

# Pickett's Charge

R. Lawrence Comstock

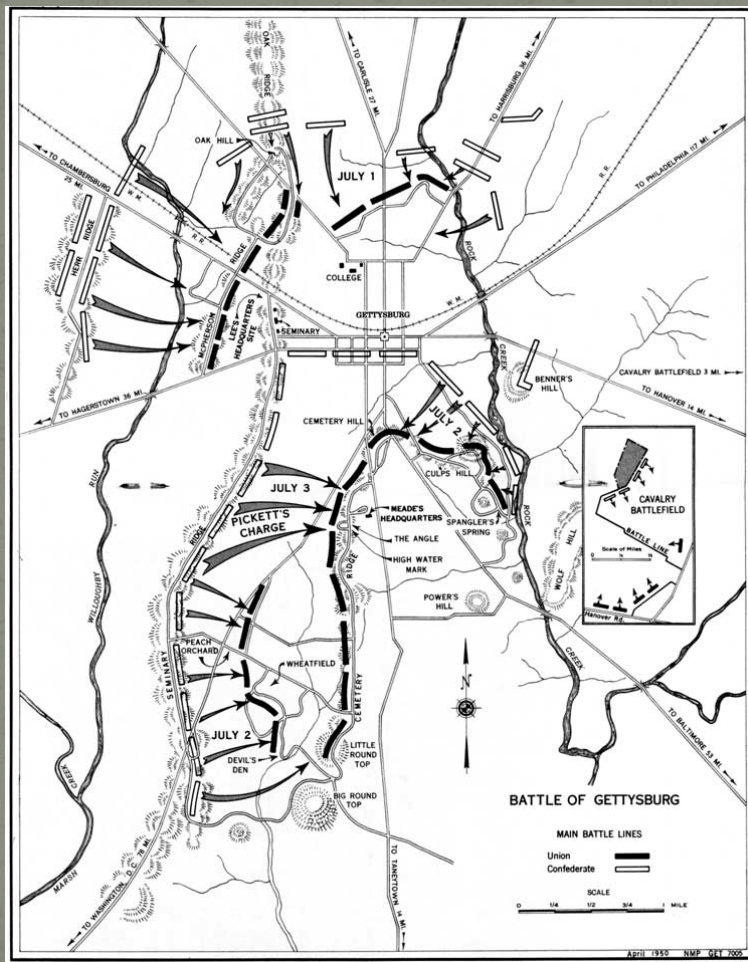
SBCWRT

October 27, 2009

---



# Overall View of the Three-Day Battle of Gettysburg





# End of Second Days Fighting

- Army of Northern Virginia breached Army of the Potomac's defensive Line
  - Lower Culp's Hill
  - Devil's Den
  - Peach Orchard
  - Wright's Brigade had reached the center of Cemetery Ridge



# Devil's Den from Little Round Top





# Wright's Brigade (Anderson's Division, Hills Corps) Breached Union Line





# The Status of the Army of Northern Virginia at end of Second Days Battle

- Far from base of supplies in Virginia
- Enough artillery ammunition for one major battle
- Important positions seized on Union flanks but attacks were not "in concert"
- Major losses in men (20,000 total). One fresh division (Pickett in I Corps)
- Strong desire to achieve a major victory in North



# General Lee's Alternatives for the Third Day

- Move around Union left flank and attack from the rear
- Continue to attack flanks of Union forces
- Attack the Union center
- Retreat and return to Virginia with supplies gathered in Pennsylvania
- Move from Gettysburg and assume a defensive position in Maryland (Longstreet)



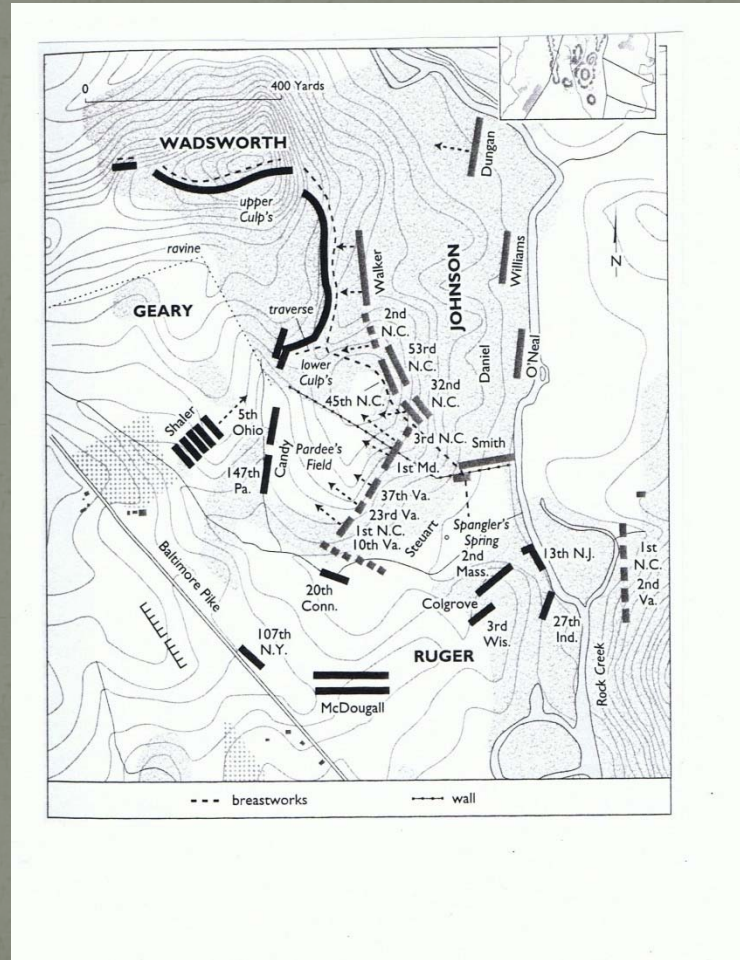
# General Lee's Plan for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Days Battle

- Early morning battle on Lower Culp's Hill forced Lee to abandon plan for coordinated attack in center and Confederate left flank
- Bring Forward Pickett's Division of Longstreet's 1<sup>st</sup> Corps
- Pickett (1<sup>st</sup> Corps), Pettigrew and Trimble (both from 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps) to attack center of Union line
  - Preceded by major artillery barrage
  - General Longstreet to plan and lead attack
- J.E.B. Stuart's Cavalry in rear of Union line to support a breakthrough



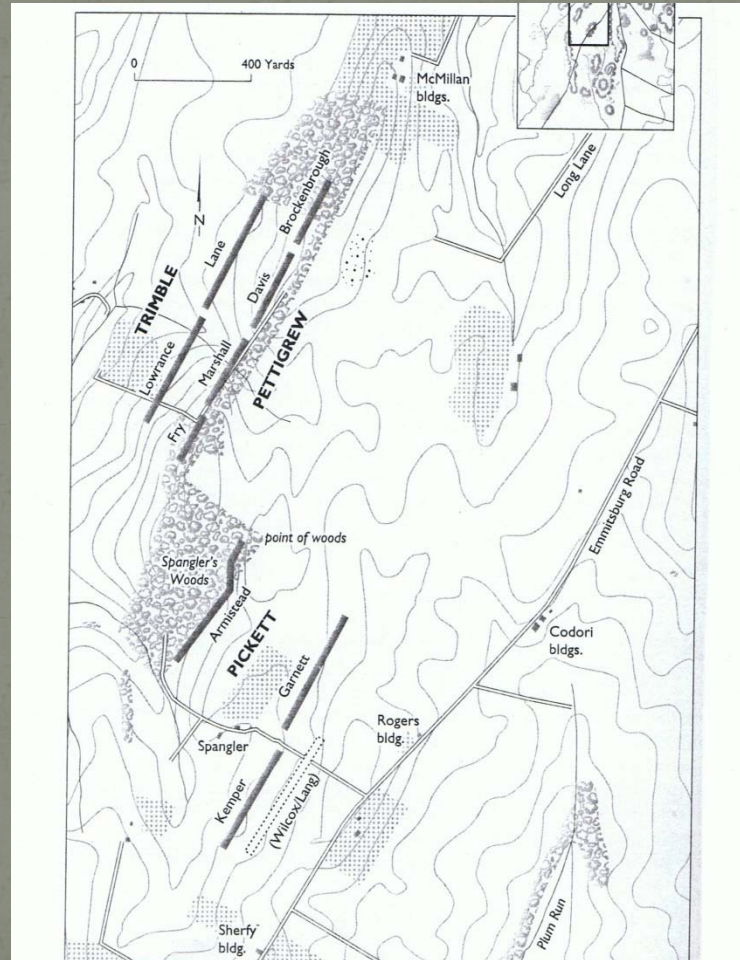
# Ewell's Attack on Lower Culp's Hill

## Morning of July 3





# Pickett, Pettigrew and Trimble Divisions Form for the Charge





# Spangler's Lane-Separates Garnett and Kemper Brigades





# Point of Woods-Separates Pickett and Pettigrew Divisions





# Kemper's Brigade Position in Swale



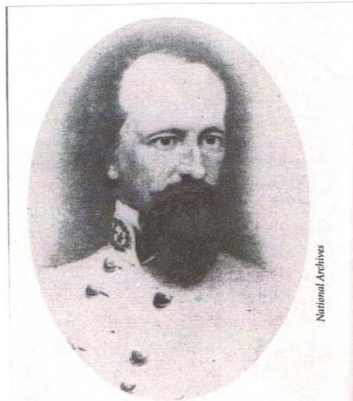


# General Longstreet and General Pickett





# General James Johnston Pettigrew



National Archives

**James J. Pettigrew: "had we succeeded the evening before, no doubt our army would have been on the road to... negotiations for peace."**



# General Isaac Trimble





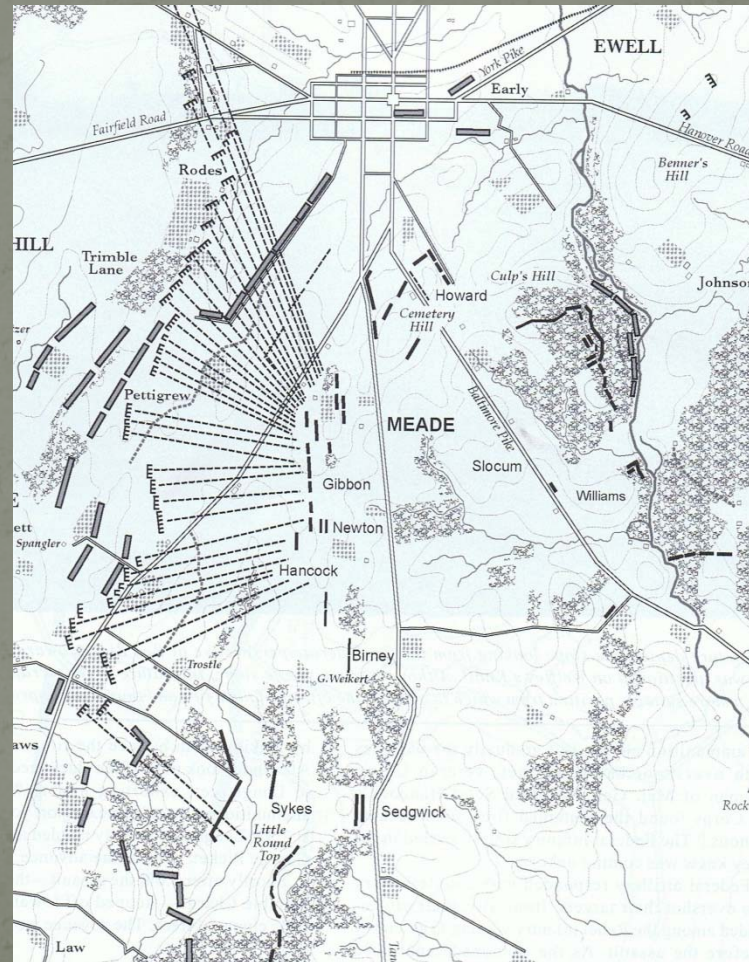
# Brigades in Charge

- Pickett 3 Brigades
- Pettigrew (Heath wounded on 1<sup>st</sup> Day) 4 Brigades
- Trimble (substituting for Pender) 2 Brigades
- Pickett 6000 men
- Pettigrew and Trimble 6500 men



# Confederate Artillery Barrage

- Objective to silence Union guns in center of Union line
- 170 guns



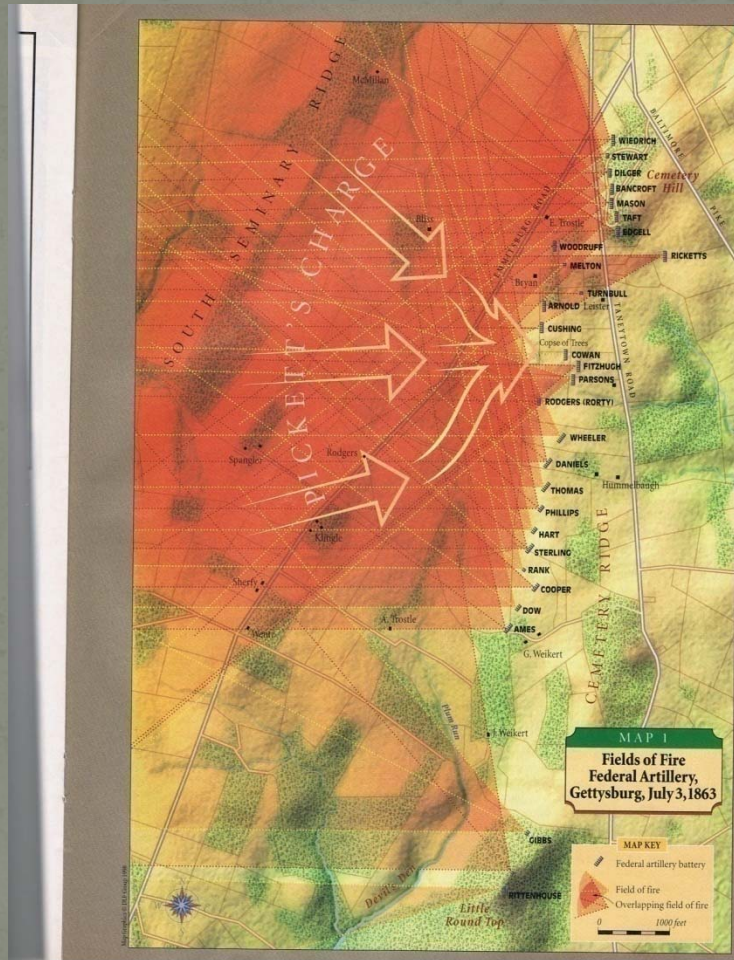


# Colonel Alexander and General Longstreet Directing Artillery Barrage



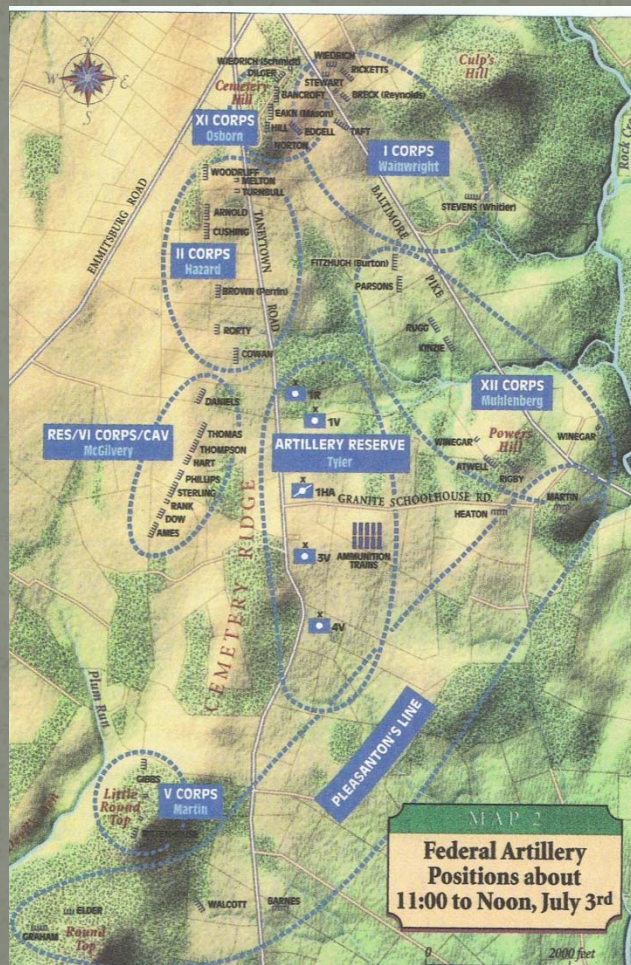


# Union Artillery Response to Pickett's Charge





# Union Artillery Positions





# McGilvery's Battery Position viewed from Little Round Top





- 400 yards spacing between Pickett and Pettigrew/Trimble Divisions

- Pettigrew attacked straight ahead. Fry on right-flank was “Brigade of Direction”.

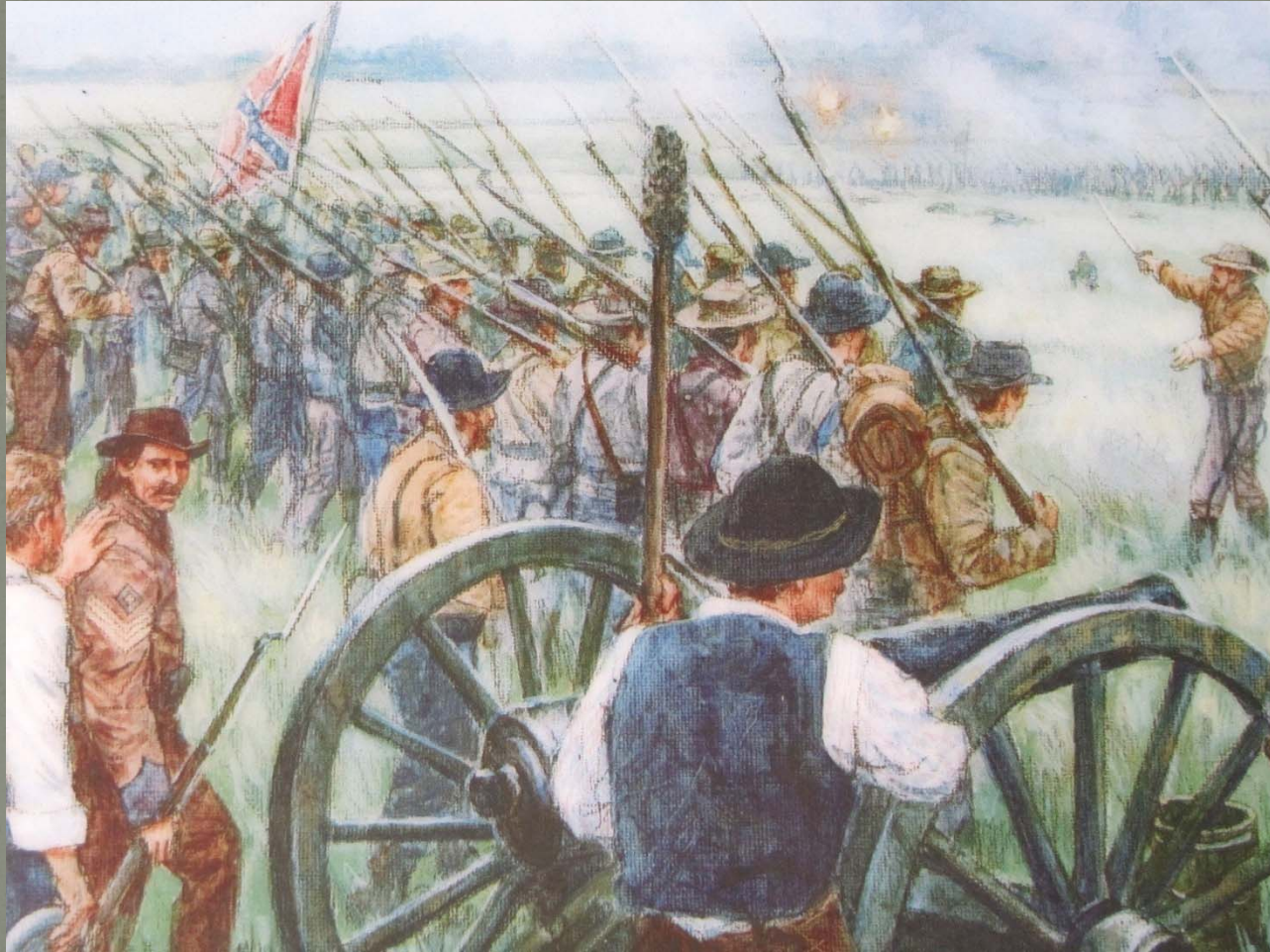
- Pickett’s Division moved toward the left.

- Copse of Trees and “The Angle” dividing line between Pickett and Pettigrew/Trimble





# Pickett's Charge Starts





# Brigadier General Henry Hunt-Chief of Artillery



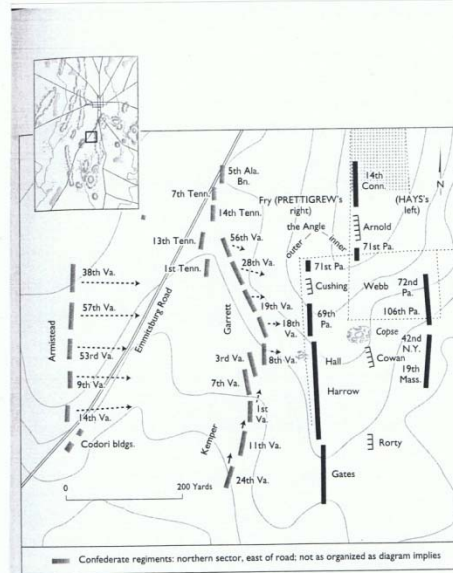


# Emmitsburg Road Fences –a Major Obstacle





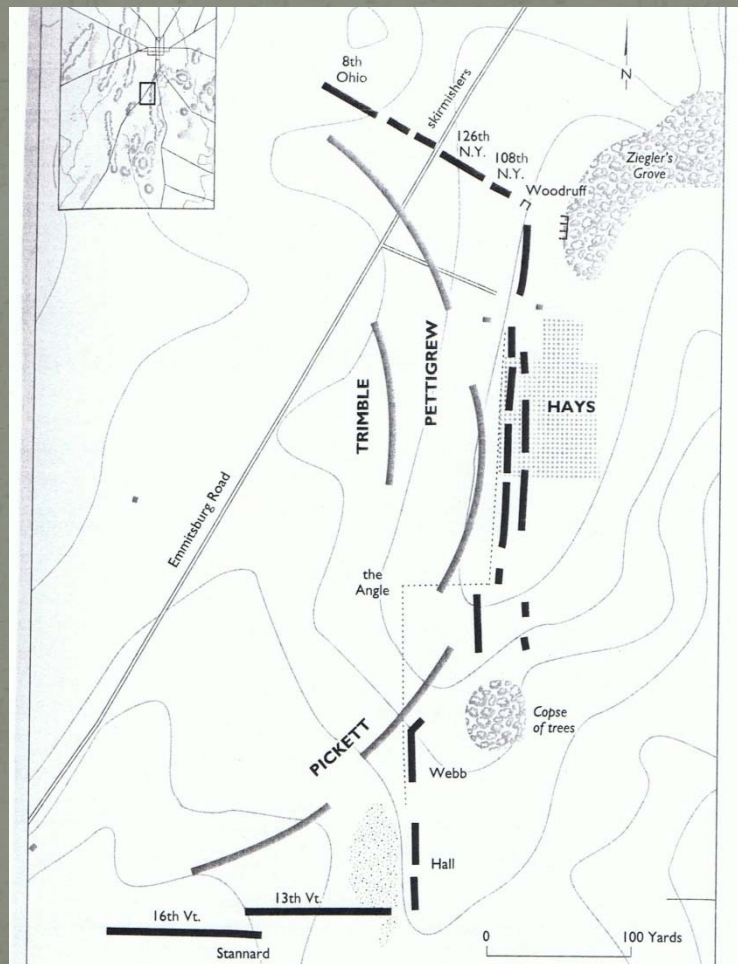
# Pickett Masses at Union Center



Map 4-24  
Pickett's division masses at  
the Union center



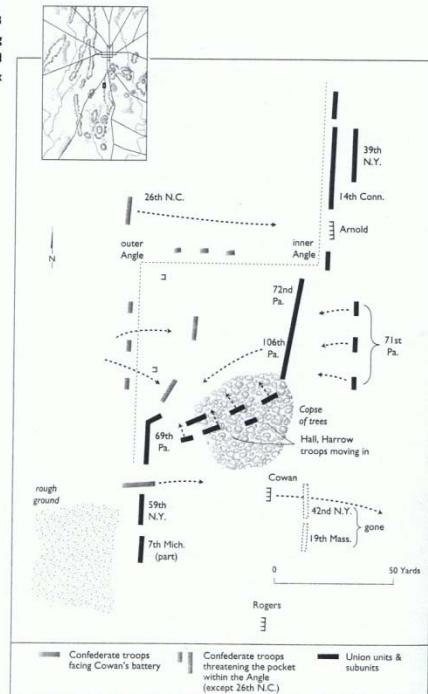
# Double Envelopment





# High-Water Mark

Map 4-33  
The High-Water Mark is passing  
its crest as the Union center and  
center-left counterattack





# The Angle





# Officer Casualties in Pickett's Division

- All three Brigadiers
- Thirteen Colonels (eight killed, five wounded)
- Of thirty five officers above Captain, one came back unhurt



# High- Water Mark





# General Armistead at High- Water Mark



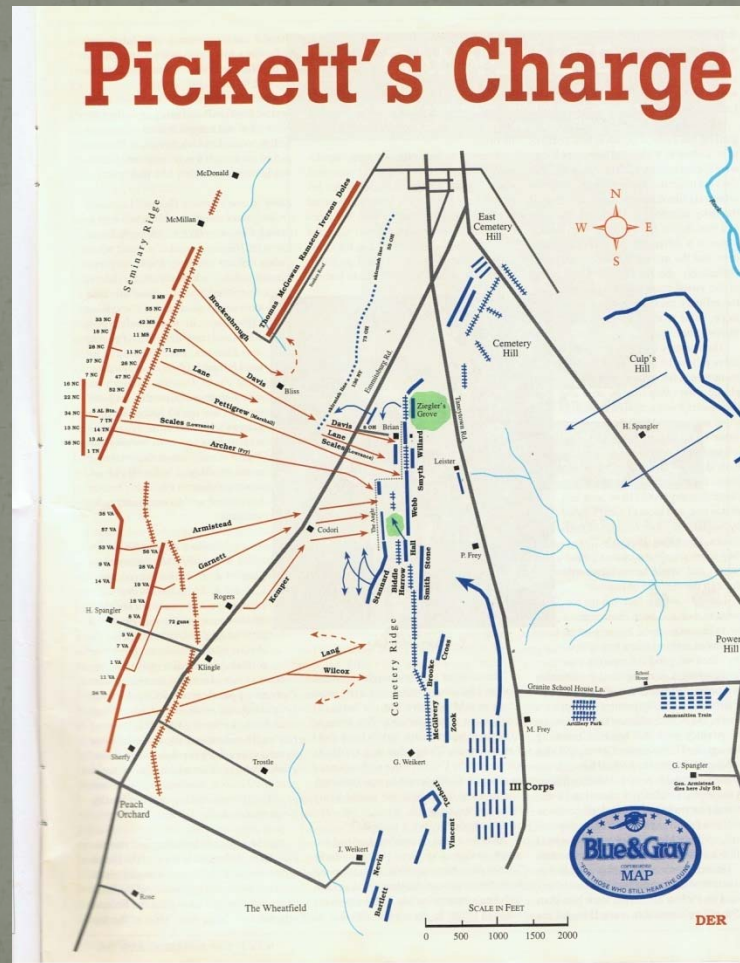


# General Garnett at High-Water Mark





# Cadmus Wilcox and David Lang's Brigades Attack and are Repulsed





# Summary of Casualties in Battle of Gettysburg

	Confederate	Union
Day 1 + Day 2	20,451	21,549
Day 3	7,077	1,500
Total	27,528	23,049



# Reasons for Failure of Pickett's Charge

- Longstreet failed to adequately plan for support on the flanks of the attacking force
- The artillery preparation was not well designed.
  - Not enough enfilading fire
  - Plan for moving the guns forward was not realistic
- Insufficient number of troops at point of attack
- **The most important reason was:**

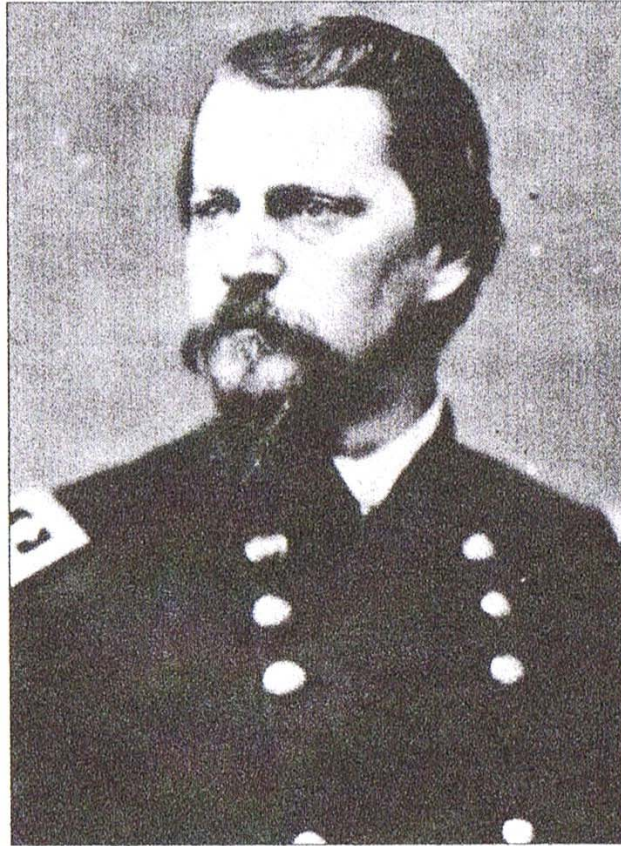


# Brigadier General Henry Hunt-Chief of Artillery





# Maj. General Winfield Scott Hancock Commander of Center of Union Line



**Winfield Scott Hancock, USA**



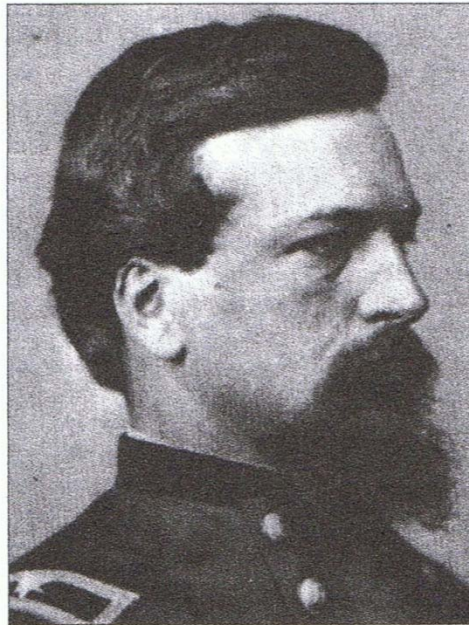
# Brig. Gen. Alexander Hays-Commander of Right Flank of 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps Line



**Alexander Hays, USA**



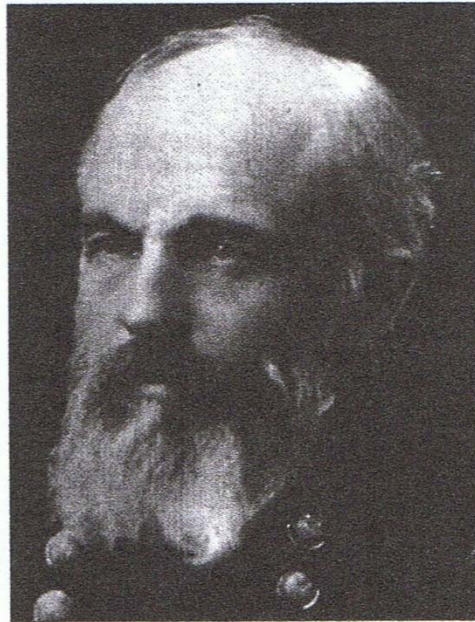
# Brig. Gen. Alexander Webb-Brigade Commander in Center of Union Line



Alexander S. Webb, USA



# Brig. Gen. George Stannard-Brigade Commander at Far Left Flank



**George J. Stannard, USA**







# Could Pickett's Charge have Succeeded?

- Pickett came close to breaching the Union line at the Angle and if adequate support had been present there could have been a serious splitting of the Union line
- However, the Charge was doomed from the start because Meade had strong reserves available to stop the breach (VI Corps-the largest corps in the army)



# General Lee's Alternatives for the Third Day

- Move around Union left flank and attack from the rear
- Continue to attack flanks of Union forces
- Attack the Union center
- Retreat and return to Virginia with supplies gathered in Pennsylvania
- Move from Gettysburg and assume a defensive position in Maryland (Longstreet)