

# **THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649071883

The Battle of Gettysburg by Franklin Aretas Haskell

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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**FRANKLIN ARETAS HASKELL**

**THE BATTLE  
OF GETTYSBURG**



# MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES.

COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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BOSTON, March 4, 1908.

The story of the Battle of Gettysburg was written by Lieutenant Haskell, within a few days after its occurrence. It was addressed to his brother, and was printed for private circulation about fifteen years afterwards. It was reprinted in 1898 as part of the History of the Class of 1854, Dartmouth College, in honor of his memory, but with certain omissions which are explained in a foot note by Captain Daniel Hall, a classmate, and an aide upon the staff of General Howard, who prepared the story for re-publication. The circulation of these editions was so limited that the attention of the great majority of military students was not drawn to them.

A few of our members becoming impressed with the value of this graphic narrative, as an incentive to patriotic thought, requested and obtained permission to republish it under the auspices of the Massachusetts Commandery of the Loyal Legion.

Colonel Frank Aretas Haskell, son of Aretas and Ann (Folson) Haskell, was born in Tunbridge, Vermont, July 13th, 1828, graduated at Dartmouth College with the Class of 1854, and successfully practised law at Madison, Wisconsin, until the outbreak of the war.

He entered the service in July, 1861, as Adjutant of the 6th Wisconsin infantry, and in June, 1862, became an aide-de-camp upon the staff of Brigadier General John Gibbon and was serving as such at the time of this narrative. On February 9th, 1864, he was commissioned Colonel of the 36th Wisconsin Volunteers and organized the regiment which at his request was assigned to the First Brigade, Second Division, Second Corps, Army of the Potomac, the Division being then commanded by General Gibbon, General Hancock commanding the Corps. He participated with zeal and gallantry in all the great battles fought by the Army of the Potomac until his death.

In the advance of Gibbon's Division at the battle of Cold Harbor against a strongly intrenched position, upon the death

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of Colonel Henry McKeen, he succeeded to the command of the Brigade and under a heavy artillery and musketry fire, Colonel Haskell also fell mortally wounded. In his "History of the Second Army Corps," Brevet Brigadier General Francis A. Walker, writing of Gettysburg, mentions Lieutenant Haskell as having "so distinguished himself on the 3rd" and as "bravest of the brave." And again "Colonel Frank A. Haskell of Wisconsin had been known for his intelligence and courage, for his generosity of character and his exquisite culture long before the third day of Gettysburg, when acting as Aide to General Gibbon, he rode mounted between the two lines, then swaying backward and forward under each other's fire, calling upon the men of the Second Division to follow him, and setting an example of valor and self devotion, never forgotten by any man of the thousands who witnessed it. He was promoted from a lieutenancy to a colonelcy for his bravery on this occasion."

Major General Hancock said in his last report on Gettysburg: "I desire particularly to refer to the services of a gallant young officer, First Lieutenant F. A. Haskell, Aide-de-Camp to General Gibbon, who at a critical period of the Battle, when the contending forces were not fifty yards apart, believing that an example was necessary, and ready to sacri-

rice his life, rode between the contending lines with the view of giving encouragement to ours and leading it forward, he being at the moment the only mounted officer in a similar position. He was slightly wounded, and his horse was shot in several places." Also in a Field Order, dated September 28th, 1864, he says: "At Cold Harbor the Colonel of the 36th Wisconsin, as gallant a soldier as ever lived, fell dead on the field."

General Gibbon held him in esteem as his best friend and one of the best soldiers of the Army of the Potomac, and said of him: "There was a young man on my staff who had been in every battle with me and who did more than any other one man to repulse Pickett's assault at Gettysburg and he did the part of a general there."

This was the manner of man from whose glowing words we may gain inspiration forty-five years after he penned them.

CHARLES HUNT,  
Captain, U. S. V.,  
*Committee on Publication.*



## THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG.\*

AT THE HEADQUARTERS, SECOND CORPS D'ARMEE.  
ARMY OF THE POTOMAC, NEAR HARPER'S FERRY, JULY 16, 1863.

The great battle of Gettysburg is now an event of the past. The composition and strength of the armies, their leaders, the strategy, the tactics, the result, of that field are to-day by the side of those of Waterloo,—matters of history. A few days ago these things were otherwise. This great event did not so “cast its shadows before” as to moderate the hot sunshine that streamed upon our preceding march, or to relieve our minds of all apprehension of the result of the second great rebel invasion of the soil north of the Potomac.

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\*The following foot-note appears in the History of the Class of 1864, Dartmouth College.

“This graphic narrative of the great battle of Gettysburg was prepared by our classmate Haskell, a few days after the event. Few men had such opportunity for exact knowledge of the occurrences on that momentous field, as our record of him elsewhere shows; and no one who had the opportunity has improved it as he did, and given the world so early, so minute, and so comprehensive a story of that critical and decisive conflict.

“The narrative went, naturally, to the care of his family, and they have printed it in a pamphlet of seventy-two pages. We owe to their courtesy the opportunity to reproduce it here, and put it in the hands of every classmate. The wish and purpose to do this, whenever a class history should be printed, has been fixed for more than thirty years, and has gained strength with every class meeting. We set it here, primarily for our own gratification, in our love for Haskell, and the honor in which we hold his dear memory. But we do it with the assurance that our Alma Mater will thank us for this contribution to her military record, and that students of our country's history will find and appreciate its value. Hall, who also honored himself and the class in the part he took at Gettysburg, testifies to the surprising accuracy of Haskell's story in minute details. Had he lived, we cannot doubt that the years would have brought him to conspicuous service and honor. Dying, as he did, on the field of duty, the country will cherish his memory, and give him eminent place among her heroes.

“Classmate Hall has read this, and an important foot-note on pages 78 and 79 is signed by him.”

No, —not many days since, at times we were filled with fears and forebodings. The people of the country, I suppose, shared the anxieties of the army, somewhat in common with us, but they could not have felt them as keenly as we did. We were upon the immediate theatre of events as they occurred from day to day, and were of them. We were the army whose province it should be to meet this invasion and repel it; on us was the responsibility for results, most momentous for good or ill, but yet in the future. And so in addition to the solicitude of all good patriots, we felt that our own honor as men and as an army, as well as the safety of the Capitol and the country, was at stake.

And what if that invasion should be successful, and in the coming battle the Army of the Potomac should be overpowered? Would it not be? When our army was much larger than at present, had rested all winter, and, nearly perfect in all its departments and arrangements, was the most splendid army this continent ever saw, only a part of the rebel force, which it now had to contend with, had defeated it,—its leader, rather, —at Chancellorsville! Now the rebel had his whole force assembled; he was flushed with recent victory; was *arrogant* in his career of unopposed invasion; at a favorable season of the year, his daring plans, made by no unskilled head, to transfer the war from his own to his enemy's ground, were being successful; he had gone days' march from his front before Hooker moved or was aware of his departure. Then I believe the army in general, both officers and men, had no confidence in Hooker. Did they not charge him personally with the defeat at Chancellorsville? Were they not still burning with indignation against him for that disgrace? And now again under his leadership they were marching against the enemy! And they knew of nothing, short of the providence of God, that could or would remove him. For many reasons, during the marches prior to the battle, we were anxious and at times heavy at heart.

But the Army of the Potomac was no band of school girls. They were not the men likely to be crushed or utterly discouraged by any mere circumstances in which they might find

themselves placed. They had lost some battles,—they had gained some. They knew what defeat was, and what was victory. But here is the greatest praise that I can bestow on them, or upon any army; with the elation of victory, or the depression of defeat, amidst the hardest toils of the campaign, under unwelcome leadership, at all times and under all circumstances, they were a reliable army still. The Army of the Potomac would do as it was told, always.

Well clothed and well fed,—there never could be any ground of complaint on these heads,—but a mighty work was before them. Onward they moved,—night and day were blended,—over many a weary mile, through dust and through mud, in the broiling sunshine, in the flooding rain, over steeples, through defiles, across rivers, over last year's battle fields, where the skeletons of our dead brethren by hundreds lay bare and bleaching, weary, without sleep for days, tormented with the newspapers and their rumors that their enemy was in Philadelphia, in Baltimore, in all places where he was not,—yet these men could still be relied upon, I believed, when the day of conflict should come. "*Haec olim meminisse juvabit!*" We did not then know this. I mention them now that you may see that in these times we had several matters to think about, and to do, that were not so pleasant as sleeping upon a bank of violets in the shade.

In moving from near Falmouth, Va., the army was formed in several columns, and took several roads. The Second Corps, the rear of the whole, was the last to move, and left Falmouth at daybreak on the 15th of June, and pursued its march through Aquia, Dumfries, Wolf Run Shoals, Centerville, Gainesville, Thoroughfare Gap,—this last we left on the 25th, marching back to Haymarket, where we had a skirmish with the cavalry and horse artillery of the enemy,—Gum Spring, crossing the Potomac at Edwards' Ferry, thence through Poolesville, Frederick, Liberty, and Uniontown. We marched from near Frederick to Uniontown, a distance of thirty-two miles, from eight o'clock A. M. to nine P. M. on the 28th. I think this is the longest march accomplished in so short a time by a corps during the war. On the 28th, while we were near