

Wednesday, July 1st, 1863

By MILTON E. FLOWER

How memorable, even after a century, was Wednesday, July 1, 1863 for Carlisle!

The previous week's terrors and confusions had terminated in the Confederate entry of Saturday. By sunset that day Gen. Rodas had scattered his division brigades along the Baltimore (Holly) Pike, on the Dickinson campus and bivouacked most of them in the vicinity of Carlisle Barracks where the men revelled "in ease and luxury."

Indeed the invaders, as Jed Hotchkiss wrote, found "the people here are not half so sullen as they are farther down the valley, the German element not being so strong and the harmonizing influence of schools, etc., have made a better population . . ." At every street corner squads were posted and divided into mess groups. Rations were brought around in army wagons and food often was cooked over fires built in the street.

On Sunday the townspeople could draw sighs of relief that the discipline was so excellent. Four churches, the First Lutheran, the Reformed, the Second Presbyterian and St. John's Episcopal held services. At the Barracks the Army's relaxation was evident. In a thrilling ceremony the first Confederate Flag according to the design adopted by the Confederate Congress a few weeks earlier was raised by the Thirty-Second North Carolina Regiment. After speeches and a band concert enthusiasm ran so high that the men "felt like going on to New York on the occasion." And it was a big day for letter writing, many of these now being preserved in Southern Archives.

That same day Gen. Isaac B. Trimble arrived at the Post and urged General Ewell to move forward. The General agreed to start before Tuesday morning. But what transpired in Chambersburg

that night turned the army toward Gettysburg instead. A messenger rode swiftly along the valley with news from the commander. Gen. Johnson's Division, strung out along Cedar Spring three and four miles west of Carlisle, was the first to break camp. These men marched back toward Shipensburg. Carlisle's soon learned of this movement but not until early the next morning, when from 3 to 8 o'clock in steady procession Gen. Ewell's wagon trains followed by columns of marching men filed through the town toward Holly Gap, did they sense their freedom. That afternoon the citizens' happy mood was disrupted by the sudden appearance of Colonel Cochran's undisciplined cavalry and later by Gen. Jenkins' arrival from the east end of the county. Their departure that night brought sleep marked by real relief.

New York and Pennsylvania militia on the West Shore that day were being ordered to pursue the retreating Confederates. Twenty-Second and Thirty-Seventh militia regiments under Gen. Ewen were halted as they returned from the Sporting Hill engagement and ordered to march westward. Some regiments along the Susquehanna refusing to march delayed Gen. W. F. Smith from accompanying these first units. The sixteen to eighteen mile advance to Carlisle was made under a broiling sun. The New Yorkers had received no rations. Hungry, deprived of even a half night's sleep the men, without water or rest, straggled along the route complaining bitterly. Exhaustion set in. Discipline was totally lacking.

Many broke ranks, pilfering and plundering the deserted farm houses along the road. At Hogestown and New Kingston women greeted the soldiers with cakes, bread, milk and buckets of cold spring water but the refreshments were far from enough for the weary men. The militia were city men new in service and unused to

marching or drills. As the sun bore down upon them with blinding heat many became physically ill, many more became footsore. Of eleven hundred men who set out, no more than three to four hundred were to reach Carlisle that night. Half way along, the Pennsylvania Twenty-Eighth and Thirtieth Regiments, with a good night's rest and rations, overtook the New Yorkers. As they attempted to pass them a fight was narrowly averted, fences were torn up and small melees begun. Then the command of "double quick" succeeded in putting the New Yorkers out in front.

At sunrise in Carlisle on July 1, the intrepid Capt. William Boyd with his hundred-twenty mounted New York cavalry entered by the Trindle Road. Thankful and excited townspeople brought them breakfast after which they galloped on. Not until five o'clock in the evening did the first militia arrive, advancing along the Harrisburg Pike. The cheering reception of these men made one of them later reminisce that "Mohamet's paradise was not in it with Carlisle". These forward companies within the next hour or two were to be augmented by other regiments and companies totalling fifteen to eighteen hundred.

The story of the shelling of Carlisle has been described many times. In the previous twenty-four hours Gen. J.E.B. Stuart and his three brigades had reached a point of exhaustion. His rations were gone. He was blindly seeking a point of contact with the Confederate Army. Riding with Gen. Fitzhugh Lee's Brigade in front, the brigades of W. H. Lee and Hampton were strung eastward to below Dillsburg. Man and beast were at the end of their tether. On the march, one officer recounted, "Mules were starving for food and water . . . Not infrequently a large part of the train would halt in the road because a driver toward the front

had fallen asleep." Desperate for provisions and want of sleep, the sight of Union forces in Carlisle must have been almost unnerving. Gen. Stuart having no alternative and as stated in his official report ordered Gen. Fitzhugh Lee to send in the demand for surrender.

It was not Gen. Stuart's Scouts but those of General Lee who were to tell the cavalry leader where the Confederate forces needed his service. Corporal Edwin Selvage, a Marylander, with eight other men had been sent to find Stuart. Near Cashtown they were directed toward Carlisle. Arriving about 11 o'clock they were halted by Union pickets. By a ruse they slipped through the lines. Not until nearly 1 o'clock did they find Stuart's adjutant. They delivered their message and were told to rest. An hour and a half later General Stuart himself inquired details from them. Riders were sent back to the brigades of W. H. Lee and Hampton directing them to turn off at Dillsburg and go towards Gettysburg. A forward order was given at once to Fitz Lee's men. Col. R.T.L. Beale, a student at Dickinson College twenty years before, was in charge of the advance. Retreating south along the Petersburg and Bonny Brook Roads the men, horses and wagons then cut across the fields to the Holly Pike. Men who had fallen asleep in the midst of the shelling, some within ten feet of the batteries, now seemingly half-drugged moved on, falling over the fences, many riding on asleep in their saddles. That night they were to recollect as the worst they had ever experienced.

Carlisle on July second might well have rejoiced at the brave stand of General Smith. Damage was slight. The next few days advances by regiments from Harrisburg continued. Then came news of Gettysburg and the wagon loads of wounded brought cause for reflection and thanksgiving rather than rejoicing.