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La Valle, Wisconsin
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Good Afternoon, and thank you for allowing me to speak today.

At the end of the battle at Brawner's Farm near Gainesville, Virginia, on August 28, 1862, Lt. Col. Fairchild of the 2nd Wisconsin asked with tears in his eyes, "Where, Good God! Where is the Second?" Major Allen, wounded, still with the regiment, replied "Colonel, they are all here – all that is left."¹ Lt. Col. Fairchild would soon learn that the 2nd Wisconsin had lost 276 killed, wounded, and missing out of the 430 soldiers who had charged into battle. In recalling the battle in the cornfield at Antietam, Rufus Dawes shared, "Men, I cannot say fell; they were knocked out of the ranks by the dozens."² Mair Pointon of the 6th Wisconsin, recalled "In the cornfield, the corn standing so nice in the morning, was cut to the ground when the fight was over."³ On October 7, 1862, General George B. McClellan, in a letter to the Governor of Wisconsin said in part, "I add ...my great admiration of the three Wisconsin regiments in General Gibbon's Brigade. I have seen them under fire, acting in a manner that reflects the greatest possible credit and honor themselves and to their state. They are equal to the best troops in any army in the world."⁴

In 1913 Wisconsin passed legislation that set up a commission with the intent to study the placement of stone memorials at Gainesville and Antietam. And rightfully so. Of the 1,514 men from Wisconsin who entered the Battle of Gainesville, 515 were casualties. While some 800 Wisconsin men engaged in the Battle of Antietam on the morning of September 17th (a battle known as the bloodiest one-day battle in American military history) some 500 Wisconsin men were numbered among those killed, wounded, or missing. The men of these Wisconsin regiments, the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th came from across Wisconsin. Farmers, store clerks, businessmen, multiple men from the same family and their neighbors often formed a company, with the patriotic spirit and determination to preserve our great Republic. In battle they saw their family members and neighbors struck down, yet they pushed on. Their dedication and resolve to the cause of preserving the Union transcended their fear, anguish, and grief and sent them back into battle.

That promise made in 1913 to aging Civil War veterans never was realized, as just months ahead World War I would begin and the noble intent of that promise was lost to time. Today we meet here with fervent hope, as we look back in awe at the courage and resolve of the men who left their Wisconsin farms and businesses to do all within their power to preserve the Union, to finally make good on a promise made to them some 113 years ago. Our vision is for memorials that do not obscure the viewscape of the battlefields at Gainesville (2nd Manassas) and Antietam. Made from Wisconsin granite, each 5 to 6 foot high memorial would be graced by a clay rendition cast in bronze of two battlefield paintings we have been given permission to use. Both paintings tell the story of the fortitude, grave determination, and resilience of the Wisconsin men who fought at the battles of Gainesville and Antietam. The intent is to enhance the beauty

¹ *Baraboo Republic*, September 24, 1862, 2.

² Dawes, Rufus, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers*, (1890), 73

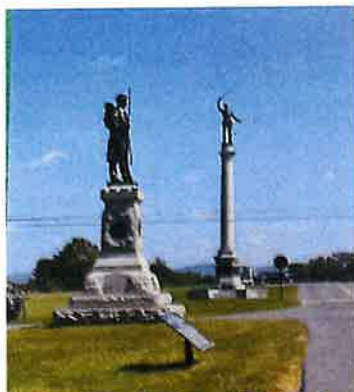
³ Philip Cheek and Mair Pointon, *Sauk County Riflemen*, (1890), 51

⁴ Philip Cheek and Mair Pointon, *Sauk County Riflemen*, 53

and visitors' understanding of the battlefield and to finally, finally make good on Wisconsin's 1913 promise to Wisconsin's Civil War soldiers.

I've often been asked why I embarked on this journey. So what if Wisconsin's small black kiosk sits between the West Woods and the cornfield at Antietam battlefield surrounded by beautiful state memorials from New Jersey, Delaware, Indiana, Massachusetts, Vermont, Pennsylvania, and other states. There is no "so what." In 1903, when President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated the New Jersey memorial at Antietam, a beautiful, towering memorial that shadows Wisconsin's small black kiosk, he said, "You men of the Grand Army by your victory not only rendered all Americans your debtors forevermore, but you rendered all humanity your debtors."⁵ His words were as true for the New Jersey men who fought in the cornfield as they are for Wisconsin's. When General Gibbon died in 1896, Wisconsin's living Civil War veterans pooled their resources so he could have a proper tombstone at Arlington National Cemetery. And, indeed he does. It sits below Arlington House and is graced by the insignia of the Iron Brigade. Their dedication to the man who commanded them at the battles of Gainesville and Antietam was long remembered and honored. Today we have the opportunity to honor Wisconsin's efforts in 1862 and pay our respect to the men who valiantly fought to preserve the Union. Beyond everything else, it simply is the right thing to do.

⁵ Theodore Roosevelt, "Theodore Roosevelt's Dedication Speech to the New Jersey State Monument at Antietam," September 17, 1903, American Battlefield Trust, accessed September 7, 2026, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/primary-sources/theodore-roosevelts-dedication-speech-new-jersey-state-monument-antietam>



Antietam National Battlefield & Cemetery

Sharpsburg,
Maryland



Why Antietam and Gainesville?

Between 1887 and 1913 Wisconsin placed 33 monuments at five sites:

- Gettysburg, PA - 6
- Chickamauga, GA - 10
- Shiloh, TN - 2
- Vicksburg, MS - 14
- Andersonville, GA - 1

In 1913, Republican Senator Timothy Burke proposed putting monuments at both Antietam MD as well as Gainesville, VA. \$300 was proposed, per Chapter 700, of that year for a commission to establishing monuments at both battle sites. A promise made, yet to be kept.

107	Appropriation, sterilization of insane, 698
	Appropriation, for slaughtered cattle, 698
109	Appropriation, report Gainesville & Antietam monuments, 100
170	Appropriation, charitable & penal institutions, deficit, 701
	Amusement, racetracks and clubs

2nd Wis. Volunteer Infantry

A - Fox Lake
B - La Crosse County
C - Lancaster/Boscobel
D - Janesville
E - Oshkosh
F - Racine
G - Portage
H - Madison
I - Mineral Point
K (original) - Milwaukee
K (permanent) - Dane County

5th Wis Volunteer Infantry

A - Manitowoc
B - Milwaukee
C - Milwaukee
D - Beaver Dam
E - Janesville
F - Waukesha
G - Berlin
H - Richland County
I - Stockbridge/Fond du Lac
K - Menomonie

3rd Wis. Veteran Volunteer Infantry

A
Watertown/Stockbridge
B - Oshkosh
C - Monroe
D - Waupun
E - Dodge County
F - Grant County
G - Green Bay County
H - Grant County
I - Shullsburg
K - Dane County

6th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry

A - Sauk County
B - Prescott
C - Grant County
D - Milwaukee County
E - Fond du Lac County
F - Milwaukee
G - Rock County
H - Fountain City
I - Mauston/Viroqua
K - Juneau County

7th Wis. Veteran Volunteer Infantry

A - Chippewa Falls/Columbus/Lodi
B - Columbia County
C - Platteville
D - Stoughton
E - Waushara County
F - Grant County
G - Juneau County
H - Grant County
I - Waukesha/ Dodge Counties
K - Rock County

- Three Wisconsin regiments (2nd, 6th and 7th) along with an artillery battery manned by many Wisconsin volunteers were at Gainesville.
- At Antietam, four Wisconsin regiments (2nd, 3rd, 6th and 7th) along with the same artillery battery were present.
- **At Gainesville, of 1,514 men taken into action, 511 were killed, wounded or missing.**
- **At Antietam, 785 were killed, wounded or missing. The 3rd Wis. had already lost 357 men the month prior at Cedar Mountain, VA.**
- **Total losses in under two months - 1,656 men and officers.**

The Memorials Vision - approximately 5 - 6' high and 6' wide clay renditions cast in bronze of two works of art: Gainesville



2nd Wisconsin at Brawner's Farm (Gainesville) Painting by Michael Thorson, used with permission



The Sixth Wisconsin pushing through the Cornfield, Battle of Antietam

Painting by Keith Rocco,

Used with permission

Two sided:

- Honoring the 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th
- Honoring the 5th held in reserve

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Sun, Jan 17, 1897 · Page 9

IN GIBBON'S MEMORY

MONUMENT TO THE IRON BRIGADE LEADER.

MARBLE BLOCK IN THE CEMETERY AT ARLINGTON.

DESIGN SUGGESTED BY GEN. E. S. BRAGG.

Handsome Memorial to Be Erected at the Soldier's Tomb by the Men Who Fought Under Him and Others Who Honor His Memory—Plan Suggested by Col. J. A. Watrons at the National Encampment at St. Paul—Circular Letter to Be Issued Inviting Contributions to the Monument Fund.

There is to be a Gibbon monument. It will be such a monument as the late Maj.-Gen. John Gibbon would have chosen

to make a contribution he can do so and send it to Capt. Otto Schorge, the treasurer of the Monument committee, whose address is 327 Third street, Milwaukee, Wis. That there will be persons outside of the brigade organization and members of families who will desire to contribute, is well known. There will be no disposition to bar any one, but the aim of the committee—and it believes that it is complying with the wishes of the survivors—is to have represented in that monument something of a contribution from all of the men who followed Gibbon or were members of his first brigade, the command in which he laid the foundation for a reputation that distinguished him as a great soldier in the war.

Gen. Gibbon's Life and Death.

Gen. Gibbon died last February and was buried on Arlington Heights, not far from where he joined the Iron brigade as captain of Battery B. There the monument is to be erected.

John Gibbon was born in Pennsylvania about seventy years ago, but was appointed to West Point from North Carolina. He graduated and entered the artillery branch of the service with which he remained until 1862, when he was made a brigadier general and assigned to the Western brigade, which for eight months had been commanded by Gen. Rufus King, many years editor of The Milwaukee Sentinel, a graduate of West Point and whose discipline had already carried the brigade far above the average among the volunteer forces, then in service. Gibbon's discipline that summer made regulars of the four regiments—the Second, Sixth and Seventh



Additional information for the Natural Resources Committee

History of the Battles of Gainesville and Antietam

Written by Wisconsin Civil War historian, Marc Storch

In August of 1862, Gen. Robert E. Lee felt he could bring his army north and sent half of it, under the command of Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson, around the flank of the Union army protecting the approaches to Washington. Gen. John Pope, commanding those Union forces, was slow to react and when he did, was in the dark as to where the Confederate forces were. Among the Union troops heading back towards Washington were the 2nd, 6th and 7th Wisconsin Infantry, along with the 19th Indiana Infantry and Battery B of the 4th U.S. Regulars (which had many men from the Wisconsin units in its ranks). Over many dry, dusty days, the men marched in what they felt was a retreat, knowing that the Rebel army was "somewhere" to their rear.

Advancing up the Warrenton Turnpike towards the small town of Gainesville, as dusk was approaching, Gen. John Gibbon, who led the brigade the Wisconsin troops were in, noted troops on a rise to the north of the road. Suddenly it became obvious that this was an enemy artillery battery as a cannonball tore through one of his aide's horses. Gibbon immediately ordered the 2nd Wis. to advance and capture the battery. As the 2nd advanced through the woods towards the battery, they soon encountered enemy infantry, more than one regiment and soon to be multiple brigades. Watching from the road, Major Rufus Dawes of the 6th Wis. would write "I saw the 2nd gallantly struggling and staggering under the fire of not less than six regiments of the enemy." Indeed, Asst. Surgeon Arndt of the 2nd would write that "the very first volley of the enemy almost decimated our ranks." For twenty minutes the 2nd stood alone, then Gibbon ordered the 19th Ind. to support their right and the 7th their left and Battery B to open fire.

Then as the sun began to set, the regiments traded fire with Confederate troops attempting to charge them. Men stood, kneeled and lay down, firing and reloading while their fellow soldiers, friends, neighbors and even relatives, as the companies of each regiment came from the same locality, were killed and maimed around them. Now Gibbon ordered the 6th Wis. to advance, as Lt. John Wood of La Crosse rode to the regiment, stating to the 6th's colonel, "For God's sake, go over and help the Second. They are being cut to pieces." The 6th advanced to the right of the 7th and began to fire at the enemy to their front. The only other reinforcements Gibbon's men received were two regiments from another brigade who joined them on the firing line. Darkness was falling and men continued to fire at the flashes of the enemy's rifles. Every man in the 2nd Wisconsin's color guard had been shot down and the flags torn by bullets. Its colonel was mortally wounded. In the 7th, its colonel, Lt. The colonel and major were all shot and in the 6th its colonel was also wounded. One soldier in the 7th wrote "bullets from the front, at right flank, - air full of them, whistling by our ears, - scratching our clothes, burning our faces, - bullets seemingly everywhere."

Darkness finally ended the fight, but the men had stood firm. Ordered to fall back, officers were shocked at the losses their men had taken. Lt. Col. Fairchild of the 2nd walked along his command and exclaimed with tears in his eyes, "Where, Good God! where is the Second?" Major Allen, wounded, still with the regiment, replied "Colonel, they are all here - all that is left." The total losses of the Wisconsin units were 2nd Wis. - 276 officers and men killed, wounded and missing out of 430, 6th Wis. - 75 Officers and men out of 504, 7th Wis. - 164 out of 580. Of the 1,514 men from Wis. who entered the battle, 515 were casualties. Standing by them, the 19th Ind. lost 210 men out of 423. Two days later the units were again involved in battle nearby in what would be known as 2nd Bull Run. The dead were left unburied as the brigade retreated that night. The Confederates would do little to cover the bodies and, in Nov. 1863 when the brigade passed by the area, a detail was sent to make things right. Arriving at the battlefield, they found the remains, bones and bits of equipment, scattered along the line where they fought, gnawed by animals and scoured by the weather, the men were finally given a proper burial.

While the 29th the brigade was in reserve, it again saw combat on August 30, 1862 in the attack on "Stonewall" Jackson's position in the Railroad embankment. While not heavily engaged, the regiments still lost men, it was nothing compared to the battle on the 28th. That night, as the Union army retreated towards the defenses of Washington, Gibbon's brigade provided the rear guard to protect it from attack. After a short period of reorganization the Union Army, now under Gen. George McClellan again, moved into Maryland to follow and defeat Gen. Lee's men who had moved into Federal territory in search of supplies. Marching northwest the brigade would again fight on Sept. 14th at Turner's Gap at South Mountain. Fighting into the night again, firing at the flashes of enemy guns, the regiments would again be battered.

On the 14th of September 1862, the 2nd, 6th and 7th were again engaged at South Mountain, Md. and losses again were tremendous, losing 317 men killed, wounded and missing. Within the regiments the 2nd lost 9 killed and 18 wounded, the 6th lost 11 killed and 79 wounded, while the 7th lost 11 killed and 115 wounded. Following Lee's retreating army, the brigade, along with the rest of McClellan's forces found them at Sharpsburg, MD. Assigned to the right wing of the army, Gibbon's men crossed Antietam Creek the night of Sept. 16th and lay on their arms, waiting for daylight and battle. As dawn broke, an aide rode up to the brigade and ordered them to move out, they were in range of Rebel artillery. As the brigade formed and moved out, an artillery shell burst nearby. Then, a second "a shell bursted in front of us, and about three feet higher than our heads. [It] did not hit anyone in our front Division, but in the third, fourth & fifth Divisions it did great execution. Just a snap glance over my left shoulder gave me an idea of the havoc." One shell killed two men and wounded eleven. Pvt. Francis Deleglise of Appleton found himself standing half blinded and ears ringing, the only one standing where the shell exploded.

Moving forward, the 6th continued to advance towards the Miller farm, forming into line with skirmishers out while the rest of the brigade marched behind them. Seeing a retreating enemy cannon, Bragg ordered Capt. Werner Von Bachelles to take his company and capture it. They would fail in this, finding Von Bachelles dead on the turnpike with his pet newfoundland dog dead beside him. Suddenly, from the West Woods, fire lashed the right flank of the 6th, wounding Lt. Col. Bragg and many men. Telling Maj. Rufus Dawes took command and pushed forward, the regiment continued to advance. Seeing this flanking fire, Gibbon directed the 7th Wis. and 19th Ind. to move to the right to push the enemy from its cover in the woods. As the 6th advanced through the Miller farm, they came to a fenced area that the men could not push down. Ordering the regiment to break ranks, pass through and reform, Dawes saw his good friend, Capt. Edwin Brown was shot in the head and killed instantly. Pushing on, into a cornfield, the 6th continued to advance under a galling fire with the 2nd coming up to its support. Already wounded twice at Gainesville, its major, Thomas Allen had one arm in a sling and the other holding a sword directing his regiment forward.

The 7th and 19th cleared the woods to the right of the other two regiments, finding themselves in a natural breastwork made of rock sloping away from the battlefield to their front. From there they continued to pour fire on the Confederates. Reaching the end of the cornfield, the 2nd and the 6th traded fire with the enemy to their front. Dawes would write that "Men I cannot say fell; they were knocked out of the ranks by the dozens" and still they pushed on. Nearing where they could see the Dunker church the two regiments, now joined by others, swung to their right to confront the enemy lining the fence along the turnpike. Here, with the help of the 7th and 19th, along with other regiments, the Federals began to succeed. It was to be short lived. Rebel Gen. Hood had been ordered to push back these forces and his men came from beyond the West Woods and attacked. Intermingled with other units and surprised, the Wisconsin men fell back towards the Miller farm and where Battery B, 4th U.S. Artillery would be stationed. Grabbing one of the regimental flags, Dawes sought to rally the men while officers in the 2nd did the same. Forming by the cannon as the enemy charged Battery B let out double canister loads into the onrushing rebels.

Looking at that moment at the onrushing enemy, John O. Johnson of the 6th stated "It looked as if pieces of fence rails, corn stalks, and old clothes indiscriminately mixes as in a whirlwind. The old clothes were pieces & limbs of the Confeds. Those right in front of us and the battery I don't think that any survived but those on both flanks, run for a piece of timber to their right in their rear, and we pegging away at them as fast as we could load & fire." Seeing the attack, the 7th Wis. and 19th Ind. poured fire into the rebels too. Major Alois Bachman of the 19th could not hold back and taking his hat in one hand and sword in another stated "Boys, the order up to this point has been forward, it is now follow me." He and the regiment charged into the enemy only for Bachman to be killed and the regiment driven back. But the Confederates had been halted. In the 7th, Pvt. Hugh Perkins had with the rest of the regiment felt like they were on a rifle range, "picked out one man and downed him." With the enemy in retreat the command to cease fire was given but Perkins noted "it was no use. The boys had been fooled too much by the gray backs to let one slip." There were no prisoners taken to their front.

With this part of the battlefield at a standstill, to the East Woods another fight was brewing. Hood's men had pushed into other parts of the cornfield and now were attacking the Union 12th Corps. Here the 3rd Wis. Inf. under Col. Thomas Ruger stood with the rest of their brigade. Bloodied at Cedar Mountain on August 8, 1862 and having lost 357 men killed, wounded or missing there. Now they were again facing a Confederate charge. Standing on a rise with a little valley between them, the 3rd and the rest of their brigade now began a stand-up fight for possession of the field. Long after the fight, a member of the regiment would return and note that he could see where they stood by the paper cartridges still strewn on the ground along where their line was.

Among the regiment the color guard was decimated. Among them Chauncey S. Beebe, Co. G, first held aloft the Colors on Antietam field until wounded; then Charles C. Chubb, Co. E, until wounded, then William A. Kimberly, Co. C, took them and he was soon wounded; Henry C. Isbel Co. B, then took them when he was wounded; Private J. M. Greene, Co. C, until he was severely wounded. Private "Murray" Green, as he was called by his comrades, held the colors but a short time while the firing was very heavy, his clothes were riddled with bullets and he received no less than seven flesh wounds, one only of the seven was severe enough to cause him to leave the field. Corporal James G. Savage, Co. B, the only remaining member of the Guard, now took the flag and held it for a brief time, until he was wounded, handing the Colors to Lieutenant J. W. Hinkley. Hinkley then handed the flag to Private Joseph E. Collins, Co. D who would carry them for the rest of the battle.

The 5th Wis. Inf. which had fought in McClellan's peninsular campaign the summer, was attached to 6th Army Corps, arrived on the battlefield mid-day and was, along with most of the corps, held in reserve and so suffered no casualties.

At the end of the day, the 2nd lost 29 killed and 49 wounded. the 6th lost 38 killed and 114 wounded while the 7th lost 9 killed, 26 wounded and 5 missing. The 3rd Wis. lost 28 killed and 172 wounded. In 1880 Gen. John Gibbon would return to this field and look at how it had changed. After passing many of the spots where he remembered the cannons of Battery B "literally piling the dead on top of each other" he stood in the turnpike and said to a friend, "Come with me and walk where we could not have gone in safety eighteen years ago – to the top of the slope on the turnpike in front of us." It was where Werner Von Bachellet and his dog had laid.