

The Battle of Cedar Mountain August 9, 1962

Slaughter's Mountain, Cedar Run
American Battlefield Trust

With the Peninsula Campaign coming to a close, Gen. Robert E. Lee sent 27,000 troops under Maj. Gens. Stonewall Jackson and A.P. Hill to attack Maj. Gen. John Pope's new Federal Army of Virginia.

Hoping to draw attention away from Maj. Gen. George McClellan's withdrawal from the Peninsula, John Pope moved to take the strategic rail junction at Gordonsville, Va. With Stonewall Jackson's command moving towards Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks's isolated division, Pope ordered Brig. Gen. Franz Sigel's division to unite with Banks's forces on high ground near Cedar Run, seven miles south of the town of Culpeper.

On August 9, Stonewall Jackson's three divisions crossed the Rapidan River and approached Banks's position. With the August temperatures soaring, the Confederates advanced their artillery to engage the Federal line. During the prolonged artillery duel, both Stonewall Jackson and Brig. Gen. Charles Winder participated in firing Confederate artillery pieces. Although it was called "the prettiest artillery duel ever witnessed during the war," it had significant consequences when Charles Winder was struck by shell fragments around 5pm and died a few hours later. With few subordinates aware of Jackson's battle plan, Winder's loss produced a dangerous leadership vacuum just as a powerful Federal attack was beginning to unfold.

At roughly 5:00 p.m., Nathaniel Banks launched two attacks against the Confederate positions. One column of

Federal troops moved against Confederate forces near the Cedars while a second force advanced against the Rebel guns placed near the Crittenden Gate - one of the most prominent landmarks on the battlefield. Pressed by the Union advance, the Confederate guns and much of their infantry support pulled back from their positions at the Gate. With defeat in the air, Stonewall Jackson rode into the center of the fighting and attempted to draw his sword that was rusted within its scabbard. Undaunted, Jackson waved a battle flag and his scabbard-encased sword over his head as he worked to rally his forces. Reinvigorated by Jackson's bravery, the Confederates launched a counterattack that drove back the Union wave. Banks's troops, exhausted and nearly out of ammunition, steadily gave way under the relentless Rebel pressure. Meanwhile, on the Confederate left, Jackson had urged Brig. Gen. Lawrence O'Bryan Branch's regiments to advance on the Union line. Branch's soldiers collapsed the Federal right, as Confederate Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell's division drove back the left. By 7:00 p.m., the Union line was in full retreat. After a mile and a half pursuit of the Federals, Stonewall Jackson ordered a halt as night set in.

For two days after the battle, Jackson maintained his position south of Cedar Run, but the expected Federal counterattacks never came. Fearful of further setbacks, Union General-in-Chief Henry Halleck called off Pope's advance on Gordonsville and surrendered the initiative to Lee and Jackson. With Pope now on the defensive, Robert E. Lee could unleash Jackson more broadly, and the 1862 Northern Virginia Campaign began in earnest.

American Battlefield Trust Reaches Historic Milestone: 50,000 Acres of Hallowed Ground Saved!

Jim Campi, Clint Schemmer,

May 31, 2018

(Washington, D.C.) — With its acquisition of 13 acres at Cedar Creek in Virginia’s picturesque Shenandoah Valley, the [American Battlefield Trust](#) has reached a historic milestone: 50,000 acres of hallowed ground saved at battlefields of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812 and Civil War. The achievement was announced at the opening of the Trust’s Annual Conference, being held this week in Newport News, Virginia.

The American Battlefield Trust is the nation’s leading battlefield preservation organization. It traces its history back to 1987 with the creation of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. It is best known for its work as the Civil War Trust, now a division under the American Battlefield Trust banner. The umbrella organization and its predecessors have cumulatively protected [50,000 acres](#) at more than 130 battlefields and associated sites spread across 24 states, from Glorieta Pass in New Mexico to Lexington in Massachusetts.



Wildflowers adorn the banks of Cedar Creek in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, on battlefield land that has just been preserved by the American Battlefield Trust.

Thousands of Confederate and Union troops traversed these 13 acres, where the Valley Pike crossed the stream, during the Battle of Cedar Creek on Oct. 19, 1864. The land saw substantial combat in the battle’s morning and afternoon phases.

Buddy Secor / American Battlefield Trust

“Every single acre you have saved represents a significant victory in our ongoing race against time and development pressures,” Trust President James Lighthizer told members and supporters gathered in Newport News. “These 50,000 acres represent priceless national treasures, saved for future generations, and replete with vivid stories of sacrifice and valor, victory and anguish.”

In his remarks, Lighthizer tried to put the 50,000-acres accomplishment in perspective: “Fifty thousand acres — that’s 78 square miles — is difficult to wrap your mind around. It is greater than the entire

area of ‘the Federal City’ that George Washington envisioned on the Potomac River, the District of Columbia. But rather than think about it in terms of size, perhaps it is better to remember it as an acre for every soldier killed, wounded or captured at Gettysburg.”

Lighthizer also noted that much of that progress has occurred in just four short years, since 2014. In that time period, more than 10,000 acres of progress has been made at historic shrines such as Antietam’s ‘Epicenter’ tract near Dunker Church, Gen. Robert E. Lee’s now-restored headquarters at Gettysburg, and a War of 1812 battlefield in New York where Americans wrested dominance over Lake Ontario from the British.



This bucolic scene, once part of Cedar Creek Campground, lies in the heart of the Civil War battlefield that witnessed seesaw fighting between Lt. Gen. Jubal Early’s Confederates and Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan’s Union forces. Federal pickets, earthworks and an artillery unit guarded this stretch of the creek, but Early overran those defenses and crossed the stream, enabling him to reunite all three of his Army of the Valley’s

infantry columns and send the Union army on the run on the morning of the battle. Buddy Secor / American Battlefield Trust

“We owe a great debt of gratitude to our 50,000 members and to each individual who believes that this legacy is worth preserving and passing on,” Lighthizer said. “But we cannot slacken our pace. As development nibbles away at and gobbles up fields and farmland, America’s historic landscapes continue to vanish at an alarming rate.”

The Trust drew within striking distance of the 50,000-acre milestone in 2017 with deals to protect Civil War sites at Appomattox Court House, Shiloh, Gettysburg, Second Manassas, Trevilian Station, and Prairie D’Ane in Arkansas. So far in 2018, the Trust has most notably acquired battlefield acreage at Corinth and Champion Hill in Mississippi, Brown’s Ferry and Fort Donelson in Tennessee, and Appomattox Court House, Brandy Station, Cold Harbor and Second Deep Bottom in Virginia.

The save that pushed the Trust across the 50,000-acre finish line was the purchase of a pivotal 13-acre tract on the Cedar Creek battlefield in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley. This was preceded by just one day by the acquisition of the 15-acre [Washington’s Charge Site](#) on the Revolutionary War battlefield of Princeton, N.J.



The preserved battlefield land includes this eastern bridge abutment of the Valley Pike, which spanned Cedar Creek, as well as the pike's original 1830s roadbed. The Valley's lifeline, the road was "macadamized" and nearly weatherproof, an engineering marvel of its day. When the Union army counterattacked in the afternoon, the tract saw "wild confusion" as a large part of Jubal Early's fleeing army crossed the bridge under fire from Union batteries.
American Battlefield Trust

The Virginia property, known to modern-day residents as the Battle of Cedar Creek Campground, figured in the fierce Oct. 19, 1864, battle that gave the Union control over the Valley. The streamside tract along Cedar Creek saw significant combat in both the morning and afternoon phases of the seesaw battle. After his troops crossed here in the morning, Confederate Lt. Gen. Jubal Early reunited his three infantry columns and overwhelmed the Union army.

But late that day, Union troops under Maj. Gen. Phil Sheridan counterattacked, sending many of Early's soldiers fleeing across the Cedar Creek bridge under artillery fire. The bridge's stone abutments survive. The parcel includes one of the few remaining sections of the Valley Pike, among the nation's first engineered roads — 22 feet wide, ditched and "macadamized."

The property was acquired with the assistance of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation and the HTR Foundation.

To help the American Battlefield Trust continue its unprecedented preservation efforts, visit battlefields.org/saveabattlefield to learn more about current projects across the nation.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. To date, the nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected 50,000 acres of battlefield land associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

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By Kim O'Connell
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Before the Civil War, Washington, D.C., was vulnerable from nearly all sides. The only major fortification was Fort Washington, an early 19th-century brick and stone structure located on the Potomac River 12 miles to the south (now a national park site). When the war began, President Lincoln moved quickly to buttress the lightly defended capital. By the summer of

1861, Union troops had occupied the high bluffs and hills on the river's Virginia side to develop a system of fortifications, under the direction of the U.S. Army Chief Engineer John G. Barnard, that would encircle the city. By war's end, that system numbered 68 enclosed forts and batteries, as well as nearly 100 other unenclosed batteries and more than 30 miles of new military roads. So formidable were the defenses that they saw only one battle—at Fort Stevens in July 1864—where Lincoln himself came dangerously close to the action. Today, although several fortifications have been lost to time and development, remembered only by historical markers, nearly two dozen forts and related sites remain viewable in Maryland, D.C., and Virginia, mostly under the care of the National Park Service (NPS). Remnants of high, thick earthworks, rifle pits, and sturdy bombproofs give you a sense of how seriously the Union took the threat against the capital. Because of them, the center held, proving that wars aren't won just on the battlefield. Be sure to visit the NPS website about the Civil War defenses of Washington for maps and other information, at www.nps.gov/cwdw. —**Kim O'Connell**

BY HISTORY NET



Interpretive signage at Fort Ethan Allen
(Melissa A. Winn)

At Fort Stevens on July 11 and 12, 1864, Jubal Early's troops fired at Union soldiers in Fort Stevens. Lincoln had gone to the fort to observe the action when he reportedly came under fire. According to legend, Union officer and future Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. yelled to the president, "Get down, you damn fool!" While the story is probably apocryphal, it is likely that someone told the president to take cover during the skirmishing.



Fort Marcy cannon (Melissa A. Winn)

The Virginia Highlands

Small But Hallowed

A half-mile north of Fort Stevens sits Battleground National Cemetery, where 41 Union soldiers who fought at the fort are buried. At one acre, it is one of the smallest national cemeteries in the country, dedicated by Lincoln himself.



Fort C.F. Smith's entrance (Melissa A. Winn)



Gun Care: Heavy artillery units served in the D.C. forts. These artillery buckets, for water to clean barrels (left), and axle grease (right), are just two of the 4,000 artifacts at the Fort Ward Museum. (Melissa A. Winn)

At the outbreak of the war, the hills of present-day Arlington County, Va., provided crucial high ground for a trio of forts that protected the Chain Bridge and Leesburg Pike, which remain key approaches to the capital: Forts Marcy, Ethan Allen, and C.F. Smith. All are interpreted and located either directly on or near the George Washington Memorial Parkway.

Owned by the NPS, Fort Marcy was built by New York and Pennsylvania troops, including the famous Iron Brigade, as well as several hundred contrabands. Forts Ethan Allen and C.F. Smith, both owned and managed by Arlington County, also preserve visible earthworks and offer interpretative trails and a peace garden. Visit parks.arlingtonva.us and search by fort name.

Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, the military post adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery, was the Civil War site of Forts Cass and Whipple.



Fort Stanton offers this fascinating northwestward view of the capital that few tourists take advantage of. The panorama also gives one an idea of how the forts were engineered to provide sweeping views of the country. (Melissa A. Winn)

Alexandria's Sentinel

Owned by the city of Alexandria, Fort Ward contains a meticulously restored cannon battery as well as a perimeter dry moat and defensive abatis, a distinctive white entrance gate, and a small but well curated museum with rotating exhibits. The fort regularly hosts living histories, lectures, kids' camps, and other special events.

alexandriava.gov/FortWard



Fort Ward Museum (Melissa A. Winn)

The Fort Circle Trail

Back across the Potomac, outdoor enthusiasts can opt to tour several fort sites on the seven-mile Fort Circle Park Hiker-Biker Trail that winds through largely forested land connecting Fort Mahan to the north and Fort Stanton to the south, passing by the sites of Forts Chaplin, Dupont, Davis, and Ricketts. Fort Dupont Park is located at about the center point of the trail and includes an outdoor stage, picnic areas, and parking.



15-inch Rodman at Fort Foote (Melissa A. Winn)

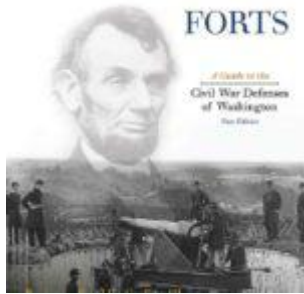
The Big Guns

“The extensive fortifications erected by the labor of our troops enable a small garrison to hold it against a numerous army.” Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan, in a report to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton

Just south of the District of Columbia, Fort Foote in Fort Washington, Md., offers both Potomac River views and a chance to get up close to intimidating 15-inch Rodman cannons. At 25 tons apiece, the cannons could send a 440-pound round shell sailing over three miles. In February 1864, a sizable crowd of civilians came to the fort just to witness the firing of one of the massive guns.

Contraband Communities

Many forts protected so-called “contrabands” during the war, escaped slaves who were often employed to construct and maintain these fortifications. The NPS and American University have embarked on an effort to interview current community members who have discovered ancestors who worked on the Civil War defenses. Visit www.nps.gov and search “civil war descendants” to learn more.

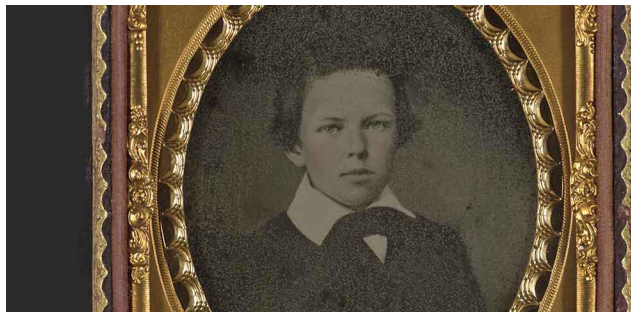


Mr. Lincoln's Forts

Mr. Lincoln's Forts: A Guide to the Civil War Defenses of Washington, by Benjamin Franklin Cooling III and Walton H. Owen is the definitive guide to D.C.'s forts. The deeply researched book offers histories of each of the forts, engineering drawings, and other rich details about these defenses.

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The War In Their Words: "The Stench of Rotten Yanks"



Homebound Chronicler: This image of LeRoy W. Gresham was taken circa 1857-58 after an accident had crushed his leg and left him an invalid. His healthy mind, however, could not be confined.

By Janet E. Croon and Theodore P. Savas
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MAGAZINE](#)

An invalid Georgia teenager kept a remarkable, insightful diary about the war...and fruit

Almost no one had ever heard of LeRoy Wiley Gresham until the Library of Congress featured his "little-known diary" in 2012. LeRoy was an invalid teenager from a wealthy slave-holding family in Macon, Ga., crippled when a chimney collapsed and crushed his left leg in 1856. In 1860, his mother, Mary, gave the 12-year-old a blank journal to record his experiences with his father, John Gresham, on their trip to Philadelphia to see a medical specialist. Sadly, the doctor could not help him.

Once home he continued writing, putting pen to paper with a vim and often tongue-in-cheek vigor that impresses even now. LeRoy was a voracious reader who debated social and military topics with his parents, older brother Thomas, and friends. A slave his own age pulled him in a small custom-built wagon for brief trips out of his sickbed.

He wrote nearly every day, and could be termed a "19th-century blogger" for the way he discusses and analyzes the Civil War. He handled major events concisely and crisply, and learned to temper his hopes because initial military reports were often wrong. The Gresham family had everything at stake when the war began. His grandmother had six sons fighting in the war. His father was a plantation owner. His older brother served in the Army of Northern Virginia.

LeRoy also offers readers a horrifying account of his daily suffering. Surgeon Dennis Rasbach studied the diary and private letters and believes LeRoy suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis that spread to his spine. His condition worsened with each passing year. Unbeknownst to LeRoy, he was chronicling his own slow and painful

descent toward death in tandem with the demise of the Confederacy.

The last diary entry was June 8, 1865, when he wrote, "I have read nothing at all for the last ten days and consequently know little of the outside world...." LeRoy died eight days later at age 17.

The following selected entries from the spring and summer of 1863 exemplify LeRoy's keen interest in the war (and sweet seasonal fruit that temporarily diverted him from his pain), and illustrate the rise and fall of his hopes based on battlefield events. It is clear he was a remarkably well-informed and intelligent young man. For a full review of publisher Savas Beatie's edited version of his diary, go to <http://bit.ly/greshamreview>. Some of LeRoy's passages in this article have been shortened, as indicated by ellipses, and the format of the datelines has been standardized. Otherwise, they are reprinted as he wrote them. There is no other published account remotely like this in the Civil War field.



Gresham led off his final diary with a Confederate 3rd National Flag illustration. (Library Of Congress)

May

Tuesday, May 5: Clear and warm. Suffered a great deal till after midnight when Mother + Father got up, removed the poultice + dressed my back. After that I was a great deal more comfortable. The news is that a great fight has been fought at Fredericksburg. Gen Lee telegraphs "that Almighty God had given us another victory. Stonewall Jackson + A.P. Hill wounded. General Paxton killed. Heath wounded. I am so sorry about Gen Jackson. Hooker flanked us or rather turned our position and in doing so got himself into a bad position. Jackson as usual got into his rear and two of Longstreet's divisions in front. The fight lasted two days. Hooker at last accts was retreating across the river... The new Flag is the "Battleflag for the Union." White field without bars. O Horrid....

Wednesday, May 6: ...Gen Lee says the Battle occurred at Chancellorsville. Gen Jackson's left arm has been amputated below the shoulder. Gen Sedgwick attempted to come up in our rear [at Fredericksburg] but was handsomely repulsed by McLaws and afterwards driven across the river by Gen Lee himself. Mother has gone down town. It is a great bother to dress my back and takes 2 to do it.

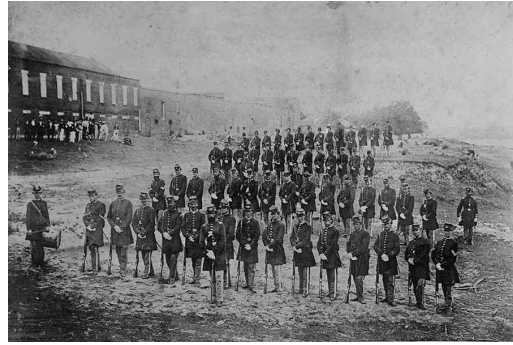
Friday, May 8: ...List of killed + wounded in the Macon Volunteers. 1700 nasty, stinkin' Yankee raiders have arrived in Atlanta. The Yanks made a raid and came within sight of Richmond. No authentic account of the Battle of Chancellorsville. The Yankee loss was 3 to our 1, "mostly foreigners." It was a very bloody fight.

Saturday, May 9: Very cool. Slept well. The bloody fight is over. Hooker is repulsed, but Stonewall Jackson, the pride and the glory of the people, is disabled and worst of

all by his own command. He and his staff rode out unknown to the men to reconnoiter and, being taken for Yankees, was fired upon; 1 of his staff killed, 1 wounded. 1 ball shattered the Gen's left arm and another passed through his right hand. 9 men were wounded in the Macon Volunteers, only 1 killed out right....

Sunday, May 10: ...My abscess on the right ran a little. Lincoln has called out 500000 men! Our loss at Chancellorsville was 8 or 10000. I don't think the Yankees lost less than 30000 for we took 8000 prisoners. The Yankees are very proud of their escape. The attack was well planned. A terrible storm prevented pursuit. I hope Gen Lee will cross the river himself as soon as the 28 regiments whose term is out leave for home. The army of Tennessee is reported on the advance?? Nary time. Gen Lee has issued congratulatory orders and this is a day of thanksgiving in the army. Gen Van Dorn has been murdered by a Dr. Peters out west. A personal affair entirely.

Monday, May 11: Clear + pleasant. Had strawberries for dinner... Brave, gallant Stonewall Jackson is dead. He, the pride of the nation, is gone. Dearly was the victory won at such a price. He died from the combined effect of his wounds + an attack of pneumonia. As a commander, it may be said that he never committed an error!...I never in my life saw peaches so defective wormy + rotten everywhere the hail hit them....



Local Boys: This photograph was taken at Macon's Camp Oglethorpe in 1861, and shows Company D, composed of troops from the town, of the 1st Georgia Infantry. The regiment served for one year, but many of its men enlisted in other units. (Courtesy Of Georgia Archives, Vanishing Georgia)

Monday, May 18: Clear and pleasant. Jackson, Miss. is in the enemy's hands and gloomy forebodings are entertained for Vicksburg. Gen Joe Johnston was cut off this side. We fought all day. The 46th Ga. was in the fight. Gloomy times certain. I am quite unwell. Took paregoric last night. Had strawberries for dinner....

Tuesday, May 19: Clear and pleasant. The news from the west is bad. The Yanks after sacking Jackson have evacuated it marching towards Vicksburg. Gen Johnston with 9000 men fought 20000 all day and then being overpowered fell back to Canton. Port Hudson has been attacked! Heavy firing; no other particulars. Halleck has gone down to overlook Hooker. Gen Tilghman is killed. Had dewberries for dinner....The itching of my back at times is intolerable. If the Yanks ain't working us now, you may take my hat. All looks threatening and dark around us. I wish Gen Pemberton was in Guinea or anywhere else but in the place he is. Minnie lost a ring. Hooker's loss in Stragglers, deserters, killed, and wounded is not estimated at less than 40000. They

acknowledge officially only 17000. Our loss was about 9000. They captured about 1500 of our men.

Friday, May 22: The news is poor. Vicksburg is closely invested and will probably fall. The news is unsatisfactory in the extreme. Thomas arrived in the evening. Ate a wormy ripe plum, the first of the season.

Saturday, May 23: ...Not a drop of news....I hope its so that Gen Johnston has put Old Pemberton under arrest and taken away his sword....

Sunday, May 24: Clear and warm Vicksburg had not fallen at last accts and the condition, though extremely critical, was not at all desperate, and I am strongly in hopes that Grant will yet meet with a stunning defeat. He it is stated was repulsed in 3 attacks on Vicksburg and "Jo Johnston" is pushing in his rear and constantly receiving reinforcements....

Monday, May 25: Clear and warm. Had strawberries, cus-tard, + cake, for dinner. No news. The anxiety about our army out West and doubt is freely expressed of Pemberton's loyalty....Recd relic from battlefield sent by Uncle Dick: a fancy roll of the Burnside Guards, a company of the 124th Pa.

Tuesday, May 26: Cloudy and cool. The news is a drop more encouraging from Vicksburg. The Yanks have been repulsed 6 times and with very heavy loss. Grant says he has taken the first line of entrenchments. Johnson is fortifying at Jackson. Breckinridge + Bragg have come to an open rupture and the former has called a court of inquiry. [Governor Joe] Brown is announced for a 4th term and there will be no opposition. Howard returned with

Allen....Mrs. Hug[uenin] sent me honey, butter and sug berries.

Friday, May 29: ...The situation is gloomy in the extreme. Vicksburg is one. It is said that the Yanks have lost heavier than in any previous battle. Rotten Yankees are piled up in such numbers before our intrenchments that the effluvia [smell] is awful. Tar is burnt to prevent sickness....Banks is crossing the Mississippi to aid Grant. Farragut is bombarding Port Hudson. Gunboats have passed Vicksburg going up. They'll take it certain. No news of Gen Johnston. Father has no hope of our holding out longer than a week. It is awful.

Saturday, May 30: ... Nothing definite from the west. Grant's loss must be enormous. Pemberton's address to the army is received. I can but hope. Grant can get any amount of reinforcements + supplies. Yazoo River and all our river batteries are in their hands. Our Warrenton batteries also. Up to the 27th, our men were cheerful and hopeful. On the 27th, The Feds made a grand attack + were repulsed with loss....

June



Generally Critical: This is a fanciful depiction of Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant leading an attack at Vicksburg.

Gresham seemed to sense, however, that Grant posed a real threat to Southern fortunes, and he had no problems criticizing Grant's Pennsylvania-born opponent, Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton. (Harper's Weekly, June 13, 1863)

Tuesday, June 2: Clear and warm. The news is on the whole encouraging. Vicksburg holds out heroically! Gen Grant demanded a surrender, but Pemberton replied that he would die in the trenches. There are some heavy rumors. One is that the enemy made a grand assault and were mown down by thousands, nearly all of them killed or captured. The Yankees say we rolled shells down the hill at them causing immense havoc....If Vicksburg does pass this fiery ordeal in safety, how thankful we ought to be!....The college girls have formed a company and drill regularly....It is rumored and credited that Lee's army is in motion. Had strawberries for dinner.

Thursday, June 4: ...Vicksburg is still ours. Grant is heavily reinforced. Pemberton's address to his troops is a defense of himself, not a harangue to the troops. The Yanks have had it captured twice....Higgelty pigglety pop! O La.

Friday, June 5: ...The "Situation" is on the whole encouraging....Grant may yet skedaddle. It says Banks has been handsomely thrashed by Gen Gardner near to Port Hudson and that Kirby Smith is opposite ready to cross. Gen Johnston is on the move to cut off Grant. Grant is moving to prevent it and a great fight is pending on the Yazoo. The stench of rotten Yanks can be smelt 6 miles off. Pemberton calls on Grant to bury them. Contrabands were put in the front of the fight on every occasion. It is rumored Rosencrans is falling back [in Tenn]....I eat June apples every eve and they are very nice + ripe.

Saturday, June 6: Rained nearly all night and it is still cloudy. Read The Laird of Norlan. Banks was not in the fight at Port Hudson. Sherman commanded and was killed. Out of a regiment of 900 "nigs" only 100 escaped. "Bully for that." A great fight is ere this going on between Johnston + Grant. "Terrific firing heard," and it must be them. Now we must wait patiently for news, but if we don't lick them – well....Father arrived at dinnertime sick and weary. He brought some apples for pies and about half-bushel of plums....My strawberries + a little bottle of May cherries arrived from Athens.

Sunday, June 7: Clear and warm....Had strawberries for dinner. Cherry preserves I mean, and they were real splendid....Prayer meeting for Vicksburg in the eve.

Monday, June 8: ...Bought Whortleberries at 50 cents a quart. My back runs a great deal now. Willis came up bringing Dewberries....Had the first apple pie of the season and enjoyed it very much. Received a letter from Uncle Richard. He is in A. P. Hill's 3d army corps.

Thursday, June 11: ...Well, if things do not look gloomy at Vicksburg, there a'int no snakes. Grant has called for 50000 reinforcements and he will get them. Alas! We have none to send without exposing an important point. So as it has come to a question of reinforcements, we are gone....Father thinks it. It is a gloomy prospect. There are some wild rumors too. One is that you can walk on dead yankees for 10 acres and not touch the earth. Another says that the blood is shoe deep!! The slain are 60 + 70,000. Ours 600. Another says Pemberton boasts he can hold Vicksburg indefinitely and tells Johnston to take his time. The Yanky exaggeration's are equally wild. They say Pemberton has been hung by our men....I did not sleep well. I had such a

binding pain across the chest and I think it comes from overexertion. My leg distresses me greatly and worse than all, folks say it's my own fault, I can straiten it if I would try. Well~...Fried apples are good and so is pig. There has been a heavy cavalry fight on the Rappahannock. Gen Lee says "Gen Stuart after a 'severe contest' of 12 hrs. drove the Yanks 'across the river.'" I reckon it was a hard fight.

Friday, June 12: ...Gen Lee is moving but in what direction no one knows. Our loss was 400 in the late cavalry fight. We got the new stove up and it is very nice....

Wednesday, June 17: ...Early's division has stormed the entrenchments at Winchester and in the language of Gen Lee, God has again crowned the Valor of our troops with success....

Saturday, June 20: Clear and warm. Ewell's victory at "Winchester" is confirmed. 7000 prisoners + 3000 horses. It is rumored that our army is pushing into Maryland. The Yankees are under the influence of a grand scare or "uprisings." Lincoln calls for 100000 6 months men and the Gov[ernor]s are calling too. Our loss at Brandy Station was 483; Yanks twice that....



Left to Remember: Postwar images of John and Mary Gresham (below), LeRoy's parents. John was a cotton planter and an attorney who served a term as Macon's mayor. Their handsome Greek Revival home still stands and is a bed and breakfast (1842inn.com). (Courtesy of The 1842 Inn)

Tuesday, June 23: ...The June apples are love to the sight and pleasant to the taste. The Yanks have made a cavalry raid into E. Tenn. and after burning a factory and damaging the R.R. were repulsed by the 54th Va. at Knoxville—General Ewell is in Mld. Hooker is near Bull run and "Manassas Plains." Where the grand collision will occur or whither Gen Lee intends to fight, no one knows. I can't see what object we can have in entering Maryland except to get provision or attract attention from Vicksburg. I feel confident that our army can whip Hooker's anywhere—Blackberries do not fall below 25 cents a quart....

Thursday, June 25: ...Peaches are getting ripe but they are watery and mean on acct of so much rain. The movements of Gen Lee are shrouded in complete mystery as are Gen Johnston's [in Mississippi]. Hooker is over the Potomac and the fight will be in Mld....

Friday, June 26: Clear and hot. Last night was the warmest of the season....Gen Longstreet has crossed the Potomac at Leesburg; Ewell at Harpers Ferry. A.P. Hill is behind....

Tuesday, June 30: ...The Yanks have made a raid around Richmond, kicked up a dust! Captured Gen W.H. Lee + left. Richmond is menaced by a large force via the Peninsula. Confident is felt as to our ability to repulse them. No General engagement is anticipated in Tennessee. 2 [rail] car-loads of wounded in the late skirmish have come down to

Chatt[anooga]. Commencement day at the college. Thomas had to dress my back. The “new un” [abscess] has not run a drop in a day and night. I hope it’ll heal up.

July

Thursday, July 2: ...Gen Ewell is reported in “Harrisburg” [Pa.]! Battle imminent in Tenn. “Vicksburg is gone,” some people say; others think it not so bad as that.

Friday, July 3: ...I have felt inexpressibly weary all day, and have had a slight pain in my leg too. Rosencrans, it is said, has flanked our right and Bragg is retreating. Before he is done I reckon we’ll be at Chattanooga again. D.H. Hill is in Richmond and Gen Dix is advancing on the city.



Mary Gresham (Courtesy of The 1842 Inn)

Saturday, July 4: Hot and clear. Well! Well! This is the glorious but “played out” 4th....3 years ago I laid down and it has not done me any good. My left leg is worse drawn up than ever....Father is desponding about Vicksburg.

Tuesday, July 7: ...The most sanguinary battle of the war has been fought at Gettysburg, Pa. Barksdale, Kemper, Garnett,

Armistead, Semmes Killed. Hood, Trimble, Pickett, Pender—Hampton, Anderson, Robinson, Jenkins, Jones, Heth, Scales, Pettigrew +c. 50 field officers besides these disabled; our whole loss probably 15000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners, certainly not less for nearly all our wounded, who were not able to move or be carried, were left behind. General Lee’s army is crossing the Potomac at Williamsport where a severe fight is probably going on with our rear guard. The Potomac is very high and our men are crossing in flats. The loss is appalling and for nothing too. What a host of men have been slain at just such an affair; at Shiloh, Murfreesboro + Sharpsburg! Our army went into Maryland declaring themselves invincible and with an utter contempt for the foe they had so often whipped....Every officer in the [Macon] Volunteers was disabled....

General Hooker has been superceded by Gen “G.G. Meade” a “brave and accomplished officer” which is a capital thing for us. Gens Wadsworth + Reynolds U.S.A. are reported killed. Our army is reported as living “in clover.” When a town is entered, a contribution of supplies is levied. Gen Ewell forbids all individual interference with private property. When our cavalry comes across fine horses, they take them and put their jaded ones in their place....

Wednesday, July 8: ...Great and glorious news! Grand defeat of the Yankees. 40000 prisoners. All of both sides engaged. The Yankees massed their forces and attacked Gen Hill in the centre. He fell back and the enemy following our wings under Longstreet and Ewell closed on them, and thus completely defeated them, killing it is said Gens Meade, Wadsworth, Reynolds, Barlow, + Meredith. The prisoners refused to be paroled and Pickett’s division was guarding them to Martinsburg. Our loss it is

supposed is tremendous. Vicksburg is taken....I hope that Gen Lee will take Washington. I cannot believe that heroic little Vicksburg is actually gone, but “lack-a-day.” I reckon it is so....

Thursday, July 9: ...An official dispatch says—“Vicksburg capitulated on the 4th inst. The men were immediately paroled; the officers retaining their side arms + baggage.” The cause of the surrender was famine. General Grant had a boatload of provisions brought for our poor men. We had only 7000 effective men. The “Victory” in Pa. grows beautifully less....

Janet E. Croon is a retired teacher living in northern Virginia. The War Outside My Window is her first book. Theodore P. Savas is the owner and managing director of Savas Beatie publishing company. Young LeRoy Gresham’s remarkable, 155,000-word, 7-volume diary was recently published as The War Outside My Window: The Civil War Diary of LeRoy Wiley Gresham, 1860-1865 (Savas Beatie, 2018). (President’s Note: Janet Croon will be the BCWRT speaker on Tues, May 28, 2019)

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Demographics, politics cited as factors in waning Civil War re-enactments

By Bryn Stole and Daniel Arnold
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GETTYSBURG, Pa. — The sun rose on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg 2018 to reveal a line of cars parked behind the Union Army’s tents.

It was an annoying historical anachronism for the brigade’s commander, Ted Brennan, 49, who was brushing his teeth with a horsehair toothbrush.

“We try to be as authentic as we can without getting dysentery,” Brennan said of his unit, several of whom were frying bacon and brewing coffee over a fire. They were camped in a sea of canvas tents that housed many of the 6,000 re-enactors at the event. Beyond the spectator stands and hot-dog stalls, the Confederates were camped just out of sight.

The 155th Gettysburg anniversary re-enactment, held last month, offered dedicated hobbyists a chance to blast away at one another with antique rifles and to rekindle old friendships over campfire-cooked meals.

Spectators paid \$40 to watch nearly a dozen mock skirmishes over four days, and there was an old-timey ball Saturday night. An Abraham Lincoln impersonator was on hand to pose for photos.

It was also a snapshot of a hobby in decline. Gettysburg is among the biggest re-enactments of the year, and it still draws thousands to the sweltering Pennsylvania countryside at midsummer.

But that’s nothing compared with the re-enactments of the 1980s and 1990s, when tens of thousands would turn out. In 1998, at the 135th anniversary of Gettysburg, an estimated 30,000 re-enactors and 50,000 spectators were in attendance.

Many of today’s re-enactors were born as the last Civil War veterans were dying; they grew up amid the celebrations and re-enactments of the centennial that lasted from 1961 to 1965. But the heyday of re-enacting

was the 1990s, during another moment of national fascination with the Civil War.

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In 1990, Ken Burns' "Civil War" documentary pulled in nearly 139 million viewers (huge ratings for a PBS program), and James McPherson's 900-plus page academic book, "The Battle Cry of Freedom," published in 1988, spent months on the best-seller lists.

Interest in the battlefield experiences of Civil War soldiers was fueled by cinematic hits such as the Oscar-winning film "Glory" (1989) and "Gettysburg" (1993), which ran more than four hours. (Hundreds of re-enactors were cast as extras.)

During the past decade or so, however, the crowds at large scale re-enactments have dwindled. Longtime hobbyists are aging out and retiring — soldiers in their 50s and 60s filled much of the camp at Gettysburg — and younger people aren't marching onto mock battlefields in nearly the same numbers.

Enthusiasts cite a number of factors. Video games are to blame, some grouse, while others attribute diminishing interest to the rising expense of gear. A reproduction Civil War rifle alone can cost more than \$1,000.

In Columbus, West Side residents Jennifer Mott and her husband, Andrew, help run the 40th Ohio Volunteer Infantry and 10th Tennessee (members re-enact both Union and Confederate battles). Mrs. Mott said the group has as many members as ever (between 35 and 50), but that, nationally, she sees the hobby in decline.

"It's harder to find events to go to," she said. "People have gotten busier, and their focus is on different things — and it's expensive."

Others have a more introspective take on the situation.

In the 1980s and '90s, "the whole tone of the country was different," said Thomas Downes, 68, a retired machinist from Cleveland, who has been re-enacting for the Union side for 38 years.

"Up until the last five or 10 years, the social causes of the war did not come into what we do," he said. "We were paying tribute to the fighting man."

"It wasn't, 'I'm racist, and I want to glorify slavery,'" he said. "Nobody really thought a lot about the social reasons of why the South went to war. It was just these poor guys who were underfed, undermanned, under-equipped fighting valiantly to the last man, until they couldn't stand anymore."

Brad Keefer, a 61-year-old corporal in the Union re-enactor ranks and a professor of history at Kent State University, said: "Re-enactors look at the war as a four-year period between 1861 and 1865 in which you can cut out all the stuff leading up to the war and very much ignore everything that happened afterward.

"We don't get tangled up in all the messy bits, which are the causes and outcomes, which are complicated and uncomfortable."

Mott, too, said she sees the "political and historical environment" affecting the hobby's popularity,

"The majority of society is cool with it (re-enacting)," she said. "But we do get those questions, 'Oh, you're racist,' and

we say, ‘No, we’re showing history: good, bad and ugly.’”

It’s a vision of history placed in narrow context. The military details are meticulously researched and re-created down to the stitching of a uniform, but the broader social and political realities of the Civil War — the profound struggle over slavery and emancipation, racism and equality, citizenship and disenfranchisement — are largely confined to the margins.

Still, those issues can’t be ignored. After a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, at which demonstrators wore swastikas and carried Confederate flags — and where an anti-racist protester, Heather Heyer, was killed — at least two smaller Civil War re-enactments were canceled. That the battle flag Confederate re-enactors carry is still used as a means of intimidation makes it hard to defend as a purely historical object, independent of its racist implications.

“You build a comfort zone for the hobby to function,” Keefer said. Pointing to the Confederate camp, he said: “And give them the benefit of the doubt that they weren’t at Charlottesville.”

There are many hard-core re-enactors — people who want to know what it felt like to march 25 miles in disintegrating shoes, sleep in ditches and subsist onhardtack and rancid salt pork — who eschew Gettysburg as a mainstream event. But at least one Union unit spent several days marching along highway shoulders to get to this year’s re-enactment, retracing the movements of the Army of the Potomac.

Another unit traveled from Germany, and hundreds of cavalry re-enactors showed up with their horses.

One cavalryman, Nathaniel Williams Sr., said he grew up riding in southern Virginia but didn’t learn that his ancestors served in the 2nd U.S. Colored Cavalry, a Union regiment of free blacks and liberated slaves, until later in life.

“I had no idea we were in the Civil War,” said Williams, his horse grazing in a field behind his tent. “It was never taught to me. It opened up my eyes to a lot of things.”

Williams first organized a re-enacting group about 20 years ago, recruiting relatives, friends and members of his church. This year, about two dozen people in his unit made the trip. It was the only black unit there.

Black re-enactors form a small faction within the overall hobby. But groups who portray U.S. Colored Troops — the designation the Army gave to ranks of all-black regiments — tend to re-enact battles where black troops played key roles in the fighting, including the Battle of Fort Wagner in South Carolina, depicted in “Glory.”

Army commanders initially made black regiments perform menial labor and didn’t regularly order them into combat until after Gettysburg.

“Even though we didn’t fight here, we make it a family event,” said Williams, sitting alongside his wife, Angela, who was wearing period dress. “We’ve got three days, we can spend time together and have fun.”

The actual battle of Gettysburg was some of the most savage fighting in the Civil War, but no one wants to die early in a re-

enactment. If you catch an imaginary bullet in the beginning of a skirmish, you miss out on most of the action. (For the cavalry, dying in mock battle is even rarer because it means falling out of the saddle.)

But casualties inevitably mount. Sometimes, there's just "no way around it," Keefer said, not long after going down under intense fire from the Confederate lines.

"We were getting killed there," he said. "There were just too many Rebs shooting."

Once down, some of the wounded took the opportunity to pull out their smartphones and take photos and videos. A crew of bucket-carrying women made their way around the battlefield, topping off the canteens of both the living and the dead.

Re-enactors shoot gunpowder, not bullets, but serious accidents do happen from time to time. Heatstroke and heart troubles usually pose the greatest threat, a problem that has grown as the average participant has aged.

The fighting was over when the buglers sounded "Taps." The soldiers placed their caps over their hearts, shook hands and congratulated one another on a good fight.

Historical flourishes and stacked rifles aside, the camp at a Civil War re-enactment resembles a Boy Scout jamboree. The slice of rustic outdoor life is one of the hobby's big draws.

"I tell people it's a chance to have a guys' weekend out camping, just doing it a little more old-school than people are used to," said Christopher Wesp, 34, a relatively recent recruit and former Marine who served three tours in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"From my first event, the camaraderie that I felt and started building was very close and comparable to what it was like being in the service," he said. "That's the thing I missed most about being in the Marine Corps."

Politically, Civil War re-enactors tend to be conservative, perhaps a reflection of the demographics of a hobby that skews heavily white and middle-aged. But it's not a monolith. One Union infantryman, a 20-year-old college student, described himself as a Marxist and card-carrying member of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Most re-enactors have strong preferences, but few stick exclusively to one side, instead switching into Confederate or Union garb if the opposing ranks are too thin.

Still, some Union re-enactors said they chose to wear blue at least in part because of their political convictions or because they wouldn't fight against the U.S. flag. The Confederates were more likely to say family history had a role in how they picked their side.

"We portray Confederates because they were the underdogs and they had all the odds stacked against them," said Bill Adams, known as "Pork Pie," an engineer from southern Michigan who has been playing a Confederate soldier for the past 35 years.

"The politics that caused the war, we don't even care about."