

The Dispatch

Newspaper of the

CAPITAL DISTRICT CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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www.cdcwrt.net



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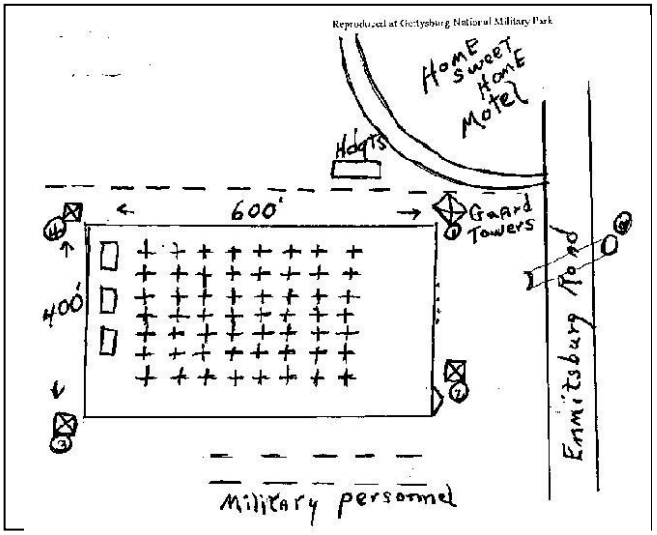
GETTYSBURG NATIONAL PARK IN WORLD WAR I AND WORLD WAR II





The battlefield at Gettysburg has been many things since 1863. Innumerable camps have been set up on parts of the battlefield for varying periods of time for state and federal units. As Camp Colt in World War I it was a tank training school and both Dwight David Eisenhower and George S. Patton served there as young officers. Pictured above to the left is a portion of the 319th Tank Company graduation photograph with General Meade's statue in the background. The tower in the background was on Culp's Hill and was eventually taken down in 1968. As many as 10,600 officer and men were assigned to the camp at its peak. The camp was quarantined during the Spanish Flu Pandemic and 150 soldiers died in the camp with the flu.

During the last months of World War II, a German prisoner of war camp was built next to the Home Sweet Home Motel. Some 400 prisoners were confined in the camp. Two prisoners escaped with the aid of local residents, but were quickly captured. The war had ended by then. The family had a good reputation, so punishment was light. Come hear more about how the battlefield has changed.

JUNE MEETING
FRIDAY, JUNE 14, 2013
ROGER BACON HALL
SIENA COLLEGE CAMPUS
LATHAM, NY

"The Remaking of the Gettysburg Battlefield Five Times Over"

Benjamin Y. Dixon, Ph.D.

Social Hour	**6:00 – 7:00 p.m.**
Business Meeting	**7:00 – 7:15 p.m.**
Presentation	**7:15 – 8:15 p.m.**
Questions & Answers	**8:15 – 8:45 p.m.**

CDCWRT MEETING

The June meeting of the Capital District Civil War Round Table will be held on Friday, June 14, 2013. This meeting will be held at **THE ROGER BACON HALL ON THE CAMPUS OF SIENA COLLEGE** ***in conjunction with the Department of History at Siena. Our very special guest speaker on will be Dr. Benjamin Dixon. His presentation is entitled,*** **The Remaking of the Gettysburg Battlefield Five Time Over: A Photographic Documentary of America's Greatest Battlefield Park from 1863 to Today."**

What was it like to tour Gettysburg 70 years ago? Or how about 100 years ago? Or 130 years ago? Well, you would be amazed at how different the heroes, stories, scenery, and touring experiences were like! This presentation will highlight the forthcoming book with the same title,, to be published by Johns Hopkins' University Press.

Dr. Dixon's research focuses on how much Gettysburg National Military Park has changed for the visitor in the last 150 years, specifically how the scenery, structures, and stories have been changed for the sake of retelling the battle of Gettysburg to the visiting public. Anyone who visits Gettysburg more than once often notices some battlefield park changes - tour routes are modified, new exhibits appear, part of the landscape is restored, and structures get demolished. Cumulatively, those changes add up. What he intends to show is that every 20-30 years at Gettysburg, the changes to tour routes, popular heroes, exhibits, stories, scenery, and structures, are so different that each generation visiting the battlefield and park since 1863 have received a different Gettysburg tour experience. Ultimately, the Gettysburg battlefield and park has gone through no less than five makeovers over the last 150 years to remember and retell the battle.

Using period photographs, maps, tour books, newspaper reports, visitor accounts, and the stories of guides, he will take the audience on 5 "tours" of Gettysburg. We will "see" the battlefield, and experience what visitors saw and learned in 1883, 1904, 1940, 1970, and today. Dixon has picked the best photographs from his collection of over 5,000 Gettysburg images from the 1870s to the 1970s. He will also highlight many of the most fascinating things about touring Gettysburg in the past from his research with old newspapers, tour books, battlefield guide interviews, and journals and diaries kept by early Park personnel from long ago. It will make for a great, and highly visual, evening of fun.

Biographical Sketch:

I was born, raised, and married in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. What a great place to grow up! As a local elementary student, I got to lay flowers on the graves in the National Cemetery every Memorial Day. As a boy scout, I got to help rebuild the wall at the Angle back in 1985 as part of a fellow scout's Eagle project. I am now a Professor of Geography at S.U.N.Y. College at Oneonta, NY. I am an historical geographer – which means I study the history of places and landscapes.

As a geography student, I was encouraged to study the history of Gettysburg – but not just the battle, rather the park, and how much it has changed. So for the past 20 years, I have gathered more than 5,000 photographic images of the Gettysburg battlefield from the best public and private collections in the country. But the majority of my time is spent going through old newspapers, journals, and documents to dig up neat and interesting stuff that occurred at Gettysburg over the last 150 years. Of course, I do like studying the battle, too. After reading every word of the more than 2000 pages of the Gettysburg Official Records (those officer reports in the black Government printed volume 27 on Gettysburg – you buffs know what I'm talking about), I managed to write a handy and helpful little book: Learning the Battle of Gettysburg: A Guide to the Official Records (Gettysburg: Thomas Publications, 2007). Presently, I live with my wife and two children in Oneonta, NY.

DIRECTIONS TO SIENA

Siena College is on route 9W in Latham. From Albany (the south), or from Latham (the north), look for the main entrance off 9W, roughly in the middle of the 9W frontage. It is a one way road in. At the end of the entrance road turn left and drive past the parking area in front of the large building with large white columns. There is a large parking lot to the left of this building. Several other buildings border this same lot. The one farthest down is the BACK of Roger Bacon Hall. Park there and walk up the ramped driveway between 2 buildings (Bacon Hall on your left) to the Quad. Turn left on the sidewalk and walk to the end of the Quad. Roger Bacon Hall is written on the building. Note: the entrance to the parking lot from Fiddlers Lane may be closed.

UP-COMING EVENTS

The following list of up-coming events is provided to help Round Table members plan their long term calendars. These are events that involve our Round Table, especially events that provide opportunities to raise funds for our preservation activities. Some events may change as the year progresses, so members should check the list monthly. Details of Sesquicentennial Civil War events can be found on the web-site: www.nycivilwar150.org.

On June 1-2, 2013, Saturday and Sunday the King Solomon Masonic Temple on route 2 in Troy will sponsor the annual Civil War Weekend. There will be an encampment, daily skirmish, exhibits, and food.

On June 14, 2013, Ben Dixon will talk about a photographic study of the Gettysburg Battlefield. His presentation is entitled "Remembering America's battlefield from 1863 to today." This presentation will be at Roger Bacon Hall at Siena College.

On August 16, 2013, Friday, the CDCWRT will have its annual picnic at Schuyler Flatts for members and re-enactors. The Civil War Weekend at Schuyler Flatts will take place on Saturday, August 17, 10am to 5pm, and Sunday, August 18, 10am to 4 pm. There will be an encampment, skirmishes, cannon firing, drills, school for young soldiers, music and food. The CDCWRT will have its tents set up at the event and there will be 150th Anniversary postal cachets from Gettysburg available at the event.

On September 13, 2013, Katherine Hawkins will present "We Done Our Part: The History of the 3rd U.S. Colored Troops."

On October 11, 2013, Wayne Mahood will talk about the 126th NYVI, in a presentation entitled "Fight All Day, March All Night."

On Columbus Day weekend, October 11-14, the Green County Historical Society is

planning a bus trip to Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and the Marine Corps Museum. More details will follow.

On November 1-3, 2013, the CDCWRT will sponsor the 1863 Sesquicentennial Conference at the NYS Museum.

On December 13, 2013, the CDCWRT will again meet at Siena College to see a movie, inspired by Stephen Crane, and produced locally in Albany. It is entitled: *Thirst: A Civil War Story.* It is about two Union soldiers who deserted. They are driven by thirst, but the well they discover is guarded by Confederate soldiers.

MAY MEETING SUMMARY

The National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania is a nonprofit museum whose mission is to inspire lifelong learning of the American Civil War through the preservation and balanced presentation of the American people's struggles for survival and healing. To do this, it has a collection of twenty-five thousand items and twenty-one thousand archival documents, including the largest collection of Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain letters in the United States.

Wayne Motts, Chief Executive Officer of the National Civil War Museum, spoke about the importance of preserving not just land and buildings, but also artifacts. These objects can tell a story in ways that landscapes and buildings are not able to do. To illustrate his point, Motts selected images of a number of artifacts from the collection and told their stories.

One such artifact was Robert E Lee's Bible. He carried it with him during the Mexican War and eventually gave it to one of his soldiers. This soldier was captured during the Civil War by a New Jersey regiment. Another artifact related to Lee was a pen. Lee, as a Lt. Colonel before the Civil War, had been dispatched to Harper's Ferry with then Lieutenant JEB Stuart to capture John Brown during his raid on the town in 1589. Brown was captured at the Engine House and the pen used by Governor Henry Wise of Virginia is one of the artifacts at the National Civil War Museum.

Some artifacts with local connections were also shown. One was a cartridge box from the Watervliet Arsenal. It held 44 caliber revolver cartridges. Motts also showed an Enfield rifle that was picked up after the battle of Bull Run and inscribed to Col. William Rice by his son James. James C. Rice was in the 44th NY and eventually became a Brigadier General. His coat, sword, and commissioning case are on loan to the Museum and he is buried at Albany Rural Cemetery. Also displayed was a letter from General Thomas Meaghar of the Irish Brigade. It was written in October 1861 to then Quartermaster General Chester A. Arthur about guns needed at Ft. Schuyler. The letterhead used is the same image that appears on our tee-shirts and sweat-shirts.

An extremely rare item Motts showed was a naval tally. These are hatbands inscribed with the name of the ship on which the sailors served. The Navy did not authorize their use until after the war, but the Museum has an 1862 tally from the USS Monitor. Another rare item was an apple wood ball bat made from a tree at Appomattox Courthouse. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain had been at the McClean house for the surrender and had it made as a gift.

The Museum also has a number of artifacts that were on soldiers when they died. One was a sash belonging to Colonel Robert William Pitman of the 13th Tennessee. It is stained in his blood from a thigh wound inflicted at the battle of Shiloh. Adam Troutman of the 48th North Carolina was stationed by the Dunker Church at Antietam.

He was wounded in the chest, and his Bible still has a bullet lodged in it. Henry Fuller, a captain in the 64th New York, was killed at the Wheatfield in Gettysburg. His tactical manual is stained with his blood from the rifle shot that went through his chest and shoulder.

This excellent summary was provided by board member Erin Baillargeon.

LEE'S REAL PLAN AT GETTYSBURG – Part 3

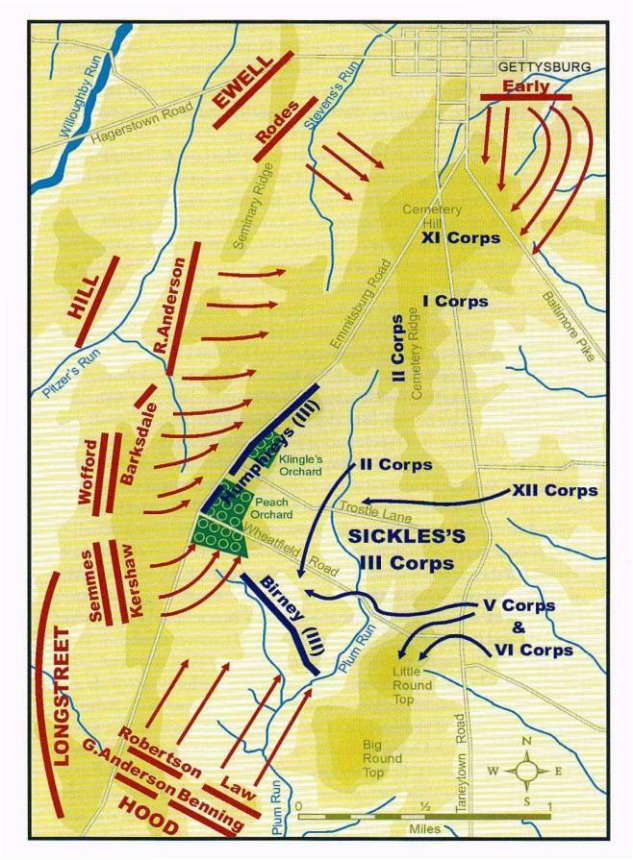
Why did Lee fail on July 2? There were several specific failures in the execution of the plan.

First, the lateness in the day before the attack started allowed Meade's army to concentrate. In the morning, Union 6th Corps and the reserve artillery were in transit, and 3rd and 5th Corps were still moving into position. Although Lee did not know the specifics, he knew that the sooner he attacked, the better his chances would be.

Lee also had inaccurate specifics of the Union position. The scout, Cpt. Johnson, reported a minimal Federal presence in the Peach Orchard at 4:00 a.m., and he missed Sickle's Corps and Buford's Cavalry. Lee formulated his plan assuming the Union left flank was "in the air." The position of Sickle's Corps presented the second reason. Had Sickles remained in line at the low point of Cemetery Ridge and Longstreet by-passed him, Sickles could have attacked Longstreet in reverse. This may have been what Meade had in mind when he positioned Sickles there.

Sickles recognized the geographical disadvantages of that position, and saw the Peach Orchard as an "artillery platform" and feared a repeat of Hazel Grove at Chancellorsville. Had Sickles remained in position and the Confederate artillery were placed in the Peach Orchard, any attempt by Sickles to attack the Orchard or Longstreet in reverse most likely would not have been successful.

Sickles movement forward created a large salient for his 9,500-man force to defend. It had no depth in line, and had many gaps. It did force Meade, who had spent all morning on his right at Culp's Hill, even considering an offensive move there, to personally attend to events on his left.



The third reason for Lee's failure was the early wounding of Gen. Hood. This left his division leaderless and decision-making devolved to subordinate commanders. Col. Oates took the 15th Alabama to Big Round Top pursuing Union sharpshooters. As the Alabamans veered eastward, Robertson's Texans could not remain connected to the Emmitsburg Road on the left and Law's Brigade on the right. A large gap opened in Robertson's line. The right side of this line headed towards Devil's Den, the Triangular Field, Plum Run and Little Round Top. Benning's Georgian Brigade was 400 yards behind, and filled the gap and continued in a northeast direction correctly towards Cemetery Ridge. But this spreading out of

Longstreet's divisional line meant that the attack was being made by a single line of battle.

The 4 brigades in McLaws Division were to move first east towards the Orchard, connect with Hood's left brigade (Tiege Anderson), then swing northeast with Barksdale remaining connected to the Emmitsburg Road. This movement was made belatedly and without coordination. Now Kershaw's Brigade was stretched to cover a two-brigade front and ultimately attacked the wheatfield to the east. Barksdale's Brigade was successful in dislodging Sickle's 3rd Corps from the Orchard. This confusion shifted the attack toward Round top.

A fourth reason for Lee's failure was Gen. Meade's committal of 20,000 troops to the Union left flank to bolster Sickle's line., including forces sent to Little Round Top. This chained the Confederate right to LRT, a hill that originally had no value in Lee's plan.

Finally, Ewell's attack on the Confederate left was delayed and diminished because he had to commit a large portion of his force to block Union. Gen. Gregg's 4000-man Cavalry Division that threatened Ewell's rear. Early's initial gains on east Cemetery Hill could not be supported and he was pushed back. Even though all these actions impacted on Lee's original plan, the last troops committed (R. Anderson's of Hill's Corps) followed the attack up the Emmitsburg Road late in the day. Wright's Brigade temporarily penetrated that part of Cemetery Ridge a couple of hundred yards from the southwestern slope of Cemetery Hill.

LEE'S REAL PLAN AT GETTYSBURG - IV

The traditional version has Lee attacking the center of the Union line, having discovered that both Union flanks are strong. All other Confederate actions have no relevancy to Lee's day 3 plan.

Harmon felt that on July 3, Lee wanted to converge his army by having Longstreet's corps, bolstered by Pickett's division on the left, join Hood and McLaws, who were to cut more north above Little Round Top. Longstreet later said that the goal was to drive the Union left in upon its center, towards the town. Lee wanted his lines to become increasingly stronger as they condensed and came to a point of impact at Cemetery Hill. At the same time, Ewell massed reinforcements to attack the Culp's Hill side of Cemetery Hill, thus preventing Meade from shifting forces to support his line on Cemetery Ridge.

Hood's and McLaw's divisions were to pin down the Union left. The divisions of Pettigrew and Trimble of A.P. Hill's corps were to attack the southwestern portion of Cemetery Hill on Pickett's left. The brigades of Wilcox and Lang were to closely follow and protect Pickett's right flank. If Lee had taken Cemetery Hill, he would have cut the Union army off from the town and the head of the road juncture, separating the Union army and forcing its extremities to retreat down Taneytown Road and the Baltimore Pike. Stuart's cavalry was situated within easy reach to harass the miles of Union wheeled vehicles sure to pass that way during a retreat.

But Pickett's division which had arrived 3-4 miles west of Seminary Ridge during the evening of July 2nd, did not move onto the field for a "sunrise attack." Lee stated, "Longstreet, reinforced by Pickett's three brigades, which had arrived near the battlefield during the afternoon of the 2nd, was ordered to attack the next morning, and General Ewell was directed to assail the enemy's right at the same time." Porter Alexander also was informed of the same by Longstreet's staff. Ewell's attack ultimately failed and Johnson was forced to retire to his initial positions by 1 pm. Lee stated, "General Longstreet's dispositions were not completed as early as was expected," implying Ewell's failure was directly related to the absence of an attack by Longstreet at the same time on the western slope of Cemetery Hill.

Longstreet may have been worried about Union cavalry attacking the rear of Hood's division if Hood moved forward. The light horse artillery that was to move with Pickett to protect his flanks, was lost during the cannonade. The cannonade itself, was to last only 20-30 minutes, but went on considerable longer and exhausted the ammunition. The result of failed artillery support was profound. Massed Union artillery had an uncontested and clean field of fire into Pickett's right. The collapse of the right flank, combined with the planned dress left towards Pettigrew's division, crowded the attackers in front of the "copse of trees" which in 1863 were just bushes. Had the flanks been protected, the intent and direction of the charge would have been apparent —Ziegler's Grove.

Deployment prior to the attack is also helpful in understanding the true intent of the charge. Most of Pickett's division was deployed during the cannonade at least 200 yards in front of the woods, with Wilcox's brigade almost on the Emmitsburg Road. Even though Pettigrew's division was father behind, it had a shorter direct route to Cemetery Hill and Ziegler's Grove. The oblique order of battle was one of Lee's favorite tactics to roll up the enemy's flank as previously noted.

This was an attack similar to July 2nd, and was recorded by Lee as "the general plan was unchanged." Over time, the copse of trees matured and the many myths of Pickett's charge as a solo attack began to emerge. Over time, even Porter Alexander changed his mind and focused on the copse of trees as the aiming point. With that change in thought, it became unclear how breaking the Union line at the copse of trees would have achieved victory.

(to be continued)

CHRISTMAS CLUBS

Years ago, banks offered Christmas clubs where customers were provided with a booklet of coupons. The customer determined how much money he needed for Christmas gifts. On a weekly basis, the customer deposited a small amount of money into a Christmas account. Fifty weeks later, the bank returned what the customer had deposited. The small weekly amount could be more easily handled than having to come up with all the cash at holiday time. Remember, there were no such things oas credit cards back then!

In 5 months is our November conference. I don't want any member to complain that they could not go because they do not have the money for the event. Take $25 right now and put it in an envelope and hide it under your matrass for the month of May. That's less than a dollar a day. You can't even get a cup of coffee from the dollar menu at McDonald's for that! Do the same for June, July, August, September and October. I'll remind you in every newsletter how much you should have.

Remember to double that if you want to bring your spouse, child or friend.

GETTYSBURG 150TH

July 1-3, 2013 marks the 150th anniversary of the battle. The reenactment will feature over 9,000 reenactors and over 150 cannon. Scenarios will take place July 4-7. The CDCWRT has reserved a cabin for June 30 to July 7, and two motel rooms for July 4-7.

The volunteers who will be manning our tables at the Visitor Center and the reenactment site, may not need all the available beds. If anyone truly wants to attend either event (and pay for the room or bed) let Matt George know ASAP. Once the volunteer schedule is set, we will know how many beds and when they are available. There are no motel beds available within 25 miles of Gettysburg at this time.