

# Friend to Friend Masonic Memorial at Gettysburg National Cemetery

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The Friend to Friend Masonic Memorial is a monument located in the annex of the Gettysburg National Cemetery in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Built by the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, it commemorates Confederate Brigadier General Lewis Addison Armistead entrusting Union Captain Henry H. Bingham with his personal effects, most notably a pocket watch, on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, during Pickett's Charge.

Pickett's Charge was an assault upon the Union Army center on the last day of the Battle of Gettysburg. The charge, the high

tide of the Confederate States of America, was repulsed. Confederate general Armistead, under George Pickett's command, personally led his men up the hill to the Union position. Armistead was shot twice. Severely wounded, and fearing that his personal effects would be stolen by Union soldiers, he "gave a Masonic sign asking for assistance". Union Captain Bingham, an aide to Major General Winfield Scott Hancock, a personal friend of Armistead, then came to his aid as he lay wounded: Armistead, Bingham, and Hancock were all Freemasons. After ensuring Armistead that his possessions would be sent to his family, particularly his pocket watch, Bingham took Armistead to a field hospital, where Armistead died two days later on the George Spangler farm.



The monument's sculptor was Ron Tunison of Cairo, New York, who was himself a Freemason. The sculpture is made of polychrome bronze.

The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania dedicated the statue on August 21, 1993.

## The Civil War by Martha M. Boltz

The Civil War has often been referred to as being “brother against brother,” and in truth there are many stories of biological brothers serving against each other, one for the United States and one for the Confederate States.

The story of the large, unique statue at Gettysburg National Cemetery, Gettysburg, Pa. reflects the love and devotion of two brothers who shared neither father nor mother and by any normal description were not brothers. In a very real sense, however, they were, and the statue stands today to commemorate their love.

Confederate Brig. Gen. Lewis Addison Armistead was born in New Bern, N.C. and was a member of Alexandria-Washington Masonic Lodge # 22. Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock, a Union officer, was born in Norristown, Pa. and was a member of Charity Lodge # 190 of that town. The two shared a friendship that had gone back for many years until politics of the time caused them to go separate ways.

### **Friends Choose Different Paths**

The two men were stationed in California when the War began. Armistead’s sympathies lay with the Southern cause and he resigned his commission in the U.S. Army to become a Confederate Officer. Hancock was a staunch Union man and went East to join the Federal ranks there. Both men served capably and well and were promoted into their respective leadership roles.



General Armistead

During war, time passes rapidly amidst the powder and smoke of battle, and it would be twenty-seven months before they would meet again. It happened on the bloody battlefield known as Gettysburg, on July 3, 1863, when Pickett’s Charge took place. Gen. Armistead’s brigade formed the second rank of the attacking division. It was at Cemetery Ridge that he was mortally wounded; coincidentally Hancock also sustained serious wounds, which would keep him hospitalized for a considerable length of time.

### **Capt. Bingham Reacts**

Hancock had an aide with him, Capt. Henry Harrison Bingham, during the formidable battle that became known as marking the “High Tide of the Confederacy.” After Hancock had been carried from the field, it was Bingham and some other Union officers who heard the cries for help from Armistead’s lips as he lay there.

Bingham was a Judge-Advocate of Hancock’s Second Corps at Gettysburg. He had been born in Philadelphia, Pa. and also a Freemason, belonging to Chartiers Lodge # 297, Canonsburg, Pa. He had had a brilliant career, fighting at the Wilderness, Spotsylvania where he was brevetted for bravery and war service, and now at Gettysburg, where he too was wounded.

Bingham recognized the distress cry of a Freemason, as would have his superior, Winfield Hancock, and such a cry must be acknowledged. It mattered not if the wounded man wore Blue or Grey, he was a brother Mason, and Bingham answered the seriously injured Armistead, who talked to Bingham of his close relationship with Hancock.



General Hancock

He asked Bingham to relay a message to Hancock, his old friend and brother, and gave his personal effects including a pocket watch, to the captain. Bingham promised to get them to Hancock, giving Armistead what help and assistance he could, until the General was taken from the field. He would die two days later at a hospital on the George Spangler farm site, comforted by the fact that his personal effects would go to his fraternal brother to be returned to his family.

This story has been historically verified and stands as a testament to the depth of the Masonic bonds between members even in wartime.

Another less known but similar story takes place on the same July 3, 1863 horrific date, when the Confederate forces were coming closer to the Union lines, and Sgt. Drewry B. Easley of the Confederate 14th Virginia infantry suddenly saw some Union skirmishers nearby. They were hiding, huddled in a tall wheat field and had been cut off from

their retreating buddies: death was certain to happen. Then Sgt. Easley suddenly recognized a Masonic distress sign given by one of the Yankees and ordered his men to pass them by.

### **Munn's Vision for the Monument**

Years later, Sheldon Munn who was a former park guide at Gettysburg, and who also had written a book entitled, "Freemasons at Gettysburg," woke early one day after having a vivid dream in which he "saw" a monument at Gettysburg, honoring the service of soldier Masons. It seemed a clear charge to Munn to see that this happened.

Thus was born the "Friend to Friend Masonic Memorial," which was finally dedicated in 1993. The life-sized statue done by sculptor Ron Tunison of Cairo, N.Y. (also a Mason) depicts Bingham bending over a reclining Armistead, Bingham's arm around the general's shoulder, his other hand touching Armistead's, as he receives the request from the General, who fears Union soldiers will take his personal effects if they remain with him.

The two sculpted figures portrayed atop a large granite base are a poignant testimony to the fraternal love shared by those who belong to any of the numerous similar groups where bonds make them brothers. The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania sponsored the statue,



Since the Civil War touched men and families on both sides of the Mason Dixon Line, it is not surprising that the figures indicate some eleven per cent of men on both sides were Masons and over 300 generals from both sides were Masons. **Nearly 18,000 Masons on the battlefield, and that approximately 5,600 of them became casualties.**

Capt. Bingham later in life