



Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

The one thing which our Civil War Round-Table supports as a community service is our involvement with the Civil War weekend at Gibson Ranch each May. I think it would be worth our while if we were to consider some other Community Service we could perform in addition to the Gibson Ranch activity.

I would like to see everyone think about "community service" and what we might do to improve our contribution to our community. My thinking is that each of us would think about it and offer suggestions to the Board for Community Service activities or projects. I don't believe we should view this as onerous and time consuming, but as something that would come as an extension from activities that we already perform.

Please make suggestions for this effort that we can review and discuss at one of our regular meetings this summer.

I look forward to seeing you this Wednesday as Tim and Ginny Karlberg give a presentation entitled "Attack on the CSS Albemarle."

Until then,

Bob Hanley, President

A Report on the 15th Annual Gibson Ranch Re-Enactment

By George W. Foxworth

The National Civil War Association (NCWA) continued its 2013 re-enactment season on May 3-5 at historic Gibson Ranch in Elverta, California. The theme was “Gettysburg 1863: The North Assumes the High Round of the War.” The NCWA is a private non-profit organization that uses “living history” to help the public to better understand the American Civil War. By portraying the manner in which the soldiers and civilians lived, worked, fought, and died during the Civil War era, the NCWA hopes to keep alive the spirit and sacrifice made by the men, women, and children of that time.

Gibson Ranch is a Sacramento County Park with rolling and grassy hills that allows excellent views of the battlefield and camps. The site accommodated the camps, horses, cannons, soldiers, civilians, and other attendees. In addition, the slight slope of the hillside gave an excellent view of the entire battlefield.

On May 3rd, Friday, the NCWA and Gibson Ranch hosted approximately 1,000 students from Sacramento area schools. The Sacramento Civil War Round Table (SCWRT) served as tour guides for the school children. On May 4th and 5th, the SCWRT hosted an event booth.

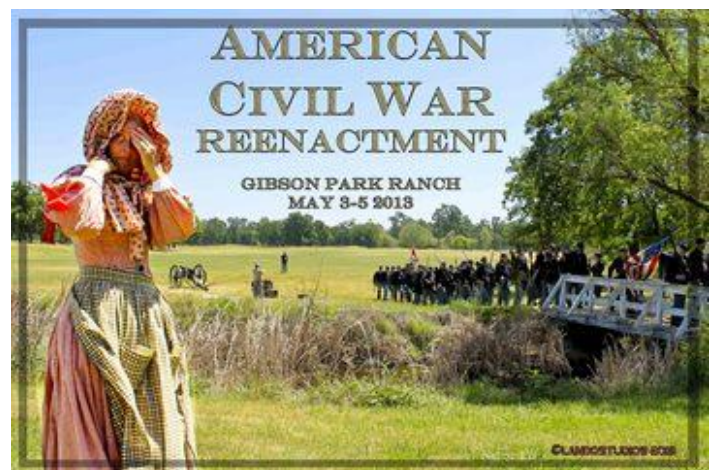
The following SCWRT members participated with the school children: Roy Bishop, Harvey and Marsha Cain, George W. Foxworth, John Greer, Bob Hanley, Eric Henderson, Wayne Henley, Kim Grace Long, Anne and Rick Peasley, Paul Ruud, and John Zasso. In addition, the following SCWRT members worked in the SCWRT booth: George W. Foxworth, John Greer, Bob Hanley, Wayne and Nina Henley, and Rick and Anne Peasley. The re-enactors were Eric Henderson and John Zasso. From the Elk Grove CWRT, Tim and Ginny Karlberg attended.

We thank the volunteers, participants, and attendees.

On Saturday and Sunday, President Abraham Lincoln (Don Ancell) gave presentations with questions from the audience on Gettysburg and the life and times of Mr. Lincoln. Also on Saturday and Sunday, General Robert E. Lee gave presentations with questions from the audience on Gettysburg and the life and times of the Civil War. On Saturday, President Bob Hanley gave a talk on Gettysburg. The public was actively involved. The presentations were excellent and well-received by the attendees.

The conditions were dry, warm, and windy.

The 2013 Gibson Ranch event was a complete success and the NCWA and Gibson Ranch are commended for their great work. A special thank you to Mr. Doug Ose for his part in keeping the Ranch open. We also thank Delrae Pope for managing the event and Keith W. Bowles (NCWA) for coordinating the event. We look ahead to 2014. The theme will be “The Battle of the Wilderness: May 1864.”



 **BOOK REVIEW** 

The Beginning of the End

A century and a half ago, a fateful battle took place in Pennsylvania.

By THOMAS M. DONNELLY

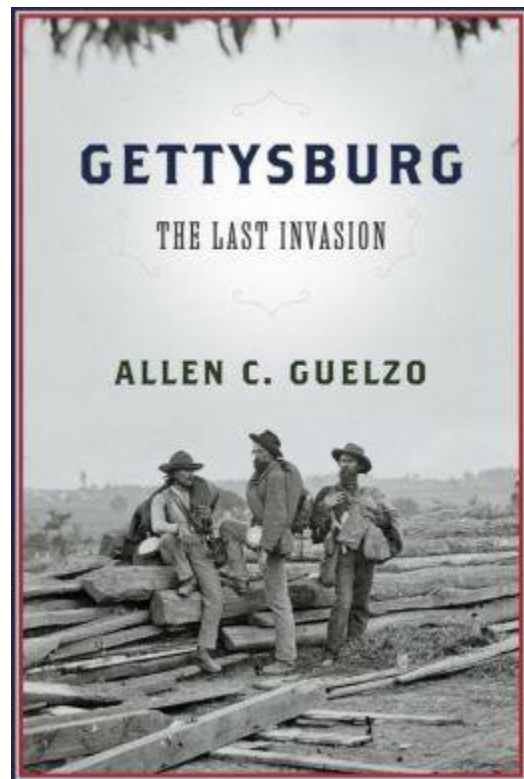
Gettysburg. The word is a looking glass for America, both as a blood-and-soil union and an ideal of liberty but also as an eternal striving to make the one realize the other. Gettysburg, like America, "contains multitudes."

The battle has likewise produced multitudes—multitudes of books that seek to wrestle with the chaotic enormity of the events of July 1-3, 1863. Not even Abraham Lincoln could fix Gettysburg for all time. The 150th anniversary of the battle this summer drives us again to peer into the glass, to reflect anew upon a moment when the American future hung uncertainly in the humid Pennsylvania air, when yet another Confederate victory, especially one on Union soil, might have broken the Lincoln administration's grip on power. And as Allen Guelzo's wonderful "Gettysburg: The Last Invasion" reminds us, the battle very easily might have gone another way.

Mr. Guelzo is, quite literally, on home ground; he has taught for decades at Gettysburg College. He has an intimate feel and a deep appreciation for Pennsylvania, which indeed becomes one of the principal characters in the book. The living landscape of the state—the one crafted by generations of Pennsylvanians—would defend itself with righteous tenacity:

The High water mark of the confederacy The monument to the 72nd Pennsylvania Regiment at the Angle on Cemetery Ridge. The tree line in the distance was the starting point for Pickett's Charge, which was targeted on the Angle.

One feature in particular took Southerners' notice, and that was the comparative smallness of the landholdings, as defined by the endless interweaving of miles and miles of wooden fences. . . . [They] scarcely reflected upon a larger reason for the miniature checkerboard of Pennsylvania's farmland. The state had mandated the gradual emancipation of its slaves in 1780, which drove downward the size of the farmholdings that could be managed by a single owner or tenant. Lee's soldiers also missed the significance of the multitude of "substantial fences" needed to enclose those small free-soil farms; these fences would play a role of their own in defeating slaveholding's bid for independence on a hot July afternoon.



Mr. Guelzo's interest in the Pennsylvania politics of the time brings a deeper understanding of the invasion. The American union in the summer of 1863 was a brittle thing. Robert E. Lee's decision to attack north, to invade the Union for a second time after September 1862's indecisive Antietam campaign, was a risk beyond any that he had taken in accumulating his string of victories in Virginia from the Seven Days Battles of June 1862 through Second Bull Run (August 1862), Fredericksburg (December 1862) and

Chancellorsville (May 1863). After Chancellorsville, Lee determined on a push into Pennsylvania, where his army might feed off the rich farms and where he hoped a display of the Confederate ability to take the war deep into the Union would encourage the antiwar movement in the North.

As the depiction of the anxious reaction of politicians makes clear, Lee was correct in calculating that one more heavy blow might well have broken the North's will to fight. As Lee's vanguard neared Harrisburg, Pa., Gov. Andrew Curtin "seemed to a New York reporter to be 'resigned to the fate that awaits the capital of the glorious old Commonwealth.' " Others feared that Baltimore and even Washington, D.C., would be besieged and overrun.

Mr. Guelzo made his scholarly reputation as a student of the ideological and political temper of the times—in particular the strong beliefs of the president in his "Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President" (1999). The Lincoln he depicted there, deeply shaped by Lockean, natural-rights and Whiggish traditions, can be felt lurking in the background in this book. But the centerpiece of "Gettysburg: The Last Invasion" is, rightly and naturally, the campaign—that is, the military maneuvering before and after the three-day battle itself. The book is very much a work of military history, a campaign study as thoroughgoing as Edwin B. Coddington's "The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command," the authoritative work since the late 1960s.

Mr. Guelzo is sympathetic to Gen. George Meade, whose lugubrious task it was to take command of the Union army after Lee's invasion and just three days from the opening of the battle. This was a job that no one else wanted, in which every previous commander had failed. Nicknamed the "Old Snapping Turtle" for his short temper, Meade may have been the least overtly political of the Army of the Potomac's generals—which recommended him to Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton—but, as Mr. Guelzo shows, he wasn't above cashiering subordinates for their political beliefs and could never quite understand the fuss over chattel slavery.

But, as Mr. Guelzo convincingly demonstrates, it was Gen. John Reynolds who, more than Lee or Meade, was responsible for there being a battle at Gettysburg. By marching his own I Corps and the bulk of the "left wing" of the army northward on July 1, 1863, to the crossroads town and seizing McPherson Ridge, he put down a series of bets that Meade would have to cover and that Lee would have to call. Reynolds had refused the job that Meade was given, yet his actions were, in effect, an order to Meade's army to fight at Gettysburg. (Reynolds did not live beyond the first few hours of the engagement, killed by rifle fire while rallying his troops.)

"Gettysburg: The Last Invasion" also goes a long way toward restoring some perspective to the story of the struggle for Little Round Top and the role of the 20th Maine Regiment at the far left of the Union line. Mr. Guelzo brings the regiment's colonel, Joshua Chamberlain, back down to planet earth from the exalted heights he has occupied since Michael Shaara's 1974 novel, "The Killer Angels." As tens of thousands of visitors discover each year, the 20th Maine site is a tiny and isolated part of a very large battlefield park. It does not, as Mr. Guelzo puts it, subtract from the desperation of the regiment's fight to allow "that the drama of Little Round Top has been allowed to run away from the reality." Porter Farley of the 140th New York Regiment, which fought on the other side of the crest from the Maine men, later complained that "Chamberlain is a professional talker"—in civilian life, he was a professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College—"and I am told rather imaginative withal." The lesser Houck's Ridge was a more important rise than Little Round Top, and it was the breadth of Cemetery Hill rather than its height that made it such an effective platform for artillery.

As befits a life-long Lincoln scholar, Mr. Guelzo concludes his story of the "last invasion" with an epilogue as elegantly succinct as the president's renowned address. "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us," Lincoln said, to demonstrate "that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." Allen Guelzo's book is an extremely

timely reminder that the American experiment has not been, as the Founders asserted, a "self-evident truth" but in fact a highly debatable proposition that needed to be proved, not just in July 1863 at Gettysburg but on many days and in many places since.

—Mr. Donnelly is co-director of the Marilyn Ware Center for Security Studies at the American Enterprise Institute.

A version of this article appeared June 1, 2013, on page C8 in the U.S. edition of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: The Beginning of the End.



Captain Joseph Graham Letter

Picketts Charge / James Longstreet

Confederate Captain Joseph Graham letter to his father written July 30, 1863. He witnessed the entire Pickett's Charge from an advantageous vantage point and describes in his own words what he witnessed - some observations defy prior speculation on what transpired on the final day.

Joseph Graham to William A. Graham, Culpepper [Culpeper] County, July 30th, 1863.

Since I left Kinston, I have travelled between seven and Eight Hundred miles, and have been engaged in one of the bloodiest conflicts of the War. We met the Enemy about two miles from Gettysburg, Pa., on the 1st. day of this month, and drove him, after a sharp contest, lasting all day, to Cemetery Hill, beyond town, distant about half a mile. During the next morning, nothing more than skirmishing occurred, until about two and a half P.M. When Longstreet's Corps arrived upon the Enemy's left, and commenced engaging him in his fortified position on the 'Hill.' In about half an hour, the fight became general, along our right, and right centre, (the right half of our Corps.) Our men advanced and fell back, in succession, until about six o'clock, when a desperate charge dislodged the Enemy from his position, but

unfortunately our reserve was not near enough to support the brave, but decimated ranks of the assailants. Just at this time, the sun being nearly down, our Battalion was ordered up at a gallop, under the thickest fire I ever experienced to support our men, who had been overpowered by the enemy's reinforcements, and compelled to fall back with great loss. Darkness soon put an end to the operations, and the night passed off very quietly. This night and the night previous, the Enemy spent in fortifying his positions, already very strong from the nature of the ground. it was equal, if not superior to his situation at Malvern Hill. And that I think, naturally, the finest position for defence I ever saw.

We slept upon the field, and no sound was audible, except continuous din of the enemy's tools, and the awful groans of the wounded and dying. The next sun brought the fatal 3rd. day of July. Everything remained quiet 'till about 12 1/2 P.M. (by the watch I saw) when we began shelling their positions. On both sides I think there must have been between 350 and 400 guns in action. And after the heaviest Artillery duel of the war, (and said to have been heavier than the cannonade at Balaklava) and lasting about one hour and ten minutes, we silenced all their guns. They report that we killed and disabled nearly all their cannoneers, and they were compelled to get detachments from their Infantry to man their pieces. My men behaved very handsomely indeed, and shells from my guns blew up two of their Caissons loaded with Ammunition. The firing was terrific, and I never expect to hear anything to compare with it. We whipped them fairly in the Artillery, and they were in an elevated and fortified position, and we have no works at all. The distance was about 1 1/4 miles, over an open and gradual slope. The Infantry were to have charged through the dense smoke immediately upon the cessation of our fire, but by some mismanagement, there was quite a delay, until everything became settled, and the Enemy had time to prepare for the charge.

It was a very oppressive day, and our troops were much fatigued by the work of the two days previous, and consequently had to advance very slowly, exposed all the time to the Enemy's fire. The most of our Artillery Ammunition then expended, we could not do much towards driving off their batteries. However, our men advanced steadily, but I fear with too feeble determination, some, up to the work,

others, not so far, and so on, 'till some did not go more than 150 yds. Gen'l Pettigrew told me that when the front line gave way, (we advanced in two lines) he could see their Artillery limbering up their guns to retire from the works. Our second line was 1000 yards from the first, and of course not near enough to support it. This being the case, the first was completely routed, and broke through the second, spoiling the whole affair. I saw the whole charge, the view was open from my position, to the Enemy's works, on the Heights. The lines moved right through my Battery, and I feared then I could see a want of resolution in our men. And I heard many say, 'that is worse than Malvern Hill,' and 'I don't hardly think that position can be carried,' etc., etc., enough to make me apprehensive about the result. Davis' Miss. Brigade was the first to give way. The slaughter is represented as terrible, but so far as I would judge, it was not near as bad as reported. And much is owing to the cowardice of the enemy, for when our men retreated, so much disordered, if they had charged upon them, our Army would have been utterly routed and ruined. It is painful to make such admissions, but they are nevertheless true. this part being over, the day passed off quietly in the centre. Gen'l Lee's plan was excellent, but some one made a botch of it indeed. Had we carried those Heights, that Army would have been ruined. There were only two avenues of escape, and Ewell had one, and Longstreet the other. So that they must have surrendered or been cut to pieces, and entirely ruined. They would have been scattered over the whole country, and we must have had Washington City, and Baltimore. And I hoped a speedy peace. But the fortune of war was otherwise. On the night of the 3rd. Inst., after the crippling of that day, the Enemy began to retire his Artillery, and kept moving out all night, Longstreet having moved back when we could not carry their works. On the 4th. Inst. they threw out heavy lines of skirmishers, and pretended as if they intended to advance upon us. That night, about dusk, both Armies, badly crippled, retired in different directions. they towards Baltimore and we towards Hagerstown. If we had only remained 'till the next day we could have claimed the victory. But our supplies were exhausted, and a retrograde movement absolutely necessary. And for want of transportation, we left about 4500 wounded to fall into their hands. Neither side buried the dead of July 3rd. before leaving. It was an awful affair altogether.

DID YOU KNOW?

Did you know that "deadline" was what the prisoners called the perimeter of Andersonville. Any prisoner crossing that line would risk being shot. Like many military phrases, American business has adapted the term to mean the time limit to complete a job-often as the risk of being shot if that limit is crossed!

Source: <http://civilwarstudies.org/trivia.shtm#03>



UPCOMING SCWRT EVENTS

Meeting location for 2013 is Plaza Hof Brau,
2500 Watt Ave., Sacramento, CA.

June 12: "Attack on the CSS Albemarle" --
Tim & Ginny Karlberg

July 10: "The Mine Run Campaign & The Battle of
Payne's Farm" -- Ted Savas

Aug 14: "The Gettysburg of the West: The 1862
Confederate Invasion of New Mexico" -- Don Hayden

September: "George Custer" -- Joe Maxwell

October: "California Railroads and the Civil War" --
William Burg

November: "The Capture of New Orleans" -- Paul
Ruud

December: "TBA" -- Anne Peasley

