

THE CHARGER

February 2012

484th Meeting

Vol. 33 #6

Tonight's Program:

A. P. Hill at Gettysburg



Ambrose Powell Hill was one of Robert E. Lee's closest, ablest, longest serving lieutenants. Promoted to lieutenant general following the death of Stonewall Jackson, Hill led Lee's Third Corps at Gettysburg where he was largely ineffective. Was he sick, not yet comfortable in his new command, or had Lee promoted Hill to his level of incompetence? What happened to A. P. Hill at Gettysburg?



Union dead at Gettysburg



Jon Thompson

Roundtable past President Jon Thompson taught English and history for nearly 40 years at Lee Burneson Middle School in Westlake, OH. During his tenure there, Jon created the annual "Civil War Days" event which immerses 8th grade students in all aspects of the Civil War era. The

students study the period, work on related projects and attend an "Encampment Night" where they hear a number of talks on topics relating to the era and then attend a Civil War Ball in period gowns and uniforms. At the ball they perform a play, drill as soldiers, dance to period songs and sing as a chorus. Jon is a long time student of the Civil War and Gettysburg in particular and has led numerous tours of the battlefield, including the CCWRT during the year he served as president.

Date: **Wednesday,
February 8, 2012**

Place: **Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio**

Time: **Drinks 6 pm
Dinner 6:45 pm**

Reservations: **Please send an email to ccwrt1956@yahoo.com with your reservation, or call Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the Sunday before the meeting.**

Meal: **Entree, vegetable, salad, and dessert.**

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
FOUNDED 1957**

President: Paul Burkholder (440) 918-0222
Vice President: Michael Wells (216) 371-8449
Treasurer: Jim Heflich (216) 381.8833
Secretary: Tim Myshrrall

Directors:

Lisa Kempfer Dennis Keating
 C. Ellen Connally Howard Besser

website: www.clevelandcivilwarroundtable.com
 email: pkburkholder@gmail.com

Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

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2002 Bill McGrath
2001 William Vodrey
2000 Bob Boyda
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1998 John Moore
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1996 John Sutula
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1993 Kevin Callahan
1992 Bob Baucher
1991 Joe Tirpak
1990 Ken Callahan Jr.
1989 Neil Glaser
1988 Martin Graham
1987 George Vourlojanis
1986 Tim Beatty
1985 Brian Kowell

1984 Neil Evans
1983 William Victory
1982 John Harkness
1981 Thomas Geschke
1980 Charles Spiegle
1979 William Bates
1978 Richard McCrae
1977 James Chapman
1976 Milton Holmes
1975 Thomas Gretter
1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
1973 Arthur Jordan
1972 Bernard Drews
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1966 Donald Hamill
1965 Lester Swift
1964 Guy DiCarlo Jr.
1963 Paul Guenther
1962 Edward Downer
1961 Charles Clarke
1960 Howard Preston
1959 John Cullen Jr.
1958 George Farr Jr.
1957 Kenneth Grant

President's Message February 2012

I think the historiography of the Civil War - the story of how the Civil War history was created and handed down to us - is as interesting as any other aspect of the Civil War. There may be other instances when the history of a war was written by the losers of the conflict, but I am not aware of it. That, of course, is exactly what happened with the American Civil War; its history, as Americans have been taught it for the last 145 years, was largely written, framed, and colored by veterans of the Confederacy and those sympathetic to its cause.

Lee was a genius. Grant was a butcher and a drunk. The war was fought over tariffs and states' rights. All the good West Pointers went south and all the crummy ones went north. The Union won on overwhelming superiority of numbers, wealth, and materiel. That I used the word "Union" in the previous sentence instead of "United States of America" is itself a telling indicator of how much the Confederate view has become our historical view of the war. Why wouldn't I say "United States of America" in that context? Why, in all of our history books, is the side that had its seat of government in Washington *never* referred to as the "United States of America," but always as "Union", or "Northern" or "Yankee?" We similarly never read about the exploits of the U.S. Army or the U.S. Navy. Why do we not use these terms? Conversely, while the term "Rebels" or "Rebs" is sometimes used to refer to Southern forces, "Confederates," "CSA," and "Confederate States of America" (also "Southern") are used far more commonly and almost always. Why do we choose to elevate one side while reducing the other?

The answer, of course, is to soften the hard, unpleasant facts of the war, who waged it, and why. These unpleasant facts include that the "states' right" the Southern states seceded and fought for was the right to own slaves; that the noble cavaliers of the Confederacy committed treason when they took up arms against the United States of America, particularly those veterans of the regular army who broke their loyalty oaths; that Robert E. Lee's two Northern invasions were horrible failures that nearly destroyed his army and, at Gettysburg in particular, Lee's failed tactics and personal miscalculations contributed more to his army's defeat than the mistakes of subordinates (i.e. Hill, Ewell, Early, Stuart, and Longstreet who typically shoulder the blame); that Ulysses S. Grant's record as a butcher was exceeded by, of all people, Lee, whose casualty rates over the last 18 months of the war were substantially higher than Grant's. Why, after 150 years, are we STILL misrepresenting and arguing over these facts? What is our emotional stake in the answers?

I have recently read two excellent books on the topic of the creation of (false) Civil War history. The first, The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History, is a collection of essays covering multiple aspects of the Lost Cause myth, the most interesting one being the role Jubal Early, his widow, and Confederate heritage groups played in the creation and propagation of the Civil War history we all learned growing up and that is still largely taught in our schools today. The other book, These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory, explores and debunks whole chunks of the Gettysburg story we know, love, and retell. The central character in Desjardin's book is John Bachelder a portrait and landscape artist who, remarkably, managed to fashion a career for himself as the preeminent Gettysburg historian of the 19th century based on one, after-the-battle topographic map he drew up to make money. Many aspects of the Gettysburg story that are today retold as history were created by Bachelder to promote himself and his work. It was Bachelder, for example, who not only coined the terms "copse of trees" and "high-water mark of the Confederacy," but who also single handedly decided the significance of both in the Gettysburg story.

The creation of the historical record that we so enjoy studying is a fascinating story in its own right, as fascinating as the original story the historical record purports to tell. I think the process by which we come to believe what we believe says as much about us as what we actually claim to believe. At the end of the movie western "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," Senator Ransom Stoddard (played by Jimmy Stewart) who built a long, successful political career on being the man who killed the notorious outlaw Liberty Valance (Lee Marvin), reveals to a group of reporters that it was, in fact, his friend, the late Tom Donovan (John Wayne) who shot Valance. The reporters care not a whit about this important bit of truth, telling Stoddard as they dejectedly walk away, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

I sometimes wonder if it is legend with which we are so enthralled and not history.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Burkholder

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2011-2012 SCHEDULE**

September 14, 2011

***Experiencing
the Civil War***

**Robert
Olmstead**



October 12, 2011

***The Battle of
Monocacy***

**Marc
Leepson**



Destruction of the RR bridge
over the Monocacy River

November 9, 2011

***The Battle of
Nashville***

**Dan
Zeiser**



December 14, 2011

***How Sibling Rivalry
Helped Spawn an
Assassin***

Nora Titone



January 11, 2012

***The Barlows and
the Gordons***

John Fazio



February 8, 2012

***A. P. Hill
at Gettysburg***

Jon Thompson



March 14, 2012

***The Dick Crews Annual Debate:
Lincoln and Douglas Debate***

**Mel Maurer as Abraham Lincoln
Chris Fortunato as Stephen Douglas
Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

April 11, 2012

***How Robert E. Lee
Lost the Civil War***

**Edward H.
Bonekemper III**



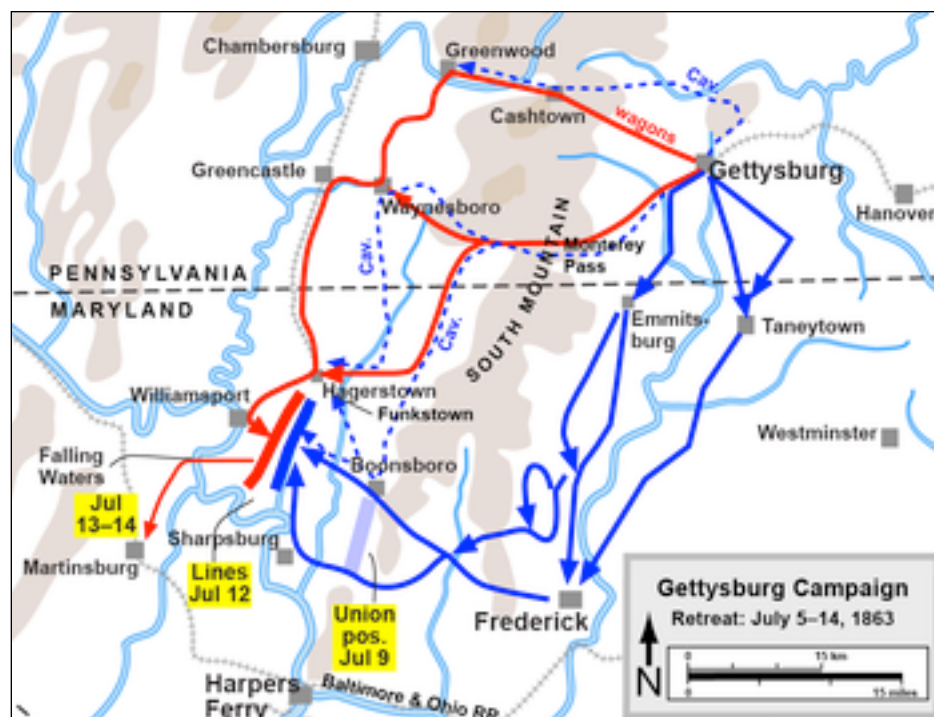
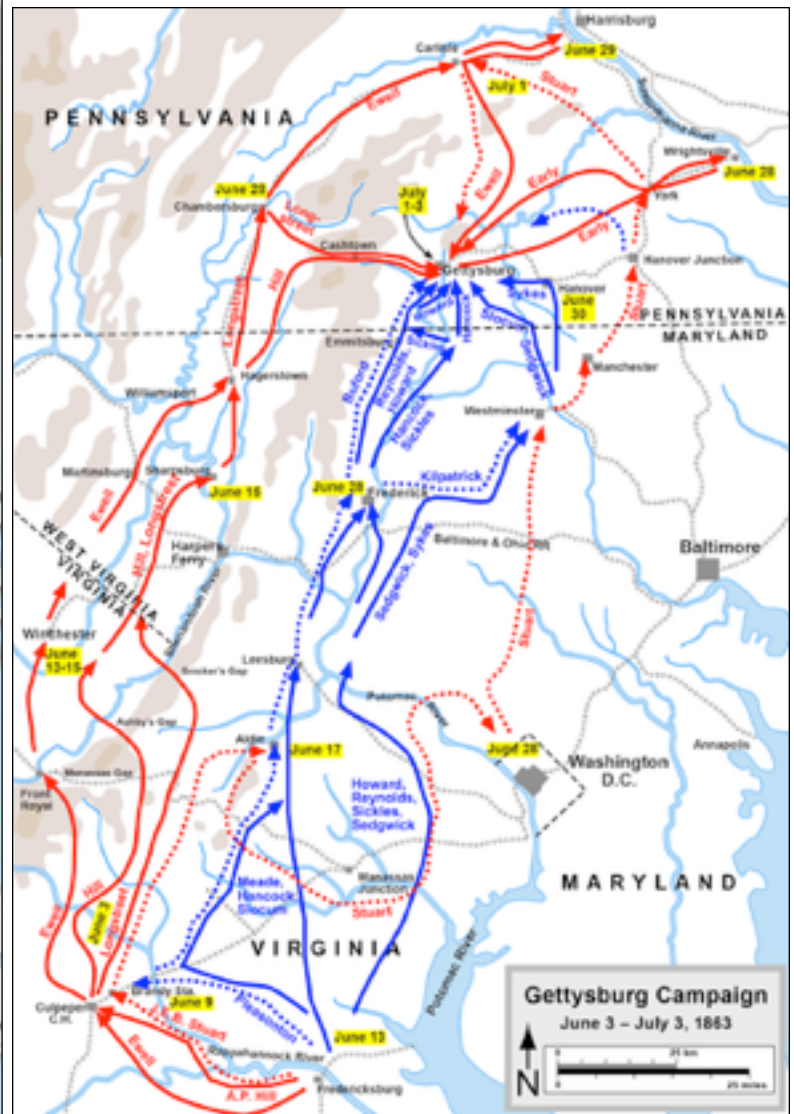
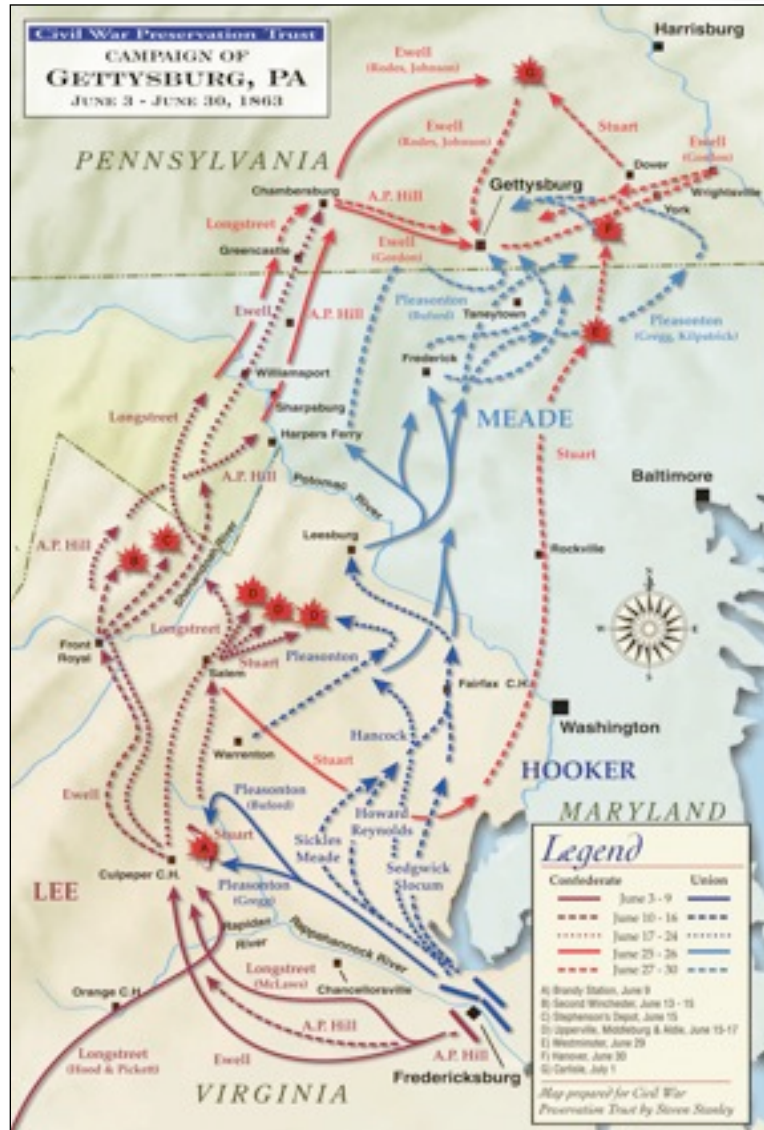
May 16, 2012 (Note later date)

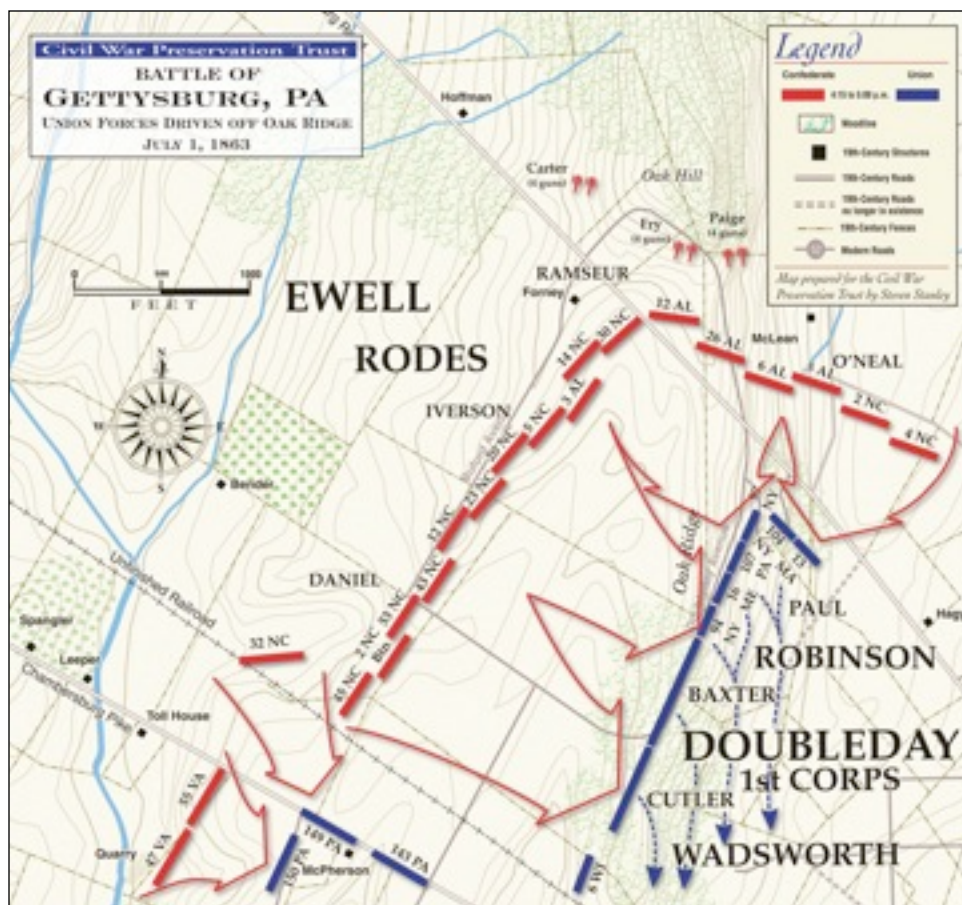
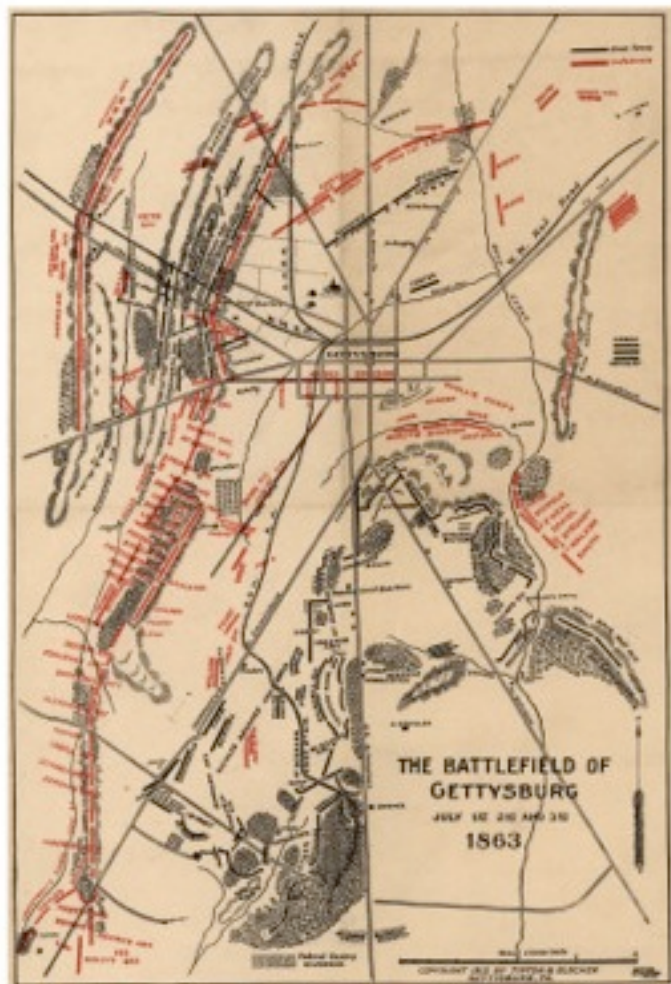
Vicksburg!

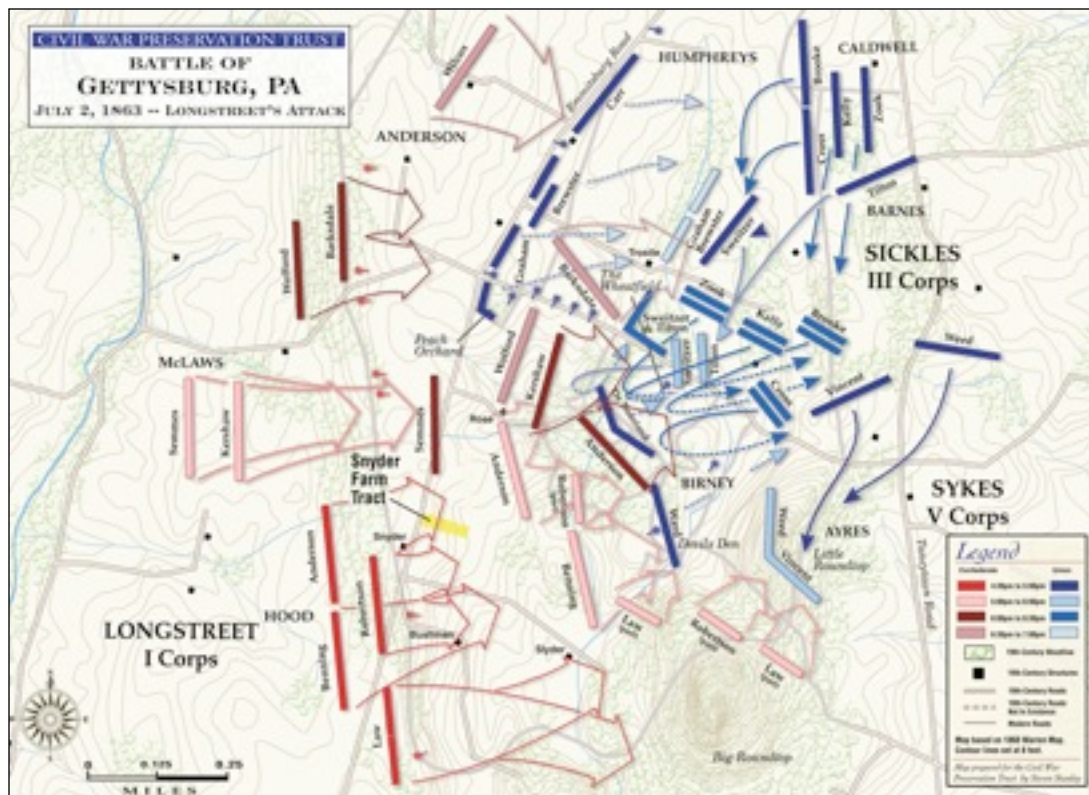
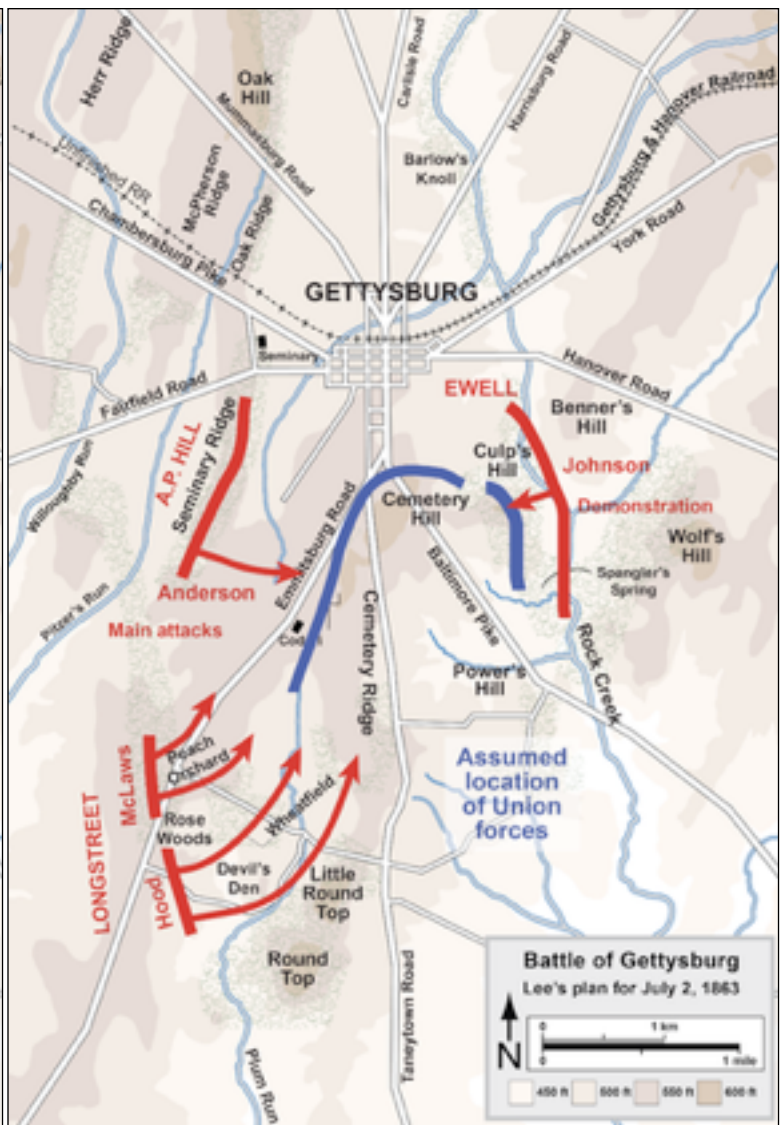
Ed Bearss



Gettysburg Battle Maps





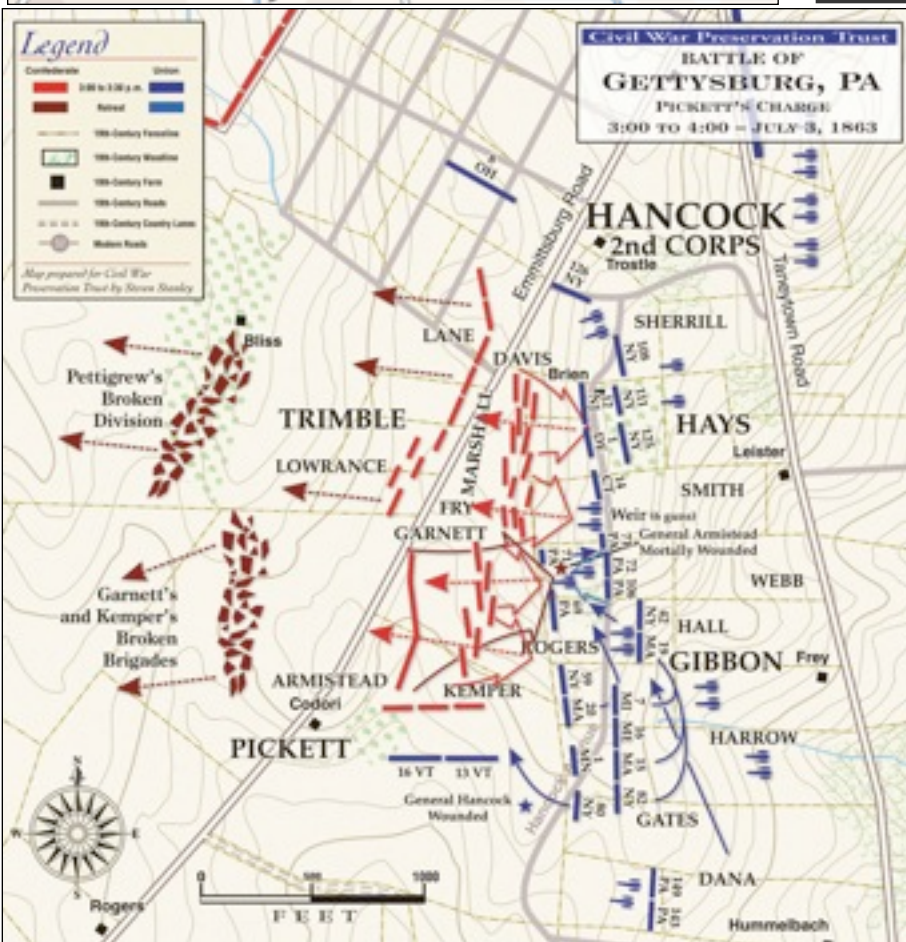
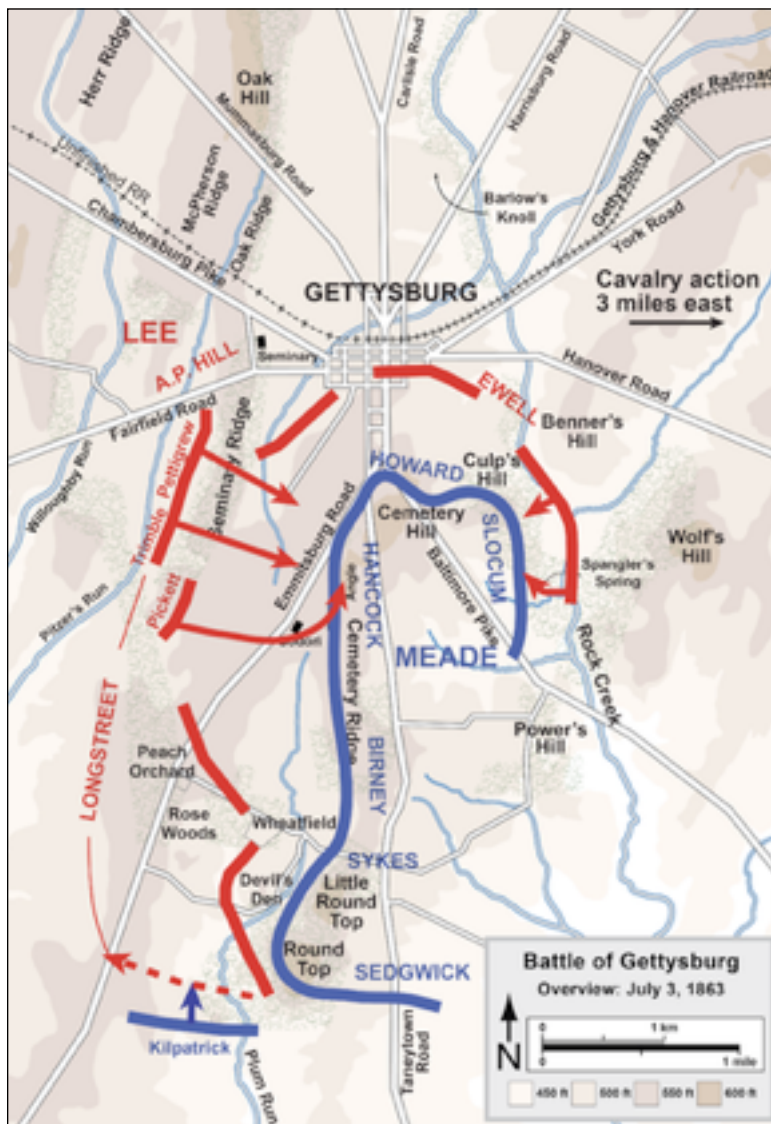


Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War – Up Close and Personal with Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis

February 8, 2012 , 3:30 – 5:00 pm. The program is open to the public. Location: Waetjen Auditorium, Cleveland State University

Mr. Mel Maurer, appearing as Abraham Lincoln, will deliver the Gettysburg Address and discuss how Lincoln wrote one of the most important speeches in American history.

Following the address, Mr. Maurer, Mr. William Vodrey, a Cleveland Municipal Court Magistrate, and Mr. John Fazio, a retired local attorney, all three of whom are past presidents of the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable, will perform *Lincoln's Last Debate: Confrontation at Hampton Roads*. This is a one act play in which Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis are found by Frank Boyd, a reporter for the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, in the dining room of the sidewheel steamboat during a recess in the Peace Conference being held at Hampton Roads, Virginia in February, 1865. The two Presidents graciously agree to be interviewed by Boyd.



NEXT MONTH

THE DICK CREWS
ANNUAL DEBATE:
LINCOLN AND
DOUGLAS DEBATE

MEL MAURER AS
ABRAHAM LINCOLN
CHRIS FORTUNATO AS
STEPHEN DOUGLAS

MODERATOR:
WILLIAM F. B. VODREY