

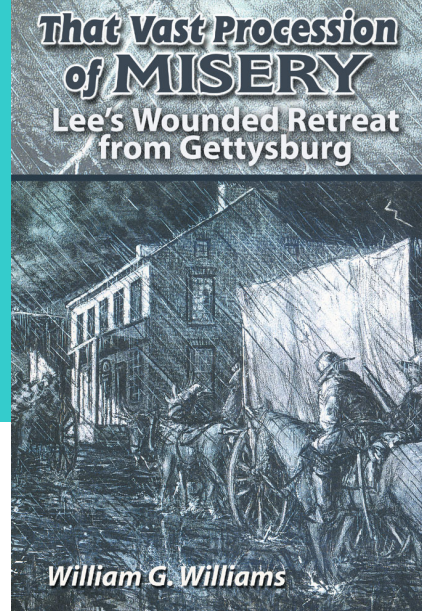
THAT VAST PROCESSION OF MISERY Lee's Wounded Retreat from Gettysburg

by William G. Williams

- By the Author of *Days of Darkness: The Gettysburg Civilians*
- Over 8,000 wounded soldiers in Lee's army retreated to Virginia after their loss at Gettysburg.
- The wagon train was a challenging and exhausting attempt to save Lee's wounded.



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Worthington Matravers and brother Kingston answered the call when the Confederacy moved against the North. Fictional characters Worthington and Kingston represent those who did live or die for the cause of separation of the United States into two countries or the cause of protecting their families.

Their adventure as soldiers—one in the Virginia infantry, the other a horse soldier with a Southern cavalry unit—is based on what happened in reality after the Battle of Gettysburg. The Matraverses, for different reasons, became part of a wagon train that has come down through history for its challenging and exhausting attempt to save General Robert E. Lee's wounded to fight another day. Of an estimated eight thousand such men Lee was able to withdraw from the blood-soaked fields, many would never be able to fight again.

Those pitiful forms who did make it home faced other problems—crippling wounds that prevented or limited their ability to earn a living, the loss of family property, continuing harassment from Yankee troopers who would operate in the South for well over two years after the Gettysburg disaster.

In 1865, the American Civil War would come to an end, but for the men who fought and for their families—on both sides—its effects would last for generations.

WILLIAM G. WILLIAMS is a retired journalist and public relations director. He majored in journalism at Pennsylvania State University, was a reporter and editor for two newspapers and The Associated Press, and a communications department director for the Pennsylvania Legislature. He is the author of five books, a former president of the Harrisburg (Pennsylvania) Civil War Round Table, and a U.S. Navy veteran.



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