

The Battle In Brief

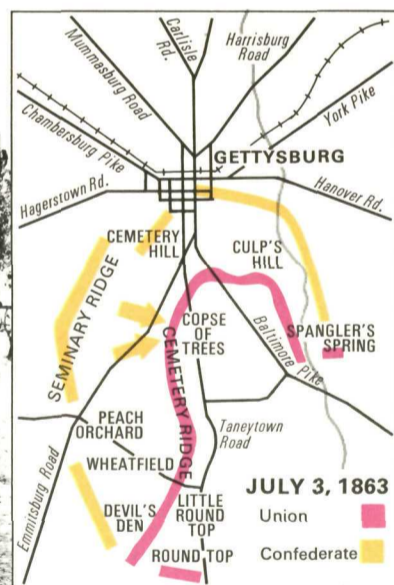
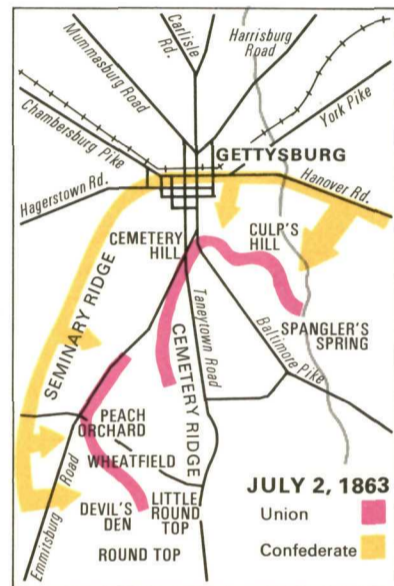
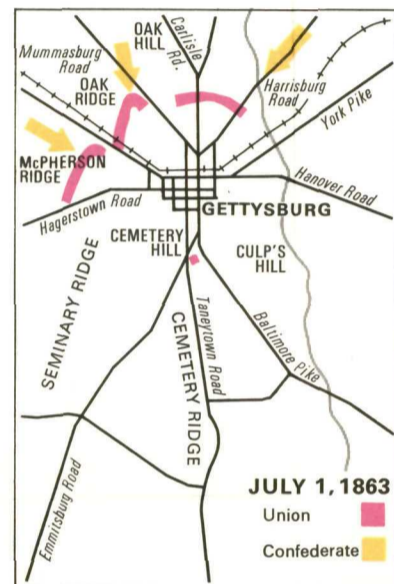
In the spring of 1863, Gen. Robert E. Lee reorganized the Army of Northern Virginia into three infantry corps and began marching westward from Fredericksburg, Va., through the gaps of the Blue Ridge, then northward into Maryland and Pennsylvania. For a second time in less than a year, Lee was carrying the war to northern soil. His first invasion had been turned back at the Battle of Antietam.

President Lincoln, learning that Lee's army was moving again, ordered the Army of the Potomac to follow. Lee was prevented from knowing precisely the enemy's whereabouts because his cavalry had gone on a brash raid around the Union Army and was unable to rejoin the others. Advance columns of Confederate troops were already at Carlisle and York when Lee finally learned that Maj. Gen. George G. Meade's entire force was close at hand. By chance the two armies touched at Gettysburg when a Confederate brigade sent there for supplies observed a forward column of Meade's cavalry.

The next day, **July 1**, the great battle opened with Confederate troops attacking Union troops on McPherson Ridge west of town. Outnum-

bered, the Union forces managed to hold until afternoon when they were overpowered and driven back through town. In the confusion, thousands of Union soldiers were captured before they could rally on Cemetery Hill south of town. Long into the night Union troops labored over their defenses while the bulk of Meade's army arrived and took positions.

On **July 2**, the battle lines were drawn up in two sweeping arcs. The main portions of both armies were nearly 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) apart on two parallel ridges, Union forces on Cemetery Ridge facing Confederate forces on Seminary Ridge to the west. Lee ordered an attack against both Union flanks. James Longstreet's thrust on



Union artillery rushing into action during Pickett's charge. An engraving by Civil War artist Edwin Forbes.

The Aftermath:

A "MELANCHOLY PROCESSION"

The climax of the Battle of Gettysburg came on the third day when Maj. Gen. George E. Pickett and his division of 4,800 men spearheaded a massed infantry charge of some 12,000 men against the Union lines on Cemetery Ridge. Arthur J. Fremantle, a British Army colonel who was observing southern military operations, moved forward to watch the Confederate attack. What he saw instead were soldiers—those who were still alive—in full retreat. In his diary, he wrote:

"I soon began to meet many wounded men returning from the front; many of them asked in piteous tones the way to a doctor or an ambulance. The further I got, the greater became the number of the wounded. At last I came to a perfect stream of them flocking through the woods in numbers as great as the crowd in Oxford-street in the

middle of the day. Some were walking alone on crutches composed of two rifles, others were supported by men less badly wounded than themselves, and others were carried on stretchers by the ambulance corps; but in no case did I see a sound man helping the wounded to the rear, unless he carried the red badge of the ambulance corps. They were still under a heavy

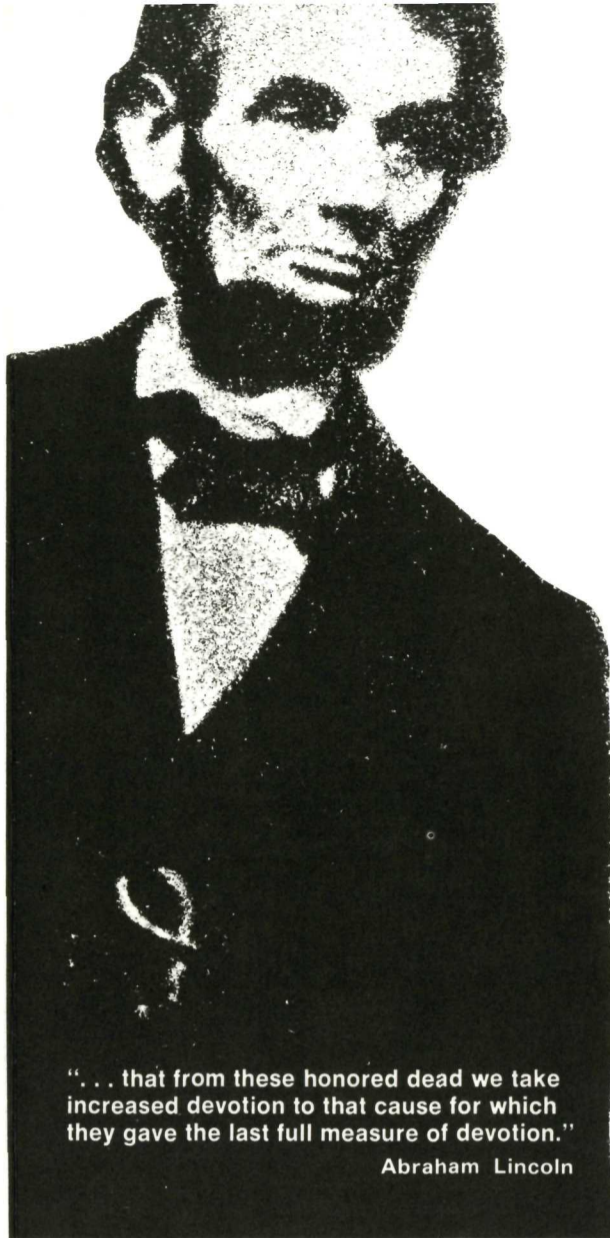
fire; the shells were continually bringing down great limbs of trees, and carrying further destruction amongst this melancholy procession. I saw all this in much less time than it takes to write it, and although astonished to meet such vast numbers of wounded, I had not seen enough to give me any idea of the real extent of the mischief."

the Union left broke through D. E. Sickles' advance lines at the Peach Orchard, left the Wheatfield strewn with dead and wounded, and turned the base of Little Round Top into a shambles. R. S. Ewell's attack proved futile against the entrenched Union right on East Cemetery Hill and Culp's Hill.

On **July 3**, Lee's artillery opened a bombardment that for a time engaged the massed guns of both sides in a thundering duel for supremacy, but did little to soften up the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. Then, in a desperate attempt to recapture the partial success of the preceding day, some 12,000 Confederate troops

under George Pickett charged across the open field toward the Union center. Raked by artillery and rifle fire, Pickett's men reached but failed to break the Union line; only one in three retreated to safety.

The Confederate army that staggered back from the fight at Gettysburg was physically and spiritually exhausted. Lee would never again attempt an offensive operation of such proportions. Meade, though he was criticized for not immediately pursuing Lee's army, had carried the day in the battle that has become known as the High Water Mark of the Confederacy.



Gettysburg National Cemetery

Both armies marched away from Gettysburg in the rain, July 5, 1863. They left behind a record of more than 51,000 killed, wounded and missing, a community in shambles—and a legend. Even before the dead could be interred in temporary graves, sightseers came to Gettysburg to view the carnage of the war's most devastating battle.

The hasty and inadequate burial of the dead particularly distressed Pennsylvania's governor, Andrew Curtin, and a local attorney, David Wills. Curtin authorized Wills to purchase battlefield land for a cemetery, and within 6 weeks reinterment had begun on 6.9 hectares (17 acres) that became Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Because of the epic proportions of the battle, it was thought fitting to consecrate the grounds with appropriate ceremonies. The choice of Edward Everett as principal speaker signaled an event of great dignity, for Everett was the outstanding orator of his day. He was invited well in advance of the date, November 19, to allow him time to prepare his address. President Abraham Lincoln and a number of other national figures were invited, too. And when those in charge of the ceremonies learned that Lincoln indeed would attend, Wills sent him a personal invitation, requesting that he dedicate the cemetery with "a few appropriate remarks."

Thongs filled the town the day before the ceremony, and the next morning thousands more poured in. The procession to the cemetery commenced at noon to the playing of funeral music. A prayer was offered. Then Everett arose, surveyed for a moment the distant South Mountain range, and for nearly 2 hours delivered a fine classical oration. President Lincoln next arose and spoke in 2 minutes the 10 sentences that stand as one of the Nation's noblest utterances.

If Everett by a learned address, rich in historical and classical allusions, lent stateliness to the occasion, Lincoln by his few remarks came closer to the central idea. He asked his audience to remember not the soldiers' deeds in combat, but to recall the reasons for which they fought. The words of the Gettysburg Address captured the national spirit by giving meaning to the sacrifice of the dead and an inspiration to the living.

In that spirit, veterans of both armies gathered here 75 years later to dedicate the Eternal Peace Memorial with "Peace Eternal in a Nation United" as its theme.

Park Programs—History For Today

Gettysburg battlefield looks today much as it did in 1863. Fences, rocks, hills, cannon, and even the monuments, which weren't here then, wait like an empty stage for an audience with the imagination to remember the battle, to ponder and try to understand what really happened here. What were the thoughts of men who fought at Gettysburg? What of the women who offered aid and comfort in the aftermath of battle, and of the hardships on the civilian population?

Park rangers lead walks, give talks, and present programs at various locations on the battlefield to help visitors visualize the personal impact of past events. Check at the visitor center for programs scheduled during your visit.



Edwin Forbes

Help Us Protect This Park

All historic sites, structures, and exhibits, as well as all plants, animals, and minerals, must be left undisturbed so that others may enjoy them. Relic collecting or possession of metal detectors within the park is not allowed.

Pets must be kept on a leash at all times. They may not be taken into the Visitor Center or Cyclorama Center or into crowded areas.

Park rangers are here to assist you and to enforce regulations.

For Your Safety

Please use extreme caution driving the park roads, especially where they intersect with heavily traveled highways. Bicycle riders are here in ever-growing numbers; please keep your speed down and be cautious at blind curves and on one-way roads. Bikers should keep to the right with the flow of auto traffic. Remember—motorists and bikers have equal rights.

You can make your visit safe and enjoyable by parking in designated areas or on the avenues but not on the grass; by obeying the posted speed limits; and by not climbing on cannon and monuments.

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Administration

Gettysburg National Military Park, established in 1895, is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Gettysburg, PA 17325, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The three days of fighting at Gettysburg in 1863 are history. Much has been written and said about this, the greatest battle of the Civil War, and many are the treasured artifacts collected in museums here and across the country. But the most tangible link to Gettysburg's past is the battleground itself.

Upon these peacefully tilled Pennsylvania fields, more men fell than in any other battle fought in North America before or since. Many of the soldiers are buried here in the National Cemetery where Lincoln delivered that simple, poignant statement of purpose, the Gettysburg Address.

Come walk the sun-flooded fields and shaded groves of trees. Climb the knobby hills and the Round Tops and let Gettysburg Battlefield stir in you powerful visions of the past. The names and regimental numbers on hundreds of monuments in the park may be unfamiliar to us today. But these statues in stone and bronze still echo the sentiments of North and South, enabling the sacrifice of soldiers who gave what Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion."

Where To Begin Your Visit

The **Visitor Center** has orientation displays, Civil War exhibits, current schedules of living history demonstrations, and the regular Electric Map programs that show troop movements of the Battle of Gettysburg in colored lights. An admission fee is charged for the Map. Park rangers at the information desk will answer questions about your visit. Tours conducted for a fee by licensed battlefield guides begin here.

The **Cyclorama Center** has exhibits, a 10-minute film, "From These Honored Dead," and the Gettysburg Cyclorama, a spectacular painting of Pickett's charge displayed with a sound and light program inside a large circular auditorium. Both programs are shown regularly; admission is charged only for the Cyclorama.

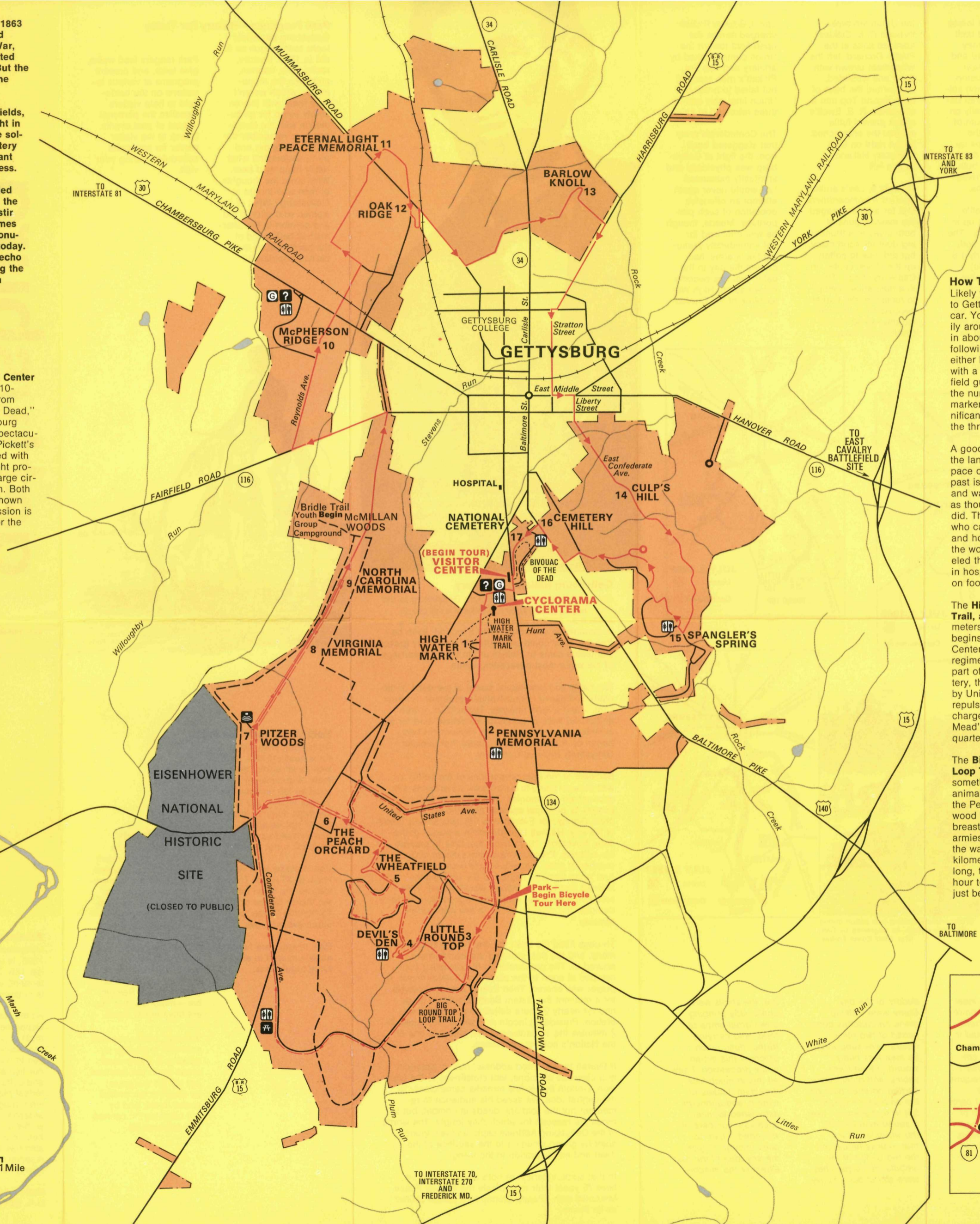
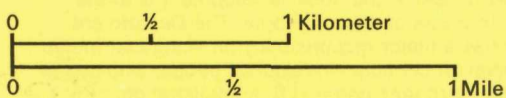
Information—Where To Write

Groups may wish to make Advance Reservations for bus tours with the services of a licensed battlefield guide included (\$15). Reservations also can be made for youth group camping, available from mid-April to mid-October (no charge). Inquiry should be made to Gettysburg National Military Park, P.O. Box 70, Gettysburg, PA 17325. Please state the day and hour of your visit.

For information about motel accommodations, restaurants, privately owned campgrounds, museums, and other facilities in the community, please write to the Gettysburg Travel Council, Gettysburg, PA 17325.

We're Joining The Metric World

The National Park Service is introducing metric measurements in its publications to help Americans become acquainted with the metric system and to make interpretation more meaningful for park visitors from other nations.



- Auto Tour
- Bike Tour—4 Mile
- Bike Tour—7 Mile
- Bridle Trail
- Foot Trail
- Paved Road
- Information
- Guides
- Comfort Station
- Picnic Area
- Amphitheater

How To See The Battlefield

Likely you have come to Gettysburg in your car. You can drive easily around the battlefield in about two hours by following the **Auto Tour**, either by yourself, or with a licensed battlefield guide. At most of the numbered stops, markers describe significant action during the three days of battle.

A good way to sense the land and the slower pace of Gettysburg's past is to leave the car and walk the battlefield as thousands of soldiers did. Think of the men who came here on foot and horseback, and of the wounded who traveled the long way home in hospital wagons or on foot.

The **High Water Mark Trail**, about 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) long, begins at the Cyclorama Center. You will see regimental monuments, part of a cannon battery, the land defended by Union soldiers in the repulse of Pickett's charge, and General Mead's Union headquarters.

The **Big Round Top Loop Trail** reveals something of the plants, animals, and rocks of the Pennsylvania hardwood forest. Stone breastworks built by the armies are visible along the way. The trail, 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) long, takes about an hour to walk, and starts just beyond Auto Stop 3.

For a longer hike, inquire about the **16-kilometer (10-mile) Compass Hike** used by the Boy Scouts of America as part of the requirement for a Gettysburg patch.

Besides these trails, there are paths to Devils Den, the Point of Woods near the Virginia Memorial where General Lee spoke to his defeated men, and the walk through the "Bivouac of the Dead" in the National Cemetery.

Bikers are welcome on all park roads, but the less-traveled roads are best for bicycle riding. The **Bike Tours** shown on the map are recommended. The park also has a 13-kilometer (8-mile) **Bridle Trail** for those with horses. It begins at McMillan Woods and passes through much of the second-day and third-day battle areas.

