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A Case Study of General George Gordon Meade: A Leadership Perspective Through the Lens of Good Work

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A CASE STUDY OF
GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE:
A LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVE
THROUGH THE LENS OF GOOD WORK

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

Theodore George Pappas, Jr.
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August 2011

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Perspective Through the Lens of Good Work

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Just four days after being ordered to command of the Union's Army of the Potomac, George Gordon Meade defeated Robert E. Lee at the Battle of Gettysburg, a critical victory in the war. Nevertheless, he has been unjustly maligned, even though he rose to a high rank in spite of obstacles and controversy. Under constant attack and criticism by certain members of Congress and the press, Meade's reputation was so severely damaged that it still has not recovered in spite of recent research that largely vindicates Meade.

The literature has focused on Meade's military decisions and ignores his leadership. To analyze and evaluate Meade's leadership as a commander, this case study derived a theoretical position from the Good Work Research Product, described by Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon (2001) in *Good Work: Where Excellence and Ethics Meet*. Guided by their methodology, this study describes Meade's Civil War experience as he viewed it and reveals an extremely competent, ethical commander who suffered great emotional and psychological stress, more from the treatment of his superiors than from the strain of war.

Shortly after Gettysburg, Lincoln erroneously decided that Meade did not want to engage Lee in another battle. Lincoln began to marginalize Meade and when General Grant arrived to travel with Meade's army, Meade's role became

minimal. Meade's marginalization usually manifested itself in the form of nonsupport from Lincoln, General-in-Chief Halleck, and Grant. The marginalization of Meade drained his energy, weakened his will to serve, and impaired his judgment. He contemplated resignation on at least two occasions, but small displays of support rejuvenated the general and he remained in command until the end of the war.

Meade deserves more credit than he has previously been allotted. He stopped Lee's string of decisive victories at a time when support for the war was waning in the North, allowing Lincoln to sustain the war and reunite the states. Meade also played a significant role in Grant's defeat of Lee. Despite the impediments to his leadership, Meade did "good work" and proved to be the right man at the right time.

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DEDICATION

To Dad

Who wanted this for me more than I did

And

To Linda

Who would not let me quit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I	The PROBLEM.....	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	13
	Theoretical Framework.....	13
	Purpose of the Study.....	14
	Research Questions.....	15
	Limitations of the Study.....	16
	Methodology.....	16
	Significance of the Study.....	18
	Definitions.....	19
	Chapter I Summary.....	20
II	THE LITERATURE AND LIFE OF GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE.....	22
	Overview of General Meade's Life.....	25
	Spain to West Point.....	25
	Family and Marriage.....	31
	The Seminole War to the Civil War.....	34
	The Civil War.....	38
	Back to Philadelphia.....	51
	Criticisms of Meade.....	51
	The Meade-Sickles Controversy.....	52
	The Committee on the Conduct of War.....	57
	Historicus.....	60
	Gettysburg and Lee's Retreat.....	62
	Grant, Sheridan, and Meade.....	67
	Meade According to His Contemporaries.....	74
	Summary of the Meade Literature.....	81
	The Good Work Research.....	84
	History and Mission of the United States Civil War Army.....	88
	The Eighteenth Century Army.....	89
	The Early Nineteenth Century Army.....	91
	Summary of the History and Mission of the United States Civil War Army.....	96
	Leadership Theory.....	96
	Chapter II Summary.....	101
III	METHODOLOGY.....	103
	Introduction to the Case.....	103
	Statement of the Problem.....	105
	Research Questions.....	106

	Research Design.....	106
	Data Sources.....	107
	Procedures.....	109
	Historiographical Bias.....	115
	Triangulation.....	116
	Selection of the Case.....	118
	Chapter III Summary.....	119
IV	DATA ANALYSIS.....	120
	Overview.....	120
	Becoming a fighter: April 1861 to August 1862.....	123
	Detroit, Duty, and the Radical Republicans.....	123
	Meade enters the War Enthusiastically.....	127
	Meade's Thoughts on War and the South.....	130
	Promotions, Politics, and Reputation.....	135
	A Taste of Command: August 1862 to November 1862.....	146
	Ready for Promotion and Command.....	146
	Ethics, Truth, and Justice.....	152
	The Need for Good Officers.....	159
	Meade Learns Lessons about Lee.....	163
	Learning to Command: November 1862 to June 1863.....	166
	Rising to Corps Command.....	166
	Growing Disdain for the Washington Administration.....	171
	Earning a Reputation as a Fighter.....	173
	Getting Closer to Command of the Army.....	176
	Meade's Need for Information.....	185
	Hooker Loses Support.....	187
	Hooker and Meade Quarrel.....	190
	Meade is Magnanimous.....	193
	Lee Invades the North.....	197
	Why Lincoln Chooses Meade: June 1863.....	200
	Meade's Independent Command of the Army.....	204
	The First Four Days: July 28 through July 1, 1863.....	204
	The Meade Controversies are Born: July 2, 1863.....	222
	Lee's Retreat: July 4 to July 14, 1863.....	229
	A Season of Frustration: July 15, 1863 to March 1864.....	249
	In Grant's Shadow: March 1864 to June 1865.....	305
	Grant and Meade Develop Mutual Respect.....	305
	Meade Defends Grant to Margaret.....	309
	Meade, Sheridan, and the 1864 Campaign.....	315
	A Gift Refused Then Accepted.....	319
	Grant Takes Control.....	321
	Cold Harbor: June 1864.....	326
	The Cropsey Incident.....	327
	Growing Frustration: Serjie and Grant.....	330

	Questionable Judgment: The Battle of the Crater	337
	Missed Opportunity to Escape Grant's Shadow	344
	Converging Stressors Challenge Meade's Will	348
	Grant Withholds Meade's Promotion.....	353
	Meade Regains His Will and Focus	357
	Meade Hits a New Low: Beecher's Attack	360
	Grant Secures Meade's Promotion	365
	Gibbon Leaves the Army.....	367
	Clarity and Judgment Return to Meade.....	370
	Duty and His Son's Death	379
	The CCW and the Crater Report.....	381
	Meade Leaves the War Disconsolate and Embittered	382
	A Final Insult: March 1869	390
V	FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS	394
	Findings.....	394
	Meade Does "Good Work".....	394
	Meade Leads and Follows.....	396
	Domain and Field Conflicts Hamper Meade	400
	Lee and Meade Stalemate	402
	Grant Needed Meade	404
	Meade's Unique Skills, Abilities and Attributes.....	405
	The Dynamics of Meade's Values and Beliefs.....	406
	Meade's Personal Value and Beliefs	406
	Meade's Military Beliefs	408
	Meade and the Northern Press.....	411
	Seeing Meade through His Eyes	412
	A Lack of Support Disenfranchises Meade.....	414
	Conclusions.....	419
	Unheralded Accomplishments.....	419
	Comparing Meade to Grant	423
	Meade's Leadership	424
	Leadership Lessons	425
	Implications	427
	Good Work and Leadership.....	429
	A New Perspective of Meade	430
	Final Thoughts.....	432
	REFERENCES	433
	APPENDICES.....	442
	Appendix A – Coding Guide	442
	Appendix B - Civil War Army Organization and Rank.....	456

Appendix C - Map of the Civil War Eastern Theatre	
of Operation	458
Appendix D - George Gordon Meade: Civil War Position	
and Rank	459

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Major General George Gordon Meade	1
2	General Daniel Sickles	9
3	Proposed Pipe Creek Position.....	56
4	General George Gordon Meade	80
5	Good Work Theoretical Diagram	86
6	Robert E. Lee	102
7	Data Classification Matrix	113
8	Senator Chandler	125
9	Senator Wade	125
10	Margaretta Meade	132
11	Secretary of War Edwin Stanton	134
12	Major General Henry Halleck	166
13	General Ambrose Burnside	170
14	General Dan Butterfield	170
15	General Joseph Hooker.....	196
16	Gettysburg Battle Lines	224
17	General Grant at Cold Harbor	306
18	General Sheridan	317

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

“George who? Everyone knows who Grant was. Even grade-schoolers recognize Lee’s picture. But Major General George Gordon Meade is another story” (Haggerty, 2002). So begins Charles Haggerty’s discussion of General George Gordon Meade’s relegation to a Civil War footnote. Meade’s reputation as a general is indeed an enigma. Noted Gettysburg historian Edwin Coddington calls it “The strange reputation of General Meade” (1961).

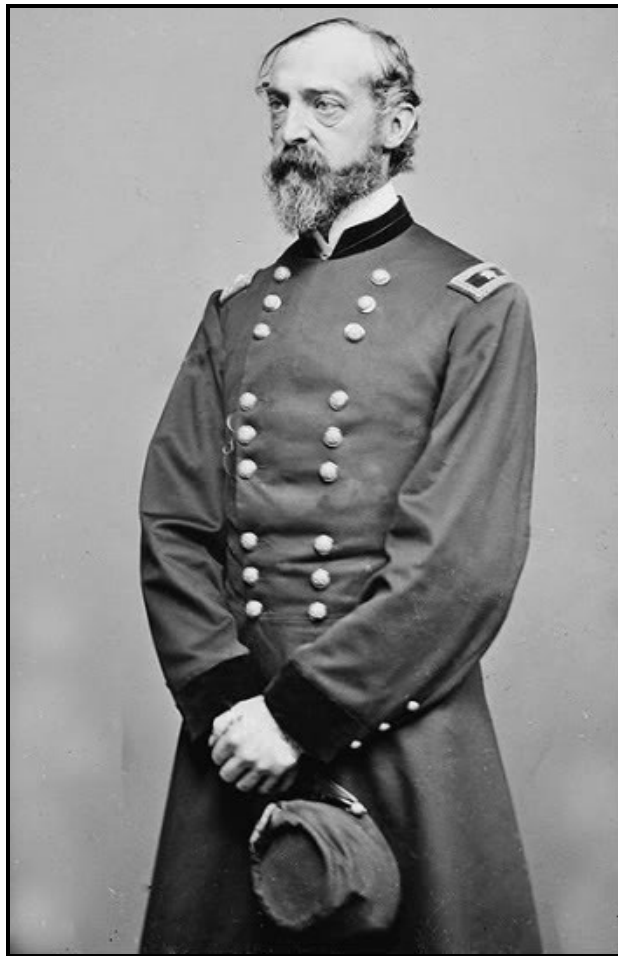


Figure 1. Major General George Gordon Meade.
(Library of Congress)

As commander of the Army of the Potomac, Meade defeated Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the battle of Gettysburg and temporarily was heralded as a hero. General Meade had worked his way through the ranks of the Army of the Potomac, earning the position due to his experience and effectiveness in battle. He was West Point trained and a career Army man. Meade was a Captain in the Topographical Engineers, commanding a survey of the Great Lakes, when the Civil War erupted. He immediately requested reassignment to the war effort and on August 31, 1861 was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers and assigned to command the 2nd Brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves.

Meade saw action at Gaines Mills on June 29, 1862 and then was severely injured in the Battle of Glendale on June 30. Returning to duty in August, he led his troops in the Second Battle of Manassas and commanded the Pennsylvania Reserves in the Battle of South Mountain on September 14. Meade was building a reputation as a fierce fighter and effective officer. At Antietam he temporarily took command of the First Corps when Hooker was wounded. He led the only division to break through General Stonewall Jackson's lines at Fredericksburg, only to retreat when his advance was not supported. But this performance would result in his promotion to Major-General of Volunteers, effective November 29, 1862. On December 23 he was given command of the Fifth Corps, which he led through the Chancellorsville campaign (April 27-May 5, 1863). After the defeat at Chancellorsville, General Hooker argued with General Halleck and offered his resignation as the commander of the Army of the

Potomac. President Lincoln unexpectedly accepted it and selected Meade to replace Hooker. On June 28, 1863 Meade was ordered to command of the Union's Army of the Potomac (Sauers, 2003a). Having neither sought nor desired the command, he accepted it as a matter of duty (Meade, 1913/1994).

Hooker and the army had pursued Lee into Pennsylvania, where the Confederates were foraging for much needed subsistence supplies (Brown, 2005). When Meade assumed command, he was unsure of where his scattered troops were, or what General Robert E. Lee's intentions were, although it appeared that Harrisburg was the likely objective (*New York Observer*, July 2, 1863). General Meade decided to turn Lee's advance by directly pursuing and engaging him. He encountered Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the crossroads community of Gettysburg, just four days after taking command of the army. Meade quickly converged his scattered troops just outside of town and engaged Lee's troops in the bloodiest three days of the war. Meade performed well, establishing a strong position on Cemetery Hill and effectively moving troops to counter Lee's assaults (Sommers, 2009). The battle resulted in Lee's first defeat and Meade was bathed in glory. However, shortly after the battle, President Lincoln became disenchanted with Meade, feeling that Meade should have struck a decisive, war-ending blow to Lee's army and that Meade had squandered a precious opportunity (Williams, 1952).

Not everyone shared Lincoln's opinion of the fledgling commander. On July 18, 1863, an article in the *Scientific American* praised Meade's skill as a

general and suggested that the Army of the Potomac had at last found a worthy leader.

All the accounts which we have read satisfy us that for skillful generalship and dauntless bravery, no other battles since the war began can compare with these. Under the most trying and extraordinary circumstances, General Meade has exhibited the highest strategic and tactical skill, and has risen to the rank of a great "military captain".... We rejoice, in common with all loyal hearts, in the apparent fact that, after a series of bloody reverses and few successes, this Potomac army has at last found a true military leader-one who seems to understand his business.... General Meade is a thorough soldier without political aspiration. He has a well-poised mind; and above all he is a high-toned Christian gentleman, well worthy of the confidence and support of every lover of his country (p.35, retrieved from Proquest Historical Newspapers database on August 22, 2009).

But less than a month later, on August 14, 1863, an article in the *Liberator* accused Meade of disobeying orders from his superiors to attack Lee. By this time, Lee had successfully crossed the Potomac and returned to Virginia. Crediting the Washington reporter of the *New York Times*, the *Liberator* stated that General Halleck specifically instructed Meade to attack Lee. It erroneously submits the substance of Halleck's order as, "It is proverbial that councils of war never fight. Attack the enemy at once and hold your council of war afterwards (August 7, 1863, p. 127). In fact, Halleck did instruct Meade to ignore his war

council and trust his own judgment, but he never ordered an attack (OR; 27, pt. I, p. 404). Then an August 14, 1863 *Liberator* article asserts that Meade was not the man to command the army. Thus, the debate between leadership and failure would begin and plague Meade for the next 150 years.

Meade's worthiness as a commanding general is still debated. Noted Civil War historian Richard Sommers (2009) takes an unusual position. He places Meade in the top one hundred generals from the 1700s until the present solely on his brilliant victory at Gettysburg. Yet he also contends that Meade would never have won the war for the North. Sommers believes that Meade only minimally possessed the boldness, tenacity and strategic insight of great generals. Sommers and T. Harry Williams (1952) agree that Meade was an above-average tactician but lacked any strategic vision. Williams characterizes Meade as timid, lacking the hardness to fight a modern war, resistant to any goading by Lincoln to fight, and overly cautious. He also characterizes him as competent and a man of character.

While Meade's efficacy is still debated, historians generally agree that Meade is largely forgotten, unrecognized and still receives little credit for any accomplishments of the army under his command. The discussion regarding the quality of Meade's work shares the spotlight with the discussion of why he has been forgotten.

Brevet Brigadier-General Francis A. Walker (1887/1985) of the Union army sees several causes for Meade's anonymity. The first of these is where Meade was physically positioned during the opening skirmishes of the battle.

Meade was ordered to command only three days before the battle erupted. He had just regrouped the army and started his search for General Lee's army. On the night of June 30, 1863 he held his headquarters at Taneytown, waiting for contact with the enemy in order to know in which direction to proceed. Thus, with Meade's headquarters being some distance from the origin of the battle, others, such as Buford, Reynolds and Hancock appropriately received the attention and credit for the beginning of the battle.

In addition, the positioning of the Union troops formed a "...convex line, (which) broke up the battles of the 2nd and 3rd of July into a series of actions, regarding which it was inevitable that attention should be fixed especially upon those who commanded at the points successively assaulted" (Walker, 1887/1985, p. 406). Also diverting attention from Meade was the Union loss of so many prominent officers, such as corps commanders Hancock, Sickles, and Reynolds and division commander Gibbons. "Such an unusual succession of casualties could not fail to have an effect in distracting attention from the commander-in-chief" (Walker, 1887/1985, p. 406).

Finally, and maybe most significantly was Meade's "...disinclination to assert himself against hostile criticism.... he took little pains to vindicate himself against aspersion..." (Walker, 1985, p. 407). Indeed, Meade never spoke publicly about any charges made against him, although his testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of War was made public. Meade's reluctance to respond to criticism may have been due to his distrust of the press and his belief

that the public did not understand the true nature of the conduct of war (Meade, 1913/1994).

Walker goes on to very clearly support his commander stating:

It is my purpose to show that at Gettysburg the Army of the Potomac had a commander in every sense; that, in spite of misadventures and miscarriages, the action was fought according to his plans and under his direction as nearly as usually happens in war; and that his presence and watchful care, his moral courage and tenacity of purpose, contributed largely to the result. (p. 407)

He adds that he agrees with Army artillery chief Henry Hunt's view that General Meade was right in how he handled the Battle of Gettysburg and the pursuit of Lee. Walker's strong support of General Meade may be absolutely correct, but the bias of general Walker should be considered.

A century and a half later Haggerty (2002) presents a different perspective. He asserts that although Meade is relatively unknown today, it is more significant that Meade was "forgotten, overlooked, and ignored in his own time" (¶5). He attributes this to several factors that developed over the course of the war, the first occurring at the outbreak of the war. While still in Detroit, then Captain Meade refused to attend a public meeting and renew his oath of allegiance to the United States as requested by the Detroit citizenry. This action invoked the wrath of United States Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan. As a key and influential member of the Committee on the Conduct of War, Chandler

would use the committee to damage Meade's reputation (See Chapter 2 for more information).

Gettysburg was both the boon and the bane of Meade's career. Despite the successful repulse of Lee's army, President Lincoln was critical, expecting a decisive offensive action at Gettysburg once Lee gave up the attack. When that did not occur, he immediately became concerned that Meade was too slow and cautious in his pursuit of Lee (Burlingame & Ettlinger, 1997). After Lee withdrew from the field at Gettysburg, Meade did remain with most of the army for a day in order to rest and reorganize. This decision is Haggerty's (2002) second issue. While Meade is portrayed as not pursuing Lee, he indeed vigorously, but cautiously, and with deference to the condition of the army, did pursue Lee (Wittenburg, et al., 2008).

The pursuit of Lee would again result in damage to Meade's reputation when Lee did cross the Potomac and return to Virginia on July 14, 1863. Although Lee was trapped at Williamsport against the high waters of the Potomac, he had chosen his position well. Meade faced a fortified enemy prepared for battle. Any offensive by Meade would be at a great risk to the army, and Meade refused to attack, allowing Lee to escape during the night. The decision not to attack at Williamsport, another of Haggerty's factors, is still controversial (see Chapter Two for more information on the fourteen days following Gettysburg).

General Dan Sickles, who would criticize Meade until his own death in 1914, promoted the most significant and persevering criticism of Meade's

generalship. Commanding the Army of the Potomac's Third Corp at Gettysburg, he moved his men forward of the Union battle line, forming a salient and disconnecting from his intended position and the rest of the Union line. The move violated orders from Meade and placed the army in serious jeopardy. Quick work by Meade and G. K. Warren provided support for Sickles, possibly saving the day for the Union. To protect his own reputation, Sickles attacked Meade's competency, stating that Meade wanted to retreat from Gettysburg. Sickles insisted that his action initiated the battle on the second day of Gettysburg and forced Meade to fight. Sickles lost a leg at Gettysburg, and was in Washington to recoup. The blood on the battlefield was scarcely cold when he was telling his version of events to President Lincoln and the Committee on the Conduct of War (see Chapter Two for details).

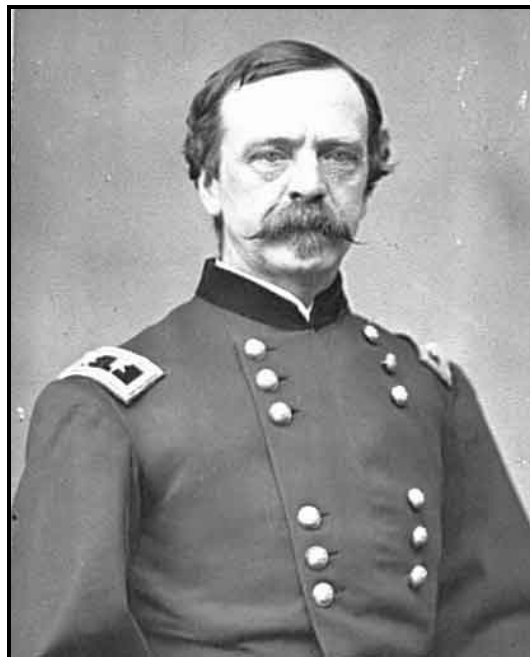


Figure 2. General Dan Sickles. (Library of Congress)

Haggerty (2002) also identifies two letters written by “Historicus”, the first appearing in the New York Herald on March 12, 1864 as factors in Meade’s demise. These letters essentially demean Meade and give credit for the victory at Gettysburg to Sickles. While the author was never identified, General Meade and others have concluded that the person responsible for the letters was Dan Sickles. Sickles and “Historicus” probably did more damage to Meade’s reputation during Meade’s time than any other of Haggerty’s factors.

General Meade would probably agree with Haggerty (2002) that one of the factors that reduced Meade’s recognition was his treatment of newspaper correspondent Edward Cropsey. Cropsey wrote an article for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* that Meade felt was a lie and demeaning. With Grant’s silent consent, Cropsey was banned from camp, exiting on a donkey and wearing a sign that read “Libeler of the Press”. Other correspondents reacted by refusing to mention Meade’s name in the press, unless it was to denigrate him (see Chapter Two for more information).

While Haggerty (2002) and Walker (1887/1985) attribute Meade’s reputation to factors during his time, Coddington (1961) considers that at least some of the dilemma of Meade’s reputation lies within historiographical approaches. He states that how Lee lost the Battle of Gettysburg is well known, but little attention has been given to how Meade won it. Additionally, the many attacks of Meade over the years have clouded his reputation. His performance at Gettysburg was never the subject of a military tribunal, but was instead investigated by Washington politicians through the Joint Committee on the

Conduct of War (CCW). The political nature of the generals in the Army of the Potomac fanned both the discontent with Meade and the CCW's efforts to have Meade removed from command. Coddington cautions that even the testimony of people friendly to Meade is tainted by the "loaded" questions of the committee. He urges that historical sources be evaluated for their objectivity, with special consideration being given to those sources that have no emotional connection to Meade, Sickles, or the CCW.

Richard Sauers, author of a Meade biography and *Gettysburg: The Meade-Sickles Controversy* (2003a) agrees that historiography in the cases of Meade and Gettysburg is suspect. He submits that shoddy scholarship by both amateur and professional historians has resulted in an over-dependence on published works written between 1863 and circa 1920. These accounts sometimes stretch the truth, sometimes are outright wrong, or reflect an emotional defense of a commander. This has resulted in a distorted truth about Gettysburg that has been accepted until recently.

While there is disagreement about Meade's reputation, even disagreement about why his reputation is tarnished, there is no disagreement about his reputation as a man. Meade was viewed as a Philadelphia gentleman (Stowe, 2005) and was generally considered to be a man of impeccable character. Theodore Lyman, Meade's aide-de-camp and personal friend, said, "I never saw a man in my life who was so characterized by straightforward truthfulness as he is" (Lyman and Agassiz, Ed., 1922, p. 25) and "I shall always be astonished at the extraordinary moral courage of General Meade" (p.57).

At the unveiling of the General George Gordon Meade statue in Washington, D.C., General John Gibbon (1887/1985) said that Meade:

... will be remembered with admiration, not only for his military achievements, which, unsurpassed by those of any other man... but also for the purity of character, for his unselfishness, for his freedom from jealousies and envies so common among distinguished soldiers, for patient and uncomplaining endurance of injustice, for his courage, which was of that high order that dared to do right at the risk of his own reputation, for his modesty, that made him ever ready to praise others, while during his whole career he never wrote or spoke one boastful word of himself, and for his supreme devotion to duty. (pp. 10-11)

The mixed perspectives of Meade's performance as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac have left the nature of General Meade's generalship unsettled. As noted by Edwin Coddington (1961) and Richard Sauers (2003a), there has been scant research and historical narrative regarding the generalship of General Meade. "Historians are divided over his wartime performance and thus the reader will find a wide range of interpretations of Meade's character and generalship" (Sauers, 2003b, p. xi). Was he incompetent, brilliant or something in between? Was this a man of great character? Has history treated him fairly or has he been unjustly relegated to be a historical footnote?

Statement of the Problem

This study will focus on the quality of General Meade's work as the commander of the Army of the Potomac through the lens of good work. It looks to see if General Meade performed good work and fulfilled his responsibilities to his constituent groups as well as how he general handled ethical questions within the realm of his profession. Finally, the study looks at how the factors of good work aligned to impact Meade's work and leadership.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on the theoretical position that General Meade did "good work". Good work is work that is of "expert quality and benefits the broader society " (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, p. IX). Good work is also ethically done and is engaging. This position is based on the book, *Good Work; When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001), a ten-year study by the authors exploring the nature of good work. Their research spawned a focused perspective of responsibility and good work which is presented in *Responsibility at Work; How Leading Professionals Act (or Don't) Responsibly* (Gardner, Ed., 2007), a collection of writings based on research relating to responsibility in the concept of good work. The core of good work is working responsibly, and this study's position contends that the central element in General Meade's good work was his ability and desire to fulfill his responsibilities.

The concept of "good work" offers a new perspective for evaluating Meade's generalship. Coddington suggested that Meade has been slighted

because historians have focused on how Lee lost at Gettysburg and have ignored how Meade won. Similarly, a shift of perspective may be helpful in viewing General Meade's behavior. Historians have frequently judged General Meade by speculating on whether or not he would have won the war, a narrow perspective of a complicated task. The 'good work' perspective takes a broader view. If, after enduring the pressures and challenges of command for almost the entire war, General Meade had done "good work", if he had fulfilled his responsibilities, then he possibly should be given more credit and recognition than he has previously received and there may be lessons for people who want to do good work in how he accomplished his good work.

This research is informed by the findings of the Project on Good Work. Conducted by noted psychologists Howard Gardner, Mihayli Csikszentmihalyi, and William Damon, the project findings describe the elements of "good work", provide criteria for decision-making in ethical dilemmas, and describe the responsibilities that accompany good work (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001). This framework provides the opportunity to develop a perspective of Meade's performance that is detailed, structured, and evaluative but unhampered by the complexity created by introducing leadership theory. Described in detail in Chapter Two, this theoretical framework shapes this study's research questions.

Purpose of the Study

The Civil War demanded many skilled leaders. Many of these leaders, such as Abraham Lincoln, Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant, have been

extensively studied for various reasons, including the leadership lessons derived from their experiences. Other leaders, such as General George Gordon Meade, have received less attention but are worthy of study. This study is designed to first determine whether or not General George Gordon Meade engaged in “good work” during his command of the Army of the Potomac and if so, what lessons might be learned from his experience.

Given that the literature has largely ignored many aspects of Meade’s generalship, that he rose to a high rank in spite of obstacles, and that he was known to be a moral person, it is possible that there are valuable insights for leaders in Meade’s experience. This study is designed to discover the lessons of Meade’s generalship that have not yet been uncovered.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed by this study:

1. What evidence exists that General George Gordon Meade, while the commanding officer of the Union’s Army of the Potomac, from June 28, 1863 until June 1865, performed “good work”, work that was of high quality, ethically done, socially responsible and engaging?
2. During his tenure as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac, what evidence indicates that General Meade fulfilled his responsibilities to his family, friends and colleagues, to his mission, to his personal goals, to the Army, and to the nation?

3. Did General Meade's approach to resolving ethical dilemmas reflect consideration of his mission, the standards of the professional soldier, and his identity?
4. How did the conditions of good work align to support or disrupt General Meade's accomplishment of "good work"?
5. If General Meade did good work, what, if any, are the implications for others who are trying to do good work?

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by the historical documents that are available. The study's conclusions rely upon the researcher's background and knowledge and other researchers may develop different interpretations of the data.

Generalizations to other cases may not be possible.

Methodology

This research is a qualitative case study that seeks a new perspective on the generalship of General George Gordon Meade and through that perspective, to gain insights into how General Meade was able to conduct good work in such difficult times. Case study offers the opportunity to see the wholeness of the individual (Stake, 1995) and to provide a deep, rich description of the events in the life of that person (Slavin, 2007). Thus, a case study of General Meade provides the opportunity to consider the complexity of the events that resulted from his position as the commander of the Army of the Potomac.

This study focuses on the events occurring during Meade's tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac that have historically been controversial;

Meade's pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg, Dan Sickles' claims about Gettysburg, *Historicus*, Mine Run, the Cropsey incident, and his relationship with Grant. Each of these events is described in Chapter Two. These events have been broken down into a series of actions by General Meade that are then analyzed to determine if General Meade's did good work or not. If the events indicate a moral dilemma for General Meade, his actions are also analyzed to determine if he acted ethically. Guidelines for determining responsibility and ethical behavior are derived from the Project on Good Work.

The *Historicus* letter provides an example. Published in the New York Times on March 12, 1864 under the name of *Historicus*, it accused General Meade, among other things, of ordering a retreat from Gettysburg and of not properly anticipating the enemy's attack. General Meade, suspecting that General Sickles had penned the letter, requested a military hearing, did not speak publicly about the letter, and then accepted his superiors' advice to drop the request for a hearing. In each action, was Meade responsible to his profession, to his family, friends, and colleagues, to the nation, to himself, and to his mission? In this instance, Meade may have had an ethical challenge. Since he was not ordered to do anything, General Meade could have responded publicly by replying through the press, even though it was clear that his superiors did not want that to happen. By remaining quiet, he and his family would suffer the attack without the opportunity for vindication and at the risk of damaging Meade's reputation. Was his decision to remain silent the ethical decision?

Given the historical nature of the case, sources are both primary and secondary. Documents from the Official Record of the War Between the States (OR) and from the General Meade Collection at The Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC) are the primary sources used in this research. The recollections of Theodore Lyman, a Meade aide, and other contemporaries such as General John Gibbon, General G. K. Warren, Captain Francis Donaldson, Charles Dana, and John Hay are used to add to the description of Meade and the events of the day. Historical accounts by noted historians such as T. Harry Williams, Edwin Coddington, Richard Sauers, and others provide researched and documented secondary sources. Newspaper accounts and magazine articles from the Civil War and times since also provide data for this study.

The data gathered was placed on a matrix to facilitate the analysis and synthesis of the results. Patterns and similarities in behavior were evaluated on a recursive basis and contributed to the developed perspective on General Meade's good work.

Significance of the Study

The study responds to the concerns of historiography expressed by Coddington and Sauers by developing a perspective of General Meade that is organized, structured and criteria based, as well as broad in scope and rich in detail. It offers a view of General Meade that considers the gestalt of his generalship, rather than the narrow focus of his military victories and failures, his temper, or his relationship with Grant, as is frequently the case.

This study also extends the good work concept to a historical figure. The concept of good work is sensitive to the moment, or to the point in time in which it occurs. It is also impacted by the culture of the time and the standards of the domain of work, as they existed at the time of the research. The Project on Good Work's research began in the 1990's and is based on the results of interviews over a ten-year period. Thus, while recognizing that people in all historical eras have performed good work, the results of the research are clearly framed in the present. However, William Damon, a project creator and researcher, sees the extension of the principles of responsibility to a historical figure as both acceptable and interesting (personal communication, December 4, 2009).

Definitions

Domain - an area of work in which a set of specialized knowledge and skills has been codified in a way that facilitates a smooth transition to new practitioners

Good work – work that is of high quality, ethically done, socially responsible and engaging (Gardner, et al, 2001)

Mission – the central goal of a realm of work, generally fulfilling a basic societal need (Gardner, et al, 2001)

Standards - the rules, ethics, and behaviors established by authority or custom and generally accepted within a profession (retrieved May 15, 2010 from www.dictionary.reference.com)

Identity – the sum of a person's background, traits, values, morals, intellect, strengths, weaknesses, like and dislikes resulting in a sense of who one is and what is important (Gardner, et al, 2001)

Profession – a domain that requires formalized training, education and certification

Responsibility – a state manifested by any act, decision, or communication that is intended to or results in providing for or maintaining the welfare of any constituent and is directly attributable to General Meade

Chapter I Summary

The Project on Good Work provides a theoretical framework for examining the contributions of General George Gordon Meade. Relatively unknown and unsung, General Meade served his nation during one of its most trying ordeals. His place in history has been debated, and his command ability has been questioned, but the quality of his character is unchallenged. A deeply religious family man, Meade served his country until his death. But even his death did not stop the wrangling about his role in the Battle of Gettysburg and whether or not he could have won the war for the Union. He has not been cited as a great leader or as a great man, but it is generally agreed that he was a moral man and a good soldier. The debate continues to this day.

It is possible that history has asked the wrong questions about General Meade and others? Is Meade's effectiveness to be based only on how many battles he won or if he destroyed his enemy? By that standard, there would be no value in the study of Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans who died fighting a superior foe. Even though they all died, their stand at Thermopylae saved Sparta and Greece. Yet that is the standard that seems to be applied to General

Meade. Is it possible that after a century and a half of debate, the questions about Meade are stale?

Let us explore a fresh question. According to Schroer (2007), one aspect of leadership is being a good worker. Then let us ask, did General Meade do good work according to the standards of his profession? The answers to this question may set the stage for a discussion of Meade's leadership, but that is not a discussion that we will undertake within the scope of this research. Whether or not General Meade did good work, whether he performed at a level where excellence met ethics, is the focus of this research.

Chapter II will explore the theoretical framework provided by the Project on Good Work. A review of the literature surrounding General Meade, as well as a discussion of key events in his life, will also be found there. Subsequent chapters will discuss the findings this research and the conclusions drawn from them.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE AND LIFE OF GENERAL GEORGE GORDON MEADE

Compared to other Civil War generals such as Longstreet, Stuart, Lee and Grant, little has been written about the life of General George Gordon Meade. Even though he rose to be the Union's fourth highest ranked officer and it has been nearly a century and a half since the Civil War, there are only four biographical accounts of his life. As noted by Edwin Coddington (1961) and Richard Sauers (2003b) there has been scant research and historical work regarding the generalship of General Meade. The existing works leave the reputation of General Meade unsettled. "Historians are divided over his wartime performance and thus the reader will find a wide range of opinions on Meade's character and generalship" (Sauers, 2003b, p. xi).

The early literature about General Meade supported a negative view of him and his command. For example, the *Historicus* article, appearing in the *New York Herald* on March 12, 1864, charged Meade with an unwillingness to fight at Gettysburg. *Historicus* asserts that this was indicated by Meade's issuance of the Pipe Creek circular on July 1, an order for the troops to withdraw to a defensive line at Pipe Creek, Maryland, fifteen miles away (see Figure 3, page 56). In fact, this circular was never issued as an order, and was only prepared as a contingency plan to be used if the events of the battle required withdrawal. *Historicus* also stated that at Gettysburg Meade neglected to properly survey the

ground and his lines and virtually ignored his left, where General Sickles and the Third Corps was positioned. Sickles, having not received any orders from Meade eventually moved his position forward of Meade's intended line. Again Historicus erred, as there is ample evidence to indicate that Sickles received orders several times but ignored them. This article spawned debates about Meade's military ability at Gettysburg, why he failed to follow the three-day battle with an attack of his own, and why the pursuit of Lee allowed Lee to escape across the Potomac to Virginia.

Within the last sixty years the literature has been more favorable to Meade, beginning around 1960 when Freeman Cleaves penned *Meade of Gettysburg*. It was followed by a favorable portrayal of General Meade in Edwin Coddington's 1968 classic, *The Gettysburg Campaign*. In the twenty first century, the literature continues to support Meade and questions the several controversies surrounding his command. For example, the literature vindicates Meade's conduct in pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg (Brown, 2005; Wittenberg, Petruzzi, & Nugent, 2008), strongly supports Meade in the Meade-Sickles controversy (Hessler, 2009; Hyde, 2003; Sauers, 2003b) and gives consideration to "...the military and political problems the Army of the Potomac Generals encountered as they pursued victory" (Rafuse, 2003). More about these controversies is found later in this chapter and throughout the accounting of Meade's life.

The rich portrait of General Meade that is provided by those who knew him demonstrates the complexity of the man, but leaves no doubt as to his

impeccable character. Theodore Lyman, Meade's aide and friend, describes the general as possessing a fiery temper, and being clear-headed, quick of mind, painfully honest, and of unequaled moral courage (Lyman, 1922). *The Scientific American* described him as a "high-toned Christian gentleman" (July 18, 1863, p. 35). General John Gibbon (1887) described Meade as being pure of character, unselfish and modest. Richard Meade Bache (1897) states that General Meade "...pursued the even tenor of his way, bending to no power but obedience to his superiors in authority and to his conscience... he repined at nothing, sought no favor, inspired by the noblest of convictions, that he had always done his duty...."(p. 555). These contemporaries of General Meade reflect a basic theme that is found in the Meade literature. While Meade's military skill has been challenged constantly since the retreat from Gettysburg, his character has remained essentially unchallenged.

The conventional view of General Meade evaluates his performance as commander of the Army of the Potomac through a military lens. From a military view, his work is generally considered to have been good and, at times, excellent, but not good enough to win the war. Very little consideration has been given to a leadership perspective of his command. Before, during, and after the war, General Meade served his country well, yet there has been little attention given to how he accomplished what he did. It may be that General Meade simply did "good work". This research will look at General Meade through the lens of good work, work that is technically excellent and beneficial to a broader society (Gardner, et. al., 2001).

Beginning in the next section of this chapter, the Meade biographies and other sources are used to describe important events in General Meade's life, to provide the biographical background necessary to developing an understanding of General Meade's Civil War performance, and to evaluate whether or not he did good work. Next, there is a discussion of the theoretical structure derived from the good work research (Gardner, et al, 2001). The chapter concludes with an examination of the nature of the army in Meade's time, a perspective that is required to explore the concept of good work.

Overview of General Meade's Life

Spain to West Point

George Gordon Meade was born on December 31, 1815, in Cadiz, Spain. He was the eighth child and second son of Richard Worsam Meade and Margaret Coates Butler Meade. Richard Meade, a native Philadelphian, was in Spain managing the family's maritime merchant transactions (Sauers, 2003a). The Meades had lived an affluent lifestyle in Spain since their arrival in 1804. They were extremely wealthy and well regarded by the Spanish government and society (Stowe, 2005).

When war broke out between Spain and France, Richard Meade provided supplies to the impoverished Spanish government. At the war's end, Meade was unable to collect the \$491,000 debt still owed to him by Spain (Stowe, 2005), which would be equivalent to \$6,243,000 today (retrieved June, 10, 2010 from <http://mykindred.com/cloud/TX/Documents/dollar/>). Eventually, in order to silence his criticism and demands, Spanish officials imprisoned him for two years.

Through the efforts of government officials in the United States, Meade was released from prison in 1818 but remained in Spain for two more years trying to collect his money. In 1819, the treaty between Spain and the United States resulted in the United States assuming responsibility for all debts owed to United States citizens by the Spanish government (Sauers, 2003a).

Margaret Meade had returned to the United States in 1817 with the children. Richard Meade eventually returned to the United States in 1820 and spent the rest of his life unsuccessfully trying to secure his claim. He first returned to his native Philadelphia, but eventually moved his family to Washington, D.C. to be better able to pursue the debt owed to him. Never succeeding in obtaining any payment from the United States, Richard Meade's unexpected death in 1828 left his family with little means to continue the affluent lifestyle the family had enjoyed for several generations. Also unable to secure the Meade's claim, Margaret eventually sold family possessions and property in order to provide for the family (Stowe, 2005).

The family's declining financial situation impacted young George's education. At age eleven, George began attending the American Classical Military Lyceum, a private boarding school patterned after the U. S. Military Academy and attended by many of Philadelphia's elite. After attending only two years, he had to return to Washington because his mother could no longer afford the school. He then attended a private school in Washington operated by Salmon P. Chase, who would eventually become Secretary of the Treasury and chief justice of the United States Supreme Court (Pennypacker, 1901). Chase,

becoming increasingly successful in his law practice, closed the school after a few months (Cleaves, 1960). Mrs. Meade then enrolled George in Mount Hope Institution, a private school in Baltimore. Meade was viewed as a very able student and performed at a very high level in these schools (Stowe, 2005, Sauer, 2003a).

George Gordon Meade wanted to become a doctor, but his mother was unable to pay for a college education. Before his death, George's father had noticed his son's ability in mathematics and mentioned to his wife that he thought West Point would be a good choice for George. Recalling the comment, Mrs. Meade sought to enroll George in West Point (Cleaves, 1960). Although it took two attempts over fifteen months, Margaret Meade was able to use her political connections to get George appointed to West Point. It was both prestigious and free (Stowe, 2005). George Gordon Meade was typical of the cadets of his time, who were from families with political influence, but were not of the American aristocracy. The Meade's had fallen far from the ranks of the American wealthy, but still had the family's connections (Stowe, 2003), such as Congressman John Sergeant, who had lent assistance to the effort to free Meade from his Spanish imprisonment (Cleaves, 1960).

In 1831, at the age of fifteen, the young Meade entered West Point as his father had hoped (Stowe, 2003). However, he had little interest in his studies and his academic achievement was mediocre. He finished nineteenth in a class of fifty-two, but his grades in military studies were significantly below the middle of his class (Pennypacker, 1901). His lack of attention to detail and drill resulted in

the accumulation of many demerits, only a few shy of preventing his graduation (Cleaves, 1960).

While Meade's training in engineering would eventually lead to civilian and army positions, the biggest contribution of West Point may have been toward the professional socialization of the cadets. West Point stressed systematic learning, hierarchy, and order. Sylvanus Thayer, the West Point superintendent, recognized the national mission entrusted to West Point graduates and emphasized rational, hierarchal values and mental discipline. It was at West Point that Meade and many others developed the belief that civilians should allow military people to conduct war and that the duty of soldiers should not be affected by politics. During both the Mexican and Civil Wars, Meade expressed his dissatisfaction with the way the government conducted war and his contempt for volunteer soldiers (Meade, 1913/1994). He fell into the mould of West Point cadets, who were generally a cohesive group, moderate and a-political (Stowe, 2003).

During the 1830's, the curriculum at West Point emphasized engineering more than it did military tactics and strategy. Thayer wanted to mould West Point into the foremost engineering school in the nation. Mathematics, science, and engineering classes occupied more than twice the academic time of all the other classes combined. Subjects such as history, geography, government, international law, and ethics received minimal attention (Skelton, 1992). All cadets studied French.

Superintendent Thayer felt that a true military education required the study of the French military. He wanted cadets to be able to read French accounts of Napoleonic battles and strategies. Thayer followed the French military school model, which emphasized fortifications and artillery more than strategy and tactics. In fact, there were only nine hours of study devoted to tactics and strategy (Skelton, 1992). Meade's ability to speak French would be beneficial to him as an officer in the Civil War because he would often happily entertain French dignitaries who were visiting and observing the war (Meade, 1913/1994).

While at West Point, Meade generally kept to himself. The only lasting friendship he made at West Point was that of John Pemberton. Meade and Pemberton shared a common background, both being of families from Philadelphia's elite society. Another Pennsylvania classmate, Herman Haupt, described Meade as courteous and gentlemanly, but lacking in any charisma that would cultivate friendship. Haupt would eventually become one of the sharpest critics of Meade's Gettysburg performance, believing that Meade should have been far more aggressive at Gettysburg and in his pursuit of Lee (Coddington, 1968). Indeed, Meade was not the most sociable of generals. In fact, he intentionally avoided army socializing that involved drinking and women, a behavior that, along with others, estranged him from politically influential generals such as Hooker, Butterfield and Sickles.

Overall, Meade's West Point performance was adequate but unspectacular, possibly due to two factors. Meade was not challenged by the curriculum (Pennypacker, 1901) and he never wanted to pursue a military career

(Stowe, 2003). Meade graduated from West Point in 1835. He was commissioned as a brevet lieutenant and assigned to an artillery division to begin his mandatory year of military service. Meade's unit was ordered to Florida due to the Seminole uprising and Meade reported there after his graduation leave of absence (Cleaves, 1960). He was destined to spend but a short time there, becoming ill with symptoms resembling malaria and unable to perform the rigors of duty.

Meade's early experiences as a member of Philadelphia's elite society and as a cadet at West Point resulted in the development of values and beliefs that would remain with him throughout his life. Stowe (2003) asserts that these values were that of a Philadelphia gentleman. Believing in order, hierarchy, serving something greater than one's self, and the extension of kindness to those less fortunate typified members of that elite society. West Point's structure, hierarchy, and preparation to serve in the army reinforced those beliefs in Meade. West Point also developed in him beliefs that were shared by a majority of West Pointers. Distaining the citizen soldier and the interference of the untrained in affairs of war, West Pointers were a-political and extremely supportive of each other. During the Civil War, these beliefs would put Meade at odds with many civilians and be one of the challenges of command that he endured.

Meade never forsook the behaviors of high society. He even encouraged his wife to continue performing her music and to appropriately participate in social events in his absence. He frequently expressed his enjoyment of proper

social affairs and in the visits of dignitaries to his headquarters (Meade, 1913/1994). Firmly grounded by his Philadelphia and West Point values, George Gordon Meade conducted himself as the Philadelphia gentleman he aspired to be (Meade, 1913/1994, II).

Family and Marriage

When Brevet Second Lieutenant George Gordon Meade graduated from West Point in the summer of 1835, his family was economically disadvantaged but still maintained its social status. Meade would state that he was without the benefit of political influence (Meade, 1913/1994), but the facts deny that perception.

The Meade family tree reveals a vast network of military and political associations. George was one of eleven children born to Richard and Margaret Meade. His older sister, Henrietta, married Commodore Alexander Dallas. Dallas became the commander of the nation's West Indies fleet and was the son of the President James Madison's Secretary of the Treasury, also named Alexander. Dallas' brother, George Mifflin Dallas, was a prominent Philadelphia politician and served as President Polk's vice-president from 1844 -1849. A Meade brother, Navy Captain Richard Worsam Meade married Clara Meigs, the daughter of New York City Judge Henry Meigs. Sister Maria del Carmen married General Hartman Bache, who secured a favorable assignment for Meade upon his re-enlistment in the army. Sister Mariamne married Captain Thomas Huger. Sister Salvadora's second husband was Judge William Peterson. Captain James Duncan Graham married George's sister Charlotte in 1828 (Retrieved from

<http://homepages.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~marshall/esmd29.htm> on August 22, 2010). Captain Graham would be responsible for procuring several surveying assignments for young George (Cleaves, 1960). Meade's siblings' marriages reflect the social affluence of the Meade family.

John Sergeant, a long-time family friend, frequently visited George's mother. Sergeant was a highly regarded lawyer and served four terms as a Pennsylvania representative in the United States Congress' House of Representatives. He was the National Republican party's nominee for Vice-President in 1832, but he and Presidential candidate Henry Clay lost to Jackson and Van Buren. Sergeant's daughter, Margaretta, was frequently her father's companion on these visits. Eventually, she and George Gordon Meade fell in love and married. John Sergeant was hesitant to approve the marriage due to George's unstable employment as a civil engineer, but he eventually relented and the couple was married on December 31, 1840, George's twenty-fifth birthday (Cleaves, 1960).

In November of the same year, Margaretta's sister, Sarah, had married Henry Wise, a United States Congressman from Virginia. Wise would become a Confederate General in the Civil War, fighting against his brother-in-law at Petersburg. Wise was with Lee at Appomattox and urged Lee to surrender (Retrieved on August 20, 2010 from <http://en.wikipedia.org/>). Ironically, it was Wise who assisted Meade in obtaining his reappointment to the army in 1842. (Cleaves, 1960). Upon hearing of the war's end, General Meade visited Lee's camp and saw Generals Lee, Longstreet, and Henry Wise. Finding Wise sickly

and hungry, Meade procured an ambulance for his use to travel home. Upon returning to camp, he ordered his son and aide-de-camp, George, to deliver a wagonload of provisions to Wise (Meade, II, 1913/1994).

While Meade General Meade generally avoided politics, his wife had no issue with using her family's considerable position. Meade biographer Freeman Cleaves (1960) suspects that it was Margaretta's influence that finally succeeded in obtaining General Meade's assignment to the war effort. Meade had been unable to obtain an assignment to an active army unit at the outbreak of the war, even though he repeatedly notified Secretary of War Simon Cameron of his desire to be reassigned. Meade became increasingly frustrated as he saw men junior to him, such as John Pope and William Franklin, promoted to volunteer brigadier general. Eventually a family friend, Pennsylvania's attorney general, passed a note to Senator David Wilmot, encouraging his help in gaining Meade an assignment. The note was dated July 17, 1861 and presumably Wilmot intervened since Meade was commissioned as a volunteer brigadier general on August 31, 1861 (Cleaves, 1960).

General and Margaretta Meade had seven children. Their first-born, John Sergeant was ill for most of his life. General Meade's concern over his son's health is obvious in many of his letters to his wife. Affectionately called "Serjie" by his father, John Sergeant died on February 21, 1865 as his father and the Army of the Potomac prepared for the final spring campaign.

Second son George Gordon became his father's aide-de-camp and was with his father throughout his tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac.

George would start the editing of his father's letters as a response to criticism of his deceased father. Passing before it was completed, his son George would complete *the Life and Letters of General George Gordon Meade* (1913/1995). Other Meade children, in order of birth, included Margaret, Spencer, Sarah, Henrietta, and William.

General Meade, while serving as the commander of the Military Division of the Atlantic, died in his Philadelphia home on November 6, 1872. His death was caused by pneumonia, possibly the result of the lingering effects of his Battle of Glendale wounds. His beloved Margaret died on January 7, 1886 at the age of seventy.

The Seminole War to the Civil War

Brevet Lieutenant George Gordon Meade's time in Florida, his first assignment, would be brief. He took ill with a fever soon after joining his unit and was declared unfit for the rigors of daily campaigning. Meade was then assigned to escort a party of Seminole Indians to the Indian lands west of the Mississippi (Bache, 1897). Although he saw little of actual combat, the Seminole War was Meade's first exposure to war. Having completed his required year of duty and never desiring a military career, Meade resigned from the army in July of 1836 (Cleaves, 1960).

Upon his resignation, brother-in-law John Graham offered Meade work as an assistant surveyor on a railroad project in Florida. Meade would work at a number of surveying projects during the next few years, but due to the uncertainty of civilian work, and feeling the need to better support his wife,

Meade rejoined the army in 1842 (Bache, 1897). Aided by his brother-in-law, Senator Henry Wise, Meade was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Topographical Engineers and was assigned to the survey of the northeastern boundary between the United States and Canada (Sauer, 2003a).

In August of 1845, Meade was ordered to join General Zachary Taylor's staff in Texas. Armies were massing near the disputed Texas-Mexico border. The United States was debating the annexation of Texas and Mexico opposed such an action. Meade felt there was little chance of hostilities breaking into battle (Meade, 1913/1995), but in April of 1846, Mexico declared war on the United States (Cleaves, 1960).

Meade's duties in Mexico included preparing lines of march, the reconnaissance of the enemy position, and the mapping of unknown territory. Serving under General Taylor and then General Scott, Meade participated in battles at Monterey, Palo Alto, and Resaca de Palma, as well as the siege of Vera Cruz. After two years of service, Meade was assigned to duty in Washington, D.C. by an order from General Scott. Scott brought his own engineers with him and Meade's services were no longer required (Cleaves, 1960).

Meade's service in the Mexican War was especially formative for Meade. He was able to observe army command techniques and the principles of war in action. He developed beliefs that were shared by many who served in the Army of Occupation, as Taylor referred to his army. For instance, Meade believed that war should be fought to defeat the enemy's army but in a manner that gained the favor of locals. During his command of the Army of the Potomac, Meade would

prohibit the looting and razing of civilian property other than for military supplies (Lyman and Agassiz, G. R., (Ed), (1922). He saw the importance of secure and dependable logistics. He believed that artillery and engineering were the strengths of the American army. This is evident in his use of engineers to prepare the Pipe Creek line and in the modification of the Gettysburg line, as well as in his use of artillery to repel the Confederate assault on the third day at Gettysburg. Tactically, he came to believe that the full weight of an army's force needed to be directed at specific, decisive points. The belief that civilians should have no input in affairs of war began at West Point but was strongly indoctrinated by Meade's Mexican War experience, as was his detestation of volunteer soldiers (Stowe, 2003; Meade, 1913/1994). These beliefs would become important elements in Meade's view of command.

Meade was brevetted a first lieutenant for his gallantry in reconnoitering the enemy position and leading General Worth's Second Division storming party to its position at Monterey. More importantly, he earned the respect of the army, family and friends. Upon returning to Philadelphia, the citizens presented him with a sword in recognition of his service. Reunited with his beloved family, Meade would return to the work of harbor and river improvements (Pennypacker, 1901).

Meade's duties after the Mexican War included the construction of the Delaware Breakwater and the construction of lighthouses in the Delaware Bay and along the Florida Coast. In 1851 he was promoted to first lieutenant and ordered to the Great Lakes to assist with the survey of the lakes. In the spring of

1857 Meade was put in charge of the survey project and promoted to Captain (Sauers, 2003b).

Captain Meade located his headquarters and his family in Detroit. The Meades quickly became part of the growing community and developed favorable social relations there. It seemed that the people of Detroit appreciated Meade's abilities and character. Meade considered his time in Detroit pleasant and quiet (Pennypacker, 1901). Detroit's feelings toward Meade would abruptly change with the outbreak of the Civil War, when Meade refused to renew his vow of loyalty at the request of the Detroit citizenry.

The years between West Point and the Civil War were important years in the development of George Gordon Meade. He developed a reputation for dependable service. He was noted for his intelligence and scientific mind. He married into a prominent and influential family. In both his civil and military capacities, he developed the engineering skills and the understanding of topography that would be crucial to his Civil War commands.

His personal and professional development was significantly influenced by his membership in Philadelphia's elite society, his West Point experience, and his participation in the Mexican War. Throughout his life, Meade demonstrated the quiet understated ambition and concern for others typical of a Philadelphian gentleman, as well as the discipline and order required of a West Point cadet. His Mexican War experience cemented the West Point beliefs that war should be left to professionally trained soldiers and that politics has no place in war. These life

experiences formed Meade's character, values and beliefs, all key elements of good work.

The Civil War

The surrender of Fort Sumter in April of 1861 signaled the beginning of the Civil War and began a new chapter in the life of George Gordon Meade. He would experience the highs and lows of command as no other in that conflict. To this day there is no consensus about Meade's performance as the commanding General of the Army of the Potomac, a position to which he would reluctantly ascend.

The frenzy that followed the opening of the war resulted in the officials of Detroit demanding that all army officers and their subordinates renew their oath of allegiance in a public meeting. Meade urged his staff to refuse to do so and on April 20, the prescribed day, Meade was notably absent (Sauers, 2003a). For Meade, the decision was one of duty. He served the United States, not the citizens of Detroit (Cleaves, 1960). He and his officers penned a letter to Washington officials stating that they would renew their oath if the War Office in Washington requested it (Detroit Free Press, April 21, 1861 in Cleaves, 1960). Unfortunately for Meade, two of his men left to fight for the South. Senator Zachariah Chandler of Michigan learned of the event and was harshly critical of Meade's refusal to renew his oath (Cleaves, 1960). He would become Meade's bitterest enemy (Meade, 1913/1994) and would be at the heart of the United States Congress' Committee on the Conduct of War's (CCW) attempt to dislodge Meade as the commander of the Army of the Potomac (Hyde, 2003).

Although not immediately called upon, Captain Meade was eventually commissioned as a brigadier general in the volunteer army on August 31, 1861 (Cleaves, 1960). He would soon begin to accumulate the experience and recognition that would lead to his command of the Army of the Potomac in the summer of 1863. Meade was assigned by General McClellan, commander of the Army of the Potomac, to McCall's division, known as the Pennsylvania Reserve. Meade's Second Brigade saw its first action in the Union defeat at Gaines Mills on June 27, 1862.

On June 29, Meade was wounded in the Battle of Glendale, another Union defeat. His brigade was covering Long Bridge Road, protecting McClellan's retreat to Harrison Landing (Parker2005). During an assault from the forces of A. P. Hill and Longstreet, Meade was struck twice by musket fire, once in the wrist and once by a ball which entered above his right hip, exited near his spine, and grazed his liver. His injuries required him to convalesce at home until August, when he returned to active duty (Sauers, 2003a).

Upon returning to duty, Meade found that his good friend, John Reynolds, had been assigned command of the division. Meade was assigned to command the First Brigade, which he led at the Second Battle of Manassas. He assumed command of the division shortly before the Battle of South Mountain when Reynolds was detached to an emergency command of the Pennsylvania militia. Pennsylvania governor Andrew Curtin had lobbied for either Reynolds or Meade to train a newly organized Pennsylvania militia. When General Hooker was injured at Antietam, McClellan temporarily placed Meade in command of the First

Corps, even though Meade was junior in rank to General Ricketts. Meade believed that this assignment was due to the urgings of Hooker. Reynolds returned to duty in October and assumed corps command and Meade returned to division command. Meade did not have the opportunity to lead the corps in battle, but the experience increased Meade's desire for promotion. Late in November, Meade was promoted to major general (Sauers, 2003a).

On December 13, 1862, Meade's division made the main assault on the Confederate lines at Fredericksburg. General Burnside, commanding the Army of the Potomac, ordered an attack on Lee's right, but allowed General Franklin some discretion. Franklin was ordered to use "at least" one division to launch an attack on A. P. Hill's formidable line. Franklin gave the assignment to Reynolds, who, with Meade, objected. Meade asserted that the attack, which required a later attack on Lee's left, was like the disastrous piecemeal assault at Antietam. Franklin eventually silenced both generals by telling them that this was General Burnside's order. Here we see two traits that characterized George Meade. He followed orders without fail or hesitation and always protected his men from unreasonable risks in battle. Meade's division performed well, carrying the field and driving the enemy back. But, General Gibbon's troops were held up in a patch of woods and could not provide support. Even though there were 50,000 unengaged troops, neither Franklin nor Burnside sent troops to support Meade's division. Having received no support, they eventually had to fall back, suffering heavy casualties in the process (Wert, 2005).

General Burnside was impressed with Meade's command in spite of the serious Union defeat, a fact that would soon benefit Meade. Meade felt he had been slighted when Burnside reorganized the army because he gave Dan Butterfield the Fifth Corps, even though Meade was senior. Meade decided to go to Burnside to request that the situation be rectified. Trying to follow the chain of command, Meade first informed General Hooker. Hooker was in command of the Central Grand Division that included Butterfield's Fifth Corps. Meade, at the time, was a division commander in John Reynolds' First Corps. Hooker was unresponsive, probably because he favored Butterfield. Burnside had tried to assign his generals strictly based on seniority to avoid the impact of politics, but simply erred in this situation, telling Meade he was unaware that Meade was senior to Butterfield. He promised to rectify the situation at some point (Taaffe, 2006).

On December 23, ten days after Meade's performance at Fredericksburg, Burnside appointed Meade to command of the Fifth Corps, replacing General Daniel Butterfield. Meade had just been promoted to major general of volunteers on November 29. Burnside would have made the change sooner, but General Hooker objected. Hooker agreed that Meade was a capable fighter, but felt that Butterfield had performed well enough to keep the command. Hooker also objected to changing commanders in the middle of a campaign. However, Burnside, General-in-chief Halleck, and Secretary of War Stanton believed that Meade was more qualified than Butterfield. Butterfield was cordial at the time, even inviting Meade to join him for Christmas dinner, but Butterfield would prove

to be one of Meade's severest critics throughout the war (Taaffe, 2006). He would join Dan Sickles in insisting that Meade wanted to retreat from Gettysburg on the second day (Sauers, 2003b). The tension between Meade and Butterfield would surface again when Hooker received command of the army and then again when Meade replaced Hooker.

On January 26, 1863, President Lincoln replaced General Burnside with General Hooker. Under Hooker, Meade led the Fifth Corps through the Chancellorsville campaign, another Confederate victory. During the campaign, Hooker had called his corps commanders together to decide if they should fight or retreat. Generals Howard, Meade, Slocum and Reynolds voted to fight while Sickles and Couch voted to retreat. Upon hearing the vote, Hooker said he had already decided to retreat (Sauers, 2003a).

The press quickly became critical of Hooker and reported that four generals had voted to fight. Hooker denied the report, saying that Meade and Reynolds had not spoken in favor of an attack, that they had stated only that it was impossible to retreat. Meade was angered by Hooker's misrepresentation and the situation inflamed a previously small feud between Hooker and Meade. Meade had told Pennsylvania governor Andrew Curtin that while he liked Hooker, Hooker had indeed missed an opportunity for victory at Chancellorsville. Word got back to Hooker, who confronted Meade. Although apparently resolved between the two, the relationship was deteriorating (Sauers, 2003a).

General Couch approached Meade to join with him and others to request Hooker's removal from command, but Meade declined. Meade did, however, poll

the generals who attended the war council as to their recollection of his vote. All recalled that Meade had voted in favor of attack, except Sickles, who said that Meade later changed his vote in favor of retreat. Meade kept the results private, but Sickles had his reply printed in the *Herald*. Meade had clearly made some enemies during his rise through the ranks, but that did not deter Lincoln from appointing Meade as the commanding General of the Army of the Potomac, replacing Hooker on June 28, 1863 (Sauers, 2003a).

Meade had not sought the position and objected several times when Colonel Hardie of the War Office delivered the orders placing Meade in command. Meade tried to defer to Reynolds, who did not want the position, and requested a conversation with General Halleck. Hardie informed him that his concerns had previously been considered and that his assignment was an order, not a request. Thus, early on the morning of June 28, 1863, Hardie and Meade went to see Hooker and deliver the news. Meade and Hardie conferred with Butterfield, now Hooker's Chief of Staff, and Hooker. Dismayed by the way the troops were scattered, Meade penned a response to Halleck (Cleaves, 1960).

Meade's message accepted command as ordered, noting that it was an unexpected situation. He went on to state that he was generally unaware of the condition of the troops and uncertain of Lee's position and would, therefore, move toward the Susquehanna while protecting Washington and Baltimore (Cleaves, 1960).

General Meade had not sought command of the Army of Potomac, but accepted it as a matter of duty. He had previously written to his wife that

command of the army was not something to be sought and that command would probably result in the demise of a general's reputation rather than enhancing it (Meade, 1913/1994). His words would be more prophetic than he could know.

Halleck's order to Meade contained specific instructions. Meade was to protect Washington and Baltimore at all costs while trying to locate and defeat Lee's army. He was also given license to use his officers as he saw fit, removing and assigning them according to his judgment, regardless of the seniority of such officers (Cleaves, 1960). Meade would use this authority at the onset of the Battle of Gettysburg.

Lee's army was on the move in Pennsylvania, someplace between the Cumberland and Susquehanna Valleys. Meade immediately sent Reynolds and the Sixth Corps toward Manchester to guard his right flank while concentrating the rest of the army near Fredericksburg. Meade's strategy was to force Lee to turn back and engage in battle. On June 30 Meade issued what has become known as the Pipe Creek circular. In it he outlined his plans for the Army to fall back to Pipe Creek if it contacted the Confederates, having determined that this position would favor the Union in a battle. This circular would later be used to support Sickles' and Butterfield's claim that Meade never intended to fight at Gettysburg and wanted to retreat on the first day of the battle. However, Meade received word that Buford's troops had encountered the Confederate Army at Gettysburg on July 1. Based on Reynold's assessment that Gettysburg was good ground, Meade hurried his troops to engage Lee's army (Coddington, 1968),

negating the Pipe Creek plan. What ensued on July 1, 2 and 3, 1863 was the bloodiest battle of the Civil War.

Meade performed exceptionally well in organizing and moving his troops to the field of battle. He was at his tactical best at Gettysburg where he skillfully moved troops to where they were most needed and successfully repelled all of Lee's attacks. It was the first time that a Union general had defeated Lee. Lee was forced to retreat to Virginia and never again fought on Union soil (Coddington, 1968). Although Gettysburg was a Union victory, losses were heavy on both sides. Union casualties numbered over 23,000 while estimates of Confederate losses range from 20,000 to 28,000 men (Andrade, 2004).

Somners (2009) claims that Meade, for his brilliance at Gettysburg, deserves to be considered one of the greatest commanders of all time. He also asserts that it was Meade's only shining moment and that he would not have won the war for the Union. But in many ways, Gettysburg would prove to be the bane of General Meade.

Many of the dilemmas and controversies associated with Meade have their roots in the Gettysburg campaign. General Dan Sickles would claim that he was the hero of Gettysburg, not Meade. He and General Dan Butterfield, Meade's Chief of Staff at the time, would claim that Meade had issued orders to retreat to Pipe Creek and that he was unwilling to engage Lee in combat. The claims of the politically motivated Sickles and Butterfield would eventually lead to the first investigation of Meade by CCW. Sickles would continue his attacks on Meade for his entire life, even after Meade's death in 1872 (Sauers, 2003b).

President Lincoln would quickly criticize Meade for his failure to pursue, attack, and destroy the Confederate Army. He erroneously felt that Meade moved too cautiously, merely wanted to move Lee into Virginia, and did not want to engage the Confederates in another battle. Lincoln lost confidence in Meade and never changed his opinion about him (Coddington, 1968).

However, Meade did actively pursue Lee with the intent to engage him in battle (Meade, 1913/1994). Robert E. Lee withdrew his troops from Gettysburg in the evening of July 4, 1863. Meade immediately sent General Pleasanton's cavalry to locate and attack Lee's trains, while moving his corps along three different routes that were parallel to Lee's route. It was Meade's intention to engage Lee before he could return to Maryland. However, Meade would have to take a longer route than Lee in order to stay between Lee and the capital (Coddington, 1968).

On July 12, Lee was fortifying his position at Williamsport. Unable to cross the rain-swollen Potomac, he prepared to receive an attack. Meade called a meeting of his corps commanders and outlined his plan for attack, but the majority of his commanders opposed the plan, largely because they had little information about the enemy's position. Meade deferred to his commanders and reconnoitered the enemy positions himself the next day. Confident with his decision to attack, he ordered the entire army to prepare for an attack on July 14. However, as General Wright and the Sixth Corp advanced toward the enemy position on the morning of July 14, they found it abandoned. During the night, Lee withdrew his forces over a recently completed pontoon bridge that spanned

the receding Potomac. Upon examining the abandoned enemy positions, Generals Meade, Sedgwick, Wainwright, and Hunt agreed that the Union had avoided possible disaster, but critics would disagree. Meade was sharply criticized for allowing Lee to escape and Lincoln became even more dissatisfied with his commander (Coddington, 1968).

Meade pursued Lee to the banks of the Rappahannock River. Late in July, the administration detached troops from the Army of the Potomac to squelch anti-draft riots in New York City and also sent troops to South Carolina. Along with expiring enlistments, these acts served to further deplete the size of the army, already suffering from the heavy losses at Gettysburg (Coddington, 1968).

In September Lee sent General Longstreet and two divisions to Tennessee to assist General Bragg. Arriving just in time, Longstreet and Bragg were able to defeat General Rosecranz and the Union army in the Battle of Chickamauga, forcing the Union back to Chattanooga. Hearing of the thinning of Lee's army, Meade was planning an attack when Washington ordered Meade to send both the Eleventh and Twelfth Corps to assist Rosecranz. It was not until October that the New York troops returned and new enlistees began to appear in camp (Sauer, 2003a).

Learning that Meade was weakened by the departure of two corps, Lee tried to flank Meade near Bristoe Station on October 14. When A. P. Hill's Confederate Third Corps encountered Sykes' Union Fifth Corp, Warren's Second Corp fell upon the battle, resulting in serious casualties to the Confederates. Meade decided to entrench at Centerville and receive Lee's attack. However,

Lee decided that Meade's position was too strong and called off the attack, retreating to the Rappahannock. Meade pursued and by October 20, the Union army was again camped at Warrenton. Even though Meade had out maneuvered Lee and dealt him a blow, Meade was criticized for again not achieving a significant victory (Rafuse, 2003).

Lee had destroyed miles of the Orange and Alexandria Railroad during the Bristoe Station Campaign. The railroad was the main source of logistics for the Union and Meade waited until repairs were complete and his logistics secure before attempting an attack in November. Having developed a well-conceived plan to force Lee out of his river entrenchments and retreat or fight in the open, Meade launched his attack on November 26 (Luvaas, 1969).

The attack failed largely due to Major French's delay of the Third and Sixth Corps. The Union lost the opportunity of a quick strike and Lee fell back to prepared fortifications. Based on General Warren's recommendation, Meade decided to bombard Lee's position to weaken it and then to assault it from the north and south with Sedgwick's and Warren's corps. But on the morning of December 1 Warren called off the attack due to the extremely secure position of the enemy behind heavy entrenchments. Upon checking the situation for himself, Meade agreed with Warren and decided not to attack. Having lost the opportunity, Meade withdrew his forces that night and went into winter quarters at Brandy Station (Wert, 2005). Later examination proved the decision to halt the attack to be a wise one. Lee was heavily entrenched and it was obvious that the attack would have been extremely unsuccessful. This decision earned Meade the

admiration and respect of his soldiers, but Lincoln was exasperated. Meade knew that the decision would damage his reputation and possibly lead to his removal from command. But he was comfortable with the decision, refusing to needlessly sacrifice the lives of his men and endanger the survival of the Army of the Potomac (Meade, 1913/1994). "His military judgment may have been at fault ...but at least his determination not to be driven from what he thought right by any storm of popular clamor is forever admirable and to be imitated" (Bradford, 1915).

The Mine Run Campaign, as it was called, would become another point of criticism for Meade. Meade's critics would claim it was one more example of a West Point general being unwilling to fight (Rafuse, 2003). On March 9, 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant was commissioned as the first lieutenant general since George Washington. Operationally, he was the commander of all the Union armies and replaced General Halleck in that capacity. Meade served as the commander of the Army of the Potomac until the end of the Civil War. However, when General Grant assumed command of all the armies of the Union, he decided to locate his headquarters in the field with the Army of the Potomac.

Grant eventually overshadowed Meade. During the Virginia campaign Grant gradually assumed control of the Army of the Potomac and it is Grant, not Meade, who is given credit for leading the Union defeat of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia and ending the war. Meade's relationship with Grant has been the subject of much historical discussion. General Meade, the dutiful soldier, unconditionally supported Grant. Meade, the man, gradually became disheartened with Grant to the point that he eventually wrote to his wife "I give up

Grant" (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 276), even though he always had Grant's support (Grant, 1885/2002).

One incident during the Virginia Campaign demonstrated Grant's support. On July 30, 1864 the Battle of the Crater, occurring during the siege of Petersburg, resulted in a disastrous defeat of the Union Army. A regiment of Pennsylvania miners from Burnside's IX Corps had constructed a tunnel from the Union lines to a salient of the Confederate entrenchments. The end of the mine had been packed with explosives. The Union plan was to blow a hole in the Confederate lines, rush the breach, and divide the Confederate defenses. The blast went off according to plan but the ensuing confusion caused many federal troops to be trapped in a huge crater that resulted from the blast. The Union was unable to support the troops that had reached the breach and the result was a stunning Confederate victory. Union forces suffered 3,800 casualties while the Confederates only suffered 1,500 (Slotkin, 2009).

General Burnside mismanaged the use of his troops after the explosion and continued to assault the Confederate lines when the futility of continuing to pour troops into the crater was obvious to all others. General Meade ordered a court of inquiry, which eventually resulted in Burnside's dismissal for his role in the debacle. The politically connected Burnside was successful in obtaining a CCW investigation that eventually blamed Meade for the failure. In addition, Meade had ordered Burnside not to use specially trained black troops to lead the assault. This decision was highly criticized by Northern abolitionists (Slotkin, 2009). However, General Grant fully supported Meade and in his memoirs

reiterated his unconditional support for General Meade's role in this incident (Grant, 1885/2002).

Back to Philadelphia

After the war Meade remained in the Army, serving in several regional administrative positions. His last taste of military action was in May of 1866 when he, at Grant's request, quelled the Finian invasion of Canada (Sauers, 2003a). He had become the nation's fourth highest-ranking Army officer, but the controversies and misinformation surrounding his service prevented his widespread recognition in his own time and beyond (Haggerty, 2002). The exception was in Philadelphia, where he became "the idol of Philadelphia" because he "saved Philadelphia" (New York Evangelist, 1872, p. 1).

General George Gordon Meade died of pneumonia at his home in Philadelphia on November 6, 1872. Pallbearers for his funeral included Generals Sheridan, Humphreys, Parke and Wright. President Grant and General Sherman attended as well. The epitaph on General Meade's tombstone is as unassuming and straightforwardly true as was the man. It simply states; "He did his work bravely and is at rest" (Sauers, 2003a, p.108).

Criticisms of Meade

General Meade's generalship was challenged almost from the beginning. As previously discussed, President Lincoln found fault with Meade's decision not to initiate an offensive against Lee on July 4. He found great fault with Meade's congratulatory note to the troops. Lincoln interpreted Meade's statement that the enemy had been driven from the North as indicative of Meade's intent to

shepherd Lee back to Confederate soil and of his desire to avoid engaging Lee in battle (Williams, 1952).

Meade's critics have claimed that Meade did not want to fight at Gettysburg, preferring the Pipe Creek location. They claim that he wanted to retreat from Gettysburg, even before he got to Gettysburg and then again, even after the success of the first two days' battles. They also have claimed that Meade had sufficient troops to pursue and engage Lee after Gettysburg and that Meade was not sufficiently aggressive in pursuing Lee (Coddington, 1961). Meade has been criticized for not attacking Lee at Williamsport and again at Mine Run, allowing the Army of Virginia to avoid battle both times (Haggerty, 2002). However, for each of these criticisms, there are those who have a different view.

The Meade-Sickles Controversy

General Dan Sickles spent his entire life declaring that he had forced the battle at Gettysburg and that Meade had intended to retreat. He was supported by General Butterfield, who claimed that Meade had ordered him to prepare a retreat order. Butterfield and Sickles were close friends and neither was trusted by Meade (Meade, 1913/1994). Sickles, a New York politician, used his political connections to encourage the CCW to investigate Meade's conduct at Gettysburg, which it eventually did. The committee did not succeed in removing Meade from command as some members hoped, but they did significant damage to Meade's reputation (Sauers, 2003b).

Sickles was the typical political general. A politician who had no military training or experience, he had received his commission due to his assistance in recruiting a regiment from New York. His opinion of Meade was likely unfavorable long before Gettysburg. Generals Hooker, Sickles and Butterfield formed a triumvirate of friends at the head of the Army of the Potomac under Hooker, who Meade replaced. Meade had previously been given command of the Fifth Corp by then commanding General Burnside, displacing Butterfield, and Sickles thought that Meade was a McClellanite and had gained his promotion at the expense of their friend, General Hooker (Sauers, 2003b).

Sickles' march to Gettysburg certainly did not enhance his opinion of General Meade. Meade criticized Sickles before the battle at Gettysburg. On June 29, Meade chastised Sickles because his train was blocking the progress of the Twelfth Corps. On June 30, Sickles was reprimanded for his corps' slow movement and lack of progress. Sickles finally arrived on the battlefield on the evening of July 1.

Matters did not improve for Sickles once he arrived on the battlefield. On the morning of July 2, Sickles was ordered to have his corps occupy the ground that General Geary's division had previously occupied, extending from Hancock's Second Corps' left to Little Round Top. Geary, after an extended wait for Sickles, removed his men from the field. Sickles sent word to Meade that he was unclear of his orders, and eventually rode to see Meade. Meade repeated the orders, but Sickles ignored them. He felt that the ground to Hancock's left was too low and eventually ordered his men forward to what is now known as the Peach Orchard,

forming a salient, uncovering Little Round Top, and losing contact with Hancock's line. Eventually General Meade rode to inspect Sickles' position. Upon seeing the salient, Meade immediately ordered Sickles back to the intended line, but as the two were talking, Longstreet's troops opened fire on the position. Knowing that a retreat was not possible, Meade ordered Sickles to remain in place while Meade quickly brought reinforcements to aid Sickles. General Warren realized that Little Round Top was uncovered and rushed troops there just in time to save the position. But for their quick action, Sickles' decision could have been disastrous to the Union (Sauers, 2003). Sickles, in a creative use of the facts, would later state that Meade must have approved of his position since he allowed him to remain (Hessler, 2009).

Sickles would eventually use variations of four arguments to defend his conduct at Gettysburg. First, he declared that he could not discern Geary's position and therefore asserted that he had no orders. Secondly, he argued that the ground he was supposed to occupy was a poor military position and the Peach Orchard was a better position. He also argued that his skirmishers had identified Confederate troops in the woods in front of the Peach Orchard and that by advancing he had prevented Longstreet's troops from flanking the Union line and saved the day for the Union. Finally, he claimed that his forward movement initiated the battle and prevented Meade from retreating. Richard Sauers (2003b) discredits each of these arguments with a detailed analysis in his book *Gettysburg: The Meade-Sickles Controversy*. Sauers states:

When I began working on the controversy in the early 1980's, I had few preconceptions about where my research would take me. By the time I was finished with my work, what I found had made me very biased in favor of General Meade's point of view.... While I could also have taken Sickles' side of the argument and defended his position, I felt the argument against doing so was too strong. (p. XI)

James Hessler (2009) is kinder to Sickles in Sickles at Gettysburg. He contends that there were reasons both for and against the forward position, and criticizes Meade for not checking on the army's left himself. Nevertheless, he agrees that Sickles did not have orders to move forward.

General Meade certainly added fuel to Sickles' animosity toward him in October of 1863. General Meade filed his official report on Gettysburg early in the month. He was restrained in his comments regarding Sickles. He did not accuse Sickles of disobeying orders, but rather that Sickles misunderstood his orders. Harsher in his opinion, General Halleck's official report stated that Sickles had misinterpreted his orders and that his forward move was nearly fatal to the army. Both reports would have rankled Sickles (Sauer, 2003b). To bear any blame whatsoever would have endangered Sickles military career and all of the honor and fame that went with it, something that Sickles' ego could not bear (Hyde, 2003).

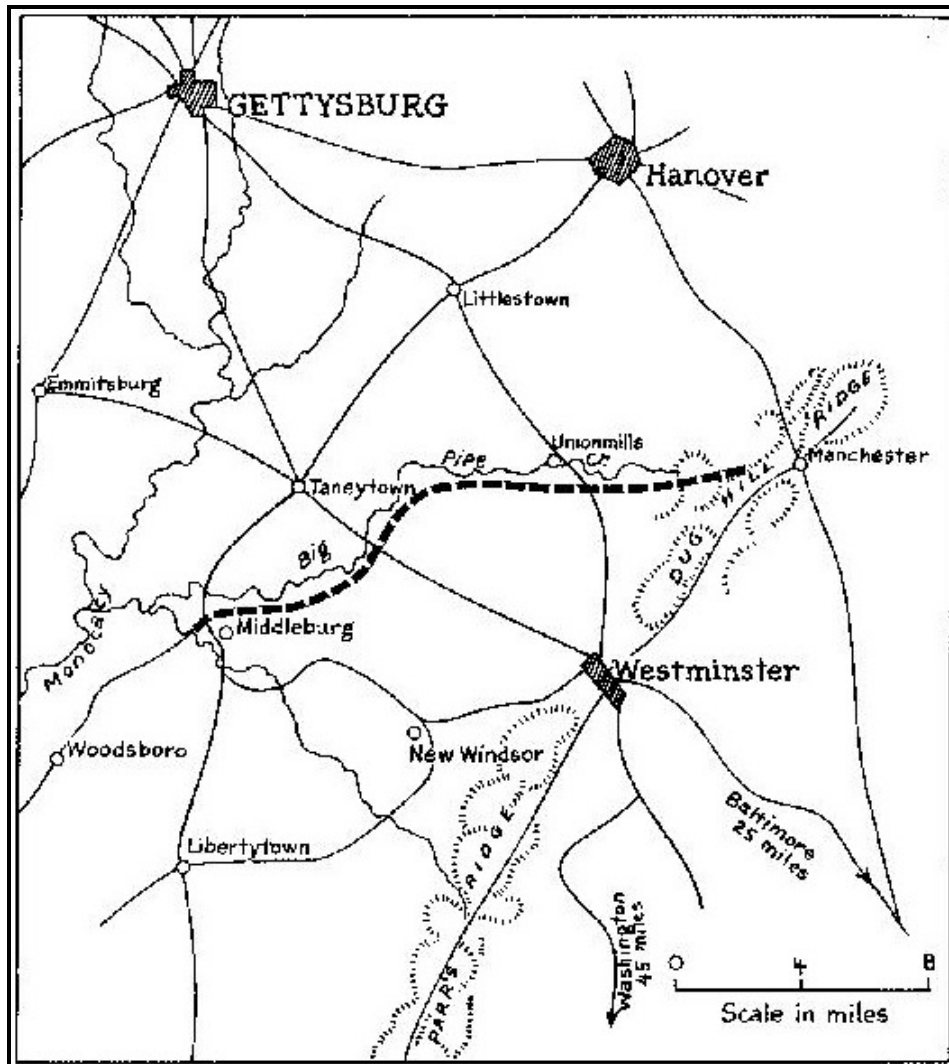


Figure 3. Proposed Pipe Creek position.

(Reprinted with the permission of Stackpole Books from *They Met at Gettysburg*, E. Stackpole, 1956)

Meade dealt Sickles another blow in October. Sickles was injured during the battle of the second day at Gettysburg, suffering a wound that required the amputation of his leg. On October 18, 1863 Sickles, convalesced from the amputation of his leg, asked Meade to return him to command. Meade wisely refused, sighting Sickles' disability (Sauers, 2003). Graciously, Meade did allow Sickles to bid farewell to his former troops (Cleaves, 1960).

The Committee on the Conduct of War

Sickles used his political connections to put forth his version of Gettysburg while he was recuperating from his wound in Washington. Among those sympathetic to Sickles were members of the CCW. In February of 1864 the committee launched an investigation into Meade's conduct at Gettysburg. The first witness would be Major General Daniel Sickles.

The CCW, the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War, was created by both the House and Senate of the United States Congress in December of 1861. Consisting of three senators and four representatives, the committee was empowered to look into any aspect of the war. Radical Republicans controlled the CCW. The Radical Republicans generally had a deep disdain for Democrats, whom they held responsible for the war. They also distrusted West Point graduates, claiming that West Point was a breeding ground of traitorous beliefs. They also objected to Lincoln's conciliatory approach to the South (Hyde, 2003).

During the time of the Meade hearings in 1864, the Senate's representatives were committee chair Benjamin Wade, Zachariah Chandler and Benjamin Harding. Wade and Chandler were Radical Republicans, while Harding was considered to be a war Democrat, closely aligned with the Republican view of the war. Wade and Chandler dominated the hearings, while Harding rarely attended. Chandler was Meade's nemesis from Detroit and was strongly anti-Meade, regardless of politics (Hyde, 2003). The House's representatives were chosen by Speaker Galsuha Grow, a close friend of Wade's. George Julian was probably the most radical of the committee members. Daniel Gooch was critical

of the Lincoln administration and military leadership but did not always back the radicals. Moses Odell was a war Democrat and Benjamin Loan, a Republican, rounded out the committee (Hyde, 2003).

Unknown to General Meade, the committee had four objectives in conducting the Meade hearings. Their first objective was to return Hooker to command. To do this the committee sought to demonstrate that Meade had followed Hooker's plan at Gettysburg, had no plan of his own, and therefore, the victory belonged to Hooker, not Meade. Second, the committee wanted to demonstrate that Meade had wanted to retreat to Pipe Creek and not fight at Gettysburg. Third, the committee wanted to show that when Meade wanted to retreat on July 2, only General Sickles' action prevented the retreat. Finally, the committee intended to indicate that Meade failed to follow and destroy Lee's army and allowed Lee to escape at Williamsport (Hessler, 2009).

Hessler (2009) asserts that Dan Sickles was not the cause of the CCW's investigation of Meade and that Meade would have been investigated without Sickles' involvement. However, Sickles clearly did decide to cooperate and supplied the committee with information it might not otherwise have possessed. Sickles' willingness to be involved may have been due to animosity toward Meade or it may have been due to Sickles' desire to be back in the spotlight of politicians and the newspapers. Sickles may also have been protecting himself by steering the committee away from his actions at Gettysburg or he may have been hoping to regain his command if Hooker replaced Meade. Whatever his motivation, Dan Sickles was the first to testify at the Meade hearings.

Sickles' testimony before the committee was followed by testimony damaging to Meade from General Doubleday and General Howe. After hearing these three testimonies, Wade and Chandler unsuccessfully approached President Lincoln, requesting that the President remove Meade from command. Although they apparently would accept any other commander, they supported Hooker's reinstatement (Sauers, 2003).

In Washington to discuss the reorganization of the Army of the Potomac and unaware of the hearings, General Meade was summoned to appear before the committee on March 5, 1864. Only Senator Wade attended and he assured Meade that the committee was merely compiling a history of the Battle of Gettysburg (Hyde, 2003). Meade gave a detailed accounting of the Battle of Gettysburg as well as his rationale for decisions. His testimony was based on his recollections since he did not have the benefit of preparation that an advance notice would have facilitated. Meade's testimony was followed by more damaging testimony by Generals Pleasanton and Birney. Meade again testified on March 11, this time bringing copies of his orders of June 30 and July 31 to refute claims that he did not wish to fight and wanted to retreat from Gettysburg (Sauers, 2003).

After Meade's testimony, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton relayed to the General that Senator Wade was satisfied with Meade's explanation of the charges against him. Meade also discovered that committee members Harding, Gooch and Odell looked favorably upon Meade's testimony. In the end, the committee was unsuccessful in having Meade removed from command, but the

hearings tarnished Meade's reputation (Sears, S. 2005). The final report of the committee was published at the war's end and was biased against Meade. It concluded that Meade followed Hooker's plan at Gettysburg, that Major Pleasanton had chosen the battlefield, that the outbreak of hostilities initiated by Sickles' move prevented a retreat, that Meade missed an opportunity by not counter-attacking on July 3, that the pursuit of Lee after the battle was insufficient, and that Meade again missed opportunities at Williamsport, Briscoe Station and Mine Run. While the evidence is now clear that these findings are erroneous, at the time they strongly influenced opinion about Meade.

Historicus

Meade may have quieted the CCW, but his troubles were not over. The day after his second appearance before the CCW, an article appeared in the New York Herald, penned by a writer claiming to be an eyewitness to the Battle of Gettysburg, and using the pseudonym "Historicus". The article put forth a version of the events at Gettysburg that matched Sickles' testimony before the CCW. It also charged the General Barnes' division of the Fifth Corps, Meade's former corps, with giving way and lying down in order to allow General Zook's brigade of the Second Corps to advance and hold the position. The article ended by condemning Meade's pursuit of Lee and failure to attack at Williamsport (Sauers, 2003b).

Historicus' article appeared on March 12, and rebuttals were printed shortly thereafter. The first, by "Another Eye-Witness", among other things, described how Sickles had detached his corps from the Union line, requiring the

Second and Fifth Corps to fill the gaps on both of The Third Corps flanks. He concluded that there was no reasonable defense for Sickles movements. On March 18, another rebuttal, penned by “A Staff Officer of the Fifth Corps” took issue with seven points made by Historicus. On March 21, the Herald printed a response from General Barnes. Barnes simply stated that everything regarding his division was “pure invention” (Sauers, 2003b), p. 61), and there was not a word of truth in Historicus’ account (Sauers, 2003b).

Historicus replied to his challengers in another article in the Herald on April 4. He claimed that everything in his previous letter was true. He ended his response with an assault on Meade, stating that the testimony by several officers before the CCW was so damaging as to require his removal from command. The identity of Historicus has never been proved, but Meade felt that it was certainly Dan Sickles. Up until Historicus’ letter, Meade had remained quiet, waiting for the committee’s report. But Meade did respond to the letter by asking General Halleck to investigate the matter to see if Historicus might be Sickles. If so, he wished there to be a court of inquiry to set the record straight. Halleck counseled Meade to not pursue the inquiry, that Sickles probably was the author, and that Sickles would welcome a battle in the New York newspapers, given his close ties to them. Meade disagreed, but deferred to Halleck’s suggestion (Sauers, 2003b).

Hessler (2009) makes a compelling argument that it is most probable that Sickles was Historicus. He notes that Historicus is everywhere that Sickles is and is even privy to his conversations. He is not at Headquarters, and anything

outside of Sickles direct experience is not of concern to Historicus. Most importantly, Historicus' account of Gettysburg mirrors every point of Sickles' testimony to the CCW. "The Historicus letters relay Sickles' thoughts, motives, and agenda...There is virtually no doubt that Dan Sickles was Historicus (p. 287).

Sickles would continue his assault on Meade and seek to have his version of the events at Gettysburg accepted for his entire life and long after Meade's death. He never missed an opportunity at a veterans' gathering to reiterate his case (Sauers, 2003b). While Meade never made a public comment about any of the criticisms levied upon him, *The Life and Letters of General George Gordon Meade* (1913/1994) was his son's attempt to respond for his father and set the record straight.

Partisans for both Sickles and Meade have entered the debate over the years, but their input should be viewed with caution due to the emotion and bias associated with their position (Coddington, 1961). Hessler (2009) notes, "The feud between Sickles, Meade, and their partisans...added a considerable quantity of primary material (often inaccurate and self-serving) to the Gettysburg historical record" (pp. vii-viii).

Gettysburg and Lee's Retreat

Meade has been both praised and criticized for his command performance at Gettysburg. Historian T. Harry Williams (1952) submits that Meade performed well tactically at Gettysburg, but that Meade lacked any strategy or aggression, showing no desire to fight an offensive battle. He asserts that Meade did not understand that the destruction of the enemy's army was the purpose at hand

and that Meade seemed to have no purpose. Meade's decision not to attack Lee on July 4 and to wait a full day after Lee departed the field before pursuing Lee is used to support claims that Meade was timid and fearful (Coddington, 1961).

Author Bruce Catton (1952) also lauds Meade's performance at Gettysburg, but submits that it was the fighting men of the Army of the Potomac who had claimed the victory. Meade had not made a mistake that would lose the battle and he gave the men the chance to win. But Catton also portrays Meade as overly cautious and perfectly content to let Lee return to Virginia. Catton and Williams represent the historical perspective that Meade was overly cautious, even timid, and missed an opportunity to end the war.

Some historians differ in their perspective. Coddington (1961) feels that there is at least the possibility that Meade was correct in cautiously pursuing Lee. He notes that after Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac needed fresh troops and reorganization. Reynolds, Hancock, Sickles and numerous other officers had been lost at Gettysburg. The casualty rate among the troops was high. In addition, Meade was unsure of Lee's intent and the size of his army on July 4. In spite of these difficulties, Meade did send his cavalry to harass Lee's trains and he had intended for Sedgwick's corps to force the end of Lee's train to turn and fight. However, Butterfield misinterpreted Meade's intent and conveyed to Sedgwick that Meade wanted to avoid a battle. Coddington concludes, "All in all, on July 4 Lee's army, instead of being ripe for the plucking, still had the determination and capacity to punish severely, if not wreck any incautious or unskillful foe who might pursue it" (p. 536).

President Lincoln was of a different opinion. He thought that Lee's army could and should be attacked and defeated, thus ending the war. He earnestly believed that Meade was moving too slowly and cautiously in his pursuit of Lee's army (Burlingame, M. & Ettlinger, J. (Eds.). (1997). At one point he told Meade that after Gettysburg Meade reminded him of an old woman shooin' her geese across a river (Williams, 1952).

Wittenberg, Petruzzi, & Nugent (2008) disagree with the popular view that the retreat from Gettysburg was simply a matter of Lee running to the Potomac with Meade cautiously following, unwilling to engage Lee, and simply "shooin'" him back across the Potomac. They describe a series of battles and skirmishes that was constant from July 4 until July 14 when Lee did manage to cross the Potomac. In their well-researched book, *One Continuous Fight*, they detail the "twenty-two engagements, skirmishes, and battles" (p. 343) that occurred during the retreat. The Army of the Potomac suffered 1,000 more casualties during these ten days while the Army of Northern Virginia suffered 5,000. They conclude that both Lee and Meade maneuvered their army well and that both made the correct decisions.

While it is possible that Meade should have struck a day earlier at Williamsport, his caution was not unfounded. Meade correctly believed that Lee had received a supply of ammunition and that the Confederate army was not demoralized or unable to fight. Meade's army was fatigued, battle weary and short on ammunition. Meade called a meeting with his corps commanders on the night of July 12. He outlined his plans to attack on the next morning, but most of

his commanders were reluctant to do so, being unsure of the position of the enemy (Wittenburg, Petruzzi & Nugent, 2008).

The skill of the corps commanders was an essential ingredient in the success of the Army of the Potomac. Their ability to handle the troops and to cooperate with each other was crucial, as had been demonstrated repeatedly when commanders failed to support other corps (Taffe, 2006). As previously noted, Meade had the distinct disadvantage of having lost veteran corps commanders at Gettysburg (Wittenburg, Petruzzi, and Nugent, 2008). Meade's two most capable and trusted officers were lost to the army, Reynolds being killed and Hancock severely wounded. Even Sickles, despite his mistakes at Gettysburg, was capable and willing to fight (Hessler, 2009). As the army set out from Gettysburg, only General Slocum, who had been in command of the Twelfth Corps for nine months, had more than six months experience. Three corps commanders had been in command for less than a week. Thus, it is reasonable that Meade would have little confidence in his corps commanders when they were disinclined to fight (Wittenburg, et al., 2008). Shortly after Lee's crossing of the Potomac, Meade expressed concern about the quality and ability of his subordinate officers, noting that Reynolds and Hancock were not easily replaced (Meade, 1913/1994). In the end, examination of Lee's fortifications convinced the officers of the Army of the Potomac that an attack would probably have been disastrous for them.

Kent Masterson Brown's (2005) *Retreat from Gettysburg* provides a detailed account of the logistics of the retreat. Lee had to move a huge supply

train as well as his wounded and captured soldiers. Meade had to reconnect to his supplies. His army had moved to Gettysburg without food and other supplies, leaving his men tired and hungry after their victory at Gettysburg. He also needed to protect his lines of supply while positioning the army to cover Washington, D.C.

According to Brown (2005), Lee's venture into the north was primarily a foraging maneuver designed to gather food and supplies for the Army of Virginia, supplies that were unavailable in Virginia but plentiful in the lush fields of Pennsylvania. Lee's advance had been very successful in this endeavor and he escaped with "over forty-five miles of quartermaster and subsistence trains filled with impressed stores" (p. 387). In addition, Lee had commandeered over 20,000 Pennsylvania mules and horses, 30,000 cattle, 25,000 sheep, thousands of hogs and tons of hay, grain, and flour. These supplies sustained Lee's army during the retreat and fueled its recovery in Virginia. Brown believes that Lee's success in re-supplying his army with Pennsylvania stores resulted in the restoration of the balance of power between the armies of Lee and Meade. Because of this, Brown believes that Gettysburg cannot be considered as a turning point in the war.

Brown may be right, but it was Lee's escape that concerned and deeply dismayed President Lincoln (Williams, 1952). John Hay, one of Lincoln's secretaries, recalls Lincoln's words. "We had them within our grasp. We only had to stretch forth our hands and they were ours. And nothing I could say or do could make the Army move" (Burlingame, M. & Ettlinger, J. (Eds.). (1997). The stalemate between Meade and Lee during the fall did nothing to improve

Lincoln's opinion or mood. He eventually looked to Ulysses S. Grant for a solution.

Grant, Sheridan, and Meade

On March 1, 1864, Ulysses S. Grant was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant General and given command of all the Union armies, replacing General Halleck as the General in Chief. Halleck was given the newly created position of Chief of Staff and served as the conduit for communications between Lincoln and Grant (Taffe, 2006).

If Grant had decided to replace General Meade, he changed his mind. Although several reasons have been put forth, it is unclear precisely why he retained Meade. Grant had decided to locate his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. From there he could manage the pressures of Washington but not be tied to them. In addition, he felt that the Army of Northern Virginia was the biggest threat to the Union and that the Union desperately needed a decisive victory in the East. Grant's presence made him, in effect, the strategic commander of the Army of the Potomac and Meade as its tactical commander (Williams, 1952).

Grant talked with General Meade at Brandy Station on March 10. Accompanying him was General William "Baldy" Smith, who was rumored to be in line for Meade's position (Cleaves, 1960). Grant and Meade had a cordial conversation during which General Meade offered to step down if Grant so desired (Meade, 1913). Grant was impressed with Meade's patriotism and sincerity and immediately decided to retain Meade (Cleaves, 1960). Grant later

wrote that General Meade had unselfishly taken the position that the task at hand was so important that no one person's feelings or beliefs should hinder the proper placement of personnel in all positions (Rafuse, 2003). Grant also was aware that imposing a Western general on the Army of the Potomac might be demoralizing to the troops (Williams, 1952). Grant knew that he could not command any army himself and still meet his obligations to all the armies. Grant also knew that General Meade knew the organization and officers of the army very well and was the best person to handle it on a daily basis (Taffe, 2006). Finally, the army was about to start a new campaign and a new commander would have hindered staff and command functions (Grant, U. S., and Thomsen, B. (Ed.). (1885/2002).

Grant would grow to appreciate Meade's ability as a commander. He once stated that Meade and Sherman were the two men best fit to command large armies (Williams, 1952). Meade and Grant never became great friends but they did respect each other and managed to make their unusual command relationship work. Meade, the dutiful soldier, followed Grant's orders without hesitation. Grant understood the position that he put Meade in and was sensitive to Meade's feelings. Generally, Grant gave all orders through Meade. However, as time went on, Grant took more control of the tactics of his strategy and reduced Meade to acting as a chief of staff (Taffe, 2006).

Grant's increased control became necessary because of the two Generals' differing philosophies of how to conduct war. Meade, as well as the officers of his army, felt that victory was obtained through a series of singular,

grand battles. Grant felt that a campaign was a series of constant engagements, placing constant pressure on the enemy. Regardless of the cost in lives, Grant's approach was to forge ahead (Wert, 2007). Meade had already demonstrated his unwillingness to sacrifice lives without significant gain.

Meade had been working on a reorganization of the Army of the Potomac before Grant had arrived on the scene. In that reorganization, Alfred Pleasanton, the Union Cavalry commander, was replaced by Phillip Sheridan, based upon Grant's recommendation (Taffe, 2006). Meade and Sheridan both possessed explosive tempers, and the two would never get along well. Their disputes would eventually result in a further deterioration of Meade's command responsibilities and contribute to Meade's growing dissatisfaction with his role under Grant (Wert, 2007). The most noteworthy clash between Meade and Sheridan came during the advance to Spotsylvania.

On May 7, 1864 Grant ordered an advance toward Spotsylvania, hoping to arrive there before the Confederates. At one point, Meade encountered Sheridan's cavalry blocking the progress of the Fifth Corps. He immediately superseded Sheridan's orders and redirected the cavalry, allowing the Fifth Corps to resume its advance. On May 8, Sheridan and Meade engaged in a heated exchange. Meade blamed Sheridan's cavalry for allowing the Confederates to arrive at Spotsylvania before the Union army. Sheridan charged that if he had a free hand, he could whip J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry. Meade took the matter to General Grant, who sided with Sheridan. He ordered Meade to allow Sheridan to control his troops and pursue Stuart (Wert, 2007). For the rest of the

Spotsylvania operations, Meade simply advised Grant and then carried out Grant's orders. While he did this without hesitation or complaint, Meade's dissatisfaction was growing (Rafuse, 2003).

In late May and June, Grant realized that he needed to return some control to Meade. Major Siegel's army was defeated at New Market in the Shenandoah Valley and General Butler was defeated at City Point. Grant knew he needed more time to supervise these and other armies. He incorporated General Burnside's independent command of the Ninth Corps into Meade's command and added Baldy Smith's corps of Butler's army to the Army of the Potomac. He also allowed Meade tactical control of the battle of Cold Harbor (Rafuse, 2003).

After the Battle of Cold Harbor, Meade committed an error that still haunts him today. An article that a reporter, Edward Cropsey, wrote for the Philadelphia Inquirer enraged Meade. In it Cropsey praises Meade, stating that Meade "is entitled to great credit for the magnificent movements of the army since we left Brandy...in a word, he commands the army" (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 341). However, he concludes that on one occasion:

...during the present campaign Grant's presence saved the army, and the nation too; not that General Meade was on point to commit a blunder unwittingly, but his devotion to his country and made him loth to risk her last army on what he deemed a chance. Grant assumed the responsibility and we are still ON TO RICHMOND" (p. 341)

Meade confronted Cropsey, claiming the report to be a lie and then expelled Cropsey from the army. Meade consulted with Provost Marshal Patrick, who disliked all war correspondents and suggested the punishment. As Meade wrote the order expelling Cropsey, "Grant nodded approval" (Cleaves, 1960, p. 254). Cropsey was then ridden out of camp backwards on a mule, wearing placards that read "Libeler of the Press", and led by a trumpeter. Meade later conceded that he had made an error and should have taken the matter to the editor of the Inquirer, William Harding, who had previously helped Meade (Cleaves, 1960).

The press convened a meeting to discuss what they considered to be an injustice to Cropsey. They decided to never mention Meade's name again, unless it could be done negatively. Even reports that were signed by Meade were reported as signed by Grant. The damage to Meade's reputation was significant (Cleaves, 1960) and contributed to Meade's anonymity (Taffe, 2006). Cropsey requested to be allowed to return to the army in September and even though Meade did not like the tone of the request, he allowed the reporter to return (Meade, 1913/1994).

Eventually Meade's dissatisfaction grew to the point that he requested to be transferred to another command. When the decision to create an independent command in the Shenandoah Valley was made during the summer of 1864, Grant recommended Meade, but Lincoln refused. He felt that it would look like a demotion for Meade and would create the impression that Lincoln had bowed to political pressure. Eventually the command was given to Sheridan (Wert, 2007).

Meade was irritated by Sheridan's selection and asked Grant why he was not selected. Grant explained Lincoln's reasoning. Meade believed Grant, but felt there were other influences of which he was not informed (Meade, 1913/1994). Certainly, the fact that it was Sheridan who was appointed did not sit well with Meade.

Later in the year, Sheridan was promoted to major general by the War Department. Meade asked Grant why his promotion had not occurred when Sheridan, Hancock, and Sherman had been promoted. Grant admitted that he had withheld the paperwork, wanting Sherman to outrank Meade. But Grant had not recommended that Sheridan be promoted over Meade and campaigned vigorously to have Meade's promotion enacted. By November he had persuaded Lincoln to not only promote Meade but to date it as of August 18, allowing Meade to outrank Sheridan by two months (Taffe, 2005). Meade's nomination had occurred in May of 1864, but was delayed for political reasons, it being an election year.

Shortly after the war ended, Meade suffered what he termed as "...the most cruel and humiliating indignity that has been put upon me" (Meade, 1913/1994, vol. II, p. 275). During the reorganization of the armies, Grant gave General Halleck the newly created Military Division of the James and placed The Army of the Potomac and Meade under his command. Meade understood that Halleck was his senior and deserving of the post. But Meade felt that his service and the consideration due to him because of it was ignored and that he should

have been given a more appropriate position. He had “given up” Grant at this point (Meade, 1913/1994).

Meade again felt slighted by Grant in May of 1869. President Ulysses Grant appointed Sherman as a full General and promoted Sheridan to Lieutenant General, even though Meade was his senior in rank. Grant’s rationale was that Sheridan had been promoted to Major General before Meade. He apparently forgot that Meade’s promotion had been backdated to August to remedy an injustice to Meade (Cleaves, 1960). For Meade, the insult was great. He considered his situation to be “...the cruelest and meanest act of injustice” (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 300).

For his part, Grant maintained a positive impression of Meade throughout his life. He never entered into the Meade-Sickles controversy. In his memoirs, Grant stated:

General Meade was an officer of great merit, with drawbacks to his usefulness that were beyond his control. He had been an officer of the engineer corps before the war, and consequently had never served with troops until he was over forty-six years of age. He never had, I believe, a command of less than a brigade. He saw clearly and distinctly the position of the enemy, and the topography of the country in front of his own position. His first idea was to take advantage of the lay of the ground, sometimes without reference to the direction we wanted to move afterwards. He was subordinate to his superiors in rank to the extent that he could execute an order that changed his own plans with the same zeal

he would have displayed if the plan had been his own. He was brave and conscientious, and commanded the respect of all who knew him. He was unfortunately of a temper that would get beyond his control, at times, and make him speak to officers of high rank in the most offensive manner. No one saw fault more plainly than he himself, and no one regretted it more. This made it unpleasant at times, even in battle, for those around him to approach him even with information. In spite of this defect he was a most valuable officer and deserves a high place in the annals of this country.

(Grant, 1885/2002), pp. 499-500)

Grant's opinion of Meade, although remaining very high, had mellowed somewhat from his enthusiastic declaration that of all the men in the army Sherman and Meade were the most capable of commanding a large army (Williams, 1952).

While Meade may have been overshadowed and, as he thought, treated poorly by Grant and Sheridan during the war, both paid honor to Meade upon his death in 1872. President Grant and General Sherman attended Meade's funeral, and Lieutenant-General Sheridan served as a pallbearer (Sauers, 2003a).

Meade According to His Contemporaries

The historical record of General Meade's life and service to the nation generally does not emphasize the character of the man, but it does speak frequently of Meade's infamous temper. As has been shown, General Grant noted this "defect", but it did not detract from his general appreciation of General

Meade. Other Meade contemporaries have commented on the general's temper and character and provide insight into the nature of the man and the general.

Charles Dana (1902), an army observer for President Lincoln, minced no words in describing the impact of Meade's temper as follows:

Grant had great confidence in Meade, and was much attached to him personally; but the almost universal dislike of Meade which prevailed among officers of every rank who came in contact with him, and the difficulty of doing business with him, felt by every one except Grant himself, so greatly impaired his capacities for usefulness and rendered success under his command so doubtful that Grant seemed to be coming to the conviction that he must be relieved. I had known Meade to be a man of the worst possible temper, especially towards subordinates. I think he had not a friend in the whole army. (pp. 226-227)

Meade did indeed have friends in the army, but the war was taking its toll on him. Dana references a time when Meade had become particularly testy, the early part of 1865. In February, Meade's young son died. Meade only had three days of leave to be with his family before the War department called him back (Rafuse, 2003). Meade had grown increasingly frustrated with the command arrangement and with Grant. He was frustrated that he did not receive his due credit for the accomplishments of the army. He had disagreements with most of his officers, especially Warren and Burnside, but even with close friends such as Hancock and Gibbon (Taffe, 2006).

Others who knew Meade had more favorable opinions of him than did Dana. Richard Meade Bache (1897), Meade's nephew, provides insights into Meade's character and values that others do not. Bache describes Meade's dedication and affection to his mother: "...his air of tenderness to her was so blended with the indescribable deference and courtesy, that had she been a queen-mother, ... her son could not have shown her more princely respect" (Bache, 1897, p. 558). He describes Meade as a:

...genial friend and acquaintance and companion, ...a domestic husband and a cheerful father, sharing with his children even in the frolicsome of youth. ...in other spheres of life, he was equally estimable. His sentiments toward his brothers and sisters were always tender. Dependents were always sure that they could secure the full measure of sympathy and aid from him which they deserved, and he was able, with justice to others, to bestow. For enemies he had no time or heart for more than casual condemnation...his decisions on matters of social propriety bore the stamp of infallibility...ready, at a moment's notice, to accord praise where he deemed it due, he would boldly face prejudice at a moment's notice, and speak out his mind frankly in the interest of truth...He was not disposed to jump to conclusions, despite the quickness of his perceptions and the general ardor of his temperament. On the contrary, he was accustomed, from his earliest youth, to weigh carefully the arguments on each side of a question which was to lead to an important conclusion, and to cast the balance deliberately. But when once

he had cast the balance, it could not be changed, except upon new evidence; and so, whether he was acting in a civil or a military capacity, he was never vacillating. (pp. 568-570)

Bache (1897) confirms that General Meade was a religious man and that charges of him cursing profusely were erroneous, a fact echoed by Theodore Lyman (1922), Meade's aide-de-camp and personal friend. As to his well-known temper, Bache suggests that it was overly represented, and although Meade could be irascible, it was simply a matter of his temperament and he would quickly return to pleasantries if possible.

According to Bache (1897), Meade had the gift of clear statement and the ability to ignore the irrelevant. He reports that Meade was an excellent conversationalist, kind of heart and indifferent to discomfort. He provides a portrait of Meade as a decisive, calculating young man, dedicated to his family and friends, quick to anger and quick to forgive, honest, tender and gentlemanly, yet vehement in battle. While this is not the picture that Meade's critics paint, others generally support Bache's view.

Theodore Lyman (1922/ 2007) provides detailed accounts of the Civil War, Meade's camp, and General Meade. A Harvard trained scientist, Lyman met Meade while Meade was building lighthouses in Florida and Lyman was on a scientific investigation of starfish. Meade facilitated Lyman's work and the two became lifelong friends. A member of Boston's highest society, Lyman volunteered to serve as Meade's aide. He served Meade from September of 1863 until April of 1865.

Although Lyman died in 1897, his wartime letters, edited by George Agassiz, were published in 1922. *Meade's Headquarters 1863 to 1865: Letters of Theodore Lyman from the Wilderness to Appomattox*, provide a detailed account of life at Meade's headquarters. Lyman provides clear descriptions of many of the officers of the Army of the Potomac and the events of the day. In 2007, David Lowe published *Meade's Army: The Private Notebooks of Lt. Colonel Theodore Lyman*, an edited version of the notebooks that Lyman kept for himself during his tenure with General Meade. Recorded contemporaneously with his letters, the descriptions of men and battles contained in Lyman's journal are more detailed and graphic than the descriptions in his letters. Together, these two volumes provide the most vigorous and detailed accounting of the daily challenges of command in the Army of the Potomac. A certain bias in favor of General Meade could be expected from a lifelong friend, but as John Simon states in the forward to *Meade's Army*, "...Lyman's sharp eye did not overlook the faults of his commander" (2007, p. xii).

Lyman frequently comments on Meade's infamous temper, at one point calling him the "Great Peppery" (1922, p. 176) and commenting that he could have "eyes like a rattlesnake" (2007, p. 224). Lyman describes Meade as "...a man full of sense of responsibility; who takes things uneasily; and who has the most singular patches of gunpowder in his disposition, which exploding suddenly, are then gone" (2007, p. 49). He cites numerous examples of Meade's temper and acknowledges that many of Meade's staff and others were actually afraid of the General. He comments, "General Meade was in one of his irascible fits

tonight, which are always founded in good reason though they spread themselves over a good deal of ground that is not always in the limits of the question" (p. 185). Lyman believed that Meade's temper was not only founded in good reason, but that it also served a good purpose. "He is always stirring up somebody...But, by worrying, and flaring out unexpectedly on various officers, he does manage to have things pretty ship-shape" (1922, p. 39). Meade's outbursts were often triggered by the incompetence or poor performance of his officers, both being intolerable to Meade.

At the same time, Lyman (1922) remarks that Meade also possessed remarkable self-control and had the ability to remain cool and keep his good judgment, especially when those around him were unable to do so. Meade possessed a "close sense of justice" (p. 28) and would accept criticism he deserved. " He adds:

...my Chief...is a thorough soldier, and a mighty clear-headed man; and one who does not move unless he knows where and how many his men are; where and how many his enemy's men are; and what sort of country he has to go through. I never saw a man in my life who was so characterized by straightforward truthfulness as he is. He will pitch into himself in a moment, if he thinks he has done wrong; and woe to those, no matter who they are, who do not do right! (p. 25)



Figure 4. General George Gordon Meade.
(Library of Congress)

Lyman believed that Meade possessed great moral courage. He states:

...I shall always be astonished at the extraordinary moral courage of General Meade, which enabled him to order a retreat, when his knowledge, as an engineer and a soldier, showed that an attack would be a blunder. The men and guns stood ready: he had only to snap his fingers, and that night would probably have seen ten thousand wretched, mangled creatures, lying on those long slopes, exposed to the bitter cold, and out of reach of all help! Then people would have said: "He was unsuccessful; but then he tried, and did not get out". (Lyman, pp. 57-58)

Lyman also describes a softer side of General Meade. He notes that Meade was slow to punish even though he was quick to chastise. When not consumed with the movement of the Army, Meade enjoyed telling jokes and

stories (Lyman, T and Agassiz, G. R., (Ed). (1922). Meade's letters often reflect his enjoyment of entertaining dignitaries and foreign visitors (Meade, 1922/1994). Born into a prominent and wealthy Philadelphia family, Meade exhibited the qualities of a gentleman (Stowe, 2005).

As noted in Chapter One, General Gibbon (1887), in speaking of the general at the unveiling of the Meade Memorial in Washington, D.D., stated:

He left nothing in his career to be forgotten, no weakness to be concealed, no frailty to be covered up, no fault to be condoned.... He will be remembered with admiration, not only for his military achievements, which, unsurpassed by those of any other man... but also for the purity of character, for his unselfishness, for his freedom from jealousies and envies so common among distinguished soldiers, for patient and uncomplaining endurance of injustice, for his courage, which was of that high order that dared to do right at the risk of his own reputation, for his modesty, that made him ever ready to praise others, while during his whole career he never wrote or spoke one boastful word of himself, and for his supreme devotion to duty. (pp. 10-11)

Meade developed both bitter enemies and strong supporters during his tenure in the United States Army. It appears that both are equally passionate about their feelings.

Summary of the Meade Literature

While General George Gordon Meade may be unknown or relegated to a role of secondary consideration by history, he undeniably played a key role in the

Civil War. Meade was and is known for the strange combination of his explosive temper, his tactical excellence, his strength of character and the charges of Dan Sickles.

His many enemies included Generals Sickles, Doubleday, Burnside, Butterfield, Howe, Pleasanton, and Birney as well as Senator Zachariah Chandler and members of the CCW. However, his supporters included some of the war's most respected generals, including Reynolds, Hancock, Sedgwick, Humphreys, Gibbon, Robert E. Lee, and Ulysses S. Grant.

Meade engineered the most famous of Union victories, the Battle of Gettysburg. But his failure to pursue Lee on his retreat from Gettysburg as aggressively as President Lincoln wished caused Meade to lose Lincoln's confidence. While Lincoln never replaced Meade, he brought in Ulysses S. Grant to command all of the Union armies. Grant headquartered with Meade's Army of the Potomac and eventually overshadowed Meade.

Many historians have described Meade as timid, cautious, and lacking aggression as the commander of the Army of the Potomac. Others have described him as tactically and logistically superior. General Grant thought he was one of only two men in the Union army suited to handle a large army.

Meade faced many challenges during his command other than Robert E. Lee. General Dan Sickles conducted a life-long campaign to discredit Meade and played a significant role in damaging Meade's reputation and image. But Washington, D.C. may have actually been Meade's biggest challenge. Meade was deemed a McClellanite by the Radical Republicans of the Congress. They

opposed Meade at every opportunity. Congress delayed his promotions. The CCW twice investigated Meade and unsuccessfully tried to have him displaced.

The control exerted by Lincoln and Halleck prevented Meade from operating freely along a line that he deemed appropriate. Meade was charged with destroying Lee's army while always covering Washington, D.C. Every move of the Army of the Potomac was scrutinized by Lincoln and Halleck and required their approval. While it has been Meade who has been criticized for being strategically weak, it should be remembered that it was Lincoln who actually controlled the overall strategy for Meade's army. Lincoln twice pulled troops from Meade's army, weakening it but maintaining the same expectations.

Meade was placed in an unprecedented and awkward command arrangement when Grant located his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. Grant slowly but surely took control of the army, reducing Meade's effectiveness. Nevertheless, it was Meade who received the criticisms while Grant and Sheridan received the credit in the press.

General Meade created some of his own problems. His intolerance of poor judgment or performance triggered his infamous temper. His demand for the absolute truth and his unwavering pride in the Army of the Potomac resulted in his poor treatment of reporter Edward Cropsey, which resulted in Meade's poor treatment by the press. Being typically West Point, Meade felt that soldiers should not be involved in politics and that politicians should not be involved in war. Thus, he garnered little political support beyond that of his wife's family.

But Meade was known as a man of the highest character, a true Philadelphia gentleman. The most favorable traits and values are attributed to Meade, with the exception of his temper. Doing good work requires first that an individual be ethical, a person of good character, as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

The Good Work Research

The theoretical basis of this research is captured by the first paragraph in *Good Work: When Excellence and Ethics Meet* (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001):

In every historical era, many people have sought to carry out good work. It has always been true that some people do their work expertly but not very responsibly. People who do good work, in our sense of the term, are clearly skilled in one or more of the professional realms. At the same time, rather than merely following money or fame alone, or choosing the path of least resistance when in conflict, they are thoughtful about their responsibilities and the implications of their work. At best, they are concerned to act in a responsible fashion with respect toward their personal goals; their family, friends, peers, and colleagues; their mission or sense of calling; the institutions with which they are affiliated; and lastly, the wider world-people they do not know, those who will come afterwards, and, in the grandest sense, to the planet or to God. (p.3)

Noted psychologists Howard Gardner, Mihaly Csikszentmihali, and William Damon conducted the Project on Good Work from the mid 1990's until

2006. They concluded that, simply put, good work is work that is “of expert quality that benefits the broader society” (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001, p. IX). It is work that is of excellent technical quality, ethically pursued and socially responsible, and is engaging, enjoyable and feels good (Gardner, (Ed.), 2007).

There are four constituents of good work that are always present and operative, and may or may not be obvious to practitioners or observers. The more closely these constituents are aligned, the more likely it is that good work will exist. Misalignment of these factors negatively impacts an individual’s ability to perform good work. The first of these constituents is the individual worker. A person’s personality, beliefs, motivation, temperament, and general character combine to determine whether a person will do good work or will cut corners, engage in irresponsible work, or hold to high standards. The second constituent is the domain of work (Gardner, (Ed.), 2007).

A domain is an area of work in which a set of specialized knowledge and skills has been codified in a way that facilitates a smooth transition to new practitioners. There are two elements to a domain. The first is a system of ideas that relate to ideas and practice. The second is an ethical dimension that assures people that the knowledge of the domain will not be used against the public or just for the gain of the practitioner. These elements result in a set of core

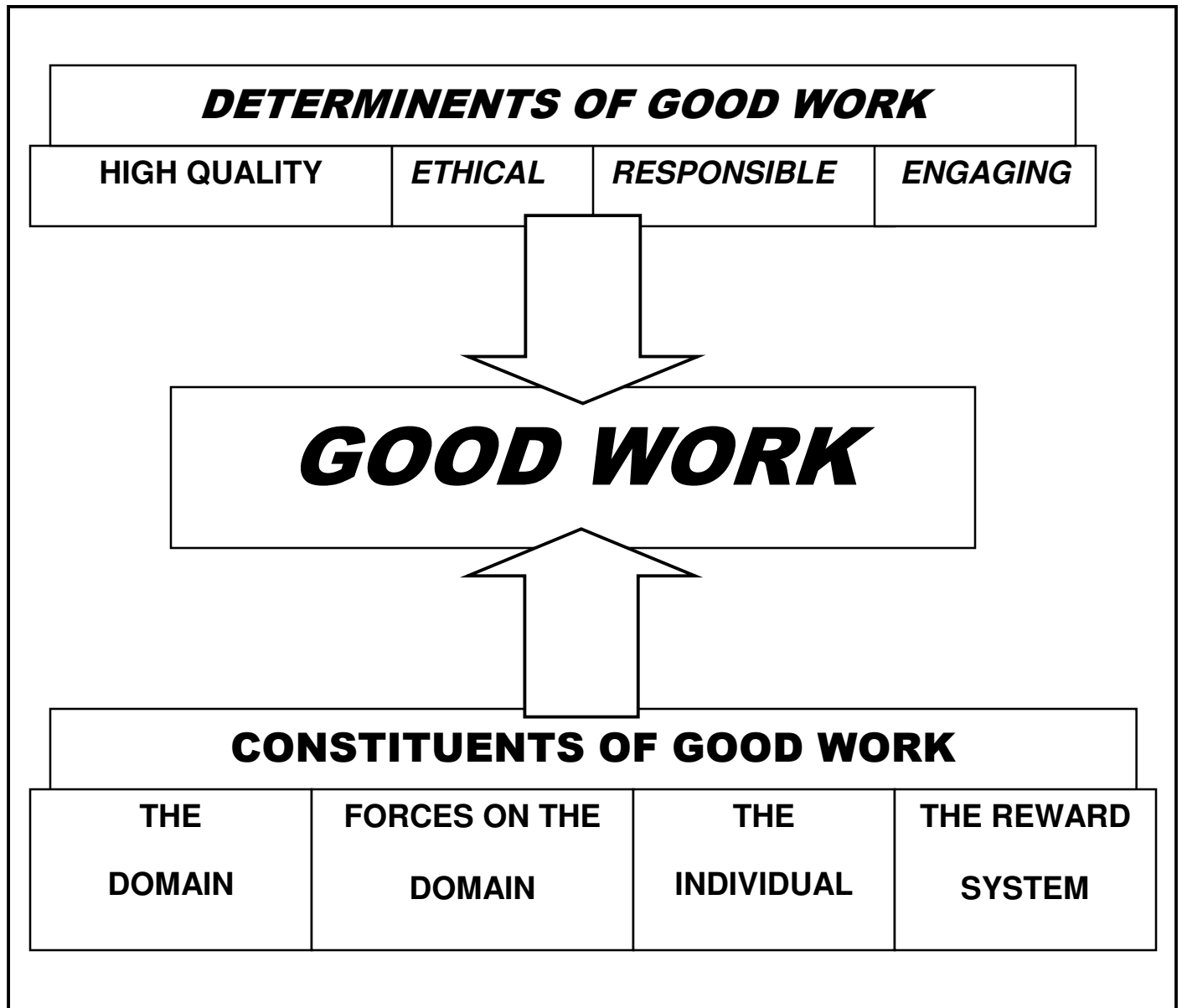


Figure 5. Good work theoretical diagram.

values and beliefs that develop over time and carry considerable influence within the domain of work. Perhaps the most recognizable example of this is found in medicine where the Hippocratic oath binds physicians (Gardner, Ed. 2007).

The forces of the field that operate on a domain compromise the third constituent of good work. The core values of a domain are mediated by the gatekeepers to

the domain, by individuals who provide opportunities and rewards, and by evaluators who determine the merit of the work. These people or social entities hold power over the domain, make consequential decisions, and constitute the forces of the field (Gardner, (Ed.), 2007).

The final constituent of good work is the reward system. Individuals, domains, and fields are part of a larger society. The broader society controls rewards and sanctions over a domain or profession. As such, it is instrumental in forming the core values of the domain.

While these four constituents determine good work, there are three factors that disqualify an individual from being considered a good worker. People who use their positions to first fill their pocketbooks, achieve credit unfairly, or abuse those over whom they have authority clearly violate the ethical considerations of good work (Gardner, (Ed.), 2007).

Given an understanding of good work and its constituents, let us return to the opening quote. One element of determining if General Meade performed good work is to determine if he performed responsibly. Therefore, the researcher evaluated General Meade's performance to determine if he was responsible to his personal goals, his family, friends, peers, and colleagues, his mission or sense of calling, the institutions with which he was affiliated, and lastly, the wider world -people he did not know. For the purposes of this research, the wider world is considered to be the nation, the mission is to serve the nation by providing for its defense and safety (Skelton, 1992), and the institution considered is the United States army.

To determine if General Meade performed his work ethically, his actions were evaluated by the criteria derived from the good work research. When faced with an ethical decision, did he consider the core mission of the domain, the core values and standards of the domain, and their individual identity? The core mission, standards, and values of the Civil War officer is explored later in this chapter. Identity “is a person’s own background, traits, and values, as these add up to a holistic sense of identity...people must determine for themselves *what* lines they will not cross and *why* they will not cross them. But a sense of identity also includes personality traits, motivation, intellectual strengths and weaknesses, and personal likes and dislikes” (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001, p. 11).

History and Mission of the United States Civil War Army

Central to the concept of good work are the standards and values of a domain or profession. Good work requires that an individual be guided by those standards. Ethical behavior within the context of the domain is, in part, influenced by these standards and values. In order to determine if General Meade did good work and did it ethically, it is necessary to establish what the standards and values of the army were during his military service. Standards and values evolve over time with the development of the domain. The United States’ army was relatively young and undeveloped in the early nineteenth century, so it is necessary to look at its history to determine the status of the army and its core values.

In addition to determining the domain's standards and values, it is necessary to determine the domain's core mission at the time of study. The core mission, standards and values for officers of the army are very clearly articulated for today's soldier (Center for Army Leadership, 2004), but that was not the case for the Civil War officer. The army had been in a state of development and flux since the Revolutionary War. Americans debated whether or not to support a standing army, how big such an army should be, what the purpose of the army was, and whether or not officers should be formally trained (Skelton, 1992).

The Eighteenth Century Army

Early in its history the United States had depended on a citizen militia to perform constabulary duties. Early legislators were reluctant to establish a large standing army, but the volunteer militia proved ineffective. In an effort to correct the situation, President Washington pushed a bill through Congress that increased the size of the standing army. Known as the American Legion, the army's new commander was General Anthony Wayne. Wayne tried to establish discipline and order to the army as detailed in the Articles of War and Baron Von Steuben's manual. Wayne emphasized study and training for frontier duty, but in the end was unable to establish the standards he professed (Skelton, 1992).

In 1794 the Congress established the Corps of Artillery and Engineers and allotted funds for books and equipment for study and training by the officers. Secretary of War Timothy Pickering tried to concentrate the corps at the military outpost at West Point. He appointed European officers to high positions in the corps in order to facilitate the study of European methods of war. This was the

first evidence of the emerging American view of military leadership as a science requiring formal study (Skelton, 1992).

The cadets and officers at West Point were required to study Von Steuben's regulations and the Articles of War. Instruction was carried out by foreign instructors who quarreled among themselves and with the cadets. Eventually, the cadets refused to attend the twice a day lectures and by 1798, this attempt to reform the army collapsed (Skelton, 1992).

Between 1798 and 1800, the United States was engaged with France in the Quasi-war, which was conducted entirely at sea. Fear of the foreign threat prompted Congress to increase the size of the army. Alexander Hamilton, then inspector general of the army shared command responsibilities with Charles Pinckney, but quickly emerged as the dominant figure. Determined to build a permanent, European style army, Hamilton, through James McHenry, the Secretary of War, was able to get Congress to pass a bill he drafted. Enacted in March of 1799, the bill established a uniform structure of regiments, defined the army pay scale, clothing allowances and rations, established the quartermaster system, established a network of inspection officers appointed by Hamilton, and provided for the routine inspection of fortifications. In addition, Hamilton established clear procedures for military routine, described the duties of officers, and ordered unit commanders to personally supervise the training of troops. A second bill, also passed that year, provided for a medical department headed by a physician general (Skelton, 1992).

Hamilton never completed two promising projects. The first was an effort to rewrite army regulations that would replace Baron Von Steuben's regulations. The second was his effort to establish a military academy. For a variety of reasons, these never came to be. Hamilton never left New York City to enforce his regulations. Most of the newly created positions went unfilled and in May of 1800, Congress eliminated the standing army and Hamilton's position (Skelton, 1992).

The Early Nineteenth Century Army

In March of 1802, Congress again passed a bill to reduce the size of the army, but within that bill it created a corps of engineers to be located at West Point. West Point was to be a military academy. Chief engineer Colonel Jonathon Williams was assigned as the academy's superintendent. Williams envisioned an academy that produced engineers who were men of science and modeled the school after the great military academies of Europe. He pushed to make the engineers an elite corps, separate from the influence of the rest of the army and tried to gain command authority over other army units, such as the artillery garrison also located at West Point. However, the artillery refused to accept orders from the engineer corps and vice versa. This friction between the engineers and the rest of the army would last well past the Civil War years (Skelton, 1992).

West Point was enlarged by an act of Congress in 1812, adding faculty and providing for up to 250 cadets. This act permanently established West Point as a military academy and institutionalized the notion that military officers

required formal training. Early studies included mathematics, engineering, natural philosophy and other subjects that were designed to support the study of fortifications. Even though friction continued to exist between the corps of engineers and other army units, "...the engineers represented a tiny pocket of nascent professionalism, isolated from the scattered and amorphous line branches" (Skelton, 1992, p. 105).

After the successes of the war of 1812, there emerged a group of young officers who viewed the military as a career. Their experience in the campaign of 1814 gave them a sense of victory, of being equal to the British army. They emerged believing in the value of a well-disciplined regular army and despised volunteer soldiers. Leading this group of officers were Generals Edmund Gaines, Alexander Macomb, and Winfield Scott. They dominated the leadership of the army in the years after the War of 1812 and advocated for a disciplined, large, standing, national army trained in the ways of European warfare. These three officers drove the development of army reform and ingrained professional standards for officers (Skelton, 1992).

During this time, many United States army officers toured Europe, especially France, to visit military academies and learn about warfare. Two of these officers, Winfield Scott and Sylvanus Thayer, would be instrumental in bringing the French influence to the American army. Scott wrote several army manuals and Thayer would drive the development of West Point into a respected, prestigious military academy (Skelton, 1992).

President Madison, riding a surge of nationalism that gained momentum after the War of 1812 and favoring a large standing army, was able to get Congress to pass a bill in 1820 that created a standing army of 20,000 soldiers. A month later, Congress reduced that number to just over 12,00, which still represented an army that was nearly four times the size of the army in 1808. The new army was to be prepared to defend the country against a foreign threat, forsaking the previous primary constabulary role. Additionally, the standing army was to prepare and man fortifications and was charged with preserving the knowledge of the science of war. This clearly gave the indication that the army and not the volunteer militia was to be the nation's first line of defense (Skelton, 1992).

The new army that developed in the early decades of the nineteenth century became organized due to the permanent staff and the bureau system. This led to uniform, depersonalized procedures. Winfield Scott developed manuals on infantry tactics that were based on the French system and manuals on all details of administration and discipline. This new army evolved into an army of formally trained officers as a result of the development of West Point under Thayer's leadership (Skelton, 1992).

The army was organized as a cadre system. Overly populated with trained, professional officers, the army operated with far fewer soldiers than were needed in the event of a war. However, the existence of the officer corps and the skeletal structure that existed allowed the army to be quickly populated with

volunteer or conscripted soldiers. By the 1830's the army had over 1100 officers and over 15,000 enlisted men (Skelton, 1992).

The core values and beliefs of this newly organized army were strongly influenced by the training and culture of West Point. One of the significant courses that worked to this end was the omnibus course that included ethics. The course was first taught from William Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* and then, starting in 1844, from *Elements of Moral Science* by Brown University ethics professor Francis Wayland. Both texts were conservative in nature. Wayland's text included a description of the responsibilities of simple executive office holders, such as military officers. He stressed unconditional service to the government and military subordination to civilian authority. Officers were not to question the law, but were obliged to execute it. Officers who felt the law was unconstitutional or immoral should resign. Officers had no right to hold office or to refuse to perform the duties required and requested of him (Skelton, 1992).

More important than the subjects taught at West Point was the culture of the academy. Partly due to the psychological and geographical isolation that promoted a feeling of separation from the rest of society, the regular army developed a type of corporate identity (Morrison, 1986). West point enforced the strict observation of rank and there was no fraternization between cadets and commissioned officers. Cadets were taught that they must respect constituted authority and strictly obey orders. Senior cadets developed a "military bearing...(and) at dances and other social events during their last summer

encampment, they mingled with fashionable guests and acquired a taste for the formal grace of army social life” (Skelton, 1992, p. 177).

Cadets at West Point developed close bonds. They knew little company but their own. They marched to and from meals in squads. Every aspect of their lives was regimented and regulated. They became loyal to each other and the institution of the army, and these loyalties lasted well beyond their West Point years. While at the academy, it was considered dishonorable to report another cadet for any reason (Skelton, 1992). West Point produced officers that were generally a cohesive group, apolitical and conservative (Stowe, 2003).

From the formal training and cultural influences of West Point developed a guiding set of ideas and values that were fundamental to all army officers. They believed in a hierarchal and authoritarian society. Officers identified positively with the service world, yet felt separated from the rest of society. They believed that war was a science to be conducted by those formally trained and/or experienced in war. Officers should not be involved in politics. Soldiers must obey orders and competently perform their duties. And most importantly, a soldier’s duty was to defend the citizens of the nation from any threat to their safety.

Between 1830 and 1860, military professionalism blossomed. Military oriented journals such as the *Army and Navy Chronicle* and the *Military Magazine* emerged. West Point became a respected institution. By 1860, 75% of the army’s officers were West Point graduates. When the Civil War erupted, the development of military professionalism was not complete, but was developed

(Morrison, 1986). The army was being lead by trained officers who understood their mission and duty.

Summary of the History and Mission of the United States Civil War Army

After the Revolutionary War, the United States wrestled with the concept of a standing army. Seeing an army as a possible threat as well as a defense, it was not until well into the nineteenth century that a standing, professional army emerged. By the Civil War, the army was dominated by West Point trained officers who saw their mission as the defense of the nation. They were bound by duty and law, obeyed orders, and were loyal to each other and the army. They understood that they were subordinate to civil authority but resented civil interference in matters of war. Apolitical and conservative, West Point officers were uniquely bonded to each other. This would alienate them from others in the army and some politicians and become a source of friction during the Civil War. Through it all, West Point has survived and thrived, and a highly trained, professional standing army exists today.

Leadership Theory

Although the concept of leadership has been studied for thousands of years, the study of leadership as a discipline is only about 150 years old. Yet, even though there is a plethora of books on leadership, there is no definitive leadership theory. "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept" (Bass, 1981, p.7).

In the mid nineteenth century leaders were viewed as Great Men and studies focused on the contributions to history by these Great Men. The Great

Man theory holds that leaders are superior persons who possess special inherited qualities, which are brought out by social situations and circumstances. Great men accomplish great things and are worthy of study (Carlyle, 1840. Retrieved November 14, 2007 from <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext97/heros10.txt>).

Trait Theory Era emerged around 1900 and suggests that great leaders are born with certain traits that their followers lack. Persons with these special traits will develop into leaders. Trait Theory focuses on the traits of a leader rather than on the leader himself/herself. In 1948, Stogdill published a book entitled the *Handbook of Leadership*. In which he reviewed trait theory and concluded that leadership could not be described simply as a function of traits. He theorized that leadership is the result of the interaction between individual traits and situations. The emphasis of leadership research switched from a focus on the leader to a focus on leader behavior (Bass, 1981).

In the late 1960's, leadership theory was expanded to include leadership style, follower behaviors and other situational contingencies. A basic assumption of contingency theory is that a leader's personality is relatively fixed and cannot be altered. Leaders must work in organizations that matches their personalities in order to be effective. Hershey and Blanchard's Situational model suggests that style is variable and can be altered to fit the situation. House's Path-Goal model suggests that style is contingent upon the means of influencing followers' behavior towards established goals, based on their needs, and changes accordingly (Clinton, 1992).

More recent theories are taking macro approaches to leadership, seeing leadership as being influenced by a number of broader variables, including organizational structure and climate, historical trends, and followers and cultural influences (Clinton, 1992). One such theory is servant leadership. The servant leader aspires to serve the needs of the followers. It is because of the need to serve others that one leads. The service leader is intuitive, filling in knowledge gaps by being close to and responsive to followers. But the service leader is a leader because the followers want to follow. They follow because they see the selflessness of the servant leader and are willing to bestow trust to the servant-leader. Followers are willing to give the servant leader the power necessary to fulfill their goals, visions and needs. It is this cycle that creates a leader from someone who serves (Greenleaf 1976).

Another view of the importance of followers to leadership is that of Kouzes and Posner (2007). People expect their leaders to be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent. Honesty has consistently been at the top of the list and is the single most important factor in the leader-constituent relationship. People expect their leaders to be truthful, ethical, and principled. Honest leaders stand on important principles. People won't trust or follow a leader who does not disclose and live by a clear set of values, ethics and standards.

James MacGregor Burns introduced the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership in his 1978 book entitled *Leadership*. To Burns, the study of leadership is not the study of great leaders, but is rather the study of the dynamics between leaders and followers. Leaders are neither born nor created,

but are the result of the social processes and forces placed on leaders and followers. Burns identifies two basic types of leadership, which he called transactional and transforming. Transactional leadership is basically a contract between leaders and followers. Leaders seek to exchange value with followers. Labor for wages and votes for jobs are two examples. In transformational leadership the leader recognizes and exploits an existing need of a follower. The leader looks for the motives and higher needs of the follower and "engages the full person of the follower. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (p.4).

In the twenty-first century, society is concerned about the integrity of leaders and corporations. The recent collapse of the economy is shining a spotlight on unethical corporations and leaders. Bill George (2003) asserts that "We need *authentic leaders* to run our organizations, leaders committed to the stewardship of their assets and to making a difference in the lives of the people they serve" (p xvii). "We need authentic leaders, people of the highest integrity...We need leaders who have a sense of purpose and are true to their core values. We need leaders who have the courage to build companies to meet the need of all their stakeholders, and who recognize the importance of their service to society" (p. 5).

George (2003) suggests that leadership begins and ends with authenticity. Being authentic means being genuine and worthy of trust, reliance or belief. It is being yourself. He believes leadership is not a list of desirable traits or styles that

a leader should copy. Leadership is not a matter of style; it is a matter of being real. In *Authentic Leadership* (2003), George describes five essential dimensions of an authentic leader; understanding their purpose, practicing solid values, leading with heart, establishing connected relationships, and demonstrating self-discipline.

The best leaders are highly independent. They are able to stand-alone against the majority and understand that it is lonely at the top. George (2003) states that authentic leaders are keenly aware of their weaknesses and realize that their strengths and weaknesses are the same thing. For instance, a temper that flares may be reflective of the passion necessary to lead.

Currently emerging in the field of leadership theory is strengths-based leadership. The strengths-based leadership research indicates that the most effective leaders lead according to his or her strengths and develop those strengths. They build leadership teams comprised of people who are strong in areas that other team members are not. They understand that followers look to leaders for trust, compassion, stability and hope (Rath & Conchie, 2008).

In General George Meade's time, people were looking for the Great Man to provide leadership. Today, the study of leadership is clouded by the plethora of theories and literature on leadership. Currently, the leader-follower relationship, values, and the character and ethics of leaders and their organizations dominate the discussion. There still is no single theory of leadership. It seems that leadership theories never die; they just assume a different place and role in the consideration of leadership.

Chapter II Summary

General George Gordon Meade served in a command capacity for almost all of the Civil War. Earning his promotions based on his battlefield performances, he rose to be the fourth highest ranked officer in the Union army. Known equally for his fiery temper and his impeccable character, he was both a diplomat and a fierce fighter. He was as comfortable carrying out the plans of his superiors as he was giving orders to carry out his own.

Meade's journey through the ranks of the army created some powerful enemies, not always Meade's fault. The most noteworthy were Generals Dan Butterfield and Dan Sickles. These generals worked together to use their considerable political connections to have Meade removed from command. Although unsuccessful, they managed to unfairly but substantially taint Meade's reputation as a general. Eventually, General Ulysses S. Grant would be given command of all the Union armies. Choosing to headquarter in the field with the Army of the Potomac, he would gradually take strategic control of the army. This, along with the intentional negative impact of the press, caused General Meade to be overshadowed by Grant.

General Meade, an 1835 graduate of West Point, combined the values of West Point with the values of a Philadelphia gentleman. Both institutions believed in a hierarchal order and in serving others. Both believed in ethical, orderly, disciplined, and gentlemanly conduct. Both appreciated an educated, scientific mind. General Meade's impeccable character was first developed by his family, one of Philadelphia's social elite, and then reinforced by his West Point

experience. Meade's life experiences equipped him to be as comfortable on the battlefield as in the ballroom. Although still controversial, there is no doubt that General George Gordon Meade served his nation well throughout a distinguished career.

Meade's character and his technical knowledge of his responsibilities make him a good candidate to be considered a good worker. Through the good worker lens, we may have a perspective of Meade that does not enter into the controversies associated with his command tenure. This perspective promotes a fresh look at his service, the quality of his work, and how he accomplished good work in such a difficult time.

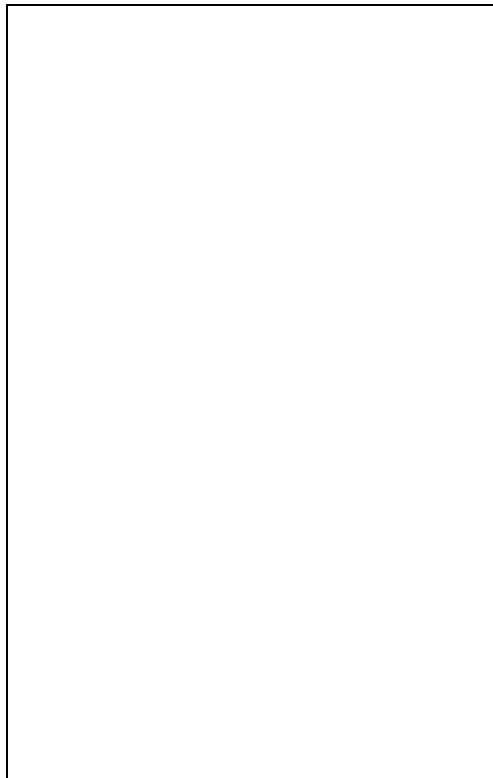


Figure 6. Robert E. Lee. (Library of Congress)

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction to the Case

General George Gordon Meade's reputation as a Civil War military commander is unsettled at best. Richard Sommers (2009), a noted Civil War historian, places General Meade with Generals Lee, Jackson, Sherman and Grant as the only Civil War commanders to be considered in the top one hundred military leaders during the time frame of the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries. But even this recognition of Meade is qualified. While attesting to Meade's effectiveness and his outstanding performance at Gettysburg, Sommers (concludes that "...Meade was capable enough not to lose the war but not good enough to win it" (p. 211). Sommers' view succinctly captures the range of perceptions that are representative of Meade's military ability.

Meade's command ability has been reviewed and debated at length by his contemporaries and historians since the Battle of Gettysburg. Those debates have focused on the military skills and abilities that Meade brought to his assignment as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac. But nearly a century and a half later, the questions are the same. Did Meade want to retreat from Gettysburg? Did Meade fail to pursue Lee properly after Gettysburg? Did Meade miss an opportunity at Williamsport? Was Meade too timid and cautious? It may be time for new questions. There may be lessons for leaders in Meade's command that have been hidden by the storm of controversy.

The good work research (Gardner, et al. 2001) offers a framework for evaluating Meade's performance from three key perspectives and by asking new questions. First, did General Meade fulfill his responsibilities to his constituents? Secondly, was Meade an ethical leader? Last, were there forces beyond Meade's control that made it difficult for him to do good work and thus contributed to his sullied reputation? These three questions are key to determining if General Meade did good work. If he did, are there implications for leaders that can be derived from his experience?

Good work is both technically excellent and ethical. This paper does not address the issue of Meade's technical ability as a commanding general. Others have done that. For the purposes of this paper, we will accept the arguments that support General Meade's decisions and conduct as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac, giving due recognition to opposing viewpoints.

General Meade was a man of confounding extremes. A vicious warrior and a gentle and loving family man, he was equally at ease on the battlefield as he was in the ballroom (Bache, 1897). Meade possessed a volatile temper yet loved a good story or joke (Lyman, 2007). He was feared by some of his own staff (Dana, 1898/1996), revered by others (Lyman, 2007; Gibbon, 1928/1988), and respected by both Grant (Thomsen, 1885/2002) and Lee (Coddington, 1968). A case study of General Meade's performance as commander of the Army of the Potomac offers the opportunity to explore these nuances and complexities of General Meade. Stake (1995) asserts "Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity

within important circumstances (p. xi) and that “The qualitative researcher emphasizes episodes of nuance, the sequentiality of happenings in context, the wholeness of the individual” (p. xii).

This study is both an intrinsic and instrumental case study. Stake (1995) refers to a case study that seeks simply to discover more about that particular case as an intrinsic case study. This case study is intrinsic in that it seeks to gain a new and broader understanding of General Meade’s performance as the commanding General of the Army of the Potomac, a period that began on June 30, 1863 and lasted until the Army of the Potomac disbanded in June of 1865. An instrumental case study seeks to discover information about something other than the case through the study of the case (Stake, 1995). This case study is instrumental in that it also explores insights into how good work and leadership may occur amid controversy and the challenges of constituents.

Statement of the Problem

The controversies and debate over General George Gordon Meade’s efficacy as a commander have clouded the historical view of his performance (Coddington, 1968; Haggerty, 2002; Sauers, 2003). This case study seeks to clarify and understand General Meade’s performance by evaluating whether or not he fulfilled his responsibilities to his constituent groups, made ethical decisions, and ultimately did good work

Research Questions

A case study is qualitative by its nature. It requires open-ended questions that focus the investigation but allow for emerging themes (Creswell, 2007). The following research questions are designed to meet these criteria.

1. What evidence exists that General George Gordon Meade, while the commanding officer of the Union's Army of the Potomac, from June 28, 1863 until June 1865, performed "good work", work that was of high quality, ethically done, socially responsible and engaging?
2. During his tenure as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac, what evidence indicates that General Meade fulfilled his responsibilities to his family, friends and colleagues, to his mission, to his personal goals, to the Army, and to the nation?
3. Did General Meade's approach to resolving ethical dilemmas reflect consideration of his mission, the standards of the professional soldier, and his identity?
4. How did the conditions of good work align to support or disrupt General Meade's accomplishment of "good work"?
5. If General Meade did good work, what, if any, are the implications for others who are trying to do good work?

Research Design

To explore the answers to the proposed research questions, a qualitative research design was chosen because it allows us to hear "silenced voices" and provides the opportunity to develop a "...*complex*, detailed understanding of the

issue” (Creswell, 2007, p. 40). A case study is an appropriate approach when exploring a life history using a vast amount of data (Slavin, 2007). Thus, a qualitative case study, historical in nature and focused on particular events in the life of General Meade was chosen as the basis for this research design.

Data Sources

General Meade died in 1872. Thus the only data able to be collected is from documents and historical narrative. The first documents analyzed were the letters of General Meade, primarily written to his wife, as contained in the Meade collection from the Pennsylvania Historical Society and housed on microfilm at the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle, PA. This is the most extensive representation of Meade’s communications and is the most personal. Most of his letters are contained in *The Life and Letters of General George Gordon Meade* (1913/1994), which is edited by his son, Captain George Meade. Young George was a staff officer at his father’s headquarters for much of the war, including the Gettysburg campaign. Captain Meade died before he could conclude *Life and Letters*, but his son, also George Meade, finished the project as editor. He explains that only letters relevant to the issues at hand were included and very personal parts of letters, such as purely personal comments to Margaretta are omitted. Because of the editing, some of General Meade’s letters are omitted, parts of many letters are omitted, and the names of people are omitted.

The Meade collection, housing the original letters, reveals these omissions. Other Meade documents, such as military communications, notes and field

reports are also contained in the collection. These were analyzed in order to gain a more complete picture of Meade's perceptions and to locate evidence relating to Meade's responsible or irresponsible performance of his duties.

Meade's testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of War, as contained in the Official Record, is another source of data. Even though historians generally reject the findings of the Committee, the findings did tarnish Meade's reputation. Senators Chandler and Wade used the testimony from the investigations to seek Meade's removal from command. Meade's testimony presents Meade's view of his performance at Gettysburg, and during a later investigation, the disaster at the Crater. The CCW's report was released on May 22, 1865. It aroused little interest at the time with the war being over and the nation mourning Lincoln's assassination (Hyde, 2003).

The memoirs of Meade contemporaries were analyzed. Theodore Lyman's field notes and letters, General John Gibbon's memoirs, the memoirs of General Grant, Charles Dana's recollections and John Hay's diary all add the perspective of people who had direct knowledge of or were in contact with Meade during his command years.

Other sources include the Meade biographies, newspaper and magazine articles, and a variety of historical narratives. The variety of materials used provides for the triangulation of data due to the different perspectives and types of documents.

Procedures

The procedures used to gather and analyze data and then develop a narrative parallels the procedures used in the Good Work Project. The primary method used by the researchers in the Good Work Project was the interview (Gardner, Gregory, Csikszentmihalyi, Damon, Michaelson, 2001). Good Work researchers transcribed recorded interviews and then converted the transcript into a reading guide. A reading guide is a reordered transcript that places the data from the transcript into an appropriate category. This process is actually the first step in coding the data

The next step involved the creation of a coded reading guide. The data from the reading guide was reduced to eleven categories that were derived both inductively and deductively. Some categories were developed from pre-determined interests and others emerged from the analysis. The categories used in the Good Work research are identified as follows:

- Independent variables
- :
- Larger Purpose
- Goals, Obstacles, Strategies
- Opportunities, Obstacles into Opportunities
- Supports
- Transforming moments
- Changes in the domain, field, workplace, or society
- Involvement in the domain
- Formative influences

Mentors and antimentors

Contemplative activities (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001)

The coding guide categories delineate the scope of the category and describe coding considerations. Below is an example of how two categories are described in the coding guide:

Larger Purpose: Coders comb the reading guide for the passage(s) which best describes the “larger purpose” or ultimate goal or (“mission”) of the work of the professional as it relates to others. In the coding manual, Larger Purpose is defined as be “to present what has happened as objectively as possible,” to help individuals make sense of the fast changing world,” “to play a constructive part in the democratic process.” It is possible that no larger purpose is discovered, in which case this category is scored as None.

Larger purposes can be further described as universalistic (applicable to all individuals) or particularistic (oriented especially to a group). Common universalistic purposes include truth and fairness. Among particularistic responses, subjects speak about a desire to deliver news to a particular constituency (e.g. African Americans) or to reach a specific group (young individuals, individuals who are remote from the center of power).

Purposes can be described in terms of informing an audience (transmitting the news more quickly and more accurately; conveying educational stories to a wider constituency); or in terms of being influential

(giving voice or empowering a certain group; righting injustices against a certain group)....

Changes in the Domain, Field, Workplace, or Society: Of interest are the important changes in the conditions of work that have impressed the subject. These can be changes at the workplace, in the domain or the field, or in the broader society. We have subdivided changes in terms of whether they principally concern technology (computers, satellites); values (what counts as good foreign coverage after the downfall of communism and the triumph of the market economy); format (new ways of reporting or editing the news); rewards (journalists hired on the basis of physical appearance or advanced degrees rather than reporting experience), or Other. Finally, with respect to each change, we have coded the subject's overall evaluation of the change as positive, negative, (if no evaluation is given) neutral, or other. (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001, pp. 13-17)

For this project, the Good Work Project method needed to be modified, since it is not possible to interview General Meade. In the Meade project, the data from sources were recorded according to the relevant event or, if the data is not specific to an event, it is recorded as general. Each action, decision, or communication is recorded separately, creating a reading guide. For instance, Meade's actions in the Historicus situation might be recorded as follows:

- Meade was angered
- Meade expressed his belief that Sickles is responsible for the letter

- Meade requested a military investigation and hearing if, when confronted, Sickles admits responsibility
- Expressed his desire to go public with a response to *Historicus* if the army does not wish to investigate
- Halleck advised, but did not order, Meade to let the matter drop
- Halleck advised Meade that Sickles would play the affair out in the papers
- Lincoln wanted Meade to stay focused on the army and forget about a hearing
- Meade abided by Halleck's advice
- *Historicus* responded in the paper to criticisms from soldiers other than Meade

Event categories include Meade's pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg, Dan Sickles' claims about Gettysburg, *Historicus*, Mine Run, the Cropsey affair, and his relationship with Grant. Williamsport, a highly debated incident that allowed Lee to escape across the Potomac, is considered part of the pursuit of Lee. Next, a process similar to the development of a coded reading guide was applied. Material was analyzed to determine if it meets the requirements of any of fourteen pre-determined categories. The categories were developed from the theoretical structure derived from the Good Works research. As the coding proceeded, other categories emerged from the data. For instance, early in a pilot run, it became obvious that fairness required that the researcher also note any irresponsible acts evidenced by General Meade. Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon (2001) clearly indicate that irresponsible acts eliminate a person from any

good work consideration. Therefore, a section on irresponsible work and its components was added. At this point, the data can be conceptualized as a matrix display, as shown in Figure 7.

Data Classification Structure						
	Sickles' Claims	Historicus	Pursuit of Lee	Mine Run	Grant	Cropsey
Responsibility to:						
Self/ Personal Goals						
Family						
Subordinates						
Superiors						
Army/ Profession						
People Unknown/ Nation						
Acceptance of responsibility						
Mission/ Duty						
Ethics						
Identity						
Core Mission						
Domain Standards/Values						
Forces Impacting Good Work						
Meade's Traits/Attributes						
Domain						
Forces Exerted on the Domain						
Reward System						
Irresponsible work						
Use position for monetary or personal gain						
Abuse subordinates						
Achieve credit unfairly						
Failure to support core values						

Figure 7. Data classification matrix.

In both studies, the data were labeled when they were recorded so they could be located at a later date if needed. If the information fit more than one category, it was placed in all appropriate categories. For instance, in the example above, Meade's decision to drop the matter and heed Halleck's advice would be recorded under Responsibility to Superiors (complying with his superior's wishes), and the domain standards under Ethics (soldiers obey orders).

As the research progressed, it quickly became apparent that recording data to the historical events above yielded exceedingly long lists of data that were beyond the resources of a single researcher to manage. An examination of the matrix indicated that Meade was central to the three main elements derived from the Good Work framework. The focus was switched to Meade, rather than the events, and a chronological progression through the Meade letters and communications was pursued. Recording Meade's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and actions chronologically made the data more manageable, revealed Meade's perspective, and led to a longitudinal portrait of Meade. This data was then combined with the other data and reported in a narrative that put these results into their historical context, including the events noted in the Data Classification Structure above.

Returning to the Good Work research, the next step used was "...to ask numerous questions of the data" (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001, p. 10), a process also used in this study. The questions may be numerical (How many times did Meade express his belief that he did his duty?), descriptive (What is Meade's view of his mission?) or comparative (Is there a correlation between Meade's sense of duty and his willingness to obey orders?). This questioning process guided the analysis of the data and identified relationships and patterns that exist in the data.

As in the good work research (Gardner, Csikszentmihali, & Damon, 2001) a coding guide was developed to keep this researcher consistent in the coding process (See Appendix A). For example, the guide describes the operational

definition of responsibility as follows: Responsibility is a state manifested by any act, decision, or communication that is intended to or results in providing for or maintaining the welfare of any constituent and is directly attributable to General Meade. The guide also contains descriptions of each category, examples, and considerations, if any.

Historiographical Bias

The guide also reminds the researcher that, as much as possible, to allow the data to speak and not to infer anything about the data. For instance, in the example above, if Meade had expressed in a letter to his wife that he changed his mind and did not wish to engage in a public discussion with Historicus because it would bring embarrassment and stress to the family, then that would have been recorded as fulfilling his responsibility to his family. The action would meet the operational definition of responsibility since it is clearly attributable to Meade, and would protect the well being of his family. However, he did not make such a statement and the researcher cannot infer this from the data.

One of the problems with the historical record and perception of Meade is separating what is true from what people believe is true. For instance, T. Harry Williams (1952) reports that Meade was too timid to fight a war and that Meade was afraid of being attacked at Williamsport. He interprets Meade's conference with his Generals and the resultant decision to forego an attack as indicative of fear. But Meade decided to attack the next day. Was he suddenly possessed by a wave of courage that previously had been lacking? If a Meade aide reported that Meade appeared fearful or expressed fear, or if Meade had written to

someone that he feared the results of an attack, Williams' claims would carry more weight. The point is that the assumption of Meade's fear has prevailed, and while Williams may be right, there is no direct evidence supporting it and an alternative interpretation seems as logical as Williams' assertion.

While interpretation is part of this study, it is important that the findings of this research are factually based. The study's conclusions or assertions may be more loosely constructed, but are identified as such. Stake (1995) describes the process as follows:

The logical path to assertions often is apparent neither to the reader nor to the researchers themselves.... For assertions, we draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivations may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, assertions of other researchers. It will be helpful to the reader when such leaps to conclusion are labeled as speculation or theory, but researchers often do not. By custom, researchers are privileged to assert what they find meaningful as a result of their inquiries. Their reports and consultations will include strictly determined findings and loosely determined assertions. (p. 12)

Triangulation

Triangulation is generally regarded as a process that incorporates multiple methods of data collection and/or analysis in order to increase the accuracy of a study's findings, increasing validity and reliability. (Slavin, 2007). The process builds confidence in the results. Recently, however, triangulation is being viewed in a broader context. Arguments have been made challenging whether or not

triangulation actually does increase accuracy (Moran-Ellis, J., et al., 2006). One objection is that the concept of triangulation assumes that there is a specific object that can be triangulated. Other benefits of triangulation are being recognized, however. Triangulation through mixed methods can generate new knowledge through the synthesis of knowledge from several data sets. It can also allow different voices to be heard, or reflect the complexity of a phenomenon (Moran-Ellis, et al., 2006).

Expanding on their objection to triangulation as a concept that reflects validity, Richardson and St. Pierre present crystallization as a better approach. Rather than being flat and three-sided, "...the central imagery is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with a variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities and angles of approach" (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2008, p. 478). Crystallizing is an example of the expanding view of triangulation in qualitative research and is particularly relative to the case study of General Meade.

The resources available for this research are all documentary. There is no opportunity for interview or other methods to be employed. However, in the spirit of diversifying the types of sources, the documents are diversified. General Meade's personal correspondences to his wife, his military communications as recorded in the Official Record, and his testimony before the CCW are three different types of communication originating with the General. Diaries, memoirs of contemporaries, contemporary newspaper articles, and magazine articles offer a view of the general by those who knew him. Historical narratives offer

interpretations of the historical record. Each of the biographies of Meade presents a different perspective from a different historical era. While these sources do not offer a great opportunity for the preferred multiple method approach to validation, they represent the variety of the multidimensionalities and angles of approach suggested by the imagery of the crystal.

Selection of the Case

The selection of a case is sometimes based on the fact that we simply want or need to learn more about that particular case and not necessarily because we want to learn about other cases or a particular problem. Stake, (1995) refers to this as an intrinsic case study. That is how this research started. It was suggested to this researcher that a study of General Meade would be interesting because there has been relatively little written about him. While there has been relatively little written about Meade compared to others such as Lee, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan, there is quite a body of work to be found about General Meade. And it is all so very confusing. The confounding extremes of General Meade are exceeded by the confounding extremes of perspectives regarding his ability and his reputation, as has been previously put forth in Chapters 1 and 2.

As this researcher read more and more about Meade, a central question developed. Why is a man who accomplished so much so maligned? Other questions emerged. Why has there been no study of his leadership, as there have been with Lincoln, Lee and others? Could Meade have done anything to avoid the damage to his reputation? What is the perception of Meade if attention

is focused on something other than his military victories or lack thereof? Are there valuable lessons on leadership that have been lost because nobody is looking? These questions lead to an instrumental perspective of the case. Are there lessons for leaders, or those trying to do good work, that can be learned from this case? Thus, what started as an intrinsic case study evolved into a case that is also instrumental in nature.

Chapter III Summary

The methodology of this research strongly parallels the methods used in the Good Work Project. Adjustments were made to accommodate the case study of a historical figure, General George Gordon Meade. The procedures used generated a diverse and vast amount of data, which is used to answer the research questions posed by the researcher. That analysis is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

Overview

General George Gordon Meade has rarely been recognized by his contemporaries or historians as having a significant role in the Civil War. Yet he attained the highest command position in the Union's most important army and held it for two years until the war's end, quite an accomplishment in an era where a commander's tenure was more likely to be measured in months than years. Meade was neither politically connected or intimately associated with his superiors in the army, yet politicians were unsuccessful in displacing him and his superiors were disinclined to dismiss him. A review of the literature reveals this recurring theme; Meade was pretty good, but not good enough. This research explores the possibility that Meade has been undervalued as a civil war commander.

The historical perspective of General Meade is fairly constant and straightforward. He was a highly principled man, very religious, and gentlemanly in his deportment. That is until his infamous temper erupted, which often alienated him from his colleagues. Meade was known as a fierce fighter but a mediocre commander. He was at his military best at Gettysburg, where his skillful handling of the troops gave the men of the Army of the Potomac the opportunity to defeat Robert E. Lee's troops. But, according to historians and Lincoln, he was too cautious and plodding to crush Lee, allowing Lee to escape after being severely crippled at Gettysburg and thus prolonging the war for two more years.

He was a faithful subordinate to Grant, but it was Grant and Sheridan who received the accolades for defeating Lee's army.

This perspective of Meade's leadership is accurate for the most part, questionable in some aspects, but certainly incomplete. As this research suggests, Meade is not as simple a character as he is portrayed. Meade's strong beliefs and values drove his behavior and decisions. They also brought him into conflict with President Lincoln, a number of generals, politicians and the press. The forces brought to bear by each of these stakeholders and their relationships with Meade influenced Meade's decisions as a commander as well as his effectiveness. His every action as commander of the Army of the Potomac has been analyzed, critiqued, and criticized from a military perspective, but the man behind the general is usually ignored. But, it is from his personal perspective that we are able to glean insights into how he struggled to lead and the conflicts that accompanied his leadership.

Much has been written about why Meade was good, but not good enough. This research is designed to determine what he did right, and what leadership lessons can be learned from his experience. The Good Work framework used to guide this research considers his traits, attributes, and values in determining if Meade has met his responsibilities and acted ethically. These are therefore central to revealing any lessons that might be learned from General Meade's leadership experience.

Chapter II of this paper reviews the historical perspective of Meade, a perspective that has been based largely on his military record. Even the

accounts of Meade that are not based solely on his military record are still garnered from people who knew him in his capacity as a soldier and commander. It could probably be no other way. General Meade, the soldier and commander, and George Meade, the man, are inseparably entwined. This chapter follows General Meade's experiences and thoughts from the beginning of the Civil War to its conclusion. Many of Meade's early experiences and thoughts are integral parts of his evolution as a commander. This research presents a critical perspective of this evolution, and focuses on the man as well as the general. It develops a deeper understanding of General Meade by considering his attributes, beliefs and thoughts as well as his military record as his Civil War experience unfolds.

This chapter begins with Meade's early development in the Army of the Potomac, covering the period from April 1861 to August 1862. He works his way through the ranks based on his ability to fight and lead men. During this period he is learning the ways of the army, war, and politics. The next section covers September of 1862 through June 1863. During this time, Meade ascends the ranks of the army's higher command, working through divisional and corps command and finally being placed in command of the Army of the Potomac on June 28, 1863. In each of these positions, Meade is learning to command and honing his skills and military beliefs. From June 28 until March of 1864 Meade exercised an independent command of the army. The controversies surrounding Meade begin to develop after his brilliant victory at Gettysburg. These controversies occupy most of this time period and Meade becomes a

disconsolate and marginalized commander. The final phase of Meade's Civil War experience is in the shadow of General Grant. Grant arrives on the scene in March of 1864 and quickly assumes primary control of the Army of the Potomac. Although Meade and Grant respect each other and make an unnecessarily uncomfortable command arrangement work, Meade continues to feel the lack of support from his superiors and cannot escape the sting of almost constant criticism from the press. Meade entered the war with a burning desire to serve his country and prove himself. Even though he did both, he was a dejected and bitter man at the war's end.

Becoming a Fighter: April 1861 to August 1862

Detroit, Duty, and the Radical Republicans

Although the Civil War broke out on April 12, 1861 General Meade was not assigned to McClellan's army until September of 1861. He and his troops were not actively engaged in battle until Gaines Mills in June of 1862. General Meade's letters during this time period reveal thoughts and beliefs that he held for the entire war. These early beliefs would later influence his decisions as the commander of the Army of the Potomac. His letters also begin to change in content and tenor as the war slowly grinds through year after year and wears on Meade. This chapter follows Meade's command from the beginning of the conflict to its conclusion. Considered in the context of events, it will reveal Meade's thoughts, traits and beliefs, and Meade's perspective as he faces the challenges of war.

An unwavering dedication to duty is one of Meade's most notable traits. But as the war breaks out, this unwavering sense of duty creates a problem for Meade that causes him immeasurable difficulty. When the war erupted in April of 1861, Meade, then a captain in the Topographical Engineers, was living in Detroit with his family. Detroit officials, frenzied by the surrender of Fort Sumner, insisted that all military officers and their commands assemble in the town square and swear their allegiance to the Union. Meade refused to attend the meeting, feeling he had sworn his allegiance when he joined the army, and that he need not do it again, unless his superior officers ordered it. Meade's duty, as he saw it, was to obey military orders, not the orders of politicians or public officials. Writing to a friend, Meade states:

But, as for myself, I have ever held it to be my duty to uphold and maintain the Constitution and resist the disruption of this government. With this opinion, I hold the other side responsible for the existing condition of affairs. Besides, as a soldier, holding a commission, it has always been my judgment that duty required I should disregard all political questions, and obey orders. (Letter to Joshua Barney, April 7, 1861, Meade Papers)

Senator Zechariah Chandler, a Michigan Senator in the United States Congress, and former mayor of Detroit, was outraged at Meade's action. This seemingly isolated incident would have significant ramifications. Chandler would become a powerful member of the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War (CCW). He and committee chair Chairman Benjamin Wade would attempt to

have Meade removed from command of the Army of the Potomac. On March 3, 1864 during the CCW's investigation of Gettysburg, and having only heard the



Figure 8. Senator Chandler.

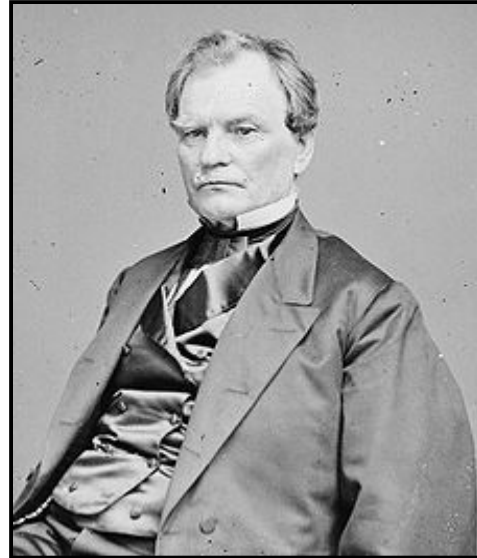


Figure 9. Senator Wade.

(Library of Congress)

testimony of Generals Sickles and Doubleday, the Congressmen approached Lincoln. Presenting him with the testimony to date, they asked Lincoln to remove Meade from command. They favored Hooker as the replacement but would accept anybody suitable to the President. The Senators added that if Lincoln failed to take action, they would be forced to make the testimony public and make comment. Lincoln listened politely but took no action. Meade's refusal to retake his oath in Detroit was based on his ethical beliefs, but it fueled Chandler's belief that West Point officers were either traitors or Confederate sympathizers. True to their word, the Senators and other radical Republicans in Congress would oppose Meade at every opportunity.

Meade's action not only reflects his commitment to duty, it provides an early indication of how Meade's disdain for politicians and the public would create problems for him as commander of the Army of the Potomac. As indicated in this letter, Meade, as was the case with most West Point trained officers, refused to participate in partisan politics, believing that he served the nation, not a political party.

More important is Meade's comment, "I have ever held it to be my duty to uphold and maintain the Constitution and resist the disruption of this government." This is the professional soldier's view of the ultimate purpose of the army. Its singular mission is to defend the United States from foreign attack. This belief will eventually contribute to the marginalization of Meade by Lincoln when Meade has independent command of the Army of the Potomac.

Captain Meade was anxious to join the war effort, but obtaining an assignment would be unexpectedly difficult. The reasons for the delay are unclear, but it well may have been the work of Chandler and the radical Republicans in Congress. They pushed for a severe prosecution of the war and advocated punishing the South for its view on slavery. They also had a high disregard for West Point trained officers. Chandler once wrote that Lincoln "is surrounded by Old Foggy Army officers more than half of whom are downright traitors and the other one half sympathize with the South." (Retrieved January 10, 2011 from <http://www.mrlincolnwhitehouse.org>).

Meade enters the War Enthusiastically

The forty-six year old Meade was a twenty year veteran of the army and had served in the Seminole and Mexican wars. Meade pressed the War Department for an assignment, but continued to wait and watch as Topographical Corps officers junior to him, such as Franklin and Pope, were promoted to the rank of Brigadier General in the volunteer army. He finally received a promotion to Brigadier General on August 31, 1861, probably due to his wife's considerable political connections and the efforts of Senator David Wilmot of Pennsylvania. Meade reported to McClellan's army and was assigned as a brigade commander in General McCall's Pennsylvania Reserves.

Meade would not lead his troops in battle until the summer of 1862. During his first year he spent most of his time in camp preparing his men for the upcoming challenges. Throughout this period, not having much to report to Margaret in terms of activity, he had time to write of his thoughts on the war, his opinions of the men and officers in the army, affairs in Washington, and his ambitions. Many of Meade's beliefs and traits are discerned from these letters.

Meade quickly settled into camp life and was quite content. His early letters are calm and have the tone of polite conversation. On September 22, 1861, three weeks into his war assignment, he writes to his wife:

I find camp life agrees very well with me, and the active duties I have entered into are quite agreeable. Sometimes I have a little sinking at the heart, when I reflect that perhaps I might fail at the good scratch; but I

try to console myself with the belief that I shall probably do as well as most of my neighbors... (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 219-220)

Meade may be a little insecure at this point because it is the first time he has commanded so many men. However he is actually quite content, even happy with his assignment.

As with most West Point officers, Meade has little regard for volunteer soldiers. But at this time, his main task is to train and drill his volunteers until they are capable soldiers. On October 12, 1861 Meade writes to his wife that he did not have a decided opinion about the men in the Reserves, but goes on to say:

Much, as I have always told you, will depend on the turn events take.... They do not, any of them, officers or men, seem to have the least idea of the solemn duty they have imposed upon themselves in becoming soldiers. Soldiers they are not in any sense of the word. Brave men they may be, and I trust in God will prove themselves.... For myself, I am here from a sense of duty, because I could not with honor be away, and whatever befalls me, those of my blood who survive me can say, I trust, that I did my duty. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 223)

In this letter Meade is moderate in his opinions. His disregard for volunteers, soldiers and officers, is apparent, but he is willing to give them a chance to prove themselves. It will not be long until Meade becomes more decided in his opinion of volunteers. Meade is also conveying his sense of duty to Margaret, something that he will do repeatedly throughout the war. Eventually, he will struggle with balancing the responsibilities of family with his duty as a soldier. Meade also

reveals how important reputation is to him, and his belief that fulfilling one's duty should garner a good reputation. This is a theme that will also reoccur and become more intense as the war progresses. Protecting his reputation will become almost as difficult as cornering Lee.

McCall's division was involved in some early scuffling between the Army of the Potomac and Lee's army, but Meade's brigade was not involved. In a November 7, 1861 letter Meade demonstrates another trait that will cause him a great deal of distress throughout the war. Obviously rankled, he writes to Margaret:

McCall showed me to-day a very severe letter from McClellan, commenting on the state of discipline of his division. I think the report of the officers who inspected us unfair and illiberal. Whilst I am aware our discipline is much below what it ought to be, yet I deny the assertion that we are worse than the rest of the army. McCall was very much mortified, and I am afraid McClellan has been prejudiced against him by the talking of others. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p226)

Meade has a great sense of justice that often manifests itself in sensitivity to criticism that he feels is unwarranted. Throughout the war, Meade will lament criticism that he feels is unjust, for others and for himself. This characteristic will also take its toll on him as the war wears on. In this case, Meade, although rankled, does not take the criticism personally.

Meade's Thoughts on War and the South

An insight into Meade's beliefs about the war is garnered from his November 24, 1861 letter to Margaret. He comments:

You know I have always told you this would be a war of dollars and cents-that is, of resources-that if the North managed properly, the South ought to be first exhausted and first to feel the ruinous effects of war.... In the meantime, we at the North should continue the good work of setting aside such men as Fremont and upholding such sentiments as those of Sherman, who declares the private property of Secessionists must be respected. Let the ultras, on both sides be repudiated, and the masses of conservative and moderate men may compromise and settle the difficulty. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 231)

General Fremont had established martial law in Missouri, a neutral state, confiscated the private property of secessionists, and emancipated the slaves. He refused to reverse his actions and Lincoln removed him from command on November 2, 1861. Meade disagreed with making war on civilians and felt the North should respect the rights of the Southern people. At this point he still hoped for a quick settlement of the conflict and an amicable peace.

Meade continues in the same letter:

I fear no amount of personal energy or efforts to do what is right will ever make these volunteers into soldiers.... The men are good material, and with good officers might readily be molded into soldiers; but the officers, as a rule, with but very few exceptions, are ignorant, inefficient,

and worthless.... I ought not perhaps to write this to you, and you must understand it is all in confidence... (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 231)

The war is developing and Meade is obviously more intense than he was in September. Apparently, the volunteers are not proving themselves worthy and Meade's prejudice against volunteers has already surfaced. In addition, Meade has expressed an opinion to Margaret that he would not express to others, and does not want her to express it to others, either. His wife is his only confidant, and she kept that confidence, saving his letters but guarding their content. Throughout the war, Meade's innermost thoughts, criticisms, and frustrations will be expressed to Margaret.

Meade again expresses his belief that war should not be waged on citizens in his December 6, 1861 letter to his wife. Meade emotionally reports that he had led a foraging expedition:

...to the farm of a man named Gunnell, who was reported not only as an act Secessionist, but one who was making arrangements to place his crops in the possession of the Confederate Army.... and in about two hours loaded some sixty wagons, stripping his place of everything we thought would be useful to the enemy or that we could use ourselves. I never had a more disagreeable duty in my life to perform.... The great difficulty was to prevent the wanton and useless destruction of property which could not be made available for military purposes. The men and officers got into their heads that the object of the expedition was the punishment of a rebel...it was with considerable trouble they could be

prevented from burning everything. It made me sad to do such injury, and I really was ashamed of our cause, which thus required war to be made on individuals. (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 234)



Figure 10. Margaretta Meade. (General Meade Society)

Meade demonstrates that his values and beliefs are consistent with his actions. Meade has no problem with confiscating supplies his army could use and preventing them from reaching the enemy, but as he previously stated, he objects to destroying private property that has no military purpose. He believes that punishing citizens is not the proper course for the war, and does what he can to stop it. This example of Meade's view of the war demonstrates why the radical Republicans were wrong about Meade. He sympathized with the people of the South, but not with the South. He had no problem with doing his military duty;

destroying Lee's army and returning the South to the Union. As will be seen, he is an effective and fearless leader in battle.

Meade expounds on this belief in a February 1862 letter to Margaret. Referring to ceremonies in Washington that celebrated recent Union victories, Meade reflects:

For my part, I consider the propriety of rejoicing somewhat questionable. In the first place, because we are not yet out of the woods, and, secondly, the character of the war is such, that although I undoubtedly desire success, yet I do not feel we can or should triumph and boast as we would over a foreign foe. If we ever expect to be reunited, we should remember this fact and deport ourselves more like the afflicted parent who is compelled to chastise his erring child, and who performs the duty with a sad heart. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 247)

Meade would hold this thought throughout the war, even though he will eventually advocate a more vigorous prosecution of the war as it drags on.

Meade continues, telling Margaret that he does not know what to make of new Secretary of War Stanton's insistence that armies must fight, and even if whipped, fight on. He writes:

To fight is the duty and object of armies, undoubtedly, but a good general fights at the right time and place, and if he does not, he is pretty sure to be whipped and stay whipped. It is very easy to talk of fighting on after you are whipped; but I should like to know, if this is all, how wars are ever terminated? (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 247)



Figure 11. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. (Library of Congress)

Stanton, although philosophically aligned with the radical Republicans, would become an ally of Meade's. He felt that Meade was a fighter and that fighting generals deserved support. He would protect and advise Meade during the Committee on the Conduct of War's investigation into Gettysburg. Meade's statement that a good general fights at the right time and place reflects a basic tenet of war that guides the strategies of the West Point trained commanders of the Army of the Potomac. Battles must be fought when you are properly supplied, possess sufficient numbers, and are on ground that gives your army the advantage. As will be discussed later in this chapter, adherence to this tenet will cause Meade immense trouble after Mine Run and Williamsport. This belief leads to the next military tenet expressed by Meade.

When Meade believed the army was ready to settle into winter camp and irritated with the prospect of several months of inactivity he wrote, “The sooner this thing is settled the better, and it can only be settled by one side or the other gaining a most decisive and complete victory” (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 236). Again, he reveals his perspective on war; wars are won by decisive battles against the enemy’s army. This belief will be fundamental to his strategy when he becomes the commander of the Army of the Potomac, but time would show that in the Civil War, this was not the case. While the war’s momentum may have been turned by the Union victory in the great battle at Gettysburg, it was Grant’s relentless pounding and the scorched earth policies of Sherman and Sheridan that would eventually grind the South into submission.

Promotions, Politics, and Reputation

McClellan’s army remained idle through the early months of 1862. A letter of February 23, 1862 makes mention of a Meade promotion. The Senate had been considering the confirmation of a number of officers, including Meade. Meade noted that the vote had been delayed twice, essentially due to debate over Baldy Smith’s nomination. Regarding his own nomination, he writes to his wife:

I cannot ascertain whether I have passed or not, and am so indifferent that I have not taken the trouble to inquire of any one who might be able to inform me. My name was published in a list of those said to be confirmed, but it is now said that the list was wrong. I don’t know of any probable opposition, unless my friend Zach Chandler should think proper

to enlighten the Senate on his Detroit experience of my unreliability.

(Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 248)

Meade received his confirmation as a brigadier general in the volunteer army on February 26. He may have been truly indifferent at this point, but Meade would eventually have to assert himself for some promotions in rank or position, and would be disappointed and frustrated when others were delayed or denied. This was just the first of several similar instances. Meade would also claim indifference in those situations, but these claims will be belied by his actions and words. In particular, Grant's failure to promote Meade and to assign him an independent command will create a schism between the two generals, as discussed later in this chapter.

Another insight into Meade is garnered from his additional comments on this promotion, presented in his letter to Margaret of May 5, 1862. He writes:

Although I don't think General McClellan thought much of me *after* I was appointed, yet I am quite sure my appointment was due to him, and almost entirely to him. At that time his will was omnipotent and he had only to ask and it was given. He had told me himself that he had simply presented my name to the President, to which I replied that I considered that the same as appointing me; which I do, and for which I am not only grateful but proud, being prouder of such an appointment than if all the politicians in the country had backed me. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 263)

Meade does not indicate why he thought McClellan might not think much of him, but it may just have been some insecurity on Meade's part. But McClellan's

recommendation gives him the approval that is so important to Meade, resulting in Meade's pride. Meade's appointment was probably routine, but he ascribes great importance to McClellan's involvement. Meade places exceptional value on the opinions of superior officers, and little to those of politicians. Unfortunately for Meade, powerful politicians, such as Chandler will reciprocate.

Meade is aware of the power of politicians, yet he maintains an antagonistic attitude toward them throughout the war, much to his disadvantage. That he thoroughly understands the state of affairs is evidenced by his May 10, 1862 letter to his wife. He expounds:

The recent act of Congress in reference to command of troops is, I understand, construed by the Secretary of War into an entire destruction of rank in the army, It is now decided that the Secretary can put any officer wherever he pleases, over the heads of his seniors, and no one has the right, or will be permitted, to protest or contest his right. Ord has been a major general for his Dranesville fight, and if McCall is superseded, I think it probable Ord will be given his division. I think the promotion of Ord just and deserved; for if I had had the good luck to have been in command at Dranesville, I should have claimed the benefit of it. War is a game of chance, and besides the chances of service, the accidents and luck of the field, in our army, an officer has to run the chances of having his political friends in power, or able to work for him. First we had Cameron, Scott (General), with Thomas (adjutant general) and McDowell, who rules the roost, distributed appointments and favors. Bull Run put Scott's and

McDowell's noses out of joint, and brought in McClellan. Then Stanton took Cameron's place, fell out with McClellan, whose nose was therefore put out of joint, and now McDowell again turns up, and so it goes from one to another. A poor devil like myself, with so little merit and no friends, has to stand aside and see others go ahead. Upon the whole, however, I have done pretty well, and ought not to complain. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 265)

Meade obviously understands that political connections can make or break an officer and laments that he has none. But such is not the case. His wife, Margaret, is the daughter of former Congressman John Sergeant, and she still enjoys the influence of her famous father, even though he passed in 1852. Meade probably received his appointment to McClellan's army through her political influence. Meade also enjoyed the support of Pennsylvania governor Andrew Curtin and a number of United States Congressmen. Secretary of War Stanton even joined the ranks of his supporters. But Meade refused to cultivate any of this support, holding to the West Point tradition of non-involvement in the political arena.

Meade believes that rank is determined by seniority and distinction in the field. He is often characterized as being modest, which he is, but his modesty does not suppress his ambition. He longs for the opportunity to distinguish himself in the field and earn rank and recognition, as indicated by his comments on Ord's success. He will become rankled toward the end of the war when Sheridan gains praise in a command Meade feels should have been his. When Meade says he is without merit, he simply means he has not earned recognition

in battle or any other significant contribution. And as much as he crows about the injustice of this law, he will almost immediately advance his friends when he takes command of the army in 1863.

What is most notably derived from this letter is that General Meade knows how the political world works in the Army of the Potomac and in the nation's capital, but he will not compromise his principles, even though if it may be to his benefit to do so. This trait enhances Meade's reputation, but it also puts him at a disadvantage when his promotions are at stake. Meade will eventually look for support in Congress, but he will not seek undue reward or credit that is based solely on political influence.

Meade provides another example of lessons known but not learned in an earlier letter of April 18, 1862, writing to Margaret:

McClellan is not the man to make himself popular with the masses. His manners are reserved and retiring.... He has never studied or practiced the art of pleasing, and indeed has not paid attention to it which every man whose position is dependent upon popular favor must pay, if he expects to retain his position... I told you of ill-advised acts on his part, showing a disposition to gratify personal feelings, at the expense of his own interests. I have no doubt now that the enmity of Heintzelman, Sumner, McDowell, and Keyes can all be traced to this very cause-his failure to conciliate them, and the injustice they consider his favoritism to others has been to them. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 253)

Much the same has been said about Meade. He was warm and congenial at formal affairs, as a host to dignitaries, and in small groups of trusted friends, but outside of these circumstances, he remained distant. He not only did not court the approval of the public, as much as he longed for it, he exacerbated the situation by alienating the newspapers. When in McClellan's position he must have forgotten the importance of public favor. Meade was conciliatory on occasion, but it was not a trait for which he is known. Ironically, Meade will eventually feel the sting of Grant's favoritism and will look for, but not receive, conciliation by Lincoln.

Meade did however learn the lesson of avoiding self-indulgence. He did not satisfy his personal feelings at his own expense, remaining ethical in all situations. He believed that it was an injustice to promote people over others, more deserving, simply to reward your friends. While Meade would always consider the character of his appointees, as well as his ability to work with them, he held to the order of seniority and service in recommending promotions.

It was not until late in June 1862 that Meade's brigade was engaged in battle. On June 26 Meade's brigade was held in reserve during the bloody battle of Beaver Creek Dam, but on June 27, it was heavily engaged at the left center of the Union line during the Battle of Gainesville. Then on June 30 Meade was seriously wounded in the Battle of Glendale. He was shot in the right arm, but a more serious wound resulted when another bullet entered his back high on the right side, close to his spine, and exited near his right hip. The wounds required

convalescence at his home in Philadelphia, but Meade, anxious for action, returned to duty nine days before his leave ended. Duty called.

In these battles, part of the Seven Days Battles, Meade proved himself to be a brave and effective leader. His troops fought gallantly, earning Meade praise and respect. Meade was now proud of his volunteers, and they returned the feeling. After his wounds healed and he rejoined the army, Meade wrote on August 19, 1862:

I have not yet assumed command of my old brigade, as I am awaiting the arrival of Reynolds.... I, however, yesterday went amongst them, riding through the camps, and was much gratified at their turning out by companies and cheering me. I stopped at each company and said a few words, indicating my gratification at being once more among them, and commending them for their good conduct in battle. They seemed right glad to see me, both officers and men, and I do believe they were sincere. This is very gratifying, for they had more opportunity of knowing what I did and what I am than my superior officers. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 303-304)

Meade's gratification is indicative of his need for approval and appreciation, a need that would be his bane. Throughout the war, Meade would confide his disappointment and disillusionment to Margaret when he thought he was denied the proper recognition for his service or when some one expressed dissatisfaction with him. It mattered not to Meade if it was officials in Washington, the press, the public, or friends and family, he desired their approval and

appreciation. This is not to be confused with affiliation. Meade held to the army tradition of maintaining a social division between himself and the troops, He also felt no need to socialize or become a crony with other officers. Meade was content with having a very small group of trusted friends, which consisted primarily of his aide Theodore Lyman, and Generals Reynolds, Hancock, Humphreys, and Gibbon. Meade may have enjoyed a better feeling from the ranks of the Army of the Potomac as its commander if he had more frequently “went amongst them”.

Meade continues:

.... I have been talking over the battles with different officers, and I am coming to the conclusion that the Pennsylvania Reserves did save the army...that is to say, had it not been for the Reserves holding the enemy in check on Monday, June 30th, and thus enabling the different corps to retreat and unite on that night, they (the enemy) would undoubtedly have broken our centre and divided our forces in two, which could have been destroyed in detail. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 304)

He also writes to Margaret on September 23, after the Battle of South Mountain, that “Although the papers are silent on the subject of the Pennsylvania Reserves, yet I can assure you in the army they are acknowledged as the best division for fighting in the whole army, and are praised everywhere” (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 313). Meade’s appreciation of his troops was growing along with his self-confidence.

The Reserves eventually expressed their appreciation of Meade by presenting him with a magnificent sword, at a cost of \$1500. The presentation was made in August of 1863. As reported in the New York *Tribune* on August 31, 1863, in accepting the honorary sword from the Pennsylvania Reserves, General Meade states:

...and I say unhesitatingly before this large assembly, and in view of the history of the War, which will vindicate my words, there is no division in the Army of the Potomac, glorious as I consider it, which can claim greater credit for gallant and laborious service than the Pennsylvania Reserve Corps. [Applause] In this, Sir, I take no credit to myself. It is not my own personal services, but the services of the soldiers of which I speak-the gallantry of the privates of the Pennsylvania Corps.... I have only to allude to New Market Crossroads, sometimes called Glendale, to which I refer most emphatically, because some of the most distinguished officers of this army, ignorant of the facts and misled by information received at the time, but which subsequently proved incorrect, have brought grave charges against this Division. It has been said that this Corps ran from that field, but I stood there with them and saw them fighting in their places until darkness fell upon the field, and at the time I was borne away my men were engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with the batteries of the enemy:...

They never ran away. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 313-314)

Meade highly valued reputation, especially his own and that of those who served under and with him. Meade is responding to General Hooker's attack on the

reputation of the Reserves. The self-serving Hooker insisted that the Pennsylvania Reserves had behaved dishonorably, fleeing in panic at Glendale. In his official report, Hooker stated that:

Meanwhile the enemy's attack had grown in force and violence, and after an ineffectual effort to resist it, the whole of McCall's division, was completely routed, and many of the fugitives rushed down the road on which my right was resting, while others took to the cleared fields and broke, through my lines from one end of them to the other, and actually fired on and killed some of my men as they passed. At first I was apprehensive that the effect would be disastrous on my command, and was no little relieved when they had passed my lines. Following closely upon the footsteps of these demoralized people were the broken masses of the enemy, furiously pressing them on to me... (OR, Series 1, Vol. 23, part 1, p. 112)

Hooker's characterization of the retreat was certainly more colorful than required and clearly reflected poorly upon the Pennsylvania Reserves. Dan Sickles' official report simply stated, "General McCall became engaged. A considerable body of his troops falling back on my line..." (OR, Series 1, Vol. 23, part 1, p.139). Hooker's report was published in *Wilkes Spirit of the Times* and other papers, creating a heated dispute between Hooker and McCall.

Hooker never withdrew his characterization, but he did admit to McCall that he was not in a position that permitted him to know what precipitated the retreat and that he was aware that troops could retreat with honor. But his

characterization clearly dishonored the Reserves, although Hooker claimed otherwise. On October 15, 1862, Hooker sent the following to Assistant- Adjutant General S. Williams:

If you have no objection I request that you will substitute the inclosed report of the battle of Glendale for one forwarded at the proper time. I desire it for the reason that the latter contained a reflection on the conduct of McCall's command which they nobly redeemed at South Mountain and Antietam. The language of my report was just and called for when made, but I do not think that it was so much the fault of the men as of other causes. I am now of opinion that the men were all right. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 23, part 1, p 115)

While Meade was not drawn directly into the fray, he was fully aware of Hooker's comments. Although Meade remained on good terms with Hooker at the time, their relationship was never more than cordial, despite Meade's belief of a closer relationship. But by the time Meade made his remarks at the sword ceremony, Meade had replaced Hooker as commander of the Army of the Potomac. The two generals had become completely at odds with each other, for a number of reasons that will be discussed later in this chapter. While Meade honors the West Point code of not disparaging another officer publicly, to those present there was no doubt to whom the remarks were directed.

In reality, neither Meade nor Hooker was party to the whole affair. Meade recalls the hand-to-hand fighting of his command, which is confirmed by the official reports of other officers. But his injuries forced him to leave the field

before the division gave way. At the time of the attack in question, McCall's division only numbered about 6,000 men, who were indeed forced to yield their position and abandon their canon, but they did engage in hand-to-hand combat before the enemy overwhelmed them. For his part, Hooker was unaware of the events that precipitated the retreat or the valiant attempt to hold position, he not witnessing these events. Given the reports of other officers and the battle record of the Pennsylvania Reserves, which Hooker acknowledges in his request to have his report modified, Sickles' description of "a considerable body of his troops falling back" is most reasonable. Given the tone of his subsequent responses to McCall, it is hard to believe that Hooker was not trying to advance his career and disparage a rival with his report.

This dispute between Hooker and McCall is but one small example of the manipulation, posturing, and vilification that occurred between officers in the Army of the Potomac. For Meade, the sword presentation is an affirmation of his generalship. It represents the approval and appreciation that he desperately needs and that he will often feel is denied him. Meade's perception of being unappreciated and unjustly criticized will become central to his frustrations and eventual bitterness. But on this day, the general was enjoying the appreciation of the troops who fought so gallantly with him.

A Taste of Command: August 1862 to November 1862

Ready for Promotion and Command

While the army was reorganizing during August 1862, and in reference to an anticipated battle, Meade writes to his wife on August 18:

For my part, the sooner it comes off, the better, as I think, after the next great struggle is settled, we will begin to see some prospect of a settlement. If can only give them a good thrashing, a regular out-and-out victory, I think the demoralization of their forces will be such that they will find it very difficult to collect and organise another army. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 305)

Meade again reflects his West Point training, believing that wars are won by “great” battles. But he underestimates the resolve of the South and its soldiers. For example, although the South was not “out-and-out” defeated at Gettysburg, they did take a “good thrashing”. Meade was correct in his assertion that the South could not raise another army, but the Army of Virginia, depleted as it was of soldiers and supplies, would fight for almost two more years. However, in the upcoming anticipated battle, the Union would take the thrashing.

The Pennsylvania Reserves had been detached and sent to support General John Pope’s Army of Virginia and was with that army when it clashed with Lee’s forces on August 30 in the Second Battle of Bull Run. Lee split his forces and easily trapped Pope between them, forcing the Union to withdraw after sustaining severe casualties. Meade described the fighting as lasting from August 28 to 30, and writes to Margaret on August 31, 1862:

The Pennsylvania Reserves were engaged throughout the whole time, and particularly distinguished themselves on the afternoon of the 30th, when our attack on the enemy’s right flank having failed, they attacked us very vigorously on our left flank; when the Reserves came into

action, and held them in check and drove them back, so that when other troops came up, we were enabled to save our left flank, which if we had not done, the enemy would have destroyed the whole army.... On these recent battle-fields I claim, as before, to have done my duty. My services, then, should I think, add to those previously performed, and that I may now fairly claim the command of a division. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 308)

In May, Meade had declared himself without merit. But after the Seven Days Battle, being wounded, fighting well at Second Bull Run, and having done his duty, Meade feels he has merit enough to be promoted. He believes he has McClellan's support. On September 6 he writes, "...I saw Seth Williams, and he says McClellan told him to remind him whenever any reorganization took place; or there was a chance to give me a division, I should have it" (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 308).

Meade also commented on the condition of his troops, writing to Margaret on September 4, 1862, "Our division, the Reserves, is pretty well used up, and ought, strictly speaking, to be withdrawn, reorganized, filled up with recruits, and put in efficient condition" This is, again, a belief fundamental to many West Point generals. Effective battle requires sufficient numbers of soldiers, properly supplied, and lead by capable officers. Meade would make this same lament to his wife after Gettysburg. As will be discussed later, being forced to push Lee without refitting the army, especially given the terrible toll the Union troops paid in that battle, would contribute to Meade's frustration with the Lincoln administration.

Returning to Meade's desire to have command of a division, Meade would soon have his wish. General Reynolds, at the request of Governor Curtin, was temporarily ordered to Harrisburg to aid in the development of Pennsylvania's militia on September 12, 1862. His departure put Meade in command of Reynolds' division under Hooker, who had replaced McDowell. Hooker immediately and unsuccessfully objected to Reynolds' departure, prompting Meade to divulge to Margaret:

...I saw Seth Williams, who had in his hands, Hooker's protest.... I told Williams very plainly that I saw no occasion for making such an outcry against Reynolds' removal; that I considered it a reflection on my competency to command the division, and that if he came back on any such grounds, I should insist on being relieved.

I am now ready to meet the enemy, for I feel I am in the position I am entitled to. I should have been delighted to have gone to Harrisburg in Reynolds' place, as I have no doubt he will get a large command there.
(Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 310)

Asking to be relieved when your honor was impugned or you were prevented from operating as you saw fit was a common practice in the armies of the Civil War, so Meade's statement is not unusual. More importantly, it is another indication of Meade's sometimes over-sensitivity to having his reputation tarnished. Hooker may have been simply objecting to the removal of Reynolds at the whim of a politician with no reflection on Meade intended or even considered. Meade also is a bit indignant, evidenced by his feeling of entitlement. Meade has

already exhibited his understanding of how positions are awarded in the army, yet he feels entitled to the position. Meade chooses to stand on principle and ignore the reality of the situation. He may have been right, but this is an indication of his inflexibility based on a belief or value, a trait that will unduly influence other decisions. Again Meade laments a lost opportunity for recognition, expressing some jealousy over Reynolds' assignment. Meade is not denigrating Reynolds in any way, as they are good friends.

Less than a week later, Meade was in command of the division at the battle of South Mountain. As Hooker affirmed, the Pennsylvania Reserves would soon quell any fears about their tenacity in battle. Meade wrote three letters to Margaret regarding the battles on September 18, 19, and 20, 1862. He states:

I commanded the division of Pennsylvania Reserves in the action at South Mountain on the 14th. Our division turned the enemy's left flank and gained the day. Their movements were the admiration of the whole army, and I gained great credit.... When General Hooker was wounded, General McClellan placed me in command of the army corps, over General Rickett's head, who ranked me. This selection is a great compliment, and answers all my wishes in regard to my desire to have my services appreciated. I cannot ask for more.... I go into action to-day as the commander of an army corps. If I survive my two stars are secure, and if I fall, you will have my reputation to live on. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 311)

Meade's ambition and his need for recognition and appreciation could not be more apparent. Meade and the Reserves did indeed gain great credit. Being

involved early and in the heaviest action, they fought admirably. Meade's pride may seem to border on arrogance, but it is just the intense passion of a soldier who has a great need for credit. As Meade clearly reveals, he has a wish, even a need, for credit. He also believes that credit for his accomplishments is an integral part of his reputation and that this field promotion reflects credit for his performance, past and present. To Meade, the corps command, as temporary as it may be, having been awarded by McClellan over Ricketts, insures a positive reputation and secures the family's good name.

Other officers shared Meade's attitude about promotion, although Meade may have been more passionate than they. For instance, General John Gibbon provides a perspective on promotions in his memoirs. While at home recovering from his Gettysburg wounds, Meade had sent Gibbon a personal letter in which he told Gibbon that he had requested his return to the army. Gibbon very candidly writes:

I must admit I was not enthusiastic about taking the field again. I had commanded a division for nearly a year and part of the time, a corps in battle, had been twice wounded and twice recommended for promotion by army commanders, but the promotion did not come, though others got it, and I began to lose heart and fancy that, no matter what services were rendered some unseen obstacle kept me out of what is as precious to every soldier as his blood-promotion. This view of the matter was, I am free to admit, not patriotic, but it was human. Of course, the only patriotic way to look at the matter was, to reflect that if the government needed my

services in a higher sphere it would promote me and if it did not do that the inevitable inference was that in its estimation I already had rank enough and others were more entitled to be advanced. Unfortunately my knowledge of the recommendations made by military authorities rather tended to force this line of argument from my mind. (Gibbon, 1928/1998, p. 198)

Ethics, Truth, and Justice

As intense as Meade's ambition is, it is an ethical ambition. Union Generals such as Hooker, Sickles, and Sheridan fulfilled their ambition unethically. They were not above lying, disparaging other officers, claiming undue credit, or using personal and political connections to gain favor, promotion, and fame. But Meade would have none of that, as demonstrated in his reaction to receiving command over Ricketts.

On October 1, 1862, noting inaccuracies in the newspapers regarding who was in command of Hooker's corps and divisions, Meade clarifies the events leading to his corps command, writing to his wife:

When Hooker put me in command of the corps on the field, I immediately sought out Ricketts, told him I presumed there was a mistake, Hooker not knowing he (Ricketts) outranked me, and I turned over command to him, and only resumed it after getting the peremptory order from McClellan, which I sent you. Ricketts appreciated my course, and said there was no one he was more willing to serve under than myself, and that he only made his protest because he considered it a matter of

principle. In this I think he was right, and I should have done the same thing myself, for I do not believe McClellan had the right to do as he did.

(Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 316)

General Meade demonstrates his sense of justice and his belief in seniority in determining the army hierarchy. Meade's values would not permit him to accept the command unjustly, but he could proceed with a clear conscience given his actions and his duty to obey a direct order. Meade would indeed do the same thing as Ricketts when Burnside reorganized the army and mistakenly placed Butterfield, Meade's junior, in command of a corps while Meade held a divisional command.

In this letter of October 1, Meade also writes:

I am very flattered to hear that Mr. Binney and other citizens desired to have me to defend Philadelphia. It was just as well, however, that they were refused; the service would have been temporary, and I should have lost the brilliant chances of the two battles. I envied Reynolds when he left for Harrisburg, and secretly thought the Governor might have applied for me. Afterwards-indeed the next day, after South Mountain-I was grateful beyond measure that I had been overlooked. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 316)

Meade, admirably, admits to the jealousy hinted at in a previous letter. But Meade was an opportunist, not in the negative sense of the word, but he saw the opportunities that fell to him and those which avoided him, and he would claim every opportunity that he rightfully could. For example, when Burnside had

promised him command of the Fifth Corps, Meade did not take a leave to return home for the Christmas holidays, not wanting to miss the opportunity to command the corps if it came. While Meade highly values duty, the need to be recognized and receive fair credit is not far behind.

Meade briefly describes the morning of September 19, the day after the battle at Antietam, to Margaret in a letter of September 20, 1862 and then questions if the impact of this Union victory will be what it should. He writes:

Yesterday morning, at early dawn, we moved forward, when lo! The bird had flown, and we soon ascertained from prisoners, taken straggling on the field, and from the evidences the field itself bore, that we had hit them much harder than they had us, and that in reality our battle was a victory. They all crossed the river and retreated into Virginia, the night of the battle, so that Maryland is free, and their audacious invasion of our soil put an end to. Whether the country will be satisfied with this or not I cannot say, but it ought to be, as I am free to confess I feared at one time the movement from Washington was a dangerous one, for if we were defeated and this army broken up, the country was gone. Now, if there is any common sense in the country, it ought to let us have time to reorganize and get into shape our new lines, and then advance with such overwhelming numbers that resistance on the part of the enemy would be useless. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 311)

The general is again expressing his belief that an army needs to reorganize and refit after a major battle. He goes on to say that if refitted the

Army of the Potomac would overwhelm Lee and end his resistance. Here again, is the West Point influence. Wars are won by organized, well-supplied armies of overwhelming numbers that crush the enemy's army. This was at the core of McClellan's dispute with Halleck. Generals who held to this approach to the war, were conciliatory to the citizens of the South, and supported McClellan became known as McClellanites. While Meade liked McClellan, he never fell into the McClellan clique of officers. Although he would at times defend the general, Meade would also criticize McClellan for being too passive and missing opportunities, such as the one at Antietam. Nevertheless, many historians consider Meade a typical McClellanite because of his military beliefs.

Meade reveals the attitude that will eventually start Lincoln's disillusionment with Meade. After the battle of Gettysburg, Meade will issue the now famous General Order, No. 68, which said in part, "Our task is not yet accomplished, and the Commanding General looks to the Army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 122). As will be detailed later, Lincoln objected to this language, feeling the South was still part of the United States. In this case, however, had Meade made a similar statement in his report, it would have probably brought no reaction. Meade has not yet attained a position that has the eye of the administration, and he can enjoy the anonymity of his position. As the commander of the Army of the Potomac he would lose that anonymity, and Meade would find it difficult, at best, to handle the criticism that comes with notoriety.

Meade's comments also expose a basic military belief that will also haunt Meade during his command of the army. He fears that the army would be broken up and the nation lost. Meade understands that the army is the protection of Washington and that it is the only protection for the industrial and transportation centers of the North. As commander, he will always consider the safety of the army first, a trait that will alienate him from Lincoln, politicians and the public, but endear him to his troops.

Meade continues his September 20 letter, writing:

I am afraid I shall not get the credit for these last battles that I did for those near Richmond, for two reasons: First, I was not wounded; second, old Sam Ringwalt was not there to write letters about me. I find the papers barely mention the Pennsylvania Reserves, call them McCall's troops, never mentioning my name; whereas I was not only in command, but at South Mountain, on the 14th, I was on the extreme right flank, had the conduct of the whole operations, and never saw General Hooker, commanding the corps, after getting his instructions, till the whole affair was over. I must, however, do Hooker the justice to say that he promptly gave credit for what I did, and I have reason to believe it was his urgent appeal to McClellan, that I was the right man to take his place when he was wounded which secured my being assigned to the command of the corps. I send you two pencil notes received on the field of battle, which I wish preserved as evidences of my having done my duty.... These papers, written on the field of battle, amply compensate. A man who under such

circumstances is elevated to rank may well be proud of the fact, and can hardly have his elevation charged to political or petticoat influence.

(Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 311-312)

Meade is unaware of his anonymity. The papers would naturally give credit to the general who commanded the grand division. It would take an exceptional act for a corps commander to receive a great deal of public acclaim in such a massive battle as Antietam. Meade's observation is only partly accurate. Some papers, such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* give him no notice. However, the *New York Daily Tribune* mentioned his name several times in its extensive detailing of the battle at Antietam. He is accurate that being wounded would practically guarantee a mention in the paper, if nothing more than in the traditional listing of the battles wounded and dead (New York Daily Tribune, September 19, 1862, retrieved January 10, 2011 from <http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/guides/hist/onlinenewspapers.html>).

But Meade also reveals what is a fatal flaw for him. He understands that a general would get his due in the papers if someone sent them the information. For example, Hooker, a noted self-promoter, wrote a despatch to the *New York Daily Tribune* on his being wounded saying:

A great battle has been fought, and we are victorious. I had the honor to open it yesterday afternoon... I was wounded and forced to quit the field...I only regret that I was not permitted to take part in the operations until they were concluded... My wound has been painful, but it is not one that will be likely to lay me up. I was shot through the foot (New

York Daily Tribune, September 19, 1862, retrieved January 10, 2011 from <http://gethelp.library.upenn.edu/guides/hist/onlinenewspapers.html>).

Hooker is masterful in his short announcement. He has promoted himself as a hero in a great victory and wounded in action. He is suffering with pain, but not to worry, he will be back soon to carry on his heroic work on the people's behalf.

As commander of the Army of the Potomac, Meade did not talk to the press or have someone promote him through the papers. Unfortunately, he assigned Provost Marshall Marsena Patrick the duty of handling the press and he had less regard for the press than did Meade. This is what some consider Meade's fatal flaw in action. Meade felt the press lied and willingly aided self-promoting generals. His sense of justice and truth would not allow him to use the press to his benefit. He knew that the power of the press could make or break a general, but his values narrowed his perspective.

As has been indicated, justice is important to Meade. He feels it is only just that he gives credit to Hooker, even though he feels he will not get public recognition. But again, the recognition of a superior officer carries a great deal of weight with Meade. The notes he sends home are the orders of McClellan, twice ordering him to take command of the corps. But such is the character of Meade. He did not need to give Hooker credit, but his sense of justice demanded it, especially since he suspected that Hooker was responsible for Meade getting the command that was giving him such satisfaction and pride.

The Need for Good Officers

In his letter to Margaret on October 5, 1862 Meade explains the importance of good officers. He also explains to her that although official records indicated that Hooker's corps had thirty five thousand men, only twelve thousand were available for duty, and of that number, only seven thousand participated in the battle. He continues:

It would take too much to explain this apparent paradox. Suffice it to say, it results from a serious evil, due to the character and constitution of our volunteer force, and from the absence of that control over the men, which is the consequence of the inefficiency of the officers commanding them-I mean regimental and company officers.... Now the difference of five thousand constituted the cowards, skulkers, men who leave the ground with the wounded and do not return for days, the stragglers on the march, and all such characters, which are to be found in every army, but never in so great a ratio as in this volunteer force of ours. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 317-318)

Meade is concerned about the number of soldiers available to fight, consistent with his military beliefs. Meade's concern with the quality of officers will continue, as it is rumored that McClellan will soon be replaced by Hooker.

Relating the rumors regarding the change in command, Meade comments to Margaret:

Hooker is a very good soldier, and a capital officer to command an army corps, but I should doubt his qualifications to command a large army.

If fighting, however, is all that is necessary to make a general, he will certainly distinguish himself. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 318)

How ironic it is that historians will say the same about Meade. He ascended the ranks of the Army of the Potomac because he distinguished himself as a fighter. His ability to command the army will lead some to assert that Meade was well placed as a corps commander, but that he could not manage the army. The irony continues as Meade comments on McClellan:

McClelland does not seem to have made as much out of his operations in Maryland as I had hoped he would.... His failure to immediately pursue Lee (which Hooker would have done), and now this raid of Stuart's in our rear (for permitting which the public will hold McClellan accountable), will go far towards taking away from him the prestige of his recent victories. I don't wish you to mention it, but I think myself he errs on the side of prudence and caution, and a little more rashness on his part would improve his generalship. (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 319)

Some historians believe that Meade will repeat McClellan's errors. His delay at Gettysburg in pursuing Lee will be based on "prudence and caution" and will be highly criticized by Lincoln and others. Lincoln and army chief Halleck will implore Meade to be more aggressive in his pursuit, which, in their view, does not happen. Historians disagree on whether or not Meade's prudence was justified, but recent accounts by Brown (2005), and Wittenburg, Petruzzi, and Nugent (2008) have tilted the perspective in Meade's favor. Meade would also be

criticized for his decisions not to attack at Williamsport and Mine Run. These decisions, examined later in this chapter, will be used by his contemporaries and historians to demonstrate his inability to command, even though there is reason to believe Meade made the right choices.

The Army of the Potomac remained inactive for a month after Antietam and the inactivity was wearing on a high-strung Meade. During the delay, McClellan was embroiled in a debate with army chief Edwin Stanton and quartermaster general Montgomery Meigs over the fulfilling of requisitions. McClellan had taken the position that his army could not move because it had insufficient supplies, even though they had been ordered in a timely manner. In a November 10 *New York Times* article, Stanton, responding to questions posed by the newspaper, asserted that no unreasonable delays in supplying McClellan's army had occurred and General Meigs had seen that all such requisitions were promptly filled. He also states that three weeks earlier McClellan had been ordered to cross the Potomac and give the Confederates battle or force them south, but McClellan had still failed to move (New York Times, Nov. 10, 1862, retrieved from New York Times Archives on January 4, 2011). Stanton's response to the *Times* is direct and reveals the ill feelings between the two generals. He implies that McClellan is using the supply issue to avoid following orders, and Stanton has become impatient. In addition, he understands that large armies always need supplies, but feels he has adequately established that there has been no unusual or avoidable delay in shipments to McClellan's army.

Meade supported McClellan's position. In a letter of October 23, 1862, a bewildered and angry Meade writes to his son, John Sergeant:

We have been detained here by the failure of the Government to push forward reinforcements and supplies. You will hardly believe me when I tell you that as early as the 7th of this month a telegram was sent to Washington informing the Clothing Department that my division wanted three thousand pairs of shoes, and that up to this date not a single pair has yet been received (a large number of my men are barefoot) and it is the same thing with blankets, overcoats, etc., also with ammunition and forage. What the cause for this untenable delay is I cannot say, but certain it is, that some one is to blame, and that it is hard the army should be censured for inaction, when the most necessary supplies for their movements are withheld, or at least not promptly forwarded when called for. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 320-321)

Meade's sense of justice has been aroused. To him, it should be obvious to the Government that an army cannot move if it is not properly supplied and reinforced. Based on his own experience, he is sure there is an unwarranted delay in receiving the necessary requisitions. Any criticism of the army is unwarranted and therefore, an injustice. He continues to comment on the situation in subsequent letters, noting that McClellan eventually informs Washington that he is completely supplied by the end of October. Meade comments, "This is false, and I know it to be false. I saw in another paper that the excuse given by the Department, for failing to supply the army, was the large and

unexpected losses encountered in the Pope campaign” (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 321). The politics of army command are becoming more visible, as is Meade’s growing distain for them.

Meade Learns Lessons about Lee

As the Union and Confederate armies maneuvered for advantage in November 1862, General Meade penned a long letter to his wife that makes several significant statements. While speculating on the intent of the Confederates he writes:

It appears the enemy are still either in the Valley of the Shenandoah or are manoeuvring to make us believe so.... or else they desire to check our advance and gain time to concentrate their forces in those mountain defiles, which the position of our forces seem to threaten. Of these gaps, or defiles, there are two principle ones.... One or the other of these, or probably both, we shall attempt to force, and they of course to dispute, in case they are going to remain at Winchester. Their infantry appearing would seem to indicate they feel strong enough to descend the mountain and meet us in this valley, which I think is all the better for us, as it would save us the trouble of forcing the mountain passes, which, after all, as at South Mountain, is only a preliminary step to the battle to be fought afterwards. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 323)

Meade would see a similar situation in July 1863. After the battle of Gettysburg, Lee retreated through two mountain passes. Some, such as Lincoln, Union General Henry Haupt, and some historians, felt that Meade should have

vigorously pursued Lee through the passes. But Meade reveals in this statement that he believes forcing the mountain passes is only a prelude to an ensuing battle. In other words, nothing decisive would come about from such a tactic. This may have been a significant reason for Meade's decision to simply harass Lee while the main part of the Union army raced to encounter Lee on the other side of the passes. Given the beating his victorious army had taken, Meade simply may not have wanted to further deplete his army with what he considered to be a futile movement, choosing to have as many men available as possible when the inevitable battle occurs.

Meade continues in the same letter:

At the same time, they are so skilful in strategy, all their present movements may only be to cover the withdrawal of their army to Gordonsville and the line of the Rapidan. If it should prove so, as we will have immediately to follow them and attack them there, we might just as well do so here.... We shall have...nearly double our force at Antietam. I don't see how they can have doubled theirs, in which case we ought to outnumber them; and if we only do that, and are properly handled, victory is sure to be ours. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 324)

As he has repeatedly expressed, numbers are important. Meade feels that the Union has a commanding numbers advantage, so he wishes to fight as soon as possible. He also indicates that Lee moves his army skillfully, so it is hard to know what his intentions are just yet. Lee may be creating the illusion of preparing for battle in order to gain time to concentrate his troops on a new line.

Meade delayed a day at Gettysburg for just this reason. He needed to determine Lee's actual intent before he moved his army.

Meade's letter continues, but now on the subject of promotions relating:

I saw to-day General Wilcox, our Detroit friend. I also saw Poe for a few minutes yesterday, looking very well, but very much disgusted at not being made a brigadier general. He told me he...saw General Halleck about his promotion, showing him letters from Generals Kearney, Hooker, Stoneman and others under whom he had served, warmly recommending his promotion. Halleck told him they were the strongest letters he had ever seen and proved most fully his claims, but said he: "To be frank with you Colonel Poe, with only *such letters* (i. e. military evidence of fitness), your chances of promotion are about equal to those of a *stump-tailed bull in fly-time*." In other words, *merit* without *political influence* is no argument in your favor. Poe told me that Chandler was bitterly opposed to him and had denounced him to the War Department as disloyal, and that he had been compelled to file at the War Department evidences of his loyalty. (p. 324)

Meade has previously demonstrated his understanding of how promotions are awarded. If he needs proof, he has it. Meade would be wise to reconcile himself to something he cannot change, but he does not. He will torment himself over promotions throughout the war.

Meade is also getting a glimpse into Halleck's nature. Although an experienced military commander, Halleck is a Washington politician and rarely

takes any action (Marszalek, 2004) Meade will never be comfortable with Halleck and the two of them will verbally joust throughout Meade's independent command of the army.



Figure 12. Major General Henry Halleck. (Library of Congress)

Learning to Command: November 1862 to June 1863

Rising to Corps Command

As the armies contained to maneuver McClellan is relieved of command and General Ambrose Burnside is appointed as the commander of the Army of the Potomac. Commenting on a grand council of war that occurred on November 12, 1862 involving Burnside, Halleck and Meigs, Meade contemplates the basic strategies the army might adopt under Burnside. He writes:

McClellan has always objected to operating on this line, and insisted on the James River as being the proper base for operations. Halleck, under Washington influence, has been trying to force operations on this line-that is, the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Now, this road has but one track, and the distance from Alexandria to Gordonsville is over one hundred and fifty miles. This distance and known capacity of the road is insufficient by one-third to carry the daily supplies required by this army. This fact to an ordinarily intelligent mind, unbiased by ridiculous fears for the safety of Washington, out to be conclusive. The next line, and the one Burnside favors as a compromise, is one from Fredericksburg to Richmond. This is open to the same objection as the other, except it is only seventy-five miles. Still, it will require a larger army to protect these seventy-five miles and keep open our communications than it will to attack Richmond itself. What the result of council will be, no one can tell.... What we are coming to I cannot tell, but I must confess this interference by politicians with military men, and these personal intrigues and bickerings among military men, make me feel very sad and very doubtful about the future. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 327)

Meade's resentment of Washington's interference in the operation of the army is beginning to manifest itself and his keen, engineer's mind is at work. He knows precisely the needs of the army, the capacity of the railroad, and the inevitable problems that will occur by using the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Meade is obviously annoyed that Halleck cannot see this simple concept.

Meade's greatest strength as a commander may be his ability to move an army, as demonstrated by the rapidity with which he converges on Lee upon taking command. Meade also has decided that Halleck falls into the ranks of the Washington politicians and his contempt for the interference of politicians will also fall onto Halleck.

Upon taking command, Burnside organized the army into three grand divisions of two corps each. Division commanders were Sumner, Hooker and Franklin. Meade was now serving as a divisional commander under Reynolds, who had returned from Pennsylvania in late September. As the army was reorganizing, General McCall sent Meade General Hooker's report of the battle of Glendale. Meade writes that General McCall:

...called on me, as the present commander of the division, to reply to it; but I answered him that I considered his being in command at that time constituted him the proper person to reply, and if not himself, then Seymour, who commanded the Third Brigade, which was on the left of our line and adjacent to Hooker's command. I further told McCall that I hardly thought it worth while to make any public reply to Hooker; that the reputation of the Reserves was now well established, and the facts of the New Market battle very generally known... (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 328)

(The battle of Glendale is also known as the battle of New Market). General Meade is not concerned about the reputation of the Reserve, or his own, believing the truth is known. Thus, he is calm and reserved in his judgment, which gives further evidence of the extent of his passion when a reputation is

unjustly discredited. Meade may also be following army protocol, as he sees it. It simply is not his place to respond to Hooker, but this researcher suspects that had the reputation of the Reserves still been in question, Meade's response would not have been so mild.

In Burnside's reorganization of the army General Dan Butterfield, who was junior in rank to Meade, was given command of the Fifth Corps in Hooker's grand division. Meade remained a division commander in Franklin's grand division. Meade, feeling Butterfield's promotion to be an injustice to him, informed Burnside of the situation. Burnside said he was unaware that Meade was senior and that he would like to give him a corps, and would, at the first opportunity, do so. Within a month, based on Meade's performance at Fredericksburg, Burnside displaced Butterfield and placed Meade in command of the Fifth Corps.

Meade reported that upon the change in command, Butterfield was cordial to him, but Hooker had objected to his friend Butterfield being displaced. Hooker told Meade that he would be glad to have him in his division, but felt that since Butterfield had performed well and the army was in the midst of a campaign, he felt obligated to oppose the change. Though friendly at the time, Butterfield would not become a supporter of Meade. Meade's unyielding position on justice would serve him well, as it did here, but it would also create problems for him, which it also did in this instance. Butterfield would actively assist efforts to remove Meade from command of the Army of the Potomac in the early months of 1864.

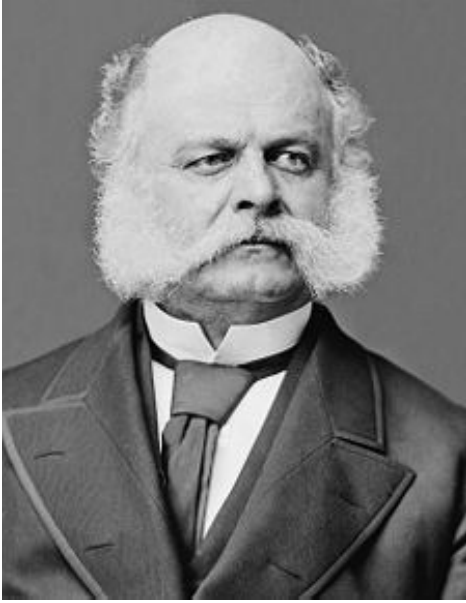


Figure 13. General Ambrose Burnside.
(Library of Congress)



Figure 14. General Dan Butterfield.

Meade took action to correct the injustice because he felt he had the right to do so, explaining to Margaret:

“General Butterfield does not command me, but his command being a corps, and I his senior, in command of only a division, I have a right to complain; just as I did when, in command of a brigade, so many of my juniors were commanding divisions” (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 329).

When Meade talked to Burnside he was satisfied that the situation was just an oversight, done without Burnside’s knowledge. More importantly, he took Burnside at his word, and therefore did not file a written protest or a claim to the position. Meade feels that positional promotion is as important as rank promotion. For Meade, promotion is not only a just reward, it is also a reflection on his reputation and an indication of his good standing with his superiors, evidenced by

his November 24, 1862 letter to his wife. Having conveyed to her the essence of his meeting with Burnside, he concludes:

I came away, however, quite satisfied there had been no intention to do me any injustice, and that had Burnside known of the true state of the case, he would originally have assigned me to the corps. I do not want it if it is to be only for a few days...and don't mind not being assigned, now that I am satisfied nothing personal was meant. (Meade, I, 1913/1994, pp. 332-333)

Meade is convinced that he has Burnside's good will and his reputation is intact.

Growing Disdain for the Washington Administration

Several days before this last letter, on November 20, 1862, as Meade debates his course of action in the Butterfield situation, he is also contemplating another injustice. He writes to Margaret:

I presume you have seen Halleck's letter in regard to the supplying of the army. It is a piece of special pleading well worthy the brain of General Halleck, but unfortunately there are too many *facts* in the possession of this army to disprove all that he asserts, which I trust McClellan will now come out and publicly expose.... But what are truths and facts against political and personal malice and vindictiveness? (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 329-330).

Halleck was well known as a very intelligent man (Marszalek, 2004), but Meade's sarcasm is indicative of his still deteriorating opinion of Halleck. In previous letters Meade has commented on the injustice of politics within the army and in

Washington, but now he sees these politics as being malicious, intentionally harmful, and personal. He ironically hopes McClellan will speak out publicly, even though Meade will endure years of undue criticism and never address it publicly.

Meade is becoming more perturbed with the government's strategy for the army, especially regarding the line of operations. The army is now near Stafford Courthouse, Virginia repairing the railroad. The task has been made nearly impossible by a hard rain and requires a great many men just to corduroy the roads. He bitterly writes to Margaret on November 22, 1862:

I do see how we can advance from the Rappahannock unless the weather should turn cold and freeze the ground. In view of these obstacles, it is most trying to read the balderdash in the public journals about being in Richmond in ten days. I question whether we can get in the neighborhood of Richmond this winter, on this line. I have no doubt the attempt is to be made and an effort to force us on, but I predict, unless we have a cold spell, freezing the ground, that we will break down, lose all our animals, experience great suffering from want of supplies, and if the enemy are at all energetic, meet with a check, if not disaster. All this comes from taking the wrong line of operations, the James River being the true and only practicable line of approach to Richmond. But I have always maintained that Richmond need not and should not be attacked at all; that the proper mode to reduce it is to take possession of the great lines of railroad leading to it from the South and Southwest, cut these and stop any supplies going there, and their army will be compelled to evacuate it

and meet us on the ground we select ourselves. The blind infatuation of the authorities at Washington, sustained, I regret to say, by Halleck, who as a soldier should know better, will not permit the proper course to be adopted... (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 330)

Meade's frustration with Halleck and others in Washington is growing. In his mind, these amateurs are interfering with the proper course of the army and will cause the men great and unnecessary suffering. His frustration is primarily due to officials in Washington making the determination of the line of operations for the army and ignoring the wishes of the army commander. Meade will experience the same thing in the fall of 1863 as the army commander, and it will frustrate him even more. Meade also subtly reveals another military belief that will have an impact in his decisions as commander. His training as an engineer makes him keenly aware of the lay of the land, and Meade will constantly search for ground that is advantageous to him before he fights.

Earning a Reputation as a Fighter

Meade was promoted to major general of volunteers on November 29, 1862. Shortly thereafter, on December 13, 1862, Meade and the Pennsylvania Reserves are in the thick of the battle of Fredericksburg. Opening the Federal attack, Meade and his troops manage the only penetration of the Confederate lines, but eventually have to fall back due to the lack of support and the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. His men performed exceptionally well, but suffered heavy casualties. Meade wrote to Margaret "... out of four thousand five hundred men taken into action, we know the names of eighteen hundred killed

and wounded. There are besides some four hundred missing, many of whom are wounded” (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 337). The battle resulted in a severe defeat for the Union, losing more than 12,000 men while the Confederate losses were 5,309 (Sauers, 2003).

Meade was quickly earning a reputation as a fierce fighter and capable general. Captain J. R. Orwig (1902) of the 131st Pennsylvania, detailing the battle of Fredericksburg, wrote, “General Meade was possibly the best general in the Army of the Potomac that day and he had some of the best soldiers to engage in the hazardous work which had been assigned to him (p. 108). In describing the battle Orwig observes:

...Meade’s men are pressing foreword and gaining ground steadily.... at 9:40 Meade is halted...at 11:00 Meade had gained a half mile...General Meade’s column is fighting vigorously... At 1:15 Meade is assaulting the hill and the men are in splendid spirits...Meade’s two brigades gain the woods and the crest and the rebels flee in confusion... (p. 109)

Meade’s fighting reputation was not limited to the Army of the Potomac. In detailing the battle at South Mountain, Confederate general Daniel Hill wrote, “Meade was one of our most dreaded foes; he was always in deadly earnest, and he eschewed all trifling” (Buell and Johnson, (Eds.), II, p. 574). Meade’s reputation as a fighter would propel his rise through the ranks of the army.

On December 23, Burnside gave him command of the Fifth Corp in General Hooker’s grand division. But 1862 ended on a bittersweet note for

General Meade. He was pleased with his assignment, but was unable to obtain a leave to be home for the holidays. A melancholy Meade writes to his son, John Sergeant on December 31, 1862:

To-day is my wedding and birthday. To-day I enter on the forty-seventh year of my life and the twenty-third of my wedded existence. I had hoped to spend this day with your dear mother and my darling children, but my promotion to the Fifth Corps and the number of generals that have been sent before the Porter and McDowell courts have prevented my getting away. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 343)

Meade was able to obtain a short leave and spent January 11, 1863 with his family. As Meade gained rank and position, he would find it more and more difficult to be with his family. Meade was, at first, buoyed by his success, but as the war wears on, his family will occupy his mind more and more.

Before returning to the army, the new corps commander stopped in Washington to testify in the McDowell hearings and then promptly returned to the field early on the morning of January 13. He dined with Burnside that day and wrote Margaret that Burnside "...was very complimentary on my promptitude in returning, saying he believed I was the only officer in his command that had come back when he was told to do so, and had not overstayed his leave" (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 347). Meade's strong values are evident here. Duty required him to follow orders. Meade is also setting an example for his men by doing what is right.

Getting Closer to Command of the Army

On January 26, 1863 Meade received an order informing him that General Hooker had replaced Burnside as commander of the Army of the Potomac and the Meade had been assigned command of the Centre Grand Division, replacing Hooker. Meade expresses cautious optimism in his January 26, 1863 letter to Margaret, writing:

As to Hooker, you know my opinion of him, frequently expressed. I believe my opinion is more favorable than any other of the old regular officers, most of whom are decided in their hostility to him. I believe Hooker is a good soldier; the danger he runs is of subjecting himself to bad influences, such as Dan Butterfield and Dan Sickles, who being intellectually more clever than Hooker, and leading him to believe they are very influential, will obtain an injurious ascendancy over him and insensibly affect his conduct. I may, however, in this be wrong; time will prove. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 351)

Both Sickles and Butterfield were political generals, rising through the ranks of the volunteers to a position of favor with Hooker and many politicians. "Old regular officers" are the West Point trained professionals who have little regard for political generals, Meade included. But Meade, believing he has Hooker's good will and feeling no ill toward him, remains optimistic and fair-minded.

The Army of the Potomac has now seen three different commanders over the past three months, and Meade's name is approaching the short list of possible commanders. Margaret is apparently worried that at some point her

husband will become the commanding general, something she apparently opposes. Meade writes to her on January 28, 1863:

Your anxiety lest I should be placed in command of the army causes me to smile. Still, I must confess when such men as Gibbon say it is talked about, it really does look serious and alarming; yet, when I look back on the good fortune which has thus far attended my career, I cannot believe so sudden a change for the worse can occur as would happen if I were placed in command. I think, therefore, we may for the present dismiss our fears on that score. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 351)

Meade apparently looks upon command of the army as an undesirable position. He has seen the impact of the interference of officials in Washington and the manipulations of generals for their own advancement. Indeed, several officers approached Lincoln to have Burnside removed from command, including Hooker (Rafuse, 2003). Meade's view of how and where the war should be prosecuted is at odds with the prevailing thought in the nation's capital. Meade feels that no Army of the Potomac general will be able to operate appropriately, free from the influence of Lincoln, Halleck, and Stanton. He goes on in his letter and discusses Hooker's situation, explaining:

Before he was placed in command he was open-mouthed and constant in his assertions that he did not want to command, and that he would not command unless he was perfectly untrammelled and allowed in every respect to do exactly as he pleased. Now I am quite confident no such conditions will be acceded to in Washington. Hence, either "Fighting

Joe” will have to back down or some one else will be sent to take the command. From my knowledge of friend Hooker, I am inclined to surmise the former will be the case. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 351-352)

Meade understands that Hooker’s superiors are not going to give up control of the Army of the Potomac and that Hooker has pursued the position too long and too hard to allow the opportunity to escape him now. However, control will be an issue between Halleck and Hooker throughout what will be a short tenure for Hooker and ultimately lead to the acceptance of his resignation.

Meade also feels that even if Hooker is given control of the army, the position is still undesirable. He explains this to Margaret as he continues his January 28 letter:

This army is in a false position, both as regards the enemy and the public. With respect to the enemy, we can literally do nothing, and our numbers are inadequate to the accomplishment of any result even if we go to the James River. On the other hand, the wise public are under the delusion that we are omnipotent, and that it is only necessary to go ahead to achieve unheard-of success. Of course under such circumstances, neither Caesar, Napoleon nor any other mighty genius could fail to meet with condemnation, never mind what he did, and Hooker, I fancy, will find in time his fate in the fate of his predecessors, namely, undue and exaggerated praise before he does anything, and a denial of even ordinary military qualifications unless he achieves impossibilities. Such

being the case, he certainly is not to be envied. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 352)

Even though Meade is frustrated with the situation of the army and the untenable position of its commanders, Meade has not ruled out the possibility of gaining command. He tells Margaret that they can “for the present dismiss our fears”.

As Hooker plans his upcoming operations the army remains in camp at Falmouth, near Fredericksburg. On January 30, 1863 Meade writes to his wife that the army is excited about a rumor that the provost marshal's department in Washington opens officers' mail. Meade continues:

For my part, I can hardly credit the statement, and so far as I am concerned am willing it should be proved true, for I cannot see how information obtained in this manner can be used against one. I have endeavored to the best of my ability to do my duty, and I have never said a word to any one around me that the most hypercritical could find fault with. In writing to you, however, the wife of my bosom and the only confidential friend I have in the world, I have without doubt at times expressed opinions about men and things, that would not be considered orthodox, but I maintain no government in the world would take advantage of such confidential intercourse to find a man guilty, and I don't believe that any of my letters have ever been opened. (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 353)

Margaret is indeed Meade's only confidant, a wise move on his part. Certainly his opinions and criticisms of officers, soldiers, the public, the press, Lincoln,

Halleck, and the prosecution of the war would have, in the least, brought him great disfavor, which would have impeded his career. Meade was never subversive, but his letters would have garnered him few friends. The letters are the truest proof of his noted truthfulness. As Theodore Lyman, Meade's trusted friend and aide wrote:

I never saw a man in my life who was so characterized by straightforward truthfulness as he is. He will pitch into himself in a moment, if he thinks he has done wrong; and woe to those, no matter who they are, who do not do right! 'Sir, it was your duty and you haven't done it; now go back and do it at once,' he will suddenly remark to some astonished general, who thinks himself no small beer. (Lyman and Agassiz, (Ed.), 1922, p. 25)

Meade believes that he has the right to express any opinion privately and will soon claim that right in a dispute with Hooker. For the most part, however, Meade has the wisdom to keep his thoughts between he and Margaret. He does not make public statements, preferring to address any grievances through the proper military channels.

On February 6, 1863 Hooker abolished the grand corps and named Meade as the commander of the Fifth Corps. Meade feels the grand division organization did not work well and is pleased with Hooker's reorganization. Meade had anticipated the move, earlier having written to Margaret, "I hope I shall retain the Fifth Corps, as it is one of the best, including as it does the

regulars” (Meade. 1913/1994, I, p. 353). Meade also comments to Margaret in a February 6 letter:

I do not know what to make of the political condition of the country. One thing I do know, I have been long enough in the war to want to give them one thorough licking before any peace is made, and to accomplish this I will go through a good deal. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 354)

Early in the war Meade had hoped for a negotiated settlement of the conflict, but he has hardened as the war progresses. Meade would get his wish and give the Confederates “one thorough licking” at Gettysburg, but the cost to the Union would be severe. Meade will “go through a good deal” as a result of this battle, not leading up to it.

As the army remains idle, Meade’s feelings toward Hooker also begin to harden. He writes to his wife on February 13, 1863:

I have not seen General Hooker for several days, indeed his course towards me is so inexplicable in refusing me leave of absence, and not vouchsafing any reason for it, that I feel indisposed to see him. Besides, I do not like his entourage. Such gentlemen as Dan Sickles and Dan Butterfield are not the persons I should select as my intimates, however worthy and superior they may be. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 354)

Butterfield, Sickles and Hooker often socialized at Hooker’s headquarters. Meade’s contempt for Sickles and Butterfield is obvious, and he will have difficulties with both generals in the future. Sickles will openly and publicly try to destroy Meade’s reputation.

Meade did, however, manage a seven-day leave shortly thereafter. His return to the army was delayed a day by a late train, causing him to miss a boat. Irritated, Meade wrote to his wife:

This is annoying, because I wished to set the example of a prompt return within the time allowed me...and this is the more disagreeable because there is a report in town that the enemy's cavalry have appeared in force on this side of the Rappahannock. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 355)

Meade understands that his example is an important part of leading men. He also is irritated that the delay might prevent him from fulfilling his duty.

February turned into March and the army was still idle. Meade's letters were less intense, more social, and more philosophical. Meade continued to be concerned with the political climate. On March 15, 1863 he expressed his concerns in a letter to his son, John Sergeant. His impatience and irritation is obvious as he writes:

I am completely fuddled by politics, and am afraid the people are very much demoralized. I trust one thing or another will be done. Either carry on the war as it ought to be, with overwhelming means, both material and personal, or give it up altogether. I am tired of half-way measures and efforts, and of the indecisive character of operations up to this time. I don't know whether these sentiments will be considered disloyal, but they are certainly mine; with the understanding, however, that I am in favor of the first, namely a vigorous prosecution of the war with all the means in our power. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 358)

Meade remains consistent in his belief that the war can be won by a well-supplied army of overwhelming numbers.

February rolled into April and the idle army was graced by a visit from the President and the First Lady. Meade and the other corps commanders joined Hooker for dinner with the President and his party. Meade's April 9 letter to Margaret explained that on that day Hooker:

...told me that he (Hooker) had told the President that the vacant brigadier generalship in the regular army lay between Sedgwick and myself. I replied that I had no pretensions to it, and that if I were the President I would leave it open till after the next battle. The next day...Hooker said the President had told him he intended to leave this position open till after the next fight. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 364)

The President's position supports Meade's belief that generals are only measured by their victories.

Meade's letter of April 11, 1863 continues the discussion of the vacancy with Meade writing:

Since our review, I have attended the other reviews and have been making myself (or at least trying so to do) very agreeable to Mrs. Lincoln.... In view also of the vacant brigadier-ship in the regular army, I have ventured to tell the President one or two stories, and I think I have made decided progress in his affections. By-the-by, talking of this vacancy, I have been very much gratified at the congratulations I have received from several distinguished general officers on the prominence

that has been given my name in connection with this appointment. ...

Coming as this does from those who are cognizant of my services, some of whom are themselves candidates, I cannot but regard it as most complimentary and gratifying, and I am sure it will please you. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 364)

This appears to be a case of Meade abandoning his beliefs and being politically active, but that is not the case in Meade's mind. He has earned the promotion and is not seeking it based on political influence or by asking for a political favor. But he has seen enough to know that the President's kind feeling will help. He is trying to gain that kind feeling, but he will not go beyond this to gain the position. Meade received the rank effective July 3, 1863 as a result of his stunning victory at Gettysburg and not as a result of gaining the Lincolns' favor.

Meade also provides another example of highly he regards the favor and appreciation of other officers. Apparent also, is how he desires to please his wife. Meade desires credit with the press and public, but the appreciation of his fellow officers and Margaret's favor are more important to him.

On April 12, 1863 Meade addresses two injustices in his letter to Margaret. General Hooker has been accused of drinking heavily while in command of the army. While well-known for his drinking previously, Meade insists, "Whatever may have been his habits in former times, since I have been associated with him in the army I can bear testimony of the utter falsehood of the charge of drunkenness" (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 365).

He also told Margaret that he had talked to the President on Franklin's behalf. A court of inquiry had treated Franklin roughly over his performance at Fredericksburg and Meade attempted to explain the situation to Lincoln. In a previous letter of April 9, Meade had written, "I had a chance to say a good word for Franklin to the President, who seemed very ready to hear anything on his behalf, and said promptly that he always liked Franklin and believed him to be a true man" (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 364). Meade asserted that any error on Franklin's part was due to a misunderstanding on his part of Burnside's orders. Franklin was slow to support Meade because he did not know that Meade's assault was to be the main thrust of the army. Meade feels kindly toward both generals and very adeptly supports Franklin without disparaging Burnside.

Meade's Need for Information

Nearing the end of April, Meade is finally convinced that the army will soon move, but is concerned about the lack of information being provided by Hooker. Meade is anxious but calm. On April 19, 1863 he writes:

General Hooker seems to be very sanguine of success, but is remarkably reticent of his information and plans; I really know nothing of what he intends to do, or when or where he proposes to do anything. This secrecy I presume is advantageous, so far as it prevents the enemy's becoming aware of our plans. At the same time it may be carried too far, and important plans may be frustrated by subordinates, from their ignorance of how much depended on their share of the work. This was the case at Fredericksburg. Franklin was not properly advised, that is to say,

not fully advised, as to Burnside's plan. I am sure if he had been so advised, his movements would have been different. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 367)

Hooker was obsessive in his secrecy according to noted historian Jeffrey Wert (2005). For his part, Meade legitimately desired as much information as he could garner. As commander of the army, Meade would work to be certain that his corps commanders were clear about his intentions and expectations, a trait that both helped and hindered him during his independent command of the army.

Meade's letter continues with Meade again espousing the need for overwhelming numbers in the army. He writes:

We might as well make up our minds to the fact that our only hope of peace is in the complete overpowering of the military force of the South, and to do this we must have immense armies to outnumber them everywhere. I fear, however, that this plain dictate of common sense will never have its proper influence. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 364)

Hooker entered his campaign with 135,000 troops and outnumbered Lee's army two to one in the battle of Chancellorsville. Meade should add a caveat to his requirement for overwhelming numbers. A commanding general has to use those men. Hooker did not engage 40,000 of his men at Chancellorsville, effectively reducing his advantage.

Meade continues to be concerned about the lack of information coming from Hooker. He writes on April 26, 1863, the day before the Fifth Corps would break camp:

Hooker seems very confident of success, but lets no one into his secrets. I heard him say that not a human being knew his plans wither in the army or at Washington. For my part I am willing to be in ignorance, for it prevents all criticism and faultfinding in advance. All I ask and pray for is to be told explicitly and clearly what I am expected to do, and I shall try, to the best of my ability to accomplish the task set before me. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 369)

Hooker Loses Support

There would be more than the ordinary faultfinding after the humiliating Union defeat at Chancellorsville. The battle began on May 1 when Sykes's division of Meade's corps encountered the enemy. However, Meade's corps would see little else of the battle, being part of the 40,000 men that Hooker did not engage. The battle was lost partly due to Lee's brilliant battle plan and audacity, which Hooker matched with a brilliant plan and unusual temerity. In addition, several subordinates, notably Howard, Sedgwick, and Stoneman, would perform poorly and fail to execute Hooker's plan. The battle ended with Hooker's withdrawal on May 4 and 5, and the dissension among his officers would begin almost immediately.

Meade believes the loss could have been avoided and victory secured. Speaking of the Union defeat, he confides to Margaret in a letter of May 8, 1863:

... when it comes to be known that it might and should have been avoided, I think the country will hold some one responsible. My conscience and record are fortunately clear. I opposed the withdrawal with

all my influence, and I tried all I could, on Sunday morning, to be permitted to take my corps into action, and have a general battle with the whole army engaged, but I was overruled and censured for sending in a brigade of Humphrey's, which I did in spite of orders to the contrary. General Hooker has disappointed all his friends by failing to show his fighting qualities at the pinch.... Who would have believed a few days ago that Hooker would withdraw his army, in opposition to the opinion of a majority of his corps commanders? Yet such is absolutely and actually the case. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 364)

Who indeed! Hooker had entered the battle with so much confidence that after the first three days of the conflict he is said to have proclaimed, "God Almighty could not prevent me from winning a victory tomorrow" (Wert, 2005). To the troops he prophesized, "It is with heartfelt satisfaction the commanding general announces to the army ...that our enemy must either ingloriously fly, or come out from behind his defenses and give us battle on our own ground, where certain destruction awaits him" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 25, part 1, p171).

Hooker lost the support of his officers and the troops alike when he retreated in the face of certain victory. Meade writes on May 10, 1863:

There is a great deal of talking in camp, and I see the press is beginning to attack Hooker. I think these last operations have shaken the confidence of the army in Hooker's judgment, particularly among the superior officers. I have been much gratified at the frequent expression of opinion that I ought to be placed in command. Three of my seniors

(Couch, Slocum, and Sedgwick) have sent me word they were willing to serve under me.... I mention all this confidentially. I do not attach any importance to it, and do not believe there is the slightest probability of my being placed in command. I think I know myself, and am sincere when I say I do not desire the command; hence I can quietly attend to my duties, uninfluenced by what is going on around me, at the same time expressing, as I feel, great gratification that the army and my senior generals should think so well of my services and capacity as to be willing to serve under me. Having no political influence, being no intriguer, and indeed unambitious of the distinction, it is hardly probable I shall be called on to accept or decline. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 373)

Meade may well be sincere. He knows the difficulties that have plagued the commanders of the Army of the Potomac. Meade expresses one such concern writing, "For my part it would seem that all projects based on pursuing this line of operations having been tried and failed, we should try some other route. Yet the Administration is so wedded to this line that it will be difficult to get authority to change. " (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 373). Success most definitely depends as much on navigating the political waters as on defeating Lee. But Meade is also sincerely gratified by the platitudes of his superior officers, and these mean more than the position to him.

Meade is sympathetic to the beleaguered commander, writing on May 12:

I am sorry for Hooker, because I like him and my relations have always been agreeable with him; but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that

he has on this occasion missed a brilliant opportunity of making himself. Our losses are terrible; they are said to exceed fifteen thousand men, greater than in any other battle or series of battles. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 373)

Hooker survived the criticism of the papers, weathered the attack of his subordinate officers, and remained in command of the army. But the good will between Meade and Hooker was about to come to an end.

Hooker and Meade Quarrel

Pennsylvania governor Curtin had visited Meade and in the course of conversation Meade expressed his thoughts on Hooker and Chancellorsville.

Meade writes to Margaret:

... in the familiarity of private conversation, after expressing himself very much depressed, drew out of me opinions such as I have written to you about General Hooker, in which I stated my disappointment at the caution and prudence exhibited by General Hooker at the critical moment of battle; at his assuming the defensive, when I thought the offensive ought to have been assumed; and at the withdrawal of the army, to which I was opposed. This opinion was expressed privately, as one gentlemen would speak to another; was never intended for the injury of General Hooker, or any other purpose than simply to make known my views. Imagine, then, my surprise when General Hooker...said that General Cadwalader had told him that Governor Curtin had reported in Washington that he (General Hooker) had *entirely lost the confidence of the army*, and

that both Generals Reynolds and Meade had lost all confidence in him. Of course, I told Hooker that Governor Curtin had no warrant for using my name in this manner. I then repeated to Hooker what I had said to Governor Curtin, and told him that he knew that I had differed with him in judgment on the points above stated, and that he had no right to complain of my expressing my views to others, which he was aware I had expressed to him at the time the events were occurring. To this Hooker assented and expressed himself satisfied with my statement. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 376)

Meade again asserts his right to express his opinions privately. Meade may be right, and he probably would keep such a conversation private, but to expect some one outside his trusted circle of friends to do so is a lapse in judgment. Meade feels that he has not expressed anything to Curtin that he has not already expressed to Hooker and therefore feels that there is nothing dishonorable in what he said. Rest assured, however, that were the roles reversed, Meade would have reacted as Hooker did.

Four days later, Meade and Hooker would again clash, and any resemblance of cordiality between the two would be permanently dissolved. Hooker had convened a council of war around midnight on May 4-5, 1863. Attending were corps commanders Sickles, Couch, Reynolds, Howard and Meade, as well as chief of staff Butterfield and chief engineer Warren. Ultimately, the generals voted 3-2 to continue to fight, with Meade, Reynolds, and Howard favoring battle. Upon hearing the results, Hooker announced he was

withdrawing and did so the next day. Eventually the papers reported that he had abandoned the fight even though his corps commanders voted to continue because Reynolds and Meade, at first opposed, eventually agreed. Hooker confronted Meade on May 19, 1863. Meade describes the confrontation to Margaret writing:

I am sorry to tell you that I am at open war with Hooker. He yesterday came to see me and referred to an article in the *Herald*, stating that four of his corps commanders were opposed to the withdrawal of the army. He said this was not so, and that Reynolds and myself had *determined him* to withdraw. I expressed the utmost surprise at this statement; when he said that I had expressed the opinion that it was impracticable to withdraw the army, and therefore I had favored an advance, and as he knew it was perfectly practicable to withdraw, he did not consider my opinion as being in favor of an advance. I replied to him that this was an ingenious way of stating what I had said; that my opinion was clear and emphatic for an advance.... He reiterated his opinion and said he should proclaim it. I answered I should deny it, and should call on those who were present to testify as to whether he or I was right.... the *entente cordiale* is destroyed between us, and I don't regret it.... I also told him that it was my impression at the time, but that of course it could only be known to himself and his God, that he had made up his mind to withdraw the army before he had heard the opinions of his corps

commanders. To this he did not make any reply, and I am satisfied that such was the case. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 377-378)

Meade might have agreed to Hooker's version, or at least remained silent, but he could not, especially with Reynolds protesting. But Meade's values will not allow him to permit a lie to persist, especially one that reflects on his reputation. Meade did not comment publicly, but he made his position clear within the army. Meade did request the written recollections of those in attendance, and all except Sickles supported Meade's memory of the event.

Meade is Magnanimous

General Couch subsequently approached Meade and asked him to join in speaking to the President about Hooker. General Slocum also wished Meade to join him in attempting to have Hooker removed. Meade refused them both. Members of the CCW, including Senator Wade, had been in camp, but Meade remained silent. In spite of their differences, Meade dutifully remained optimistic and refused to be insubordinate. He writes on May 20, 1863, "Hooker is safe, I think.... He may, and I trust he will, do better next time; but unless he shows more aptitude than in the last affair, he will be very apt to be defeated again" (Meade, 1912/1912, I, pp. 379-380).

Meade is too ethical to participate in the plans of Couch and Slocum. He understands that it is his duty to support his commander, regardless of personal feelings. He even manages to be optimistic about Hooker, even though he feels Hooker erred at Chancellorsville.

Meade's sense of justice will not allow him to be unjust to Hooker or fail to give him credit when it is due. In the preceding letter, Meade opened by retelling Margaret how badly Hooker had erred, but also said of Hooker, "His plan was admirably designed, and the early part of it, entrusted to others, was well executed" (Meade, 1912/1912, I, p. 379). Meade again gives Hooker his due, writing to Margaret:

The story of Hooker losing his head, and my saving the army, is a canard, founded on some plausible basis. When Hooker was obliged to give up Chancellorsville and draw in his lines, I fortunately had anticipated this, and was prepared with my troops to take up the new line in a very short time, and to receive within it the broken columns from the old line. About this time Hooker, who had just been stunned by being struck with a pillar of a house, hit by a shot, felt himself fainting and had to dismount from his horse and lie on his back for ten or fifteen minutes. During this time he was constantly calling for me, and this operation above referred to was executed by me. Outsiders, particularly his staff, not knowing my previous preparations and expectation of having to do this, and seeing it so well and quickly done, were astonished, and gave me more credit than I was entitled to, and hence rose the story that I saved the army. *Hooker never lost his head, nor did he ever allow himself to be influenced by me or my advice.* The objection I have to Hooker is that *he did not and would not listen* to those around him; that he acted deliberately on his own

judgment, and in doing so, committed as I think, fatal errors. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 380)

Several insights into the traits and beliefs of Meade are seen in this letter. Meade is not refusing all credit, reserving his fair share for his preparation and execution. He does, however, insist that Hooker be given fair consideration, even though he believes Hooker erred in this battle. Meade obviously is willing to place some blame on Hooker, but not at the expense of the truth. Meade also gives an indication that he believes the opinions of corps commanders and other officers to be of value to a commanding general, a belief that would eventually be used against him. His convening of councils of war would be criticized throughout his tenure as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Finally, Meade displays what would eventually become contempt for opinions formed by anyone who did not have the facts available to them. Meade continues to address injustices, writing to Margaret on May 25, 1863:

I have addressed a circular letter to each of the officers present at the much-talked-of council of war (and).... Did I tell you that Curtin promptly answered my letter, saying that General Cadwalader had entirely misapprehended what he said to him; that he (Curtin) had never so understood me, or repeated to Cadwalader that I had lost all confidence in Hooker? (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 381)

Meade was satisfied that Governor Curtin had sustained him and denied that Meade had said he had lost confidence in Hooker. He would soon feel

sustained again when the first of his requested accountings of the council of war was returned by Reynolds, who clearly agreed with Meade.



Figure 15. General Joseph Hooker. (Library of Congress)

As the army remained idle through May, Meade continues to be optimistic about Hooker, and given their recent disputes, displays magnanimity. Meade exhibits an unexpected restraint, speaking of Hooker and the council of war, he writes:

The attempt to fasten on *me* the responsibility of withdrawing the army is one of the shallowest inventions that Hooker could have devised, which, if ever he brings to a public issue, must recoil on him.... I have no doubt the Administration has determined to sustain Hooker, and to this I do not object, as I really believe there is a great deal of merit in him.

(Meade, 1913/1994, I, P. 382)

Meade shares Lincoln's opinion that Hooker deserves another chance. Meade understands that command is difficult and that given other circumstances, such as the proper execution of his orders, Hooker may have well succeeded.

Meade's sense of justice has allowed him to be reasonable, although there still is an edge to Meade's comments on the council of war.

Lee Invades the North

Hooker indeed gets his second chance, but before June is over, he will, as a result of his own doing, be relieved from command. In early June 1863 Lee began an advance into Maryland and Pennsylvania. As Hooker prepared to pursue him, Meade reflected to Margaret on June 11, 1863:

This army is weakened, and its *morale* not so good as at the last battle, and the enemy are undoubtedly stronger and in better *morale*. Still, I do not despair, but that if they assume the offensive and force us into a defensive attitude, that our *morale* will be raised, and with a moderate degree of good luck and good management, we will give them better than they can send. War is very uncertain in its results, and often when affairs look the most desperate they suddenly assume a more hopeful state....

If peace can be secured without loss of honor, no one would be more rejoiced than I; but I do not see how this can be brought about, with matters as they stand at present. If we could only whip these fellows two or three times, regular out-and-out defeats; but I don't advocate peace until we have clearly shown them, as we ought to have done long since, our superiority in the field. I can hardly expect you to enter fully into these views, but if you had been humiliated as I have been by seeing your cause and party defeated when they should be victorious, you would be roiled,

too, and would not be willing to give up till things assumed an aspect more consistent with your pride and honor. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 383)

Meade's position on dealing with the South, or at least Lee's army, has hardened. It has become personal for Meade. He can take no pride in the army's recent battles and wishes a chance to redeem his and the army's honor. Fate will soon give him that chance.

Meade did not have any indication of how prophetic his letter is. Hooker would spend the latter part of June sparring with Halleck and Stanton. Neither liked Hooker and eventually Hooker would tender his resignation due to Halleck's unwillingness to give Hooker control of the forces at Harper's Ferry. Lincoln quickly accepted the resignation. Reynolds and Sedgwick refused the command and suggested Meade and on June 28, 1863 Meade was named to succeed Hooker. Lee would, on July 1, force the Army of the Potomac into a defensive position and with "a moderate degree of good luck and good management" the men gave Lee better than what he could send.

In early June Lee had started to position his army for a move up the Shenandoah Valley and into Pennsylvania. He hoped to demoralize the people of the north by defeating the Army of the Potomac on its own soil. He also needed the food and supplies that were so readily available in the North, the war having stripped Virginia of its ability to supply Lee's army. As he maneuvered his army, Hooker, and Meade, tried to determine his intention. Meade explains the possibilities to Margaret as he concludes his letter of June 11:

We are now *qui vive* to know what the enemy are going to do. I am removed from Hooker's headquarters and know nothing of what is going on, either of plans or surmises. In some respects this is convenient, as I am spared much speculation. In other respects it is not so agreeable, because I like to form my own judgment on what is going on, and to make my preparations accordingly. If Lee is going to assume the offensive, I presume he will not long delay; but whether he will move to our right, trying to get between us and Washington, or whether he will move up the valley as he did last summer, or whether he will attack us here, are questions the future can only solve. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 385)

Meade has learned that what Lee appears to be doing is not always what he is doing, and without clear information, Meade considers all possibilities. But it is troublesome to Meade to not have a sense of what his commander's intent is. Meade does not lack initiative and would, as he says, make any preparations he could in anticipation of Hooker's needs, if he only knew them. Meade again demonstrates that he needs information to make command decisions.

Lee's force crossed the Potomac in mid June, but as of June 25, Meade was still unsure of Lee's intent, writing to Margaret:

What Lee's object is in moving up the valley is not yet clearly developed. He has massed his army between Winchester and Martinsburg. The invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania, so far as I can gather, has as yet been a mere foraging expedition, collecting supplies and horses for his army.... That he has assumed the offensive and is

going to strike a blow there can be no doubt, and that it will be a very formidable one is equally certain, unless his forces have been very much exaggerated. He is said to have collected over ninety thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, with a large amount of artillery. (Meade, 1913/1994, I, pp. 387-388)

Meade correctly discerned that one of Lee's purposes was to gather food, supplies, horses and whatever else he could to sustain his army. He was also correct that Lee intended to strike a blow in the North.

Why Lincoln Chooses Meade: June 1863

Hooker still was pursuing Lee even though he was unsure of Lee's location or intentions. Meade had no idea that in just three days he would be the one responsible for pursuing and engaging Lee's army. In his June 25, 1863 letter to Margaret, Meade still believes that he will not be given the command, commenting:

I see you are still troubled with visions of my being placed in command. I thought that had all blown over, and I think it has, except in your imagination, and that of some others of my kind friends. I have no doubt great efforts have been made to get McClellan back.... I have no doubt, as you surmise, his friends would look with no favor on my being placed in command. They could not say I was an unprincipled intriguer, who had risen by criticizing and defaming my predecessors and superiors. They could not say I was incompetent, because they could not say I had never been under fire, because it is notorious no general officer, not even

Fighting Joe himself, has been in more battles, or more exposed, than my record indicates. The only thing they can say, and I am willing to admit the justice of the argument, is that it remains to be seen whether I have the capacity to handle successfully a large army. I do not stand, however, any chance, because I have no friends, political or others, who press or advance my claims or pretensions, and there are so many others who are pressed by influential politicians that it is folly to think I stand any chance upon merit alone. Besides, I have not the vanity to think my capacity so pre-eminent, and I know there are plenty of others equally competent with myself... (Meade, 1912/1994, I, p. 388)

Meade is unusually introspective in this letter and is largely accurate in his self-appraisal. He is no intriguer and never will be. It simply violates his personal and soldierly values, and he was a man who did not abandon his values simply because it was convenient or to his favor. Lincoln was getting a man of honor and integrity. The President did not have to worry about Meade's politics as he did with McClellan and Hooker.

But Meade was wrong about not having friends who would "press his claim". Both Reynolds and Sedgwick declined the opportunity to command the army, but in doing so both indicated their willingness to serve under Meade. Lincoln knew his new commander would have the support of his generals, unlike Burnside and Hooker. The army's high command would see more unity under Meade than it had at any other time.

Meade is indeed battle-tested. He is known as a fierce and courageous fighter. His promotions are well earned on the battlefield, not the result of political manipulations. But he is correct in his acknowledgment that he has never commanded an army and whether or not he has the capacity to be successful in such a position is an unknown. Historians agree on Meade's outstanding service and capacity as he ascended the ranks of the army, but his ability to command the Army of the Potomac was challenged then and is still.

Meade continues in his letter June 25, "For these reasons I have never indulged in any dreams of ambition, contented to await events, and do my duty in the sphere it pleases God to place me in" (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 389). Meade has recognized that being in command of the Army of the Potomac has been the demise of each of its commanders. It is not a position to be desired. He is fully aware of the challenges and even impossibilities that come with the prestige, yet his ambition will not let him completely dismiss the possibility. He tells Margaret that there is no chance of him getting the command, yet in such a long discourse he never says he does not want it or will not accept it. For Meade, being named to command represents all the due credit and appreciation that he feels he has earned and that he so desires. It would be hard to turn all that down.

Meade concludes his June 25 letter by writing:

I hear nothing whatever from headquarters, and am as much in the dark as to proposed plans here on the ground as you are in Philadelphia. This is what Joe Hooker thinks profound sagacity-keeping his corps commanders, who are to execute his plans, in total ignorance of them until

they are developed in the execution of orders (Meade, 1913/1994, I, p. 389).

General Meade's first task upon receiving command will be to determine where Lee is. He will almost immediately inform his corps commanders of where the enemy is thought to be and what his intentions are. Meade will use his corps commanders as no other general has, both to advantage and disadvantage.

In Meade, Lincoln has a courageous and battle-tested general who is respected and supported by his fellow officers. Meade is a man driven by his beliefs and values. He values duty above all else, feeling that by doing his duty he insures a good reputation, which is close to duty in Meade's priorities. Meade also seeks justice and rails at injustice to himself or others. He is modest but ambitious. He wants his due credit, but desires no credit that he does not deserve. He feels entitled to promotions that he believes he has earned, seeing them as evidence of his good service and as an expression of appreciation. He is honest, almost to a fault. Generally quiet and withdrawn, during military campaigns he possesses an explosive temper. A principled, ethical man, Meade does not engage in political maneuvering or clandestine schemes. He is consistent in his beliefs and acts accordingly. But his military beliefs will put him at odds with Lincoln only weeks into his command.

Meade's view of the war is shaped by both his West Point and battlefield experiences. He believes the North has superior resources and therefore, on favorable ground, using a superior force, both in numbers and resources, can overwhelm Lee's army in a major battle and force Lee into submission. He also

believes the army has proven that operating along the Orange and Alexandria railroad line is unsuccessful, and another line of operations should be adopted. Meade understands that the army must protect Washington and Baltimore and also understands that if the Army of the Potomac should meet disaster and be destroyed, the North will fall. He has come to appreciate the volunteer soldier, but not the political general. Meade tries avoid politics, believing that military men and not politicians should determine military operations.

Meade also believes that war is not waged on the citizenry. While he sees the Southern military as the equivalent of a foreign foe, he believes the Union must remember that the people of the South must be brought back into the United States if the North wins. He firmly believes that there can be but one nation and the South must be part of it. Lincoln holds generally the same view as Meade, with the exception of seeing the Southern army as an invading foreign force. Lincoln holds that all soil is Union soil, and that small difference in perception will become significant to Lincoln. Unfortunately, they will also disagree on how to achieve their common end. Meade resents what he perceives as undue influence and demands from Washington officials, and Lincoln has grown weary of generals who feel Washington is not supportive enough and ask for what cannot be given. But in Meade, a relative unknown to many in the army and the public, Lincoln has a capable commander.

Meade's Independent Command of the Army

The First Four Days: July 28 through July 1, 1863

The assignment to command the Army of the Potomac was a complete surprise to Meade. He did not anticipate the order, which was delivered around three o'clock on the morning of June 28, 1863. Colonel James Hardie, who carried the order, awakened Meade from his sleep. Although Meade never actively sought command of the Army of the Potomac, he did, as a matter of duty, accept the order placing him in command of the army. In accepting command, he wrote to General Halleck, General-in-Chief of the Union armies saying, "The order placing me in command of this army is received. As a soldier, I obey it, and to the utmost of my ability will execute it" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 61). Whether or not Meade actually wants the command is irrelevant at this point. Meade is ordered to take command, and duty demands that he obey orders.

Halleck's order read:

You will receive with this order of the President placing you in command of the Army of the Potomac. Considering the circumstances, no one ever received a more important command; and I cannot doubt that you will fully justify the confidence which the government has reposed in you.

You will not be hampered by any minute instructions from these headquarters. Your army is free to act as you may deem proper under the circumstances as they arise. You will, however, keep in view the very

important fact that the Army of the Potomac is the covering army of Washington, as well as the army of operation against the invading forces of the rebels. You will therefore manoeuvre and fight in such a manner as to cover the Capital and also Baltimore, as far as circumstance will admit. Should General Lee move upon either of these places, it is expected that you will either anticipate him or arrive with him, so as to give him battle.

All forces within the sphere of your operations are will be held subject to your orders.

Harper's Ferry and its garrison are under your direct orders.

You are authorized to remove from command and send from your army any officer or other person you may deem proper; and to appoint to command as you may deem expedient.

In fine, General, you are entrusted with all the power and authority which the President, the Secretary of War, or the General-in-Chief can confer upon you, and you may rely fully on our full support.

You will keep me fully informed of all your movements and the positions of your troops and those of the enemy, so far as known.

I shall always be ready to advise and assist you to the utmost of my ability. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 16)

The order may have assuaged Meade's concern regarding undue influence from Washington, but Halleck immediately limits the operation of the army by requiring it to continue to protect Washington and Baltimore. Halleck and Lincoln will largely forget this order in their exuberance over the Gettysburg

victory, but Meade will not overlook it. As with all of his predecessors, Meade will face the dilemma of fulfilling this order and at the same time engaging Lee. However, the order also gives Meade the unprecedented power to discharge and assign officers at his discretion, which he will do during the Gettysburg battle. Halleck also gives him control of the troops at Harper's Ferry, the very thing that he denied Hooker, causing Hooker to tender his resignation. Halleck pledges his support to the utmost of his ability. Unfortunately, Halleck's abilities as the General-in Chief are suspect at best (Marszalek, 2004).

Meade, however, has little time to think about the nuances of the order, needing to immediately meet with Hooker and form a plan of operation. Historians differ on how much information was relayed to Meade during his meeting with Hooker. What is clear is that Meade immediately sought information that would tell him the location of Lee's troops as well as his own. Hooker had established a thorough system for gathering intelligence known as the Bureau of Military Intelligence (BMI). Organized and operated by Colonel George Sharpe, the BMI gathered all types of intelligence, including the reports of the cavalry, troops in the field, citizen spies, the signal corps, balloons, observation points, prisoners, deserters and roughly sixty spies, referred to as scouts, that were agents of the BMI. On June 28, the BMI received constant reports of Lee's location, some accurate and others lacking credibility. Here, Meade's keen intellect and trained engineer's mind serves him well. His thirst for information puts him in the middle of interpreting the reports. According to Edwin Fishel

(1996), “Meade had to spend the better part of that Sunday, June 28, in getting his bearings as to both the enemy’s situation and that of his own army” (p. 495).

Meade eventually is able to sort through the information and make an accurate assessment of Lee’s position. Lee’s army is extended over an expanse of sixty miles, with Ewell widely separated from the main body, and Early from the rest of Ewell’s force (Fishel, 1996). Ewell’s main force is near Carlisle and Early is close to York. Hill and Longstreet are at South Mountain in the area of Cashtown. Meade’s troops are more closely massed near Frederick. Based on the information at hand, Meade forms his operational plan. Years later, Meade’s son, George, asserted that General Meade had “meager” information regarding the disposition of his troops and Lee’s army (Meade, 1913/1994). While that may have been true early in the day, by the time Meade issued his marching orders for June 29, he had a great deal of information, including a rather accurate estimate of the size of Lee’s infantry, cavalry, and artillery (Fishel, 1996).

The Army of the Potomac has been marching north in its pursuit of Lee. Meade decides to turn northeast to protect Washington, Baltimore and Harrisburg and to intercept Longstreet and Hill. Fishel explains:

... he put this knowledge of the enemy’s positions to use in an order that sent the army fanning out at an angle of almost 60 degrees, its left headed for Emmitsburg and its right for Westminster. Emmitsburg was on a direct route that would cut across the probable line of march of the enemy’s main body, the corps of Longstreet and Hill. The force directed to Westminster was aimed at Ewell’s divisions, particularly Early’s, on his

right, and Meade hoped to fall upon “some portion of Lee’s army in detail.” His view was that despite the twenty-five mile spread of his seven corps, the movement would enable him to “hold my force well together.” (Fishel, 1996, p. 497)

General Meade’s dispatch by courier to Halleck at 8:15 P.M. on June 28, 1863 explains the movement of his troops as well as his intent:

If Lee is moving for Baltimore, I expect to get bet between his main army and that place. If he is crossing the Susquehanna, I shall rely upon General Couch, with his force, holding him until I can fall upon his rear and give him battle, which I shall endeavor to do. I have ordered the abandonment of Harper's Ferry, a detachment of not more than 3, 000 to proceed with the property, by canal, to Washington, and strengthen your forces there against any cavalry raid; the remainder to move up and join me. The line from Frederick to Baltimore by rail will necessarily be abandoned. While I move forward, I shall incline to the right, toward the Baltimore and Harrisburg road, to cover that, and draw supplies from there, if circumstances permit it, my main objective point being, of course. Lee's army, which I am satisfied has all passed on through Hagerstown toward Chambersburg. My endeavor will be in my movements to hold my force well together, with the hope of falling upon some portion of Lee's army in detail. The cavalry force between me and Washington, as soon as I can learn sufficiently of their movement to pursue and fight without

wasting the necessary force by useless movements, will be engaged by my cavalry. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 67)

Meade has accurately anticipated the possibility that Lee's intent is to mass his troops west of Harrisburg in preparation of attacking the city and destroying the vital railroads that pass through it. The movement of the right wing of the army will allow him to turn the enemy away from Harrisburg by falling on its rear. If Lee's intent is to turn toward Baltimore, Meade should be able to intercept him, having the shorter line of march. According to Fishel, the portion of Lee's army that Meade is hoping to engage is Early's division, which is isolated from its corps. But Meade also exercises prudence in this plan, not wanting to waste energy in senseless movements. Meade has determined that the army is tired from its forced march north and he knows that many men are shoeless. He would rather rest the men than foolishly parade them around the countryside. Most of all, Meade clearly wishes to force a battle.

On the morning of June 30, 1863, Lee sends orders to Ewell halting the advance on Harrisburg and directing him to rejoin the army in the vicinity of Cashtown or Gettysburg. Meade is notified of Ewell's withdrawal very late on the night of June 30. He informs Halleck, "The point of Lee's concentration and the nature of the country, when ascertained, will determine whether I attack him or not. Shall advise you further to-day, when satisfied that the enemy are fully withdrawn from the Susquehanna" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 70). Meade is using his experience and is justifiably cautious. He knows that Lee could be feinting a withdrawal of Ewell's corps, or moving his corps to meet Longstreet

and Hill in order to attack Harrisburg with his full army. Longstreet and Hill are believed to be headed east, adding to Meade's caution.

At midnight on June 30-July 1, Meade notified Halleck that the enemy had indeed withdrawn, writing:

Dispatch sent last night giving my position at Emmitsburg, Gettysburg, and Hanover. Ewell is massing at Heidlersburg. A. P. Hill is massed behind the mountains at Cashtown. Longstreet, somewhere between Chambersburg and the mountains. The news proves my advance has answered its purpose. I shall not advance any, but prepare to receive an attack in case Lee makes one. A battle-field is being selected to the rear, on which the army can be rapidly concentrated, on Pipe Creek, between Middleburg and Manchester, covering my depot at Westminster. If I am not attacked, and I can from reliable intelligence have reason to believe I can attack with reasonable degree of success, I will do so; but at present, having relieved the pressure on the Susquehanna, I am now looking to the protection of Washington, and fighting my army to the best advantage. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 71)

Meade's first objective, saving Harrisburg has been accomplished. Now Meade is governed by Halleck's order to cover Washington. He seeks a battle, but reverts to his training and experience, looking for advantageous ground to fight from the defensive. Meade had sent his topographical engineers to locate good ground, and they had returned and recommended a line at Pipe Creek, Maryland. Meade

prefers to fight from the defensive, having seen the setbacks that occur when either army assails a fortified position located on good ground. But he has not ruled out assuming the offensive, knowing that Lee is on the move and will have to fight in the open.

At 1:00 P.M., July 1, 1863, Meade informs Halleck that the enemy has arrived at Gettysburg and that he expects a battle before the day is over. He has spent the last two days determining the disposition of his own army, locating Lee, forming an operational plan, corresponding with Washington and other generals, and commencing his campaign. He has had little time to himself, but he manages to pen a letter to Margaret on June 29. He advises her of his assignment, stating:

As, dearest, you know how reluctant we both have been to see me placed in this position, and as it appears to be God's will for some good purpose-at any rate, as a soldier, I had nothing to do but accept and exert my utmost abilities to command success. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 11-12)

One day into command, Meade is showing no joy in his new position, no expression of entitlement. He is most definitely reluctant, but resigned to do his duty to the best of his ability. Later in the same day he writes to Margaret again, expressing his plan of operations and his resolve, writing:

We are marching as fast as we can to relieve Harrisburg, but have to keep a sharp lookout that the rebels don't turn around us and get at Washington and Baltimore in our rear. They have a cavalry force in our rear, destroying railroads, etc., with the view of getting me to turn back;

but I shall not do it. I am going straight at them, and will settle this thing one way or another. The men are in good spirits; we have been reinforced so as to have equal numbers with the enemy. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 13-14)

Meade explains his caution, wanting to be certain that the enemy does not change direction. This is why Meade is advancing on such a wide angle and has two corps apparently headed away from the rest of the army. By the night of June 30, Meade has his corps in position to meet a move toward Washington or to advance against Longstreet and Hill. Meade believes his army is equal to Lee's, based on intelligence reports, but he has over 90,000 men, compared to Lee's 72,000. On his second day in command, a confident but cautious Meade is determined to confront Lee's army.

On June 30, 1863 General Meade steals the time to write another brief note to his wife that reveals his deepest thoughts. He writes:

All is going well. I think I have relieved Harrisburg and Philadelphia...I continue well, but much oppressed with a sense of responsibility and the magnitude of the great interests entrusted to me. Of course, in time I pray I will become accustomed to this.... Pray for me and beseech our heavenly Father to permit me to be an instrument to save my country and advance a just cause. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 18)

During the first sixty hours of command Meade has realized the enormity of his responsibility, especially in a situation where the enemy is operating on Union soil. In these sixty hours, Meade displays the tenor of his command in

several ways. First, his decisions are data driven. He has collaborated with Colonel Sharpe and:

... showed his mettle as an evaluator of intelligence by the firmness and accuracy of his reports to Halleck in the confusion of his first day as army commander.... the language of his telegrams to Washington reflects his own direct involvement in the interpreting of the mass of often contradictory material. (Fishel, 1996, p. 19)

He also sent his engineers to scout an area that was suitable for battle. Meade wants information on the land he is about to encounter, and he wants to fight on good ground.

In addition, Meade immediately informed his corps commanders of his intent and gave them information about the location of the armies. Meade's first marching orders gave the destinations and routes of all the corps, artillery, cavalry, and trains to all the corps commanders. His circular of June 30, 1863, issued to all corps commanders is a typical example of Meade's communication style. It states:

The Commanding General has received information that the enemy are advancing, probably in strong force, on Gettysburg. It is the intention to hold this army pretty nearly in the position it now occupies, until the plans of the enemy shall have been more fully developed.

Three corps, 1st, 3^d, and 11th are under the command of Major General Reynolds, in the vicinity of Emmitsburg, the 3 corps being ordered up to that point. The 12th Corps is at Littletown. General Gregg's division

of cavalry is believed now engaged with the cavalry of the enemy, near Hanover Junction.

Corps commanders will hold their commands in readiness at a moments notice, and upon receiving orders, to march against the enemy. Their trains (ammunition trains excepted) must be parked in the rear of the place of concentration. Ammunition wagons and ambulances will alone be permitted to accompany troops. The men must be provided with three-days rations in haversacks, and with sixty rounds of ammunition in the boxes and upon the person.

Corps commanders will avail themselves of all the time at their disposal to familiarize themselves with the roads communicating with the different corps. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 15)

Meade has informed his commanders of the location of the enemy and of the location of all the Army of the Potomac's corps. Meade's intent to remain stationary but ready to move toward the impending battle is clear. He is trying to provide for effective communication and movement between the corps by reminding the commanders to become familiar with the roads. To insure the rapid movement of the corps he has ordered supply trains to the rear. His orders are complete, clear, and detailed. He even orders the amount of the rations and ammunition for the soldiers.

Meade also keeps Halleck informed of his movements and intentions with frequent telegrams. There would be no more of the secrecy that marked Hooker's command. Meade was correct in this approach. Knowledge by the

corps commanders of each other's role and of the overall plan can facilitate a cooperative, effective effort and avoid mistakes that were made in the past.

Meade's order has done one more very important thing. He has given his weary soldiers a rest. Meade's command would be marked by his concern and knowledge of the condition of the men, from their morale, to their supplies, to their safety. He would slowly but most certainly earn their support and respect, as indicated in a letter Captain Adam Donaldson, of the Fifth Corp, wrote to his brother on October 22, 1863. He writes, "Candidly, we feel every confidence in Meade, and if anyone succeeds him but McClellan, the dissatisfaction will be intense" (Acken, (Ed.), 1992, p.371).

There is an intensity in Meade that will become a hallmark for him. Part of his current intensity is determined by the void of information Meade encountered and the urgency to determine the disposition of the armies. Part of the intensity is due to the significant threat that Lee poses to Meade's home state and city, and therefore, the nation. Meade's letter to Margaret indicates that part of his intensity is due to his recognition of the enormity of the responsibility that was thrust upon him. A nation is looking to him to protect their interests and restore peace. Meade knows that if he does not win the inevitable battle that looms to his front, all could be lost.

On July 1, 1863 information is coming into Meade's headquarters indicating the presence of the enemy at Gettysburg. Here Meade reveals another trait of his leadership. He will use the best person he can, regardless of rank. Meade needs information about the situation and the ground at Gettysburg.

Unable to get there in a timely manner himself, he turns to General Reynolds, who is on his way to Gettysburg with his corps and the Eleventh Corps, as ordered. Reynolds is a long-time friend of Meade, is trusted throughout the army, and has Meade's complete faith. Meade entrusts the most important decision of his short command to Reynolds. Is it the time and place to fight? His last communication to Reynolds before Reynolds was killed on the field at Gettysburg was typical of Meade. He gives Reynolds a great responsibility in a clear, detailed communication. The note to Reynolds informs him that:

The telegraphic intelligence received from General Couch, with the various movements reported by Buford, seem to indicate the concentration of the enemy either at Chambersburg, or at a point situated somewhere on a line drawn between Chambersburg and York, through Heidlersburg, and to the north of Gettysburg. The Commanding General cannot decide whether it is his best policy to move to attack until he learns something more definite of the point at which the enemy is concentrating. This he hopes to do during the day. Meanwhile, he would like your views upon the subject, at least so far as concerns your position. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 33-34)

Reynolds has a clear picture of where to find the enemy due to Meade's detailed explanation. He also tells Reynolds that he not only wants to know where the enemy is; he wants his opinion on whether or not to attack. But Meade is again precise. He is telling Reynolds to limit his opinion to what he knows from his position. He does not want speculation from Reynolds, just facts.

Meade's communication continues:

If the enemy is concentrated to the right of Gettysburg, that point would not, at first glance, seem to be a proper strategic point of concentration for this army. If the enemy is concentrating in front of Gettysburg, or to the left of it, the General is not sufficiently informed of the nature of the country to judge of its character either for an offensive or defensive position. The number of the enemy are estimated at about 92,000 infantry, with 270 pieces of artillery, and his cavalry, from six to eight thousand. Our numbers ought to equal it, and with the arrival of General French's command, which should get up to-morrow, exceed it, if not too much weakened by straggling and fatigue. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p.34)

Meade continues to provide information to Reynolds that would be crucial in determining his advice. With equal or superior numbers and advantageous ground, Meade is willing to fight, if the troops are fit.

Meade's communication then explains why he has placed such an important task upon Reynolds. It states:

The General having assumed command in obedience to orders, with the position of affairs leaving no time to learn the condition of the army as to *morale* and proportionate strength, compared with its last return, would gladly receive from you any suggestions as to the points laid down in this note. He feels you know more of the condition of the troops in your vicinity, and the country, than he does.

General Humphreys, who is at Emmettsburg with the Third Corps, the General considers an excellent advisor as to the nature of the country for defensive or offensive operations. If near enough to call him to consultation with you, please do so, without interference with the responsibilities that devolve upon you both. You have all the information which the General has received, and the General would like to have your views. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 34)

Meade is telling Reynolds to make the decision to fight or not, but eases the burden by assuring Reynolds that Meade knows the responsibility falls to Meade. He has given Reynolds all the information that is available at headquarters. Meade recognizes that Reynolds now has more information than he does. But understanding the gravity and importance of what he is asking Reynolds to do, he offers him the assistance of General Humphreys. Humphreys will become Meade's chief-of-staff in a few days and also has Meade's trust. Curiously, Humphreys commands a division in the Third Corp, which is commanded by General Dan Sickles. Meade has given Reynolds the authority to pluck Humphreys from Sickles without consulting him. Meade does not hesitate to get the person he believes most suited for the situation, regardless of rank or position.

About 11:30 on July 1, 1863, Meade learns from Reynolds and Buford that the enemy is engaged at Gettysburg. Around one o'clock Meade receives the news that Reynolds has been killed in action. Meade once again turns to a man he trusts, General Hancock. Meade and Hancock had just finished a long

discussion about events and Meade's intentions, and Hancock was nearby. Having full faith in Hancock, and feeling the need to stay at headquarters at Taneytown to facilitate communications until matters were decided, Meade orders Hancock to Gettysburg. The order, issued at 1:10 P.M., states:

The Major General Commanding has just been informed that General Reynolds has been killed or badly wounded. He directs that you turn over the command of your corps to General Gibbon; that you proceed to the front, and by virtue of this order, in case of the truth of General Reynolds' death, you assume command of the corps there assembled, viz. the Eleventh, First, and Third, at Emmettsburg. If you think the ground and position there a better one to fight a battle under existing circumstances, you will so advise the General, and he will order all the troops up. You know the General's views, and General Warren, who is fully aware of them, has gone out to see General Reynolds. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 37)

Meade wasted no time in reacting to the situation. Noted for his clear head in difficult times, within ten minutes of learning of Reynolds' probable death, he has ordered Hancock forward. By telling Hancock to surrender command of his corps to General Gibbon, Meade has prevented any confusion about who is in command of the Second Corps, and he has engaged another man in whom he has great faith and friendship, General Gibbon. He has also clearly placed Hancock in command over Howard, commander of the Eleventh Corps, who Meade knows is Hancock's superior in rank. If someone other than Meade is

going to decide to fight at Gettysburg, it is going to be someone Meade trusts implicitly. But, again, Meade does not avoid his responsibility, telling Hancock that Meade will order the troops up, relieving Hancock of the final decision. Hancock not only has his orders, he has a precise understanding of Meade's intention.

Meade's order also addresses the Pipe Creek issue that will become a point of controversy for Meade. Opponents of Meade will claim that Meade intended to withdraw from Gettysburg and assume a position at Pipe Creek, Maryland. According to Meade's testimony to the CCW, he and Hancock had discussed the Pipe Creek contingency in detail. It is to this consideration that Meade states, "If you think the ground and position there a better one to fight a battle under existing circumstances". Meade is telling Hancock that he is willing to fight at Gettysburg, if Hancock feels it is a better choice than falling back to Pipe Creek. There certainly is no indication that Meade does not want to fight at Gettysburg, as will be claimed later by Sickles and Butterfield.

Around 5:30 July 1, Hancock sent a dispatch to Meade indicating that the army could retire from their position, but that the ground was good ground on which to fight. Before he had received Hancock's note, Meade had decided to fight at Gettysburg and had ordered all the corps to Gettysburg. True to his training, Meade is going to be certain that he has his entire army available and can take advantage of his numbers. By 6:00 that evening, Meade had informed Halleck that he faced Hill and Ewell, but was unsure of Longstreet's location. He states, "I see no other course than to hazard a general battle. Circumstances

during the night may altar this decision, of which I will try to advise you (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 72).

The battle of Gettysburg was the bloodiest battle ever fought on American soil. Over 50,000 men would be killed, wounded, captured, or missing during the fierce encounters of the first three days of July 1863. The Union's now famous fish hook line provided Meade with interior lines that he and his generals used wisely, holding their ground and repulsing every attack of Lee's army, which retired from the field on July 4. It is not the purpose of this paper to recount the details of the battle, as several outstanding accounts of the battle exist. Certain events of the battle are relevant to this research, however. Two of those events occurred on July 2, 1863.

The Meade Controversies are Born: July 2, 1863

The first relevant event evolved into the biggest controversy of the war for Meade. The impact of lies and the misrepresentation of the facts to negatively impact the reputation of General Meade are never more apparent than in what has become known as the Meade-Sickles controversy. The controversy would rage for years, and it has not been until recently that Meade has been largely vindicated.

Sickles and Meade never held warm feelings for each other. Sickles was a volunteer general, having been given his rank in the volunteer army for his rather significant contributions in raising a volunteer force in New York. A politician by trade, Sickles and Dan Butterfield had been riding Hooker's star. Sickles had merit as a soldier, as Meade was well aware, but that did not sway Meade.

Predisposed to a negative impression of Sickles, the relationship did not improve after Meade took command of the army. Sickles would incur Meade's considerable wrath twice en route to Gettysburg, both times being chastised for not making sufficient progress on the march. But it was the events of July 2 at Gettysburg that fueled the controversy.

Sickles Third Corps arrived at Gettysburg on the morning of July 2 and Meade ordered him to take a position on the Union left, attaching to Hancock's Second Corps on the right and connecting with Little Round Top on his left, occupying a position held by Geary the night before. Sickles delayed obeying that order, feeling the ground too low and that a better position existed ahead of his assigned position in the Union line. He repeatedly asked to have his orders clarified and to be allowed to move forward. Each time Meade, or his representative, declined Sickles' request and repeated his orders. Finally, Sickles disobeyed his orders and moved his corps ahead in a salient, losing contact with Hancock's line and Little Round Top. This vulnerable position was attacked later that day by Longstreet's troops. Were it not for Meade's quick action in reinforcing the position, and General Warren's actions to secure Little Roundtop, the Union effort would have been severely crippled, if not lost. Sickles was wounded that day, losing a leg. He was sent to Washington to recover and while recovering, Sickles began a campaign to destroy Meade's reputation and build his own, a campaign that he continued throughout his long life and after Meade's passing.

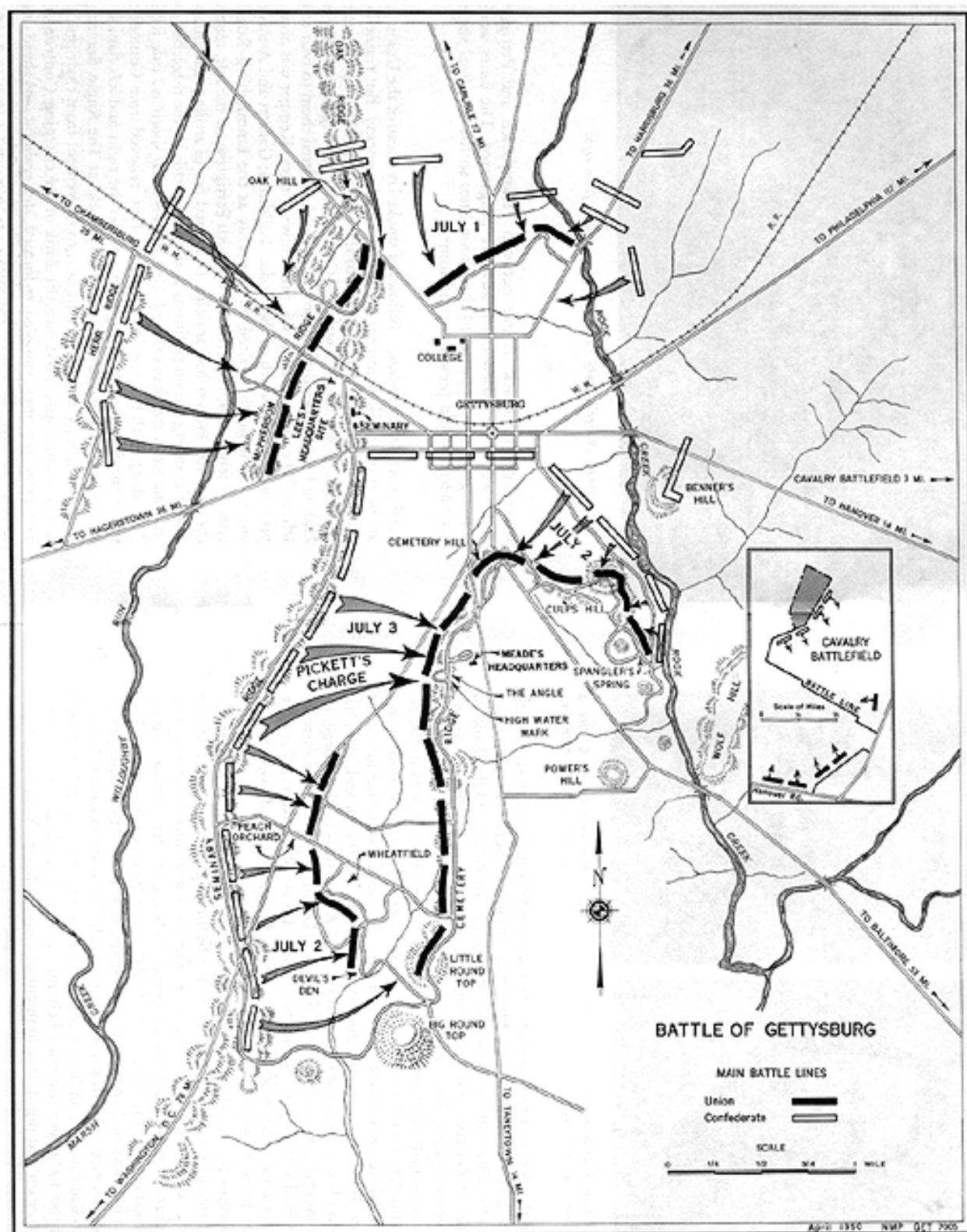


Figure16. Gettysburg Battle Lines.

(Battle of Gettysburg Resource Center)

Sickles claimed that Meade wanted to retreat from Gettysburg and that it was Sickles' action that forced the battle. Sickles told his tale to President Lincoln shortly after arriving in Washington to convalesce, and at some point to Senator Chandler of the CCW. The issue remained dormant until the CCW began its investigation of Gettysburg on February 26, 1864.

The second event that created controversy around Meade was the convening of a council of war late on July 2. Meade had attempted to convene a council during the afternoon of that day, but Longstreet's attack on Sickles' ill advised position on the Union left dissolved the meeting before it could begin. It would not be until late that night that Meade would reconvene the meeting of his corps commanders. Meade's opponents wrongly claimed that Meade convened the meeting that evening to gain support for a retreat.

Meade did not consider meetings such as these to be a council of war. He considered them to be consultations. While the difference may appear to be a matter of semantics, there is a significant difference. The prevailing opinion of councils of war, as expressed by General Halleck, was that councils of war never fight. Thus, the convening of a council of war could be interpreted as a sign that a retreat was favored. Meade explained the difference in his testimony during his first appearance before the CCW, stating:

I never called those meetings councils; they were consultations, and they were probably more numerous and more constant in my case, from the fact that I had just assumed command of the army, and felt it was

due myself to have the opinions of high officers before I took on matters which involved such momentous issues. (Hyde, Ed., 2003, p. 128)

Meade's need for information is at the heart of his consultations. He has not been in command long enough to understand his troops as well as their corps commanders, and on the evening of July 2, those commanders certainly had a more precise knowledge of the condition of their men and of the situation in their fronts than could Meade. Meade's testimony before the CCW on March 5, 1864 offers a detailed description of his rationale for convening the consultation on the evening of July 2. He states:

On the evening of July 2, after the battle of that day had ceased, and the darkness had set in, being aware of the very heavy losses of the 1st and 11th corps on the 1st of July, and knowing how severely the 3d corps, 5th corps, and other portions of the army had suffered in the battle of the 2nd of July-in fact, as subsequently ascertained, out of the 24,000 men killed, wounded, and missing, which was the amount of my losses and casualties at Gettysburg, over 20,000 of them had been put hors du combat before the night of the 2nd of July; and taking into consideration the number of stragglers, and weakening of my army from two days' battle, my ignorance of the condition of the corps, and the morale condition of the troops, caused me to send for my corps commanders to obtain from them the exact condition of affairs in their separate commands, and to consult and advise with them as to what, if anything, should be done on the morrow....

The questions discussed by this council were, first, whether it was necessary for us to assume any different position from what we then held; and secondly, whether, if we continued to maintain the position we then held, our operations of the next day should be offensive or defensive. The opinion of the council was unanimous, which agreed fully with my own views, that we should maintain our lines as they were then held, and we should wait the movements of the enemy and see whether he made any further attack before we assumed the offensive. I felt satisfied the enemy would attack again, as subsequently proved to be the case... (Hyde, Ed., 2003, pp. 126-127)

Meade does anticipate an attack and after the meeting tells General Gibbon that the attack would be made on his front, the center of the Union line, which proved to be an accurate prediction. Meade is aware that his corps commanders have information that he does not, and that they know better than he whether or not their corps is able to continue the fight. This consultation is the quickest way to gather the most information. It also allows Meade the opportunity to speak to all of his corps commanders for the first time since he took command, as it is the first time they are all gathered at the same location. The corps commanders departed the meeting with a complete and uniform understanding of Meade's intent for the next day's battle and Meade departed with the knowledge that his army was willing and able to continue the battle. While severely criticized for convening this meeting, it is an example of Meade's leadership. He has garnered information he previously did not have, has heard

the opinions of his generals, and has united them in preparation for the next day's task.

General Meade's assessment of the situation is succinctly relayed to Margaret in a letter hastily written at 8:45 on July 3, 1863. He writes:

All well and going on well with the Army. We had a great fight yesterday, the enemy attacking and we completely repulsing them; both Armies shattered. To-day at it again, and with what result remains to be seen. Army in fine spirits and every one determined to do or die. George and myself well. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 103)

Throughout his command, Meade keeps his family foremost in his thoughts. He feels a responsibility to let his wife know that he and their son, George, are well. He wants to spare her needless worry and the pain of any erroneous rumors that she may hear.

In this note he also expresses a thought that will be a part of his decision making for the next ten days; "Both armies shattered". This simple, but accurate assessment of the situation will avoid Halleck and Lincoln, but it will play into Meade's pursuit of Lee. Even though Gettysburg was a clear victory for the Union, *both* armies were shattered. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia lost 32 % of its strength and Meade's army was reduced by 24 %. At the end of the battle, Lee had around 47,000 effective troops, while Meade had about 67,000 (Wittenburg, Petruzzi, and Nugent, 2008). Washington officials did not seem to grasp the fact that the Army of the Potomac was reduced in its capacity, as was Lee's.

Lee's Retreat: July 4 to July 14, 1863

The Army of Northern Virginia did attack Gibbon's position exactly as Meade had predicted on July 3, 1863. It first launched an unsuccessful attack on the Union right, and then assaulted the center of the Union line in the now infamous Pickett's charge. Successfully repulsed and having suffered severe casualties, Lee started to withdraw from the field at Gettysburg on July 4, 1863. Lee's retreat and subsequent return to Virginia resulted in immediate and severe criticism of Meade. Many people, including Lincoln, Stanton and historians past and present, believe that Meade missed another golden opportunity to crush Lee and end the war during his retreat because he was too cautious and plodding, if not timid in his pursuit of Lee. However, current historical accounts discredit this view.

Halleck implied that Meade's pursuit was not sufficiently enthusiastic, but the record indicates otherwise. Recent works by Brown (2005) and Wittenberg, Petruzzi, and Nugent (2008) paint a picture of constant skirmishes and engagements. Meade did pursue Lee cautiously, concerned that his enemy was not as helpless as portrayed, and knowing that the Army of the Potomac was weary and short on supplies, and not as strong as officials in Washington believed. Wittenberg, Petruzzi, and Nugent submit that Lee skillfully maneuvered his army back to Virginia and that Meade did everything he could to stop him. It was a case of two very capable generals simultaneously making the best decisions. But the idea that Lee was completely helpless and that Meade's army

simply had to make an attack, any attack, to finish the affair was nothing more than wishful thinking in Washington.

Lee's withdrawal was a tactical withdrawal that created enough uncertainty on Meade's part to contribute to his delay in pursuing Lee. Lee's withdrawal started with the repositioning of the army. He pulled Longstreet's corps back from its position on the right, and then refused his line to protect the withdrawal of Hill's corps. On his left, he ordered General Ewell to withdraw from Culp's Hill and Gettysburg to a position north of town, protecting Lee's left. Lee expected an attack from Meade on July 4, or at least prepared for it, ordering both Longstreet and Ewell to fortify their new positions. Lee chose to take the shortest route to the Potomac, departing Gettysburg on the Fairfield Road toward the Monterey Pass. Lee's army began to reposition during the night of July 3 and had completed its movement by daylight on July 4. The movement gave Meade no indication of Lee's planned retreat.

Meade informed Halleck at 7:00 A.M. on July 4:

This morning the enemy has withdrawn his pickets from the positions of yesterday. My own pickets are moving out to ascertain the nature and extent of the enemy's movement. My information is not sufficient for me to decide its character yet-whether a retreat or maneuver for other purposes. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 78)

Meade followed this message with one at noon of the same day, stating:

The position of affairs is not materially changed from my last dispatch, 7 a. m. The enemy apparently has thrown back his left, and

placed guns and troops in position in rear of Gettysburg, which we now hold. The enemy has abandoned large numbers of his killed and wounded on the field. I shall require some time to get up supplies, ammunition, &c., rest the army, worn out by long marches and three days' hard fighting.

(OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 78)

At midday, Meade is still uncertain of Lee's intent. He is not sure if Lee is retreating or just relocating in anticipation of another battle. He also gives Halleck an early indication that the army is fatigued and in need of supplies. While the importance of this statement may be lost on a civilian such as Lincoln, as a soldier Halleck should have realized its full implications. He seemed not to, and if he did, he soon disregarded it.

At 10:00 P.M. Meade reports that affairs had not changed, writing to Halleck:

No change of affairs since dispatch of 12 noon. I make a reconnaissance to-morrow, to ascertain what the intention of the enemy is. My cavalry are now moving toward the South Mountain Pass, and, should the enemy retreat, I shall pursue him on his flanks. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 78)

It would take most of the day on July 4 for the Confederates to organize the 17-mile long train and start it toward Williamsport. Hindered by torrential rains that began around noon, the Confederate train finally departed about 4:00 P.M, guarded by the cavalry of General Imboden. After giving the train sufficient time to clear the road, Lee's army withdrew in the darkness of the night.

At 8:30 on the morning of July 5, Meade advised Halleck:

The enemy retired, under cover of the night and heavy rain, in the direction of Fairfield and Cashtown. All my available cavalry are in pursuit.... My movement will be made at once on his flank, via Middletown and South Mountain Pass.... I cannot delay to pick up the debris of the battle-field, and request that all those arrangements may be made by the departments. My wounded, with those of the enemy in our hands, will be left at Gettysburg. After burying our own, I am compelled to employ citizens to bury the enemy's dead. My headquarters will be to-night at Creagerstown. Communication received from General [W. F.] Smith, in command of 3, 000 men, on the march from Carlisle toward Cashtown. Field return last evening gives me about 55, 000 effective in the ranks, exclusive of cavalry, baggage guards, ambulances, attendants, etc. Every available reinforcement is required and should be sent to Frederick without delay. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 78)

Meade avoids a direct pursuit of Lee through the mountains, realizing that a small force could delay him while Lee's army gained ground. It is quicker and safer for Meade to pursue him on the flank, which also keeps Meade between Lee and Washington.

But Meade faces a significant challenge in reattaching his corps to their supply trains. Meade's army is hungry, and ill supplied, having been cut off from their supplies due to Stuart's disabling of the railroad from Westminster to Gettysburg. The distance between Meade and his supplies is too long to effectively supply the troops by an overland route. In order to protect the twenty-

five mile long supply line, Meade has used a significant amount of cavalry. Now he will have to reestablish his supply center at Frederick, but not until he is sure that Lee is retreating. He now needs the cavalry for reconnaissance and therefore sends the Second and Eleventh Corps to guard the supply train and ammunition train.

At 2:00 P.M. on July 6, Meade summarizes the events of July 5 and 6 in a correspondence to Halleck, stating:

Yesterday I sent General Sedgwick with the Sixth Corps in pursuit of the enemy toward Fairfield, and a brigade of cavalry toward Cashtown. General Sedgwick's report indicating a large force of the enemy in the mountains, I deemed it prudent to suspend the movement to Middletown until I could be certain the enemy were evacuating the Cumberland Valley. I find great difficulty in getting reliable information, but from all I can learn I have reason to believe the enemy is retreating, very much crippled, and hampered with his trains. General Sedgwick reported that the gap at Fairfield was very formidable, and would enable a small force to hold my column in check for a long time. I have accordingly resumed the movement to Middletown, and I expect by to-morrow night to assemble the army in that vicinity. Supplies will be then provided, and as soon as possible I will cross South Mountain, and proceed in search of the enemy.... A brigade of infantry and one of cavalry, with two batteries, will be left to watch the enemy at Fairfield, and follow them whenever they evacuate the gap.... If I can get the Army of the Potomac in hand in the

Valley, and the enemy have not crossed the river, I shall give him battle, trusting, should misfortune overtake me, that a sufficient number of my force, in connection with what you have in Washington, would reach that place so as to render it secure.... The losses of the enemy were no doubt very great, and he must be proportionately crippled. My headquarters will be here to-night, and to-morrow I expect to be at Frederick. My cavalry have been attacking the enemy on both flanks, inflicting as much injury as possible. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp. 80-81)

Sedgwick's report indicated that the enemy was preparing for battle at Fairfield Gap. Meade halted his advance waiting for developments there, wanting to be certain the enemy had cleared the mountains before continuing his pursuit. He advised Sedgwick that if he left the Confederates alone, they were likely to leave him alone (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1). This message has been interpreted as indicating that Meade did not want to give Lee further battle and just wanted to escort him back to Virginia. This view is erroneous on two accounts. First, Meade knew better than to attack an enemy positioned in a narrow mountain gap. Indeed, Lee hoped Meade would attack him there (Wittenberg, Petruzzi, Nugent, 2008). On the second account, as indicated in the preceding message, Meade has every desire to engage Lee.

Meade's message to Halleck indicates that Meade still has the defense of Washington in mind. As will often be the case, Meade must maneuver to engage Lee but keep Washington covered. He obviously considered that in the event of a

Confederate victory, the next move would be to fall back to protect Washington. Here is evidenced Meade's careful and thorough planning and attention to detail.

On July 4, Meade issued his congratulatory message to the troops, General Orders, No. 68. It read:

The Commanding General, in behalf of the country, thanks the Army of the Potomac for the glorious result of recent operations. An enemy superior in numbers and flushed with the pride of a successful invasion, attempted to overcome and destroy this Army. Utterly baffled and defeated, he has now withdrawn from the contest. The privations and fatigue the Army has endured, and the heroic courage and gallantry it has displayed will be matters of history to be remembered.

Our task is not yet accomplished, and the Commanding General looks to the Army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 122-123)

President Lincoln was immediately alarmed by Meade's congratulatory message. He objected to the concept of driving the enemy from our soil, feeling that this was not a foreign invasion, and all soil was United States soil. Lincoln was also alarmed by reports coming in from other generals that indicated that Meade did not wish to engage Lee again. For example, Henry Haupt, Military Director and Superintendent of the United States Military Railroad, informed Lincoln that he had visited Meade and that Meade showed no interest in immediately pursuing Lee. Haupt's opinion was that Meade could pursue and crush Lee, if he so desired. Even though Haupt had been east of Gettysburg

repairing the railroad during the battle and his opinion was based on his observations after the battle, his conversation with Lincoln was damaging to Meade. Lincoln wrote to Halleck, "These things all appear to me to be connected with a purpose to cover Baltimore and Washington, and to get the enemy across the river again without further collision, and they do not appear connected with a purpose to prevent his crossing and to destroy him" (Works of Lincoln, IX, 18-19, in Williams, 1958). Lincoln's opinion of Meade would continue to deteriorate and reached a low when Lee crossed the Potomac on July 14.

Lincoln's reaction to Meade's message is unfortunate, but understandable from his position. He is a politician who influences people with his words. Lincoln crafts elegant speeches or tells humorous anecdotes to make a point. But Meade is a career soldier. The army's sole purpose in the mid-nineteenth century is to protect the nation from foreign invasion and his army is engaged in deadly battle. Meade is not the wordsmith that Lincoln is, but he is all soldier, and Pennsylvania is his home soil.

Lincoln may have had a more positive view of Meade if he had seen Meade's July 8, 1863 letter to Margaret. Meade writes:

I think we shall have another battle before Lee can cross the river, though from all accounts he is making great efforts to do so. For my part, as I have to follow and fight him, I would rather do it at once and in

Maryland than to follow into Virginia. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 132)

Meade is still not certain that Lee's goal is to return to Virginia without a battle, but suspects that it is. But he clearly indicates that he wishes to face Lee soon.

Meade also indicates that he will fight in Virginia if necessary. Apparently Meade does not feel that if Lee crosses the Potomac he has escaped the possibility of being defeated in another battle.

Meade's letter continues:

I received last evening your letters of the 3d and 5th inst., and am truly rejoiced that you are treated with such distinction on account of my humble services. I see also that the papers are making a great deal too much fuss about me. I claim no extraordinary merit for this last battle, and would prefer waiting a little while to see what my career is to be before making any pretensions. I did and shall continue to do my duty to the best of my abilities, but knowing that battles are often decided by accidents, and that no man of sense will say in advance what their result will be, I wish to be careful in not bragging before the right time. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 132)

Meade takes pride in providing his wife with joy and recognition. He also sends her a document, which he says will "give you pleasure I know." (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 133) The document is his notification of being promoted to Brigadier General in the Regular army. But his modesty prevents him from claiming any great credit based on a single battle. Later in the letter he states, "I never claimed a victory, though I stated that Lee was defeated in his efforts to destroy my army" (p. 133). Meade is still unsure of the amount of damage that has been inflicted on Lee's army.

Meade's lack of exuberance may be due as much to fatigue as it is to modesty. His letter continues as Meade explains:

George is very well, though both of us are a good deal fatigued with our recent operations. From the time I took command till to-day, now over ten days, I have not changed my clothes, have not had a regular night's rest, and many night not a wink of sleep, and for several days did not even wash my face and hands, no regular food, and all the time in a great state of mental anxiety. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 133)

The rigors of war have visited Meade. He is dedicated to his responsibilities and does not allow personal inconveniences to interfere with the execution of his duty. His mental anxiety will continue to grow as the war progresses, eventually grinding down his resilience and resistance.

Meade's army is progressing to Middletown on three fronts. Meade plans to unite the army and supply it there before moving against Lee. Lincoln is apparently not satisfied with Meade's progress and continues to be fearful that Meade is avoiding another battle, as indicated by messages from Halleck to Meade. On July 7, Halleck forwards a message from Lincoln that states:

We have certain information that Vicksburg surrendered to Genl. Grant on the 4th of July. Now, if Gen. Meade can complete this work, so gloriously prosecuted thus far, by the literal or substantial destruction of Lee's Army the rebellion will be over (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 83).

Halleck also sent his own note to Meade stating, "You have given the enemy a stunning blow...follow it up and give him another before he can cross the Potomac (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 82).

On July 8, Meade explains the situation to Halleck writing:

My army is assembling slowly. The rains of yesterday and last night have made all roads but pikes almost impassable. Artillery and wagons are stalled; it will take time to collect them together. A large portion of the men are barefooted. Shoes will arrive at Frederick to-day, and will be issued as soon as possible. The spirit of the army is high; the men are ready and willing to make every exertion to push forward. The very first moment I can get the different commands, the artillery and cavalry, properly supplied and in hand, I will move forward. Be assured I most earnestly desire to try the fortunes of war with the enemy on this side of the river, hoping through Providence and the bravery of my men to settle the question, but I should do wrong not to frankly tell you of the difficulties encountered. I expect to find the enemy in a strong position, well covered with artillery, and I do not desire to imitate his example at Gettysburg, and assault a position where the chances were so greatly against success. I wish in advance to moderate the expectations of those who, in ignorance of the difficulties to be encountered, may expect too much. All that I can do under the circumstances I pledge this army to do (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 85).

Meade is feeling the pressures of command. He is aware of his responsibilities and the conflicts between them. He desires to meet the

President's expectations and engage Lee, but only when there is a good chance of success. He wants the army to be well supplied and all of the corps available. He does not want to attack Lee when Lee is on favorable ground and well fortified. Lee has just demonstrated the futility of such a attack. The Army of the Potomac, although victorious, has suffered greatly and a defeat at this point could result in it being rendered ineffective. Meade has a responsibility to keep the army viable. Maybe most importantly, Meade is telling Halleck that he will not be forced into a battle just to prove that he is willing to fight.

Halleck, on the same day, again pushes Meade, writing, "There is reliable information that the enemy is crossing at Williamsport. The opportunity to attack his divided forces should not be lost. The President is urgent and anxious that your army should move against him by forced marches" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 85). Meade, obviously irritated, responds:

My information as to the crossing of the enemy does not agree with that just received in your dispatch. His whole force is in position between Funkstown and Williamsport. I have just received information that he has driven my cavalry force in front of Boonsborough. My army is and has been making forced marches, short of rations, and barefooted. One corps marched yesterday and last night over 30 miles. I take occasion to repeat that I will use my utmost efforts to push forward this army (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 85).

Halleck recognized Meade's ire and quickly responded:

Do not understand me as expressing any dissatisfaction; on the contrary, your army has done most nobly. I only wish to give you opinions

formed from information received here. It is telegraphed from near Harper's Ferry that the enemy have been crossing for the last two days. It is also reported that they have a bridge across. If Lee's army is so divided by the river, the importance of attacking the part on this side is incalculable. Such an opportunity may never occur again. If, on the contrary, he has massed his whole force on the Antietam, time must be taken to also concentrate your forces. Your opportunities for information are better than mine. General Kelley was ordered some days ago to concentrate at Hancock and attack the enemy's right. General Brooks is also moving from Pittsburgh to re-enforce Kelley. All troops arriving from New York and Fort Monroe are sent directly to Harper's Ferry unless you order differently. You will have forces sufficient to render your victory certain. My only fear now is that the enemy may escape by crossing the river. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 78)

Halleck is vacillating and non-committal in this correspondence.

Unfortunately for Meade, it is typical of what he will get from Halleck throughout Halleck's tenure as Commander-in-Chief. The message to Meade is, "I don't want to make you angry, but I still think I am right, even though you are there and I am not. And I still think you are going to let Lee get away even though you would defeat him in a battle. But, just in case, I am sending you some more troops."

On July 9, Meade advises Halleck that the army is moving and now more disgusted than irritated, adds, "I think the decisive battle of the war will be fought in a few days. In view of its momentous consequences, I desire to adopt such measures as in my judgment will tend to insure success, even though these may be deemed tardy (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 88). Meade again is telling Halleck that he will not be browbeat into a mistake.

Later that day Halleck responds to Meade, writing, "Do not be influenced by any dispatch from here against your own judgment. Regard them as suggestions only. Our information here is not always correct" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 88). Meade has effectually been told that he has no orders, just suggestions. While that is Halleck's style, it is not a trait that is endearing to Lincoln, who wishes Halleck to order an attack. Meade's position may have been much improved if Halleck had been more assertive in conveying Lincoln's wishes. What is clear is that Halleck has given Meade permission to disregard his "suggestions" based upon his own judgment.

Early in the afternoon of July 10, 1863, Meade advises Halleck that he has briefly encountered the enemy and will proceed the next day to determine the force and location of the enemy in his presence, and then he will formulate a plan of action. Surprisingly, after goading Meade forward for days, Halleck suggests that he stop at Middletown and gather all his forces before he hazards a battle. On this day, Meade's letter to his wife indicates that his anxiety is increasing. He writes with disgust:

I see also that my success at Gettysburg has deluded the people and the Government with the idea that I must always be victorious, that Lee is demoralized and disorganized, etc., and other delusions which will not only be dissipated by any reverse that I should meet with, but would react in proportion against me.

I am of opinion that Lee is in a strong position and determined to fight before he crosses the river. I make but little account of myself, and think only of the country. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 133)

Although Lee has the rain-swollen Potomac River to his back and is unable to cross it, his army is behind six miles of artillery-protected entrenchments. On July 12, 1863 Meade advises Halleck, "It is my intention to attack them to-morrow, unless something intervenes to prevent it" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 99). That evening Meade convened a meeting of his corps commanders. Meade favors an attack the next day, but most of his corps commanders objected to an attack without properly examining the enemy's position and strength. Meade advises Halleck:

In my dispatch of yesterday I stated that it was my intention to attack the enemy to-day, unless something intervened to prevent it. Upon calling my corps commanders together and submitting the question to them, five out of six were unqualifiedly opposed to it. Under these circumstances, in view of the momentous consequences attendant upon a failure to succeed, I did not feel myself authorized to attack until after I had made more careful examination of the enemy's position, strength, and

defensive works. These examinations are now being made. So far as completed, they show the enemy to be strongly intrenched on a ridge running from the rear of Hagerstown past Downsville to the Potomac. I shall continue these reconnaissances with the expectation of finding some weak point, upon which, if I succeed, I shall hazard an attack. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 92)

Even though Meade was deferring to the judgment of his commanders, he accepts responsibility for the decision and does not place any blame on others. Again, he seeks reliable information before making a decision.

Halleck responded sharply to Meade's correspondence at 9:30 P.M. the next day, July 13 writing:

You are strong enough to attack and defeat the enemy before he can effect a crossing. Act upon your own judgment and make your generals execute your orders. Call no council of war. It is proverbial that councils of war never fight. Re-enforcements are pushed on as rapidly as possible. Do not let the enemy escape. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 93)

Again, Meade's use of a council brings criticism. Meade explained his rationale for calling the consultation in his testimony before the CCW, testifying:

... as soon as my army was in hand and ready for offensive operations, although I had no opportunity of examining critically and closely the enemy's position, still knowing the importance of not letting the enemy recross the river without further action, it was my desire to attack

him in that position. Having, however, been in command of the army not more than twelve or fourteen days, and in view of the important and tremendous issues involved in the result, knowing that if I were defeated the whole question would be reversed, the road to Washington and to the north open, and all the fruits of my victory at Gettysburg dissipated, I did not feel that I would be right in assuming the responsibility of blindly attacking the enemy without any knowledge of his position. I therefore called a council of my corps commanders, who were the officers to execute this duty... (Hyde, 2003, p. 116)

Meade has lost two of his best commanders in Hancock and Reynolds. Even Sickles' loss is significant, as he is known as a capable and bold fighter. Wadsworth is in command of the First Corps, replacing Newton, who is ill and has just replaced Reynolds. Hays has replaced Hancock and French has just replaced Sickles. Howard, Sykes, Sedgwick, and Slocum have been in command since before Gettysburg. Meade knows that if his commanders are not supportive of his plan, they will not execute it with the fervor required. Meade has demonstrated that he knows how to use good men to best advantage, and he also knows the weaknesses of lesser men.

Meade is still not entirely comfortable with command, believing that he needs the information that his corps commanders possess to aid his decision making. As previously noted, Meade's planning requires information and he is uncomfortable when he faces too many unknowns. He is also weighing the risk

against the possible gains, and he correctly feels that a defeat would be disastrous to the nation, not just the army.

Meade spent the next day, July 13, reconnoitering the enemy position, but little information was gained due to the rain and fog. Nevertheless, Meade decides to attack the next day, July 14, but finds that most of Lee's army has escaped in the early hours. Meade's forces fall on the enemy's rear and capture about 2,000 prisoners, but for the most part, Lee is successfully back in Virginia.

Meade's testimony before the CCW continues:

It is proper I should say that an examination of the enemy's lines, and of the defences which he had made-of which I now have a map from an accurate survey, which can be laid before your committee-brings me clearly to the opinion that an attack, under the circumstances in which I proposed to make it, would have resulted disastrously to our arms.

Question: Will you give us the reason for that opinion?

Answer: It is founded upon the strength of their position. I will say that if I had attacked the enemy in the position which he then occupied-he having the advantage of position and being on the defensive, his artillery in position and his infantry behind parapets and rifle-pits-the very same reasons and causes which produced my success at Gettysburg would have operated in his favor there, and be likely to produce success on his part. (Hyde, 2003, p. 118)

Others, such as Generals Howard, Sedgwick, and Sykes support Meade's opinion. It is, of course, speculation as to whether or not an attack would have

succeeded. The CCW believed that Lee was short on ammunition, but Sharpe's intelligence service correctly had advised Meade that ammunition had been ferried across the river to Lee. Meade also believed that his army was not significantly larger than Lee's and therefore, did not feel he had that advantage. The memory of Pickett's charge was still fresh, a charge that failed in spite of using a large number of men. At this point, Meade was content to pick up the chase on the other side of the river.

Meade advises Halleck of the situation and asks for advice regarding operations, now to be commenced south of the Potomac. Halleck's terse response states the obvious:

The enemy should be pursued and cut up, wherever he may have gone. This pursuit may or may not be upon the rear or flank, as circumstances may require. The inner flank toward Washington presents the greatest advantages. Supply yourself from the country as far as possible. I cannot advise details, as I do not know where Lee's army is, nor where your pontoon bridges are. I need hardly say to you that the escape of Lee's army without another battle has created great dissatisfaction in the mind of the President, and it will require an active and energetic pursuit on your part to remove the impression that it has not been sufficiently active heretofore. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 92)

Meade received Halleck's "advice" at 1:00 P.M. It is likely that Meade would agree with Halleck, as it has long been his contention that officials in Washington could not know the conditions in the field and interfered excessively

with the operations of the Army of the Potomac. But, having heard once again that his pursuit of Lee was not adequate enough to suit the President, and this time implying incompetence on Meade's part, Meade responded:

Having performed my duty conscientiously and to the best of my ability, the censure of the President conveyed in your dispatch of 1 p. m. this day, is, in my judgment, so undeserved that I feel compelled most respectfully to ask to be immediately relieved from the command of this army. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 93)

Halleck's response, refusing Meade's resignation, only agitates Meade more. Halleck writes, "My telegram, stating the disappointment of the President at the escape of Lee's army, was not intended as a censure, but as a stimulus to an active pursuit. It is not deemed a sufficient cause for your application to be relieved (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp. 92-93).

On July 14, Meade wrote to Margaret and explained that Lee had successfully crossed the river and that Halleck said the President was very dissatisfied. His frustration then becomes evident as he tells her:

This is exactly what I expected; unless I did impracticable things, fault would be found with me. I have ignored the senseless adulation of the public and press, and I am now just as indifferent to the censure bestowed without cause. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 134)

A Season of Frustration: July 15, 1863 to March 1864

On July 16 Meade is still seething over the President's "censure" and Halleck's reply. His letter to Margaret is bitter and angry. He writes tempestuously:

I don't know whether I informed you of Halleck's reply, that his telegram was not intended as a censure, but merely to "spur me on to active pursuit," which I consider more offensive than the original message; for no man who does his duty, and all that he can do, as I maintain I have done, *needs spurring*. It is only the laggards and those who fail to do all they can do who require spurring. They have refused to relieve me, but insist on my continuing to try to do what I know in advance it is impossible to do. My army (men and animals) is exhausted; it wants rest and reorganization; it has been greatly reduced and weakened by recent operations, and no reinforcements of any practical value have been sent." Yet, in the face of all these facts, well known to them, I am urged, pushed and *spurred* to attempting to pursue and destroy an enemy nearly equal to my own, falling back upon its resources and reinforcements, and increasing its *morale* daily. This has been the history of all my predecessors, and I saw clearly that in time their fate would be mine. This was the reason I was disinclined to take the command, and it is for this reason I would gladly give it up. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 135)

Meade feels that his honor has been impugned, as well as his ability. He feels that his army has had no opportunity to recover from Gettysburg. Still, Meade will

not forego his duty to follow orders, and immediately continues his pursuit, but laments to Margaret on July 18, 1863:

The Government insists on my pursuing and destroying Lee. The former I can do, but the latter will depend on him as much as on me, for if he keeps out of the way, I can't destroy.... The proper policy for the Government would have been ...not to have advanced till this army was largely reinforced and reorganized, and put on such footing that its advance was sure to be successful. As, however, I am bound to obey explicit orders, the responsibility of the consequences must and should rest those who gave them. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 136)

Only three weeks into command, Meade is becoming frustrated. His army has made forced marches to engage Lee's army at Gettysburg, fought brilliantly for three days, and endured rain soaked roads to pursue a wounded but dangerous foe. The army is short on supplies, shoes, animals, rest and experienced officers. Lincoln may have wished for a decisive battle, but Lee was not going to be trapped and forced to fight a battle he did not want to fight any more than would Meade. The first fourteen days of July has seen a major battle and daily skirmishes and engagements. The army has not done anything *but* pursue Lee with the intent of destroying his army. Meade must have wondered just what Halleck and Lincoln thought the army was doing. The impression that Meade was just plodding along behind Lee hoping to avoid an engagement is not sustained by the facts. Even though Meade would have preferred refitting and reorganizing before he pursued Lee, he dutifully followed his orders.

Meade's insistence that the army should have been refitted before it began a pursuit does appear to support Lincoln's and historian T. Harry Williams' speculation that Meade really did not want to engage Lee, in spite of what he says. Williams asserts that, "He did not say so in his communications to the government, and he probably did not admit even to himself that he was avoiding a showdown. But his fear of the result of a general engagement appeared in every dispatch that he sent..." (Williams, 1952, p.266). Lincoln was much more direct. In a letter he wrote on July 14, 1863, but never sent to Meade, he insists that when Lee retreated:

You did not, as it seemed to me, pressingly pursue him; but a flood in the river detained him, till, by slow degrees, you were again upon him.... you stood and let the flood run down, bridges be built, and the enemy move away at his leisure, without attacking him. (Retrieved from www.historyplace.com on February 1, 2011)

Meade is not fearful of an engagement, but he is cautious. Lincoln's and Williams' opinions seem to be based only on the belief that Lee was severely crippled and unable to mount an effective defense and the only reason for his escape was Meade's unwillingness to engage him. This premise ignores the difficulties that Meade faced in supplying and refitting his army, the damage his army suffered at Gettysburg, the loss of important generals, delays caused by inaccurate information, the delay ordered by Halleck, the weather, Lee's head start, the lack of intelligence on the condition of Lee's army, the skill of Lee, the strong position of Lee at Williamsport, the consequences of a Union loss, and the

orders to cover Washington. Most notably, Meade has only been in command for sixteen days. He received command during an active campaign and the constant movement of the armies has forced him to be more reactionary than proactive. Meade is not fearful or unwilling, but he is cautious and inexperienced at this level of command. Meade feels a great responsibility to the army and the nation, and it is reasonable for him to err on the side of caution.

As the armies continue to maneuver, Meade is still disturbed by Lincoln's admonishment. On July 21, 1863 Meade wrote to Margaret, echoing her indignation at the treatment he had received over Lee's retreat and escape after Gettysburg:

Your indignation at the manner in which I was treated on Lee's escape is not only natural, but was and is fully shared by me. I did think at one time writing frankly to the President, informing him I never desired command, and would be most glad at any time to be relieved, and that, as he had expressed dissatisfaction at my course, I thought it was his duty, independent of any personal consideration, to remove me. After reflection, however, I came to the conclusion to take no further action in the matter.... I took the command from a sense of duty. I shall continue to exercise it, to the best of my humble capacity, in the same spirit. I have no ambition or ulterior views, and whatever my fate, I shall try to preserve a clear conscience. I have received handsome letters, both from Generals McClellan and Pope, which I enclose for your perusal and preservation.

(Meade, 1913/1994, II, p.136)

Meade's sense of duty required that he accept the assignment to command the Army of the Potomac. As ordered, he had successfully engaged Lee, dealt him a crippling blow, and protected Washington while he pursued and tried to engage Lee on his retreat. But the President's dissatisfaction had robbed Meade of the pride he might naturally have felt. However, he was proud of the approval expressed to him by Generals McClellan and Burnside, even though, due to their ineffectiveness, they both had been relieved from the command Meade held. McClellan wrote:

I wish to offer you my sincere and heartfelt congratulations upon the glorious victory you have achieved, and the splendid way in which you assumed control of our noble old army under such trying circumstances.... You have done all that could be done and the Army of the Potomac has supported you nobly. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 312)

Meade is frustrated and disappointed that the faithful discharge of his duty did not result in earned and deserved appreciation or rewards. He highly regards and needs the appreciation of others. Given Meade's disdain for the military opinions of those who are not trained professionals, the support of two generals who understood his position was particularly gratifying. After all, President Lincoln did not have McClellan's or Burnside's experience in the field. Ultimately, it is Meade's belief that he had done his duty as well as he could that sustains him during this criticism, as it often will.

During the remainder of July Meade and Lee continued to maneuver for position. On July 22, 1863, General French encountered the enemy and had the

opportunity to divide the Confederate forces, but moved too slowly, allowing Lee to again withdraw. "French was not Hancock or Reynolds" (Sauer, 2003, p. 62). On July 26, 1863, there was a brief encounter at Manassas Gap. Meade, having pushed Lee's forces through the gap, expected a battle the next day, but Lee did not oblige him. He writes to Margaret, "Of course I was again disappointed, and I presume the President will again be dissatisfied" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 139). Meade's choice of the words "disappointed" and "dissatisfied" reflect the sensitivity of Meade, as indicated by a subsequent exchange of letters between he and Halleck.

On July 28, 1863, Halleck sent Meade an unofficial correspondence that was well received by Meade. Halleck wrote:

I take this method of writing you a few words which I could not well communicate in any other way. Your fight at Gettysburg met with the universal approbation of all military men here. You handled your troops in that battle as well, if not better, than any general has handled his army during the war. You brought all your forces into action at the right time and place, which no commander of the Army of the Potomac has done before. You may well be proud of that battle. The President's order, or proclamation, of July 4, showed how much he appreciated your success. And now a few words in regard to subsequent events. You should not have been surprised or vexed at the President's disappointment at the escape of Lee's army. He had examined into all the details of sending you re-enforcements, to satisfy himself that every man who could possibly be

spared from other places had been sent to your army. He thought that Lee's defeat was so certain that he felt no little impatience at his unexpected escape. I have no doubt, general, that you felt the disappointment as keenly as any one else. Such things sometimes occur to us without any fault of our own. Take it altogether, your short campaign has proved your superior generalship, and you merit, as you will receive, the confidence of the Government and the gratitude of the country. I need not assure you, general, that I have lost none of the confidence which I felt in you when I recommended you for the command. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp. 105-105)

Meade responded on July 30, 1863, writing:

I thank you most sincerely and heartily for your kind and generous letters of the 28th instant, received last evening. It would be wrong in me to deny that I feared there existed in the minds of both the President and yourself an idea that I had failed to do what another would and could have done in the withdrawal of Lee's army. The expression you have been pleased to use in your letter, to wit, "a feeling of disappointment, " is one that I cheerfully accept and readily admit was as keenly felt by myself as any one. But permit me, dear general, to call your attention to the distinction between disappointment and dissatisfaction. The one was a natural feeling, in view of the momentous consequences that would have resulted from a successful attack, but does not necessarily convey with it any censure. I could not view the use of the latter expression in any other

light than as intending to convey an expression of opinion on the part of the President that I had failed to do what I might and should have done. Now, let me say, in the frankness which characterizes your letter, that perhaps the President was right; if such was the case, it was my duty to give him an opportunity to replace me by one better fitted for the command of the army. It was, I assure you, with such feelings that I applied to be relieved. It was not from any personal considerations, for I have tried in this whole war to forget all personal considerations, and have always maintained they should not for an instant influence any one's actions. Of course you will understand that I do not agree that the President was right, and I feel sure when the true state of the case comes to be known, that however natural and great may be the feeling of disappointment, no blame will be attached to any one. Had I attacked Lee the day I proposed to do so, and in the ignorance that then existed of his position, I have every reason to believe the attack would have been unsuccessful, and would have resulted disastrously. This opinion is founded on the judgment of numerous distinguished officers, after inspecting Lee's vacated works and position. Among these officers I could name Generals Sedgwick, Wright, Slocum, Hays, Sykes, and others. The idea that Lee had abandoned his lines early in the day that he withdrew, I have positive intelligence is not correct, and that not a man was withdrawn till after dark. I mention these facts to remove the impression, which newspaper correspondents have given the public, that it was only

necessary to advance to secure an easy victory. I had great responsibility thrown on me. On one side were the known and important fruits of victory, and, on the other, the equally important and terrible consequences of a defeat. I considered my position at Williamsport very different from that at Gettysburg. When I left Frederick, it was with the firm determination to attack and fight Lee, without regard to time or place, as soon as I could come in contact with him; but after defeating him, and requiring him to abandon his schemes of invasion, I did not think myself justified in making a blind attack simply to prevent his escape, and running all the risks attending such a venture. Now, as I said before, in this, perhaps, I erred in judgment, for I take this occasion to say to you, and through you to the President, that I have no pretensions to any superior capacity for the post he has assigned me to; that all I can do is to exert my utmost efforts and do the best I can; but that the moment those who have a right to judge my actions think, or feel satisfied, either that I am wanting or that another would do better, that moment I earnestly desire to be relieved, not on my own account, but on account of the country and the cause.

You must excuse so much egotism, but your kind letter in a measure renders it necessary. I feel, general, very proud of your good opinion, and assure you I shall endeavor in the future to continue to merit it. Reciprocating the kind feeling you have expressed, I remain, General, most truly and respectfully, yours, (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp. 109-110)

Several characteristics of Meade are again evident in his response. A man of lesser sensitivity or intellect may not have placed so much importance on the difference between disappointment and dissatisfaction. Meade's perception is accurate, however, and given his values, the difference is significant to Meade. He can accept criticism of his judgment, but objects when it is suggested that he failed to do what he obviously should have done. As he repeatedly demonstrates, he needs the support and approval of his superiors. He truly is proud to have Halleck's kind feelings. He also appreciates, even needs, the concurrence of his corps commanders, which is an indication of support to Meade. Again, he reveals his need for information, not wanting to make a "blind attack". Most importantly, his inexperience again shows. As a corps commander Meade may have attacked at Williamsport, but as commander of the army, Meade's responsibilities are much greater and diverse, as Meade explained.

On July 29, Lincoln sent Halleck a message, which Halleck relayed to Meade. Lincoln's view of Meade and the army is clearly defined. The President wrote:

Seeing General Meade's dispatch of yesterday to yourself, causes me to fear that he supposes the Government here is demanding of him to bring on a general engagement with Lee as soon as possible. I am claiming no such thing of him. In fact, my judgment is against it; which judgment, of course, I will yield if yours and his are the contrary. If he could not safely, engage Lee at Williamsport, it seems absurd to suppose he can safely engage him now, when he has scarcely more than two-

thirds of the force he had at Williamsport, while it must be that Lee has been re-enforced. True, I desired General Meade to pursue Lee across the Potomac, hoping, as has proved true, that he would thereby clear the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and get some advantage by harassing him on his retreat. These being past we here are pressing him, and I shall be glad for you to so inform him, unless your own judgment is against it. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 105)

Lincoln has decided that Meade cannot defeat Lee at this point, and will soon idle the Army of the Potomac.

Meade responded to Halleck on July 30, writing at length:

The impression of the President is correct. I have been acting under the belief, from your telegrams, that it was his and your wish, that I should pursue Lee and bring him to a general engagement, if practicable. The President, however, labors under two misapprehensions: First, I did not fail to attack Lee at Williamsport because I could not do so safely; I simply delayed the attack until, by examination of his position, I could do so with some reasonable degree of probability that the attack would be successful. He withdrew before that information could be obtained. Secondly, my army at this moment is about equal in strength to what it was at Williamsport, the re-enforcements, principally Gordon's division, from the Peninsula, which reached me at Berlin, being about equal to the losses sustained by the discharge of the nine months' men. ... With this preliminary explanation, and the fact that my army is now in a condition to

move, it becomes necessary that the question of an advance should be definitely settled at the earliest possible moment. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 106)

Meade's demand for the truth requires him to correct what he views as misconceptions on the President's part. It is so important to Meade that he barely makes note of the fact that, indeed, he has been under the impression that he is to engage Lee as soon as possible. He also asserts that his army is not significantly reduced in numbers compared to his force at Williamsport, preparing to make the case for the army's continued advance.

He continues:

The solution of this question will depend in a measure on data not in my possession, such, for instance, as is referred to by you in your telegram of 2. 30 p. m., viz, the withdrawal of a part of this army. So far as the question is a military one, dependent on the relative condition of the two armies, I am of the opinion that, even if Lee has been re-enforced by 10, 000 men, owing to the losses sustained by him in his recent campaign, I ought still to be able to cope with him, provided he is not found in a very strong position, where the natural and artificial obstacles to be overcome are such that, with inferior or equal numbers on his part, the advantages referred to in reality make him my superior. This, of course, can only be tested or settled by an advance and coming in contact with him. The information as to the enemy's position and movements, as previously reported, is very meager and contradictory. I have still to rely on my own

judgment and reasoning.... therefore, in my judgment, if there were no other considerations than the relative strength and position of the two armies, I should favor an advance. Of course, you and the President will be governed by such other considerations as may exist, and your decision, when communicated, will be promptly and strictly complied with.

(OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp. 106-107)

Meade is operating on what he considers as limited information and asserts that to a large degree, he is left to his own judgment. His judgment is that he can effectively engage Lee and he recommends that the army should advance. He also understands that it is his responsibility to serve the needs of the bigger picture, as Halleck and Lincoln see it. Meade is willing to do his duty. But Lincoln clearly has no regard for Meade's judgment.

As Meade was composing his response, he was receiving orders to send 1,500 to 2,000 soldiers to New York City to quell the riots against the draft. He was also ordered to hold his position and avoid a battle. On August 3, 1863 Meade writes to Margaret, "The Government, for some reason best known to itself, has ordered me to cease pursuit of Lee, though I strongly recommended an advance" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 141). Then on August 6 he writes, "...Halleck had ordered me to halt and cease pursuing Lee.... I do not know the reason.... I am quite sure if I were to advance now, he [Lee] would fall back to Richmond" (pp. 141-142). Meade has previously expressed the opinion that the best course of action is to push Lee into Richmond and then cut all the supply routes to the city. Eventually, Lee would be forced to come out from the city's

defenses and fight in the open. But the destruction of Lee's army is Lincoln's objective, and Meade will never have the opportunity to try his strategy. He apparently does not realize that Lincoln has given up on him and the army. Halleck's 2,000 men for the riots turned into between eight and ten thousand men according to Meade (Meade, 1913/1994, II).

As August became September, Meade continues to be criticized. He writes to Margaret on September 5, 1863:

Have you seen a very bitter article in Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times*, of August 29th? He says the victory at Gettysburg was due entirely to the strength of the position and the heroic bravery of the common soldiers, and was entirely independent of any strategy or military ability displayed by any general from the senior down. He then charges me with imbecility and timidity... (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 147)

The article also blames the failures of the Army of the Potomac on "the many commanders outside the army proper, who have restrained and controlled its action on more than one important occasion, from the President down; and above all, it is due to the many ignorant and self-sufficient politicians who have been appointed to high commands..." (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 317).

Meade agrees that the position was strong and the men fought nobly, but also comments that no commander would be victorious if the reverse were true. But it is articles such as this that condemn Meade to a lifetime of criticism and create his contempt for the newspapers. As in many instances, the influence of outside forces, beyond the control of the army's generals, is ignored or unknown

to the author of this article. It is curious that the author is also unknown, brave enough to have an opinion but not so brave as to face any response. Meade, on the other hand, must have his every action and word exposed to all.

In early September Lee detached Longstreet and two of his divisions to assist Bragg in Tennessee. Hearing rumors of this, Meade quickly sent the cavalry and Warren's Second Corps to investigate. They drove Lee's cavalry out of Culpepper Courthouse and beyond. But Meade was uncertain as to whether or not this action prompted a withdrawal by Lee, and if it did, how he should proceed with his reduced forces. Meade's caution was warranted, as Lee was simply retiring to a stronger position. Meade then asked Halleck what he wished to do, but Halleck gave him no specific instructions. As he considered what to do, Meade was summoned to Washington. He relates to Margaret on September 24, 1863:

... the President considered my army too large for a merely defensive one, and proposed to take a portion of it away. I objected and reasoned against this, and left Washington with the belief that the President was satisfied. I had just arranged the programme for a movement, and was about issuing orders, when orders came from Washington, taking troops away. Of this I do not complain. The President is the best judge of where the armies can be best deployed, and if he chooses to place this army strictly on the defensive, I have no right to object or murmur.... I told the President and General Halleck that if they thought me too slow or prudent, to put someone else in my place. Halleck

smiled very significantly, and said he had no doubt I would be rejoiced to be relieved, but there was no such good luck for me. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 150)

Meade is sincere in his patriotic belief that if there is a better person to command the army, he would be glad to be removed. Halleck is also correct that Meade would be rejoiced to be relieved. The mental and physical fatigue of command is intense. This, combined with dealing with seemingly constant criticism, has taken its toll on Meade. Now, his superiors are blocking his efforts. Meade apparently has not yet realized Lincoln's true view of his command and the army. It is not just that Lincoln can use Meade's troops elsewhere. He feels they will accomplish nothing under Meade. Meade is so focused on his mission that he has failed to detect the President's disposition.

Longstreet arrived in Tennessee in time to turn the battle at Chickamauga and the Union force under General Rosecrans was forced to withdraw. Lincoln subsequently pulled Meade's Eleventh and Twelfth Corps and sent them to Tennessee under Hooker's command to assist Rosecrans. The Army of the Potomac was reduced to occupying Lee without threatening him.

Meade's wife is also feeling the stress of Meade's command and criticism. He writes to her on September 30, 1863:

I am sorry to see you so anxious about me...You must try and be resigned, and not anticipate evil, but wait for its actual arrival. My position is of course liable to misconstruction so long as the public are ignorant of the truth, but the time will come when they will be enlightened, and then I

shall be all right. Of course, if people believe that Lee has no army, and that I have an immense one, it is hard to expect them to not to inquire why I do not do something.... I have remained here to offer Lee battle if he chooses to come out of his stronghold, and to prevent by my threatening attitude his sending any more troops to Bragg. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 151)

General Meade is following orders, but seems to think he has a choice in the matter, apparently still not understanding Lincoln's perspective. He is also trying to calm his wife and give her hope. He believes the public has been misled by the papers, but he also has faith that the truth will be known and he will be vindicated. By the end of the war, this faith will be gone.

October 1863 saw both armies attempting to maneuver to advantage. Meade's army was bolstered by the return of the troops from the New York riots. On October 14 there was an engagement at Bristoe Station with the Union securing a small victory. Meade then withdrew to Centerville to reposition his army on favorable ground. On October 18, Meade advised Halleck that the enemy had withdrawn from Bristoe Station and told him, "It is impossible to move this army until I know something more definite of position of the enemy.... Whatever route he has taken, it is too late for me to overtake him in any short time (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, pp. 345). Halleck curtly responded, "Lee is unquestionably bullying you. If you cannot ascertain his movements, I certainly cannot. If you pursue and fight him, I think you will find out where he is. I know of no other way" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 346).

Meade, appropriately indignant, replies immediately, stating:

If you have any orders to give me, I am prepared to receive and obey them, but I must insist on being spared the infliction of such truisms in the guise of opinions as you have recently honored me with, particularly as they were not asked for. I take this occasion to repeat what I have before stated, that if my course, based on my own judgment, does not meet with approval, I ought to be, and I desire to be, relieved from command. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 346)

Meade answers Halleck's sarcasm with equal sarcasm. Meade is earnestly trying to secure an advantage and then engage Lee in battle. He interprets Halleck's response as dissatisfaction in his course, and reacts as he always has. Halleck responds as he always has, replying:

Under these circumstances it is continually urged upon me that you ought to ascertain Lee's force and position, in order that the Government might at least know the actual facts. As you could not ascertain otherwise, I have repeated the suggestion made to me of the necessity of giving battle. If I have repeated truisms it has not been to give offense, but to give to you the wishes of the Government. If, in conveying these wishes, I have used words which were unpleasing, I sincerely regret it. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 354)

Halleck not only indicates that he meant no offense, he also deftly lays the blame for pressuring Meade elsewhere. Halleck is reflecting his own tensions, being

pressured by Lincoln to goad Meade into battle. Lincoln is also becoming desperate, writing to Halleck on October 16, 1863:

Doubtless in making the present movement, Lee gathered in all the available scarps, and added them to Hill's and Ewell's corps, but that is all, and he made the movement in the belief that four corps had left General Meade; and General Meade's apparently avoiding a collision with him has confirmed him in the belief. If General Meade can now attack him on a field no more than equal for us, and will do so with all the skill and courage which he, his officers, and men possess, the honor will be his if he succeeds, and the blame may be mine if he fails. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 332)

Lincoln clearly articulates his belief that Meade does not wish to engage Lee and in desperation makes this offer. He, however, misreads Meade. Meade truly enjoys the praise and recognition that a victory brings, but it is not his fear of damaging his reputation that prevents him from attacking. Meade is governed by his military beliefs, wishing to engage Lee in the open, or to receive Lee's attack while the Army of the Potomac fights defensively from a fortified position. Meade also is unwilling to take a risk that is so great as to render the army ineffective if it suffers a serious defeat. Meade also does not forsake his values and accept Lincoln's ploy. While any battle, even a defeat, might serve Lincoln's political purposes, it serves no purpose militarily and Meade will not sacrifice his men for no gain.

During the late summer and fall of 1863 Halleck repeatedly rebuked Meade. He had denied Meade permission to position himself on the Rappahannock and later, denied Meade's request to change his base in order to support offensive actions. Nevertheless, in early November Meade was on the offensive. On November 7, 1863, the Sixth Corps charged the enemy at Rappahannock Station, driving them back. They captured 2,000 prisoners and several guns. Lincoln was pleased enough to send Meade a congratulatory telegram on November 9 (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1).

Meade, experiencing more good feeling than he has for some time, exclaims to Margaret:

The enemy occupied strong positions.... Thanks, however, to their being entirely deceived as to my capacity to move, and to the gallantry of my men, we were enabled to carry their strong works...with a comparatively small loss, and with great *ec/lat*.... The operation being successful, the army is in fine spirits, and of course I am more popular than ever, having been greeted yesterday as I rode through the ranks with great cheering. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 155)

Meade is exuberant at the favor expressed by his troops. He truly appreciates their support and in turn supports them, giving them the credit for the victory. Meade continues, explaining that Lee was forced to retreat to the Rapidan. He hopes that the retreat will silence critics and:

...convince the intelligent public that my retreat to Centerville was not to avoid battle, and that Lee, who was not outflanked, or had his

communications threatened, but was attacked in front, and yet withdrew, is really the one who avoided battle.... I must say I was greatly disappointed when I found Lee refused my offer of battle... (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 156)

Meade had been criticized for withdrawing at Bristoe Station, and feels that this recent action demonstrates that his judgment was correct and that the move was a repositioning, not a retreat, as he has claimed. Lee indeed did not wish to risk battle when he was at the disadvantage. He, as does Meade, has an obligation to protect his army in order to keep it viable for defending his capital. Lee's movement sets up the confrontation at Mine Run, commencing on November 27, 1863.

Meade had decided to try and draw Lee out of his entrenchments by rapidly advancing on Lee's right and turning that flank. As usual, Meade had developed a detailed plan, which quickly went awry. Rain delayed the march for two days, raising the river and causing the pontoons to fall short of the opposite bank. After managing to cross the river, General French was late in starting and then made slow progress, once taking the wrong road. French's delay prevented Sedgwick's following corps from advancing and connecting with Warren's corps. As a result, Lee had time to withdraw and choose an advantageous position. November 28 was spent by the Union in organizing its troops along the Orange Turnpike. Lee spent the day preparing his position and building fortifications.

On the evening of November 29, 1863 Meade met with his corps commanders. Sedgwick wanted to attack on the right, but Warren convinced

Meade than he could carry his front on the Union left due to the weakness in the enemy defenses there. As the artillery opened fire on the morning of November 30, Meade awaited the signal from Warren to advance French's corps on his right. Instead a courier from Warren arrived to tell Meade that Warren did not feel he could carry his front and he had not ordered the attack. When Meade rode to Warren, he understood Warren's concern. During the night the Confederate line had received reinforcement from A. P. Hill's troops, extending their line well beyond Warren's and strengthening their fortifications. Meade agreed with Warren and called off the attack. Meade withdrew the next evening, ending operations for the year (Cleaves, 1960).

Meade's decision was well supported in the army. Lee had chosen an almost unassailable position due to the nature of the ground, the fortifications he constructed, and the heavy reinforcement of the troops. Union engineer R.S. Mackenzie reported:

The position of the enemy in front of General Warren on the (our) right of the old railroad cut is very strong, there being an almost level plain of nearly 1,000 yards, over which troops must advance to take rifle-pits and batteries on crest, some 30 feet high. On the left of railroad cut the distance to be passed over by troops under fire is about 300 yards. What I could see of this part of the line seemed to be breastworks protected by abatis. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 521)

Captain Francis Adam Donaldson of the Fifth Corps wrote:

At early dawn the enemy's position could be seen. During the night they had greatly strengthened it by formidable earth works and by damming the Run so that it filled & spread into quite a river.... Immediately to our front, the ground ascended to an angle of 30 degrees-base, rough & barren without shelter or protection of any kind. I can truly say there was not an officer or man in the division but felt it now simply impossible to carry such entrenchments. It could not be done, it were madness to attempt it, worse than at Fredericksburg to allow it. The men at once fell to labeling themselves, writing name & address on paper they pinned inside their coats.... Every man in the command felt that death would surely be met with on these terrible slopes. But I did not hear any one decline to go forward. (Acken, Ed., 1998, p. 406)

Meade's friend and aide-de-camp, Theodore Lyman wrote:

...I shall always be astonished at the extraordinary moral courage of General Meade, which enabled him to order a retreat, when his knowledge, as an engineer and soldier, showed that an attack would be a blunder. The men and guns stood ready: he had only to snap his fingers, and that night would probably have seen ten thousand wretched, mangled creatures, lying on those long slopes.... Then people would have said: He was unsuccessful; but then he tried hard, and did not get out. (Lyman and Agassiz, (Ed.), 1922, pp. 56-57)

Captain Talley of the First Pennsylvania declares:

The army, possibly the Union cause was saved due to the clear judgment and military skill of those ground officers. Thus would have ended the remainder of the 1st Reserves, Meade and Warren. If officers less cautious and less able had been in command, the battle likely would have been fought then and there. (Stine, p. 592, in Cleaves, 1960, p. 213)

Meade had requested his corps commanders to report their opinion of the possibility of successfully attacking the enemy in their front on December 1. All but General French felt that it was impossible, or would be done at a severe cost. Meade then withdrew his army that night. The most convincing testimony of the wisdom of Meade's decisions may be that of Robert E. Lee. Lee planned to attack Meade on December 2. Upon hearing of Meade's withdrawal, Lee is said to have declared, "I am too old to command this army. We should never have permitted those people to escape" (Venable, in Cleaves, p. 213).

Meade expected severe criticism and possibly to be removed from command. On December 2, 1863 he summarized the campaign and his expectations of censure in a letter to Margaret, stating:

I expect your wishes will now soon be gratified, and that I shall be relieved of duty from the Army of the Potomac.... After reviewing all the circumstances, notwithstanding my earnest desire to give battle, and in the full consciousness of the fact that my failure to do so was certain personal ruin, I, having come to the conclusion that an attack would not be successful, determined to, and did, withdraw the army. I am fully aware it will be said I did wrong in deciding this question by reasoning, and that I

ought to have tried, and then a failure would have been evidence of my good judgment; but I trust I have too much reputation as a general to be obliged to encounter certain defeat, in order to prove that victory was not possible.... I would rather be ignominiously dismissed, and suffer anything, than knowingly and willingly have thousands of brave men slaughtered for nothing. It was my deliberate judgment that I ought not to attack.; I acted on that judgment, and I am willing to stand or fall by it at all hazards.... I feel of course greatly disappointed; a little more good fortune, and I should have met with brilliant success. As it is, my conscience is clear. I did the best I could. If I had thought there was any reasonable degree of probability of success, I would have attacked. I did not think so; on the contrary, I believed it would result in a useless and criminal slaughter of brave men, and might result in serious disaster to the army.... There will be a great howl all over the country...Administration will be obliged to yield to popular clamor and discard me. For all this I am prepared, fortified as I said before by a clear conscience, and the conviction that I have acted from a high sense of duty, to myself as a soldier, to my men as their general, and to my country and its cause, as the agent having its vital interests solemnly entrusted to me, which I have no right to wantonly play with and to jeopardize, either for my own personal benefit, or to satisfy the demands of popular clamor, or interested politicians. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 157-158)

His officers and soldiers echo Meade's assessment that the battle would result in needless and useless death. Meade does what his duty calls for, which in this case is to preserve the army so that it might fight another day. He has a responsibility to his soldiers to put them in a position to be successful, and in his judgment, this is not the case at Mine Run. The many responsibilities of his command are weighing heavily on Meade, but he remains consistent with his values and does not yield to the wishes of politicians or other civilians. Mine Run is used as one more example of Meade's unwillingness to attack Lee. However in this case, Meade should not be criticized for being reluctant since he initiated the action and was fighting on the offensive. Clearly, nature, the shortcomings of French, and the acuity of Lee worked to foil his plans.

Meade never did get a complaint from officials in Washington, but Halleck was certainly short in his correspondences to Meade after December 1. On December 4 Meade requested permission to go to Washington. Halleck responded, "You have my permission to visit Washington whenever you deem proper, reporting to the Adjutant-General at the War Department (OR, Series 1, Vol. 41, part 1, p. 540). Meade was not ordered to report to Halleck and Meade interpreted this reply to indicate that he was not welcome in Washington. He decided not to go to the capital unless ordered there. In a December 11, 1863 letter Meade reports to Margaret that rumors indicate he will be replaced. But Meade, although angered by Halleck's rebuff, holds onto hope and sustains himself with the knowledge that he did his duty. He writes:

...I really believe the voice of the army will sustain me. This, though, goes for nothing in Washington. I will not go to Washington to be snubbed by these people; they may relieve me, but I will preserve my dignity.

(Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 161)

As December came to an end, Meade is thinking of his family. Having calmed with the subsidence of the pressures of an active campaign and settled into winter camp, Meade writes to Margaret on December 20, 1863:

As to the Christmas box you ask about, it is hardly necessary to send it, as the Frenchman who messes with me provides me liberally with everything, and these boxes are very expensive. I expect you will have your hands full with the children at Christmas, and I think you had better throw into this fund the amount you would expend on me for a box and mufti. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 162)

Meade has decided he will not be going home for Christmas, but he does allow his son George to visit for the holidays. Meade's unselfishness is always extended to his family. But even as he reflects on the holidays, his mind is still distracted by the demands of his position. Referring to newspaper editor Horace Greely, Meade rhetorically asks his wife "I wonder what these people want if they are not satisfied with my services and my practical devotion to their cause?" (p. 162).

Meade then gives Margaret his appraisal of Grant. He writes:

You ask me about Grant. It is difficult for me to reply. I knew him as a young man in the Mexican War, at which time he was considered a

clever young officer, but nothing extraordinary.... I think his great characteristic is indomitable energy and great tenacity of purpose. He certainly has been very successful, and that is nowadays the measure of reputation. The enemy, however, have never had in any of their Western armies either the generals or the troops they have had in Virginia, nor has the country been so favorable for them there as here. Grant has undoubtedly shown his very superior abilities, and I think justly entitled to all the honors they propose to bestow upon him. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 162-163)

Fair-minded as ever, Meade gives Grant his due credit. It is a simple matter of justice, as Grant, by his record, has earned his recognition. Meade is resigned to the fact that a general must post victories to receive the approval of Lincoln, the press and the public. As he indicated earlier in the letter, dedicated service simply is not enough for the masses.

As the year ends, Meade is once again tormented by talk of his removal and the misrepresentations of the press. He writes on December 28, 1863:

Yesterday General Hancock arrived. He has been with me all the time since his arrival, and we have had a long talk. He says it was undoubtedly intended at first to relieve me, and it was, as I surmised, intimated to him that he would be placed in command. Such was his impression till the day before he came down, when, on reporting to Halleck, he was told the design was abandoned, and that he could go down to his old corps. Hancock further says that Halleck declares he

saved me...that he, Halleck said, "No, an officer who gained the battle of Gettysburg is entitled to more consideration. Let us wait and hear what General Meade has to say, and if his report is not satisfactory, then we can act advisedly." This was agreed to, and the unanimous opinion of all returning officers, together with my report, changed the whole aspect of the case. I must say I am gratified some little consideration was extended towards me and that justice was finally awarded. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 163-164)

Meade considers the actions of Halleck, and presumably Lincoln and Stanton, to be just. The army has sustained him as he had hoped, but in view of the continued public criticism, this justice falls short of the vindication he so desires. He references an article in Wilkes' *Spirit of the Times* as he continues his letter, informing Margaret that the article claims:

...Hooker planned the campaign at Gettysburg, and that Butterfield wrote all the orders for the movements.... I furthermore hear that General Sickles asserts that Hancock selected the position and that he (Sickles) with his corps, did all the fighting at Gettysburg. So, I presume, before long it will be clearly proved that my presence on the field was rather an injury than otherwise. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 164)

In this case, Meade is reacting to rumors. He has not seen the article, which wished to establish credit for Hooker and the role he played in the Gettysburg campaign. The author objects to Halleck's official report for only crediting Meade and ignoring Hooker. The article clearly states:

And in doing this, we do not mean to detract in the slightest degree from the reputation and honor of General Meade.... Gen. Meade can claim no higher honor than that which he acquired by winning such a victory over the best disciplined army the rebels have in the field, in a series of battles which commenced only about forty-eight hours after he assumed command of the Army of the Potomac, *even upon the plans of another!* (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 318-319)

Given their relationship, it is not surprising that Halleck would ignore Hooker if he could. General Hooker did move quickly to pursue Lee into Maryland and Pennsylvania, and by all accounts, the speed of his pursuit surprised Lee. Whether or not Meade knew Hooker's plan is debatable, but Meade did change the nature and direction of the pursuit, albeit not significantly. But this article is focused on garnering justice for Hooker and desperately tries to avoid damaging Meade's reputation. Having been routinely criticized since midsummer, Meade is now extremely sensitive to criticism and the General keenly feels any detracting from his due. In this case, he simply overreacts.

Early in January of 1864, Meade was able to return home for a visit. During that visit he contracted pneumonia and was not able to return to the field until mid February. On his way back he stopped in Washington on business. He writes to Margaret:

The Secretary was, as he always is, very civil and ready to accede to all my suggestions. He gratified me very much by saying that there was no officer in command who had so great a degree the implicit confidence

of all parties as myself; but said there were several officers in my army that did not have the confidence of the country, and that I was injuring myself by retaining them. I told him I did not know who they were, but that if he was aware of this fact, I thought it his duty to retire them, and I should not object; and I suppose the result will be a pretty general sweeping out. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 163-164)

As always, Meade is truly appreciative of the good will extended to him by a superior. Stanton had to know that Lincoln lacked confidence in Meade, but he may well have been softening the general in order to gain his approval for his proposed reorganization of the army. In Stanton's plan, Pleasanton, French, Newton, Sykes, and Sedgwick would all be removed from command as the First and Third Corps were absorbed into the remaining corps. Meade tried to retain Sykes and Sedgwick, but was only successful in keeping Sedgwick.

This situation also reveals the depth of Meade's character. He would not remove a man from command simply because he did not have the confidence of the public. Indeed, Meade frequently finds himself in that position. Shrewdly, Meade tells Stanton that he should do his duty, forcing Stanton to make the changes, which Stanton is glad to do. However, when the changes are finally initiated, it is under Meade's signature, so Meade will bear the criticism and ill will they create.

Throughout the remainder of February Meade's letters discuss social events, routine business, and the weather. But March would be the beginning of what would be a very difficult year for Meade. The Committee on the Conduct of

War opened hearings on the battle of Gettysburg on February 26, 1864 with the testimony of General Sickles.

Much of Sickles' testimony is fiction or is enhanced to support his own position. He testified that he never received orders in reference to the position he should take and that Meade intended to retreat from Gettysburg on the morning of July 2. Sickles claimed that but for his actions in moving his line forward and engaging Longstreet's troops, Meade would have retreated. But Sickles did receive orders as to his position, several times. Even the report of Birney, a division commander under Sickles and an ally, evidences that Meade had sent orders to Sickles (Hyde, 2003). There is no evidence that Meade ever ordered an attack. General Butterfield, Meade's chief of staff was working on a contingency plan for a withdrawal to Pipe Creek if it was needed, which it was not. He also testified that there was no reason for Meade's failure to attack and destroy Lee during his retreat, even though Sickles was not there and had no direct knowledge of events. These points made by Sickles served the committee's purpose and caused considerable damage to Meade's reputation.

Meade was unaware of the investigation being conducted by the CCW until he visited Washington early in March. On March 6, 1864, Meade informs Margaret of events occurring during the trip. Although he is taking these events in stride as best he can, they only represent the opening salvo of what will become an intense attack on Meade's reputation. He explains:

The night before I left I saw Mr. Wilkeson's attack on me in the Senate and Reverdy Johnston's reply and defense. When I reached

Washington I was greatly surprised to find the whole town talking of certain grave charges of Generals Sickles and Doubleday, that had been made against me in their testimony before the Committee on the Conduct of War. On Saturday I was summoned before the committee. I found there only Mr. Wade, of Ohio. He was very civil, denied there were any charges against me, but said that the committee was making up a sort of history of the war and was now taking evidence to enable it to give an account of the battle of Gettysburg, and my administration since commanding the army.... subsequently Mr. Stanton told me (this is strictly confidential), that there was and had been much pressure from a certain party to get Hooker back in command, and that thinking, through Sickles and others, they might get me out (a preliminary step) they had gotten up this hullabaloo in the Committee on the Conduct of War; but that I need not worry myself, there was no chance of their succeeding. The only evil that will result is the spreading over the country certain mysterious whisperings of dreadful deficiencies on my part, the truth concerning which will never reach the thousandth part of those who hear the lies. I suppose and fear you will be worried about them, but I beg you to be calm and quiet, and rest satisfied that I will come out all right in the end. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 169-170)

Wilkinson was a close friend and political ally of Chandler. He essentially served the needs of the CCW in making Sickles' charges public by bringing them to the Senate floor. Meade misreads his own position. He feels that he is being

attacked simply because he blocks Hooker's return. His removal is simply the "preliminary step". But members of the CCW oppose Meade in his own right because he is viewed as a McClellanite. As evidenced by the visit to Lincoln by Wade and Chandler, if they cannot have Hooker back in command, they at least want Meade out. It is a matter of politics, not military ability.

Hyde (2003) is not sure whether Meade is politically naive or is simply taken in by the duplicitous nature of Wade. Regardless, Meade also completely misreads Senator Wade and makes the mistake of trusting and believing him. Wade had already joined Chandler in asking for Meade's removal from command before Meade testified. Meade also underestimates the "evil" that will emanate from this committee and General Sickles. Meade continues his letter, lamenting to his wife:

It is a melancholy state of affairs, however, when persons like Sickles and Doubleday can, by distorting and twisting the facts, and giving a false coloring, induce the press and the public for a time, and almost immediately, to take away the character of a man who up to that time had stood high in their estimation. However, I suppose we cannot change human nature; we must be patient, await the period when the truth will slowly and surely make itself known. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 170)

Doubleday was the second General to testify before the CCW, following Sickles. Doubleday testified that Meade was in the habit of promoting his personal friends and that "no anti-slavery man on anti-McClellan man can expect decent treatment in that army as at present constituted" (Hyde, 2003, p. 74). This

supported the committee's beliefs that West Point officers were sympathetic to the South and that Meade should be relieved of command.

Meade seems confident that his position is not in jeopardy and is reassured by Stanton in this belief. He is, however, duly concerned about his reputation. While he will retain his position until the end of the war, attacks on Meade's reputation will persist long after.

Unknown to General Meade, the committee members had four objectives in conducting the Meade hearings. Their first objective was to return Hooker to command. To do this the committee sought to demonstrate that Meade had followed Hooker's plan at Gettysburg, had no plan of his own, and therefore, the victory belonged to Hooker, not Meade. Second, the committee wanted to demonstrate that Meade had wanted to retreat to Pipe Creek and not fight at Gettysburg. Third, the committee wanted to show that when Meade wanted to retreat on July 2 and only General Sickles' action prevented the retreat. Finally, the committee intended to indicate that Meade failed to follow and destroy Lee's army and allowed Lee to escape at Williamsport (Hessler, 2009). Wilkes' article has already put the idea that Hooker deserved the credit for Gettysburg before the public. The CCW will continue its "investigation" and what Meade views as a conspiracy against him will continue to quietly assault his reputation.

On February 24, 1864, General Grant is named lieutenant general and given control of all Union armies. Halleck was effectively replaced and made chief-of-staff. Lincoln has removed Halleck in favor of a more aggressive commander. Meade believes that Grant "may desire to have his own man in

command “ (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 176). He is responding to rumors that Grant will indeed replace Meade. For the present, Meade has decided to wait for the action of the CCW before responding to criticism, and must also wait to see what Grant will do.

In early March the papers carry articles both supporting and condemning Meade and the CCW’s investigation continues to disparage Meade. Meade writes that General’s Birney and Pleasanton, testifying before the CCW, “...have appeared in the hostile ranks” (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 176). In February Meade had opposed Pleasanton’s removal from command of the cavalry, but when the reorganization was announced in March, Pleasanton was relieved. Meade apparently withdrew any objections to his removal that he had previously registered with Stanton.

In the middle of March, Meade found himself in another controversy, this time with Stanton. He caught the wrath of the Secretary of War over a perceived breach of protocol. Meade explained the situation to Margaret in his letter of March 14, 1864:

I think I wrote you on my return from Washington I found a polite note from Reverdy Johnston, saying he had assumed the responsibility of denying Mr. Wilkinson’s statement, and asking me if he was not right. This act of courtesy I considered entitled to an acknowledgement, so I replied to Mr. Johnston, and explained to him wherein I thought Mr. Wilkinson had been misled. This letter, it appears, Mr. Johnston showed to his friends, and its receipt was announced in Forney’s Chronicle. To-day I got a sharp letter from the Secretary of War, asking

by what authority I wrote to Senators on military operations. I replied my note was private and not intended for publication or circulation, and that I was not aware I required any authority to write private letters defending myself from the false and slanderous reports with which the public press has been filled for a week, particularly as the military operations referred to took place nine months ago, and the official reports have been published. This may involve me in trouble with the Secretary, but I cannot help it; I will not yield my right to defend myself. (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 177)

Although Meade is absolutely correct in claiming his rights, he should know better than to believe that his letter would remain private. His experience with his “private” conversation with Governor Curtin regarding Hooker should have been lesson enough. Meade’s passion for justice, although reasonable, might also be a lapse in judgment. Meade might have pursued another approach, or at least have been less aggressive in his response.

On March 11, 1864, Meade appeared again before the CCW armed with copies of orders and other documents to support his testimony that he did not wish to withdraw from the battle at Gettysburg at any time. Again, Wade was the only member present. Meade still misreads Wade, writing to Margaret: He took great pains to endeavor to convince me the committee were not responsible for the newspaper attacks on me, and I might rest assured there was no disposition on their part to do me injustice.... Wade was rather friendly. (Meade. 1913/1994, II, pp. 177-178)

Meade also notes that Stanton assured him that Wade was satisfied with Meade's testimony and that he (Meade) felt the tide had turned in his favor. Meade again misreads the situation. The committee's final report will give credit to Hooker and Pleasanton for the Gettysburg victory and will condemn Meade. But fortunately for Meade the report is not issued until the war's end and the public gives it little note. In the end, the CCW neither destroyed Meade nor advanced Sickles.

Meade's letter continues, but on the subject of his conflict with Stanton. Almost joyfully, Meade recounts a recent meeting with the Secretary and their discussion of the letter to Reverdy Johnston. Meade writes:

He told me his letter had been written in my interest; that I had made a great mistake in writing to Mr. Johnston.... that his political status was such that any identification with him could not fail to damage me and my cause.... and all he wanted was just such a reply as I had made, which he could now show to Senators and Representatives when they called on him to know what my relations were with Reverdy Johnston. I fortunately met Mr. Johnston in the street, begged him to consider my letter strictly private, and borrowed it to copy for the file in the War Department. (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p.178)

Stanton's reply, as reported by Meade, is suspect. There is nothing in Meade's response to Stanton that would define Meade's relationship with Johnston. The real issue may have been Meade's patriotism. The testimony before the CCW of Doubleday and Howe fed the committee's notion that West Point generals were sympathetic with the South, even traitorous. Stanton's

original challenge may have been in response to suspicions that Meade was working with Johnston against the interests of the radical Republicans. Even though he is a supporter of the committee, Stanton still is a Meade supporter, and may have been satisfied that Meade's response established his loyalty.

Concluding his letter of March 14, Meade relates his view of Grant after having met with him, writing:

I think I told you I was very much pleased with General Grant.... I spoke to him very plainly about my position, offered to vacate the command of the Army of the Potomac, in case he had a preference for any other. This he declined in a complimentary speech, but indicated his intention, when in this part of the country, of being with my army. So that you may look now for the Army of the Potomac putting laurels on the brows of another than your husband. (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p.178)

Meade may be unsophisticated in the ways of politics, but he is keenly aware of how things work in the military. His prophecy about being overshadowed will quickly become true, but for now Meade's most immediate challenge will be the CCW and a mysterious writer who attacks Meade in the papers under the name of Historicus.

Meade took great pains to guard his reputation and he understands how damaging the recent efforts to discredit him can be. On March 15, 1864, he indicates his concerns, as well as how highly he holds his reputation, in a letter to Henry Cram, who is his wife's brother-in-law and a close friend of the general. Meade outlines the case put forth against him in the CCW hearings, noting that

he is unaware of the actual testimony against him. (It was the policy of the CCW to not release testimony, unless it served their purposes). He explains:

My enemies consist of certain politicians who wish me removed to restore Hooker; then of certain subordinates, whose military reputations are involved in the destruction of mine; finally, a class of vultures who in Hooker's day preyed upon the army, and who sigh for a return of those glorious days. I expect to retain my place, but I am anxious about my reputation.... I think my testimony will pull the lion's skin off of some of my distinguished foes, and that they will perhaps, before the thing is over, repent they ever meddled with it. Already the liars have disclaimed any intention to attack me, and in evidence produce the article in the Herald signed Historicus, which you have doubtless read, and which is filled with false and perverted statements, which have astonished even myself, and those around me, who have great respect for the capacity, adroitness, and skill in this respect of my opponents. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 179-180)

The Historicus article appeared in the New York Herald on March 12, 1864. Claiming to be an eyewitness at Gettysburg, Historicus declares that the only purpose in penning the article is to "...vindicate history, do honor to the fallen and justice to the survivors when unfairly impeached" (Meade, 1913/1914, II, p. 323). Historicus' version of the events insist that on July 1 General Meade had issued an order for the army to retreat to Pipe Creek, Maryland, having accomplished all that was desired at Gettysburg. He claims that upon arriving on the field early on July 2, Meade failed to survey of the ground. Later that day,

Sickles was said to have observed the massing of Confederate troops on the Union left, and recognizing the importance of occupying the high ground ahead of him, asked Meade to approve the advance of his line that Sickles desired, but as late as 2 P. M., no orders had been given to Sickles. Historicus claims this was because Meade was busy having Butterfield compose orders for the army to retreat to Pipe Creek. But Sickles took the initiative to move his troops forward, forced the battle and saved the Union left until reinforcements arrived. Historicus claims that Meade did not recognize the importance of Sickles' position and ignored it, despite warnings from Sickles. Historicus also states that Meade could have easily prevented Lee's army from crossing the Potomac by having just half of his army attack the Confederates "anywhere or anyhow" (Meade, 1913/1914, II, p. 329).

Historicus' letter spawned a number of responses, both in support of and opposing his perspective. But Historicus was wrong on many accounts. Meade had previously had his engineers survey the Pipe Creek location and had hoped to force a battle there, but he never ordered the army to Pipe Creek. Trusting Reynolds' judgment, as well as Hancock's, Meade decided to stand and fight at Gettysburg. Upon arriving on the field early on July 2, Meade rode the Union line. Later that day he ordered Butterfield to become familiar with the roads in the area and prepare an order for the orderly withdrawal of troops, if a withdrawal was required. Meade never issued the order, but wanted to be prepared for that contingency.

The claim that Sickles had no orders is also incorrect, Sickles having received his orders several times. His movement forward constituted a direct disobedience of orders, not a bold move necessitated by the circumstances. It is unlikely that Sickles saw any movement by Longstreet's corps because of the woods in Sickles' front. In fact, the Confederates were not discovered until Berdan's men conducted a reconnaissance of the area. Most importantly, Sickles' actions endangered the entirety of the Union line because Meade had to pull troops from other positions on the line, thereby weakening them. General Halleck's official report supported this view of events and condemned Sickles' actions. Halleck states that Sickles "...misinterpreted his orders"..."an error which nearly proved fatal in battle" (OR, Series 1, Vol. 37, part 1, p. 16).

Sickles' perspective of his position was not entirely in error. His line was located in a low spot on the battlefield and the higher ground ahead might have afforded a better position if Sickles had enough men to occupy it and maintain contact with Hancock and Little Roundtop. Historicus suggested that if there were so many men needed to reinforce Sickles, then there should have been that many troops there in the first place, given the importance of the position. Such a view ignores the fact that Sickles corps occupied but one part of the Union line and while Sickles' only had to worry about that part, Meade saw the position in relationship to the whole Union position. Meade has been criticized for not riding to Sickles sooner, suggesting that he ignored his left. It is true that Meade was more concerned about his right, but Meade had no reason to suspect that Sickles was not in position. Meade preferred to give his corps commanders his general

orders, have them know his intent, and then allow them the freedom to operate accordingly. Having given his orders repeatedly, as well as having sent his aide, and General Warren to Sickles, and not having heard differently, Meade had every reason to believe that all was well on his left.

In trying to garner the glory of Gettysburg for Sickles, *Historicus* reported that Sickles' Third Corps held off the whole of Longstreet's assault by themselves for over an hour. He lauds the performance of the Second and Third Corps, but finds it necessary to report that Barnes' division of the Fifth Corps, Meade's former corps, gave way and was so disorderly that they impeded the advance of Zook's brigade from the Second Corp. At this point, Birney ordered the men of the Fifth to lie down so Zook could pass, which they did. This contention would create ill feelings between the two corps that would last for years, each trying to gain credit at the expense of the other. But on March 22, 1864 General Barnes responded to *Historicus*, firmly asserting, "All this is pure invention. No such occurrence as is here related took place. There is not a particle of truth in it..." (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 333). Barnes finished by summarizing *Historicus*' account as "...filled with errors, detracting from the merits of some and exalting the moderate claims of others to a ridiculous excess" (p. 335).

Several rebuttals to *Historicus*' account were subsequently printed in the *Herald*, prompting a reply by *Historicus* on April 4, 1864. *Historicus* states that his account is accurate and that the responses fail to prove him wrong. He then adds to his disparaging of General Meade, making several errors. He again incorrectly asserts that Sickles had no orders. He claims the forward move of the Third

Corps was simply a wheeling of the line to meet an enemy attack. However, the fact is that Sickles had moved his line before it was under attack. He also repeats the premise that Meade approved of the position, saying he would send troops to support Sickles. Meade did say that, but because the line could not be withdrawn while under attack, not because he approved of the position.

One of the rebuttals to which Historicus refers is that of General Barnes. To prove that Barnes is wrong, and, therefore, Historicus is right, Historicus references a letter from General Birney that fully supports Historicus' version of the conduct of Barnes' troops. He goes on to state that his version of Gettysburg "will be fully sustained by the concurrent testimony of all the generals who have recently appeared before the Committee on the Conduct of War" (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 340). This would not be surprising since five of the first several generals called to testify before the committee were clearly opponents of Meade, Birney and Sickles included.

Historicus finishes his second letter with a lengthy scathing attack on Meade, claiming:

The evidence of General Butterfield, Chief of Staff to General Meade, is known to be so ruinous to the reputation of the commander of the Army of the Potomac that it will be a singular indifference to public opinion on the part of the government if he is allowed to remain longer in that important post. It has been conclusively proved that nothing was easier than to force Lee's whole army to an unconditional surrender at Williamsport, where he was without ammunition or subsistence, and the

swollen Potomac preventing his escape.... Yet General Meade still commands this noble army, and not only that, but he has lately ventured to break up, under shallow pretexts two of its finest corps, and dismiss some of its heroic officers, Pleasanton, Sykes, and others. It will be an important inquiry for the Committee on the Conduct of War to ascertain by whose influence General Meade exercises such arbitrary power. This vital and dangerous act was carried out without any consultation with General Grant... (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 340)

This assault on General Meade's reputation raises some interesting points. For one, Historicus is obviously aware of Butterfield's testimony, although it has not been released publicly. Historicus also claims to be an eye-witness, but how then could he know what had occurred all morning on Sickles front and that Meade, miles away, "was entirely engrossed with the plans for retreat...and that just at the moment the general order for retreat was prepared, the canon of Longstreet opened on our left wing, under Sickles" (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 337)? Historicus neglects to include Butterfield's final testimony to the CCW regarding the order to withdraw. It reads as follows:

Question: Did the collision of General Sickles' corps with the enemy prevent the order being executed which you had prepared?

Answer: It is impossible for me to state that, because General Meade had not communicated to me his intention to execute that order.... He merely directed me to prepare such an order, which I did. It is for him to say whether he intended to execute it or not. He may have desired it

prepared for an emergency, without any view of executing it then, or he may have had it prepared with a full view of its execution. (Hyde, 2003, p. 257)

Butterfield's testimony was injurious to Meade, but his statement that Meade did not order a retreat strongly supports Meade's testimony. But the committee, and more notably, Dan Sickles, chose to ignore this testimony.

It is true that Meade's order facilitated the reorganization of the army, but the authority is unquestionable. At Lincoln's direction, the War Department issued the orders reducing the army from five corps to three. Grant had approved Pleasanton's removal, a move that allowed him to bring in General Sheridan to command the cavalry. Grant obviously was consulted about the change and the reorganization was anything but arbitrary.

For his part, Meade was certain that Historicus was Sickles, or a member of his staff. Meade immediately sought to save his reputation by having General Sickles officially confronted. On March 15, 1864 Meade wrote to Colonel E. D. Townsend, the Assistant Adjutant-General:

I enclose herewith a slip from the New York Herald of the 12th instant, containing a communication signed "Historicus, " purporting to give an account of the battle of Gettysburg, to which I desire to call the attention of the War Department, and ask such action thereon as may be deemed proper and suitable. For the past fortnight the public press of the whole country has been teeming with articles, all having for their object assaults upon my reputation as an officer and tending to throw discredit

upon my operations at Gettysburg and my official report of the same. I have not noticed any of these attacks, and should not now take action, but that the character of the communication enclosed bear such manifest proofs that it was written either by some one present at the battle, or dictated by some one present, and having access not only to official documents but to confidential papers that were never issued to the army, much less made public. I cannot resist the belief that this letter was either written or dictated by Major General D. E. Sickles. An issue has been raised between that officer and myself in regard to the judgment displayed by him in the position he took with his corps at Gettysburg. In my official report I deemed it proper to state that this position was a false and untenable one, but I did General Sickles the justice to express the opinion that, although he had committed an error of judgment, it was done through a misapprehension of orders, and not from any intention to act contrary to my wishes. The prominence given to General Sickles' operations in the inclosed communication, the labored argument to prove his good judgment and my failing, all lead me to the conclusion he is directly or indirectly the author.

As the communication contains so many statements prejudicial to my reputation I feel called upon to ask the interposition of the Department, as I desire to consider the questions raised purely official. I have to ask, therefore, that the department will take steps to ascertain whether Major-General Sickles has authorized or indorsed this communication, and, in

the event of his replying in the affirmative, I have to request of the President of the United States a court of inquiry, that the whole subject may be thoroughly investigated and the truth made known. Should this course not be deemed advisable, [and] the Department decline any action, then I desire authority to make use of and publish such official documents as in my judgment are necessary for my defense. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, pp 128-9)

The CCW's investigation of the Battle of Gettysburg had commenced in late February. On March 4, Senator Wilkinson, a radical Republican and ally of Chandler, attacked Meade on the Senate floor, claiming that Meade had intended to retreat from Gettysburg and only the eruption of hostility kept him there. Obviously, Wilkinson was aware of the Pipe Creek Circular. Meade had testified on March 5 before the committee, and on March 9 the New York *Tribune* contained an article that detailed the charges put forth to the committee by Sickles and others. The article supported Sickles in every aspect, impugning Meade's ability, character and loyalty.

Meade's reputation was indeed being challenged on multiple fronts. Meade felt he had done himself justice with his testimony to the CCW, but the Tribune letter and the *Historicus* letter put the committee's concerns, and Sickles' charges, in front of the public. Meade had determined to give the CCW the opportunity to "...do me justice" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 177), but the *Historicus* letter seems to be a tipping point for Meade. Meade chose to not fight his battle in the press, believing the matter to be a military one. Therefore, he went through

military channels to protect his reputation and put forth the truth. But his final request, to be allowed to use official documents publicly for his defense reveals that Meade did not expect the President to convene a court of inquiry.

General Meade received an unofficial and private response from General Halleck, who advises:

The Secretary of War has shown me your letter in regard to the communication in the Herald signed "Historicus. " I have no doubt that and other articles of the same kind in the New York papers were written or dictated by General Sickles; nevertheless, you will not be able to fix on him the authorship. My advice would be to ignore him entirely in this controversy, unless he makes himself officially amenable, which I think he is too shrewd to do. He cannot by these newspaper articles injure your military reputation in the slightest degree. Indeed, I think that any attacks from him will have the contrary effect. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p. 137)

Halleck was wrong in his estimation of the damage that could be done to Meade's reputation by Sickles' manipulations of the truth and Meade could never have suspected that Sickles would continue to assert his version of events for as long as he lived. But it did not matter to him if Halleck was right or not, he certainly was not willing to just "ignore" the situation and let his reputation be unjustly sullied, as evidenced by his reply to Halleck on March 22. Meade replies sharply:

I have received and thank you for your friendly letter of the 20th instant. I have no intention of entering into a personal or newspaper controversy with General Sickles. I hardly expected he would acknowledge writing, or being a party to the writing, of the letter by Historicus; but I did expect he would have the manliness to say, though he was not a party to its publication, that its contents were, in his judgment and belief, correct and true. As these statements are in direct conflict with my official report, I thought this might be considered sufficiently official by the Department to justify an investigation.

Of course, if he denies having had anything to do with the matter, why that is an end of it. I am not as philosophical as you are, nor do I consider it good policy to permit such slanders as have been circulated to pass entirely unnoticed.

They have an influence with many people to whom I am a stranger; indeed, even my friends, believing me innocent, have still been puzzled to account for and understand these charges. I had no intention of annoying the Department, and if you and the Secretary think it better policy for me to keep quiet, I will withdraw the letter I have written, or remain satisfied with an official reply that the Department cannot interfere or take action on an anonymous communication. (OR, Series 1, Vol. 39, part 1, p138-9)

Meade is irritated by Halleck's attempt to gloss over another situation that he knows is distressful and damaging to Meade. He feels that if pressured,

Sickles might at least say that he did not write the letter but agrees with it, that he is the hero of Gettysburg and but for his action, Meade would have retreated and there would have been no glorious victory at Gettysburg. Meade is also telling Halleck that in such a circumstance, with two generals being so opposed in their representation of events, the government has sufficient grounds to conduct an investigation and bring forth the truth, so he could move on this if he so desired.

Meade is also trying to push Halleck into defending him. He is essentially telling him, "If you say it is done, so be it, but you should have enough honor to defend one of your commanding generals. You just stated that you agree with me, Sickles is the author. As an officer, you should not allow such insubordination to go unchallenged." He is reminding Halleck that his reputation will have to be defended, even if he ignores *Historicus*, and it would be a great help if his superiors would make some effort to support him. Finally, Meade subtly lays down a challenge. He is not going to just ignore the situation. The government will have to make a decision and he is not going to withdraw his request unless ordered to do so.

Eventually Lincoln responded to Meade, refusing to convene an inquiry. Lincoln stated that he did not believe that Meade's "...honor demands, or the public interest demands, such an inquiry (OR, 1,39, p. 139). Meade acquiesced and dropped the matter, dutifully following the directive of the President even though it was contrary to Meade's interests and contrary to the course Meade would have preferred.

Meade's official report on Gettysburg was rather conciliatory to Sickles, only suggesting that Sickles misinterpreted his orders. But after the war his opinion hardened, as revealed in a private letter from General Meade to G. C. Benedict, editor of the Burlington Free Press, dated March 16, 1870. Benedict, a Colonel in the Army of the Potomac, observed Sickles' movements on July 2, 1863 from Cemetery Hill. Benedict was aware of an oration by Colonel W. Grout that was delivered on November 1869 and put forth Sickles' version of events. Having studied the battle, as well as being there, Benedict felt obliged to correct the errors of his friend and did so in several editorials. General Meade, having been presented copies of the editorials, wrote a letter to Benedict thanking him for his support. Then, on July 2, 1886, at a battlefield reunion of the Third Corps, Dan Sickles again attacked Meade and claimed credit for the Gettysburg victory. Benedict, wishing to vindicate the now deceased Meade, once again took up the pen and sent a copy of Meade's letter to the *Weekly Press* of Philadelphia, which published the letter on August 11, 1886. Benedict explains that Meade's letter contains a convincing presentation and why he held the letter for so long writing:

This has long been in confidence, as it was written, but in view of the recent elaborate attack upon General Meade's military reputation, made by General Sickles in his address at Gettysburg, the interests of truth and justice seem to demand that it be given to the public. (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p. 351)

General Meade's letter was lengthy, detailed and unyielding. In reference to Generals Butterfield and Sickles he states:

I have avoided any controversy with either of these officers-though both have allowed no opportunity to pass unimproved which permitted them to circulate their ex parte statements, and as you so justly say, to distort history for their purposes. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 351)

Meade continues his narrative, revealing that he had spoken with Confederate General Ewell after the war, who had informed him that he was preparing to move on Culp's Hill with 20,000 troops on July 1, but Lee had ordered him to halt his advance because the arrival of Slocum's troops. Meade continues:

But suppose that Ewell with 20,000 men had occupied Culp's Hill, and our brave soldiers had been compelled to evacuate Cemetery Ridge and withdraw... would the Pipe Clay Creek order have been so very much out of place?

That order was to meet the very contingency here in question, to wit: A part of my army, overwhelmed by superior numbers, compelled to fall back, and a line of battle formed to the rear of my most advanced position thus necessitated. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 353)

Meade then condemns Sickles in a way not previously heard from him, emphatically stating:

Now, when I wrote my report of the battle I honestly believed General Sickles did not know where I wished him to go, and the error arose from a misapprehension of my orders, but I have recently learned from General Geary, ...that on the morning of the 2nd, when he received my order that he would be relieved by the Third Corps, and on being

relieved, would rejoin his own corps (Twelfth) on the right, after waiting for some time to be relieved he sent to General Sickles a staff officer with instructions to explain the position and its importance, and to ask, if troops could not be sent to relieve him, that General Sickles would send one of his staff to see the ground, and to place troops there on their arrival. No officer or troops came, and after waiting till his patience was exhausted, General Geary withdrew and rejoined his corps. Now my first orders to General Sickles were to relieve the Twelfth Corps division (Geary's) and occupy their position. Here is evidence that he knew the position occupied by Geary's division, or could have known, and yet failed to occupy it.

(Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 353-354)

In noting Sickles advanced, unauthorized, and dangerous position at the outbreak of Longstreet's attack, Meade, his vexation apparent, gives no quarter when he asserts:

Sickles' movement practically destroyed his own corps, the Third, caused a loss of 50 per cent in the Fifth Corps, and very heavily damaged the Second Corps; as I said before, producing 66 per cent of the loss of the whole battle, and with what result-driving us back to the position he was ordered to hold originally. These losses of the first and second day affected greatly the efficiency and morale of the army, and prevented my having the audacity in the offense that I might otherwise have had

(Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 354).

Meade's determination that the losses sustained on July 1 and 2 compromised the Union effort could be based on hindsight, but Meade's traits indicate that he truly felt the losses limited his options. Indeed, as noted previously, Meade was concerned about numbers in any battle, a belief that was manifested in his assessment of his strength on July 3 and thereafter. Geary's information gave Meade the support he needed to assert what he knew to be true. Sickles disobeyed orders and endangered the entire Union left and the outcome of the battle. He also appears to have heard enough from Butterfield, now stating that Butterfield absolutely knew that the order was a contingency, and given the situation, it was prudent to have a contingency. But Meade's most powerful statement may be that Butterfield and Sickles are liars, trying to regain their reputations at the expense of Meade's.

This would not end Sickles' efforts to discredit Meade. He would never recant his version and would continue to put it forward until his death in 1914. Meade never commented publicly, and the letter to Benedict would be Meade's last statement. It was up to his son and grandson to come to his defense with *The Life and Letters of General George Gordon Meade*, first published in 1913. The controversy, now known as the Meade-Sickles controversy, continued to be debated until recently. Meade biographer Richard Sauer's *Gettysburg: The Meade-Sickles Controversy* (2003) and Sickles' biographer James Hessler's *Sickles at Gettysburg* (2008) have clearly vindicated Meade. Time has brought justice and due credit to General Meade and General Sickles, but it took over a

century for the truth to “slowly and surely emerge” and for Meade’s reputation to begin to be restored.

Controversy dominated Meade’s independent command of the army and the general was much maligned by incessant criticism, much of it unjustified. The efforts of Dan Sickles, the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War, and other self-serving generals produced a skewed history of Meade’s command that prevailed for years. The controversy and criticism dominates the historical record and ignores what Meade did accomplish.

General Meade took command in the middle of an active campaign, while the army was in full pursuit of Lee, racing to save northern cities. Within days he forced Lee into battle, soundly defeating Lee’s army and stopping a string of serious Union defeats. Lee would never recover the strength he had before the battle and he spent the rest of 1863 maneuvering against Meade to a stalemate. Meade also provided cover for Washington, D.C. and the city was never threatened during Meade’s tenure. Meade also revived and reorganized the Army of the Potomac, which had been badly depleted in the Gettysburg campaign and lacked rest, soldiers, officers, horses, food, supplies, clothing and shoes. Most importantly, Meade revived the confidence of the soldiers in themselves and their officers. It was under Meade that the Army of the Potomac matured into a confident, effective weapon. And he gave the Northern people hope. Even though Lincoln could not see it, Meade gave him much of what he needed.

In Grant's Shadow: March 1864 to June 1865

Grant and Meade Develop Mutual Respect

Grant arrived in late March and established his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. Meade has heard that Grant speaks highly of him and does not intend to replace him. Meade again demonstrates his understanding of how the army works and of the public's perception of the army, writing to Margaret on March 20, 1864:

Grant is expected here Wednesday.... I understand he expressed every confidence in me, and said no change would be made in the command.... Still he will undoubtedly have the power, and will exercise it, of bringing here such a force as will effect results that hitherto I have been unable to effect... and this will by the ignorant public be set down as to his superior merit and quoted against me. However, I shall do my duty to the best of my ability, and trust to Providence. (Meade, 1913.1994, II, p. 182)

Meade's insights are correct on all counts. Grant was and is considered to have superior military ability compared to Meade. But Meade is correct in recognizing the difference in his position and Grant's, a difference that is readily overlooked by many historians. The ineffective and vacillating Halleck has his movement, he can and does. Meade has wanted to do these things, but lacked the power and the support of Lincoln.

In spite of his anticipated demise, Meade is committed to his duty, writing Margaret, "I intend to give him my heartiest co-operation, and so far as I am able, to do just the same when he is present that I would do were he absent" (Meade,

1913/1994, II, p. 182). But Meade will seldom be allowed to command as he would if Grant was not near. Early in the campaign of 1864, Grant will take control of the army and rarely allow Meade to command it entirely on his own. Meade's story for the remainder of the war is more one of his relationships with Grant, and to a lesser degree, Sheridan, than it is of his military actions. While obviously not inseparable, it is Grant and his actions toward Meade that will

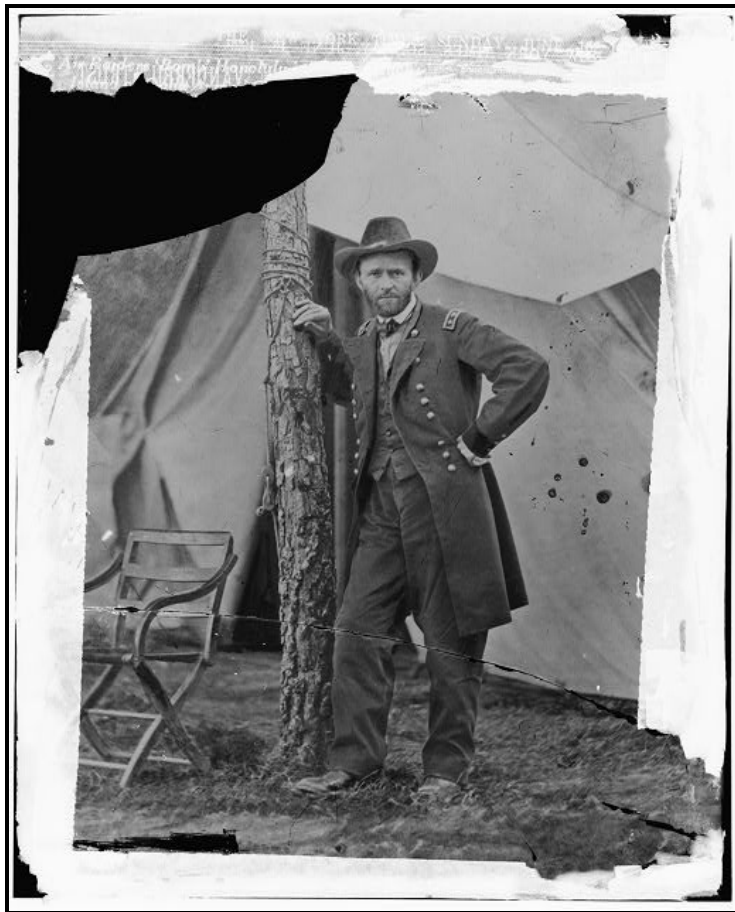


Figure 17. General Grant at Cold Harbor. (Library of Congress)

frustrate Meade and turn him bitter, having been reduced to a position with no influence under Grant. Grant is quite a contrast, being decisive and moving straight ahead. Grant also has control of all the troops in the field and will use this

power to effectively coordinate the actions of other forces in the field with those of the Army of the Potomac. Eventually, by applying pressure on Richmond from several directions, he will defeat Lee. Grant also has a truly free hand. He can and does change the base of operations for the army and engages in a siege of Petersburg and Richmond, cutting supplies to Lee's army and eventually forcing Lee into the open.

On March 10, 1864 Grant visited Meade at his headquarters. Although it was suspected that Grant would replace Meade with General "Baldy" Smith, Meade so impressed Grant that he retained Meade as commander of the Army of the Potomac. Horace Porter, of Grant's staff, recalled a conversation with Grant regarding this meeting with Meade. He writes:

In my first interview with him he talked in a manner which led me to form a very high opinion of him...and said that it had occurred to him that I might want to make a change...and urged me not to hesitate on his account if I desired to make such an assignment. He added that the success of the cause was much more important than any consideration for the feelings of an individual. He spoke so patriotically and unselfishly that even if I had any intention of relieving him, I should have been inclined to change my mind after the manly attitude he assumed in this frank interview. (Porter, 1897, p. 29)

Grant seems to indicate that he had not made the decision to replace Meade before the two met. Indeed, there were reasons to keep Meade. He had the respect of his corps commanders, knew the army intimately, still held the

support of many for his victory at Gettysburg, and bringing in a general from the West would not be well-received by the army. Grant also immediately identified two of Meade's strongest traits; his loyalty to the Union and his dedication to do his duty, even at personal sacrifice. Grant would discover that Meade was exactly the man he needed in that position.

Given the unusual command arrangement created by Grant's traveling with the Army of the Potomac, Grant needed a subordinate that he could count on to faithfully discharge his orders. Meade did this so well that in his memoirs an appreciative Grant said, "He was subordinate to his superiors in rank to the extent that he could execute an order that changed his own plans with the same zeal he would have displayed if the plan had been his own (Grant, 1885/2002, pp. 499-500). Grant's success was in some measure due to Meade's ability to sublimate his ambition and serve Grant.

Grant arrived in camp on March 24, 1864, the same day as the order for the reorganization of the army arrived. On March 25 Meade spent several more hours with Grant. He cheerfully writes to Margaret:

He appears very friendly, and at once adopts all my suggestions. I believe Grant is honest and fair, and I have no doubt he will give me full credit for anything I may do, and if I don't deserve any, I don't desire it. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 183).

Meade is enjoying his relationship with Grant, largely because Grant supports his judgment. He also is holding on to the hope that with Grant's power, the army will be successful.

Meade Defends Grant to Margaret

While Meade is feeling confident about Grant, Mrs. Meade appears to be less generous in her opinion. Meade responds to her concerns about Grant, and notes his son's deteriorating health in a letter written to Margaret on Easter Sunday, March 27, 1864. Concerned, he writes:

I am very much distressed to hear of Sergeant's continued weakness. As to my going home, this is utterly out of the question. You must not expect to see me until next winter, unless, as before, I am brought home on a litter. Whatever occurs, I shall not voluntarily leave the field. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 184)

Sergeant, Meade's oldest son, is afflicted with tuberculosis. Meade is unusually curt with his wife. He normally tries to calm and comfort her in his letters, but there is nothing comforting in knowing that you will not see your husband for nine or ten months unless he is wounded severely enough to be sent home. Meade makes it very clear that family concerns, although important to him, are subordinate to honor and duty. A very religious man, his tone lightens as he discusses his satisfaction with the day's church services. Then, he takes a more severe tone, reproving Margaret for her opinion of Grant. He writes:

You do not do Grant justice, and I am sorry to see it. You do not make a distinction between his own acts and those forced on him by the Government, Congress and public opinion. If left to himself, I have no doubt Grant would have left me alone; but placed in the position he holds, and with the expectations formed of him, if operations on a great scale are to be carried on here, he could not have kept aloof. As yet he has

indicated no purpose to interfere with me; on the contrary, acts promptly on all my suggestions, and seems desirous of making his stay here only the means of strengthening and increasing my forces. God knows I shall hail his advent with delight if it results in carrying on operations in the manner I have always desired they should be carried on. Cheerfully I will give him all credit if he can bring the war to a close. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 185-185)

Meade is trying to explain to Margaret that as a commander, Grant is not left to just his own devices, and that the actions of Lincoln, Stanton, Congress and the public influence what he must and can do. He reminds Margaret of the interference to his own command. Meade feels that he was hindered from operating the way he wanted to and hopes that Grant can change that situation. Meade feels he did not have a fair opportunity to prove his worth, but consoles himself with the possibility of a swift end to the war, which Grant accomplished, but not swiftly.

This letter demonstrates several of Meade's traits. He is sincerely religious and trusts his fate to God. He has a deep and sincere love for his family, but his intense dedication to his duty and his country takes precedence over all-else. Meade has a strong sense of justice that is so integrated into his character that he cannot let an injustice stand. He desires any and all credit that he deserves, but he also willingly extends credit to others. Meade is a patriot, believes in the Union's cause, and will gladly step aside if the war is brought to a prompt and favorable end.

Meade continues to try and sway Margaret's opinion by painting a favorable impression of Grant. On March 29 he writes, "Grant continues very affable and quite confidential" (Meade, 1913, 1994, II, p. 185). In this letter Meade also makes a statement that is perplexing. He writes:

I join with you in the regret at the relief of Sykes. I tried very hard to retain Sykes, Newton and even French, as division commanders, but to no avail. I had very hard work to retain Sedgwick. As to Pleasanton, his being relieved was entirely the work of Grant and Stanton. (p. 185).

Either Meade has deluded himself or he is more adept politically than thought. He had in fact saved Pleasanton until such time as he conveyed to Stanton that he would not object to his removal, a move probably predicated upon Pleasanton's falling into the ranks of those critical of Meade. True, Meade did not make the decision to relieve him, but it was not "entirely the work of Grant and Stanton". Note that he does not say that he worked hard to save Pleasanton, as he did the others. If Meade is not deluding himself, then this is a rare instance in which Meade was able to favorably modify his position without violating his values. He did not remove Pleasanton from command based on the fact that he did not hold the confidence of Washington or the public; he merely allowed it to happen, based on insubordination. Meade understands that a general who openly opposes his judgment is a liability and deftly has him replaced. Unfortunately, his replacement, General Phil Sheridan, will cause Meade more difficulty than Pleasanton ever had.

Meade returned to Washington and testified before the CCW again on April 1, 1864. This time he refuted Butterfield's claim that Meade had ordered him to issue an order of retreat to Pipe Creek. The documents that he brought with him served to refute Butterfield's testimony rather well (Tap, 1998). He left Washington feeling rather content, having had a pleasant visit with his son, Spencer. He writes to Margaret that Spencer's visit "has been a source of great happiness to me (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 186).

He also continues to try to influence Margaret's opinion of Grant, writing that he "had a long and satisfactory talk with Grant, who has expressed himself and acted towards me in the most friendly manner" (p. 187). But Meade again misreads the tenor of Washington, believing that he has the support of several members of the committee, including Wade. He also notes that "The President, Secretary, indeed every one I met, were civil and affable to me' (p. 187). Civil and affable they may be, but he cannot count on their support.

Meade continues to defend Grant to Margaret. On April 4 he reminds Margaret, "As I have told you before, he is very well disposed towards me" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 1867). Then on April 13 Meade pens a longer discourse on Grant:

Grant has not given an order, or in the slightest degree interfered with the administration of this army since he arrived.... It is undoubtedly true he will go with it when it moves, and will in a measure control its movements, and should success attends its operations, that my share of the credit will be less than if he were not present. Moreover, whilst I have

no doubt he will give me all the credit I am entitled to, the press, and perhaps the public, will lose sight of me in him. Nevertheless he is so much more active than his predecessor, and agrees so well with me in views, I cannot but be rejoiced at his arrival, because I believe success to be more probable from the above facts. My position before, with inadequate means, no power myself to increase them, and no effort made by others to do so, placed me in a false position, causing me to be held responsible, when in fact I could do nothing. My duty is plain, to continue quietly to discharge my duties, heartily cooperating with him and under him. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 189)

Meade, while supporting Grant, is again saying that he never had a real chance to show what he could do with the army. Halleck, Grant's predecessor, was known for doing little of substance and Meade appears to be still smarting from what he considered to be a lack of support and guidance after Gettysburg. To Meade, it is an injustice to judge him and ignore the failings of others who had the ability to do things he could not. Having been sharply criticized for his inability to corral Lee in the second half of 1863, and currently under fire from the Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War, Meade is concerned that he will continue to be denied credit from Washington and the public for what he does accomplish. Yet Meade has faith in Grant, believing him to be fair and still feeling a spirit of cooperation with him. Over time, Meade will slowly begin to have doubts about Grant, but in this period, before the army had made any movement, Meade feels he has control of the army and Grant's full support.

While Grant and Meade prepare for the upcoming campaign, Historicus' second letter has appeared and Meade's response is far less intense than it was to Historicus' first letter. Meade feels that he has the support of "his countrymen" and that the attacks by the CCW and the newspapers have "signally failed" (Meade, 1913/1994. II, p. 188). Meade also seems unconcerned about a promotion in the regular army, claiming that he never did expect it. He does, however, feel that some of the recent attacks on him were to prevent his nomination so that another could receive it.

Meade continues to praise Grant for Margaret's benefit. On April 18 he advises her that many subordinates have submitted complaints to Grant, but he properly forwards them to Meade to handle. If Grant had not done so, Meade's authority would have been seriously undermined. Meade, understanding this, is pleased that Grant insists on keeping him in the chain of command.

Also in his letter of April 18, Meade demonstrates that he can, at times, be very conciliatory, as he does in his treatment of General Birney. Birney had approached Hancock to see if it might be possible for him to meet with Meade. His caution is understandable, given that his testimony to the CCW supported Sickles. Meade advises Hancock that Birney is free to visit him anytime. Meade relates to Margaret:

I had an interview with General Birney to-day, who disclaimed ever having entertained unfriendly feelings towards me, or being a partisan of Sickles, and expressed hope he would be permitted to serve under me. I listened to all he had to say, but made no reply, except that I had never

heard he had any unfriendly feelings towards me. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 190)

This is an extremely rare situation, one in which Meade compromises his values by matching Birney's lies with one of his own. But he does forgive Birney, as evidenced by his statements upon Birney's untimely death in October of 1864. Meade writes to Margaret that, "General Birney is undoubtedly a loss to the army. He was a very good soldier.... During the last campaign he had quite distinguished himself (Meade. 1913/1994, II, p.235). Meade has the capacity to be magnanimous, but it is a trait rarely mentioned in the literature.

Meade, Sheridan and the 1864 Campaign

By the end of April Grant was ready to commence operations. On May 3, 1864 Meade writes to Margaret, trying to comfort her:

To-morrow we move.... I beg of you to be calm and resigned, to place full trust in the mercy of our heavenly Father, who has up to this time so signally favored us, and the continuance of whose blessings we should earnestly pray for. Do not fret, but be cheerful, and go about and do just as if nothing was going on, and above all things don't anticipate evil; it will come time enough. Give my love to all the dear children. I shall think a great deal of you and them, notwithstanding the excitement of my duties. I feel quiet and determined, satisfied I have ever striven to do my duty to the best of my ability, and believing that in time posterity will do justice to my career. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 193)

Meade is known for his calmness in battle, and as he prepares for the campaign he is obviously calm. While Meade hates the carnage and misery of war, he is excited by the business of soldiering and the possibility of enhancing his reputation. Meade again reconciles the attacks on his reputation with the knowledge that he has done his duty and with the hope that time will vindicate him. Meade's love of his family and his faith accompany him into the campaign.

On May 5, 1864 Union troops encountered the Confederate army near Spotsylvania in a densely wooded area known as the Wilderness. Three days of fighting produced a great many casualties on both sides, but was essentially a stalemate. Grant then withdrew and tried to position his army between Lee and Richmond by gaining control of the roads at Spotsylvania Courthouse. As he and Lee raced to Spotsylvania, Meade and Grant's new cavalry commander, General Philip Sheridan would clash.

Meade arrived at Todd's Tavern very late on the evening of May 7. He found two of Sheridan's units there waiting for orders from Sheridan. In Sheridan's absence, Meade ordered Merritt's brigade to open the road to Spotsylvania and ordered Gregg to post on a side road, watching the enemy. Merritt's movement was too late and Lee gained the advantage. Meade and Sheridan argued thereafter, Meade insisting Sheridan had ignored his orders and Sheridan insisting he never received orders. Meade apologized when he discovered that although the orders were issued, Sheridan indeed had not received them. But the argument continued. Sheridan described the argument in his memoirs stating:

Meade was very much irritated, and I was none the less so. One word brought on another until, finally, I told him that I could whip Stuart if he (Meade) would only let me, but since he insisted on giving the cavalry directions without consulting or even notifying me, he could henceforth command the Cavalry Corps himself-that I would not give it another order. (Sheridan, 1888/1992, p.200)

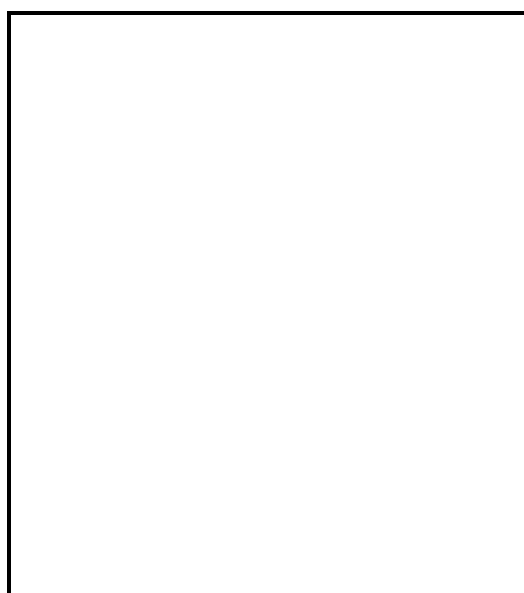


Figure 18. General Sheridan. (Library of Congress)

Contrary to his statement, Sheridan had been notified of Meade's orders, but the dispute was only a symptom of deeper issues. Sheridan wanted no interference from others (Cleaves, 1960) and he had and did differ with Meade on the proper use of the cavalry (Sheridan, 1888/1992).

Meade, angered by Sheridan's insubordination, took the issue to Grant. Grant, upon hearing of Sheridan's boast, told Meade to let Sheridan "go out and do it" (Sheridan, 1888/1992, p. 200). This was the beginning of Meade's reduced

role and effectiveness as commander of the army under Grant. Grant not only allowed Sheridan's insubordination by ignoring it, he rewarded him with what he wanted-an independent command. In this instance, Grant failed to support Meade as he should have.

The Battle of Spotsylvania was a two-week affair, resulting in 18,000 casualties for the Union and with the South suffering 12,000. No advantage was gained by either side and on May 28 Grant withdrew and continued his move toward Richmond, trying to turn Lee's right flank. While the battle raged, Meade received two correspondences that gave him great pride and he sent them home to Margaret for preservation. The first was from Secretary of War Stanton, who thanked Meade and the army for their success in the first week of the campaign. The second was a despatch that Grant sent to Stanton requesting that Meade and Sherman be promoted to the ranks of major general in the regular army. Grant's despatch stated:

General Meade has more than met my most sanguine expectations. He and Sherman are the fittest officers for large commands I have come in contact with. If their services can be rewarded by promotion to the ranks of major-generals in the regular army the honor would be worthily bestowed, and I would feel personally gratified. I would not like to see one of these promotions at this time without seeing both (Grant papers, Vol. 10, p. 434 in Taffe, (2006). p. 162).

Meade wrote to his wife that he told Grant he was:

...obliged to him for his good opinion, but that I asked and expected nothing from the Government, and that I did not myself attach any importance to being in the regular army, so long as I held an equal rank in the volunteer service. What the result will be I cannot tell.

(Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 195)

Here is the complexity of Meade. His modesty prevents him from requesting recognition for doing his duty, but his ambition most certainly expects it. He believes that the Government should reward his service on its own initiative, without any active pursuit of such by Meade. He has already demonstrated that if he is denied a promotion he feels he has earned, or a promotion is rewarded to another less deserving, he will express his concern and request a correction of the situation. These situations constitute injustices to Meade from his perspective, and he will speak out. Meade's informing Burnside of Butterfield's promotion to corps command while Meade, his senior, remained in divisional command is one such example. Meade also again demonstrates how greatly he appreciates and needs the "good opinion" of his superiors.

A Gift Refused Then Accepted

On May 17, Meade writes to Margaret:

I received to-day a kind letter from Mr. Gerhard, written from his sick room, and informing me of the generosity of kind friends in Philadelphia, who had subscribed to pay for your house in DeLancey Place. I have replied to Mr. Gerhard, and whilst I have tried to express my sense of the generosity of my friends, I have declined the gift, believing

that, under existing circumstances, it would not be proper in me to accept.... I hope you will approve my course, and that my feelings will be understood. It would not do to lose our independence, and I don't think we would be comfortable in a house bought with our friend's money. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 197)

Meade feels that it would be unethical for him to accept such a significant gift. It was common for officers to receive small gifts of appreciation, such as a basket of champagne, cigars, jewelry or flowers, all of which Meade had received, but this gift was too significant in Meade's estimation. His considerable pride also is evident and it is pride as much as ethics that dictate his opinion. He must have anticipated Margaret's disapproval, for in his letter to Margaret of May 25 he comments that he received letters from his mother and Margaret that informed him that it was too late to accept the house. An indignant Meade replied:

Setting aside the injustice to me of placing the affair in such condition that I have no option in the matter.... My contributing friends must know there was nothing personal in my action, because I do not know the name of a single contributor. I acted on the general principle I have always held, that a public man makes a mistake when he allows his generous friends to reward him with gifts. I wrote Mr. Gerhard it was not a case of necessity, as, by proper economy, we could and should live on our means; that if anything should happen to me, then I would be grateful for the smallest assistance given you and the children,; but until that time, I thought it better for me to preserve my independence....My opinions are

still unchanged; but if the affair is settled, and it is too late to decline, I have no disposition to be ungenerous, and certainly no design to do anything that would be offensive.... You can therefore take the house... (Meade, 1912/1994, II, pp. 198-199)

Meade wishes to be free of any influence that might result from a perceived obligation due to the gift. He also wishes to remain financially independent, an obvious point of pride for a man who was born into wealth and fell into near poverty. Meade reveals the depth of his character, simply finding it unethical for a public person to accept a gift that would invite criticism that might tarnish his reputation.

Benjamin Gerhard was a noted Philadelphia lawyer who was made provost marshal of Philadelphia early in the war. He served in this position without pay. His main duty was to supervise the draft in Philadelphia. Meade notes that Gerhard wrote from his sickbed and Mr. Gerhard died one month later, on June 18, 1864. It would seem that Gerhard had no intentions of influencing Meade, and if he did, obviously it could not come to pass. Gerhard was married to Margaret Meade's sister, Anna, and it is more likely that the dying Gerhard was simply trying to assist his family.

Grant Takes Control

Returning to the war effort, Meade wrote to Margaret on May 19, 1864:

We did not have the big battle which I expected yesterday, as, on advancing, we found the enemy so strongly entrenched that even Grant thought it useless to knock our heads against a brick wall, and directed a

suspension of the attack. We shall try to manoeuvre again, so as to draw the enemy out of his stronghold, and hope to fight him with him before he can dig himself into an impregnable position. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 197)

Grant is now operating in a manner similar to that which brought so much criticism to Meade. Finding a heavily entrenched enemy and realizing that the costs are greater than the rewards, Grant does not attack and chooses to try to maneuver Lee into the open. Meade knows that even when in the open, Lee is a master at finding a good position and quickly fortifying it.

Meade's letter continues:

Yesterday I had a visit from Senators Sherman of Ohio, and Sprague of Rhode Island; both were very complimentary to me, and wished me to know that in Washington it was well understood these were my battles. I told them such was not the case; that at first I had manoeuvred the army, but that gradually, and from the very nature of things, Grant had taken control; and that it would be injurious to the army to have two heads. I see one of the newspaper men is puzzled to know what share we each have in the work, and settles it by saying Grant does the grand strategy, and I the grand tactics. Coppee in his *Army Magazine* says, "the Army of the Potomac, directed by Grant, commanded by Meade, and led by Hancock, Sedgwick, and Warren, " which is a quite good distinction, and about hits the nail on the head. (Meade 1913/1994, II, pp. 197-198)

Meade is willing to give credit where he feels it is deserved, gladly accepts, even expects, credit he is due, but is unwilling to accept credit he feels belongs to Grant. Meade is correct when he asserts that Grant had taken control “by the very nature of things”, those things being the untenable and convoluted command hierarchy created by Grant’s decision to travel with the Army of the Potomac. In addition, there has been pressure on Grant from his staff to at least marginalize Meade by skipping him in the chain of command, which Grant resists. In the beginning of May Meade felt he still had control of the army, but now, only two weeks into the campaign, he fully understands that Grant has assumed control. Still, he is trying to be fair-minded about the command arrangement.

On May 13 Grant’s staff strongly urged the himl to take direct control of the army, implying that Meade should be relieved of command. They complained that passing orders through Meade slowed down the process and increased the risk of orders being misunderstood. Meade’s position was a false one, he having the duties of a commander but not the responsibility and thereby being able to claim credit but not being able to be held responsible for failure. Finally, he was irascible and often irritated officers who came in contact with him. Grant listened patiently, then replied:

I am fully aware of some embarrassments that arise from the present organization, but there is more weight on the other side of the question. I am commanding all the armies, and I cannot neglect others.... Besides, Meade has served a long time with the Army of the Potomac,

knows its subordinate officers thoroughly, and led it to a memorable victory at Gettysburg. I have just come from the West, and if I removed a deserving Eastern man from the position of army commander, my motives might be misunderstood, and the effect be bad upon the spirits of the troops. General Meade and I are in close contact on the field: he is capable and perfectly subordinate, and by attending to the details he relieves me of much unnecessary work, and gives me more time to think and mature my general plans. I will always see that he gets his full credit for what he does. (Porter, 1907, pp. 114-115)

Grant is keenly aware of the political leanings of the public and the Army of the Potomac. He acknowledges that he needs Meade. General Meade might be the only general who has the ability to command independently when needed and the sense of duty and patriotism required to be “perfectly subordinate”. Grant may be the only general who can successfully command Meade and his gunpowder disposition. Porter (1907) explains that “Grant was a man with whom an associate could not quarrel without providing all the provocation himself, he and Grant remained on the best of terms personally and professionally throughout this long and eventful campaign” (p. 115).

Margaret evidently continues to be critical of Grant and on May 23, Meade pleads with her, writing:

I am sorry you will not change your opinion of Grant.... I don't think he is a very magnanimous man, but I believe he is above any littleness, and whatever injustice is done me, and it is idle to deny that my position is

a very unjust one, I believe it is not intentional on his part, but arises from the force of circumstances, and from that weakness inherent in human nature which compels a man to look to his own interests. (Meade, 1913/1994,II, p.198)

Meade is beginning to resent his position under Grant, feeling it is an injustice to him. Meade's position could certainly be viewed as unfair, as no other Union general had the eyes of the Lieutenant General evaluating and directing his work on a daily basis, or had to work with such a confusing command arrangement. Still, he is supportive of Grant, but gives an early indication that his opinion of Grant has started to deteriorate.

Meade has been criticized for his lack of strategic understanding, but in a June 1, 1864 letter, he reveals a complete and prophetic concept of the Union strategy. He writes to Margaret:

The rebs keep taking up strong positions and entrenching themselves. This compels us to move around their flank, after trying to find some weak point to attack. This operation has now occurred four times.... We shall have to do it once more before we get them into their defenses at Richmond, and then will begin the tedious process of a quasi-siege, like that at Sebastopol; which will last as long, unless we can get hold of their railroads and cut off their supplies, when they must come out and fight. (Meade, 1913/1994,II, p.200)

Meade had often espoused the wisdom of changing the Union's base of operations, which Grant did, and forcing Lee into Richmond. The siege at

Sebastopol occurred at the end of the Crimean War and lasted a year, from September of 1854 to September of 1855. The quasi-siege of Petersburg and Richmond, will last nine and one half months. Not only does this give an indication of Meade's ability to understand the nature of this campaign and its probable results, he gives an indication of how well-studied he is in the affairs of war.

Cold Harbor: June 1864

On May 31, 1864 the battle of Cold Harbor began. The battle would last until June 12, when Grant withdrew and moved toward Petersburg. This would prove to be one of Grant's worst defeats, with the Union losing approximately 10,000 troops, compared to the South's 2,500, according to most estimates. In his memoirs Grant commented, "I have always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made.... no advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained" (Grant and Thomsen, (Ed.), 1885/2002, p. 357). On June 3, 1864 at 12:30 P.M., Grant ordered all attacks to be suspended based on the fact that the opinion of the corps commanders was that further assaults would be unsuccessful. Evidently, Meade's only fault in considering the opinions of his corps commanders was that he sought them during meetings.

On June 5, 1864, Meade smugly writes to his wife:

I feel a satisfaction in knowing that my record is clear, and that the results of this campaign are the clearest indications I could wish of my sound judgment, both at Williamsport and Mine Run. In every instance

that we attacked the enemy in an entrenched position we have failed, except in the case of Hancock at Spottsylvania, which was a surprise discreditable to the enemy. So, likewise, whenever the enemy has attacked us in position, he has been repulsed. I think Grant has had his eyes opened, and is willing to admit now that Virginia and Lee's army is not Tennessee and Bragg's army. Whether the people will ever realize that fact remains to be seen. (Meade, 1913/1994,II, p.201)

Meade believes that by calling off the attack at Cold Harbor and not renewing it, Grant has given credibility to Meade's actions at Williamsport and Mine Run. Meade has long felt that a great general knows when and where to fight and does not fight under adverse conditions. But he has forgotten that the biggest criticism at Williamsport was not for his failure to attack. It was for not pursuing Lee more vigorously and attacking him before he could fortify his position. Nevertheless, Meade's satisfaction is well deserved.

The Cropsey Incident

On June 9, 1864 Meade's letter to Margaret describes what will become one of the greatest errors that Meade makes. He had been made aware of a letter in the June 2 issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* written by reporter Edward Cropsey. Meade writes that:

...the writer intended to be very complimentary. At the close of it he refers to an eventful occasion when Grant saved the life of the nation, when I desired to destroy it...I found the author, one Edward Cropsey... he explained that he had heard that on the night of the second day's battle of

the Wilderness I had urged on Grant the withdrawal of the army across the Rapidan, but Grant firmly resisted all my intercessions, and thus the country was saved from the disgrace of a retreat. (Meade, 1913/1994,II, p.202)

Meade then had Cropsey ridden out of camp on a donkey wearing placards that read "Libeler of the press". Although Meade thought the army appreciated his discipline of Cropsey, members of the press did not. They decided not to mention Meade's name in any article, unless it was to Meade's detriment.

Meade has been under the strain of almost three months of constant fighting and has seen unparalleled carnage. He has endured months of being unfairly accused of wanting to retreat at Gettysburg. He has been overshadowed by Grant's presence, a situation that clearly conveys to Meade that Lincoln and Stanton found him wanting as a commander. Under Grant, he functioned more as a chief of staff than as a commander. That he was now overly sensitive, as is the case here, is easy to understand. But Cropsey's article, when read in its entirety is, as Meade says, intended to be complimentary to Meade. Cropsey wrote:

MEADE'S POSITION

He is as much the commander of the Army of the Potomac as he ever was. Grant plans and exercises a supervisory control over the army, but to Meade belongs everything of detail. He is entitled to great credit for the magnificent movements of the army.... In battle he puts troops in action and controls their movements; in a word, he commands the army....

History will record, but newspapers cannot, that On one eventful night during the present campaign GRANT'S presence saved the army, and the nation, too; not that General Meade was on the point to commit a blunder unwittingly; but his devotion to his country made him loth to risk her last army on what he deemed a chance. Grant assumed the responsibility and we are still

ON TO RICHMOND (Meade, 1913/1994,II, p.200)

Cropsey could not have been kinder in his representation of Meade's position in and importance to the Army of the Potomac. He had merely reported what he had heard repeatedly in camp. Congressman Washburne, who was traveling with Grant's headquarters, had promoted the rumor in camp and in Washington. Meade would have been better advised to direct his anger toward the originator, not the messenger. The article actually gave credit to Meade for one of his basic beliefs; the army could not be risked when little was to be gained, and the loss of this army could mean the loss of the nation. Cropsey also did not say that Meade wanted to retreat, even though that was the rumor. All told, Meade greatly overreacted and it cost his reputation dearly.

Grant, and even Assistant Secretary of War, Charles Dana, who was no friend of Meade's, came to Meade's defense, wiring Washington that the rumor was completely false and that at no time during the campaign had Meade desired to retreat. Stanton quickly responded that neither he nor the President ever believed otherwise (Porter, 1897). Meade, having the support of his superiors, was still seething when he wrote to Margaret on June 12, noting that the reports

were widely circulated in the northern press. Meade would eventually realize his mistake and reluctantly allow Cropsey to return.

Meade's best course of action would have been to ignore the article, but short of that he could have contacted the newspaper's editor, William Harding. Harding had helped Meade in the past and his brother, George, was close to Stanton. He was even given a chance by Cortland Parker, a friend of the Hardings, to correct the situation. Parker had talked to the brothers and Meade merely had to write a letter to them to "smooth it over". Instead, Meade insisted that Cropsey's "confession" should be printed so the public knew "the real character of Cropsey's offense" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 208). Meade's pride kept him from seeing the article as it was intended, and his temper prevented him from seeing the reasonable way to correct the situation.

Growing Frustration: Serjie and Grant

Two new themes begin to appear in Meade's letters in early June 1864. First, Meade makes more comments on his son, Serjie's health. For example he writes, "I am sorry to hear what you write of Sergeant, but God's will must be done; and we must be resigned" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 202). Meade often deals with difficult situations by recognizing that they are out of his control or in the hands of God, and then disciplining himself to be resigned to things he cannot influence.

The second theme that emerges is Meade's discontent with Grant. Although early and slight, it will grow over the remainder of the war. Meade will vacillate, as the level of his support and trust of Grant will vary, but as the war

trudges on, Meade's discontent with Grant will be more evident. He is starting to express his disenchantment with Grant as early as June 9, 1864 when he wrote to Margaret that Grant "...has greatly disappointed me, and since this campaign I really begin to think I am something of a general" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 202). Meade does not say why he feels this way, but it may be due to his feelings that Grant's experience has shown that Meade's judgment in refusing to attack fortified positions to be prudent. He is probably taking solace in the fact that Grant is now using many of his strategies that were refused by Halleck. In some ways, Grant's campaign is demonstrating the effectiveness of Meade as a commander.

Meade was noticing that his name never appeared in Mr. Stanton's dispatches and suspected that Stanton merely passed on what Grant sent him. Meade quite accidentally discovered that he was wrong to hold Grant responsible, since Grant never sent messages to Stanton. Nevertheless, the seeds of distrust are beginning to sprout in Meade.

The nine-month siege of Petersburg began on June 15. As the armies settled in to their positions, Meade's thoughts were not of war. Meade's mood was markedly improved, having been "...placed by General Grant in command of all the troops in front of Petersburg, consisting of the Army of the Potomac, and two portions of Butler's army, Grant being back at City Point" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 204). Meade led the troops in a ten hour attack, "...eight of which was by moonlight, another unparalleled feat in the annals of war" (p. 204).

In his June 17, 1864 letter Meade writes about the recent movements and his command in the field and relays information on General Wise of the Confederate army, Margaret's brother-in-law. His tone lightens as he talks of the fair in Philadelphia, then softens as he speaks of Serjie, writing:

I wish Sergie would get well enough to travel; he might pay me a visit, now the weather is warm. I don't suppose Sergie cares much about seeing war, but I and George would like hugely to see him. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 205)

Meade's concern for his son continues to grow and will occupy his mind more as Serjie's condition deteriorates and the year grinds to an end.

Meade's letter of June 21, 1864 reveals that Meade is again growing frustrated. He is proud to be in command of the troops, free of Grant's eye, on June 17 and 18. Meade is pleased with the success of the army, but laments that he gets no credit. He describes his success when he writes to Margaret:

...we drove the enemy more than a mile and a half, taking from them two strong lines of works, capturing over twenty guns, four colors and nearly seven hundred prisoners. In all this fighting and these operations I had exclusive command, Grant being all the time at City Point, and coming on the field for only half an hour on the 17th, and yet in Mr. Stanton's official despatch he quotes General Grant's account, and my name is not even mentioned. I cannot imagine why I am thus ignored.... Our losses in the three days' fight under my command amount to nine thousand five hundred.... As I did not have over sixty thousand men, this

loss is severe, and shows how hard the fighting was. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 205-206)

Meade is so obsessed with receiving his due credit and with being ignored, that he does not realize the situation. This move from Cold Harbor to Petersburg is not the type of engagement that will enhance a reputation. The Federal loss, according to Meade's numbers, is over fifteen per cent of his force and it did nothing other than to force Lee into his fortifications at Petersburg. Meade wants to be recognized as being in command, even if the results are less than desirable.

In an uncharacteristic offensive action Meade attacked the enemy lines on June 18, 1864 because he "...had positive information the enemy had not occupied them more than twelve hours, and that no digging had been done on the lines prior to their occupation" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 207). He writes to Margaret that his losses were considerable, "principally owing to the moral condition of the army" p. 207). Meade is convinced that two months of constant fighting has left the troops too tired to fight effectively. He also laments the loss of good officers who cannot be replaced with experienced men.

In his June 24 letter Meade again repines, "I complain, and I think justly, that the press and the Government despatches fail to acknowledge my services, but I cannot reasonably do this, and expect to be shielded from complaints, if there any are made of the operations" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 207). Meade uncharacteristically seems to be willing to accept even negative criticism as long as it acknowledges his service. Meade's lack of sleep, consisting of three hours

in three days, is wearing down his resilience. He is also becoming more uncomfortable with Grant, grouching that, "Grant being at City Point, some eight miles distant, I see but little of him. He paid me a visit of an hour or two day before yesterday" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 208). Grant's absence puts Meade at a perceived disadvantage because he does not have information about the movement of the army or its strategic intent. Meade also views Grant's absence as another indication that he is being overlooked.

On July 12 General Hancock unwittingly fuels Meade's growing belief that he does not receive his due credit. Hancock told Meade that it was most definitely intended to relieve Meade from command and replace him with Hancock, although Meade would be retained in some capacity in the army. Hancock believed that Grant opposed the move, but he might be overruled. Meade, now vexed, writes to Margaret:

Now, as my conscience is clear that I have done my duty to the best of my ability...and as I feel I have been unjustly treated, and have not had the credit I was and am entitled to, I shall not worry myself about any such outrage as being relieved without cause. I mention all this confidentially to you, simply as a preparation for the coming event, should it take place. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 207)

Meade's sense of justice has been aroused. He rightly feels that he has performed faithfully and competently for Grant and the country. It is Grant that controls the army now, and it is well known, even to Meade. Then why would a move be made to replace him now? Meade provides the answer in his letter.

There have been recently with the army several Senators and Representatives and among them are Chandler and Wilkinson. The latter individual was...very severe on me, showing he still retained the animus that dictated his attack on me in the Senate last winter (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 212). The Senators were supposedly on a mission to inspect the army, but their real mission was to persuade Grant to remove Meade (Tap, 1998). As with Lincoln, the Senator's efforts would be in vain. Meade knew these men would attack him at any opportunity, yet he still cannot view this as one more political maneuver that reflects on the Senators, not him. Although unsuccessful with Grant, the Senators will soon get one more opportunity to attack Meade, as the Battle of the Crater at the end of July will prompt another CCW "investigation".

In mid-July Meade again caught the wrath of the press, although unjustifiably so this time. General Grant had sent Meade an order to expel two reporters from camp. The first Grant had already expelled from Butler's army and Meade was ordered to expel the other. Meade's order to arrest them should they return simply relayed Grant's orders. Nevertheless, given their animosity toward Meade, it is not surprising that the press attacked him. Meade confidently wrote:

Grant expressed himself very much annoyed at the injustice done to me, which he said was glaring, because my order distinctly states that it was by his direction these men were prohibited remaining with the army. He acknowledged there was an evident intention to hold me accountable for all that was condemned, and to praise him for all that was considered commendable. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 213)

Meade is relieved to have Grant's support. Grant's recognition of the conspiracy against Meade by the papers is also comforting. But Meade cannot escape criticism, as plots to remove him and newspaper attempts to destroy his reputation persist. Meade has quite a conundrum. He wants to be recognized for his service, but when his name is mentioned, it is negatively. He should welcome anonymity, but his pride and honor cannot accept that state of affairs. However, Meade seems to take great solace in Grant's support, which raises an interesting but unanswerable question. Would Meade have been less sensitive to public criticism if he had the support of Lincoln? In this situation, it seems so. Grant could have publicly supported Meade, but he did not. Still, his expressed support seemed enough for Meade.

The attacks on Meade are apparently also wearing on his wife. Meade chastises her in a letter written on July 29, 1864 saying:

Your letters of the 24th and 27th arrived this evening. They are written in very bad spirits, and I am tempted to scold you for indulging in such. I want you to recover your original elasticity of spirits which characterized you in the early days of our married life, when you were always sure something was going to turn up. You must now try to look on the bright side and hope for the best. I think we have a great deal to be thankful for, and things might be much worse. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 216)

Margaret's situation certainly wears on the Meades. She attends a dying son while constantly wondering if today is the day that she learns of the death of

her husband or a son. She must bear the constant denigration of her husband's character and ability. The general faces death each day and constantly wonders if today is the day he learns of a son's death, either at home or on the battlefield. He constantly wonders if he will be replaced and if the attacks on him will ever stop. As soon will be apparent, he is tortured by his son's illness and his inability to help Margaret. The war is wearing on the Meades, and the attacks on Meade will soon be renewed.

Questionable Judgment: The Battle of the Crater

On July 30, 1864, the battle of the Crater, part of the siege of Petersburg, became one the biggest disgraces of the Union effort. Pennsylvania miners had dug a tunnel from their lines to the Confederate lines and filled the tunnel with eight thousand pounds of powder. Grant's plan was to send Hancock's Second Corps and two divisions of Sheridan's cavalry across the James River to conduct a diversionary attack and draw Lee's forces to the north. The Ninth Corps, under General Burnside, would make the main attack on the south side of the river. After the detonation of the mine, his troops were to assail the enemy on the sides of the crater and push forward, supported by Warren's and Ord's corps.

Grant's plans were well conceived, but Burnside's plans were incomplete. As was typical of Burnside, his orders were slightly ambiguous and added to the disaster. The attack was luckless and poorly commanded from the beginning. The explosion was delayed from 3:00 until 5:00 A.M. because of a problem with the fuse. Once the fuse was repaired, the successful explosion of the mine created a crater 100 to 120 feet wide, and at least 30 feet deep, instantly killing

between 250 and 350 Confederates. But Burnside's troops were unprepared for the magnitude of the blast, some breaking and running at the blast itself. The advance troops took refuge in the crater, rather than skirting its edges as planned. The crater became a killing field as the Confederate fire slaughtered the trapped Union soldiers. All told, the Union suffered 3,800 casualties, compared to the Confederate loss of 1,500 soldiers. Fortunately, for the Union the defeat did not negatively impact the overall strategy in the East.

The Crater incident could have been another severe blow to Meade's reputation, but it was not. Meade escaped censure due to Grant's unconditional support and the findings of an army court of inquiry, which cleared Meade of any fault. But in reality, almost every Union commander from Grant down to divisional commander Ledlie contributed to the disaster, or at least could have minimized the loss. Meade described the events to Margaret in his letter of July 31, 1864, writing:

Our attack yesterday, although made under the most advantageous circumstances, was a failure. By a movement to the north bank of the James, Lee was completely deceived...he rushed over there...leaving his works in our front held by only three out of eight divisions of his army. When this was ascertained, it was determined to spring a mine which had been dug under one of the enemy's batteries on their line, assault the breach, and push the whole army through to the Appomatax River.... At 5 A. M. yesterday the mine was most successfully exploded, throwing into the air, and subsequently burying, four guns and a South Carolina

regiment. Our column immediately took possession of the crater...but instead of immediately pushing on and crowning the hill in front, which was the key to the whole enemy's position, our men crouched in the crater and could not be got forward. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 217)

It is at this point that the errors of Union commanders began to take effect. Burnside had trained the Fourth Division, comprised of black soldiers to lead the attack, but Meade and Grant vetoed that plan. Meade felt that if the attack was unsuccessful, the public would decree that the black soldiers were sent first because the army did not care about them, but no such criticism would result if white troops led the attack. At Burnside's objection to Meade's order, Meade took the issue to Grant, who agreed. Thus, "The... decision was political, not military" (Slotkin, 2009, p. 145). Burnside then allowed his division commanders to draw lots to see who would lead the attack, a grievous error. The lot fell to General Ledlie, the least capable of Burnside's commanders, and a known drinker. Ledlie would end up being discharged from the army for his poor performance. In addition, Burnside's division commanders had secured themselves in a bombproof shelter distant from the action, and as the attack fell apart, it suffered from the lack of coordination and direction that should have been provided by the commanders. To complicate matters, Burnside had failed to clear obstructions that prevented the advance of troops and limited the sight of the artillery. Nor had he ordered the engineers to provide the equipment needed to ascend the Union entrenchments or the crater walls, as well as what was needed to entrench in preparation for the counterattack of the Confederates. Thus, as his troops

charged forward, they were stalled almost as quickly as they had started. The day was lost as men piled into the crater and massed along its sides.

At 6:30 A.M. General Grant went to the front lines and immediately knew the attack was a failure. But he only advised Burnside, rather than ordering him to withdraw. Burnside, under orders from Meade to advance, disagreed with Grant. But Grant did not want to compromise Meade's position as the commander of the army, so he gave no order. Grant was also working under Lincoln's guidelines which called for aggressive attacks with a minimum of casualties. The Union had lost between 65,000 and 70,000 men in Grant's seven-week campaign leading to this assault. The public and the press were concerned, some even referring to Grant as a butcher. Lincoln was looking at an election and public disfavor of Grant's tactics would not help him. Thus, Grant was willing to quickly call off the attack, but Burnside and Meade were not as predisposed to retreat as Grant (Slotkin, 2009).

But the President's conditions did impact Meade's orders. Generals Warren and Ord were to provide support to Burnside, but only after they were assured that Burnside's efforts were successful. General Warren stalled, reluctant to enter the battle, and eventually left his post for a time, making it impossible for Meade to send him orders. Ultimately, Warren would advise Meade that he could not successfully attack. Ord was willing, but the mass of men at the breach in the Confederate line and in the crater prevented Ord from advancing to help. Burnside had ordered Ledlie to advance up the slope on the other side of the breach, to the crest, "if possible". Ledlie decided it was not

possible and kept his troops at the breach, impairing the advance of other troops and failing to carry out his mission as Meade intended.

Meade, somewhat distant from the field, was not informed by Burnside of the conditions of the battle and was acting on the earliest reports, which indicated success. Meade was not informed of the complete failure of the attack. But Grant was aware, as he had made his way back toward the front a second time. Meade was able to piece together the actual state of affairs, and that, along with Grant's information, was enough for Meade to order a withdrawal of Burnside's forces and to order Hancock, Ord, and Warren to cease offensive operations. Meade could have been stationed closer to the battle and intervened, as Warren requested, but Meade had chosen to stay back where he had telegraphic communication with all of the corps commanders. Meade normally allowed his corps commanders the freedom to operate on their fronts and his location was typical for him. In addition, Grant was with him.

Burnside failed to respond to Meade's telegrams which irritated Meade. Eventually, Meade accidentally discovered that what he did get from Burnside was misleading and the attack was in trouble. He then demanded the truth from Burnside, who, feeling that his honor was impugned by Meade, replied in an insubordinate manner. The feud, which began early in the morning, erupted into an argument when Burnside appeared at Meade's headquarters to argue against the withdrawal. Meade explained the situation with Burnside to his wife as he continued his July 31 letter, writing:

The affair was very badly managed by Burnside, and has produced a great deal of irritation and bad feeling, and I have applied to have him relieved. In one of my despatches I asked if the difficulty was the refusal of his officers and men to obey his orders to advance, and I said I wanted to know the truth, and to have an immediate answer. This he chose to construe into an imputation of his veracity, and replied that the charge on my part was un-officer-like and un-gentlemanly. Of course, this has brought matters to a focus, and either he or I has got to go. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 218-219)

Both Generals had a legitimate case. Meade had essentially accused Burnside of lying, and Burnside was insubordinate, as well as ineffective. The army court of inquiry found Burnside culpable and placed him on a leave from which he never returned. The army exonerated Meade, but the CCW's investigation placed blame on Meade. The CCW, having one more occasion to try to oust Meade, was unsuccessful. Meade's attention would quickly shift from his dispute with Burnside, as Grant's actions would again feed Meade's discontent with the Lieutenant General.

August 1864 was a month of emotional turmoil for Meade and signaled a breaking point for him. Everything seemed to converge on him and his letters reveal the loss of optimism. While he persists in his duty, there is a lack of the enthusiasm that Meade previously had while the army was actively campaigning. The court of inquiry into the mine affair was conducting its investigation. Meade

expects to again be the target of public and political animosity over the incident, even though he has Grant's unfailing support in the matter.

Returning to the subject of the mine disaster in his letter of July 31, 1864, Meade writes:

Grant was on the field with me all the time, and assented to all I did.

I am afraid our failure will have a most unfavorable influence on the public mind, prone as it is to despondency. I was not much in favor of the plan, but it being determined on, I wanted to try everything for success.

Grant went last night to see the President. What the result will be I cannot tell... (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 218)

Meade was more in favor of the plan than not, even though his view now is that he was not. Although Meade was not accorded fault in this battle, it was possible for Meade to do more toward success. As suggested by Slotkin (2009), Meade could easily have headquartered himself at Burnside's headquarters. It may have been a better position, but Meade was not negligent in the choice of his place on the field. However, he could have gone forward himself, as had Grant, in order to ascertain for himself the true situation. He did so to great advantage at Gettysburg when he went to Sickles' position. He also could have conveyed more clearly to Burnside that if the attack failed, he was to immediately withdraw and minimize losses, as Grant and the President wished. Finally, by knowing the exact situation, he may have been compelled to remain on the field after his order to withdraw, which he did not. His direct control over the actions of Warren may have provided support for the withdrawal and saved the slaughter of

troops that occurred before they had the opportunity to withdraw. All of this is speculation, but noteworthy in Meade's failure to see it.

Meade's unusual capacity to understand a battle and move troops to best advantage was not at the level it had been in the past. Evidence of this had been seen in the attacks of July 17 and 18, when Meade ordered his corps commanders to attack at their own discretion when he was unable to compel them to operate in a coordinated effort. His military judgment was becoming impaired, largely due to fatigue and frustration.

Missed Opportunity to Escape Grant's Shadow

What became of Grant's visit to the President will add to Meade's feelings of being unappreciated, will grate Meade through the end of the war, and will be a significant part of the bitterness Meade is beginning to develop toward the public, politicians, newspapers and Grant. On July 28, Grant told Meade that he had recommended him to take charge of the Union troops in the Department of West Virginia, Susquehanna, Baltimore and Washington in order to provide a unified command and coordination of the armies in that area. Meade writes to his wife:

I made no reply to Grant, except to say I was ready to obey any order that might be given me. So far as having an independent command, which the Army of the Potomac is not, I would like this change very well; but in other respects, to have to manage Couch, Hunter, Wallace, and Auger, and to be managed by the President, Secretary, and Halleck, will

be a pretty trying position that no man in his senses could desire. I am quite indifferent how it turns out. (Meade 1913/1994, II, p. 216)

Although Meade claims indifference, his assertion is hollow. Meade's ambition drives him, and an independent command affords the opportunity to gain distinction and restore his reputation. At the very least, it would be an affirmation in the Government's faith in him as an independent commander.

Meade did not seem indifferent when he subsequently learned that Sheridan was ordered to take command of the troops from the Army of the Potomac that were detached to Washington. Meade immediately approached Grant and demanded to know why he had not been sent. Grant stated that he was not sure of Meade's wishes and if any more troops were sent to the area, Meade could have the command. In explaining this to Margaret in a letter of August 3, Meade claims to be "...indifferent about the position...so long as finding any fault with me is disclaimed" (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 219). Again, he is concerned with his reputation and his claim of indifference is hollow.

Just one week later, his indifference seems to have disappeared. Meade's August 10 letter to his wife explains:

The Washington papers of yesterday announce Sheridan being *temporarily assigned* to the military division which Grant told me was intended for me. Grant has been back for two days, and has not vouchsafed one word in explanation, and I have avoided going to see him, from a sense of self-respect, and from the fear I should not be able to restrain the indignation I hold to be natural at the duplicity some one has

practiced. In my last conversation with General Grant he distinctly told me that if a military division was organized I should have command, and that it was designed to give Sheridan only the command of that part of the army of the Potomac temporarily detached. This order is not consistent with that statement. (Meade, 1913, 1994, Pp. 220-221)

Meade now requires an explanation as to why he did not receive a position that he failed to speak for when given the opportunity. His indifference has changed to indignation over Sheridan's assignment and Grant's apparent lie.

On August 13, finding Grant in camp, Meade asked him about Sheridan's appointment. Meade's ire is evident as he writes to Margaret:

I immediately asked him, how, after his promise to me, that if a military division was organized, I should be assigned to the command, he has placed my junior, Sheridan, there. He said Sheridan had not been assigned to the division, that no one was yet assigned to it, and that Sheridan had only been put in command of the troops in the field belonging to the different departments. I referred him to the order constituting the division, and assigning Sheridan temporarily to the command, and observed that temporarily I supposed meant as long as there was anything to do, or any object in holding the position. I further remarked that I regretted it had not been a simple matter of justice to me to place me in this independent command. To which he made no remark. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 221)

Meade's truthfulness knew no bounds and if it meant chastising a superior officer, so be it. But his acrimony is not winning Grant's favor. He essentially called Grant a liar and accused him of treating Meade unjustly. He also implied that an independent command was better than serving under Grant. What could Grant say? It may have been for the best that Grant said nothing. The last time Meade asked Grant to intervene between him and Sheridan things did not work out very well for Meade. So now, it probably was not so much that Sheridan was Meade's junior as it was that it was Sheridan.

Meade added in his letter:

I really am not able to ascertain what are his real views. Sometimes I take the dark side, and think that they are intentionally adverse to me, and at others I try to make myself believe that such is not his purpose.

(Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 221)

"I try to make myself believe..." is a significant statement. Meade has apparently decided that he does not have the level of Grant's favor that he would like. Here is an example of Meade's focus on values prohibiting from seeing a bigger picture. Meade is focused on the injustice to him and on the lost opportunity to elevate his reputation. If he could see Grant's position, he may have been more optimistic about Grant. The army had suffered the embarrassment of being severely beaten during the mine disaster at Petersburg on July 30. In addition, Meade was not the most popular general in Washington, but Sheridan was looked upon favorably. Sheridan and Grant were close, and it was only natural for him to assign an independent command to a general whom he trusted and

would not create a furor in political circles. Meade had done the same thing, favoring Reynolds and then Hancock over senior officers at Gettysburg. Finally, Meade had not expressed a desire to have the position. From Grant's perspective, Sheridan was a much better choice than Meade.

Converging Stressors Challenge Meade's Will

As Meade dealt with the sting of Sheridan's assignment, other thoughts occupied his mind. Indicative of the myriad of circumstances impacting the general is his letter of August 6, 1864 to Margaret. He writes:

Grant has not yet returned from Washington...I presume the project of sending me to take command has fallen through. I feel quite easy and indifferent to what course they may think proper to take. My conscience is clear. I have done my duty to the best of my ability, and shall continue to do so, regardless of newspaper abuse, and without any effort to reply thereto. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 221)

Meade must be anticipating the wrath of the press, but it has been Grant, not Meade, who is the recent target of the press. Grant's "butchery" is the topic of dissent and Meade has been left quite alone. Nevertheless, Meade falls back on his duty and a clear conscience to once again resign himself to his perception of unjust criticism and treatment.

The next thing Meade reports in his letter, matter-of-factly, is that the court of inquiry for the battle of the crater has been appointed. Then, without further comment on the subject, he relates to Margaret that he recently had a visit from

Sam Wilkeson, an editor of the *Tribune* and “one of my most bitter villifiers last spring”. Meade continues:

This individual called...to say he had been deceived, and to express his most friendly feelings for me. As I had never...exchanged a word with him, or given him any cause of offense, I received his apologies as if nothing had ever taken place, and he left me quite pleased. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 219)

Meade has switched from being indignant and resigned to emotionless, to almost gloating. It is curious that Meade spoke so negatively of the press and then writes of his vindication by an editor.

A softer tone is struck as Meade speaks of family and hope, possibly due to a slight euphoria from relating Wilkeson’s apology. He concludes his letter:

I hope the dear children will enjoy themselves at Cape May. I should be so happy if I could be there with you, to indulge in those splendid sea baths and take our walks on the beach. Well, let us keep our spirits, have brave heart’s, trust in God’s mercy and goodness, and believe that so long as we try to do our duty all will be well in time.

(Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 219)

The picture of Meade strolling a beach with his wife, surrounded by joyous children, contrasts sharply with the historical perspective of a stern, cold, and unapproachable commander. Yet both are accurate. Meade’s feelings for his family are deep, and Margaret is the most precious of the gifts that Meade so often references. That Meade is a sensitive man is undeniable. From being

oversensitive about criticism and justice, to the depths of his caring for people, Meade is passionate and sensitive.

He is as complex as this letter suggests. In the few minutes it takes to write this letter, Meade makes a merely factual statement, nearly gloats, resents his unjust treatment, and then mellows, thinking of his family. The complexity of Meade is rarely referenced, but to judge Meade's leadership without considering the complexity of the man and the burden that this complexity creates runs the risk of misinterpreting his behavior. The popular perspective of him as a man of impeccable character and a capable commander, but unapproachable and ill tempered limits the understanding of the man.

Meade simply cannot free himself from the hurt of the criticism he has suffered for now over a year. The lack of affirmation is just as painful. On August 9, 1864 he writes to Margaret:

The attempt to implicate me in the recent fiasco was truly ridiculous; still, the public must in time be influenced by these repeated and constant attacks, however untrue and unjustifiable they may be. Have you ever thought that since the first week after Gettysburg, now more than a year, I have never been alluded to in public journals except to abuse and vilify me? And why this is I have never been able to explain. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 220)

Meade has been worn out by the "repeated and constant attacks", so much so that he fails to recognize the articles that have supported him. It is Grant's support that he feels slipping, but as a soldier he cannot yet criticize

Grant. But Meade's frustration is understandable. He has given the nation three years of dedicated service and for the last fourteen months he has served in a position that even Lincoln feels that few men can do. He could not work harder than he does and yet the public wants more. He has no more to give. But Meade does know what the President and the public want. Victories that point to the end of the war are the only measure that is accepted.

Meade's letter continues with Meade again expressing his continuing suspicion of Grant's disposition toward him. He writes Margaret that Cortlandt Parker recently saw George Harding, who relayed that:

Stanton observed that Grant had a most exalted opinion of me, and told him, Stanton, that when he first came East he thought Sherman was the first soldier in the country, but now he believed I was his equal, if not superior. I send you this for what it is worth. I certainly think Grant has a queer way of showing his appreciation. Grant has not until recently seen Stanton, since we crossed the Rapidan, so could not have told him this; but Dana may have conveyed this information. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 220)

Meade is duly suspect of this report. Knowing the closeness of Sherman and Grant, Meade knows that Grant would not place him above Sherman. Grant had, in his request for promotions, stated that Sherman and Meade were the fittest soldiers for a large command, but not that Meade was superior. It is unlikely that he ever did, and Meade senses such, if he indeed did not know it. Yet by this time Meade so desires Grant's affirmation that he is willing to put

some credence to the possibility. Meade's analytical mind has uncharacteristically given way to his emotion.

Family is again on Meade's mind in mid-August as he forces himself to regain his focus. He writes on August 16, 1864:

I am right glad the dear children are enjoying themselves. I wish I could be with you and them; but this is out of the question, and there is no use thinking about it. I have made up my mind to stick it out here, regardless of every consideration, except that of doing my duty at all hazards. They shall not say that any personal considerations caused me to turn my back upon the enemy. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 221)

This is a significant change of perspective for Meade. Normally he states that he must remain with the army as a matter of duty. At times, it has been because he felt needed and could not vacate his post, even for a visit. But this time it is not duty that tips the scale, it is reputation. Now he is going to "stick it out". This phrase suggests that Meade apparently has been thinking of resigning his command. His honor would accept that course, given that Meade feels Sheridan's assignment is an injustice that casts aspersions on Meade's reputation. The "personal considerations" may be to escape the criticism, or may be Serjie's condition, but that the considerations are personal implies that he has been thinking about a personally advantageous decision. Ultimately, Meade decides to give no quarter and will not allow his enemies the opportunity to once again cast dispersions on his honor and reputation. Fighting for the nation was considered a matter of honor in the Civil War, and sacrificing time at home was

not unique to Meade. It was what every soldier was resigned to, again, as a matter of honor (Slotkin, 2009).

Serjie's condition has been weighing heavily on the general. He writes to Margaret on August 22, 1864:

I have known of Sergeant's condition for some time, because, when I found he was so sick, I wrote to Dr. Hewson, who at once replied to me. Everything has been done for Sergeant that could be done. He has had the best medical advice, and the most careful nursing. This should be continued, and the result left to that Power who governs and rules all things, and to whose decree we must submit with resignation. (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 221)

Serjie's condition may well be a significant part of Meade's recent psychological and emotional demise, but Meade does not reveal when he became aware of the situation. However, Meade's decision to stick it out is having a positive effect, clearing his mind. He has returned to dealing with difficult situations with faith and resolve. He has also been buoyed by recent military operations at the Weldon Railroad. The three-day attack was successful for the Union, but at a heavy cost in casualties, over 4,500 men.

Grant Withholds Meade's Promotion

August would bring one more blow to the general. Meade's letter to Margaret, dated August 24, 1864 exudes his frustration and indignation at what he perceives as an injustice inflicted upon him. He responds to his wife:

I see you have heard of the promotion of Sherman, Hancock, and Sheridan, and noted the absence of my name. I cannot tell you how I felt when I first heard this, but I determined to keep quiet till I could obtain some explanation from General Grant.... On my asking him the reason of my name being omitted when those recommended at the same time had been appointed, he answered it was his act; that he had asked for the immediate appointment of the others, but not for mine; and the reason he had not asked for mine was, that if Sherman and myself had been appointed the same day, I would rank him, and he wished for Sherman to rank me.... My object was to ascertain whether any fault was found with me, or whether any change of opinion had taken place since the last time he had assured me I was to be appointed when the others were. As he had disclaimed any such reasons, I did not care to know why I had been left out. I never expected, nor did I much care about, the appointment except to prove to the ignorant public that they had been imposed upon by a lying press.... The whole substance of the explanation was that he desired to advance his favorites, Sherman and Sheridan. I was left out because it would interfere with Sherman's rank to have me in.... Of course I could say nothing to this explanation.... I had the right to ask why, after telling me I had been recommended, and would be appointed, I found I was not, but when the above explanation was made, however unjust I may have deemed such reasoning to be, I could take no notice of it, and could not with propriety complain.... It is rather hard to have denied me the

vindication which the Government might give my course, by conferring a promotion that I have the most positive evidence it, the Government, has acknowledged I merited and should have. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 223-224)

General Meade claims indifference to the promotion, except for the purpose of vindication, but he clearly feels that the failure to receive the promotion is an injustice and fails to give him credit for the work he has done. This comes at a time when a court of inquiry is delving into the mine disaster at Petersburg. Meade is embroiled in a battle with Burnside, both blaming the other for the failure of the attack. Meade may have looked upon a promotion as a public vindication of his actions at Petersburg as well as the fact that he had done his duty as well as he could under Grant. Nevertheless, Meade's emotional discourse belies his indifference. Meade worries about the view others have of his performance and is angered and embarrassed by Grant's actions. He feels this injustice distracts from his reputation, even though Grant implies otherwise.

Meade's indignation is justified. Grant has failed to support him. To have Sherman, who is his junior and has not commanded an army as large as the Army of the Potomac, promoted over him is an injustice. Meade's reward for his slavish dedication to Grant is this injustice. Meade did not care about the promotion, as affirmation and reputation are more important to him. But when he is passed over, there is a negative impact on his reputation. Grant's course can only be interpreted by Meade as a lack of support and he fairly implies to Grant that he has done nothing to deserve the slight. Grant probably did not mean to

slight Meade. He has always supported Meade, and eventually he will agree with Meade and correct the misstep.

The summer of 1864 was a difficult and demanding time for Meade. June began with the disaster at Cold Harbor. Shortly thereafter, Meade suffered the criticism of the press over his expulsion of reporter Edward Cropsey, as he would again, unjustifiably, in July over the expulsion of two more reporters at Grant's behest. Mid June saw the beginning of the siege of Petersburg and on June 17 and 18, Meade commanded a costly but successful attack on the enemy. July brought renewed unsuccessful attempts by the CCW to have Meade removed from command and ended with the complete breakdown of the command structure of the army at the debacle of the Petersburg mine. August began with officers finger-pointing and assigning blame and ended with a court of inquiry. Sheridan was assigned to a temporary command that Meade was promised and felt should have been his. Near the end of August Grant, choosing to advance his friends, snubbed Meade for promotion. Meade recoiled at the blow to his pride and reputation. As all of these events converged on Meade, his thoughts became more occupied with the welfare of his wife and the declining health of his son.

The seeds of discontent with Grant were sprouting. Meade's judgment was uncharacteristically impaired. Even more uncharacteristically, Meade considered resigning his command. Command of the Army of the Potomac was the most difficult assignment in the Union army and was complicated by the constant and usually unjust criticism cast upon Meade. But the General, a dutiful

and honorable soldier and man, found his bearing and with his characteristic resilience, ended August once again properly focused on the war and the army.

Meade Regains His Will and Focus

Meade's letters of late August return to descriptions of the army's activities and his confidence and strength have returned. On September 8, Meade comments that he was "received with the greatest kindness both by the President and Mr. Stanton" (Meade, 1913, 1994, II, p. 226) and then on September 10 that "Both were very affable, apparently very glad to see me, and said many flattering things" (Meade, 1913, 1994, II, p. 227).

But Meade opened this letter by telling Margaret that he was "...very sad and dispirited, as I reflect on Sergeant's ill health..." (Meade, 1913, 1994, p. 226). He also opines that Margaret should accompany Serjie on a trip to a better climate, or find a trusted friend who would take him, regardless of the expense. He concludes with hope and affection, writing:

Still, we must...yield everything in the hope that dear Serjie will be benefited by the change of scene and air, and under the blessing of God his health restored. I dream about you all the time, and cannot dismiss you from my thoughts day or night. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 227)

His confidence may be restored, by Meade cannot escape the weight of his concern and feelings for his family. Meade's concern is deep and selfless, as he will give everything to help his son, if only there was anything that could be done.

Meade's selflessness is again demonstrated in his reaction to Sheridan's apparent success in his new command. He writes on September 22, 1864:

I am very glad for the cause and glad for Sheridan's sake; but I must confess to enough human weakness to regret this opportunity for distinction was denied me, who was, I think, from previous service and present position, entitled to it. It is all settled, however, now, as I see Mr. Stanton announces Sheridan has been permanently assigned to the Middle Military Division, and that he has been made a brigadier general in the regular army.... My time I suppose has passed, and I must now content myself with doing my duty unnoticed. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 229)

Duty and resignation have again fortified Meade in the face of unwelcome events. But he is sincerely glad for the cause and Sheridan. In Sheridan's case, Meade is most gracious. Having conflicted mightily with Sheridan and having no warm feelings for him, it would be understandable for Meade to be rankled at Sheridan's appointment. However, Meade is content, now choosing not to fret things he cannot control and focusing on his duty.

The content and resignation that Meade demonstrates extends to his family, which is constantly in his thoughts, especially Sergeant. Resigned but disconsolate, he holds on to hope as he writes, "I am very much distressed to hear that Sergeant does not seem well enough to bear a sea voyage, and still hope the fine weather of the fall will enable him to gather strength" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 234).

Meade continues to be content and resigned and unexpectedly demonstrates a willingness to accept his station. He relays his perspective to Margaret in his letter of October 13, 1864 writing that he is aware that he is not held in the esteem he once held, but that no general will stay in the public favor unless he masses a series of decisive victories. But, when compared to the fate of many of the Union's commanders, most notably his predecessors, he has been successful as a commander. He indicates to Margaret that:

... my retaining command, and the hold I have at present, is even more creditable than the exaggerated laudation immediately succeeding Gettysburg. Recollect, also, that most persistent efforts have been made by influential men, politicians and generals, to destroy me, without success; and I think you will find reason to be grateful and satisfied, even though you should desire to see more justice done. I don't mean to say I have not been badly treated, but I do mean to say that I might have been much worse treated, and my present status is not without advantages, and does not justify my being discontented. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 234)

General Meade makes a valid point that escaped many of his contemporaries and historians. Lesser efforts have resulted in the ruination of an army commander. Meade's ability to remain in command is no small achievement and gives an indication of his true value to the Union. But Meade's longevity as the commander of the Army of the Potomac is generally simply noted and frequently is attributed to the fact that Lincoln could find no one better suited. If that be the case, then the argument is that in an army that enlisted over

2.2 million men over four years, not one of them was better suited to command the Army of the Potomac than George Gordon Meade. In fact, only three men ranked Meade in the entire army. Why a man of that distinction is relatively unknown, other than for his victory at Gettysburg, and has been noteworthy primarily for his failings, is a question avoided by his critics. Sauer's (2003) explanation is that the misguided history of the war that emerged as the war unfolded, as well as poor scholarship by historians, has contributed greatly to this misinformed view.

Meade Hits a New Low: Beecher's Attack

One example of the misguided history of the time occurs on October 23, 1864 in an article printed in the New York *Independent*. The article refers to Meade's movements on September 29, 1864. These movements were in coordination with Butler's attack north of the James at New Market Heights. The article credits Butler's victory and reports that the Army of the Potomac's attack south of the river failed because of General Meade's inability to control the maneuvers of the army. The article resounds like a sermon from the pulpit of the periodical's editor, Henry Ward Beecher. Gaining venom, the essay proclaims:

The advance was arrested, the whole movement interrupted, the safety of an army imperiled, the plans of a campaign frustrated-and all because one general, whose incompetence, indecision, half-heartedness in the war have again and again been demonstrated, is still unaccountably to hamper and hamstring the purposes of the lieutenant-general.... He is the general who at Gettysburg bore off the laurels which belonged to

Howard and to Hancock; who at Williamsport suffered a beaten army to escape him, who when holding the lone of the Rapidan, fled before Lee without a battle to the gates of the capital; who at Mine Run drew back in dismay from a conflict which he had invited and which his army longed to convert into a triumph; who, in the campaign from the Rapidan to the James under Grant, annulled the genius of his chief by his own executive incapacity; who lost the prize of Petersburg by martinet delay on the south bank of the James; who lost it again in succeeding contests by tactical incompetence; who lost in again by inconceivable follies of military administration when the mine was exploded, who insulted his corps commanders and his army by attributing to them that inability to co-operate with each other which was traceable solely to the military slovenliness of their general; who, in a word, holds his place by virtue of no personal qualification, but in deference to a presumed, fictitious, perverted, political necessity, and whom hangs upon the neck of Gen. Grant like an Old Man of the Sea whom he longs to be rid of, and whom he retains solely in deference to the weak complaisance of his constitutional Commander-in-Chief.... we ask that Grant's hands may be strengthened by the removal of Meade. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 342)

This article represents the conventional wisdom of those who wished to discredit him and became the prevailing account of Meade's career. The bias of these accounts has been discussed previously in this paper. Founded on the particles of fundamental truths, they conveniently distort the facts or ignore

mitigating information. Meade would look to Grant to counter the article, but Grant, although supportive of his general, never spoke out against the accusations.

For his part, Meade considered the article a “fiendish and malicious attack” (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 236). He asked Grant to provide him “something that would set at rest these idle and malicious reports, based on the presumption I had failed to support him and he was anxious to get rid of me” (p. 236). Grant agreed that the article was an injustice to Meade but responded only by supplying him with copies of every dispatch that he had sent that mentioned Meade’s name. Grant’s intent was to show Meade that he never expressed dissatisfaction with him. While Meade may have appreciated his affirmation, he was looking for public support. This article worries Meade more than most because he sees “no chance for the truth being made public, as it should be” (p. 237).

Six days after he wrote to Margaret about the *Independent’s* article, and receiving no public support from Grant, Meade is again at a personal low point. In his letter of October 27, 1864, Meade reveals to Margaret that his resolve to “stick it out at all hazards” has waned. Resolutely he writes:

I had a conversation with Grant...and told him I did not care about his despatches, but desired he would furnish me a few lines for publication, that would set at rest, as far as he was concerned, the wicked and malicious falsehoods which the article contained. This he said he would most cheerfully give me. At the same time I told him that...I did not

wish to embarrass Mr. Lincoln, nor did I wish to retain command by mere sufferance; and, unless some measures were taken to satisfy the public and silence the persistent clamor against me, I should prefer being relieved; that I was becoming disheartened, and my usefulness and influence with the army were being impaired. In all successful operations I was ignored, and the moment anything went wrong I was held wholly responsible, and rather than continue in this way, I would prefer retiring, and desired him to say this to the President. (Meade, 1913/1994, pp. 237-238)

Meade's assessment of his situation, when taken as a totality of his experience, is accurate. He has no energy or inclination to continue to absorb the attack of the press alone. Without the support of his superiors, he has no effective response. Even his sense of duty is not sustaining him, his pride in his service has been usurped, and he has had enough. Meade's honor and sense of duty will not allow him to resign, but he can accept retirement if it is desired. By remaining publicly silent, Meade's superiors sent the message that the General was on his own and signaled a lack of support. Lincoln would not enter the fray just days before the election, even if he were so inclined. While Lincoln may have been affable with Meade, he still did not hold a high opinion of Meade as a commander, and he shared many of the opinions expressed in the article. Grant was just not inclined to reply to the press, as Meade explains to Margaret in his October 31 letter:

I have reason to believe that you are in error in inputting any sympathy on the part of Grant with my detractors. It is true he has not exerted himself to silence or contradict them, but this arises from a very different cause. Grant is very phlegmatic, and holds in great contempt newspaper criticism, and thinks, as long as a man is sustained by his own conscience, his superiors, and the Government, that it is not worth his while to trouble himself about the newspapers.... Differently constituted, with more sensitiveness in his nature, I don't doubt that he would before now have taken some action... (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p.238)

Meade's assessment of Grant is accurate. Grant's reputation is that he can ignore all travails and stay focused on the task at hand, the very trait that historians attribute to his willingness to repeatedly smash into Lee, regardless of each day's outcome. It is the central difference between Meade and Grant, as Meade finds difficulty in dismissing things Grant gives no second thought. Meade's statement that Grant would take action if "otherwise constituted" is for Margaret's benefit, for Grant is not otherwise constituted.

In early November Meade is occupied with the elections and a small scandal over altered poll books. Meade successfully refers the matter to Washington for handling, saving him from a situation that could have ended with more unwarranted criticism. True to his values, Meade refrains from voting.

The elections having passed, Meade is again fretting Serjie's condition. His affection and concern for his family is again evident as he writes on November 11, 1864:

It is hard for me to know that he continues so sick, and that I cannot be with you to assist in taking care of him and in trying to keep up his courage and spirits.... I fully sympathize with you in your anxiety, but can only urge you to watch him closely. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 240)

Grant Secures Meade's Promotion

Meade's distress continues as he explains to Margaret that he never sees Grant and is not privy to what is going on. But in mid November Grant gives Meade some solace. Meade relates to Margaret a conversation he had with Grant, writing on November 20, 1864:

Grant promised me he would, when in Washington, use all his influence to have justice done to me, disclaimed any agency in Sheridan's appointment, acknowledged I was entitled to it before, and ought now be appointed his senior; and that if he found any difficulty in Washington (which he did not anticipate) he would have me relieved. He furthermore expressed regret at not having insisted on my appointment when Sherman was appointed, and assured me my not being assigned to the Middle division was accidental, as he always intended I should go there, until it was too late. Finally, he assured me, on his word of honor, that he had never entertained or expressed any but the strongest feeling in my favor.... Now I *believe* Grant... *Every other officer* in this army, except myself, who has been recommended for promotion for services in this campaign has been promoted. It is rather hard I am the only exception to this rule. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 244)

It is hard to believe that Grant had nothing to do with Sheridan's appointment to the Middle Division, and certainly it would not have been made over his objection. Grant's decree has cleared any misgivings Meade may hold regarding him, but Meade is truly saddened by the failure to receive the promotion. Grant is truthful about his support of Meade, always holding a high opinion of him. True to his word, when Grant returned from Washington, he had procured a promotion for Meade that was dated August 19, 1864, making Meade senior to Sheridan and fourth in rank in the regular army.

A pleased Meade writes to Margaret on November 25, commenting:

As justice is finally done me, I am satisfied.... At one thing i am particularly gratified, and that is at this evidence of Grant's truthfulness and sincerity. I am willing to admit, as he does himself, that his omissions have resulted unfavorably to me, but I am satisfied he is really and truly a friend to me. I like Grant, and always have done so, notwithstanding I saw certain elements in his character which were operating disadvantageously to me.... He says Stanton is as staunch a friend of mine as ever, and that the President spoke most handsomely of me. (Meade, 1913/1994, pp.

247-248)

Grant has impressed upon Meade that he has the support and good feelings of all of his superiors and has proven it with his promotion. They even managed to have the Washington *Chronicle* present the story as though Meade had been appointed before Sheridan's appointment, thereby giving Meade some public support.

News of the promotion raised Meade's spirits, but did not elate him. Upon receiving official notification of his promotion, a subdued Meade writes on December 4:

Much of the gratification that ought justly to accompany such a reward has been destroyed by the manner in doing it; so what that might have been a graceful compliment became reduced to a simple act of justice. Well, let us be satisfied with this... (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 249)

Meade believes that had he not objected, the matter never would have been corrected. But, his anger is gone and he is resigned enough to be modest. He writes to Henry Cram that he (Meade) and Sheridan "...are both of us placed far beyond our merits (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 249).

Gibbon Leaves the Army

While Meade was enjoying this short period of good feeling, he made a move that cost him a dear friend. Humphreys had served Meade well as chief of staff, but Humphreys saw the position as a curtailment to his advance in the army and desired a corps. When Hancock departed the Second Corps, Meade gave Humphreys to temporary command of the corps. Unfortunately, Meade's close friend, John Gibbon felt that the position should have been awarded to him. Gibbon comments, in a letter of November 26 to an unnamed recipient:

I have known for some time that I was not to have command of this corps when Gen. Hancock left...but I did not suppose I should be so slighted, as I have been today. I had no objection to anybody else being assigned permanently to the command of the corps, having always,

maintained that a commander has the right to select his own subordinates, but this morning Gen. Hancock received a leave of absence and an order arrived assigning the Gen. Humphreys to command the corps during his temporary absence when the command should have devolved upon me. This, I regard as a slight which I am not willing to submit to, and have asked to be at once relieved of command.... Although not an unreasonable man, I have, as you know, a certain amount of pride which I do not fancy having offended and I hope when Gen. Meade comes to consider the matter he will grant my request and relieve me. (Gibbon, 1928,/1988, pp. 273-274)

Gibbon is offended, as the existing practices in the army dictate. Traditionally, when a commander was on leave, the next in rank in that unit would assume command. Normally, Gibbon would have assumed command, at least until a permanent commander was assigned. Had he been appointed temporary commander and then Humphreys was given permanent command, Gibbon may not have objected. Gibbon's objection is not a reflection on Humphreys and he has no objection to serving under Humphreys, writing that Humphreys is "...one of the most accomplished soldiers and highest-toned gentlemen in the army" (Gibbon, 1928,/1988, p. 274).

Gibbon acted as Meade had in similar situations, most notably when Sheridan was sent to the Middle Department. In the Army of the Potomac, it was customary for an officer who was feeling offended by his superior to request to be relieved, this being the only honorable way in which to respond. An officer

would also request to be relieved when he felt he could not follow orders, as Meade did after Gettysburg. Unfortunately, both men had valid points. Meade had tried to gain a corps for Gibbon for over a year, a fact that caused his disdain for Meade. Gibbon wrote:

I do not think I was treated exactly right, for I cannot forget that Gen. Meade has been trying for over a year to get me as a corps commander and then when an opportunity occurs passes me over, but you know my principle that all will come right in the end...(Gibbon, 1928/1988, p. 275)

Gibbon again sounds much like Meade, who claimed that Grant had passed him over with Sheridan, but looked for things to be set right eventually. Gibbon's ill feeling is understandable. Meade felt that Humphreys, being senior to Gibbon, was entitled to the position when he expressed an interest. Gibbon was one of Meade's biggest supporters, and would continue so for years after the war, in spite of this situation. But clearly Gibbon feels that Meade has failed to support him.

Grant did not accept Gibbon's resignation, instead issuing his endorsement of Gibbon. Gibbon could not honorably resign with such an endorsement. It was not long until all did come out right, as he was soon given his corps command. General Meade's order and congratulations of January 13, 1865 informed Gibbon of his assignment to command the Twenty-fourth Corps in the Army of the James, commanded by General Ord. Gibbon was extremely pleased, now being second in command of that army and feeling favorably

toward Ord. Ever the gentleman, Gibbon visited Meade to say his proper good-bye. Meade now was left only Theodore Lyman, his volunteer aide, as a close friend in the army. Not only were his best comrades departed, they departed with their friendships strained. Gibbon and Hancock had feuded, as had Hancock and Meade, and Gibbon and Meade. This situation reflects the strong sense of organization and hierarchy that was characteristic of the Army of the Potomac. It was the West Point way, a way to maintain command in battle without orders. But in these types of situations, the usual procedures could be counterproductive, as it was in this case, driving a very dependable comrade out of Meade's army.

Clarity and Judgment Return to Meade

In late November Meade continues to regain his clarity of judgment, as evidenced by his view of Grant, Grant's situation, and his relationship with Grant. He writes a keenly insightful letter to Henry Cram in which he opines:

I thank you most gratefully for your opinion that Time and History will do me justice, but I very much fear your kind feeling has caused the wish to be father to the thought.... I have done and shall continue to do my duty to the best of my ability...

I am sorry to hear what you say of Grant, but it is in accordance with my theory and experience. Public expectation in his case, as in Sherman's, having been wrought up to a false and unreasonable pitch, expecting impossibilities and miracles, visits on them the failure to do what only public imagination renders practicable. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 245)

Meade knows that the public does not understand military affairs and has expectations that are not based in reality. The public expected battles and continuous victory, but to the public a battle lost was better than no battle. A great man of superior ability could end this war, and with each change in command, the public looked for that great man. Meade understands these things well.

The letter continues:

Grant is not a mighty genius, but he is a good soldier, of great force of character, honest and upright, of pure purposes, I think, without political aspirations, certainly not influenced by them. His prominent quality is unflinching tenacity of purpose, which blinds him to opposition and obstacles-certainly a great quality in a commander, when controlled by judgment, but a dangerous one otherwise. Grant is not without his faults and weaknesses. Among these is a want of sensibility, an almost too confident and sanguine disposition... Take him all in all, he is, in my judgment, the best man the war has yet produced.... I like Grant, and our relations have been very friendly. He has always in words expressed himself most kindly towards me, and I believe does feel so; but his acts, from causes alluded to above, have not been so; but I acquit him of any actual intention of injustice. His coming here has resulted virtually in setting me aside, almost as effectually as if I had been relieved.... there is the difference between us. I am over-sensitive, and he deficient in sensibility. There are many things in Grant that call for my warmest

admiration, and but few that I feel called on to condone. He has been greatly over-rated; but I should be really sorry to see him, through a reaction, under-estimated.... Grant will make use of me or any one else to carry out his views, but he will always do justice to others. (Meade, 1913/1994, pp. 245-246)

Meade is aware of his situation under Grant. He has been marginalized to the point of having little impact on strategy and only slightly more on tactics. He also provides an understanding of Grant's personality that has been supported by history. Surprisingly, Meade recognizes his own sensitivity and that slights that occur as a result of Grant's lack of sensitivity are unintentional on his part. Meade's valuing of honesty and justice sustain his positive opinion of Grant, even when he doubts his commander.

Late in December four members of the CCW are in camp investigating the battle at the Petersburg mine. Surprisingly, Meade is undisturbed by their presence and investigation, writing, "I don't intend to worry myself, but shall just let them take their course and do as they please" (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 249). Meade continues to regain his composure and again thinks clearly, understanding that the "investigation" is simply to find information to support the committee's foregone conclusion. As the month draws to a close, many of the officers have returned home for the holidays. On December 30 Meade departed for home and left to return to the army on January 9.

1864 was a tumultuous year for Meade. He began it as the commander of the Army of the Potomac and ended it in the shadow of Grant, having command

but little control. The Committee on the Conduct of War attacked him. The *Historicus* articles charged him with incompetence at Gettysburg, even cowardice, and claimed his deserved laudations for Sickles and others. The newspapers attacked him or ignored him, each to his disadvantage, because of his treatment of reporter Edward Cropsey. Grant, and then Congress delayed his promotion. His oldest son was dying. He had lost the support of the administration. He was vindicated in his dispute with Burnside over the Mine fiasco, but lost Burnside's friendship. He was denied an independent command in the newly created Middle Division when it was given to Sheridan, his junior in rank. That is until Sheridan was promoted and Meade was not, even though they had been nominated simultaneously. This made Sheridan senior to Meade. The normally stoic, clear-headed Meade slowly became emotionally, psychologically, and physically fatigued, impairing his judgment in both personal and military matters. Finally, suspicious of Grant and weary of the ceaseless attacks and lack of support from the administration, he expressed his desire to be relieved. But Grant successfully lobbied for Meade's promotion, regained Meade's confidence, and Meade began to regain his stride. It was a confident, clear-headed Meade that left for Philadelphia on December 30, 1864.

He was recalled due to the perceived evacuation of Richmond and departed Philadelphia on January 9, 1865. Upon his return, Meade explained his situation to Grant and his "earnest desire" to be with Serjje. Grant, unaware of the situation, promised to allow Meade to leave "as soon as this affair is settled" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 255). Meade hoped it would be soon. He may have

sensed that he may have seen Serjie alive for the last time. On January 10, 1865 Meade emotionally writes to Margaret:

It is hardly necessary I should tell you how much I have suffered since I left you. All I can do is earnestly pray God to have mercy on dear Sergeant and yourself, and to give you the strength to bear up under the affliction you are visited with. My heart is too full to write more. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 255)

The sensitivity of Meade is revealed in a tender, loving lament. It is not a trait of Meade that is often presented, but is obvious here.

Meade is also sensitive to injustice and he speaks out against injustice to Grant in his January 14, 1865 letter to Margaret declaring:

I am sorry to hear what you write people say of Grant, because it is unjust, and I do not approve of injustice to any one. Grant undoubtedly has lost prestige, owing to his failure to accomplish more, but as I know it has not been in his power to do more, I cannot approve of unmerited censure, any more than I approved of the fulsome praise showered on him before the campaign commenced. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 256)

Meade empathizes with Grant, feeling that the pressure to do more assumes that he could do more but chooses not to. It is the same assumption used to discredit Meade and he rightly speaks out in Grant's defense.

On January 21, Meade replies to Henry Cram's letter, informing Cram that he expected that his promotion would meet with opposition in Congress. Meade demonstrates the importance of support from his superiors, writing:

I have not been able to believe I was in danger of rejection. I, of course, expected opposition, and that it would be violent and malignant, being based on falsehood and personal hostility...I have been relying on the truth, my record, and the fact that I was sustained by the Administration and Grant.... The nomination is, after all, only a compliment, and of no real practical value, as it will not deprive me of my superior rank in the volunteer service or my present command, the largest in the field. It is, nevertheless, mortifying to have a compliment thus detracted from. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 257)

Meade knows he has the support of Grant and the administration in this matter and their support is more important than the confirmation of Congress. Meade can forego the actual promotion so long as he knows that his superiors support it, and therefore him. It is their affirmation that he needs. When Meade had to fight to get the nomination he was angry and hurt, and certainly did not view it as “only a compliment”. But now he is only mortified, not angry or frustrated, and is willing to accept his fate. The support of his superiors is powerful enough to restore his judgment, calm his seething soul, and ease his mind. He is a much more competent general when he feels affirmed.

Grant was true to his word and Meade was able to secure a leave, arriving in Philadelphia on January 28 and departing on January 30th. Meade no longer thinks of resigning, and duty has again taken its normal place in his priorities, evidenced by Meade’s letter to Margaret on February 1, 1865. He writes, “I am sorry I could stay no longer with you, but I don’t believe I should

have had any satisfaction, as every report brought in would have a recall telegram” (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 260). But Meade’s heart was heavy with the thought of Serjie.

On February 2 he writes to Margaret that he has been confirmed as a major general in the regular army by a “...heavy majority; thus I have gained another victory, and have found that I really have more friends than I had any idea of” (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 260). When he was under such severe attacks during 1864, few people raised their voice to support him publicly, least of all Grant and the administration, so it was easy for Meade to feel that he had few friends. The revelation caused by this vote is particularly rewarding to Meade as it again makes him feel supported and affirmed. But it is not enough to lighten the burden on his heart, as he continues:

I thought my last visit was, excepting dear Sergeant’s sickness, most happy, but I cannot be happy and see my noble boy suffering as he does. I think of him all the time, and feel at times like asking to be relieved, that I may go home and help you nurse him. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 260)

Meade still wishes to be home, but now is not asking to be relieved. Duty once again prevails in spite of the deep sadness Meade feels.

On February 9, 1865, Meade makes note of the CCW’s report of the battle at the mine. Unsurprisingly, it assigns blame to Meade. Again, Meade is thinking clearly and is calm, largely due to the support he feels he has. He writes to Margaret:

You have done Grant injustice; he did not testify against me; but the committee has distorted his testimony, my own, and that of everyone who told the truth.... Immediately on the appearance of this report Grant sent me a despatch, a copy of which I enclose, and from it you will see what he thinks of the course of the committee...I replied to him that, after the acknowledgment of my services by the President, the Secretary, and himself, and the endorsement of the Senate, as shown by the large vote in my favor, I thought I could stand the action of the committee, and I felt confident that when the facts and the truth were laid before the public, the report of the committee would prove a miserable failure.... I, however, asked him to exert his influence to have published the proceedings of the military court of inquiry. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 261-262)

Meade's strong belief in the power of the truth is apparent. The truth is that this time Meade has accurately assessed his support. The vote in the Senate was 32-5, a strong statement of support. Lincoln and Stanton had both offered their support and Grant has personally lobbied for Meade. Grant's despatch gives Meade the level of support that he has long desired. Grant, commenting on the CCW's report, writes:

Their opinions are not sustained by knowledge of the facts nor my evidence nor yours either do I suppose. Gen. Burnside's evidence apparently has been their guide and to draw it mildly he has forgotten some of the facts. I think in justification to yourself who seem to be the only party censured, Genl. Burnside should be brought before a Court

Martial and let the proceedings of the Court go before the public along with the report of the Congressional Committee. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 344)

Again, Meade expresses no anger or frustration, and displays an acceptance of the situation. It is much easier to do when he has Grant's unconditional support. For the first time he has an unsolicited commitment of public support from a superior, and an action to correct the injustice. Truth might stand a chance. Grant has given him what he has always sought, and Meade is content. While the court martial never occurs, Meade never returns to the subject. This is an indication that support is more important to Meade than public vindication. And since he is again thinking clearly, he may also have realized that the court martial was a secondary concern for Grant as the army was about to return to action.

From February 7 to February 9, 1865 Gregg's cavalry, Warren's Fifth Corps, and Humphrey's Second Corps fought to a tactical victory at Dabney's Mill, also known as Hatcher's run. The action resulted in a three-mile extension of the Union lines, forcing Lee to further thin his army's defenses. The Tribune charges Meade with failure, as Meade had predicted. Meade writes to Margaret on February 11, 1864:

Now, the facts of the case are that I accomplished a great deal more than was designed... and on the whole the success was with us. It is rather hard under these circumstances to be abused; but I suppose I must

make up my mind to be abused by this set, never mind what happens.

(Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 262)

A slight hint of his previous frustration is evident in Meade's letter. He is trying to be resigned, but cannot help but feel he cannot please the press. But more so, his mind is on Serjie, and the carping of the press is secondary to thoughts of his son.

Duty and His Son's Death

On February 20, 1865 Meade received the news he most dreaded: Serjie was getting worse. Meade had received a telegram from Margaret, stating that although Serjie was slipping on Sunday, February 19, he had responded well the next day. Meade continued to wrestle with the ethical dilemma created by his paternal desire to be at home with Margaret and Serjie, and his soldierly duty. His painful resolve of the situation is emotionally conveyed in his letter to his wife on February 21. He pines:

It is impossible for me to go to you, unless I resign my command. If I left for a short time, I should undoubtedly be recalled almost as soon as I reached there. Besides, to be with you for a few days would be but little satisfaction to you; and as to dear Sergeant, his condition is such that I presume it does not make much difference who is with him. For your sake I should like to be home, and for my own, but it is God's will, and I must submit.

My duty to you and the children requires I should retain the high command I now have. My reputation and your interests are involved, and I

cannot shut my eyes to these considerations, however cruel may be the conclusion that I cannot be at your side and that of my dear boy in this hour of agony and trial. We must all endeavor to be resigned to God's will.... All we can do is bear it with humility and resignation, and endeavor to profit by it, in preparing ourselves, as I believe my beloved son is prepared.

Dear Margaret, let me rely on your exhibiting in this, the greatest trial you have had in your life, true Christian fortitude. Bear up, in the consciousness that you have ever devoted all the energy of a tender mother's love to check and avert the fatal disease that is carrying off our first-born; all that human power could do has been done. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 263-264)

Meade has resolved that he can do nothing for Serjie and but little for Margaret, realizing that anything short of a long, sustained visit would not benefit Serjie, Margaret, or himself. Meade's agony for his wife and son is apparent, as is the conflict he wrestles. He obviously wishes to be home, his heart heavy with the knowledge of his son's impending death, but he also feels the grave responsibility that comes with his command.

General Meade left headquarters for home at noon, February 21, the day of the preceding letter. Unfortunately, Serjie had died at 11:00 of the same day. Meade did his best to fulfill his duty to his country and his family, a task not easily accomplished in the middle of a war. Whether or not one believes Meade made the right decisions regarding his family, especially Serjie, it is still clear that

Meade considered duty to country and family to be extremely important obligations and he did his best to fulfill them.

Called back to duty by Stanton, Meade left Philadelphia on February 26, 1865. On a stop in Washington, Meade wrote to Margaret:

I hardly dare think of you in your lonely condition, surrounded by so many associations of our beloved boy. God have mercy on you and send you submission and resignation! No human reasoning can afford you or myself any consolation. Submission to God's will, and the satisfaction arising from the consciousness that we did our duty by him, is all that is left us happens. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, pp. 264-265)

Meade can only find solace in his great faith, and urges his wife to do the same. Again he displays sensitivity and caring that is not often noted. It is this sensitivity that allows him to accurately perceive and feel his wife's suffering and is the same sensitivity that causes him to be so pained by public criticism or the dissatisfaction of his superiors.

The CCW and the Crater Report

Having returned to duty, Meade's thoughts returned to the CCW's report of the Mine fiasco. Uncharacteristically, Meade has taken the matter into his own hands, not having heard anything from Grant. On February 13, before his son passed, Meade had telegraphed Stanton, requesting that the findings of the military court be printed. On his short stop in Washington, after seeing Stanton, Meade went to the Capitol, where he was assured that the same number of copies of the court proceedings as the CCW's report would be printed. Meade

did not feel that he was insubordinate in this act, as Grant had expressed the opinion that the proceedings of the court should be made public. While he probably meant the results of a considered court martial of Burnside, his wording gave Meade enough leeway to proceed as he did.

In a March 4, 1865 letter to Margaret, Meade notes that at least part of the court of inquiry's report was printed in the *Chronicle*. Meade then displays the forgiving nature of his character, another trait often overlooked. He writes to Margaret, "Senator Harris told me that, after I was confirmed, he received a letter from Burnside saying he was glad of it, and that I deserved it. I told Senator Harris I had no personal feelings against Burnside, and no desire to injure him" (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 266). Meade is able to separate his personal and military opinions and feelings, and apparently Burnside can do the same.

Meade Leaves the War Disconsolate and Embittered

In late March Margaret came to visit her husband in camp at his request. The general hoped that the trip would be invigorating and distract her from her sorrow. The army had been preparing for an early start this spring, but on March 25, 1865 Lee initiated the campaign, forcing Margaret home rather abruptly. On April 3 a joyful Meade announces to Margaret "Petersburg and Richmond have fallen, and Lee, broken and dispirited, has retreated" (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 269).

As the war entered its closing days, Meade was suffering from a severe cold and high fever that forced him to sometimes travel by ambulance. But he never abandoned his post, although it may have impaired his judgment on at

least two occasions during the pursuit of Lee. On April 3 Meade incorrectly felt that Lee would cross to the north bank of the Appomattox River and make a stand. Fortunately, Grant divined that Lee would head west. At Jetersville, on April 5, Meade and Sheridan disagreed on strategy. Meade wanted to attack at Amelia Courthouse in the morning, but Sheridan felt Lee would be gone in the morning and favored a movement west. Sheridan called upon Grant, who sustained both commanders. Meade, feeling the effects of his illness, deferred to Sheridan to deploy the corps. In the morning, finding Lee gone and moving toward Sheridan in the west, Meade quickly redeployed his corps and made a direct march toward Lee. Eventually Griffin's Sixth Corps, along with Humphreys' Second Corps and Sheridan's cavalry were able to destroy half of Lee's army at Saylor's Creek. Most historians agree that Meade's judgment may have been impaired by his illness, but Meade must have experienced a moment of clarity, having made the correct tactical move in this pursuit of Lee.

From a clear advantage point, Colonel Lyman, of Meade's staff, watched the battle at Saylor's Creek. Observing Meade's redeployment of the corps to pursue Lee, Lyman notes, "These prompt dispositions ensured the grand success of the day, which the newspapers have gracefully handed over to General Sheridan!" (Lyman and Agassiz, Ed., 1922, p. 349). Once back at camp near Deatonville, Meade received a despatch from Sheridan, wherein, according to Lyman, Sheridan declares, "I attacked with two divisions of the 6th Corps. I captured many thousand prisoners, etc, etc, " causing Meade to exclaim, "Oh, so *General Wright wasn't there*" (p. 349). This is the type of glory grabbing

that Meade abhors and will cause him much bitterness as the war ends. Some historians feel that Sheridan deserves all the accolades bestowed upon him at the end of the war (Rafuse, 2003), while others feel that Sheridan exaggerated his successes (Wittenburg, 2002).

On the evening of April 8, Meade, Grant and both staffs camped together. The next day, Lee surrendered. Meade visited Lee's camp and visited with Lee, Longstreet and General Wise, his brother-in-law. He writes to Margaret:

Mr. Wise looked old and feeble, said he was very sick, and had not a mouthful to eat. I secured him the privilege of an ambulance to go home in, and on my return to camp immediately despatched George with an ambulance load of provisions to him. He enquired very affectionately after yourself, your mother and all the family. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 271)

Although Wise is family, Meade is still more generous than required. His generosity is fueled by his desire to please Margaret and his belief that the people of the Confederacy should be welcomed back to the Union with grace.

In his letter he also comments that he hopes rest and quiet will cure his illness. Weakened by his condition and already disgusted with the way that some officers, such as Sheridan, are awarded undue credit Meade comments:

I have seen but few newspapers since this movement commenced, and I don't want to see any more, for they are full of falsehood and of undue and exaggerated praise of certain individuals who take pains to be on the right side of reporters. ...I don't believe the truth will ever be known, and I have a great contempt for History. Only let the war be finished, and I

returned to you and the dear children, and I will be satisfied. (Meade, 1913/1994, p. 271)

As the war ends, Meade's pent up anger boils to the surface. It is as troublesome to be ignored as criticized, and Meade has experienced more than his fair share of both. But having any modicum of credit usurped by those undeserving is both untruthful and unjust in Meade's estimation and offends his moral core.

His discontent continues as he writes in his letter of April 12:

Your indignation at the exaggerated praise given to certain officers, and the ignoring of others, is quite natural. Still, I do not see how the evil is to be remedied, so long as our people and press are constituted as they are now. I have the conscious that I have fully performed my duty, and have done my full share of the brilliant work just completed; but if the press is determined to ignore this, and the people are determined, after four years experience of press lying, to believe what the newspapers say, I don't see there is anything for us but to submit and be resigned. Grant I do not consider so criminal; it is partly ignorance and partly selfishness which prevents his being aware of the effects of his acts." With Sheridan it is not so. His determination to absorb the credit of everything done is so manifest as to have attracted the attention of the whole army, and the truth in time will be made known. His conduct towards me has been beneath contempt, and will most assuredly react against him in the minds of all just and fair-minded persons. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 271)

Meade's disgust with the papers and the public has returned and will never wane. Much of this has to do with his past experiences, but it is being fueled by the credit being given Sheridan. Were it another, Meade may have been less bothered, but since his arrival to the Army of the Potomac, Sheridan has been, at the least, an annoyance for Meade. Given that Meade feels Sheridan's opportunities should have been his, Meade feels particularly bitter. His comments about Grant are more jaded than they were in November. Grant has been very supportive of Meade in the early part of 1865, and Meade is still supportive of him, but a small note of discord is appearing. In November Meade felt Grant was insensitive, but now Meade views him as selfish and ignorant. Meade states that Grant is not "so criminal", thus not completely absolving him of guilt. Still Meade has resorted to using his clear conscience and the knowledge that he has done his duty to sustain himself.

On April 13, a more considered Meade writes:

I have written you fully, urging on you patience and resignation. Popular fame is at best but ephemeral, and so long as one has a clear conscience that he has done his duty, he can look, or at least should look, with indifference on the clamor of the vulgar. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 272)

Meade may be reminding himself as well as Margaret of the proper perspective. He is trying to remain indifferent, but it is difficult. He bears the scars of almost two years of abuse, some recent and unhealed. Forgiveness is difficult and forgetting is impossible for Meade.

The general received some positive press when the New York *Herald* pointed out that the notion that Meade was not popular with his troops was erroneous. The reporter notes, “ I never saw so much enthusiasm displayed for any man as was for him after the surrender of Lee’s army “(Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 350). Meade writes to Margaret, “So long as the soldiers appreciate my services, I am indifferent to the opinion of politicians and newspaper editors” (p. 272). Meade would like to be indifferent and certainly tries, but wounds, emotional or otherwise, can only fester for so long before he can no longer ignore them. The worst is yet to come for Meade, and soon.

Meade is unsure of the fate of the army, having not seen Grant for sometime. But his fate is determined, much to his chagrin. In his letter to Margaret on April 22, 1865 Meade claims to be demoralized, which is true, but anger quickly emerges. He complains:

I am at present very much demoralized by a recent order which places me and my army under the command of General Halleck, who has been transferred from Washington to Richmond. In order to make General Halleck’s removal from Washington acceptable to him, and appear necessary to the public, the services of myself and army are ignored, and this indignity put upon us; and this by Grant, who wrote the letter he did last winter, and who *professes* the warmest friendship. All this entre nous. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 275)

He continues in his letter of the next day, malevolently proclaiming:

This is the most cruel and humiliating indignity that has been put upon me. (It is General Grant's work, and done by him with a full knowledge of my services and the consideration due to them, all of which have been ignored by him to suit his own convenience.) The order is a perfectly legitimate one, and to which, as a soldier, I have no right to make any objection, General Halleck being my senior in the regular army.... there is nothing left me but the submission which a good soldier should always show to the legitimate orders of his superiors. I, however, now give up Grant. (Meade, 1913/1994, II, p. 276)

It is a final indignity that Meade cannot tolerate. His previous misgivings about Grant must have come crashing back with sudden clarity. Of all people, Grant should know, and claimed to know, the value of Meade's service. Grant knows the many nights Meade had little or no sleep, his complete dedication to the nation, and his total support of his superiors, especially Grant. Grant witnessed the humiliation and undue criticism thrust on Meade. But in this moment of glory, instead of giving Meade his due credit, as he always promised to do, Grant has awarded Meade this final insult. Meade will not be deceived again; he will not trust Grant.

As disconsolate as he is, Meade's sense of justice is not dulled, as defends of Sherman, who he feels is being unfairly criticized. On April 27, Meade writes to Margaret:

I cannot understand Sherman's course. I am very sorry for Sherman, no one can dispute that his services have been pre-eminent,

and though he may have erred in judgment, and have mistaken the temper of the North, he is entitled to the considerations due to his past services, which should have shielded him from having his motives and loyalty impugned. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 277)

On September 17, 1865 Sherman sat down with Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston near Dunham, North Carolina to negotiate Johnston's surrender. Johnston hoped to receive better terms than Lee had when he surrendered on April 11. Sherman had previously conferred with Lincoln and Grant about terms and understood that the President wished an amicable peace. Johnston wanted an agreement that was political as well as military. He proposed that the Confederate armies would disband and lay down their arms in the state arsenals, the states would be recognized after they pledged allegiance, the people would have their rights restored, and there would be a general amnesty. Sherman, realizing the consequences if a surrender could not be negotiated, agreed. But, Lincoln had been assassinated and Secretary of War Stanton was not as conciliatory as Lincoln. He immediately convinced the cabinet to refuse the terms and order the immediate resumption of hostilities. Grant was sent to the scene and advised Sherman in the renegotiations and on September 26, Johnston, much like Lee, ignored Jefferson Davis' wishes, and agreed to a purely military surrender (Hampton, Sons of the Confederate Veterans, retrieved on January 2, 2011 from <http://www.wadehamptoncamp.org/hist-js.html>).

Sherman is widely criticized in the North for the terms he originally offered. Meade is expressing a belief that he has long held; a soldier deserves credit for

his service, loyalty, and past successes, even when he falters. He would expect Sherman to accept responsibility if he had erred in judgment, but would not condemn him for a single mistake when weighed against his previous record. Meade is especially sensitive to the type of injustice Sherman is experiencing, feeling that he has often been treated so. Meade is, however, wrong about Sherman misreading the North. His settlement would have been in line with Lincoln's wishes, but Stanton felt the South should be punished for their actions and in Lincoln's absence, he wielded great power. But, Meade's support for Sherman is reasonable and Meade's values, as was usually the case, allowed him to look past the clamor and see the situation clearly. He did not need to know the details. It simply seemed to him that a general who had contributed so much should not be so maligned.

For Meade, the war was over. The Army of the Potomac was disbanded on June 28, 1865 and Meade assumed command of the Military Division of the Atlantic. He was able to locate his headquarters in Philadelphia and be with his family in the city he cherished. But Grant was to deal him one more injustice.

A Final Insult: March 1869

On March 4, 1869 Grant was inaugurated as President of the United States. He quickly named General Sheridan, Meade's junior in rank, as Lieutenant General of the Army. This time, Meade had expressed an interest in a higher position, having met with Grant shortly before he assumed the President's office. Meade's son, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel George Meade, who served in the army from 1862 to 1874, expresses the bitterness of a soldier and a family

member as he writes, "Promotion is a soldier's highest ambition, and General Meade had every right to expect it, but he who knew justice required it and in whose power it lay did not see fit to give it to him" (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 299).

At the time of Grant's inauguration, General Meade was serving as the commander of the Third Military District, and was headquartered in Atlanta. General Sherman had succeeded Grant as the Commander in Chief of the armies. His telegram on March 5, 1869 ordered Meade to turn over the department to the next in command and return to Philadelphia to resume command of the Military Division of the Atlantic. From this order Meade "inferred Sheridan was Lieutenant General and that Sherman, in the goodness of his heart, sympathizing with me in my affliction, had sent me at the earliest moment to Philadelphia "(Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 299). A despatch later that day announced Sheridan's appointment. Meade, bitter and disconsolate, writes to Margaret:

My own sweet love, you can imagine the force of this blow, but it is useless to repine over what cannot be remedied, and we must find consolation in the consciousness we have that it is the cruelest and meanest act of injustice, and the hope, if there is any sense of wrong or injustice in the country, that the man who perpetrated it will some day be made to feel so...I am coming to you, and in each other's society try to find that calm, dignified, protest which such low conduct alone merits.... I cannot write all I feel; indeed it is as well I should not. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 277)

Meade's son provides a moving summary of his father's career and his pain after this "cruellest and meanest act of injustice", writing:

General Meade bore the stroke unflinchingly in the bosom of his family with Christian fortitude and resignation, and abroad with the calmness of a gentleman. He had, in the fullness of his powers, spent his best thought and energy and blood for a cause which, successfully upheld, had failed to bring in the train for him the only just recognition. He, however, believed the day would come when men in their hearts would do him justice, a justice of which he was defrauded and of which he the rank denied him was but the outward symbol. The degree to which he felt the injustice that had been done him few even of his intimates even suspected, so jealously did he protect the secret of his heart... he...buried his grief deep within his own bosom, satisfied that when petty, jarring interests had had their little day history would do him justice, and from a pinnacle on which he defied the assaults of evil fortune he looked down on the meaner men below. (Meade, 1912/1994, II, p. 299)

Brevet Lieutenant Meade provides a description of what was a familiar story for Meade, having seen it repeated often. Indeed, it is the personal story of his Civil War experience. Faithful service is rewarded with injustice inflicted. Unsupported, Meade becomes bitter, then dejected, but sustains himself through his faith in God and the knowledge that he has done his duty to the best of his ability. But throughout it all, Meade was successful in attaining one thing that he held dear, the reputation of a gentleman. Meade could not, and did not, see

justice done to his service in his lifetime. It took a century for the truth to begin to emerge and another half century for it to be known.

Meade continued to serve the army and the nation until his death on November 6, 1872. He died in his home in his beloved Philadelphia, surrounded by his family.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings

Meade Does “Good Work”

The primary question of this study was whether or not General Meade did “good work”, work that was of high quality, ethically done, socially responsible, and engaging. The historical record indicates that he did indeed do good work. He never failed to fulfill his responsibilities to the army or the nation. He understood the social importance and responsibility that accompanied his command and always placed these above his personal wants and needs. He was a man of noted high character and never used his position for personal gain. When supported by his superiors, Meade was enthusiastic and completely engaged in his mission. However, as will be discussed, when Meade did not receive that support, he would lose his energy and be less engaged in his duties. Still, he never failed to do his duty or fulfill his responsibilities.

Meade possessed a blend of skills, attributes, and values that made him uniquely qualified to perform the serious duties that his command demanded. His contributions to the Union war effort have been undervalued, but the historical record clearly indicates that Meade did do good work. He was the right man to complement Lincoln and Grant, and his unique ability to lead or follow was essential in the performance of his good work.

President Lincoln had quickly gone through a series of commanders for the Army of the Potomac during the first two years of the war. By the time Hooker

resigned in June of 1863, Lincoln had decided that his generals were either too cautious, too political, or inept. In ordering Meade to command the army, he solved several of his problems. Meade was a skilled commander and fierce fighter. He was completely apolitical. He would not initiate any political intrigue that would complicate Lincoln's political agenda. The high command of the Army of the Potomac was noted for its political nature. Generals often formed alliances against their commanders, or promoted themselves at the expense of other generals. But Meade had earned the respect of the army's corps commanders and under his leadership political manipulation within the army was minimized.

He was honest, followed orders and could give orders. He had proven himself to be a capable commander through the corps level. Grant once said that Sherman and Meade were the Union generals most suited to command large armies. Lincoln knew he had a commander that was capable, trusted by his subordinates, and politically neutral. He had the right man.

Meade possessed a unique set of attributes and abilities that would serve the Union well during his command, which lasted until the end of the war. He spent the first hours of his command wading through the huge volume of intelligence provided by Colonel Sharp's Bureau of Military Intelligence. Possessing a keen analytical mind, by that evening Meade had accurately determined the location of his troops as well as Lee's. Quickly moving to consolidate his troops, the army moved on a line that would protect Washington and encounter Lee's army, or part of it. Meade's intent was to force Lee to turn and give him battle and halt his progress toward Harrisburg and he did.

One of Meade's greatest strengths was his ability to move an army swiftly and efficiently. He was upon Lee before Lee had a chance to mass his own troops and fortify a position of his choosing. By July 1, Buford's cavalry, operating on Meade's left wing, encountered Lee's troops near Gettysburg. Meade had maneuvered his army in such a manner that three corps, under the capable leadership of General Reynolds, were able to immediately support Buford and by the morning of July 2, all but one corps of the army had arrived on the battlefield, and it would arrive later that day.

Meade Leads and Follows

Meade also possessed a leadership ability that is often a topic in current leadership discussions, but was unappreciated in his day. To use Collins' (2001) terminology, Meade knew to put the right people on the bus. He knew who his most capable and trusted subordinates were. He had placed the highly capable Reynolds in temporary command of the three corps on his left, even though he was not the most senior of Meade's corps commander, because he trusted Reynolds's judgment and fighting ability. Hearing of Buford's encounter, Reynolds appropriately took the initiative and moved his corps to Gettysburg.

When Reynolds fell early on July 1, Meade sent General Hancock, another trusted and extremely capable commander, to assess the situation. Meade continued his leadership by precisely informing both Reynolds and Hancock of his intent and the information he required. Meade made decisions by processing all the information he could obtain and rarely made a decision before he was confident that he had sufficient information. Hancock was to advise

Meade as to whether the army should fight at Gettysburg, or fall back to a contingent location near Pipe Creek, which had been determined to be good ground on which to fight a defensive battle. Not only did Meade put the right people in the right position, he trusted their judgment and allowed them the freedom to act on that judgment. Again demonstrating his leadership, Meade advised Hancock to determine whether or not Gettysburg was good ground, and if it was, he would order all of the corps to Gettysburg. Meade understood the perils and impact of his decision but did not hesitate to take decisive action.

General Meade's leadership was not recognized in his time. During the mid nineteenth century, people held to the Great Man theory of leadership. They expected a man of superior traits and abilities that surpassed those of ordinary men to achieve unconditional success and thus save the Union. Deferring to subordinates and trusting their judgment was seen as a weakness. Meade would be criticized for this when he used "councils of war" throughout the Battle of Gettysburg and thereafter. But these "councils" were informational consultations designed to strengthen Meade's decisions. On the evening of July 2, 1863, and again on July 3, Meade convened consultations with his corps commanders. He knew that the quickest way to accurately determine the location and condition of his troops was to go directly to the officers who commanded them. He also knew that in order to effectively execute any of his orders, the commanders had to be willing and supportive. These meetings also allowed him to clearly inform his subordinates of his intent. Officers who clearly understand their commander's intent are able to make better tactical decisions in the heat of battle. Meade's

innovative use of staff meetings is an indication of his leadership abilities, not an indication of weakness or indecision.

Given the situation and Hancock's declaration that Gettysburg was good ground to defend, Meade quickly ordered his troops to Gettysburg, where his tactical skill and engineer's eye created the opportunity for the Army of the Potomac to secure a victory. Arriving very late on July 1, Meade quickly surveyed the ground and his troops. Grant claimed that Meade could quickly and accurately determine the lay of the ground and use it effectively. His famous "fishhook" battle line was a masterful use of troops and ground, giving the Union the positional advantage. During the ensuing battles, he used the interior lines created by this deployment to effectively support the troops at critical positions and times and successfully repulsed all of Lee's attacks. Lee retreated after the third day of battle, a battle that resulted in over 50,000 casualties.

Much to Meade's dismay, Lee eventually crossed the Potomac River and returned to the security of Virginia before Meade could inflict another, war-ending blow. Meade's letter to his wife clearly indicated that he hoped for another battle, but President Lincoln erroneously concluded that Meade missed a golden opportunity because he was too cautious and did not intend to fight another battle before Lee "escaped" across the Potomac. From Meade's point of view, Lee had not escaped, and he immediately continued his pursuit of Lee.

Before Lee crossed the river on July 14, 1863, he was stopped by the high waters of the river at Williamsport and was trapped between the river and Meade's army. He had arrived at Williamsport days before Meade. Lee had a full

day's head start from Gettysburg and Meade had delayed another day to determine if Lee was retreating or just repositioning on better ground. Meade did not want to fall into a trap and lose what he had gained. He then took a longer route to intercept Lee, rather than follow him, because it put him in position to cover Washington and afforded better roads. On July 12, Meade convened a meeting of his corps commanders to determine when and how to attack Lee, who was now heavily fortified. Meade's army had three new corps commanders as a result of the loss of Sickles, Hancock, and Reynolds at Gettysburg, and Meade knew that they must be committed to any plan if was to be successful. His commanders advised against an attack until the enemy's position and strength was ascertained, so Meade deferred the attack until July 14, using July 13 to determine the disposition of Lee's army. By that time, Lee had managed to cross the river and avoid the battle. Examination of Lee's position revealed that the attack could have resulted in a catastrophe for Meade's army. He had learned, as had Lee, that attacking an entrenched and fortified army that held good ground usually lead to a disastrous defeat of the attacking army. Meade's good judgment and experience may have averted a Union disaster that would have negated all that had been gained at Gettysburg.

The lack of quality corps and division commanders presented a problem to Meade. He wrote to his wife that men with the ability to command and fight as well as Hancock, Reynolds and Gibbon were not to be found. Although Hancock and Gibbon would eventually recover from their Gettysburg wounds and return to the army, Meade was hampered by the lack of capable commanders. His

hesitation at Williamsport was partly due to his lack of confidence in many of his corps commanders. Meade's final attempt to force a battle with Lee during the 1863 campaign at Mine Run failed largely due to the inability of his corps commanders to execute his plan, as well as their lack of initiative.

Even though Meade's army had inflicted considerable damage to Lee's army at Gettysburg, the Army of the Potomac had also suffered severe casualties and was in need of reorganization, rest, and supplies. Based on his military experience and West Point training, Meade believed that an army had to be well rested, properly supplied, well organized, of superior numbers, and on good ground to win a battle. Given to his own judgment, he would have rested, refitted, and reorganized his army before continuing his pursuit of Lee, but following the wishes of Halleck and Lincoln, he forged ahead. According to Grant, Meade was capable of following orders as if they were his own, so it is not surprising that Meade pushed on. Nevertheless, Lincoln lost confidence in Meade and never regained it. Eventually, he would completely marginalize Meade, rendering him ineffective. Lincoln and historians criticized Meade for his failure to bring about another major engagement with Lee during the remainder of 1863, but Lincoln must bear some of the blame.

Domain and Field Conflicts Hamper Meade

At this point, the Good Work research informs our understanding of the situation. When the conditions of good work align it is much easier for good work to occur. This study asked how the conditions of good work aligned to support or disrupt General Meade's accomplishment of good work. Although Meade did

accomplish good work, domain and field conflicts became an obstacle. Lincoln, operating in his political domain, and Meade, operating in his military domain, seem to be aligned. Both want a quick end to the war. Both believe that the Union must be preserved. Both believe that Lee's army must be destroyed. Curiously, Meade shares Lincoln's view that the South must be treated with a certain amount of respect in order to facilitate a quick and amicable reunification of the states at the war's end. However, the procedural practices of these domains influence the field, the practitioners who strive to fulfill the mission of the domain. It is at this point that Lincoln and Meade seriously diverge.

Lincoln's party lost seats in Congress in the election of 1862, reducing Lincoln's support. Lincoln was keenly aware that there was a growing discontent in the North and people were beginning to question if winning the war was worth the tremendous economic cost and the loss of so many young lives. Lee knew it too, and one of his objectives in raiding the North and hopefully striking a serious blow to the Army of the Potomac was to feed Northern discontent by increasing the cost of war on Northern soil (Spruill, 2011). Lincoln was looking for a decisive victory that would end the war or at least quiet the discontent. To be effective, and to win reelection in 1864, Lincoln needed to bolster his political support. True to the beliefs of the West Point trained officer, Meade had no regard for party politics. Lincoln may have wanted a battle that served a political purpose, but Meade could not be goaded into a battle that served no military purpose. It is this difference that put Meade and Lincoln at odds, the difference in the procedural tenets of each domain as they are practiced in the field.

The preservation of the army was a basic tenet of the domain of the military. It may have been politically profitable to fight a battle and lose, but from a military prospective, to fight a battle simply to fulfill the needs of politicians was unthinkable. Lincoln put Meade in such a position. In October 1863 he suggested to Meade that he engage in a battle and if successful, Lincoln would see that Meade received the credit, and if unsuccessful, he promised to take the blame. Meade simply refused. His great moral courage gave him the strength to adhere to his beliefs and resist undue influences. He would not risk the lives of his men or the safety of the army for political purposes and little, if any, military gain. At Mine Run, Meade again demonstrated his moral courage when he stopped an attack that he felt certain was doomed, even though he was sure he would be highly criticized and possibly be removed from command. He was not relieved of command, and in fact, he garnered increased respect from his men as a result of his decision.

Lee and Meade Stalemate

The Army of the Potomac was not able to gain another victory in 1863 and this adversely impacted Meade's reputation. Even if it is conceded that Meade was more cautious than he needed to be, events beyond Meade's control contributed to the stalemate in the East. As a result of Gettysburg, Lee, although still dangerous, did not have the capacity to wage the same type of aggressive offensive that he had previously practiced. With Meade constantly nearby, Lee looked to maneuver to advantage, as did Meade. Neither was about to make a

fatal mistake. As much as Lincoln and Meade wanted to secure a decisive battle to end the war, Lee would not oblige them.

Another significant factor impacting Meade's generalship was the requirement to cover Washington, D.C. The Army of the Potomac was the covering army for the capital and Meade was under direct orders to prevent Lee from advancing on it. Forced to maneuver in such a manner as to block any possible movement toward Washington, Meade's strategic and tactical options were limited. He was at times cautious because of this requirement. He also could not risk the destruction of the army, as this would expose Washington.

Interference from Washington, as Meade put it, also limited Meade's options. Lincoln pulled troops from Meade's army, first to control the New York City draft riots, and then to support Rosecrans in Tennessee. Meade estimated that the total reduction in troops was between ten and twelve thousand men. Lincoln then decided that Meade, now having fewer men than he did at Williamsport where he was unable to successfully engage Lee, could not successfully engage him now. Through Halleck, he ordered Meade to occupy Lee but not to engage him. Halleck also refused Meade's request to change his base of operations and the Army of the Potomac was forced to continue to operate along the line of the Orange and Alexandria railroad, which Meade believed lacked the capacity to efficiently provide for the army's needs. This line of operations also had proven to be ineffective under other commanders and Meade correctly believed that the James River was the best line for a campaign.

It was that line that Grant successfully used when he assumed command of the Union armies.

Grant Needed Meade

General Grant was appointed Lieutenant General and assumed control of all of the Union's armies on February 24, 1864. He located his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac but kept Meade as its commander. After his first meeting with Meade, Grant remarked that Meade made a most favorable impression, offering to step down if Grant wanted to put another in command. Meade again demonstrated his moral courage, as well as his commitment to duty and the Union when he told Grant the Union cause should be placed above the interests of any man.

Many historians have put forth the notion that Meade could not defeat Lee without Grant, but Grant needed Meade as well. Meade knew the Army of the Potomac intimately and had the support of its officers and soldiers. Grant knew that an officer from the West would not have the same trust and support that Meade did. He also knew that Meade was a fierce fighter and had the ability to command a large army. Grant may have been strategically better than Meade, but Meade had excellent tactical and operational ability, as he had demonstrated. Retaining Meade was a wise decision.

Grant also needed a commander who would willingly and explicitly follow his orders. He needed a commander who had the initiative and ability to command when he was absent. He needed a commander who supported his strategies. He needed a commander who would not blink when faced with the

carnage that Grant's campaign would soon generate. He needed a commander who could move the army and who could respond to the changing conditions of battles. He needed Meade. Being able to willingly subordinate himself to Grant while steadfastly supporting him was one of Meade's greatest contributions to the Union. The unity and effectiveness of the army remained intact under this unusual and awkward command arrangement due to the professionalism of both men. Meade never failed to do his duty or to honor the hierarchy of the army. Grant, although not always successful, tried to refrain from interfering with Meade.

As Grant noted, Meade's presence allowed Grant to attend to his other duties as the new commander in chief. Halleck had been reduced to a chief of staff and Grant took control of the armies. Grant's constant pounding of the Army of Northern Virginia is credited with defeating Lee and crumbling the Confederacy, but it was Meade who made this strategy work on a day-to-day basis. Meade and Grant were the perfect complement to each other.

Meade's Unique Skills, Abilities and Attributes

The unique combination of skills, talents, and attributes that Meade brought to the command of the Army of the Potomac were significant to his and the Union's successes. He possessed a sharp, analytical, scientific mind that allowed him to accurately analyze tremendous amounts of data. He could analyze the ground before him and recognize how to best use it. Meade made decisions based on information and intelligence, which at times made him appear cautious, but generally resulted in good judgment. He possessed a great moral

courage and strength of character that allowed him to resist political influences and make difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions.

West Point trained and a veteran of the Seminole and Mexican wars, Meade was able to move a large army quickly. He had an uncommon and extraordinary commitment to duty and the nation. He could obey an order as well as he could give one; he could lead, and he could follow. He could be counted on to do the right thing. His integrity was due to his consistent values and beliefs. Meade possessed the skills, abilities, and attributes that Lincoln and Grant both needed and he served them both well.

The Dynamics of Meade's Values and Beliefs

Meade's Personal Value and Beliefs

Meade valued his reputation above all else and fought obsessively to protect it. This obsession made it particularly difficult for him to cope with the attacks on his military reputation, especially when they were based on falsehoods and put forth solely to advance the position or politics of those who were attacking him. Attacks on his reputation and ability that were unjust caused him great pain and anxiety and he suffered these injustices poorly. Meade could not allow an injustice to go unchallenged, even when the injustice was inflicted on others.

Meade expected credit when it was his due, but he would not accept credit he did not deserve. He fully accepted responsibility when the army was less than successful, even when its failures were due to the poor execution of its officers. However, he sought credit for the successes of the army or for his particular

performance, and he was devastated when it was denied to him. Deserved credit enhanced reputation and he felt that the denial of his due credit deprived him of the opportunity to enhance his reputation and the family name.

Duty held a unique position in Meade's value system. He held the professional soldier's belief that duty was his first responsibility. His decision not to be at the side of his dying son, knowing that he could do nothing to change the situation and feeling that duty required him to attend to the responsibilities of command, reveals that for Meade, duty was a catalyst for his other values.

Many would criticize Meade for putting duty, the job, ahead of his family. But Meade had no choice because of the dynamics of his value system. By performing his duty faithfully and to the best of his ability, Meade felt he would receive the just rewards of his conduct. He would receive credit from his peers and superiors, as well as the public, and thereby secure a favorable reputation. His reputation would secure the family's good name, especially among the finer social circles of his hometown Philadelphia, where his family lived. His reputation fell to his children, and he had a duty to preserve the family's good name for his children's sake. He thus fulfilled his responsibility to both his family and the army when he remained at his post. This dynamic also explains why Meade was so preoccupied and disturbed by attacks on his reputation and why he felt that such attacks were an injustice. It also explains why receiving his due credit was so important to Meade.

Meade did not seek credit simply to garner glory, power, or position, or to feed his ego. There is no doubt that Meade enjoyed the good feeling that the

recognition of his accomplishments brought, as would most people. He sought, even needed, the good will and support of his superiors, and to a lesser degree, his subordinates and the public. At first glance it appears that Meade's ego drove his ambition and need for credit, but it was his reputation and not his ego that he sought to feed. That is not to say that Meade had no ambition, as quite the contrary is true. Meade's ambition drove him to perform at a high level and to seek higher command, and thereby secure a positive reputation for himself and his family. Due credit leads to promotion, and to Meade, promotion is the symbol of that credit and of the approval and support of his superiors. Promotion, based on merit, enhances reputation. The denial of his due credit, or earned and deserved promotions or positions, rankled Meade because of the lost opportunity to enhance his reputation. In the midst of criticism, the lost opportunities were particularly significant and troublesome to Meade.

Meade's Military Beliefs

The dynamics of Meade's personal values and beliefs are inseparable from his military values and beliefs. Fulfilling the responsibilities required by the domain, in this case the military, is an ingredient of good work and ethical behavior. Meade held to the values of the domain.

Soldiers were to conduct themselves honorably. Honor dictated that officers did not criticize other officers publicly. Meade always used military channels to address his grievances. This belief contributed to Meade's reluctance to defend himself publicly. When he did speak to civilians about

military matters, he did so privately and did not discuss matters not already before the public.

West Point officers believed they served the nation, not any specific political agenda or platform. The army's primary mission was to protect the nation from foreign invasion and to prevent the disruption of the government. To support any party or political agenda would betray their primary mission and many refrained from participating in politics in any way. Neither Meade nor Grant voted in the 1864 Presidential election. Meade's failure to express any support for the agenda of the radical Republicans was part of reason that politicians like Chandler and Wade opposed him so consistently.

Chandler originally became disenchanted with Meade when he refused to follow the demands of civilian authorities in Detroit and declined to renew his oath of allegiance when the war erupted. Meade believed that duty required him to follow the orders of his military superiors, not those of civilian authorities. He believed that military affairs should be carried out by military people, not politicians or other civilians. Meade's belief that civilians should not make military decisions added to his frustration as the army's commander. Lincoln may have become a military expert over the course of the war as some proclaim, and even though he was the commander-in-chief of the army, in Meade's eyes he was still a civilian. While Meade never expressed this opinion about Lincoln, he did indicate that Halleck, as a military man, should know better than to adhere to some of Lincoln's notions about the army. Meade always obeyed Lincoln's

orders, but he clearly viewed him in a different light than he did his militarily trained superiors.

Soldiers must do their duty, which requires the obedience of orders. Meade did not question the legitimate orders of his superiors. His ability to be completely subordinate to Grant was vital to Grant's success in the East.

The West Point teachings on the conduct of war were based on the lessons of the great European wars and followed Napoleonic methods. Meade ascribed to these teachings. He felt that an army must be well equipped, well supplied, and rested to fight effectively. Success in battle depended on holding the better ground or using superior numbers to overwhelm a weak point in the enemy position. Each time Meade took the offensive, he planned a massed attack at a specific point. However, he preferred to fight defensively from a good position. For example, he did not take the offensive on the third day at Gettysburg because he did not want to give up the advantage of his superior defensive position. His war experience had taught him that it was almost impossible to successfully attack an army that was entrenched, heavily fortified, reinforced and well supplied. Grant learned the same lesson at Cold Harbor. Lee also understood this and preferred to force Meade into the open to fight, rather than to attack him when he held such a position (Dowdey & Manarin, (Eds.), 1961).

Another lesson that Meade learned from his war experience was not to underestimate Lee. Lee was not only fundamentally strong as a commander, he was also a master of deception, and he would make bold, unanticipated moves.

Meade delayed as Lee withdrew at Gettysburg, knowing that Lee might create the illusion of retreating when he was simply repositioning, or that he might try to lure Meade into the mountain gaps where Lee would have the advantage of terrain. Thus Meade appropriately pursued Lee cautiously, not as a matter of temerity, but as a matter of military prudence.

Meade and the Northern Press

Every Meade historian has noted Meade's poor relationship with newspaper editors and reporters. Early in his military career he came to the conclusion that the press was usually dishonest and irresponsible in its coverage of wars. He refused to talk to reporters and delegated press relations to provost marshal General Marsena Patrick, who despised the press as much as Meade. Meade's poor treatment of reporter Edward Cropsey resulted in a successful conspiracy by reporters to discredit Meade. They refused to give him any credit for his accomplishments and would search for ways to discredit him and blame him for any perceived failures of the army. This type of newspaper coverage was used by politicians such as Chandler to continue to press for Meade's dismissal.

The negative press coverage only fueled Meade's contempt. Truthful almost to a fault, he had no tolerance for lies and misrepresentations. Meade was always pained by criticism directed toward him that he felt was unjust. Although he consoled himself with the hope that time would bring out the truth as he saw it, he found little comfort in this hope.

The press' treatment of Meade is often viewed as Meade's fatal flaw. His failure to use the press productively is considered to be one of the reasons that

Meade has remained relatively anonymous in historical accounts. Meade certainly contributed to his situation and has been appropriately held accountable for it, especially in view of the fact that he had an opportunity to make amends with the press and refused to do so. While the press affected Meade on a personal level, it had little impact on his command ability or decisions. The negative press coverage did, however, significantly contribute to his anonymity. By today's leadership standards, Meade's treatment of the press would be considered a serious error in judgment.

Seeing Meade through His Eyes

While Meade's military ability as the commander of the Army of the Potomac has often been criticized, his character has rarely been challenged. Intense, focused and intolerant of incompetence while engaged in a campaign, he was a gracious and gentlemanly otherwise. Meade's behavior consistently followed his beliefs and values and he rarely abandoned them, even when his superiors or politicians tried to influence him. He did, however, faithfully perform his duty and obeyed the direct orders of his superiors. Believing that doing his duty was his first priority, he possessed the unique ability to command or obey as required.

Meade could not tolerate injustice any more than he could lies. He railed against any injustice or falsehood that he felt unjustly denigrated his reputation or that of his army. Modest and yet ambitious, he sought credit for his successes and accepted responsibility for his failures. He did his duty to the best of his ability and expected to be rewarded appropriately. Meade acknowledged that he

was sensitive by nature, and when he did not receive the rewards of his service, whether that was due credit, promotion, or the support of his superiors, he was deeply pained.

Cautious in his choice of battles as a commander, he was fearless under fire. Meade's analytical mind could quickly analyze and evaluate a battle situation and was the foundation for his superior tactical skill. Trained as an engineer and possessing a scientific mind, he required information to support his strategic and operational decisions. His need to gather information often took time, which Lincoln and historians interpreted as temerity or an unwillingness to engage the enemy. For instance, Meade delayed in leaving his position at Gettysburg, waiting for information from Sedgwick that would allow him to determine Lee's true intention. At Williamsport he was unsure of the exact position and strength of Lee's army and delayed while gathering more information. Judged to be overly cautious or timid in each of these circumstances, Meade simply needed more information. He understood his responsibility to the men and to preserve the army and he would not move without being confident in his understanding of the situation his assessment of the risk.

The consistent adherence to his values and beliefs both helped and hindered Meade. It earned him the respect of other officers, and eventually the troops. It also garnered the contempt of certain politicians and the press, and caused Lincoln to lose confidence in him. It gave him the moral courage to lead and protect the army, which also made him appear overly cautious and ineffective as a commander. His belief in the Union's cause served to harden him

to the atrocities of the war, but his sensitivity to unjust criticism or the lack of due credit caused him immense emotional distress.

Meade appears to be a complex man, which in part, explains why there can be a variety of interpretations of his service and value to the nation. He was a man with a gunpowder temper, but was courtly and gracious when entertaining dignitaries and guests. He was intense and unyielding in battle, but gentle and selfless off the field. He was devoted to his family, yet chose to remain with the army while his son slowly died. He held few people close enough to call them a friend, yet he relished and enjoyed the social affairs of his native Philadelphia. He valued reputation over wealth and approval over promotion. He refused to be drawn into the world of politics, but his advancement in his career depended upon politics. Meade was a complex man, but there is a consistent, orderly dynamic in his values and beliefs that drives his decisions and behaviors. Looking through Meade's eyes at his Civil War experiences yields a different view than does looking upon him.

A Lack of Support Disenfranchises Meade

His relationship with the press is sometimes cited as Meade's fatal flaw, but the press had little impact on Meade's command decisions. What did impact Meade's judgment as a commander was the combination of the lack of support from his superiors and his sensitivity to perceived injustices inflicted upon him. The lack of support emerged early in his command when Lincoln saw Meade's congratulatory order to the army for its victory at Gettysburg. Lincoln objected to the phrase that congratulated the army for driving the enemy from "our soil",

feeling that Meade was content to simply send Lee back to Virginia rather than destroying the Army of Northern Virginia. Meade's subsequent failure to engage Lee before he did return to Virginia convinced Lincoln that his assumption was correct. It was not long before Lincoln decided to pull troops from the Army of the Potomac and ordered Meade to merely occupy Lee. While Meade understood that Lincoln had the authority and right to place troops where he wished, he disagreed with Lincoln's assessment. Lincoln's decision also marginalized Meade by limiting his ability to fulfill his mission.

Lincoln and Halleck had constantly urged Meade to hasten his pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg, falsely believing that Meade could attack and destroy Lee's army at any time. Ordering him to simply occupy Lee was clearly a signal that Lincoln had lost confidence in his commander and that Meade no longer enjoyed his support, but Meade remained unaware of Lincoln's position. Halleck's decision to not allow Meade to change his base of operations sent a clear message that although Meade was promised complete autonomy in determining the operations of the army, quite the contrary was true, and again signaled that Meade did not have the support of his superiors in Washington. Lincoln's actions in the summer of 1863 and Grant's decision to make his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac in 1864 further marginalized Meade's command authority.

In December of 1863 Meade requested permission to go to Washington. Halleck responded that he could come to the capital at any time and he should report to the Adjutant General at the War Department. Meade correctly interpreted Halleck's response to mean that he was not really wanted or needed

in Washington and did not go. Commanding generals usually met with Stanton, Halleck, or Lincoln, not a lesser officer such as the assistant adjutant general. Halleck sent a clear message to Meade that he was completely marginalized in the eyes of Lincoln and Halleck. Meade understood yet decided to stay with the army.

Halleck and Lincoln continued to fail to support Meade in the spring of 1864. Indignant at the falsehoods in the article by Historicus and feeling that his reputation was unjustly impugned, Meade sought help from the War Department. He sent a letter outlining his concerns and suspicions that Dan Sickles was responsible for the letter and asked for an investigation. Halleck advised against such an investigation and Lincoln eventually denied the request. The administration had the opportunity to support Meade and clear his reputation of false allegations, but they refused. This lack of support demoralized Meade on a personal level and more significantly, allowed a distorted and false history to evolve that still haunts Meade.

Some historians believe that Lincoln elevated Grant to Lieutenant General because he could not find a commander to replace Meade and because he felt that removing the hero of Gettysburg, who still maintained some popular support, was politically dangerous. However, there is evidence that suggests that it was Halleck that Lincoln wished to replace. It was Grant, not Lincoln, who decided that Grant would establish his headquarters with the Army of the Potomac. Grant and Meade began the campaign of 1864 with a positive

relationship, but Grant's support of Sheridan and Sherman would eventually destroy Meade's good opinion of Grant.

Meade did not object to Grant's presence, feeling that with his power and authority Grant might be able to do things that Meade could not accomplish in his position. Believing that Grant shared his views on strategy, Meade was satisfied to serve Grant, knowing that Grant would receive any accolades resulting from the army's success. Grant tried to not undermine Meade's authority and allow him to continue to control his army, but shortly after the campaign of 1864 started, Grant slowly began to take control. Still, Meade did not object, commenting that it was only the natural course of events for Grant to be in control. Grant did appreciate Meade's willingness to follow orders and his ability to manage the army. Never the less, as Grant took greater control of the army, Meade was further marginalized.

Eventually Meade began to doubt Grant's support. Early in May of 1864 Meade and cavalry commander Sheridan had a heated argument because Meade, appropriately, had given Sheridan's troops orders in Sheridan's absence at Todd's Tavern. During the argument Sheridan announced that he would no longer give the cavalry any orders and that he could whip the Confederate cavalry if permitted. Meade took the matter to Grant, who sided with Sheridan and told Meade to allow him to pursue Stewart's cavalry. Instead of supporting Meade by at least rebuking Sheridan for his insubordination, he Sheridan an independent command. Grant's lack of support again marginalized Meade.

By the end of May Meade was feeling that his position under Grant was an injustice and by June he had become disappointed in Grant. Grant spent less time conferring with Meade, and Meade was becoming frustrated. At the end of July Grant told Meade that he had recommended him to take command of all the forces near Washington, but in the end it was Sheridan who received the command. Meade began to doubt that he had Grant's support. By mid August 1864 Meade was considering his options and contemplated resigning his position. Late in August Meade was devastated when he learned that Sherman, Hancock, and Sheridan had been promoted to major general in the regular army, and he had not. Questioning Grant, Meade discovered that Grant had withheld Meade's recommendation because he did not wish to have him rank Sherman. Meade, more concerned with the impact on his reputation than the promotion, doubted Grant's truthfulness as well as his support.

Late in September of 1864 Henry Ward Beecher, an influential member of the clergy and editor of the New York *Independent*, penned a vicious attack on Meade and called for his dismissal. Meade sought Grant's support by requesting an official report or other documentation that refuted Beecher's attack and could be released to the press. While Grant agreed to do so, he never did, and instead provided Meade with copies of his reports to Washington that showed his support of Meade. The reports did not provide Meade the support he sought and he again was feeling the pangs of despair created by the failure to receive a superior's support. Meade informed Grant that he would rather retire than continue to suffer the attacks of the press and politicians.

Meade remained in command and was temporarily buoyed by Grant's efforts to gain Meade's promotion, which was approved in November of 1864 and dated as to restore Meade to his position of seniority over Sheridan. Pleased, but not exuberant with the promotion, Meade felt that the circumstances surrounding the promotion had reduced it to simply the correction of an injustice, rather than the statement of support and approval it should have been.

In November of 1864 Meade had commented that Grant was insensitive and by April of 1865, Meade felt that Grant was ignorant and selfish. After Lee surrendered in April of 1865, Grant placed Halleck in charge of the area around Richmond and placed the Army of the Potomac under his control. Meade recognized that Halleck was his senior but still felt that Grant's action was an insult to the army and to him. He felt that he and the army deserved a higher recognition. From Meade's point of view, he was unappreciated. Grant's action was another indication of the marginalization of Meade. Grant and Meade had maintained cordial relations in spite of Meade's growing discontent with Grant and Meade never failed to support his commander, but this slight completely devastated the sensitive Meade. War weary and emotionally drained, Meade ended his command disheartened and disenfranchised.

Conclusions

Unheralded Accomplishments

Taffe (2006) asserts that Meade "marked time" during his independent command of the Army of the Potomac. This characterization reflects a common view of historians and can be considered accurate only if the tally of victories is

the measure of success. Meade only attained one significant victory over Lee, but no other general had been able to defeat him. Lee's army was unable to assume the offensive after its defeat at Gettysburg, so great was the damage inflicted by Meade's Army of the Potomac. But Meade accomplished more than a stunning victory in 1863. His first success was turning Lee away from Harrisburg.

Lincoln accepted Hooker's resignation in the middle of an active campaign. Lee was plundering the rich resources of the North and was threatening the key transportation center in Harrisburg. Lincoln needed a general who could take immediate control of the army and stop Lee's advance. Meade's intimate knowledge of the army and his ability to quickly assess the situation allowed the army to swiftly engage Lee and halt his advance. The army's previous commanders had frequently hesitated or became indecisive in critical situations, and it would have been natural for a new commander to do the same while acclimating to his new position. Under Meade, the army did not delay or hesitate and Meade's new direction of advance brought an end to Lee's plans. New commanders normally had months to prepare and plan, but Meade only had hours. Fortunately for Lincoln and the nation, the new commander was equal to the task. Certainly some of the credit for the army's immediate success goes to men such as Buford, Reynolds, and Hancock, but to Meade goes the credit for putting them in a position to be successful and for trusting them.

Hampered by a mediocre cadre of officers, interference from Washington, and the order to protect the capital, Meade was still able to hold Lee at bay. Lee is often recognized as one of the greatest generals the nation has

ever produced and he had secured a series of victories and inflicted considerable damage to the Union prior to Meade's appointment to command. However, Lee could not force Meade into a mistake or gain an advantage. Meade was able to match Lee's skill as a general, and the two armies maneuvered to a stalemate by the end of 1863.

Preventing Lee from striking at vital transportation and industrial centers in the North was Meade's first accomplishment. Had Lee been successful, the Union's ability to supply its armies could have been significantly impeded. In addition, it is possible that support for the war may have significantly waned, as Lee had hoped. It is hard to imagine that the prolonged presence of the Confederate army in Pennsylvania and the damage inflicted could have had any other effect.

Lincoln also benefited from Meade's command. Although Lincoln wished for the immediate destruction of Lee's army, the victory at Gettysburg and the subsequent stalemate served him politically much better than the series of devastating defeats the Army of the Potomac had been suffering. The growing unrest of the people and the Congress with the war was at least temporarily quieted, allowing Lincoln to sustain the war and eventually reunite the nation. Meade deserves considerable recognition for this significant contribution, recognition that has escaped him.

The turbulent political waters of the Army of the Potomac were also quieted under Meade's command. He had the support and trust of his corps commanders and the army's high command was more unified than it ever had

been. Guided by this unified command, the Army of the Potomac reached its fighting potential for the first time at Gettysburg. No longer intimidated by Lee, the army would become a key to the eventual Union victory over the Confederacy.

Historians have touched upon each of Meade's contributions in the second half of 1863, but this researcher has not seen them considered in their entirety. It is easy to overlook their gestalt, for it is not easy to recognize what did not happen. But what if Lee was able to gain the demoralizing victory on Union soil that he sought? What would the impact have been if Lee had destroyed vital manufacturing and transportation centers and disrupted communication? After the defeat of the Army of the Potomac, would Lee have had an open road to Baltimore and Washington and if so, to what end? Would the citizenry and Congress have demanded an end to the war?

Still, Lincoln was disappointed that Meade did not destroy Lee's army, but he never replaced him as commander of the Army of the Potomac. He instead elevated Grant, displacing Halleck, not Meade. Meade's longevity in command was an accomplishment in itself. Despite the severe criticism of self-serving generals, politicians and the press, and Lincoln's propensity to change commanders, Meade survived and served longer than all of his predecessors combined. Some historians claim that Lincoln simply could not find another general as a suitable replacement. There may not have been a suitable replacement because of what Meade provided Lincoln.

Short of ending the war, Meade had provided Lincoln with what he needed. Lincoln did not need to worry about Meade having political aspirations,

and more importantly, political influence. Meade had saved the North from Lee's threat, giving Lincoln the opportunity to continue the war and reunite the states. Meade neutralized Lee. Meade unified the army under his leadership, and the Army of the Potomac became an effective weapon.

Meade also provided Grant what he needed. Under Grant's direction and Meade's command, the army fought well and continuously. Meade's ability to be subordinate to Grant was a key to the success of their awkward command situation. Through years of dedicated service with the Army of the Potomac Meade gained an intimate knowledge of the army and earned the respect and support of his corps commanders. Meade's unique combination of experience, knowledge, skills, and attributes complemented Grant's strategic ability and dogged determination. Complementing Grant was a significant achievement for Meade. General Meade did not remain in command simply because there was no other to replace him. He remained in command because of what he brought to the war effort. He was the right man at the right time, a crucial time.

Fulfilling responsibilities is critical to performing good work and the answer to the second research question of this study requires evidence that Meade did fulfill his responsibilities. Meade's unheralded accomplishments are clear evidence that Meade fulfilled his responsibilities to his family and friends, his colleagues, his mission, his personal goals, the Army and the nation.

Comparing Meade to Grant

Historian T. Harry Williams (1956) claims that Meade was unsuccessful because he lacked Grant's boldness and determination and that he was too

gentle a person to wage a modern war. Comparisons to Grant are often used to demonstrate Meade's limitations. It is true that he lacked some of Grant's attributes, but Grant's position in the army was significantly different than Meade's. Grant had the authority to control all the Union armies. He used his authority to provide a strategy that coordinated the efforts of all the armies and gave Meade's army a clear role in that strategy. When Lee surrendered, Grant had three armies converging on him. The authority to coordinate the armies of Sheridan, Ord, and Meade was crucial to the defeat of the Confederacy. Grant's authority was as crucial as his leadership.

Halleck's guidance had provided Meade little in terms of strategy or support. Halleck did more to impede Meade than he did to assist him. Although he promised Meade full authority to operate at his discretion, Meade never possessed the freedom or authority that Grant did. Grant could and did, at his discretion, disregard the suggestions he received from Washington. Because of the differences in their authority, comparing Meade to Grant is an apples-to-oranges comparison.

Meade's Leadership

This research sought to determine if there were leadership lessons that could be derived from Meade's Civil War experience and although it does not seek to determine if Meade was a leader, the question cannot be ignored. Whether or not he was a leader depends upon the leadership theory that is applied and there is no theory that completely fits Meade. He displayed authentic leadership, operating on a clear set of values and beliefs that he instilled in his

organization. He looked to the needs of the army and placed the needs of the nation and the army above his needs, displaying elements of servant leadership. He was trusted by his subordinates, honest, and competent. These are traits that Kouzes and Posner (2007) have consistently identified as desired by followers. He empowered his key subordinates at critical times and collaborated with them. He led by example and was committed to his responsibilities. He was clear headed in a crisis, and with few exceptions, exercised sound judgment. Most importantly, he was ethical.

Good work requires ethical behavior and leadership. This study did not reveal any situation where Meade acted unethically. The clear ordering of his values was such that he rarely found himself in an ethical dilemma. The third research question in this study looked to determine how Meade dealt with ethical dilemmas, but there is only one situation in which he felt an ethical dilemma. He objected to the gift of a house, and advised against it, but his wife simply acted without him and accepted the gift. This is the only evidence that Meade felt he had an ethical dilemma and is insufficient to determine how he handled them.

Meade also lacked key leadership traits. He was a poor public communicator and failed to take advantage of the press to promote his cause. His temper resulted in poor relationships within the army and except with a few trusted subordinates, he did little to build relationships. While he appreciated the sacrifices and efforts of his soldiers, he rarely went among them to express his appreciation. He did nothing to cultivate cordial relationships with key stakeholders such as Congress and the public, and frequently incurred their

wrath. Meade's leadership was not the inspiring leadership that current literature advocates, but he displayed leadership qualities that have been ignored in the past.

Kouzes and Posner (2007) assert that leadership is for everybody. Meade may fall short of being the ideal CEO as described in the leadership literature that evolves from the corporate world and dominates the list of best sellers, but he excels as an everyday leader. At the core of the results of the Good Works research is responsibility and ethics. Good work requires ethics and both require responsibility. Meade's experience demonstrates that fulfilling your responsibilities is critical to success, even though it does not guarantee it. Meade's position as a commander required him to lead everyday. On a day-to-day basis, the army's fortunes were determined by Meade's decisions. Meade understood his responsibilities, as complex as they were, and he generally exercised good judgment in making those decisions. Even in the rare instances where his judgment was questionable, it was never because he abdicated his responsibilities. In that regard, Meade did do good work.

The most disappointing aspect of Meade's leadership is what never was. The early marginalization of Meade denied him the opportunity to truly lead. Lincoln's early misjudgment of Meade's intent as a commander resulted in the slow erosion of Meade's opportunities to lead until they finally almost totally disappeared under Grant's command. Leadership often fails when followers will not be led. In Meade's case, his followers were willing, but his superiors did not

give him the opportunity to lead. Meade displayed flashes of outstanding leadership, but his is not as much a story of leadership as it is of leadership lost.

Leadership Lessons

Five lessons in leadership emerged from Meade's experience as a commander and leader. First, leaders cannot be effective when marginalized or when they lack the support of their superiors. Second, the lack of support can create stress that negatively impacts the judgment of leaders. Third, leaders must attend to maintaining the support of those superiors. Fourth, leaders must be able to successfully deal with criticism. Finally, domain and field conflicts can impact leadership effectiveness.

Meade's experience exposes the devastating effect that the lack of support and marginalization can have upon the most dedicated leaders. This research reveals that when Meade lacked the support and approval of his superiors, he became disconsolate to the point of losing his enthusiasm as a leader, fell into momentary lapses in judgment, and contemplated retirement. Robert E. Lee gave Meade all he could contend with and the sense of being marginalized and unappreciated added an unnecessary burden that negatively impacted Meade personally and professionally. Conversely, when Meade felt he had the support and approval of his superiors, his stress would wane and his energy would return. So strong was this effect that Meade convincingly wrote his wife that he did not care about his promotion to major general in the regular army as long as he had the good feelings of Grant and the administration in Washington.

Lincoln respected Meade but misjudged him. Early in Meade's command he erroneously determined that Meade lacked the desire to fight and lost confidence in Meade. Heifitz and Linski (2002) warn leaders that they may be so focused on their mission that they fail to see the dangers in front of them. Marginalization is one such danger. This is precisely what occurred in Meade's case, for he failed to recognize the lack of support and marginalization as it first occurred and therefore did nothing to regain Lincoln's trust. He did not hesitate to oppose injustices imposed on him, and while he generally did so cordially and appropriately, his position was always argumentative. Meade's inability to build better relationships was a factor in his marginalization.

Meade became frustrated and bitter when he felt that he was not supported. Given the circumstances, this is understandable, but it served no purpose. Meade was a sensitive person, often overly sensitive. He knew this, but he was still unable to find a successful way to withstand criticism and the perceived unjust actions of his superiors. Given his value system, he probably was not capable of reacting rationally rather than emotionally to his situation. His sensitivity was his greatest fault. Treated differently he would not have become so disconsolate. However, the reality is that leadership is always accompanied by criticism and those who cannot handle the criticism will struggle as leaders and run the risk of becoming ineffective.

Leaders who operate in different domains and fields can share the same mission but differ significantly in how to achieve it. The field conflict that existed between Meade and Lincoln contributed to Lincoln's lack of confidence in and

criticism of Meade. While Meade understood and honored his duty to obey the orders of his superiors, his disdain of politics prevented him from understanding Lincoln's position. He failed to see or even seek a middle ground where their respective interests could be served. Meade was correct in refusing to be influenced to irresponsibility, but incorrect in failing to at least express sensitivity to Lincoln's needs.

Implications

Good Work and Leadership

The framework used in this study was derived from the procedures used in conducting the Good Work Research (Gardner, Csikszentmihaly, & Damon, 2001), even though the concepts of Good Work had not previously been applied to a historical figure. The method served this researcher well and resulted in a recursive analysis of the data as themes and relationships emerged. Further study of historical figures using this method may yield new insights into leadership.

The Good Work research was not designed to explore leadership, yet it seems to be fundamental to leadership. Further research is warranted to determine if good work is actually fundamental to successful leadership. The role that good work plays in the development of leadership, especially everyday leadership, is worthy of additional study. Is good work fundamental to all leadership theories? How does a leader acquire the ability to meet his or her responsibilities? How do successful leaders prioritize conflicting responsibilities? When, where, and how do domains or fields conflict? How do successful leaders

handle such conflicts? Does an understanding of good work impact the attitudes or behaviors of leaders or potential leaders? Such studies may add to the understanding of leadership by providing a perspective that is not based on the study of heroes or CEO's.

A New Perspective of Meade

My interest in both Gettysburg and leadership prompted the suggestion that I might enjoy studying General Meade. After some initial reading, I abandoned the research, but the feeling that Meade was misunderstood lingered and eventually I returned to the study. I expected to find a shortage of research material, but quite the contrary was true. There has been little study explicitly about Meade, but due largely to the extensive study that the Battle of Gettysburg has commanded, there are many accounts and opinions of Meade to be found.

I thought that I would find evidence that either the historians were correct in their judgment of Meade, or prove that they were wrong. Eventually I came to realize that Meade's command effectiveness has almost exclusively been evaluated from a military perspective. From this perspective, either position can be defended. This research does not take that perspective. I claim no expertise in military affairs of any type and leave those judgments to those who are better qualified to do so. This research evolved into a study of Meade, the man within the general. A different understanding of Meade emerged; the story of a man who struggled with the challenges of leadership, yet persisted in spite of personal debilitating emotional and psychological stress, and made a significant contribution to the reunification of the nation.

Recent historians generally offer a more positive view of Meade's command ability than their predecessors, often rejecting the criticisms of key decisions that have plagued his reputation. These positive accounts of Meade's command still incorporate the previous criticisms and then seek to defend him. When the undue criticism is simply dismissed and the researcher incorporates Meade's thoughts, feelings, values, and beliefs, the story becomes richer and the significance of Meade's contributions become clearer. The view of Meade's command through his eyes, rather than through the jaundiced lens of poor historiography, reveals the depth of his sacrifice and the importance of his contributions to the Union cause.

Further research that seeks to understand his leadership may provide insights for students of leadership as well as students of the Civil War. Leaders, especially school superintendents, may benefit from studies that delve deeper into how Meade dealt with the challenges of leadership and how the actions of his superiors impacted his effectiveness. Research that seeks to identify the processes that lead to marginalization, the lack of support of superiors, or both, as well as the impact that these leadership dangers have on a leader's effectiveness may lead to new practices in the field. These studies could focus on other historical figures whose leadership has not been studied or on current leaders, especially school superintendents.

Final Thoughts

This research represents the findings and conclusions of this researcher. This research has not exhausted the study of Meade's leadership. It is my belief

that Meade is worthy of further study that focuses on specific leadership issues and that these studies will inform our understanding of leadership.

Leadership studies that focus strictly on the successes or failures of a specific leader run the risk of obscuring valuable lessons. Success and failure cannot be eliminated from consideration, but an evaluation of the dynamics of a person's belief's, values, skills and attributes will lead to a deeper understanding and reveal what might be overlooked. Such is the case with Meade.

As this research began as a study of Meade's command and leadership, so should it end. His contributions to the success of the Union and the preservation of the nation have been underrated. They go beyond a single but significant battlefield victory. He served in extremely trying circumstances, possibly as no other may have been able to serve. I leave it to the reader to judge his leadership, but there is no doubt that he was the right man at the right time. The nation needed him.

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Appendix A: Coding Guide

Introduction

The intent of this guide is to provide guidelines for coding that will focus the researcher and result in consistent coding. The guide defines categories for coding and includes descriptions, explanations of concepts, and examples for each coding category, as well as comments. Background information is provided to help the coder in developing the context of the category.

The purpose of coding is to distill the data into categories that can be analyzed, leading to findings and a narrative. The first step in the analysis of data is to list the important conditions, behaviors, communications, and thoughts involved in the controversial events occurring during General Meade's command of the Army of the Potomac, June 30, 1863 until June of 1865. Those events are listed below. The second step is to code these items into pre-determined categories designed to answer the research questions, or to place the data into categories that emerge from the analysis process. The third step is to ask pertinent questions of the data, questions that are suggested by the research questions or the iterant analysis of the data.

The following definitions operationalize the categories for coding. There must be clear evidence to code an act or event. If the data qualifies in more than one category, it should be placed in all applicable categories. However, care should be taken to be discerning and not place data into a questionable category. If the data does not completely fit a category, it should be left out.

Section I: Responsibility

Definition of Responsibility

The first consideration of this research is to determine whether or not General Meade met his responsibilities to various constituent groups. This is fundamental to doing good work. For our purposes, responsibility is a state manifested in any act, decision, or communication that is intended to or results in providing for or maintaining the welfare of any constituent and is directly attributable to General Meade. Any act that contains these elements is considered a responsible act. These elements must be present before considering the additional elements in the categories of responsibility described as follows:

Responsibility to self

Responsibility to self or personal goals refers to being consistent with one's personal goals and moral beliefs. Is the action consistent with the moral beliefs of the individual? For instance, General Meade frequently expresses his belief in the importance of and his love for his family. In January of 1865 he advises Grant of his son's failing health after Grant recalled him from a visit home, requesting to be able to return home soon (Meade, 1913/1994). This request is consistent with Meade's expressed values and is therefore consistent with his moral philosophy. Accordingly, the act is coded in this category.

Responsibility to family

Responsibility to family and friends is manifested in any act, decision, or communication that is intended to or results in providing for or maintaining the welfare of any of Meade's family or personal friends outside of the army and is directly attributable to General Meade. The example in the above paragraph also qualifies in this category and would also be recorded accordingly. Remember that items can be coded into more than one category.

Responsibility to subordinates

Responsibility to subordinates refers to responsible acts by Meade that benefited those in the army who were subordinate to him. In the Army of the Potomac, this is everybody from corps commanders to the soldiers in the field. When Meade expressed to his wife that to attack at Williamsport would have resulted in the useless deaths of many men (Meade, 1913/1994), his decision was evidence of being responsible to his subordinates.

Responsibility to superiors

Responsibility to superiors refers to responsible acts by Meade that related to his superiors in the army. These include President Lincoln, Secretary of War Stanton, General Halleck, and eventually, General Grant. Providing for the welfare of his superiors involved Meade's obligation to assist these people in successfully fulfilling their assigned responsibilities. Lincoln and Halleck felt they were responsible for the safety of Washington, D. C. and it was Meade's responsibility to operate in a manner than fulfilled their responsibility. One of Meade's most important traits was his ability to follow orders (Thomsen, Ed.,

2002), and those situations where General Meade followed orders, especially orders he did not agree with, should be recorded in this category.

Responsibility to the army

Responsibility to the army is manifested in those responsible acts that benefited the Army of the Potomac in particular, or the Union army in general. For instance, Meade was at odds with the newspapers of the North because of actions he took against newspaper reporters who Meade felt had reported falsehoods that reflected negatively on the Army of the Potomac (Meade, 1913/1994). By doing so, Meade protected the reputation of the Army of the Potomac in particular, and of the army in general.

Acceptance of responsibility

Acceptance of responsibility is evident primarily in a person's communications, although actions can also reflect the acceptance of responsibility. Simply put, it occurs when someone says that he or she did or did not do something. For example, General Meade was questioned by the CCW on the possible loss of a day in pursuing Lee after Gettysburg when Meade waited for two corps to come to his position at Middleton. General Meade explained that he had delayed, but for a different reason. He replied that he decided to rest his troops and wait for necessary supplies, such as shoes, to arrive. Thus, General Meade demonstrated his honesty and he accepted responsibility for the delay.

Responsibility to duty

Responsibility to duty refers to responsible acts that support his duty and mission, as Meade saw it. Duty is what Meade believed he was obligated to do

as part of being a soldier and as a result of his position in the army. There are numerous incidents in Meade's letters and communications where he directly expresses that he believes he did his duty, or that duty dictates a particular action. Meade even forsook a visit home to see his dying son when he felt his presence was required on the battlefield (Meade, 1913/1994).

Responsibility to people unknown/nation

Responsibility to people unknown/nation involves protecting the welfare of those who are unknown to Meade. This includes future generations and the nation. Maneuvering the army to prevent any attack on Washington and pressing Lee to force him to turn away from his advance into Pennsylvania are examples that are included in this category.

Section II: Ethics

The second consideration in determining if General Meade did good work is his ethical behavior. An individual that performs technically well but unethically is not doing good work. The three categories to consider under ethics are identity, core mission, and the standards and values of the domain.

Mission

"Each realm of work has a central mission which and reflects a basic societal need and which the practitioner should feel committed to realizing" (Gardner, et al., 2001, p. 10). The mission of the army, as conceived in Meade's day, was to defend the United States against foreign invasion (Skelton, 1992). The immediate mission was to suppress the uprising of the Confederacy and preserve the United States. According to President Lincoln and subsequently

General Grant, the specific mission for Meade and the Army of the Potomac was the defeat of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. But the central mission of the army, based on societal need, was and still is, to protect the people of the nation. Expressions of some form of the central mission or acts reflecting them should be included in this category. For instance, Meade's message to the troops after Gettysburg expressed that the enemy had been driven from Northern soil (Meade, 1913). While this expression angered Lincoln, it clearly reflects the core mission of the army.

Standards of Performance

A domain is an area of work in which a set of specialized knowledge and skills has been codified in a way that facilitates a smooth transition to new practitioners. A domain consists of the ideas related to practice and the ethical constraints of that practice. For instance, there are a number of instructional and class management techniques that are known to teachers and can be passed down to teachers in training. These conceptualizations of teaching have been handed down through the years and carry weight in the domain. Other members of the domain, as well as society, expect practitioners to comply with the guidelines established by the conceptualizations by using these techniques or reasonable modifications of them. This is part of the standard for the domain and it exerts a certain force on practitioners and society.

For General Meade, the domain was the newly emerging domain of the professional soldier. West Point soldiers faced automatic opposition from the Radical Republicans in Congress who neither trusted nor respected West Point

generals, believing them to be in sympathy with the South and therefore, too cautious to win the war. (See Chapter II for more on this). Nevertheless, the fledgling domain of the soldier had developed guiding standards.

“Each profession prescribes standards of performance, some permanent, some changing’ (Gardner, et al., 1961, p. 10). From the formal training and cultural influences of West Point developed a guiding set of ideas and values that were fundamental to all army officers. They believed in a hierarchal and authoritarian society. Officers identified positively with the service world, yet felt separated from the rest of society. They believed that war was a science to be conducted by those formally trained and/or experienced in war. Officers should not be involved in politics. Soldiers must obey orders and competently perform their duties. And most importantly, a soldier’s duty was to defend the citizens of the nation from any threat to their safety. These beliefs formed the guiding standards of this emerging professional army.

Expressions of these standards and acts indicating the influence of the domain standards should be included in this category. For instance, General Meade positioned his army to protect Washington and Baltimore, as ordered, in spite of the fact that he felt that a different line of operations would be better (Meade, 1913/1914). Meade’s ethical dilemma at this point was whether to fulfill his duty to follow orders or his professional obligation to attack the enemy in the most effective manner, the latter being influenced by Meade’s training and the standards of the profession.

Identity

“Our third consideration is a person’s own background, traits, and values, as these add up to a holistic sense of identity: a person’s deeply felt convictions about who she is.... a sense of identity also includes personality traits, motivation, intellectual strengths and weakness, and personal likes and dislikes.... Each person’s identity is shaped by an amalgam of forces, including family history, religious and ideological beliefs, community membership, and idiosyncratic individual differences (Gardner, et al., 2001, p. 11).

Identity is what determines the lines a person will not cross. Each person determines this or her own line, based on the elements of identity. This category is unique in that it includes not only actions or expressions that reflect Meade’s identity, but also includes a list of the elements of identity, those traits that define General Meade. Meade’s temper, caution, desire for accurate information and engineering background are examples of traits that define Meade. Meade’s deep religious convictions should also be noted, as many ethical decisions are guided by religious belief (Gardner, et al, 2001).

Section III: Forces Impacting Good Work

Four elements are always present when a person is trying to do good work. These forces are always acting on the situation, even though they may not be apparent to the worker. Good work is not guaranteed when all four forces are aligned and working to the worker’s favor, but the ability to do good work is greatly enhanced under this circumstance. When the forces are not aligned and

are in disharmony, good work is very difficult to accomplish, but not impossible. The four constituents of good work are, the individual worker, the domain of work, the forces of the field operating on the domain, and the reward system (Gardner, et al., 2007).

The individual worker

Included in this category are acts or communications that reflect Meade's beliefs about work, or the job of a soldier. Also included are the individual's motivation for doing good work, and the personality and character traits that determine whether the worker will hold to high standards of performance or will be inclined to engage in marginal, irresponsible, or compromised work (Gardner, et al., 2007).

The traits in this category relate directly to the individual's propensity to do good work, and they may or may not be included in the category of Identity in section II. For instance, Meade was a tireless worker when engaged in a campaign, forsaking sleep until an action had reached its conclusion. Gettysburg provides one such example. General Meade remained at his headquarters in Maryland until he had all of the corps moving toward Gettysburg and then he moved to the battlefield, arriving during the night, early on the second day and not sleeping until the battle had ended (Coddington, 1968). These actions are indicative of Meade's beliefs about his work, and demonstrate that he holds to a high standard of performance.

The Domain of work

This category contains the same information as *Standards of Performance* beginning on page 4 above. It is listed here only to maintain the organizational structure of the framework.

Forces of the field

The people who actually practice a domain's procedures, based on that domain's knowledge, skills, and standards, comprise a field. Fields are occupied by the gatekeepers, practitioners, and apprentices or students. The gatekeepers control entry into the field as well as existing acceptable practice. The bulk of the field consists of expert practitioners who are authorized to practice within the domain. Apprentices and students are those who are in the process of attaining the skills and knowledge necessary to become a practitioner.

The forces exerted on the field are flexible and may change over time. Generally, gatekeepers control admission to the fields, evaluators determine the merit of a person's work, and others control the rewards and opportunities of the field. During the Civil War, state and national politicians controlled entry into the field. The officer corps of the Union army had many career officers, who largely, but not entirely, were West Point graduates such as Meade and McClellan. There was a rift between them and the politically appointed generals such as Butterfield and Sickles.

For General Meade, the primary evaluator of his performance was President Lincoln. However General Halleck, Secretary of War Stanton, and members of Congress all had the president's ear. The people of the North,

largely through their newspapers also expressed their evaluative opinion of any general. Lincoln stayed abreast of their leanings, largely as a matter of political concern. In some circumstances, a Union general, such as Sickles or Doubleday would gain an evaluators attention and become part of the evaluative process.

This category includes the actions or communications of General Meade or others that are related to the friction between political and career officers, or are related to the evaluation of General Meade's performance.

Reward system

The larger society controls the reward system for a domain. Society sanctions or denies the rewards for a practitioner by its general exertion over the field. While specific entities or people control a person's direct rewards, the larger society establishes the general level of rewards (Gardner, et al., 2007). In today's United States, society has placed a high value and created a subsequent generous reward system for actors, musicians and athletes while reluctantly allowing gains in the reward system for teachers. Most recently, society has started to condemn outrageous rewards for irresponsible corporate officers, but as yet, has not significantly altered that situation. Nevertheless, it is a recent example of the ambient society exercising control over a domain.

Congress, President Lincoln, General Halleck, and later, General Grant, controlled the specific rewards for General Meade, largely in the form of promotions or the denial of such. On the other hand, the reward of the public's praise and support was largely controlled by the press. The value of a

professional officer was not clearly established, partly due to the infancy of the profession.

This category includes actions and communications that indicate the control or the attempt to control rewards for Meade's performance as the commanding general of the Army of the Potomac. The actions and communications of Meade, the press, General Grant, General Halleck, Secretary of War Stanton, Congress, members of Congress, other politicians, Union Generals, President Lincoln and others who controlled the reward system are included in this category.

Section VI: Irresponsible Work

Use of position for personal or monetary gain

A person is considered to be doing irresponsible work when his or her sole purpose is monetary or other personal gain. Doing so would result in the lack of fulfilling other responsibilities as described above.

Abuse of subordinates

This category involves any action or communication that ignores the needs of subordinates, such as food, clothing, and rest, or directly shows a disregard for subordinates. In war, the soldiers are often pushed to fatigue and are hungry because there is no choice, but there are times when officers have control of these situations. It would be abusive if an officer pushed his soldiers when unnecessary or failed to provide supplies when they were readily available.

Achieve credit unfairly

Achieving credit unfairly involves accepting credit for something you did not do, or promoting yourself over others, especially those more deserving, in order to promote yourself. General Sickles used his connections with New York City newspapers to claim credit unfairly for his role in Gettysburg when he falsely claimed credit for initiating the battle and preventing Meade from withdrawing from the field.

Failure to support core values

Failure to support core values is manifested in actions or communications that ignore the established core values of the domain. The failure to follow an order, such as occurred with General Sickles at the Peach Orchard, ignores the army's core value of following orders. The core values of the army are discussed in Chapter Two.

Section VI: Event Descriptions

Pursuit of Lee after Gettysburg

Includes the events from the end of Lee's attack on July 3 until Lee crosses the Potomac River on July 14, 1863. Meade's decision not to attack Lee's entrenched troops at Williamsport is included this category, although it could well be considered alone, due to the attention it has received over the years. It is included here to keep it in the context in which it occurred. This includes the Mine Run decisions.

Meade-Sickles controversy

This event contains anything related to the Meade-Sickles controversy as described in Chapter Two. The testimony of Meade, Sickles and others at the hearings of the CCW regarding Meade's performance at Gettysburg is part of this event. The perspectives of others regarding Sickles and Meade's positions on Gettysburg are also considered in this event category. This includes incidents related to the Historicus letters.

Grant

This category focuses on the command and personal relationships of General Grant and General Meade from the time Grant became Lieutenant General in charge of all the Union armies until General Meade died in 1872. This is also discussed in Chapter Two.

Appendix B

Civil War Army Organization and Rank

Organization

A Civil War army consisted of many small parts that were joined together in stair-step fashion to make larger units. There were six basic units of organization. The smallest was a company, which had around 100 men. The largest was an army, which could have many thousands of men.

COMPANY

A company was the basic unit in a Civil War army.

A company had approximately 100 men and was commanded by a captain.

Companies were named with the letters A–K
(*J* was not used because it looked too much like *I*.)

REGIMENT

A regiment usually contained ten companies.

A regiment had approximately 1,000 men and was commanded by a colonel.

If the unit had only four to eight companies, it was called a battalion rather than a regiment.

BRIGADE

A brigade contained an average of four regiments.

A brigade had approximately 4,000 men and was commanded by a brigadier general.

Union brigades were named with numbers, but Confederate brigades were often named after their current or former commanding officers.

DIVISION

A division contained three to five brigades.

A division had approximately 12,000 men and was commanded by a major general.

Confederate divisions tended to contain more brigades than their Union counterparts. Confederate divisions often had twice as many men as Union divisions had.

CORPS

A corps contained an average of three divisions.

A corps had approximately 36,000 men and was commanded by a major general (Union) or a lieutenant general (Confederate).

ARMY

An army comprised from one to eight corps.

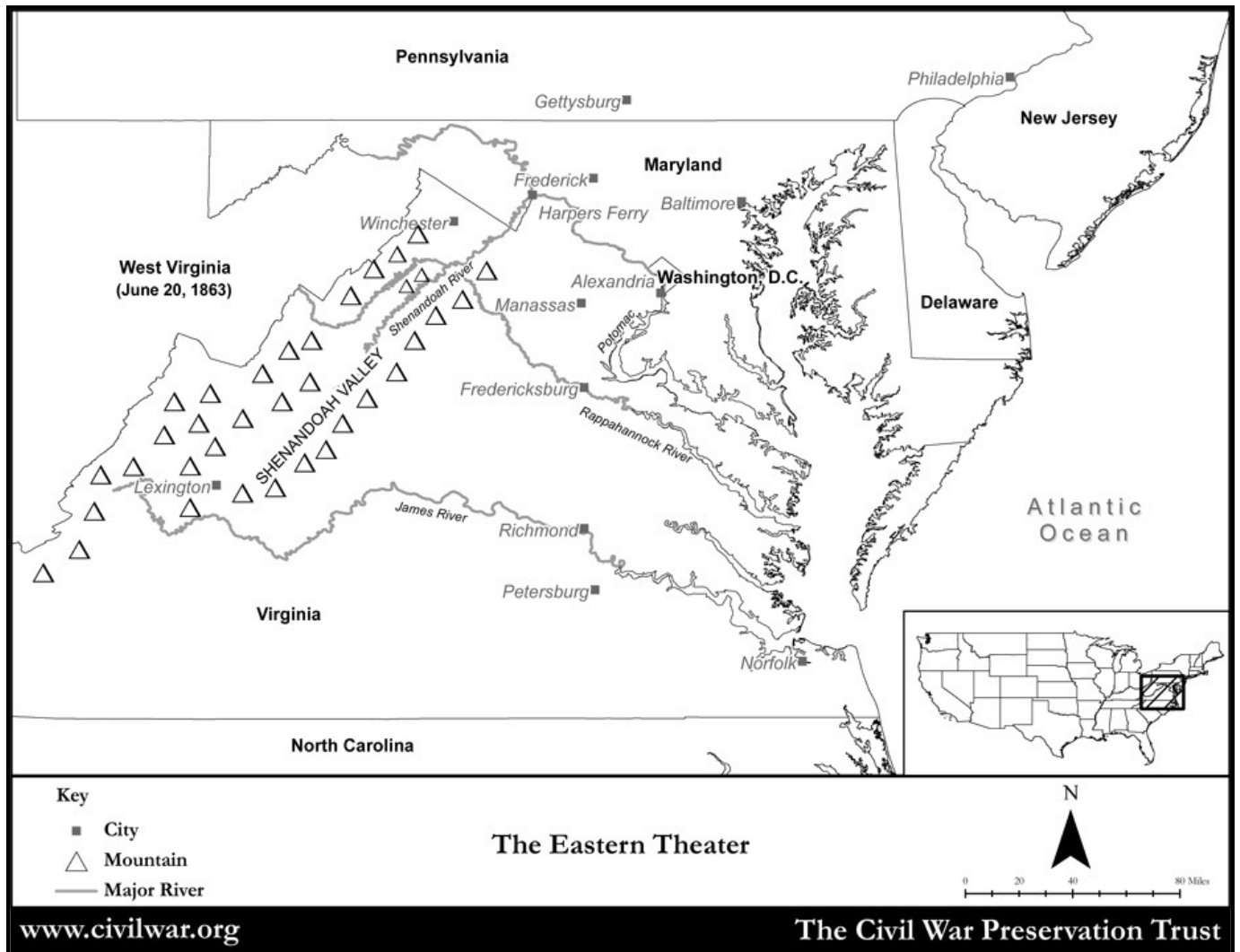
An army was commanded by a general.

The Union often named its armies after rivers or waterways, i.e., Army of the Potomac. The Confederacy named its armies after states or regions, i.e., Army of Northern Virginia.

Retrieved May 20, 2011 from North Carolina Museum of History at <http://ncmuseumofhistory.org/workshops/cw/orgrank.htm>

Appendix C

Map of the Civil War Eastern Theatre of Operation



Appendix D

George Gordon Meade: Civil War Positions and Rank

Brigadier General, United States Volunteers (August 31, 1861-October 2, 1861)

Commander, 2nd Brigade, McCall's Division, Army of the Potomac (October 3, 1861 - March 13, 1862)

Commander 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac (March 13 -April 4, 1862)

Commander, 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division, Department of the Rappahannock (April 4 - June 12, 1862)

Commander, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Division, 5th Corps, Army of the Potomac (June 18 - 30, 1862)

Major, Topographical Engineers (June 18, 1862)

Commander, 1st Brigade, 3rd Division, 3rd Corps, Army of Virginia (August 26 - September 12, 1862)

Commander, 3rd Division, 1st Corps, Army of the Potomac (September 12 -17, & September 29 - December 25, 1862);

Major General, US Volunteers (November 29, 1862)

Commander 5th Corps, Army of the Potomac (December 25, 1862 - January 26, 1863 & February 5-16 & February 28 - June 28, 1863)

Commander Center Grand Division, Army of the Potomac (January 1863)

Commander, Army of the Potomac (June 28, 1863 - December 30, 1864 & January 11 - June 27, 1865);

Brigadier General (July 3, 1863)

Major General (August 18, 1864)