



Many historians and Civil War buffs ascribe to the belief that the Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the war. Even pro-Southerners admit the battle concluded as a Union victory. But why did the Confederates lose at Gettysburg? Modern works generally point to Robert E. Lee as a failure there, not up to his usual, superb generalship. Certainly Lee's health may have affected his performance. Jeb Stuart's engineer, W.W. Blackford, visited Lee's headquarters during the battle. At first Blackford was told that he could not see the commanding general, but after a half-an-hour, Lee came "*out of his tent hurriedly,*" remembered Blackford, "*and [went] to the rear several times....and he walked so much as if he was weak and in pain.*" When Blackford inquired of Lee's difficulty, he was told that "*General Lee was suffering a good deal from an attack of diarrhea.*" Indeed, Lee may also have suffered from rheumatism and malaria.

Although numerous mistakes were made by a variety of Confederate generals on all three days, the errors of the first day may have been the most critical to the outcome of the battle. Prominent names—Richard Ewell, Jubal Early, Robert Rodes, A.P. Hill, Jeb Stuart, Henry Heth, Richard Anderson, Alfred Iverson—heroes on other battlefields, may have been guilty of being lackadaisical, indecisive, indolent, unimaginative, and even insubordinate. Yet, the fault continues to fall on the shoulders of Robert E. Lee. Several noted historians, possibly ignoring the errors of others in the command breakdown, maintain that Lee flat-out failed. Other scholars have followed this premise, some rather blindly.

This month, **Neil Martin** will dissect July 1, 1863, to analyze where the blame should be placed—on Robert E. Lee or those who served him—with a program entitled: "*Gettysburg, Failure of the Confederate Command—Part I.*" Neil, a long-time member and former President of the Michigan Regimental, was born in Milwaukee and graduated from the University of Wisconsin. He retired from Ford Motor Company after 29 years in accounting and financial analysis. He is currently employed part-time at AHD Vintners, a wine distributor.

You'll want to mark this one on your calendar. So, circle the date now—**MONDAY, AUGUST 30.**

**FALL FIELD TRIP:** At this month's meeting the \$20 checks for the Saturday night dinner will again be collected. Hopefully all who haven't paid will do so. Also, you will need to decide on your entrée.

- ROAST SIRLOIN OF BEEF (with natural brown gravy)
- GRILLED BONELESS CHICKEN BREAST (served over rice pilaf)
- VEGETARIAN PLATE

The meal also comes with a garden tossed salad, bread, marshmallow yams, fresh green beans, peach cobbler, and a beverage (coffee or tea).

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On Friday August 6 Gary Pike was involved in an accident at work. Apparently, a nitrogen tank blew and the hose flew out at 2500 psi, lacerating his left bicep, cutting the muscle and several arteries. The bleeding was finally stopped 25 hours later (after a loss of about 3-5 units of blood). He was taken to surgery the next day to repair the muscle and soft tissue. He came home that evening. He was also scheduled for surgery to repair a broken finger (same accident) on August 18. Gary will be off work for 4-8 weeks. I spoke to Gary a couple of days after the accident, and his spirits are good. His wife, Marilyn, luckily a nurse, tells me he is "*mouthy and fine.*"

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Our thanks to last month's speaker, **Hudson Mead**, for his fine tribute to Russell Alger: "*I Thought Armstrong Was My Friend—I Thought He Was My Friend.*" Hudson gave an interesting comparison of the two officers—Alger and George Custer—and told how their relationship later broke down. He highlighted the performance with slides and Alger's presentation watch and sword.



**QUIZ: All questions pertain to Gettysburg**

1. Which Confederate artilleryist, ill since the Battle of Chancellorsville, arrived to take command of his battalion, prompting Robert E. Lee to say to A.P. Hill, “I have good news for you. Major \_\_\_\_\_ is up”? And, which 6’6” North Carolina-born Quaker led the renowned Iron Brigade?
2. Which Confederate general was shot in the head and knocked senseless on the first day, but lived thanks to folded newspaper in the sweatband of an oversized hat? And, which young Union general, thought to be mortally wounded, was given water and assistance by Confederate General John Brown Gordon?
3. Which of Longstreet’s divisional commanders led the second day’s assault on Little Round Top? And, what would signal Richard Ewell’s advance on the same day at Culp’s Hill?
4. Which Federal general, the Chief Engineer of the Army of the Potomac, helped save the army from defeat at Little Round Top? And, which Federal general surprisingly pulled his corps from Little Round Top to the Wheatfield area?
5. Besides George Pickett, which 2 Confederate generals headed the attack known as “Pickett’s Charge”?
6. What time did the Confederate bombardment of Cemetery Ridge begin on the third day, and how long did it last? A) 1:07, 1’40” B) 2:08, 1’10” C) 1:45, 2’30” D) 12:37, 1’30” E) 1:50, 2’40”
7. What artillery piece did the Confederates have that was the only breech-loading cannon on the field? And, which famous sculptor created the monument of the North Carolina soldiers on Seminary Ridge?
8. Which general said: “It took a great many mistakes to lose that battle, and I myself made most of them”? And, who said: “Your men have done all that they could do. The fault is entirely my own”?
9. Which farmhouse stood at the northeast corner of Emmitsburg Road and Wheatfield Road junction? And, whose house along Chambersburg Pike did R.E. Lee supposedly use as his headquarters?
10. Who was the only civilian killed at the battle? And, which Confederate soldier was killed on his family’s property?

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Some tales of soldier life while at West Point.....

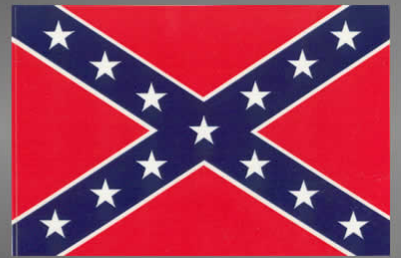
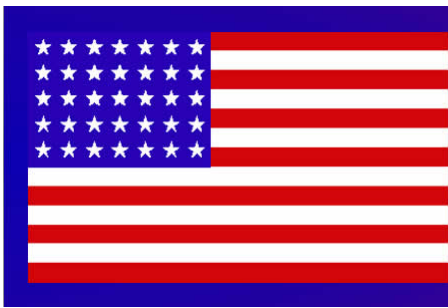
Morris Schaff, a West Point graduate of 1862 and a Union soldier, related a story that occurred while a cadet at the Academy pertaining to Harold Borland, who graduated last in his class after six laborious years in 1860. “*Ginger*,” as Borland was nicknamed because of the color of his hair, was called upon by a professor in Ordnance class. “*Mr. Borland, how many pieces will a 12-pound shell burst into?*”—(the average number having been determined well by numerous experiments.) “*Ginger’s*” blue eyes stared at the floor for some time as he deliberated. He slowly lifted his eyes toward the ceiling and finally responded, “*Not less than two.*”

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Young Adelbert Ames, a West Pointer from the class of May, 1861, told the story of his unwanted tent-mate—“*a large rat*”—during his first winter with the Army of the Potomac in 1861. Ames stated: “*I ruled supreme during the day, and he during the night. He treats me very badly, wakes me up, runs through the mud and drags his tail over my pillow, walks on my letter paper, and pokes his nose into my private affairs. For his rudeness I am feeding him bread and butter spiced with arsenic.*”

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On Christmas Day, 1851, J.E.B. Stuart, nicknamed “*Beauty*,” at West Point, wrote a letter to his cousin in which he briefly described fellow cadet (and a future Union general) William Rufus Terrill. “*The cadet whom you saw at the*



*Springs is named Terrill; he enjoys the reputation of being the ugliest man in the Corps, and so I hope you will not consider him as a fair specimen so far as looks are concerned. But he is a very good hearted fellow [even] if he is ugly.”*

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Morris Schaff also told a tale on his friend George Armstrong Custer. It seems as though an instructor of drawing at the Academy, named Henry Douglass, was the proud owner of a rooster. The nameless pet crowed loudly each morning awakening the other cadets. “*Custer slipped down one night, took him [the rooster] from his perch, and later he was in a kettle boiling over the gas-burner, his feathers on an outspread newspaper. When the feast was over, the one delegated to dispose of the feathers was not careful as he carried them off, and the result was that the next morning there was a string of yellow feathers from the 8<sup>th</sup> Division (Custer’s residence) clear across the ‘area.’*”

Schaff continued: “*This delinquency....[offered] a pleasant relief and contrast at a time when clouds hung dark and passions were stirring deep. West Point has had many a character to deal with; but it may be a question whether it ever had a cadet so exuberant, one who cared so little for its serious attempts to elevate and burnish, or one on whom its tactical officers kept their eyes so constantly and unsympathetically searching as upon Custer. And yet how we all loved him.*”

#### QUIZ ANSWERS:

1. Willie Pegram and Solomon Meredith
2. Henry Heth and Francis Barlow
3. Lafayette McLaws and John Bell Hood/the sound of Longstreet’s guns
4. Gouverneur Warren and Dan Sickles
5. James Johnston Pettigrew and Isaac Trimble
6. A) 1:07 and 1 hour, 40 minutes
7. Whitworth and Gutzon Borglum
8. Richard Ewell and Robert E. Lee
9. John Wentz and Widow Mary Thompson
10. Jennie Wade and Wesley Culp

Don’t forget the meeting on **MONDAY, AUGUST 30**, when **Neil Martin** presents: “*Gettysburg, Failures of the Confederate Command—Part I.*” We’re still at the same place—the Farmington Public Library (Grand River and Farmington Road). The meeting starts at 6:30 P.M. It’ll be a good one.

Also, take a look at our website: <http://www.farmlib.org/mrrt/>.