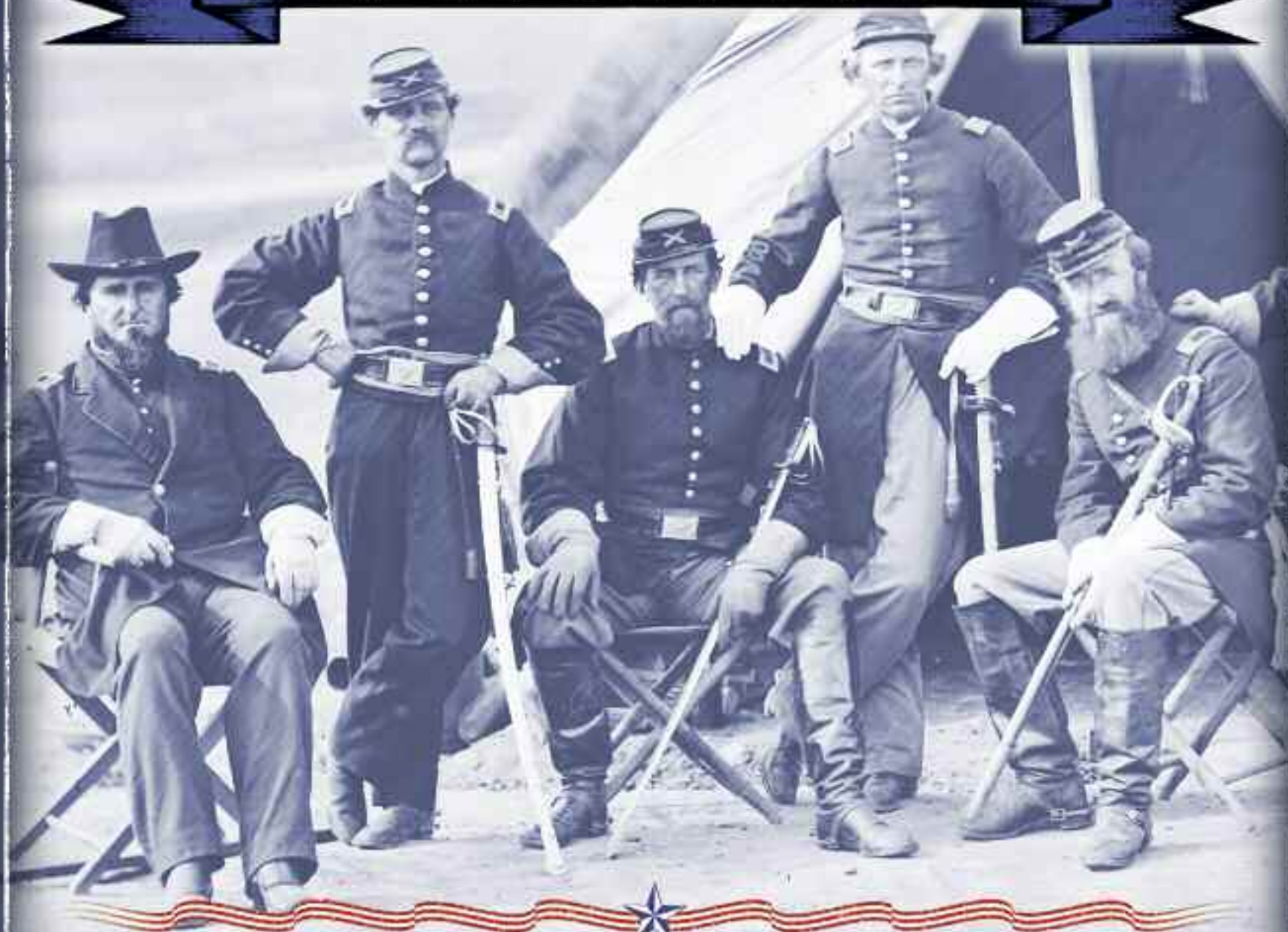




THE CIVIL WAR

REVISITED





Frederick Douglass was a famous abolitionist and powerful orator who was born into slavery in 1817. Four years after he escaped from slavery at the age of twenty, Douglass attended a meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, where he spoke for the first time about his life as a slave and his escape. His eloquent words so impressed the group that he was hired as a full-time speaker. Douglass would often begin his speeches with these provocative words: "I appear this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master, and ran off with them." He also edited and published the influential abolitionist newspaper *The North Star* for 17 years. After the war began, Douglass worked hard to convince blacks to join the Union Army. These words were first published as an editorial in March 1863 in *The North Star* and soon after became a recruiting flyer for the famed Massachusetts 54th Colored Infantry as "Men of Color to Arms."



Frederick Douglass

What are these words asking you to do?

"Who would be free must themselves strike the blow. Better die free, than to live slaves . . .

I urge you to fly to arms, and smite

with death the power that would bury the government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave.

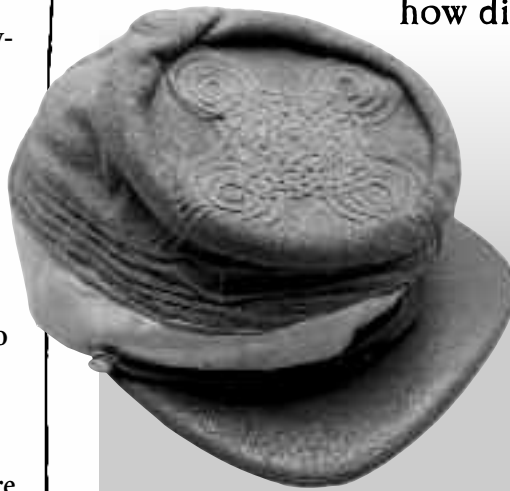
The day dawns; the morning star is bright upon the horizon! The iron gate of our prison stands half open. One gallant rush by the North will fling it wide open, while four million of our brothers and sisters shall march out into liberty. . ."

CREATED BY THE
NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT OF
THE FRESNO BEE IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE
FRESNO CITY AND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NIE activities provided in part, by
Diane Kannenberg, Kannenberg Consulting

Did you know that...

In 1860 there were two nations in America?

**Compare the facts and discover
how different they were.**



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

23 states and eight territories

2 million men joined the Union Army and Navy

1860 CENSUS:

Population: 22 million (4 million of whom were men of fighting age)

100,000 factories employing over a million workers

20,000 miles of railroad track — more than the rest of the world combined! — and 96% of U.S. RR equipment

\$189 million in bank deposits (with Union banks holding 81% of the nation's bank deposits and almost \$56 million in gold)

New York City's population in 1860 was 800,000 — the largest city in the Western hemisphere.

CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

Eleven states

850,000 men joined the Confederate Army and Navy

1860 CENSUS:

Population: Nine million, including 4 million slaves (1,140,000 men of combat age)

20,000 factories employed estimated 100,000 workers

9,000 miles of railroad track

By 1860, the Southern states produced almost three-fourths of the raw cotton used around the world — an estimated 1 billion pounds a year!

Combined population of Southern cities New Orleans (150,000), Charleston, Richmond, and Savannah in 1860 was 270,000.

STATES OF THE UNION

California
Connecticut
Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Maine
Massachusetts
Michigan
Minnesota
Nevada
(added as free state in 1864)
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
Ohio
Oregon
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Vermont
West Virginia
(added as free state in 1863)
Wisconsin

U.S. TERRITORIES

Arizona
Colorado
New Mexico
Utah
Nebraska
Washington
Indian Territory

STATES OF THE CONFEDERACY

Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Georgia
Louisiana
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Texas
Virginia

BORDER STATES

Slave States that remained in the Union
Delaware
Kentucky
Maryland
Missouri

UNION NAMES FOR THE WAR

The Civil War
The War for the Union
The Southern Rebellion
The War for Abolition
The War Against Slavery

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

CONFEDERATE NAMES FOR THE WAR

The War Between the States
The War for States' Rights
The War to Suppress Yankee Arrogance
The War for Southern Independence
The Yankee Invasion

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

WHAT'S IN A NAME – It is likely the United States will go to war over the recent attack on the East Coast. Look through your newspaper and come up with a name or

phrase that would best describe our current situation. Write it down. Compare yours with the class and take a class vote.

Camp Life

OF BILLY YANK & JOHNNY REB



Life in the army camps of the Civil War was a tedious one of drill sessions, maintaining the sanitation and readiness of the camp, and somehow enduring the daily boredom.

One soldier described his days in camp with one word:

"The first thing in the morning is drill. Then drill, then drill again. Then drill, drill, a little more drill. Then drill, and lastly drill."

BOREDOM

"One everlasting monotone, yesterday, today, and tomorrow."

When not faced with the sheer terror of battle, which was about 75 percent of the time, days in camp tended to drag on endlessly. To fight the numbing tedium, the troops filled the time between drilling with —

Reading — Literacy was quite high in Civil War America. In the South, at least 70 percent of the white male population could read, and in the North the ability to read may have been as high as 90 percent. Soldiers were absorbed by literature such as Charles Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* and James Fenimore Cooper's *The Deerslayer*, popular fiction, religious writings, and newspapers.

Letter and journal writing — The twin

emotions of loneliness and homesickness were assuaged by putting pen to paper in a private diary entry or to tell a beloved wife, child or parent of the challenges and fears of soldiering.

Whittling, drawing and painting

Games such as checkers, chess, dice, dominoes, and cards

Baseball — The most popular sport was a ball game known as "one old cat" with three bases. New rules evolved during the conflict that the soldiers took home with them after the war.

Boxing matches, cock fights, ... and one competition involved racing lice or cockroaches across a strip of canvas!

Singing was very popular. Soldiers' favorites were sentimental ballads rather than patriotic tunes and included "Just Before the Battle, Mother," "Somebody's Darling," and "Aura Lea." "All Quiet on the Potomac" was a rebel standard while the Yankees favored "Tenting Tonight on the Old Camp Ground."

"TENTING TONIGHT"

At the beginning of the war, both sides used the Sibley tent, named after its inventor Henry H. Sibley (who later became a Confederate brigadier general). A

large cone of canvas, 18 feet in diameter and 12 feet tall, and supported by a center pole, the tent had a circular opening at the top for ventilation and cone-shaped stove for heat. Designed to fit a dozen men, army regulations assigned 20 men to each tent. These extremely cramped quarters became unbearable when the ventilation flap was closed during cold or rainy days — soldiers rarely had access to clean water in which to bathe.

As the war dragged on, the Sibley was re-



placed with smaller tents. The Union armies favored the wedge tent, a six-foot length of canvas draped over a horizontal ridgepole and staked to the ground at the sides with flaps that closed off one end. When canvas became scarce in the South, Confederates were forced to rig open-air beds by heaping straw or leaves between two logs. In winter, units lucky enough to find wood built crude huts and made mattresses from pine needles.



Images courtesy of the Library of Congress.



HARDTACK AND COFFEE

At the onset of the war, soldiers on both sides were relatively well-fed.

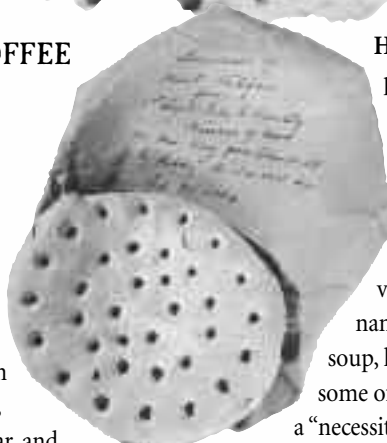
The mandated daily ration for a Union soldier in 1861 was a veritable banquet of at least 20 ounces of fresh or salt beef (or 12 ounces of salt pork called sowbelly or salt horse), more than a pound of flour, and a vegetable, usually beans. Coffee, salt, vinegar, and sugar were provided as well. When in the field, the men saw little beef and few vegetables. Outbreaks of scurvy were common due to the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables.

“The rice was badly burned and unedible, the hardtack a mystery, and the pork very salty. It seemed at first that we would starve.”

— A Union private describing his first company meal

“Tell Ma I think of her beans and collards often and wish for some. But wishing does no good.”

— Confederate Benjamin F. Jackson



Hardtack – The Union soldier’s staple, a dry flour and salt cracker so hard that it often had to be broken with a rifle butt and soaked in coffee to be edible. While the high salt content did not attract mice and cockroaches, weevils laid their larvae in the cracker inspiring nicknames such as “worm castles.” Bully soup, hellfire stew and skillygallee are only some of the recipes for which hardtack was a “necessity”!

Coffee – By far the most important staple in the minds of the soldiers! Although most Union camps were well-supplied with coffee, Confederates had to make do with substitutes made from peanuts, potatoes, peas, and chicory.

“Sloosh” – With cornmeal and bacon rations, Johnny Reb fried the bacon, took the cornmeal and swirled it around in the grease to make the dough, made a snake out of it around his rifle’s ramrod, and cooked it over the campfire. They ate a lot of Sloosh.



“SEEING THE ELEPHANT”

This phrase became the soldiers’ code word for describing the experience of battle and was seen as a young man’s rite of passage – to pass the test of manhood posed by battle. Once they had “seen the elephant,” however, the romance, adventure and glory of war quickly disappeared. Here is how Private J.W. Reid, 4th Regiment of the South Carolina Volunteers described “seeing the elephant.”



“I cannot give you an idea of the terrors of this battle. I believe it was as hard a contested battle as was ever fought on the American continent, or perhaps anywhere else. . . .For ten long hours. . .the firing did not cease for a moment. Try to picture. . .one hundred thousand men, all loading and firing as fast as they could. . . .The sight of the dead, the cries of the wounded, the thundering noise of the battle, can never be put on paper. . . .The dead, the dying and the wounded. . .all mixed up together, friend and foe embraced in death; some crying for water; some praying their last prayers; some trying to whisper to a friend their last farewell message to their loved ones at home. It is heartrending. I cannot go any further. Mine eyes are damp with tears. . . .Although the fight is over the field is yet quite red with blood. . . .The victory was complete. We are now occupying the same ground that we did before the battle.”

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

Pictures are often used to tell a story. Look through the newspaper and find a picture of interest to you. Without reading the story below, write a short paragraph telling what you think the picture is about. Now, go back and read the story. How close was your of the picture to the actual event? List the similarities and the differences.

Who fought the Civil War?



Soldiers of a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds participated in the Civil War.

Of the approximately two million Union soldiers, nearly one quarter were foreign born.

Immigration continued during the conflict, and many newcomers showed their new-found patriotism by joining the Union Army within months of arrival.

IRISH

Irish-Americans, in particular, played an integral role in the war. 150,000 Irish served in the Union Army. Some of the most notable regiments were Irish, such as Thomas Meagher's Irish Brigade which went into battle with a green flag containing a large gold harp at its center. Statistics from the Confederate Army are scarce, but the Southern songs of the era suggest a strong regional Irish influence.

GERMANS

German participation in the Union Army was strong with 175,000 joining up to fight. When the war broke out young German men enlisted without hesitation; a number also served in the Southern forces. Several all-German regiments served in the Union forces, many in the 11th Corps, and there were a number of German artillery units. Union generals from Germany included Franz Sigel, August von Kautz, and Carl Schurz. Among the notable Germans to fight for the South were Captain Justus Scheibert and Major Johann August Heinrich von Borcke.

ITALIANS

Italian American involvement in the Civil war was intense and



Members of the Irish Brigade.

passionate. Their military hero, Giuseppe Garibaldi, was their inspiration and his republican views led many Italians to support the Union cause, though they were represented in the Southern forces as well. Francisco Spinola recruited four regiments in New York and was appointed by President Lincoln to be their general. In one battle, finding his men of the Spinola Empire Brigade outnumbered six to one he ordered them to fix bayonets — and they charged scattering the amazed Southerners in disorder.

The famous Garibaldi Guard was the name of the 39th New York Infantry, recruited mainly from New York City under the auspices of Francisco Casale. Most of the regiment had fought under the freedom fighter Garibaldi and wore a distinctively styled red shirt as part of their uniform to show their connection to their partisan countrymen.



Members of the 39th New York Infantry - the "Garibaldi Guard."



General Franz Sigel.

Who fought the Civil War?

SCANDINAVIANS

A large number of Scandinavian immigrants fought for the Union, with many joining the Navy. One of the most prominent, John Ericsson, invented the propeller and designed the first Union ironclad ship, the Monitor.

LATINOS

Much of the research on Latino participation in the Civil War focuses on the Texas natives, known as Tejanos, who served both the Union and Confederate forces. Nearly 10,000 Latinos fought during the conflict and research continues on this fascinating aspect of the Civil War. The Tejano regiments, of which the best known are the 33rd Texas Cavalry and the 2nd Texas Cavalry (Union), had very different goals from most Union and Confederate soldiers. Loyal to themselves first, they faced a great deal of prejudice against them in both armies, and perceptions of their behavior in battle is probably due to the language barrier. The Tejanos were also frequently the last to get supplies, ammunition, feed for their horses, and food for the troops. The 33rd Texas was commanded by Colonel Santos Benavides, who persevered with his men against poor supply lines and prejudice, saw action numerous times against Mexican bandits and Union soldiers in Texas and the Southwest. His unit never lost a battle and was often praised by the Confederate government. Latino troops were involved in the majority of the 90 officially recorded Civil War engagements in Texas. Prominent Latinos who led Union troops were generals Don Carlos Buell and Edward Ferrero.



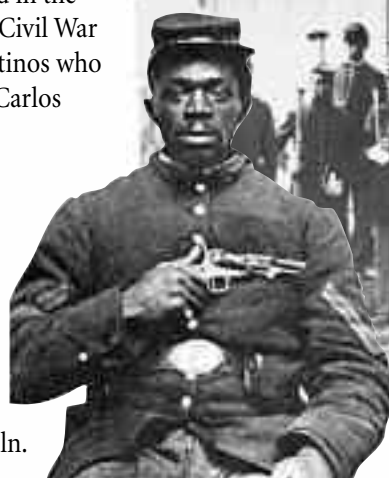
BLACKS

An estimated 200,000 African Americans served in the Union Army over the course of the Civil War. Their participation began in earnest after the Battle of Antietam and the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Lincoln.



Crew members of the Monitor.

Black soldiers played an increasingly important role during the final year of the war. Recruitment was strong, and, by October 1864, there were 140 Black regiments. Their pay was about half that of white troops, and casualty rates in combat were approximately 35 percent higher than white units in part because the Confederate troops were less likely to take Black prisoners. One of the most famous units, the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, saw its most distinguished action in South Carolina in May of 1863 at the assault on Battery Wagner. Over 37,000 of those who served in the Union Army gave their lives in the great struggle to end slavery.



AMERICAN INDIANS

Native Americans participated on both sides of the Civil War. According to government records, approximately 3,600 American Indians served in the Union Army. One of the best known was Colonel Ely Parker, a Seneca who served as an aide to Ulysses S. Grant and helped to transcribe the terms of Lee's surrender at the Appomattox Court House. Elevated to the rank of general after the war, Parker served as President Grant's Commissioner

of Indian Affairs. Statistics for Confederate participation are unavailable, but many did serve the Southern cause. Probably best known was Brigadier General Chief Stand Watie, a Cherokee, who organized a regiment known as the First Cherokee Mounted Rifles. Watie had the distinction of being the last Confederate officer to lay down arms — more than two months after Lee's surrender.



General Ely Parker.



107th U.S. Colored Infantry.

Images courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Who fought the Civil War?

...continued



ZOUAVES

The Zouaves, with their distinctive uniforms, were some of the most famous Civil War units. With their uniforms of red baggy pants, white leggings, a jacket trimmed in red and tasseled red fez or turban, the Zouaves earned a reputation as hard and steady fighters.



Zouave by Vincent Van Gogh.

The origins of the Zouave uniform that was worn in the American Civil War has its beginnings in North Africa in the 1830s. Men from the Zouaoua tribe of Algeria were organized into the French army. As the fame of their fighters grew, more and more French soldiers joined their ranks and adopted the colorful uniform. By the time of the Crimean War in 1854, the Zouave units were composed entirely of Europeans. Their exploits, along with illustrations of their uniforms, were chronicled by the world press, including America's *Harper's Weekly*. In pre-Civil War America, as men raised militia and drilling companies, some of the groups adopted the uniform and

name of the famous French fighters. One of the first, in 1859, was the Zouave Cadets. On their tour of eastern cities, their intricate, complex marching and flashy uniforms generated even more interest in the Zouaves.

With the outbreak of the war, many Zouave units were raised on both sides: the 11th Infantry on the Union side and the units from Louisiana with its French culture on the Confederate side. After the first year of the Civil War, most of the Confederate Zouaves chose not to wear the traditional uniform; however most units in the North kept their Zouave attire for the entire conflict.

ZOUAVES AT ANTIETAM

The role of the Zouaves at Antietam, as is the case for most of the war, is primarily a Union story. Their

units with the Army of the Potomac fought in nearly every phase of the battle. One of the most noted was the 9th New York or "Hawkins Zouaves,"



114th Pennsylvania Infantry (Zouaves) suffering 63 percent casualties in the final assault "Burnside Bridge" phase of the battle. The only complete Confederate Zouave command at Antietam was the 1st Battalion "Louisiana Zouaves."

AFTER THE WAR

The Zouaves' fame during the Civil War resulted in the continuation of their tradition, mostly in National Guard units, veterans' or fraternal organizations, and drill teams. An American legion drill team in Zouave uniforms even appeared on television's Ed Sullivan Show in the 1950s.



NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

Look through your copy of the newspaper. See if you can find people of different ethnic groups who are our allies (those who are on our side), in the war against terrorism. List the names. (i.e. the British, etc...).



Zouave ambulance crew demonstrating removal of wounded soldiers from the field.

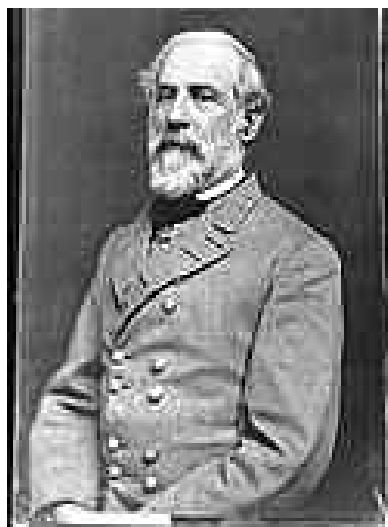


ON THREE HOT DAYS IN THE SUMMER OF 1863, TWO ARMIES CLASHED
IN THE GREATEST BATTLE EVER WAGED IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE...

THE Battle of Gettysburg [JULY 1-3, 1863]

The Battle of Gettysburg symbolizes the Civil War in our country's imagination, and it remains one of the defining moments in U.S. history. Of the more than 2,000 land engagements of the War Between the States, Gettysburg is the most important battle of the four-year national conflict.

After two long years of war and fresh from the Confederate triumph at Chancellorsville, the Confederacy's supreme commander, General Robert E. Lee, was convinced that the South's best hope for victory lay in bringing the war to the North. He reasoned that a decisive defeat of federal troops on home soil would alter the momentum of the war, create panic and strengthen the growing peace movement in the North, and keep the question of British and French recognition of the Confederacy alive.



General
Robert E. Lee

In mid-June, Lee boldly ordered his Army of Northern Virginia across the Potomac in a major invasion of the enemy's heartland. By June 28, his 75,000 soldiers were spread out in southern Pennsylvania. The Union Army of the Potomac, with 95,000 men and under a new commander Major General George Meade was on the march and the stage was set for the two forces to meet.

On July 1, Confederate soldiers searching for supplies and probing for the enemy, encountered Union fire in the small town of Gettysburg. As the day progressed, more Blue and Gray units converged on the town and joined the action, deploying around local landmarks that would become famous in the titanic three-day battle: Cemetery Hill, Seminary Ridge, Little Round Top, the Peach Orchard, Wheatfield, Culp's Hill, and Devils Den. By the end of that first day, more than 170,000 troops were committed and the two opposing generals had arrived to take direct charge of their respective battle strategies. And, as a grim omen of the carnage to come, in the first 12 hours of fighting, a total of 16,000 soldiers were killed, wounded or captured.

On the battle's second day, the conflict intensified with Confederate forces seeking to penetrate the Union defensive lines which had been secured along the high ground around Gettysburg. Some of the day's fiercest engagements took place in the center of the Union lines. The First Minnesota Volunteers

lost 224 of the regiment's 262 officers and men in a successful charge to hold back the Rebels. At Little Round Top, Colonel Joshua Chamberlain led the 20th Maine



Regiment in a desperate fight that secured the Union's left flank. Night fell with neither side having gained much advantage.

On the final day of Gettysburg, General Lee made his fateful decision to attempt a bold frontal assault at the center of Meade's entrenched Union lines. After an early afternoon bombardment that engaged the massed cannon of both sides in a thundering duel, the three-day battle climaxed with Pickett's Charge. Major General George Pickett, with his men at the front, ordered 13,000 Confederate soldiers to march in parade-ground precision across an open field toward enemy lines. In less than an hour, more than half of the men in Gray were killed, and nothing had been gained. The battle was over.

The Army of Northern Virginia staggered into retreat physically and psychologically exhausted. Lee would never again attempt an offensive against the Union of such proportions. Although General Meade was criticized for not immediately pursuing the Confederate army, he had carried the day. The war was to rage on for two more terrible years, but the Confederacy never recovered from the losses at Gettysburg.

The statistics from the Battle of Gettysburg are staggering. Over 172,000 men and 634 cannon had been positioned over an area encompassing 25 square miles. An estimated 569 tons of ammunition were expended. The dead horses and mules numbered 5,000. All told, casualties have been figured at 57,000, including the 9,600 soldiers who gave their lives for the Union or Confederate cause.



Major General
George Meade

Eyewitness to Gettysburg

[JULY 1-3, 1863]



Prelude

In a gentle Pennsylvania valley surrounded by hills and ridges and knolls, the quiet town of Gettysburg measured 12 blocks long, six blocks wide, and had 2,400 inhabitants. A wooden sign on Cemetery Hill warned that anyone firing a gun in the area would be fined five dollars.

During the hot, long days of June, there had been rumors that Confederate troops were crossing into the southern portion of the state, but few in Gettysburg believed that they would witness any battle action. On June 26, however, the cry "the Rebels are coming!" reverberated through the streets.

A fifteen-year-old school girl, Tillie Pierce, was attending class at the nearby Young Ladies Seminary and remembered encountering the first contingent of Confederates as she ran home. The daughter of the town's butcher, she witnessed the entire battle and published her observations twenty-six years later.

After several days, when the Confederates had moved on, the Union cavalry began to arrive at mid-day on June 30.

"It was to me a novel and grand sight," Tillie wrote, "...for then I knew we had

protection and I felt they were our dearest friends...

A crowd of us girls, desiring to encourage them, ...started the old war song "Our Union Forever." She and her sister stayed up late preparing bouquets of flowers to welcome the soldiers. "As we lay down that night, little did we think what the morrow would bring forth."

"What a horrible sight!
There they were, human beings!

Clad almost in rags, covered with dust, riding wildly pell-mell down the hill toward our home! Shouting, yelling most unearthly, cursing, brandishing their revolvers, and firing right and

left... Soon the town was filled with infantry, and then the searching and ransacking began in earnest... They wanted horses, clothing, anything..."

— Tillie Pierce



Tillie Pierce

NEWSPAPER ACTIVITIES

Chose a date from July 1-3 and reconstruct a newspaper front page showing what was happening in Gettysburg. Use your newspaper's front page as a template. Be sure to keep the following items in mind: every story must answer who, what, where, when, why, and how; headlines must be short, concise and "draw" the reader into the story; illustrate the stories with drawings. Remind them that the most "news worthy" story must be at the top of the page. Be sure to include the newspaper's name, cost, publication date, etc. Encourage the students to use all the elements shown on your newspaper's front page (e.g. teasers, index, bylines, etc.).



View of Gettysburg battlefield.

“A perfect Hell on earth, never, perhaps to be equaled, certainly not surpassed, nor ever to be forgotten in a man’s lifetime. It has never been effaced from my memory, day or night, for fifty years.”

Massachusetts private who fought at Gettysburg.

The First Day

At dawn on July 1, a Confederate infantry unit ventured towards Gettysburg searching for shoes and encountered Union cavalry. As units of both armies began to engage in battle, thirteen-year-old William Bayley, along with a brother and cousin, was heading into town and arrived on the top of Seminary Ridge. He later wrote:

“...we perched ourselves on the topmost rail of the road fence... But our gallery seats began to have features of great discomfort when we noticed coming over the nearest hill, great masses of troops and clouds of dust; how the first wave swelled into successive waves, gray masses with the glint of steel... filling the highway, spreading out into the fields, and still coming on and on...”



Images courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Meade's wrecked headquarters located at the center of Cemetery Ridge, showing damage from the Rebel cannon barrage that preceded Pickett's charge.

With every Confederate and Union division in the area converging on Gettysburg, Union officers rode through town warning the people to take refuge in their cellars. With the fighting raging through the streets, fifteen-year-old Albertus McCreary remembered when “...Suddenly the outer cellar doors were pulled open, and five Confederate soldiers jumped down among us. We thought our last day had come... One fellow – with a red face covered with freckles and very red hair, dirty and sweaty, with his gun in his

hand said, “We are looking for Union soldiers.” “There are none here,” Father answered... And the danger was over for a time.” By early evening much of Gettysburg was occupied by Confederate troops, while the Union forces had established defensive positions along Cemetery Ridge. Annie Young recalled...

“The moon was shining brightly in the heavens, while on earth scattered everywhere were the dead and the wounded, moaning in pain... I thought I had been transferred to some strange place, so different did it seem from the home I had seen in the morning.”

Eyewitness to Gettysburg

[JULY 1-3, 1863]



Panorama of 2nd day's battle, Gettysburg.

The Second Day

Sent to the 'safety' of a friend's farmhouse on the eastern slope of the Round Tops where the fiercest fighting of the day would take place, Tillie Pierce observed:

"My attention was called to numerous rough boxes which had been placed just outside the garden fence. Ominous... as was the sight presented, it nevertheless did not prevent one of the soldiers from joking 'I will consider myself very lucky if I get one.'"

COLONEL JOSHUA CHAMBERLAIN AND THE TWENTIETH MAINE REGIMENT

This 350-man regiment of lumberjacks, trappers and seamen led by a college professor quite possibly saved the Union army from defeat in their legendary defense of Little Round Top

A soldier in the 20th Maine, seventeen-year-old Private Theodore Gerrish wrote this dramatic description of his regiment's heroism:

"Imagine if you can, nine small companies of infantry...three hundred men... on the extreme flank of an army of 80,000, put there to hold the key of the entire position against a force at least ten times their number...

The conflict opens. The carnage begins...

a terrible medley of cries, shouts, cheers, groans, prayers, curses, bursting shells, whizzing rifle bullets and clanging steel...

Our line is pressed back so far that our dead are within the lines of the enemy.

Our ammunition is nearly all gone...

We must advance or retreat. The order is given, "Fix bayonets!" and the steel shanks of the bayonets rattle upon the rifle barrels.

"Charge bayonets! Charge!"

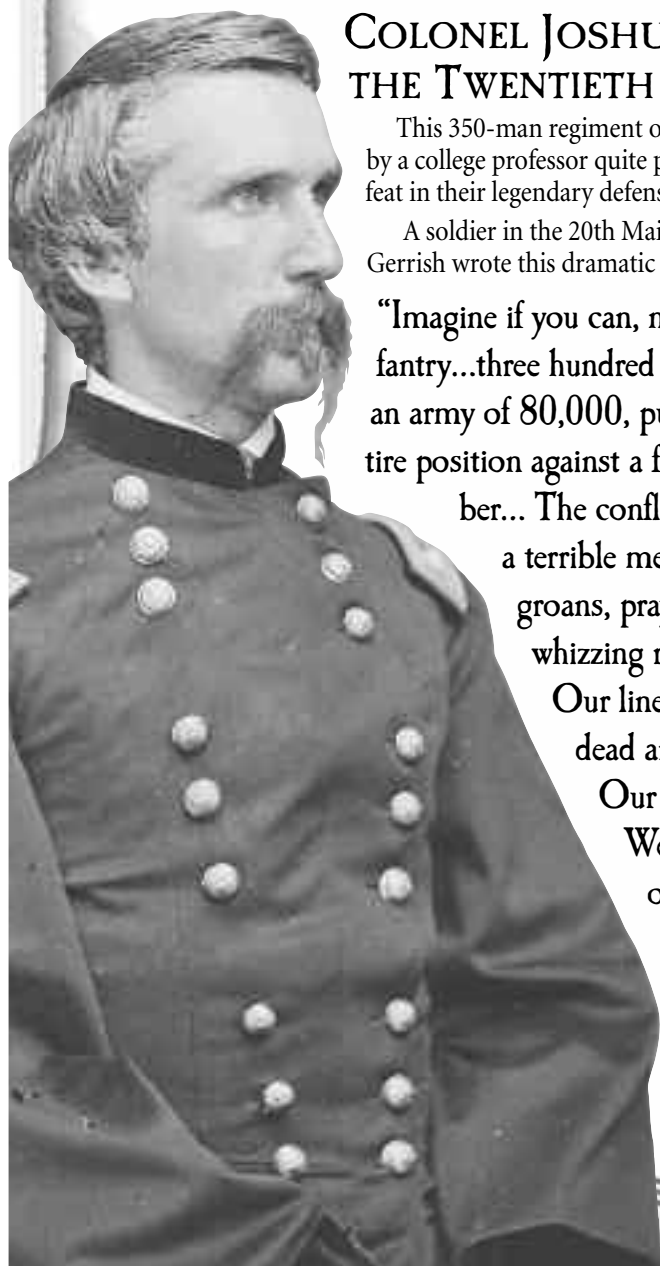
The Third Day

"All felt that this day must decide who should conquer," wrote seventeen-year-old Jennie McCreary to her sister.

"It was comparatively quiet until... the afternoon, and then the cannonading began... such cannonading no one ever heard. Nothing can be compared to it, one who has never heard it cannot form any idea how terrible it is."



General Lee had made the fateful decision to attack the center of the Union line giving the orders to Major General George Pickett to lead an infantry charge, 13,000 strong, in a direct assault on the opposing forces. To soften the Union soldiers before the attack, a massive artillery barrage began at one o'clock when more than 150 Confederate cannon began shelling the Union line. The Federal army replied with 80 cannon and a giant duel ensued that was heard 140 miles away in Pittsburgh. After about one hour, the Union guns fell silent, to conserve ammunition and to lure the rebels out into the open field.



Portrait of Colonel Joshua L. Chamberlain, officer of the Federal Army.

“The fearful noise above our heads, the rattling of musketry, the screeching of shells, and the unearthly yells, added to the cries of the children, were enough to shake the stoutest heart.”

21-year-old Elizabeth “Sallie” Myers, from her book
“How A Gettysburg Schoolteacher Spent Her Vacation in 1863”

PICKETT’S CHARGE

“It was,” a Union colonel was heard to marvel, “the most beautiful thing I ever saw.”

As the Confederate soldiers emerged from the trees on Seminary Ridge, they formed perfectly aligned battle ranks in one mile-long line and Pickett gave the order to charge “Up men and to your posts! Don’t forget today that you are from old Virginia.” Frank Aretas Haskell, a Union soldier from Wisconsin watched in awe.

“Right on they move, as with one soul, in perfect order, over ridge and slope, through orchard and meadow and cornfield, magnificent, grim, irresistible. Man touching man, rank pressing rank... the red flags wave, their horsemen gallop up and down, the arms of thirteen thousand men, barrel and bayonet, gleam in the sun, a sloping forest of flashing steel.”

Within moments, Union artillery fire began to cut down row after row of the Gray column and when the thinned ranks were closer to Federal lines, the Rebel yells could be heard above the thundering guns as they made a last, futile dash.

Lieutenant William Harmon of the 1st Minnesota Volunteers remembered the chaos as one small Rebel contingent penetrated the Union line and his unit received orders to charge:



Gettysburg, Pa. The Bryan house on 2d Corps line, near scene of Pickett’s Charge.



“If men ever became devils that was one of the times.

We were crazy with the excitement of the fight. We just rushed in like wild beasts Men swore and cursed and struggled and fought... threw stones, clubbed their muskets, kicked, yelled, and hurrahd... When the line had passed, those who were not wounded threw down their arms, I remember that a Confederate officer... gathered himself up as our men swept by and coolly remarked, ‘You have done it this time.’ ”

Suddenly it was over. In less than one hour more than half of the Confederate troops had been killed, with another 4,000 taken prisoner. Pickett’s division alone lost 75 per cent of its men. The defending Union forces, with their number scarcely half of the enemy’s strength, suffered only 1,500 casualties. When General Lee ordered a dazed Pickett to ready his division for a Union offensive, Pickett’s famous reply came back

“Sir, I have no division.”

Corporal Thomas Galwey from Cleveland, Ohio, wrote “towards dark all became quiet. Both armies were now exhausted... Men ran about everywhere seeking wounded comrades, not forgetting... to do many kindnesses to the enemy’s wounded who everywhere lay mixed with our own.”

Still at the farmhouse, Tillie Pierce saw nothing but desolation in the scene before her.

“I fairly shrank back at the awful sight presented. The approaches were crowded with wounded, dying and dead...”

By this time amputating benches had been placed about the house. I saw them lifting poor men upon it.... I saw the surgeons hastily put a cattle horn over the mouths ...and learned that was their mode of administering chloroform, ...But the effect, in some instances, was not produced; for I saw the wounded throwing themselves wildly about, shrieking with pain while the operation was going on... Just outside the yard I noticed a pile of limbs higher than the fence. It was a ghastly sight.”

Images courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Eyewitness to Gettysburg

[JULY 1-3, 1863]

Aftermath

Tillie Pierce described the scene the next morning on the Fourth of July:

"On the summits, in the valleys, everywhere we heard the soldiers hurraing for the victory that had been won. The troops on our right, at Culp's Hill, caught up the joyous sound as it came rolling on from the Round Tops on our left, and soon the whole line of Blue rejoiced..."

We were all glad that the storm had passed... But oh! The horror and desolation that remained."

The descriptions of the Battle of Gettysburg's aftermath are uniform in their gruesome detail. Typical of these graphic word pictures, is the memory of a nun from the Sisters of Charity whose order ministered to the wounded throughout the war. "Finally we reached the scene of combat. What a frightful spectacle met our gaze! Houses burnt, dead bodies of both Armies strewn here and there, an immense number of slain horses, thousands of bayonets, sabers, wagons, wheels, projectiles of all dimensions, blankets, caps, clothing of every color covered the woods and fields. We were compelled to drive very cautiously to avoid passing over the dead... The farther we advanced the more harrowing was the scene; we could not restrain our tears."

One hundred and thirteen emergency hospitals were established in the near-by town of Emmitsburg where every available building was used to treat the thousands of wounded soldiers that included seven thousand Confederate men who were too badly injured to remove and left to the Union surgeons.

"Comrades and friends, these splendid statues of marble and granite and bronze shall finally crumble to dust,
...but the spirit that has called this great assembly of our people together, on this field, shall live for ever."

Dr. Nathaniel D. Cox, July 2, 1913

"The Great Reunion" - Gettysburg's 50th Anniversary



The largest combined reunion of Civil War veterans ever held took place in July, 1913 at Gettysburg on the 50th anniversary of the great battle. Over 50,000 veterans traveled to Gettysburg to be part of this unique encampment -- a combined reunion of members of the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans.

Plans for the Great Reunion were begun two years before the event when the US Army Quartermaster Corps and Engineer Corps arrived at Gettysburg National Military Park in 1912 to survey the field for the "Great Camp", which was located on the battle field adjacent to the location of "Pickett's Charge." By early June, 1913, the 280-acre camp, divided into Union and Confederate sections, included 48 miles of avenues and company streets lit with 500 electric arc lights and lined with hundreds of tents and ice water fountains. Over 2,000 army cooks and bakers manned 173 field kitchens to provide three hot meals every day for veterans and the hundreds of camp personnel. By the end of the reunion, the kitchens had supplied over 688,000 meals! In addition to all the U.S. Army and Pennsylvania state staff, several hundred Boy Scouts served as escorts, couriers, and aides in the army hospitals. Medical care was taken care of by the American Red Cross and U.S. Army Medical Corps.

The first veterans began arriving on June 25, and the Great Camp soon filled to overflowing.

Invariably, the days were hot, and the thermometer topped 100 degrees on July 2. Heat exhaustion and fatigue resulted in the hospitalization of several hundred veterans. Over 9,900 patients were treated during the reunion, but only nine veterans passed away during the week-long encampment.

Despite the sweltering heat and dusty conditions, the aged soldiers spent most of their time at the battlefield sites where they had fought with their comrades 50 years before. The Confederate veterans were especially pleased to find old cannon mounted on metal carriages to mark battery locations on the battlefield. Exchanges between the Civil War soldiers and khaki-clad U.S. Army personnel were spirited as the young soldiers discussed modern weapons and the Civil War Yanks and Rebs explained how much things had changed in fifty years.

The youngest veteran at the reunion was 61 years old, and the oldest "alleged that he was 112!" The old soldiers, friends and foes, walked over the battlefield and attended daily ceremonies held in the Great tent erected in the field of "Pickett's Charge" adjacent to the camp. Every day there were programs with speeches by dignitaries and state governors.

On the Fourth of July, President Woodrow Wilson spoke to the veterans with compassion and gratitude: "These venerable men crowding here to this famous field have set us a great example of devotion and utter sacrifice... their task is done. Their day is turned into evening. They look to us to perfect what they have established..."

As the 75th anniversary of the battle approached, plans were laid for one last meeting on the battlefield of Gettysburg. Over 1,800 Union and Confederate veterans from across the nation gathered for the final great reunion in 1938.

The Gettysburg Address



Among the most beloved and powerful words in our nation's history, Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is a short speech he delivered on November 19, 1863 at the ceremony dedicating a portion of the battlefield as a cemetery – 18 weeks after the conclusion of the Civil War's epic battle.

"Fourscore and seven years ago our forefathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live free. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate – we cannot consecrate – we cannot hallow – this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work for which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that the government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

A. Lincoln

Many historians believe that his inspired words reshaped the nation by defining it as one people dedicated to one principle – that of equality. Without mentioning slavery, nullification or states' rights, President Lincoln linked the birth of the United States of America to the Declaration of Independence, with its clear statement that "all men are created equal," rather than the Constitution of 1783 with its implied recognition of slavery.

Author Garry Wills, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Lincoln at Gettysburg: The Words that Remade America*, states: "It would have been hard to predict that Gettysburg, out of all this muddle, . . . all the senseless deaths, would become a symbol of national purpose, pride and ideals. Abraham Lincoln transformed the ugly reality into something rich and strange—and he did it in 272 words. The power of words has rarely been given a more compelling demonstration."

Under a clear autumn sky on that Thursday afternoon in November, 15,000 people gathered to consecrate the burial grounds at Gettysburg with prayer, an oration, music, and "dedicatory remarks" by the President of the United States. The program's main speaker, Edward Everett, had a distinguished career as president of Harvard University, a U.S. senator, a secretary of state, and ambassador to Britain. With a reputation as the greatest orator of the day, he spoke for two hours (an appropriate length, in the 1860s, for the occasion) from memory in a deep, rich voice.

At the end of the program, preceding the final dirge and benediction, Lincoln rose, put on his steel-rimmed spectacles, and read his remarks. Everett commented, "Mr. President, I

should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours, as you did in two minutes."

Two who witnessed this singular event in American history were children from the town of Gettysburg. Fifteen-year-old Albertus McCreary sat only a few feet away from the platform where Lincoln spoke and later shook hands with the President. A young Liberty Hollinger recalled her most vivid impression of Abraham Lincoln was the "inexpressible sadness on his face."

There are a number of stories that developed around the history of this famous speech that are false. One of these falsehoods is that the people did not appreciate the Gettysburg Address and, in turn, Lincoln deemed it a failure. Most of the newspapers that backed the Republican cause wrote favorably about the speech and there are no credible reports of Lincoln's dissatisfaction. The major myth about Lincoln's remarks is that he got the idea for the speech on the train going to Gettysburg and jotted it down on the back of an envelope in his pocket. As Garry Wills notes, "These mythical accounts are badly out of character for Lincoln, who composed his speeches carefully..."

Lincoln wrote two versions before delivering the address at the dedication program. The most important change was to add the phrase "under God" after the word "nation" in the last sentence. The fifth and final version was written and signed in 1864. It differs only slightly from the others, and it is this text of the Gettysburg Address that is carved on a stone plaque at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The Only Known Photograph of President Lincoln

at the dedication of the Civil War cemetery at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863.

These modern prints showing the crowd around the platform at Gettysburg and a detail from that picture of President Lincoln on the platform were made from the original glass plate negative at the National Archives. The plate lay unidentified in the Archives for some fifty-five years until in 1952, Josephine Cobb, Chief of the Still Pictures Branch, recognized Lincoln in the center of the detail, head bared and probably seated. Cobb estimated that the photograph was taken about noontime, just after Lincoln arrived at the site and before Edward Everett's arrival, and some three hours before Lincoln gave his now famous address.

Courtesy of Elizabeth L. Hill, Chief, Still Picture Branch, National Archives



