

But that wasn't enough for the Pickett's Division men, nor would it be satisfactory for the Philadelphia Brigade men. One of the Confederates awkwardly leaned forward over the wall, immediately striking memories in more than a few of the Philadelphia Brigade survivors and the veterans among the spectators of the brief breach of the stone wall by General Armistead's men...perhaps fifty years ago this very minute! Some could swear that they could actually see a specter of the Confederate general Armistead, his hat planted on top of his raised sword, present on this earth again and once more rallying and leading his men at the double-quick as South collided with North at Bloody Angle.

Another Confederate leaned across the wall in an attempt to embrace one of the Yankees, and at that point most of the Union men abandoned their scripted actions just as their Southern counterparts had. Those Philadelphia Brigade men nimble enough to climb over the stone wall at that very spot did just that, while others hurried to one side or the other, looking for a spot low enough for them to likewise cross over and come face to face with their former enemies.

A bustle of back-slapping and hugs commenced, with cries of glee intermixed with sobbing from many of the men from both sides. They wept for their lost comrades; whether on this field fifty years earlier, or at some other point during the Battle of Gettysburg, or at a different time during the war; or for that matter in the years since the end of the war. Tears flowed in memory of those who had not been granted the days of their lives to be here at this moment. They wept for survivors as well; those who had struggled with the mental and physical scars of war all these years, haunted by what they had witnessed and in many cases, what they had been forced to do in battle.

And they wept for themselves; for their lost youth and their own agonies, and what might have turned out so very differently in their own lives if it hadn't been for that terrible war.