

"Civil War Soldiers Recall Visiting Taneytown"

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By Jay A. Graybeal

During the Gettysburg Campaign, thousands of Union soldiers passed through Taneytown to and from the battle. Maj. Gen. George G. Meade arrived early on the morning of June 29th and established his field headquarters on the Benjamin Shunk farm near town. While there, he developed his Pipe Creek Line plan and began placing troops from Middleburg to Manchester. The III Corps commanded by Gen. Daniel E. Sickles arrived in Taneytown on 30 June 1863 and Gen. Winfield S. Hancock's II Corps passed through town on the following afternoon. Some of these soldiers later recalled their experiences in Taneytown on the eve of the battle and the following writings from published regimental histories provide an additional perspective on local life during the campaign.

Gilbert A. Hays included a brief description his unit's visit in his history of the 63rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry:

On the 29th our march was continued through Walkersville, Woodbury, Middlebury and Taneytown, and our reception in the various places as extremely enthusiastic. Ladies and young girls distributed beautiful bouquets to the officers and soldiers; groups of fair damsels bewitchingly posted in conspicuous places sang patriotic airs as the "boys in blue" passed by and the passage of troops being a novelty here, the citizens turned out en masse. Long after tattoo, groups of ladies and gentlemen promenaded through our camps, actuated by a curiosity to see how soldiers really lived in the tented field.

A fellow Pennsylvanian, Frank Rauscher of the 114th Volunteer Infantry (Collis' Zouaves) recorded in his diary,

June 29.-We broke camp at 6 a.m. and resumed our march, going through Woodborough, a neat little town, and at 9 a.m. We passed a village named Ladysborough. As an assurance that the town had not been misnamed, three pretty young ladies stood on a porch and sang "John Brown" while our column was passing. Our men repeatedly cheered the loyal young girls for the welcome thus tendered. On passing through Taneytown the people received us as though we were their deliverers. We encamped about a mile outside this town for the night, well nigh exhausted by the severe march.

June 30.-This morning we remained in camp and were visited by many ladies, who came in clusters from the town and adjacent farms. There was a deal of encouragement in their presence and kindly words, such as we never experienced south of the Potomac.

Another diarist, Charles Mattocks of the 17th Maine Volunteer Infantry noted, Monday, June 29th. Near Tenneytown [Taneytown], Md.

We started from near Walkersville this morning, and are now 20 miles from that place. We passed through Woodsboro, Ladiesville and Taneytown. We had quite a nice little halt at Woodsboro, where a fair damsel treated us to home-made Blackberry wine and custard pie. To my unpractised [unpracticed] eyes this little brunette was a beauty. Her name is Miss Phipps, address care A.E.J. Phipps, Woodsboro, Frederick Co., Md. If our wanderings ever carry us to Woodsboro again I hope to be assigned to provost duty. The country about here is really beautiful, and the inhabitants pay us every attention. This evening, men, women and children, young and old-have been wandering through our camp. We are in a very pretty grove, where we pitched our shelters at 6 o'clock. We have now marched almost through Maryland, and perhaps tomorrow night will find us in the Quaker State. We are now only 3 miles from the nearest point. I had forgotten to mention our reception in Taneytown. We marched through "in column by platoon." The young damsels sang union songs and waved handkerchiefs to us as we passed

along. The boys have got up a new game. They take a newspaper, and write on the margin, "Regards of -
-----, Co. -----17th Me. Vols.," or "Please address &c.," and then throw this tender missive to the
first pretty girl that takes their eyes. When we got the blackberry wine we took pains to leave our card.

Thomas D. Marbaker of the 11th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry wrote of his experiences,
The transition from the pine forests and desolated fields of Virginia, from contact with a disloyal people,
who meet you with open defiance or ill-concealed dislike, to the fruitful fields and overflowing loyalty of
western Maryland was especially grateful to the army. It gave new courage to the heart and life to the
lagging footstep.

Colonel Schoonover, writing of the march through Maryland, says: "There was enthusiasm in the towns
and hospitality in the farm-houses. Cup after cup of water was passed to the thirsty soldiers from the
many springs bursting out along the roadside. Up through the beautiful valleys and cozy towns we were
welcomed with bright smiles and waving handkerchiefs. At one point on the roadside a number of big-
hearted women had provided a large quantity of sandwiches and handed them to the men as they
passed by. This act of generosity and kindness brought forth repeated and hearty cheers from the ranks.
I do not know how far down the line the lunch reached, but I am prepared to give my individual
testimony in favor of Maryland sandwiches."

Several common themes run through each of the recollections. The soldiers were well received in
Maryland and their treatment was a positive influence on their performance at the Battle of Gettysburg.
The soldiers also recalled that the Taneytown women were quite attractive.

Photo caption: Maj. Gen. George G. Meade established his headquarters in Taneytown on the morning
of June 29, 1863. Historical Society of Carroll County collection.