therewith are considered.” The article expressed a strong disdain for President Johnson, citing the dedication ceremony at Antietam as “another opportunity to observe what an object of disgust he [Johnson] is, and will probably never forget his visit to Antietam.” The article contained strong anti-Confederate sentiment, notably when the author noted that “Liquor stands lined the roadside up to the gates of the cemetery, and the graves of the Union soldiers who died on this field for their country were trampled upon by the returned rebels as they gallanted their ladies through the cemetery.”\(^{42}\)

Similarly, a New York Times article questioned the substance of Governor Bradford’s speech for its impertinent focus on the history of the battle and continued by stating that “the true spirit in which such ceremonies are to be regarded will forever remain embalmed in the almost inspired language used by Mr. Lincoln in his remarks on the Gettysburg dedication.”\(^{43}\) This statement reveals the author’s disappointment in the proceedings at Antietam. The author of the article obviously hoped that the dedication of the Antietam National Cemetery would have taken a similar style as that of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg. Although President Lincoln’s address at Gettysburg received

\(^{41}\) Boonsboro Odd Fellow, September 19, 1867, quoted in Remembering Antietam, 94.
\(^{42}\) Village Record, September 27, 1867.
\(^{43}\) The New York Times, September 18, 1867.
initial criticism, as the years passed and the war concluded the nostalgia and legend of the speech began to swell.\textsuperscript{44} The proceedings at the Antietam cemetery, however, did not contain a ‘Gettysburg Address.’ Although the addresses, poems, and hymns delivered at the ceremony contained approbation for the soldiers who lost their lives on the battlefield, the Reconstruction and reconciliationist dialogue that pervaded the proceeding overshadowed the honoring of the fallen. Perhaps it would have been impossible, maybe even for Lincoln, to deliver a ‘Gettysburg Address’ in 1867 on such a contested spot as Antietam and in such a contested state as Maryland.

The \textit{Daily Evening Bulletin} also disparaged the proceedings at Antietam. The newspaper noted that Governor Swann’s “incivility to his official peers from the Northern States” was the only part of his role in the ceremonies that required noting. The paper reserved its fiercest written attacks for its critique of President Andrew Johnson’s address:

The speech of the President is, of course, the feature of the programme in which the people at large are most interested. It is thoroughly Johnsonian. It contains about two hundred and eighty words, and its “I’s” and “my’s” number fifteen, or one allusion to himself in each eighteen words uttered. Its characteristic egotism is in painful contrast with the noble simplicity of the speech of his great predecessor, at Gettysburg, in which Mr. Lincoln never once alluded to himself, but devoted his brief words to the nation and to the nation’s dead. Mr. Johnson knows no distinction between “the brave men who fell on both sides,” but, with a broad Irish bull, he desires to “imitate their example as they lay sleeping in their tombs, and live together in friendship and peace.”\textsuperscript{45}

The author obviously believes Johnson to be a self-absorbed individual, noting the number of times he referred to himself, but what is more telling is that President Johnson is once again compared to his predecessor Lincoln and his speech at the dedication of

\textsuperscript{44} Thomas A. Desjardin, \textit{These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory}, (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2003), 199.

\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Daily Evening Bulletin}, September 18, 1867.
cemetery at Gettysburg. Through this portion of the article, we can see the combination of a dissatisfaction of not only Johnson and his administration but also the disappointment and letdown of the dedication of Antietam National Cemetery. Many newspapers that commented on the ceremony at Antietam compared the Antietam dedication to that of Gettysburg and felt that Antietam, with its several reconciliationist speakers including President Johnson, did not measure up to the dedication of the National Cemetery in Gettysburg and the words spoken by the preserver of the Union, Abraham Lincoln.

The anti-reconciliation and anti-Confederate sentiment was not unique to the reaction of the audience in attendance or the newspapers. Many of the speakers participating in the dedication of the Antietam cemetery expressed strong anti-Confederate attitudes and a refusal to forgive those who rebelled against the United States. The speeches of the former Maryland Governor Augustus Bradford and Pennsylvania Governor John W. Geary are particularly indicative of the anti-Confederate sentiment that seeped into the ceremony.

Bradford dedicated a portion of his lengthy speech to challenging the numbers of soldiers engaged in the Battle of Antietam suggested by Confederate historians and newspapers immediately following the battle. He notes that Confederate newspapers “might at times have attempted to deceive us by an inflated account of their military power.”

This brief statement reveals a great deal about the mentality of not only Bradford but many staunch loyalists and Unionists of the North. Bradford’s use of the word ‘us’ is significant in that he still views the North and South separated, not one nation. He utilized inclusive language to exclude former Confederates. Perhaps what is

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46 History of Antietam National Cemetery, 32.
more telling are Bradford’s criticisms of the estimates put forth by Confederate historians and newspapers even after five years passed since the battle. He argued that Confederate sources initially inflated the numbers to exaggerate the Confederacy’s military power but then claimed to fight the Union to a stalemate with significantly fewer troops. It is also interesting that Bradford felt it necessary to argue about the relative equality of the forces at Antietam, implying that it was the Union Army’s will and tact that led to its victory in the Battle of Antietam:

There could not have been much difference in the effective strength of the two armies; but if such a difference did exist and in favor of the Union army, it was more than compensated to the Confederates, not only by their choice of positions, but by other influences, which justice to all concerned requires us now to consider.47

Bradford obviously believed that establishing the relative strength of McClellan and Lee’s armies was an important topic ‘to consider’ at the official dedication of the cemetery.

In Bradford’s verbose history of the military campaigns surrounding and leading up to the Battle of Antietam, he included a discussion and analysis of Union General John Pope. In his retelling of the fighting that took place between Pope and Lee’s armies, Bradford mentioned Pope’s inability to defeat Lee. He stated that despite the Union Army “displaying conspicuous gallantry, and evincing the most heroic powers of endurance, they were nevertheless gradually forced back by Lee’s army.”48 However, after making this statement Bradford made sure that the loyalists in the crowd did not mistake his comments for criticism. He offered the following disclaimer:

You will not, I am sure, so far misunderstand me as to suppose, that in referring thus briefly to the campaign of Gen. Pope, I have any design to criticize it. I

47 Ibid., 32.
48 Ibid., 34.
disclaim as well any such power as such a purpose; whether it failed through his
fault or that of others, or without fault anywhere, are questions requiring far more
skill in military maneuvers, as well as a more accurate knowledge of facts, than I
pretend to possess. It is telling that Bradford believed questioning the estimates put forth by Confederate
historians was within his expertise and knowledge but questioning failed “military
maneuvers” was beyond his expertise. Ironically, Bradford dedicated a majority of his
longwinded address to describing the “military maneuvers” of the Maryland campaign
and the American military history of 1862.

Although Bradford questioned Confederate historians’ and newspapers’ reliability
and made sure to not blatantly criticize Pope, he did not restrain himself in his criticism
of the staunch Republicans involved in the inhibiting of reconciliation between the North
and South. Bradford contended that these individuals furthered the divide that existed
during in the Civil War and persisted after the final shots were fired. He argued that
those responsible were primarily “old party leaders, who play upon these fears and
memories with no other object than to recover some old office or power they have lost, or
to retain others they have more lately won.”

Governor Geary of Pennsylvania, the governor requested and cheered by the
crowd in attendance, was much more obvious in his anti-Confederate and anti-
reconciliationist speech. Geary opened his speech with a passive criticism of the
dedication ceremony at Antietam stating that when a monument is dedicated at
Gettysburg “we will tender you the hospitalities of the State, and permit every man to

49 Ibid., 34.
50 Ibid., 47.
speak.” This was an obvious backhanded condemnation of the proceedings at Antietam. He continued by stating that the program at Gettysburg will contain “no gag.”

Although Geary noted the importance of the Battle of Antietam in preventing the exposure of “both Washington and Baltimore” to the Confederate Army, the main focus of his speech was praising the Union Army and isolating and, at times, even condemning the Confederate military. Geary was especially harsh in his discussion of General Lee stating that during his campaign in Maryland “the arrogant assumptions of superior valor, so vauntingly advertised by Lee and his followers, were utterly dispelled, and he and they forced to fly for safety beyond the waters of the Potomac.” In many ways, Geary reflected and expressed an opinion of Lee that many citizens of Pennsylvania shared.

Lee’s invasion into Pennsylvania in 1863 brought the war to its most northern point and brought the war into the backyards of Pennsylvanians and northern citizens for one of the first time. The war became much more personal for northern citizens after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Geary continued with his address by honoring, by name, the units from Pennsylvania that participated in the Battle of Antietam and stated that all of the soldiers “who perished while contending for the Union, are just as dear and will be hallowed as sacredly by the people of Pennsylvania as the memories of their own beloved sons who here lie buried.” However, Geary’s most blatant exclusion of the Confederates who fell at Antietam was near the conclusion of his speech:

The blood of the North, of the East, and of the West flowed in the same sacred stream, and broke from the same ranks to crimson the waters of Antietam, and

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51 Village Record, September 27, 1867.
52 Ibid.
when the chill morning dawned upon the scene of carnage, the Union dead from every section were mingled upon the field of strife.  

Geary was careful to note every cardinal direction and geographic region but the south, almost denying any suffering or loss felt by the South during and after the Battle of Antietam, much like the cemetery itself.

Maryland’s unique position both geographically and in the Civil War led to the state’s loyalty being a major topic of discussion during and immediately after the dedication of Antietam National Cemetery. Although Maryland remained, officially, a Union and loyal state during the Civil War it resembled, politically, other border states. Maryland’s citizens possessed divided political affiliations with many citizens of the state sympathetic to the Confederacy and the Confederate cause. In particular, Baltimore harbored strong Confederate sympathies with Confederate flags streaming outside many homes in the city shortly after the firing on Fort Sumter. Two-thirds of the soldiers who fought in the Civil War from the state of Maryland joined the Union Army with the other one-third taking up the Confederate cause. In remembering Maryland’s role in the conflict after the war concluded, the state’s loyalty was often called into question.

Bradford, as a former governor of Maryland, felt it necessary to dedicate a substantial portion of his speech to addressing and challenging the common criticism and perception about Maryland’s loyalty to the Union cause. Bradford began by laying out the popular opinion of many staunch loyalists:

The loyal citizens of the North had been taught to believe that the loyalty of Maryland had at best but [sic] an apocryphal existence; that as a patriotic and spontaneous impulse it was limited to a few; whilst, as regarded the great body of

53 Ibid.
54 Trail, 71.
our people, it was but a pretended and superficial display, induced chiefly by the presence of the National force.\textsuperscript{56}

Bradford continued by noting all of the opportunities Maryland had to submit to Confederate appeals to the citizens of Maryland, attempting to sway their political loyalties in the direction of the Confederacy and secession. According to Bradford and a Confederate officer, the citizens of Maryland, in response to Confederate appeals “rushed into their houses and slammed the doors.” He further stated that the rebels “were regarded not as friends, but enemies.” Bradford concluded his discussion on Maryland’s loyalty by one again laying out the common perception of many Unionists then challenging it:

Yet, to this day, with that and every other ordeal—and that was neither the first nor last—by which Maryland loyalty had been tested, there are those who still make it the subject of an ungenerous sneer. I am happy, however, to believe that it never comes from that gallant host that accompanied her sons to the field, but usually from those whose well calculated distance from the scene of conflict placed them as far out of the reach of information as of danger.\textsuperscript{57}

Despite Bradford’s defense of Maryland, there were still those who questioned Maryland’s loyalty and role in the preservation of the Union during the Civil War. The day after the dedication of the cemetery, The \textit{Daily Evening Bulletin} made its own ‘ungenerous sneer’ in reference to Maryland’s loyalty to the Union. In referencing Bradford’s speech at the ceremony, the newspaper praised Bradford for his “eloquent, interesting and elaborate account of the battle of Antietam.” However, the \textit{Daily Evening Bulletin} believed that Bradford’s speech was “marred by an abortive attempt to set up a claim for Maryland loyalty during the rebellion.” The article continued with its own analysis of Maryland’s loyalty:

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{History of Antietam National Cemetery}, 36.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 38.
The loyal men in Maryland were and are intensely devoted to the cause of the country, but the whole world knows how that State lay as a stumbling block and an embarrassment in the way of the North, and its official standard of loyalty today is only measured by such dubious characters as Swann and his Johnsonized body-guards.58

The author of the article did not only question Maryland’s loyalty during the war, he also characterized the state as a problem for the goal of Union victory and went further claiming that the state’s leadership and political affiliations did not improve after the war by classifying the current governor as ‘dubious’.

The creation and dedication of Antietam National Cemetery reflected the time in which the events that surrounded its development took place. Only two years after the conclusion of the fighting, Reconstruction and reconciliation remained hot-button issues and they came to the forefront in the process of creating a national cemetery on the soil of a border state. In many ways, the cemetery’s dedication served as a forum for debates to take place on reconciliation; however, the commemoration of the Battle of Antietam and those who fell on its field were often lost in the exchange. This phenomenon was not unique to the dedication of the cemetery at Antietam. As we shall later see, the politicization of commemorating the battle was very much present in the years that followed.

58 Daily Evening Bulletin, September 18, 1867.
CHAPTER 2: THE “GOLDEN AGE” OF ANTIETAM COMMEMORATION, 1870-1920

Not three years later, crowds again gathered at Antietam National Cemetery to honor the Union soldiers who fell during the battle. The crowds gathered to adorn the graves of the fallen with flowers and other varieties of objects of affection. It was May 30, 1870, Memorial Day. Shortly after the conclusion of the Civil War, citizens would bring flowers to the graves and monuments of Civil War soldiers thus leading to the emergence of “Decoration Day,” later known as Memorial Day.\(^59\) Decoration Day originally began as a remembrance holiday to honor Union soldiers who served in the American Civil War but would eventually develop to include American soldiers who fought in all wars. The official beginning of Memorial Day commenced with General John A. Logan, the Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic, and his May 5, 1868 General Order No. 11 which called for the creation of a memorial day to be held on May 30, 1868. Logan explained that the day of remembrance and honoring “is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village, and hamlet church-yard in the land.”\(^60\)

The main speaker of the day was Colonel Ephraim F. Anderson who delivered the ceremony’s Memorial Address. Anderson noted the developing holiday in his introduction by stating that “Memorial Day is indeed becoming a national anniversary—the saddest yet the sweetest of all the days we celebrate.” He also commented on why


they gathered on this occasion in the first line of his address noting that “We have come here to-day with evergreens and flowers to decorate the graves of our fallen heroes.”\textsuperscript{61} Anderson took special care in clearly stating those “fallen heroes” who the day’s honor warranted. He let those gathered at the ceremony know that “Our offerings to-day are for the Union Soldier.”\textsuperscript{62}

There were other parts of Anderson’s speech that were much less subtle in their anti-southern and anti-Confederate expression. In his analysis of Lee’s decision to enter Western Maryland, “the loyal section of that state,” Anderson noted that Lee and “his deluded followers” were disappointed with the sentiments of the Marylanders they met in terms of their opinions on ‘liberty’. Like others before him, Anderson also made the erroneous claim “that the two armies here engaged were nearly equal in numerical strength—from 80,000 to 90,000 troops participating on each side.” Additionally, Anderson echoed previous arguments when he stated that even if the Union possessed a numerical advantage in terms of troop strength, “the advantage of the rebel position infinitely more than compensated for any such disparity.”\textsuperscript{63}

Although Anderson was critical of the Confederacy, he did not, however, limit his critique to the South. Anderson included a subtle, yet noticeable criticism of General McClellan’s tactics following the battle. Anderson compared the post-battle strategy of McClellan to the strategies of other notable military leaders of previous conflicts. He noted that “Napoleon pressed his advantage to the complete overthrow of the allied armies”, Wellington was able to extend “his victory at Waterloo to the absolute

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 6, 8.
destruction of the French Army”, and Bismarck capitalized on his victory at Sadowa by crushing “the Austrian forces.” Anderson contrasted these commanders with McClellan who, according to him, “remained quiescent for six long weeks upon this hard won field, and allowed the prostrate foe to recover and depart in peace, refreshed and prepared for new campaigns, and other fields.” Although Anderson later qualified his statement by stating that he was “not here, however, to criticize the conduct of General McClellan, or to utter a word with desire to detract from his fame”, his questioning of McClellan’s strategy remained.64

Anderson also made sure to mention the importance of the Battle of Antietam for the outcome of the war as well as for postwar society. After concluding that McClellan failed to take advantage of the battle, he continued that although “the relative condition of the armies engaged” did not change decisively, the Union Army was able to send “the insurgent army back from a fruitless attempt at invasion” and challenge the “arrogant assumptions of the superior valor of the South.” Not surprisingly, Anderson also connected the battle to emancipation. He claimed that the battle “emboldened the government to proclaim the policy of emancipation, thereby meeting the real issue of the war.” Anderson continued by stating that in the postwar years society analyzed the potential causes of the Civil War and one by one many fell away but the notion that “human slavery” remained at the heart of the controversies surrounding the beginning of the war remained.65

Toward the end of Anderson’s speech, one finds a perception that reveals a great deal about the reconciliationist mindset. Anderson presented a false and perhaps ignorant

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64 Ibid., 12.
65 Ibid., 12-13.
or denial view of Southerners welcoming nature to Northerners. He claimed that the “harmony between the sections of the country” was greater than it ever was “before the war.” He stated that the South welcomed Northerners with open arms claiming that “Citizens from Massachusetts are not only permitted to sojourn in South Carolina, but they are cordially invited there, with their Yankee enterprise, their capital, and their sentiments, to make it their future home.” It is hard to believe that Colonel Anderson would not be aware of the prevalence of strong anti-northern sentiment, notably the common use of the pejorative term carpetbagger to refer to the same transplant Northerners that Anderson argued were so “cordially invited” to the South. In many ways, Anderson’s entire speech was an attempt to justify the great amount of bloodshed that the Civil War caused. He noted the legacy of emancipation and the cause of abolishing slavery as well as what he termed the “harmony” between the previously divided states. However, as the tenth anniversary would demonstrate, many Union veterans did not share Colonel Anderson’s view of the previously rebellious states.

**Tenth Anniversary**

On the tenth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, September 17 and 18, 1872, a reunion and anniversary celebration took place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. However, the celebration served a dual purpose and was much more than simply a reunion of Civil War soldiers. The main purpose of the proceedings in Pittsburgh was to rally support for the reelection of the incumbent president Ulysses S. Grant. The reunion of the soldiers and sailors served primarily as a political convention on behalf of Grant rather than a remembrance ceremony devoted solely to recounting the Battle of Antietam and those

66 Ibid., 15.
who fell on its battlefield. The convention at Pittsburgh, however, does reveal the politization of commemoration and the connection that Republicans attempted to draw between Civil War politics and the politics of the Reconstruction period. It also shows that many Union veterans still harbored resentment toward former Confederates and challenged reconciliation. The Veterans’ National Committee used the anniversary of one of the most significant battles of the war in order to garner support for their former commander and current commander-in-chief, President Grant.

The convention in 1872 was not the first Civil War veterans rally conducted in order to promote support for their former general. In 1868, one week before the Republican convention, a gathering of soldiers and sailors met in Chicago. The purpose of the gathering was to endorse Grant for president and invite various delegates and politicians to speak on behalf and in favor of Grant.67

The election of 1872 brought the issues of Reconstruction and reconciliation to the forefront. As historian David Blight notes, the election of 1872 pitted “memories of war, emancipation, and Reconstruction against one another.” The election also pitted the incumbent Republican Ulysses Grant against the Liberal Republican Horace Greeley. Grant’s first term, despite his stance against the Ku Klux Klan, was full of corruption and scandal. Carl Schurz, a former Union general, led the emergence of the new Liberal Republican party. Liberal Republicans endorsed economic liberalism and free market politics. The reform movement also supported the concept of “natural leaders” to lead the governments in the North and South as well as “universal amnesty for ex-Confederates.” The Liberal Republican party did not support federal policies against the

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Klan on the basis that they were unconstitutional. The Liberal Republicans ultimately nominated Horace Greeley as their candidate of choice. Greeley was the embodiment of the reconciliationist position and he professed reconciliationist rhetoric at almost every campaign stop he made during his run for the presidency. Greeley expressed his confidence in reconciliation by stating that “the masses of our countrymen, North and South, are eager to *clasp hands across the bloody chasm* which has too long divided them.”

General Ambrose Burnside, whose valor during the Battle of Antietam solidified his reputation as well as the name of the now famous bridge over Antietam Creek, issued the call and invitation, on July 5, 1872, as chairman of the Veterans’ National Committee, for the gathering at Pittsburgh for the tenth anniversary of the battle. In the opening portion of Burnside’s invitation, he expressed praise for Grant’s first term and confidence in his ability to successfully complete a second. He applauded Grant for his “civil capacity in aiding the reduction of the public debt, in conducting our foreign affairs with great skill” and his ability “in preserving peace” in the states formerly in rebellion. Burnside also contended in his ‘call’ that for the next four years the country “should be under the protection of men who never faltered in the hour of our country’s greatest danger.” He continued that those placed in “high positions of State” should be those that gave their “intellect, personal reputation, and personal faith in the justness” of the Union cause during “the hour of our greatest peril.”

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68 Ibid., 122-126.
The second portion of Burnside’s call was a listing of the tenets and beliefs of the Veterans’ National Committee on Grant as president, the importance of the reunion gathering, and ex-Confederates and secessionists. The list of beliefs frequently noted that the “old defenders” of the Union contained “no partisan motives” but merely wanted “good government”; however, the ceremony ultimately proved otherwise. The sixth statement of the committee’s beliefs is perhaps the most telling:

We believe that while all the old veterans are loyalists in the extreme, and utterly opposed to any doctrine which would tend, in the slightest degree, to revive the heresy of secession, they are desirous of extending charity and full forgiveness to all of their former enemies in the field who now recognize or who may hereafter recognize the great wrong that they have done to our country.70

There is a great deal that we can extrapolate concerning a Reconstruction mindset from this statement. Burnside first qualified his statement by making sure those who read his letter knew that he was not endorsing a pro-Confederate or pro-secessionist viewpoint by assuring his readers that he and other veterans of the Union Army were ‘extreme’ loyalists. There is also a great deal of presumption in the second half of Burnside’s statement on behalf of the committee. Burnside, as a former Union officer, presumes the Confederacy’s guilt in the Civil War and its damage to the country. He offers forgiveness in anticipation that an apology is both forthcoming and warranted. Although Burnside and the committee are offering to accept reconciliation, the statement is very much written from an anti-reconciliation perspective. The statement utilizes exclusionist language by referring to former Confederate soldiers as ‘they’. The last line of the passage, “the great wrong that they have done to our country,” reveals the true sentiment of the Veterans’ National Committee in terms of reconciliation. That short phrase negate the sincerity of the invitation of forgiveness and the possibility of any legitimate

70 Ibid., 4.
or significant act of reconciliation to take place at the convention. The purpose of the invitation is more than likely politically motivated in an attempt to appear welcoming to the constituency.

The call for troops to gather at Pittsburgh induced thousands of letters in response including opinions on the proposed convention, Grant, the Republican Party, reconciliation, and Reconstruction as well as plans to attend the event or regrets about abilities to take part in the proceedings. Former officers and enlisted men from all over the country sent letters to the Veterans’ National Committee Secretary, Colonel L.E. Dudley and the chairman, General Burnside. The letters as a whole and analyzed individually, reveal a persistent anti-Confederate sentiment and the politicization of that sentiment.

The letter authored by General Edmund Rice, who himself participated in the Battle of Antietam, characterized Grant as the soldiers’ choice. He made reference to the convention in Chicago for Grant’s first nomination as a candidate for the presidency by noting that the “voice of the soldiers and sailors was unanimously and enthusiastically expressed at our convention in Chicago.” He noted the Republican Party’s initial hesitation in nominating the former general as the Republican nominee but then “appreciating the integrity and wisdom” put its support behind Grant. Rice believed the convention at Pittsburgh to be of the utmost importance to once again rally support for President Grant. Another interesting point that comes across in Rice’s letter is the personal ownership the soldiers of the Union Army took in Grant as both a candidate and
President of the United States. In his letter, Rice refers to Grant as the “soldiers’ choice” as if to claim Grant as their choice before he was that of any other.71

Horatio Jenkins, Colonel of the 4th Massachusetts Cavalry, expressed a similar sentiment in his reply to the invitation. Jenkins also expressed confidence in Grant as president believing that his “integrity” was evident throughout both his military and political career and he exhibited “no less courage, firmness, wisdom, and success in peace than in war.” Jenkins also showed his loyalty in the Republican Party by stating that the ceremonies in Pittsburgh would “convince Liberal Republicans, Democrats, and Ku-Klux that the lies and slanders” they offered against the President “only strengthened” the veterans’ support for Grant.72

Jenkins’s letter was not the only one to include an example of the political tone of the time as well as the tone that the convention would ultimately take. Many other responses demonstrated not only the politics of Reconstruction but also the stance of the Republican Party. The letters also demonstrate the politicization of Civil War memory in the postwar years by continuing to classify political factions based on their sentiments during the war. A subtle, yet striking, absence of any mention of the Battle of Antietam in the letters serves as a foreshadowing of the remembrance of the battle at the convention.

General Benjamin Spooner tied the Democratic Party to secession in his letter to the Veterans’ National Committee. Spooner made a passionate appeal describing the devastation caused by the Democratic Party:

Secession and rebellion were inaugurated under the auspices of the Democratic party; and for the hundreds of thousands of lives sacrificed in defense of the

71 Ibid., 7.
72 Ibid., 16.
flag—for the untold and immeasurable suffering entailed upon the people—for
the widows’ tears and for the orphans’ cries, and for the mountain of debt which
rested so heavily upon the country at the close of the war, the leaders of this party
should be held responsible.

Spooner essentially placed all of the suffering caused by the Civil War on the shoulders
of the Democratic Party. He argued that the election of Greeley would mean a
“restoration of the lost cause” and that if elected Greeley would have a forum and the
power from which to “press his secession views into practical operations.” Spooner
concluded by characterizing the Republican Party as the party of peace and Grant was the
wise choice for those wanted “peace and quiet” and economic stability as well as
financial and business prosperity for the country. 73

The letters of Colonel William Phelps and Captain W.M. Taylor reveal that many
soldiers of the Union Army did not believe the struggles of the war to be over, in fact, the
letters from these two officers exude a sentiment that could be found in the midst of the
Civil War. The first words of Phelps’s letter read, “We have the same foe before us that
we had from 1861 to 1865.” Phelps viewed the election of 1872 as a continuation of the
same struggles that drove the Civil War and the election was another battle. Phelps came
to this conclusion based on recent conversations he had with former ‘rebels’. Through
his conversations, he concluded that the former Confederate soldiers possessed “the same
spirit and desire they had in the rebellion.” He noted that these soldiers along with the
‘copperheads’ from his own state were the most enthusiastic in the endorsement of
Greeley’s candidacy. Captain Taylor expressed a similar sentiment on the persistent
issues of the war stating that:

As long as I see so many one-armed and one-legged men about me, as long as so
many orphan children go about the streets, as long as so many widows mourn the

73 Ibid., 11.
loss of their husbands, I don’t propose to believe the issues of ten years ago are dead.

Taylor saw the lasting visual effects of the war and contended that until the effects dissipated the same issues that plagued the country during the war would continue to do so. 74

Colonel William Schmidt of Illinois epitomized an anti-reconciliationist perspective in his response letter. Schmidt did not want to form any sort of partnership with Democrats or ex-Confederates. Schmidt expressed his willingness to attend the ceremony as well as his support for the convention but made one qualification stating that, “For one, I am not ready to sell out to rebels, or to even form a copartnership with Democrats; therefore, I propose to adhere to the principles for which I fought, and stand by the men with whom and under whom I stood in the fore-front of battle.” 75 Schmidt was not interested in reuniting with any former enemies of the Union; rather, he wanted to express his support for the men he served ‘under’, namely President Grant.

Once the time for the convention finally arrived, the soldiers received a warm and welcoming reception. Houses in the cities were “decorated with flags, banners, and mottoes” and the main street intersections arches were erected and “covered with evergreens and flowers.” Homeowners in the city took in soldiers attending the ceremony who could not reserve a hotel room. City hall transformed into a buffet restaurant filled with tables that were “bounteously loaded with tempting viands” and the local citizens, primarily women, fed “over fourteen thousand soldiers.” The streets crowded with people and the speeches of Tuesday evening fell on the ears of several

74 Ibid., 17.
75 Ibid., 19.
thousand soldiers in attendance at over twenty different locations in both Pittsburgh and its neighboring city Allegheny.\textsuperscript{76}

The speeches delivered on September 17, 1872 demonstrate not only the politicization of commemoration and Civil War memory but also a persistent resistance to reconciliation on behalf of both former Union soldiers and the Republican Party. General J.B. Sweitzer began the convention with the “Address of Welcome”. Sweitzer’s speech contained a strong anti-southern sentiment, most notably in his discussion of what the war came to be about and why Northern soldiers took up arms in the Union’s cause. He states that “it was a question whether the arrogant and supercilious white men of the South” would be “allowed to rend and destroy the Union—that last hope of freedom to man.” Sweitzer noted that is was these “supercilious white men” who despised “the men of the free States.”\textsuperscript{77}

What is perhaps more noteworthy is that Sweitzer’s speech was the only one of all the speeches delivered at the convention that made any sort of significant mention of the Battle of Antietam or its tenth anniversary. Sweitzer referred to the battle as “one of the greatest conflicts of the war” and it also served as one of the Union Army’s first major victories “over the adversary against which it had so long contended.” He then offered some brief details on some of the Union, in particular Pennsylvanian, heroics that took place during the Battle of Antietam. As a native of Pennsylvania himself, Sweitzer more than likely singled out General Hartranft and the 51st Pennsylvania regiment to not only commemorate the heroes of his home state but also to pander to the Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania audience in attendance at the convention. Reluctant to go into anymore

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid., 25-26.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., 28.
detail, Sweitzer summed up his analysis of the Battle of Antietam by describing it “as a whole, as one of the most momentous battles of the war” and alluding to “the fearful loss of life” suffered by both sides. 

The whole mood of the convention is adequately summed up in the brief final remarks of the convention delivered by General John A. Logan. Although Logan endorsed the Republican Party and the reelection of President Grant, he devoted the bulk of his short address to endorsing an anti-reconciliation approach to relations with former Confederates. He stated:

Comrades—One word before we return to our homes. When our enemies tell us to be reconciled to those who fought against the Government, let us tell them that there is no reconciliation required on our part. We are reconciled to our country, to its honor and glory, to its Constitution, and to the old banner of our fathers; and when those men who draw their blades against the Government become themselves reconciled to the old banner, we will be reconciled to them. [Applause.] It is on their part, and not on ours.

Logan contended that those loyal to the Union had no obligation in the reconciliation process and believed reconciliation to be a one way street. It is interesting that Logan believed these words to be most appropriate for the closing of a convention that met to both honor the soldiers who fought in the war and the Battle of Antietam and to express support for the incumbent Republican president. The remarks might seem, at first, out of place for the occasion’s intended purpose but when one analyzes the speeches of the convention it is clear that Logan merely synthesized the sentiments of many speakers, albeit rather bluntly. The Democratic Party’s strong connection and ties with the South during the postwar years provided a platform for which the Republic Party to sponsor and exhibit anti-southern sentiments in their rallies and conventions. The tenth anniversary of

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78 Ibid., 27-28.
79 Ibid., 53.
the Battle of Antietam and the convention that took place on that occasion serves as but
one example of the politicization of commemoration and Civil War remembrance.

Not long after the convention, Greeley visited Pittsburgh and met with Union
veterans. During the visit, Greeley offended Union veterans by challenging their
unconditional loyalty to Grant and characterizing their position as “pseudo-heroic.” As
David Blight notes, “Greeley paid dearly for that blunder at the polls.”

Grant won the election of 1872 in a virtual landslide, garnering 286 of a potential 349 electoral votes
and 3,597,132 popular votes, 763,000 more than Greeley. Greeley’s wife passed away
before the election and shortly thereafter Greeley “was placed in a private sanatorium for
mental patients” and passed away three weeks later before all of the electoral votes had
been cast.

The tenth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam is indicative of the larger
narrative of Antietam’s commemoration history and more broadly, memory of the Civil
War. The anniversary demonstrates the tension between the push for reconciliation and
continuing anti-Confederate sentiment as well as the partisan and political implications of
commemoration and remembrance of the Civil War.

Creation and Dedication of the Private Soldier Monument

Five years before the large anniversary convention held in Pittsburgh, the prospect
of a monument for the cemetery began with the resolution passed by the Board of
Trustees of the Antietam National Cemetery on September 16, 1867 and the contract
entered into by the executive committee of the board of trustees with James C. Batterson

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80 Blight, 126.
of Hartford, Connecticut, designer of the monument. The contract covered the time span of approximately two years to allow for the completion of the monument. The total cost of the monument was $30,000 and was to be paid intermittently throughout the time of the contract in a series of five payments. The $30,000 included the cost of making, delivering, and erecting the monument.\(^{82}\)

The design of the monument was a soldier leaning on his rifle standing in a “place rest” position. Historian Thomas J, Brown notes that the design of “a uniformed standing soldier holding the barrel of a rifle that rests upright on the ground in front of him” was the dominant form that many Civil War monuments took during this time frame. The “watchful sentinel” served as a representation of the common Civil War soldier and the preferred choice of monument design by sculptors and designers. There were over two-hundred “single-figure soldier statues” erected around the country by the late 1880s.\(^{83}\)

Although the design of the monument at Antietam was not the most unique, it was and remains to this day unparalleled in terms of its size. The monument is made of granite and weighs 250 tons. The height of the structure is 44 feet-7 inches, with the soldier alone reaching 21½ feet in height and weighing over 30 tons. The entire structure consists of 27 pieces and the soldier is made of two pieces connected at the soldier’s waist.\(^{84}\)

The board of trustees was able to make the first four payments on schedule within the 1871-73 timeframe; however, the board was unable to make the final payment of $10,000 that was due on October 1, 1873. The board could not muster the funds in order

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\(^{82}\) Snell and Brown, 23-24.


to make the final payment and the matter was not put to rest until after the United States government took control of the cemetery in 1877. The trustees of Antietam National Cemetery voted to transfer control and ownership of the cemetery to the United States and the War department on June 6 and 7, 1877 under the terms outlined in the Act of March 2, 1877. The Secretary of War, G. W. McCrary, assumed control and responsibility of the national cemetery on June 22, 1877. The United States government eventually paid the remaining balance, with interest, on the monument.  

The sculptor of the monument, James W. Pollette, completed the structure on schedule in 1873 but the delay in the final payment caused a delay in the delivery of the monument to the cemetery. The Private Soldier monument was not, however, stationary in Connecticut during the period between the completion of the monument’s construction in 1873 and the final payment made by the United States government in 1879. The monument was exhibited at the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876 to celebrate the centennial of the issuing of the Declaration of Independence. The soldier stood prominently at the primary entrance to the exposition and at the conclusion of the exposition it was returned to Connecticut. 

Primarily because of its conspicuous location at the exposition and its imposing size, the Private Soldier Monument garnered a great amount of intention during the centennial celebration. J.S. Ingram visited the exposition in Philadelphia and was full of praise for the Private Soldier Monument that so prominently welcomed the visitors to the grounds. He remarked in his description of the exposition that “the American Soldier designed for the Antietam monument” was one of “the most imposing works exhibited by

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85 Snell and Brown, 24, 26.
86 Ibid., 24.
American sculptors.” He continued that the monument represented a “performance of very considerable merit, and if not absolutely satisfactory as a specimen of skilful modeling, it at least compared favorably with the colossal bronze Bismarck” which was the “most important sculpture of the German section.”

Figure 2.1. Dedication of the Private Soldier Monument, September 17, 1880 (courtesy of the National Park Service).

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The struggles to get the Private Soldier Monument to Antietam National Cemetery did not end after the conclusion of the Centennial Exposition nor once the War Department issued the final payment for the monument. The intended date of arrival for the monument was delayed an additional several months when the waist-up section of the soldier fell into the Potomac River near Washington D.C. After the eventual retrieval of the soldier’s upper-half from the river bottom, the structure was transported along the C&O Canal and then dragged to the cemetery through the town of Sharpsburg “using huge, wooden rollers.”

The War Department finally officially dedicated the monument on September 17, 1880, the eighteenth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, despite some preliminary

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88 “Antietam National Cemetery: Private Soldier Monument.”
plans and prospects of dedicating the monument on Memorial Day. The dedication took place within a three-day campfire event held in Hagerstown on September 15-17, 1880. The event represented one of the first major reunions of Union veterans to take place on the battlefield at Antietam. During the afternoon of September 16, Hagerstown hosted a parade including 2,000 uniformed men from numerous posts of the Maryland portion of the Grand Army of Republic. The official unveiling and dedication of the Private Soldier Monument took place on September 17 with more than 15,000 spectators in attendance to watch the dedication ceremony. The ceremony’s notable attendees included dignitaries and officers from the GAR, Maryland Republican Congressman Milton G. Urner and the main speaker of the occasion, Republican Congressman Marriot Brosius from Lancaster, Pennsylvania.\footnote{Trail, 118-120.}

Helen Wright from Ohio unveiled the statue and as “the covering fell from the statue, a battery of the Second Artillery, from Fort McHenry, fired a national salute.” After the unveiling, the Reverend Henry Edwards of Hagerstown offered a prayer followed by the “dedicatory oration” delivered by Marriot Brosius. The dedication ceremony concluded with the speech delivered by the Philadelphian, H.W. Lambert. The ceremony, much like the arduous process of getting the monument to the cemetery, did not progress flawlessly. According to the \textit{New York Times}, “a company from Towsontown, Maryland and the Anderson Guards” from Woodstock, Virginia “were delayed on the road by a collision of trains” and, as a result, were unable to participate in the dedication ceremony. The collision, however, did not result in any injuries or loss of life.\footnote{The \textit{New York Times}, September 18, 1880.}
Marriot Brosius advocated reconciliation but, like others before him, made sure to qualify his call for reconciliation and note who was to blame for the devastation of the Civil War. He noted that the “war became a high and responsible duty” when it became necessary “to crush bad principles, destroy tyrants, and rescue society from evils incomparably greater than itself.” He continued with a detailing of the “abuses” that precipitated the Civil War as well as with an account of the Battle of Antietam “described in vivid and stirring language.” Brosius made mention of the North’s “magnanimity” to the “conquered South” in his speech and “condemned” those that practiced “blind adherence to party or faction” arguing that if party loyalty promoted behavior and actions against the public good it represented the highest form of “disloyalty to the Government.” An anonymous reporter with the *New York Times* noted Brosius’s conditionality in his call for reconciliation:

> Reconciliation and forgiveness were as important now as were heroism and valor in the hour of the country’s peril. He believed, however, that there should be no obliteration of the distinction between loyalty and treason by equality of rights and ceremonies in their commemoration; no immunity to crime, by venerating the memory of its perpetrators. The only conceivable national basis of reconciliation and restoration was the recognition of the rightfulness of the war for the Union and entire acquiescence in its results.\(^\text{91}\)

Brosius’s idea of reconciliation amounted to a complete submission on the part of the former Confederacy to the loyal Union, an admittance of its wrongs, and even through this form of reconciliation, “crime” should not be forgotten and the “distinction between loyalty and treason” should remain in commemoration.

The creation and dedication of the Private Soldier Monument at Antietam National Cemetery is notable for a number of reasons. The history of the development, expense, and transportation of the monument sheds light on the often undocumented

\(^{91}\) Ibid.
complications and complexity of creating a commemorative monument. The dedication ceremony and the address delivered by Brosius serves as yet another example of the tension and back-and-forth exchange between the reconciliationist mindset and anti-southern sentiment during the period of Reconstruction. However, perhaps the most significant contribution of the Private Soldier Monument was that it marked the beginning of the prolific monumentalization of the battlefield at Antietam. The Private Soldier Monument was the first of many monuments that would dot the battlefield and serve as permanent forms of commemoration and remembrance of those who served, fought, and fell in the Battle of Antietam.

The establishment of the Private Soldier Monument helped usher in a new era of commemoration for the Battle of Antietam that would forever change the landscape of the rural battlefield near Sharpsburg. Historian Timothy B. Smith refers to the period of the 1890s as “the golden age of battlefield preservation” in his book of the same name. Smith notes several factors that allowed preservation to take place, including “veterans returning to the fields to document what had happened, the opportunity to preserve almost pristine fields that had not yet experienced the development that would later come in the second industrial revolution, and massive government support from Congress and state legislatures dominated by veterans.”92 These same factors also contributed to the drastic increase in the monumentalization of Civil War battlefields that took place during the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. Thomas Brown, scholar on Civil War monuments and commemoration, notes the late nineteenth-century as the “peak” period for the establishment of Civil War monuments up until 1920. After 1920 and the

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“technological innovations” of the time, “monuments tended to be obstacles for rapidly proliferating automobiles.”

Expressions and trumpeting of reunion and reconciliation dominated the period between 1880 and 1920. In addition to veteran-dominated Congress that promoted commemoration, the period consisted of a renewed interest in remembering and discussing the war among veterans. Gerald Linderman refers to this period as one of revival. He contends that around 1880 interest in martial matters increased and Americans and veterans alike demonstrated this renewed interest in the form of reunion ceremonies, GAR membership increases, and monument commemorations. Linderman argues that this “military revival licensed veterans to employ their positive memories of the war in compensation for the insufficiencies of their civilian lives.”

While Linderman’s analysis is persuasive, it neglects the significant exceptions and dissenters who refused to extend “their positive memories” in their discussions of their former foes. When one evaluates the various monument dedications of a more northern battlefield, such as Antietam, it becomes clear that many Northern veterans did not endorse a reunion that ignored the wrongs of the Confederacy.

**Brigade and Regimental Monuments**

Regimental and brigade veteran groups, with the endorsement and financial support of their home state governments, established the first monuments on the battlefield at Antietam. Over one hundred veterans of the 51st Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment and many other patrons gathered near Burnside Bridge in fall of 1887 to

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93 Brown, 6.
commemorate and remember their famous charge across the bridge under the leadership of the then colonel, John F. Hartranft. On the occasion of the reunion, the attendees unveiled a monument that would commemorate the memorable charge in perpetuity. Those in attendance included many notable and noteworthy individuals, including the presiding officer of the proceedings Captain W.B. Hart as well as General Hartranft, General W.J. Bolton, and J. Eugene Troth. Chester Farr delivered a poem, penned by a Mrs. Oberholtzer of Norristown, Pennsylvania, entitled “Storming of Antietam Bridge” during the proceedings. During the afternoon of the day of the ceremony, the officers of the reunion organization agreed to hold the next reunion in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania on the twenty-sixth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1888.95

If the 51st Pennsylvania monument represents one of the first regimental monuments of the Antietam landscape, the four Connecticut monuments dedicated in 1894 represent the first movement of a state to honor its regiments that participated in the battle. The process of establishing Connecticut regimental monuments has its beginnings in the reunion meetings of both the 16th and 14th Connecticut regiments in 1891 but it was not until a Grand Army of the Republic encampment which included the respective divisions’ department. The regiments’ department of the GAR drafted a resolution to appeal to the General Assembly of Connecticut to secure the necessary funds to establish monuments of the Antietam battlefield. The state General Assembly approved the proposed resolution in 1894 with the requirement that the cost of each individual monument not exceed $1000.96

95 Winona Daily Republican, October 11, 1887.
96 Trail, 242-243.
The dedication of Connecticut monuments took place on October 8, 1894. More than 400 people attended the ceremonies, including veterans of the four regiments. The monuments honoring the 8th, 11th, and 16th regiments were erected approximately one-half mile from Burnside Bridge with the land for the 11th and 16th monuments “bought and deeded” by Colonel Frank W. Cheney, former officer with the 16th Connecticut. Mayor John S. Lane of Meriden donated the site for the 8th Connecticut monument and the location:

…marks the spot on the advance line where Lieut. Col. Appleman of the regiment seized the colors from the dying hands of the Color Sergeant, Henry E. Strickland, who was mortally wounded, and held them in the face of the enemy until Sergt. Walker took Strickland's place in the ranks.

Several officers of the Grand Army of the Republic and former field officers from the regiments delivered the speeches and poems at the dedication of the four monuments. The ceremonies concluded on the evening of October 8 with a campfire attended by the four regiments.97

The dedication and establishment of the Philadelphia Brigade Monument received a substantial amount of coverage due, in part, to the fact that it was the first monument commemorating and honoring an entire brigade to be placed on the Antietam battlefield and the heavy losses suffered within a matter of minutes by the brigade during its attack in the West Woods under General Sedgwick. The brigade lost a total of 545 men. However, the dedication is most notable in that it demonstrates the easing of tensions and movement toward reconciliation by extending invitations to not only Union veterans but also veterans of the former Confederate states. The official dedication of the monument took place on September 17, 1896, the thirty-fourth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

The Philadelphia Brigade Association coupled its dedication ceremony with a reunion held in Washington D.C. on the day prior. The reunion included several thousand veterans from both the North and the South. The Washington reunion also consisted of both vocal and instrumental music as well as speeches on topics such as “Pennsylvania and Gettysburg”, “Maryland and Antietam”, “Philadelphia and Her Brigade”, and “Southern Hospitality” delivered by their respective governors and mayors. The following morning the reunion attendees traveled to Antietam for the dedication of the Philadelphia Brigade Monument. A newspaper published out of Atlanta noted the open invitation to former Confederate soldiers and the hope of reconciliation that the monument dedication would foster several months before the ceremonies took place. The article recorded that “it is the desire of the Philadelphia Brigade…that every camp of Confederate veterans will be represented both at the reunion in Washington and at the dedication of their monument at Antietam” and that “a general invitation is extended to all Confederate veterans, and to the people of the South generally, to be present, and an official invitation will be extended through General Gordon at the annual meeting of Confederate veterans at Richmond, June 30th.” The article concluded by recalling the platform of the “old Philadelphia Brigade” as “one flag, one people, one country.”

The monument stands in excess of 73 feet in the West Woods several hundred yards north of the Dunker Church just off of Hagerstown turnpike, now Sharpsburg Pike. It is made of Vermont granite and is in the form of an obelisk, similar to the shape of the Washington Monument. At the base of the monument, there are inscriptions on each of the four sides detailing the makeup of the brigade and its history during the Battle of Antietam and the Civil War. The die between the base and the shaft is 6 feet thick and

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98 Sunny South, April 4, 1896.
weighs approximately 28 tons. The total cost to construct and place the monument on the field was $15,000.\textsuperscript{99}

The speeches also included addresses on “The North” by Charles F. Warwick, “The South” by General William A. Hemphill and on the “Army of the Potomac” and the “Army of Northern Virginia” delivered by Generals James Beaver and William Aylett, respectively. However, the ceremony’s only civilian orator, Archbishop P.J. Ryan, gave the most noteworthy speech of the ceremony entitled “A Reunited People.” Ryan opened his address by stating that “no part of the country felt more deeply that separation than the border States, like Missouri, Kentucky, and Maryland.” He continued by recalling his time at a parish in St. Louis tending to “both the Union and Confederate sick and wounded that filled the hospitals in that city.” Ryan believed that because those citizens of the Border States experienced the divisiveness of the war more than anywhere else, then they rejoiced “more on an occasion of the reunion of the people.” Ryan also detailed his initial hesitancy with the establishment of commemorative Civil War monuments:

At first, I confess, I thought it a mistake to erect monuments either in the North or South to the great soldiers who had fallen in battle, because these monuments seemed destined to perpetuate the sad memories and enmities of the past; but when I found Northern soldiers going on to Richmond for the unveiling of a statue to the gallant Southern soldier, Gen. Pickett, whose valor they admired as well as felt, and Southern soldiers coming North to celebrate the memories of Union heroes, I thought within myself, Let us have as many monuments of this kind as possible.

Ryan then expressed his hope “that such a reunited people may be perpetuated” in order to segue, not surprisingly, into a virtual sermon warning against “moral foes” and the danger of a “decrease of religious faith and dependence on God.”\textsuperscript{100}

Although Ryan used his platform to speak on the religious condition of American society, his address does speak to two important aspects of commemoration during this time period: the connection between commemoration and religion and the movement toward reconciliation and reunion between the North and South. In a speech delivered before the Maryland Historical Society in 1883, Clarence F. Cobb, a former private in the United States Army, concluded his comments on the Maryland Campaign with an overtly religious tone describing his trip to the Antietam battlefield:

…as we looked across Antietam field that Sunday and heard the church bells, we felt a calm peace and comfort that cannot be taken away when we saw the spires pointing upward; and we knew that eighteen hundred and eighty-two years ago a young recruit enlisted in our poor ranks at Bethlehem, who brought with Him a Countersign to pass us into Higher camps; and we knew further that on the Last Day when Gabriel sounds the Reveille there will be no more wars nor rumors of wars but all, all will be well.101

The latter point on the significance of Ryan’s speech concerning reconciliation would be best demonstrated four years later at the dedication of the Maryland State Monument.

Regimental monument dedications marked several of the subsequent anniversaries of the Battle of Antietam. The thirty-fifth anniversary of the battle, the year after the dedication of the Philadelphia Brigade Monument, veterans of the 20th New York dedicated their own monument on the field at Antietam, the 21st Massachusetts the following year, and four years after that, veterans of the 34th New York dedicated a monument to honor their fallen at Antietam on the battle’s fortieth anniversary. The establishment and dedication of the Ohio and Pennsylvania regimental and brigade monuments occurring the succeeding years are perhaps the most noteworthy primarily because they are some of the few that published official battlefield commission reports.

100 The New York Times, September 17, 1896.
The reports contain a wide variety of valuable information including proposals for the monuments, legislative acts, historical sketches of regiments, and transcripts of the dedication ceremonies.

In 1894 the Ohio Antietam Battlefield Commission traveled to the battlefield and with the expertise and consultation of General E. A. Carman, the commission’s Historical Expert, “passed over the entire line” and “marked the spots with boards, which were numbered” at the points were the various locations held by the Ohio regiments. The commission relayed its activities at the battlefield in their letter to the then governor of Ohio and participant in the Battle of Antietam, William McKinley. Congress passed the official legislation to authorize a commission to mark the positions for the monuments and the contractual negotiations with a sculpting company on May 12, 1902. The act included the appropriation of funds totaling $20,000 for the establishment of the ten monuments, including a monument to the late President William McKinley, as well as $2500 to defray the personal and travel costs of the commission members. Section 4 of the legislative act also mandated that the Ohio Commission consult with representatives of the regiments concerning the “style of the monuments they desire” and the inscriptions to be placed on the monuments as “far as is practicable to do so.”

The commission sent several notices on November 12, 1902 to the leading marble and granite companies and contractors in Ohio as well as New York and New England. The letter included a breakdown of the budget to be spent on each individual monument as well as what the cost limit was to include. The commission made sure to mention its requirement that the granite be of the best quality and “free from flaws.”

Commission also requested that anyone interested in being considered for the work submit “at least twenty-one original designs for the seven regimental monuments; at least four designs for the battery, and at least five designs for the joint monument, and should furnish at least three original designs for the McKinley monument.” The commission ultimately settled on The Hughes Granite and Marble Company of Clyde, Ohio on January 30, 1903 and entered into contract with the company on February 28, 1903.  

It is perhaps beneficial at this point to note the motivation for dedicating a monument to McKinley on the battlefield at Antietam and the history behind its establishment. In his report of the Battle of Antietam, President Rutherford B. Hayes made special note of the nineteen-year-old’s actions on that day:

Early in the afternoon, naturally enough, with the exertion required of the men, they were famished and thirsty, and to some extent broken in spirit. The commissary department of that brigade was under Sergeant McKinley’s administration and personal supervision. From his hands every man in the regiment was served with hot coffee and warm meats, a thing that had never occurred under similar circumstances in any other army in the world. He passed under fire and delivered, with his own hands, these things, so essential for the men for whom he was laboring.

General J.L. Botsford of Youngstown, Ohio provided a similar account of McKinley’s actions at Antietam. McKinley rose to the rank of second lieutenant for his “gallant conduct at Antietam.” The Ohio Antietam Battlefield Commission resolved to establish a monument in the late president’s honor on the spot where he served his troops. The monument stands over 33 feet in height and at the top an eagle rests upon a ball. Near the base of the monument is “an allegorical figure representing the spirit of the people in their devotion to the martyred dead, with one hand clasping the American flag, the other holding a palm branch over the bronze busts of McKinley.” The bronze busts of

103 Ibid., 22-24.
McKinley depict him as both a young soldier in the Union Army and as President of the United States. Also in bronze below the busts of McKinley is a representation of McKinley serving his fellow soldiers during battle.\textsuperscript{104}

The dedication ceremony for the Ohio regimental monuments and the McKinley monument took place on October 13, 1903 in front of the Dunker Church. The commission originally planned to hold the dedication proceedings on September 17, 1903, the forty-first anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, but the commission did not know if the monument would be ready in time and the New Jersey State Monument’s dedication ceremony was planned for the anniversary date. The battlefield commission invited President Roosevelt to attend the ceremony and give an address to those in attendance but in his letter to the commission Roosevelt expressed his regret in not being able to attend and attributed his inability to attend to the fact that he was speaking somewhere else the same week and he already “accepted an invitation to speak at Antietam” (at the New Jersey monument dedication). The dedication program commenced with a prayer delivered by Rev. William R. Parsons, Chaplain with the 66th Ohio Volunteer Infantry Regiment.\textsuperscript{105}

Captain W. W. Miller, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Ohio Antietam Battlefield Commission, offered the report of the commission including legislation enacting the commission to commemorate the Ohio regiments with monuments and the military record of the regiments being honored. After Miller’s speech, the President of the commission, David Cunningham addressed the crowd. Cunningham began by thanking the citizens of Maryland who gathered near Dunker Church, acknowledging their unique

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 25-27.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 102-104.
and difficult position of residing in a border state during the war for they “were exposed to all the vicissitudes and annoyances of active warfare, and therefore have less reason to remember with pleasure those trying days.” He also noted the divisiveness of the state and the fact that “one-half of the community recognized the stars and bars as their national emblem, and the other half still holding to the stars and stripes” but now that the country was once again united, the people of the United States “have but one national emblem, recognized and acknowledge everywhere, and that emblem old glory.” Cunningham continued with a brief narrative of the Battle of Antietam and had but one criticism for both sides stating “that the campaign of invasion was badly planned on one side and inefficiently met and defeated on the other.” The criticism of both sides demonstrates a more balanced approach to analyzing the battle than what occurred during the late-nineteenth century. Near the end of Cunningham’s address, he put forth his interpretation on the purpose of the monuments:

Not that these monuments can add new luster to their fame; that is not their purpose, but they are intended as a feeble recognition thereof, and for the further purpose of enabling the descendants and friends of the men who fought here, when, in the years to come, they may visit this field (as I trust they will never cease to do to the remotest time), to find the exact spot where their ancestors fought, and maybe died.

Cunningham concluded by thanking Ohio Governor George K. Nash for his support and approval of establishing Ohio monuments on the Antietam battlefield.106

Governor Nash followed Cunningham with his own address and officially handed over the monuments to the control of the War Department and the acting Secretary of War, General Robert Shaw Oliver. Nash’s speak marked a more reconciliationist and reunion mindset, noting that those who remained loyal to the Union were not “here to

106 Ibid., 109-112.
boast over those who were then our foes.” He continued: “Ours is a loftier, more noble patriotic purpose. They are no longer our enemies. They are our friends. We are all Americans. We love one country. We owe allegiance to one government.” Despite the apparent reconciliationist tone in Nash’s speech, the mere fact that he had to proclaim that boasting was not the goal says something about Civil War memory even after over forty years of separation. Nash also pointed to the recent Spanish-American War as a sort of reuniting event for the once divided country. He recalled that a sailor from Ohio and North Carolina both fell at the hands of the same enemy shell and “thus a son of the South and a son of the North gave up their lives in support of a common cause and the one flag which floats over our reunited country today.”

The Spanish-American War was the first major American war after the Civil War and provided the first opportunity for former Confederate and Union soldiers to once again join each other on the battlefield, this time on the same side but as later remembrance ceremonies indicate, the Spanish-American War did not completely reconcile the memory of the war. The Spanish-American War, in many ways, provided those promoting sectional reconciliation with a rallying point and a cause in which reunion was a requirement. The reconciliation sentiment was, in some respects, wishful thinking as there were still a substantial number of individuals who lived or fought in the Civil War and would not forgive the injustices brought forth by the Confederacy.

After Nash’s address, Cunningham introduced the event’s primary orator, Ohio Congressman and former Lieutenant Governor, General R. P. Kennedy. Kennedy recalled the heroes of the battle and war in his speech and made sure to mention the leaders from both the North and the South but also made sure to note that on the “field of

107 Ibid., 113-115.
death and desolation floated in triumph the flag of the Union.” He recalled the heroics of a regimental color bearer who knew the dangers of carrying the banner and said that he would “carry it and die” if necessary. Like others before him, Kennedy expressed his hope for continued reconciliation and reunion looking at battlefields as the “meeting places of one common people, instead of contending factions battling for the mastery.” He also contended that the South’s greatest victory “was the victory of peace.” The most unique aspect of Kennedy’s speech, however, was his remembrance of Lincoln and Antietam’s connection to emancipation. He recalled that the Antietam battlefield “not only won for the nation a new lease of life,” but it also “won for four millions of human chattels that measure of liberty which God had intended for all mankind.” Kennedy also used a great deal of imagery in his depiction of Lincoln walking the streets of New Jerusalem stating “that angel wings are bowed in reverence as he passes, and angel fingers are pointing, while angel lips are whispering, “There goes the great emancipator”.” One can only imagine how southern audiences would react to a speech like Kennedy’s. The acceptance by the audience of such a speech sheds light on the significance of Antietam’s geographic location in the history of the battle’s commemoration.

General Eugene Powell of the 66th Ohio followed, noting that the monuments will hopefully increase of the “love of country” of those who visit them and that they will help the fallen soldiers’ “memory live forever” and shortly thereafter, John Finn of the 8th Ohio anticipated the monuments being “an attraction for the tourist” visiting the nation’s capital being that the battlefield at Antietam was a brief two hour ride. He also believed that “an electric line” connecting the two points was forthcoming and would

108 Ibid., 119-127.
shorten the ride by thirty minutes. The ceremonies concluded with a closing prayer and a visit by those in attendance to battlefield to “inspect the monuments.”

Three years after the dedication of the Ohio monuments, the Pennsylvania Antietam Battlefield Memorial Commission dedicated its own monuments on September 17, 1906, two years after the dedication of fourteen other Pennsylvania monuments. The monuments dedicated in 1906 commemorated and honored the service of the Pennsylvania Reserve regiments, the 3rd, 4th, 7th, and 8th regiments. The commission decided to position the monument on ground already owned by the United States government, specifically the War Department. The members of the commission located the monuments on Mansfield Avenue in front of General Meade’s headquarters. The 1906 monument dedications are notable for their relation (or lack thereof) to the Battle of Gettysburg and the explicit anti-southern sentiment riddled throughout the speech delivered by Major G. L. Eberhart of the 8th Pennsylvania Reserve Regiment.

In the first sentence of the report’s preface, the authors acknowledge that the regiments concerned were to be honored at Antietam given that they “were not thus honored at Gettysburg.” The same sentiment is even expressed in the official legislation that enacted the plan for the placement of the monuments. In analysis of the law it becomes clear that the Pennsylvania government decided to place monuments for the Second Brigade of Pennsylvania on the Antietam battlefield because the regiments “were not in the battle of Gettysburg.” In the eyes of Pennsylvania veterans and the state

109 Ibid., 137, 144-149.
111 Ibid., 3.
government, Antietam was the second best option available to honor a group of native regiments that did not take part in the battle that took place on their own soil.

Not surprisingly, many of the orators at the dedication ceremonies spoke of the hope and development of reunion and reconciliation. Governor Samuel Pennypacker of Pennsylvania noted in his address that, “The times have changed and we have changed with them” and that the current period in history was one “of peace and plenty” with “men of the North and men of the South” who gathered out of mutual patriotism they now shared. Similarly, Dr. Mahlon H. Berry, member of the former 128th regiment, stated that citizens, namely Christians, of the North and South would do well in remembering the Lord’s Prayer and putting into practice the verse, “forgive my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me.” John C. Schofield of the War Department also tried to highlight reconciliation in his address even if it meant downplaying the immediate postwar tensions of the Reconstruction period by stating that the country emerged from the “darkness and gloom” of the war “more splendid than before.” Despite his emphasis on reconciliation, Schofield’s address demonstrates, albeit subtly, a persistent anti-southern attitude. He attributes most of the development of the United States’ postwar society, economy, and transportation to “the valor and sacrifices of the Union soldier.” He continued with the following statement:

But it is certain that had it not been for the Union soldier at Antietam and Gettysburg, at Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Appomattox—had it not been for all the blood-bought Union victories, culminating in the overthrow of the Confederacy—the world would have never seen the marvelous progress we have made in the forty years since the war closed.

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112 Ibid., 21.
113 Ibid., 108.
114 Ibid., 23.
Schofield’s speech, however, pales in comparison, in terms of anti-southern sentiment, to address delivered by Major G. L. Eberhart.

One of the day’s speakers stated that it was the hope of the North “that every Southern state may flourish and prosper” and that he was “sure that there is not a veteran present who has the slightest feeling of animosity towards the South or its people.” Another commented that “there are some people after the close of the war for over forty years who tried to revive a bad spirit between us, but it is too late.”\textsuperscript{115} Apparently, Major Eberhart did not receive the memo. In reference to the Battle of Antietam, Eberhart characterized it as an “act of treason” and “one of the bloodiest crimes against civilized society that blackens the history of mankind.” He likened the Civil war to a struggle between good and evil, God versus Satan and the conflict would not come to a close until God commanded “the stormy waves of treason and discord to cease.” Eberhart rarely referred to the Confederacy or Confederate Army by name, instead, he preferred “bloody treason” or “bloody treason’s forces.” He also preferred “the Slaveholders Rebellion” over the Civil War.\textsuperscript{116} As the program’s main orator, if there is anything significant to take from Eberhart’s speech it is that for some, even over forty years after the final shots, the war, its participants, and its memory were not completely reconciled or reunited. The takeaway from the entire program is that, even in 1906, an inherent confliction existed between reconciliation and a persistent anti-southern rhetoric expressed by Union veterans at various monument dedications.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid., 40, 107.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid., 26-29.
State Monuments

The emergence of state monuments began with the first dedicated in 1900 to the state of Maryland and its soldiers who fought in the Civil War and the Battle of Antietam. The Maryland State Monument is particularly worth noting in that it is the only monument on the field of Antietam devoted to soldiers of both the Union and Confederate Armies. Scholar of the Antietam battlefield, Susan Trail points to the reconciliation effect of the Spanish-American War as central to the success and development of establishing a Maryland monument to both Union and Confederate soldiers. The Maryland state legislature committed $12,500 to all of its monuments for the Antietam Battlefield and selected a spot near the Dunker Church in the heart of battlefield to place its primary state monument. On the soil of a border state with contending loyalties during the war, the Maryland State Monument was to serve as beacon of reconciliation and reunion at Antietam. The eight-sided monument bares a gazebo-type framework with each side devoted to a Maryland unit that participated in the battle, six Union and two Confederate. The equal sides of the monument are intended to represent the now parity that existed between the once divided sections of the country and the state.117

The dedication of the Maryland State Monument took place on Memorial Day, May 30, 1900, despite initial plans for dedicating the monument on the anniversary of the battle the previous year. The ceremony was well-attended with between 15,000 and 25,000 people in attendance. Many notable individuals and dignitaries attended the event, including the current president William McKinley, Maryland governor John W. 

117 Trail, 259-261.
Smith, and several prominent veterans and officers of the Civil War.\footnote{Ibid., 263.} In his speech, the acting Secretary of War, Elihu Root retold the heroics of McKinley as a young sergeant at Antietam and expressed his belief in the monument’s mutual commemoration. President McKinley also stated his satisfaction with the process of reconciliation that was taking place as a result of the Maryland monument’s dedication. He expressed his gladness in seeing men from both the former Union and Confederate armies gathering “not with arms in their hands or malice in their souls, but with affection and respect for each other in their hearts.” McKinley also pointed to the Spanish-American War as a reconciling force in the United States noting that “The followers of the Confederate Generals, with the followers of the Federal Generals fought side by side in Cuba, in Porto Rico, and in the Philippines, and together in those far off islands are standing to-day fighting and dying for the flag they love.”\footnote{The New York Times, May 31, 1900.}

Many newspapers, and even some speakers at the dedication ceremony, noted the lack of precedent of such an event as the Maryland monument’s dual commemorative spirit. The \textit{Winona Daily Republican} noted that it was an event which was “without parallel in the history of the world,” echoing the sentiments of many other newspapers and attendees of the ceremony.\footnote{Winona Daily Republican, May 30, 1900.} However, the author of an article published in \textit{The Sumner Gazette} disagreed. The author state that the monument had “a precedent in the monument which the people of Canada some years ago erected in the public garden at Quebec to the memory of Wolfe and Montcalm, enemies in the strife on the Plains of Abraham which destroyed the power of France in the new world.”\footnote{The Sumner Gazette, June 21, 1900.} Whether or not the
monument possessed a precedent in world history is uncertain; what is clear is that the dedication of the monument garnered a great deal of attention across the country.

Despite the reconciliationist tone of the monument and its dedication, it could not escape the ever-common politicization of Civil War commemoration as demonstrated in the Chicago Chronicle article reprinted in the Marion Sentinel. In 1900, the Chicago Chronicle was a Democratic newspaper and clearly demonstrated its political loyalties and its lack of reservations in bringing politics into commemoration ceremonies when it openly criticized McKinley and his speech at the monument dedication. The article noted that the echoes of McKinley’s speech “are those of reproof and censure” and the newspaper criticized McKinley for not mentioning McClellan, “who gained the union victory over Lee at Antietam.” In reference to McClellan’s efforts during the Maryland Campaign the author of the article recorded that:

President McKinley ignored this memorable chapter in the history of the war. He not only neglected to mention McClellan as the hero of Antietam, he neglected to mention Abraham Lincoln, who derived from McClellan’s victory inspiration for the emancipation proclamation, the most notable act of his life.122

The dedication of the Maryland State Monument paved the way for future state monuments including the New Jersey State Monument dedicated three years later on the forty-first anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1903. The New Jersey Battlefield Commission decided to place the monument along Hagerstown Turnpike near the Cornfield. The monument consists of a wide multitier base with a large granite shaft rising from the base. At the top of the column, stands a representation of 13th New Jersey Infantry’s Captain Hugh C. Irish, the first in the regiment to fall at the Battle of Antietam. Much like the process of creating and delivering the Private Soldier

122 Marion Sentinel, June 14, 1900.
Monument, the creational process of the New Jersey State Monument encountered its own delays. The Barre Granite Company informed the Secretary of State’s office in July of 1903 that the original cast of the granite shaft was defective and that the company was going to have to quarry a new shaft, adding additional time pressure to have the monument ready by the anniversary.123

The dedication of the New Jersey State Monument is particularly worth noting because of the presence and speech of President Theodore Roosevelt. Although Roosevelt briefly alluded to the soldiers of the Confederacy, he dedicated the great majority of his speech to recalling “the patriotism, the courage, the unflinching resolution and steadfast endurance” of those “who wore the blue…in the great years from ’61 to ’65.”124; once again proving that even though reconciliation was a common theme among the speakers of the Maryland monument dedication ceremony, the monument devoted to soldiers of both sides did not represent the beginning of movement toward reconciling Civil War memory in the North. Roosevelt devoted the rest of his speech to what contemporary citizens and government officials should take away and remember from those who fought to preserve the Union. During Roosevelt’s address a torrential downpour doused the attendees of ceremony and even though the speakers’ platform was covered with canvass, the rain came through nearly unabated. The New York Times reported Roosevelt’s reaction to someone offering him an umbrella as follows:

“I don’t care for it. If they (indicating the assemblage) can stand it I can.”

Turning to the crowd he said, laughingly: “I don’t feel sorry for you old veterans. You will not melt. I do feel sorry for the ladies.”125

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124 Urbana Daily Courier, September 18, 1903.
125 The New York Times, September 18, 1903.
Reaction to Roosevelt’s speech in Democratic newspapers was not surprising; however, the speakers’, namely Roosevelt’s, omission of mentioning General George B. McClellan garnered a particular strong response. The *New York Times* reported that “The name of Gen. McClellan, the Union victor at Antietam, was never once mentioned by any of the speakers, although the names of other Union Generals were mentioned by both the President and Gov. Murphy” and that such an incident “probably has never been duplicated in the dedication of any similar monument.”

According to the same article, Governor Murphy of New Jersey expressed his remorse for leaving out McClellan to Roosevelt after the dedication ceremony. The negative reaction compounded because not only was McClellan the commanding Union General at Antietam, he was also a Democrat and former governor of New Jersey. *The McKeans Democrat* published out of Smethport, Pennsylvania, McClellan’s native state, expressed its own critique as follows:

In the President’s long and wordy speech there is a strange omission. There was an American commander at Antietam, a Pennsylvania youth, to whose patriotism, courage, skill and generalship was due the glorious result of this momentous and decisive battle. But in his wealth of words and verbosity of patriotic periods President Roosevelt forgot his name. He recalled the name of Lee, as at Antietam, but he ignored the fact that ever such a man existed in North America as George B. McClellan.

A few days after the dedication, the War Veterans and Sons’ Association of Brooklyn attempted to rectify the omission during its annual anniversary of the Battle of Antietam gathering held in Prospect Park, Brooklyn. The gathering evolved in response to the dedication of the New Jersey State Monument into a celebration of General McClellan with General Horatio C. King stating that “The name of George B. McClellan will shine in illuminating gold letters across the pages of history with a splendid luster long after the

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126 Ibid.
127 *The McKeans Democrat*, September 24, 1903.
The establishment and dedication of the Indiana State Monument is noteworthy for a number of reasons, particularly the speech of Major William W. Daugherty, the president of the Indiana Antietam Battlefield Commission. In the preface of the Commission’s report, the organization expressed a characteristic of commemoration that is often overlooked, that of competition and comparison among states. The Commission states that the Indiana legislature appropriated funds to establish “a monument that more than favorably compares with any memorial hitherto erected by any other State whose soldiers fought there, and one of which every citizen of our State may feel justly proud.”

The concern on the part of the Indiana Commission to compare “favorably” to other states monuments is not unique. In establishing monuments on battlefields across the country, states remained wary of the size, style, and location of other monuments in order to ensure that their own not be trumped.

The dedication took place on September 17, 1910 with the usual ceremonies of music, transferring the monument to the governor then to the government of the United States, and the reading of a poem crafted for the ceremony. Meredith Nicholson read the poem and two lines stand out as representative of the concept of Civil War memory and remembrance for a society at a particular point in time:

Ours be the task to guard in peace the light

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That led them through the fight.\textsuperscript{130}

The poem makes reference of the “task” of the citizens living in the postwar years to guard or protect the “light” or the cause of the war. What a society interpreted that “light” to be is a matter of collective and social memory. The “light” of the war changes and evolves with a society and in many ways reflects the society’s own cultural values.

However, Major Daugherty’s speech is especially meaningful in light of analyses on reconciliation after the Spanish-American War and the dedication of the Maryland State Monument. Not surprisingly, Daugherty recalled the valor and role of the Indiana regiments at Antietam and continued by stating that the monument and its dedication is more than “a mere monument” because “it is reopening the graves, disinterring the ashes, revivifying the dead, filling the ranks of the five Indiana regiments which engaged in this conflict.”\textsuperscript{131} Daugherty’s speech is also another example and source of evidence that anti-southern sentiment in the North had not yet dissipated and that the country was still not completely reconciled, at least in spirit and memory. Daugherty stated that in the years after the American Revolution and before the Civil War, the people of the North devoted “themselves exclusively to the peaceful pursuits of trade” and that “they much preferred the windy war of words and fondly hoped, and hoping, thought that logic and law would be replaced by grape and schrapnell [sic].” Conversely, according to Daugherty, “their brethren of the South were of hotter blood; they were prone to settle their grievances by the gun rather than by the law.”\textsuperscript{132} Forty-eight years after the Battle of Antietam, former Union soldiers and Northern citizens were still describing an inherent difference between the North and South, essentially an analysis of good versus

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 17.  
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 27.  
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid., 29.
evil, and characterizing citizens of the South and the former Confederacy as immoral and unlawful.

The dedication of the New York State Monument took place ten years later on the fifty-eighth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, September 17, 1920. The monument consists of a tall, roman-column with a large eagle mounted atop the column. Approximately 250 veterans in “their venerable years” attended the ceremony at the dedication of the New York monument near Dunker Church. The order of exercises took the form of many previous monument dedications, including opening and closing prayers, speeches from government and military officials, patriotic music, poem recital, and transferring of the monument to the battlefield’s superintendent. However, a few items are worth noting from the dedication proceedings of the New York State Monument.

Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles’s speech demonstrated, once again, that although the country appeared reconciled, almost sixty years after the war Union veterans still expressed a resentment of Southern secession. In remembering the causes of the war most Northern veterans used that ground to express a persistent anti-Confederate sentiment. Although Miles devoted some of his speech to laud reconciliation, a reunited nation, and the concept of the Maryland State Monument, when coming to the cause of war he could not help but follow suit of others before him. Miles stated that “the cause of the great war” was one “fraught with cruelty and injustice” and “mercenary designs and unworthy motives for several generations had caused a serious dissension among our
people.” Miles does not explicitly state whose ‘designs’ or ‘motives’ he is referring to but one can deduce to whom he is referring without much difficulty.

Major General John F. O’Ryan’s speech also stands out in that he commemorates the Civil War by comparing it to World War I. O’Ryan, a veteran of World War I, attempted to relate to the aging Civil War veterans by recalling his own experience in combat just a few years earlier. He stated that although “new-fangled implements of war” have developed since the Civil War, “the thing that counts in war…is discipline” as well as “courage, morale, determination, and the like.” O’Ryan contended that “these fundamental qualities” extended across spans of time and in many ways connect soldiers from all eras.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the dedication of the New York State Monument is that it, along with the dedication of the Massachusetts State Monument during the same year, marked the relative end of large-scale monumentalizing of the Antietam battlefield. Although other monuments continued to be placed on the battlefield after 1920, they were not dedicated at the same rate or to the same scale as the forty year period from 1880 to 1920. As we shall soon see, the commemoration and remembrance of the Battle of Antietam began to evolve and take new forms.

133 Dedication of the New York State Monument on the Battlefield of Antietam, (Albany: J.B. Lyon Company, 1923), 34.
134 Ibid., 46.
CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING FORM OF ANTIETAM’S COMMEMORATION, 1912-1937

Although newspaper coverage characterized the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam as the ultimate expression of reconciliation, not everyone was buying into the spirit of reunion. One newspaper reported “many persons” claimed they were robbed and that “pickpockets ran rampant among the throngs at Antietam Battlefield yesterday afternoon.” According to the paper, “more than a score” of those in attendance “had their pockets picked of a total sum estimated by the Sheriff’s office at between $500 and $600.” In a letter to the editor, Albert S. Brown condemned Roosevelt’s characterization of the Civil War as the “War between the States” because it did not adequately interpret the conflict as “one being propagandized by partisan Southern writers and speakers [who] would minimize the error of secession.”

Even when the event was billed as an expression of unity and reunion, there were still those who resisted. However, these reports and accounts were the exception rather than the norm. The dissenting voices approximated less than five percent of the reactions and speeches covered in the press and various reports.

State monument commissions continued to fund and dedicate monuments on the battlefield at Antietam after 1920 and continue to place monuments on the rolling landscape near Sharpsburg to this day. Despite this persistent monumentalizing of the battlefield, new forms of commemoration took the place of large, elaborate regimental and state monuments. Historian Thomas Brown established 1915 as the watershed mark for the decline in commemorating the Civil War in urban centers as well as on rural

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135 Morning Herald, September 19, 1937.
battlefields with monuments. The history of Antietam’s commemoration supports this point. New forms of commemoration of the Battle of Antietam developed around this time period, in particular anniversary celebrations. Although regiments who fought in the war and the Battle of Antietam held annual reunion and anniversary celebrations of the battle, such as the annual reunion held by the 4th New York in September, no large or widespread anniversary of the battle had taken place, with the exception of the dedication of the national cemetery and a few other early monument dedications. The semicentennial and seventy-fifth anniversaries of the Battle of Antietam are indicative of this evolution from physically imposing monuments to anniversary celebrations and other smaller forms of commemoration. The semicentennial represents the beginning of this evolution as well as the seventy-fifth anniversary, the final and closest to complete reconciliation of the war in the memory of those who participated in the conflict, most notably among the aged Union veterans. By the time of the seventy-fifth anniversary, new tensions and wars entered in the American consciousness and the tensions of the Civil War perhaps faded alongside the number of surviving veterans. With fewer veterans gathering each year, former Union soldiers in their nineties perhaps embraced the concept of reconciliation more willingly. Additionally, the federal government and press were more inclined to tout a reconciliationist-dominated event in light of the economic situation of the United States in 1937, when perhaps during a recession the image of a reconciled and reunited people once again working toward a common goal would create powerful imagery.

137 Brown, 6.
Semicentennial of the Battle of Antietam

What is perhaps most noteworthy of the semicentennial of the Battle of Antietam is that it was not one centralized event or ceremony. Conversely, many reunion and anniversary celebrations took place across the country to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the battle. Several Massachusetts and Connecticut regiments held reunions on or around September 17 as well as the veterans of the 124th Pennsylvania regiment. More than one-hundred veterans also gathered on the Antietam battlefield, however, more than likely the largest gathering was held several hundred miles away from the battlefield in Prospect Park in Brooklyn, New York. In the weeks leading up to the anniversary, the New York Times reported that the celebration in Brooklyn “will be National in scope” and would include a 6000 man march including veterans from New York who participated in the battle.138 In the large printout that detailed the anticipated gathering, the Times reported a perhaps exaggerated number of an expected crowd of 100,000 with 400 veterans of the Union Army. Despite the fact that the ceremony was meant for the soldiers of both Lee and McClellan’s armies, the article only included in its estimated number of veterans those “old soldiers who fought on while comrades fell and won for the Union Army what proved to be one of the most important victories of the war.”139

This same article also corroborated the fact that it was the only extensive celebration of the anniversary in the country but what is more significant is that it details the planning of Antietam Day in the schools in collaboration with the semicentennial event. The Board of Education of New York City agreed to have an account of the battle

139 The New York Times, September 15, 1912.
read to some 700,000 children attending class in Manhattan and Brooklyn on September 17.  

William H. Maxwell, superintendent of the New York public schools, recommended that the account should be read “during the opening exercises in the schools” and also requested that “suitable references be made to the sacrifices, the heroism, and the results of the battle.”

The day after the anniversary celebration, the *New York Times* offered a more tempered estimation of those in attendance of more than 5000. Survivors of the battle gathered and “grasped hands and recalled incidents of the war.” The program began with a military concert at 2:30 pm and included several speeches made by prominent members of various veterans’ commissions and associations. The chief speaker of the program was Reverend Newell Dwight Hillis. Hillis focused his speech, like many others before him, on the battle’s significance and importance for the Emancipation Proclamation. He stated that the “reward” soldiers who fought in the battle “received was liberty for 3,000,000 slaves.” Hillis continued by outlining what distinguished Antietam from other “sordid conflicts” was that it “ushered in a new era for human liberty.” It is interesting that Hillis frames the amount of bloodshed that occurred at Antietam with a positive light by examining the cause that Lincoln ultimately connected to it. What is perhaps more interesting is that no newspaper reacted critically or reported a negative reaction in the crowd. Hillis, speaking to a predominately northern audience, was undoubtedly aware of how the crowd would receive such a connection.

Hillis’s opening statements are perhaps the most interesting and encapsulating of the sentiment of the semicentennial and the commemoration and remembrance of the

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140 Ibid.
Civil War during this period as a whole. He stated, “Now that fifty Septembers have come and gone since you veterans fought the bloodiest battle of the civil war, we are far enough removed from the scene to value aright Antietam.” 143 According to Hillis, time was needed before ‘we’ (Americans, in particular veterans) could adequately and appropriately analyze Antietam and more broadly, the Civil War. In many respects, Hillis was echoing the sentiments that would emerge once again during the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam. This sense of being “far enough removed” is a key contributing factor to the more complete reconciliation that took place during the early twentieth-century among the aged veterans of the war than the reconciliation of the 1890s and the Spanish-American War trumpeted by historians.

Undoubtedly, the reunion and reconciliation between North and South occurred, to a certain extent, at the expense of improvements in race relations and civil rights for African Americans. However, as evidenced by the bitterness that persisted well into the twentieth-century, the passage of time coupled with the aging of the combatants created an environment more welcoming for reunion many decades after the 1890s. One can find the same premise embodied in the reunion ceremonies held between former US Marines and Japanese defenders on Okinawa and Iwo Jima during the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The reunion between these former foes was able to take place without a perceived expendable group.

Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam

The seventy-fifth anniversary of Antietam, held on September 17, 1937, is significant in the history of the commemoration of the battle for a myriad of different

143 Ibid.
reasons. The anniversary revolved around the fact that during the celebration current
National Guardsmen would perform a reenactment of the engagement at Bloody Lane.
Although reenactments took place for many years prior to the seventy-fifth anniversary of
Antietam, most notably at Gettysburg in 1913, no major reenactment was yet held at
Antietam. The anniversary also marked the last time that veterans of the American Civil
War would gather on the field at Antietam for any significant reunion ceremony. In
collaboration with the reunion ceremony, the United States Congress approved the
minting of a commemorative half-dollar coin to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of
the Battle of Antietam with images of Lee and McClellan on one side and Burnside
Bridge on the other. However, the most important characteristic of the seventy-fifth
anniversary is that it is indicative of the final reconciliation and reunion that would take
place among the veterans who fought at Antietam. With many of their comrades since
passed, soldiers in their nineties were perhaps more inclined to shed a persistent anti-
southern sentiment and in its place exhibit a spirit of reunion and reconciliation with the
fellow soldiers who shared a common experience of fighting in the Civil War, even if
they were former foes.

Estimates of the time placed the number of surviving veterans of Antietam at
fewer than 100. Nevertheless, the National Antietam Commemoration Commission sent
out a special invitation to the veterans of “the War between the States” with the
opportunity to “be present on this occasion, to meet your comrades there in gala reunion
and pay tribute to the 23,000 who fell there, many of whom lie buried in the Antietam
National Cemetery.” The invitation also relayed a brief overview of the planned program
which included a “most colorful parade,” President Franklin Roosevelt’s memorial address, and the reenactment of “the Battle’s thrilling climax.”\footnote{An Invitation, Civil War Veterans, 1937 Collection, (Boonsborough Museum of History, Western Maryland’s Historical Library).}

The responses and completed questionnaires of the veterans demonstrated an enthusiasm of the veterans, almost all of them over the age of ninety, to meet once again on the battlefield with their fellow soldiers. However, two issues prevented many willing veterans from attending the reunion. First, many veterans stated that they would like to attend but could not because of their inability to secure necessary funds for the travel expenses and the fact that the commission did not offer any sort of reimbursement for the trip. John Aldridge of Indiana stated that he “would like to attend but will be unable to do so as I would not want to go that far by myself and would be unable to pay expenses for an escort.” Similarly, L.N. Baugh of Fort Worth, Texas stated that he was “not financially able to attend.” Second, many veterans could not attend the anniversary because of their failing health. William E. Bennett concluded that he “would be glad to [attend] if my health would permit me to” and that he could “scarcely get around the house without help.”\footnote{All Respondents, Civil War Veterans, 1937 Collection (Boonsborough Museum of History, Western Maryland’s Historical Library).} Nevertheless, several veterans of the war were in attendance to take part in the reunion and witness the reenactment at Bloody Lane.

Several newspapers previewed the events that would be included in the program and some of the notable individuals to be in attendance among the expected 250,000 (35,000 actually attended) patrons. The \textit{Richmond Times-Dispatch} stated that the event at Antietam would include a “review of 200 years” of the history of Antietam including its colonial history. The same article also noted that in addition to Roosevelt’s confirmed
appearance, 20 governors had accepted the invitation of the commission to attend the
reunion as well as the grandson of Robert E. Lee, Dr. George Boiling Lee and the son of
General George B. McClellan, Colonel George B. McClellan.\textsuperscript{146}

In analyzing newspaper and veterans’ reactions to the ceremony, it is clear that a
spirit of reconciliation and reunion ran throughout the anniversary. Undoubtedly,
newspapers covering the event trumped up and sensationalized the reunion sentiment of
the veterans but we can still extrapolate the voice of these veterans and the country as a
whole through their interpretation of the ceremony. Columnists wrote of the spirit of
reconciliation and reunion, Roosevelt spoke of it in his memorial address, and Grover C.
Crilley relayed it in his broadcast from the tower on the battlefield.

Many newspapers emphasized the spirit of reconciliation and reunion in their
reports of the ceremony and the veterans that participated. The \textit{Delaware County Times}
contended that even the commemorative coin exhibited the sentiment of the ceremony in
that its depiction of Lee and McClellan serves “as a symbol of lasting and cemented
friendship of the old and the new of the nation, on the occasion of the first and last
reunion of the Blue and Gray at Antietam.”\textsuperscript{147} The \textit{Washington Post} included a story of
veteran wandering through the graves at Antietam National Cemetery looking for one his
fellow soldiers and once he came upon the grave he stated to his guide, “I am contended
now.”\textsuperscript{148} The \textit{Morning Herald} stated that “veterans of the Blue clasped hands with
veterans of the Gray at what will be one of the last re-unions of the thinning ranks at
Antietam Battlefield yesterday” and that “the bitterness of 75 years ago has disappeared
and frequently men who fought for the South were seen arm in arm with soldiers of the

\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Richmond Times-Dispatch}, September 12, 1937.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Delaware County Times}, August 28, 1937.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Washington Post}, September 14, 1937.
North."\textsuperscript{149} Similarly, the author of an opinion-editorial piece contended that “the wound has healed.”\textsuperscript{150} Even the cover of the official program and guide to the National Antietam Commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary promoted the concept of reunion and reconciliation between Union and Confederate veterans with a woman walking arm and arm with two elderly men, one in a blue suit, and the other in gray.

This concept of the ‘wound being healed’ and ‘thinning ranks’ perhaps contributed to the decision of many veterans to attend the ceremony and the sentiments of reconciliation they expressed during their attendance at the anniversary. Franklin Roosevelt expressed, despite the temporary failing of the loud speaker, a similar analysis of the mood during his memorial address for the occasion. He stated that “it serves us little good purpose to discuss the rights and wrongs of the long four years war between the states” and that “we can and we do revere the memory of the brave me who fought on both sides.” Roosevelt continued that only within the past few years was the country “not only acting but also thinking in national terms.” He concluded his speech noting that the “spirits of those who fell…rejoice with us in unity of understanding” and “they urge us on in all we do to foster that spirit of unity, foster it in the spirit of tolerance, of willingness to help our neighbor, and of faith in the destiny of the United States of America.”\textsuperscript{151}

Despite the minor dissenting opinion, the sentiments of oneness were evident among the veterans of the Union and Confederacy present at the seventy-fifth anniversary. Realizing that this would be the last time they would see their comrades and
their former enemies in their lifetime, let alone on the historic battlefield, Union veterans who had once held onto an anti-southern perspective let it fade away in favor of a final act of camaraderie among those few remaining men who had taken part in America’s bloodiest war. The overriding sentiment of the veterans in attendance is perhaps best expressed in the words offered by Grover C. Crilley during his broadcast from the tower on the battlefield for the radio station WJEJ. Crilley stated early on in the broadcast that “Fewer and fewer of the comrades of ’62 are answering the bugle call each year” and thus, “Both the thin lines of the Gray as well as the thin lines of the Blue now sense the importance of this event as they meet here today and extend the hand of friendship and thus confirm once and for all a united country with its wounds healed.”

152 Grover C. Crilley, “Narration Broadcast at Antietam,” 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam Collection, (Western Maryland’s Historical Library).
CONCLUSION

The commemoration of Antietam did not end with the conclusion of the seventy-fifth anniversary on the battlefield. The memory and remembrance of the Battle of Antietam persisted into the mid-twentieth century and beyond. Emancipation celebrations often included some sort of remembrance, mostly through memorial speeches, to Antietam and its importance in the evolution of the war into a war explicitly over slavery by allowing Lincoln to issue the Emancipation Proclamation. The importance of the battle in deterring Lee’s attempt to bring Maryland into the Confederate fold and his first campaign into northern territory is well documented in speeches and addresses remembering Antietam but even more so in the various histories that cover the battle. The Battle of Antietam is one of the most analyzed battles in American history, perhaps second only to the Battle of Gettysburg. Military historians have focused on the battle not only for its importance in the strategy of the war for both the Union and Confederate Armies but also because of the sheer amount of bloodshed that the battle produced in such a little amount of time. Historians have broken down the various phases of the battle and calculated how many casualties occurred within timeframes as small as a couple minutes. Students of military strategy and history have also reflected upon McClellan’s decision to not pursue the Army of Northern Virginia and its retreat across the Potomac. The debate surrounding this decision has produced countless discussions among Civil War historians and enthusiasts about the military leadership of those at Antietam.

Commemoration and remembrance of Antietam continues to even more contemporary times. Monuments are still being placed on the battlefield, albeit on a
smaller scale and to a lesser degree. Every winter season, the National Park Service places 23,000 luminaries throughout the battlefield, representing the 23,000 casualties of the battle. The Antietam battlefield is perhaps the most well-preserved of all the Civil War battlefields. The National Park Service managed to retain much of the original land and recreate how the battlefield appeared during the early autumn of 1862. The field also possesses a historically accurate viewscape with very few signs of contemporary urbanization and commercialization, unlike the viewscape of the battlefield at Gettysburg. The battlefield remains one of the most popular Civil War tourist attractions in the country.

In some respects, the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration held on the battlefield was not drastically dissimilar to the earlier blue-gray reunions. Sectional reunion and reconciliation received the greatest amount of attention in the press coverage of the anniversary. While the previous chapter attempts to place the 1937 reunion at Antietam within the framework of a rapprochement between Northern and Southern veterans, the most important point is one that is implied in its narrative. As long as Union Civil War veterans survived, so too would anti-Confederate sentiment. By 1937, the number of surviving Union veterans was relatively small and thus, the blatant anti-southern rhetoric of the earlier monument dedications was not evident at the seventy-fifth anniversary.

However, the context during which the 1937 anniversary took place was markedly different than the commemoration ceremonies of the nineteenth-century. From a social and economic standpoint, the country was beginning to see the light at the end of the Great Depression tunnel, despite the Recession of 1937. Politically, Roosevelt was expanding the role of the government and government employment through his New
Deal. The United States recently endured the “war to end all wars” and sectional tensions still existed but slackened over time. Racial tensions remained but evolved into new and more modern forms. Jim Crow laws, segregation, and discrimination became further entrenched into the fabric of American society, in particular in the South through the legalization and continued reaffirmation of segregation’s justifications. In many respects, these changes created an environment in which reconciliation and commemoration were needed more so than during the 1890s. The United States was in a situation in which reunion was critical for the country’s survival. Despite the necessity of sectional reunion, there still existed a number of veterans who resisted reconciliation throughout their entire lives.

In light of this evolution, it is perhaps more beneficial if we, as historians, examine reconciliation, commemoration, and Civil War memory as occurring across a continuum, rather than periodizing different times in which resentment dominated versus when rapprochement ruled the day. When one critically evaluates Civil War memory across seventy-five years, it becomes evident that reconciliationist and dissenting voices occurred throughout history. During certain periods, one overpowers the other but it is important not to over-generalize these critical eras of Civil War memory. In many ways, that is the ultimate goal of this thesis and its contribution to Civil War memory studies. The thesis attempts to complicate Civil War memory by evaluating the continuum on which remembrance and commemoration take place. The context of memory changes along with collective memory itself but the changes are not always jarring, distinctive, or sudden. By taking a larger timeframe of seventy-five years, the author of the preceding essay attempted to analyze a persistent anti-southern sentiment among Union soldiers and
thus, simultaneously analyze the continuities from the immediate postbellum period through the 1930s.

The contested memory of Antietam still exists to this day. Historians continue to contemplate the successes and failures of the respective armies and leaders as well as the significance of the battle for the eventual outcome of the Civil War. Scholars of the war and its memory also debate the commemoration and remembrance activities of the Battle of Antietam. Reenacting of the battle, in particular, is a contentious subject. There are those who argue that reenacting helps to bring interest and awareness to the Civil War and the Battle of Antietam. Conversely, some Civil War historians contend that reenacting trivializes and romanticizes a war that resulted in the loss of more than 600,000 lives. Although the memory and remembrance of the Battle of Antietam remains convoluted, it is clear that the commemoration history of the Battle of Antietam still exerts influence in the collective memory of American society.
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