

# SEARCHING *for the* “S” WORD *at* GETTYSBURG: *The Battlefield in the Era of Black Lives Matter*

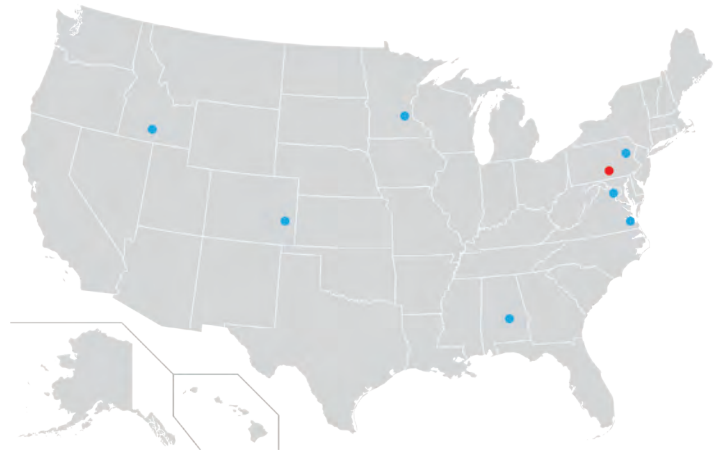


MARGARET CREIGHTON

**Chances are you have been to the battlefield at Gettysburg.** You likely toured all the hallowed sites: the national cemetery; Little Round Top; the broad field crossed by General Pickett. And you probably toured Confederate Avenue, too, and saw the regimental markers and grand state monuments to soldiers who fought and died for the Confederacy. Out of all of these, you doubtless circled around the Virginia State Monument, topped by General Robert E. Lee astride his horse Traveller.

What you perhaps did not notice at the Virginia monument is the cluster of soldiers at its base. Seven men, representing different aspects of (free) life in antebellum Virginia, from a farmer to a businessman to an artist, are grouped together. It is the man to the north who is, I think, the most interesting. He is a young soldier, blowing his bugle. He is pointing his instrument toward the field in front of him, directly at a small white wooden house and barn. That farm sits squat along the ridge that General Lee hoped to command by nightfall on July third, 1863.

The two structures—the little painted house and the big equestrian statue—almost seem to speak to each other. And it is right that they should do so. The little house was owned by a free Black man named Abraham Brian, and just before the battle consumed his farm he and his family had fled—fearful of being captured and enslaved or killed by Lee’s invading army. General Lee was an enslaver himself, and if he had been successful that day in pushing through Union defenses, his victory might have widened the toxic spread of human bondage.



There isn’t, yet, a legible or tangible link between the Confederate general and the Black farmer, and there may never be. Visitors can see both of them but they seem unconnected. At the same time, however, the National Park Service (NPS), which runs the expansive military park, has done some moral wrestling in the last 20 years, and, along with private exhibitors and foundations, has begun to acknowledge the way racism and slavery are key to the Gettysburg story. The change has come slowly, though, and tends to be relegated to Black civilian sites. Most Confederate memorials remain unframed by talk of white supremacy and enslavement.

I first came to Gettysburg to do research on Black and White civilians in the mid-1990s. I had brought a Civil War class down from Maine to Pennsylvania, and was intrigued, if not disturbed, by the way that the fighting fields had been memorialized, but the town had not been. The borough of Gettysburg had been swallowed by the battle as well. What had local residents seen and endured? How had the proximity to slavery-friendly Maryland affected their experiences? How might the story of the battle be expanded, even turned around? These were some of the questions I took on in the book that resulted from my research:

*The Colors of Courage, Gettysburg’s Forgotten Battles.*<sup>1</sup>

At the time I began to explore these questions, it seemed as if the Civil War was just an arm’s length away. Some of the people I interviewed had actually talked to and cared for veterans of the battle. In 1938 they were young adults, and had worked at the battle’s 75th anniversary celebration, serving food, doing housekeeping, assisting with hospitality. There seemed to be only one degree of separation between me and the thundering days of the summer of 1863.

And it wasn’t just the human link that connected me to the past. Gettysburg seemed to be reliving the war, even

The Virginia monument at Gettysburg National Military Park, with the Abraham Brian farmhouse in the distance. MARGARET CREIGHTON



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avenging Confederate defeat. In much of the national military park and borough, slavery was the “s” word. The Abraham Brian farmhouse, with all its potential for a deep and important discussion of life on the Mason–Dixon line, was locked up. Popular narratives of the battle centered on courageous, if eccentric, Southern generals who led their men into Pennsylvania to defend the principle of states’ rights. There were, according to these popular writers, good people “on both sides.” The Brian story, because it specified the “rights” that Lee and Longstreet and Stuart were actually defending, complicated that story. Visitors continued to stumble upon the Brian property, but did so almost by accident.<sup>2</sup>

While White visitors came to Gettysburg and mostly found a “no-fault” history and a congenial welcome, Black residents told me that racial segregation in the borough was informal, but just as powerful as if there were a concrete dividing line. The national military park attracted few Black visitors. The commercial zone of the town catered to White descendants of Union and Confederate veterans with equal affection. Confederate flags flew proudly with Union flags along avenues, and shops sold T-shirts emblazoned with the faces of Confederate heroes. Businesses proudly sold both nostalgia and regret. Within the borough, Black residents clustered in the same areas they had inhabited in the 1860s and navigated the town carefully; they knew which restaurants welcomed them and which did not.

Many of these residents had been schooled in the Civil Rights era, however, and devoted time to exploring their own, alternate histories—writing accounts of the men and women who had helped build the borough and who preached and prayed together. They helped clean up Lincoln Cemetery, where their ancestors were buried, within earshot of the groomed, well-ordered, “national” cemetery. They mostly did their own research, their own writing, and, to some extent, kept their records safe in attics. Once in a while their stories attracted some attention outside of the community. I was indebted to all of these people for introducing me to a newer, wider battle.<sup>3</sup>

In sum, the popular history of Gettysburg at the close of the millennium was a segregated story. The official battle history at the park, paid for by (all) Americans’ tax dollars, was edited and circumscribed. The story of Black civilians in the battle, all at risk of enslavement, was sidelined. The story of civilian women—White, Black, immigrant—was also bypassed. These narratives, of course, all intersected and overlapped, and were all part of the same dynamic and contentious account.

I was eager to revisit Gettysburg to see how things might have changed since my book appeared in 2005. We have been through a lot as a country in the last 20 years, confronting and avoiding discussions of systemic racism and the meaning of public space. Black Lives Matter, shootings at Charleston and Buffalo, the murder of George Floyd, the ugly and violent protest at Charlottesville have all challenged the ongoing veneration of historic White supremacists. How and why we continue to honor Confederate leaders, from monuments to buildings to roadway names to military sites, has generated big, fraught national conversations.

So what do visitors to the national military park and the borough of Gettysburg—all of it the site of fighting in 1863—learn these days?

The Brian house, I believed, would be the most telling, being smack dab in the July 3 battlefield and begging for interpretation. I found it still there, small and resolute in the green fields near the Confederate “high water mark.” It looked freshly painted, and, through the window I could see that the interior—two rooms—had been restored. I noted simple furniture, bedding, and some clothing. A wayside marker just south of the house identified the 12-acre farm owned by this free Black family, detailed how the family departed as word of the invasion spread and how the house and farm were damaged by fighting, and how they rebuilt. The marker replaced one that had stood at the site for decades.

There were important changes in the text of the current tablet. It had, I learned, been newly installed by the National Park Service in 2021, in honor of Black History Month. The changes seem small—the modification of a word or two—but they are significant. The previous marker described the serious damage Union soldiers did to the farm; the new marker now castigated both armies. I read that the Brian fences and crops had been destroyed and the land dug up to inter—at least temporarily—soldiers who fell close by. The wayside text offered its readers an important lesson in



The Abraham Brian farmhouse in mid-July 1863, photographed by Mathew Brady. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

how Civil War battles extended far beyond the “field” of combat, and how the so-called rules of war that protected civilians were more often ignored than followed.

A more significant shift is in the way the Brian family is described on the eve of the battle. Gone is the earlier text that claimed that the Brian mother, father, and children “left the area” on the approach of the Confederates, with its implication that the family departed at their leisure, perhaps not wanting to be inconvenienced by the smoke and commotion of arriving armies. NPS has made important adjustments and now renders the Brians’ flight more accurately and more compellingly. Now they are said to have left in flight because they were “afraid of being captured and sold into slavery.” It doesn’t need to be spelled out that Lee’s army would have been doing the capturing.<sup>4</sup>

If only NPS had taken a few steps further. It could open the Brian House to the public (it is open now only on special occasions) and use wall text to give on-site visitors a more expansive—and chilling—insight into the family’s experience and the ironies of the site’s location.

Visitors could stand inside the small room where the Brian family sat and cooked and ate and imagine life for these Black residents of the borderlands. They could look out of the south-facing windows toward the blue-tinted mountains of Maryland and realize how close the family was to the line that defined “free” from “unfree.”

They could also have a sense of how perilous this site was if there were a panel pointing out the location of another small house, now gone, where Abraham Brian’s tenant lived in 1863. The tenant was a freeborn Black woman named Mag Palm, and just a few years before the war two local men attacked Mag in Gettysburg, tried to wrestle her into a wagon and drive her to Maryland to enslave her. Visitors could have a sense of how even neighbors in Pennsylvania tried to benefit from slavery’s cruel economics.

Park visitors could also learn about what lay just beyond the boundary of the farm: the so-called high water mark of the Confederate attack at Gettysburg. It was, and is, a site revered by proud Confederate descendants and by those who want to honor secession and its rationale. Tourists could picture—and there are enough historic photographs

to make this easy—the White veterans of the Union and Confederate armies posing at the stone wall at both the 1913 and 1938 reunions, clasping arthritic hands in heartfelt forgiveness.<sup>5</sup> Missing from the image are descendants of the people who had been at greatest risk in 1863. In Gettysburg, for instance, Mag Palm’s great-granddaughter worked at the reunion, and lived near the Brian farm, in a segregated Gettysburg, at the height of Jim Crow, fighting a battle that hadn’t ended.

Gettysburg National Military Park may be forfeiting the opportunity to make the Brian House an important talking point for on-site visitors, but park interpreters discuss the Brian family and other Black residents of Gettysburg in other formats. On web pages, through blogs, in 3-D house tours, and in special on-site programming, various speakers, like Chris Gwinn, chief of interpretation and education at the national military park, talk about what life must have been like for families like the Brians, especially given their proximity to Maryland.<sup>6</sup>

NPS has also recently expanded Black history with other efforts. It has added a wayside marker on the Taneytown Road Trail identifying the home and work of Basil Biggs, who managed interments, digging up bodies of Union soldiers and transporting them to the new soldiers’ national cemetery. This panel reminds visitors how the battle’s trauma persisted for borough residents beyond July 1863, even though press attention had quickly shifted to other arenas. It also reminds us that behind the image of Lincoln and his legendary address lay literal dirty work. Men like Biggs helped men like Lincoln do their celebrated jobs.<sup>7</sup>

An even more important effort is the restoration of the James Warfield home. NPS allocated significant time and resources to bring back the historic appearance of this small stone house south of the borough, near what was likely the headquarters of Confederate general James Longstreet. Warfield, a Black blacksmith, evacuated with his large family upon the invasion, and Confederate soldiers used the house to attack Union forces at the Peach Orchard on the second day of the battle. The house was enveloped in artillery fire.

The park also added a new marker outside the house and farm in 2021, identifying the inhabitants and alluding to the terror the Confederate army brought with them. Furthermore, officials say they plan to refer to the house in an auto tour stop—one that currently focuses on the Mississippi and Louisiana state monuments. As Gwinn has explained, the story of the Warfields will “connect directly with why the war was fought,” and help explain what the battle meant for civilian populations.<sup>8</sup>

As important as it is to explain to visitors why the war was fought, it is also vital to connect that cause with the soldiers who were actually invading Pennsylvania. These were individuals who were fighting, some explicitly and personally, all implicitly, for the right to enslave humans. To relegate the fact of slavery to certain areas of the park (like the Brian and Warfield houses or in the privately operated, pay-to-view visitor center) and to leave it undiscussed near Confederate monuments gives white supremacists ongoing power in what they perceive as sympathetic space.

Indeed, I wondered what had changed along Confederate Avenue, that stretch of asphalted roadway

Detail of the restoration of the James Warfield home. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



that leads from Seminary Ridge down and around the Peach Orchard, and over to the Round Tops. It was in this area that Confederate troops readied the assault on the Round Tops (July 2, 1863) and gathered for Pickett's Charge (July 3). It has been, since the early 1900s, an extended homage to the men who fought under General Lee.

And there was something new. At the North Carolina state monument, the first that visitors encounter at the northern end of the avenue, stands a new tablet. The tablet, with a photograph of the dedication ceremony, talks about the formation of the memorial park at Gettysburg and the beginning of Confederate monument building. And here, believe it or not, is the "s" word. Confederate monument inscriptions, the plaque says, do not address the causes of the war, especially the salient fact of slavery. Could it have said more? Professor Scott Hancock of Gettysburg College suggests that the interpretation would have been more powerful had it explained that the monument's designer (it was erected in 1929) was a sculptor named Gutzon Borglum, who designed Mount Rushmore and Stone Mountain and was an avid backer of the Ku Klux Klan. Historian Kevin Levin suggests that the plaque might also have stated how many enslaved men the Confederate army brought with them to the battle, and how the monument, like so many at Gettysburg, was built during the cruel era of Jim Crow.<sup>9</sup>

If there is room for more information at North Carolina's site, there also is space for context at the Tennessee memorial. Although efforts to gather money for the Tennessee monument were launched in 1967, the sculpture and base were not dedicated until 1982. The inscription predictably insists that Tennessee soldiers at Gettysburg "fought and died for their convictions" as if the intensity of belief is the best metric of value. The monument's dedication speech described the Civil War as a "duel of honor," and the address was punctuated by shouts of the rebel yell.<sup>10</sup>

Then there is Virginia. For so many reasons, those traveling south down Confederate Avenue will make it a point to stop at the Virginia state monument. It was the first Confederate state monument, dedicated in 1917 and unveiled by Lee's niece. And it is the biggest. Lee and his legendary horse, Traveller, stand over 40 feet above the ground, with the cluster of seven Virginians at the base.<sup>11</sup> In the near distance, the Abraham Brian house and barn disrupt and unsettle the view of green fields and the long, low rise of Cemetery Ridge.

When I reached this monument, I found a few handmade signs stuck into the ground near the base of the statue. Other, more official looking, tablets warned me to stay away, to keep my "hands off" the memorial. What are they worried about? That someone might stick a sign into the ground (just as they have done) explaining slavery's connection to secession and to this invasion? Or describe General Lee as a traitor to his country? Or that the statue was erected in an era when veneration of the Confederacy went hand in hand with violent intimidation and oppression of Black Americans? Or that the statue continues to serve as a site for intimidation (Keep away!)?



ALBERT HERRING / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The authors of these warnings might be responding to a shift in national sentiment. They worry, perhaps, that the equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee at Gettysburg will follow the same downward trajectory as the statue of Lee at Charlottesville. In 2021, four years after the violent, fatal rally of Unite the Right, statues of Lee and Stonewall Jackson were removed from the public park. The Charlottesville town council voted to melt down the Lee sculpture for public art, and placed it under the auspices of the African American Heritage Center. In Richmond, the

capital of the Confederacy, Lee was similarly removed, and went to a Black history museum. Across the country, efforts to rename and take out tributes to the Confederacy have continued. Street names, public parks, military installations, and many monuments have been modified. Some of these have been changed through protest, more through the actions of local officials, and some through the decisions of the federal government. Congressional Democrats have also introduced a proposal to eliminate Confederate statues from national park sites.<sup>12</sup>

At Gettysburg National Military Park, Confederate monuments don't seem to be going anywhere soon. Congress has not moved forward on any removal plans, and, according to park officials, any toppling in Gettysburg would have to be legislated. The park continues to make this clear on its website: Confederate monuments “are an important part of the cultural landscape.” They represent an “important, if controversial, chapter in our Nation’s history.” NPS has left itself some wiggle room, however. First, it reminds its readers that while park officials are committed to preserving the monuments, they are also committed to delivering interpretation and education. Second, the director of the National Park Service “may make an exception” to the policy of preservation.<sup>13</sup>

Visitors hoping that General Lee will never fall at Gettysburg would have been gratified by the activity around it in the autumn of 2022. The park refurbished the Virginia State Memorial, particularly its sculptures, with a new patina. In September, the area around the monument was cordoned off so that preservationists could sand and polish the surface of the statue.<sup>14</sup> As one blogger put it at the time, NPS technicians will “bring new life to the bronze memorial.” The soldiers and horse will all have a “new pop.”<sup>15</sup>

Those who cheered Lee’s new polish may have celebrated prematurely. As Gwinn explains, there may be more coming to the site than preservatives. Plans are underfoot, he says, to install two new tablets. One will discuss the monument itself, emphasizing that it, too, has a history. And the other will carry on the conversation about slavery hinted at near the North Carolina monument. It will discuss the many enslaved men that Lee’s army carried with it, a daily reminder to his soldiers—enslavers or not—that they depended on that institution. Will it discuss Lee as an enslaver himself? Allude to the personal stake in slavery that he carried with him? Gwinn says it will do so.<sup>16</sup>

General Lee’s “context” panels may be the most contentious and the most necessary additions the park makes. But there is room for more. In fact, many Confederate Avenue monuments beg for new interpretation. Perhaps we might re-emphasize how these statues are not artifacts from the Civil War Era. What began as a memorial field for Union veterans, to mark Union positions and celebrate the Union victory, became, in the early 20th century, a place where Southern states could defiantly celebrate opposition to Black freedom.<sup>17</sup> The heyday of Confederate monument building in the early 1900s was coincident with the heyday of lynching and Jim Crow segregation. And a number of monuments went up in the 1960s to early 1970s, fighting symbolically against the Civil Rights Movement. The South Carolina memorial, which proudly declares its soldiers fought for the “sacredness of states [sic] rights,” was put up in the summer of 1963, about the same time Martin Luther King Jr. spoke to 200,000 marchers for racial justice in Washington.<sup>18</sup>

Of the twelve Confederate state monuments at Gettysburg (there are 40 memorials in all), those which seem to speak most defensively of the Confederacy are Louisiana and Mississippi, situated near the famous Peach Orchard. Their fierceness is centered as much in the figures themselves as in the inscriptions. The Louisiana monument, conceived in the mid-1960s and dedicated in 1971, consists of a tortured bronze female figure rising above a fallen soldier, explicitly representing the “spirit of the confederacy.” In concept it was intended to convey that “they did not die in vain.” The extended female figure raises a trumpet in one hand and seems ready to launch a flaming cannonball in the other.<sup>19</sup>

Just beyond is the Mississippi monument, also conceived in the late 1960s and designed by the same sculptor. Unlike the muscular female that exemplifies Louisiana’s determination, Mississippi’s soldier is furious and defiant. Standing over the body of a fallen color bearer, a huge bronze infantryman swings his musket like a club. The avenging soldier is matched by the rhetoric of the inscription: “On this ground our brave sires fought for their righteous cause.” Even the National Park Service, usually so helpful to Confederate memorial committees, had some qualms about this text. NPS Chief Historian Thomas Harrison and Superintendent George Emery wanted the word “righteous” eliminated. If

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it wasn't, they argued, "we will have to revise American History." Throughout 1970 and 1971 NPS and the monument sponsors haggled over the words. Bypassing the issue of slavery, Mississippi officials claimed that no court had ever said that what "the South" did was actually treasonous. Mississippi officials traveled to Pennsylvania, made their case in person, and won. On a cloudless day in late October 1973, Confederate and United States flags fluttered together companionably, the US Army band played "Dixie," and a Mississippi senator asserted in his address that those "who wore the Confederate grey deserved a special place in heaven."<sup>20</sup>

The musket-wielding soldier is still there, of course, fighting for his "righteous cause" right next to the James Warfield house. Will the park include its occupants in the same conversation? Just as the Lee statue points toward the Brian Farm and could open a true and painful dialogue, the Mississippi Monument and the Warfield farm could speak to each other and fill in a gaping hole in interpretation.

Filling in those holes on the fields and hills of the battlefield park is essential not only because it is good history, but also because it is one of the places in Gettysburg where touring is completely free of charge. At the park's visitor center, where exhibits introduce local Black history and a film narrated by actor Morgan Freeman identifies slavery as the key to secession, the private Gettysburg Foundation, which operates the center, charges a fee. Driving or walking around the federal park, on the other hand, is freely accessible to everyone. American citizens, all of them, have already paid for it.<sup>21</sup>

Sites outside the park also have begun to address a fuller history. This is battle land too, of course, but privately owned. Like the Gettysburg Foundation, many of these sites have opened new exhibits and interactive experiences, and have made a distinct commitment, not surprisingly, to addressing civilian engagement. Several also offer the story of slavery and abolition, and identify slavery as the root cause of the war.

Newly housed on the campus of the Lutheran Seminary, the Gettysburg Museum of Black History addresses the long history of slavery in Adams County, while also detailing the demanding landscape for Black civilians in the post-Civil War period. The same historical team who helped preserve and interpret Lincoln Cemetery has done hard work to track down historical records of those who lived in the borough's "Third Ward." Exhibits of historical photographs and documents, including those featuring Gettysburg's segregated school and Black Civil War veterans, line the walls. The museum honors the community's tradition of storytelling and wants to inspire a new generation to honor a proud past.<sup>22</sup>

Almost next door on Seminary Ridge, under the historic cupola of the Lutheran Seminary, and at the site of critical action on July 1, 1863, stands the Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center. One of the first of the "new" museums to explore the broader dimensions of the battle (it opened in 2013), this non-profit foundation introduces visitors to such topics as 19th-century religious debates and Civil War era medicine. It offers walking tours and an escape room where visitors can re-enact operations of a Union signal corps. Its robust educational component also invites visitors to engage with the history of race and slavery. In a virtual education segment called "Going to War," for instance, viewers are asked to think about what

Seminary Ridge Museum and Education Center CONCORD/CC BY-SA-3.0



motivated soldiers to fight, and are introduced to a Union and a Confederate soldier. The South Carolina soldier links to two primary sources—one a demographic profile of his county in South Carolina with its large enslaved population, and other the slavery-dominated articles of secession defending South Carolina’s decision. This is important. It is one thing for Gettysburg museums to discuss slavery and emancipation with regard to Gettysburg’s Black civilians. It is quite another to connect slavery to the stories of individual Confederate soldiers who invaded Pennsylvania. Museum Director Peter Miele has additional plans. He would like to see an exhibit on slavery in the borderlands and to partner with the Black History Museum to bring other aspects of Black experience to the forefront.<sup>23</sup>

Tackling some of these topics, too, is the new (2023) Beyond the Battle Museum of the Adams County Historical Society, north of the borough. Drawing on the society’s extensive archives, curatorial staff have produced a rich display of civilian experience during the battle. They have taken a long view, considering Indigenous life in Adams County, exploring the Colonial Era, and presenting the environmental history of the region. Exhibits and educational materials ask provocative questions about slavery, abolitionism, and the Civil War. Mag Palm, Abraham Brian’s tenant, is on display in a life-size photograph of her and her rocking chair. The scene invites guests to consider the precariousness of freedom in Adams County. The historical society also promises visitors a thrilling experience. Using theatrical technology and sounds of gunfire, guests can “relive” the frightening days of battle. They can time-travel “behind enemy lines” and stand within a bullet-riddled farmhouse.<sup>24</sup>

Along with incorporating various aspects of civilian history in their exhibits, many Gettysburg museums are embracing a new trend among exhibitors—the immersive experience. Whether it is an invitation to try to “escape,” or to listen to the booming of cannon fire, visitors to Gettysburg are invited to “feel” the battle. The Gettysburg Foundation offers visitors a chance to meet with three Civil War figures, including Gettysburg’s own Basil Biggs, at the restored train station, through virtual reality goggles. The foundation also invites younger visitors to role play in its galleries at the historic Rupp House, in a program called *Children of 1863*. This house exhibit fills an important gap in the interpretive narrative by introducing young visitors to the children their age who lived through the battle. Young visitors are invited to “find a place to safely hide during the battle” and to visit exhibit galleries with titles like the “Soldiers are Coming” and “Surviving the Battle.”<sup>25</sup>

We do need to wonder which young guests the re-enactment designers have in mind, though. Will Black parents want their children to play at being captured by White enemies? Or to imagine what might have happened to Black families “when the soldiers come” if they hadn’t hidden well enough? If one of the aims of new interpretations is to afford diverse visitors a relevant and inclusive history, then role playing may be counterproductive. We also live in a nation where all schoolchildren are exposed to active shooter drills, and where they regularly imagine bad guys with guns. Some children, too, live in heavily policed communities, where gunfire is no thrill. The Black History Museum states that one of its goals is to “makes sure that kids of color do not feel invisible.” That should be the goal of every Gettysburg museum.<sup>26</sup>



DOUG KERR / WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Don’t get me wrong. These are museums and organizations that have done important interpretive work in expanding the history that is taught about the Battle of Gettysburg. They are acknowledging the breadth of the battle, the battle’s aftereffects, and the role that slavery played in bringing about the war. They are vital correctives to the years when all of this was ignored—where civilians, especially women, were afterthoughts, when slavery was unmentionable, when children were invisible. And they stand in distinct contrast to the borough’s commercial sector, where Confederate flags still wave, where shoppers can buy shirts and hats and decals with the stars and bars, and where racism is still overtly on display in town restaurants.<sup>27</sup>

But we want to do more than educate the White visitors who already come to Gettysburg in droves. Don't we want Gettysburg to speak to all Americans, especially to those whose ancestors not only endured the unspeakable but who persisted and succeeded? Who can look to the historical record at Gettysburg and be proud of resilience and resistance? There is, as a somber president once said at Gettysburg, some unfinished work, and it behooves us to widen the interpretive lens, desegregate the history of slavery, and open the park—fully open the park—to those people who have been excluded for generations.

## ENDNOTES

1. *The Colors of Courage, Gettysburg's Forgotten Battles: Women, African Americans and Immigrants in the Civil War's Defining Battle* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).
2. The classic homage to the endearing eccentricities of both armies at Gettysburg is Michael Shaara, *Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974).
3. It gives me pleasure to thank these people again: Betty Myers, Catherine Carter, Jean Odom, Gabor Boritt, Pete Vermilyea, Tim Smith, Woody Christ, Becky Lyons, Louise Arnold-Friend. More recently, Louise Arnold-Friend, Chris Gwinn, and Pete Miele were generous with their time and expertise.
4. For the text of the previous marker, see: <https://civilwartalk.com/threads/wayside-marker-pics-part-1.121337/>. Also: <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/news/black-history-month-2021.htm> and <https://www.hmdb.org/map.asp?markers=196646,31192,14542,14566,14568,16034,9927,14550,14692>.
5. <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/photosmultimedia/1938-reunion-then-and-now.htm>
6. See for example <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/news/-morehistory-2021.htm>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iqL2h7b8rol>; and <https://npsgnmp.wordpress.com/2015/05/15/trials-and-triumphs-a-new-opportunity-to-explore-the-abram-brian-farm/>.
7. On the creation of the new Biggs wayside in 2021 see <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/news/black-history-month-2021.htm>.
8. See Barbara J. Finrock, "The Warfield House: Its History and Preservation," at [https://bluetoad.com/publication/?i=651086&article\\_id=3608233&view=articleBrowser](https://bluetoad.com/publication/?i=651086&article_id=3608233&view=articleBrowser); <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=196856>; author 's conversation with Chris Gwinn, May 23, 2023.
9. <https://kevinmlevin.substack.com/p/interpreting-confederate-slaves-on>; <https://twitter.com/scotthancockOT/status/1502334272950214656/photo/1>; author 's conversation with Chris Gwinn, May 23, 2023.
10. <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=7240868&id=cf1917c7f-1f5f-4005-9b5b-a75eb6229a82&gid=6005C26C-6424-4457-A6F0-5419F7881234>
11. <https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/virginia/>
12. On the Lee statue removed from Charlottesville and Richmond: <https://www.npr.org/2021/07/10/1014926659/charlottesville-removes-robert-e-lee-statue-that-sparked-a-deadly-rally> and <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/30/1069081021/richmonds-robert-e-lee-statue-will-move-to-the-citys-black-history-museum#:~:text=Steve%20Helber%2FAP-,Crews%20remove%20the%20statue%20of%20Robert%20E.%20Lee%20in%20Richmond,to%20Richmond's%20Black%20History%20Museum>. On debates at national park sites, see <https://www.nationalparkstraveler.org/2021/02/future-confederate-monuments>.
13. <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/historyculture/confederate-monuments.htm#:~:text=Confederate%20Monuments%20Statement&text=There%20are%201%2C328%20monuments%2C%20memorials,by%20different%20generations%20of%20Americans>
14. For the preservation process giving a new patina to the sculpture on the Virginia Memorial in 2022, including photos, see <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?pg=7327435&id=945547BA-7328-44F0-9263-FC8DC00608D3>.
15. <https://civil-war-picket.blogspot.com/2022/08/gettysburg-preservation-project-will.html>
16. Conversation with Chris Gwinn, May 23, 2023.
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18. The inscription on the South Carolina monument: <https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/south-carolina/>.
19. See monument correspondence at <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=7240137&id=bc249925-7ef6-411c-bdb2-6b88bb9e7a57&gid=77F661D1-09E8-49CC-81EB-B8A7DA1EA2EE> (the sculptor thought she symbolized peace and memory); see <https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery-item.htm?pg=7240137&id=bc249925-7ef6-411c-bdb2-6b88bb9e7a57&gid=77F661D1-09E8-49CC-81EB-B8A7DA1EA2EE>.
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htm?pg=7187877&id=f0397a1e-db88-4d42-86b4-68caa844dd83&gid=C7C5DDAF-803B-444F-9968-681A0AE04756. On the Virginia inscription change in 1912, see <https://www.nps.gov/gett/learn/historyculture/virginia-monument.htm>.

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26. <https://gettysburgconnection.org/gettysburg-connection-black-history-museum/>
27. Conversation with Chris Gwinn; For recent events at a Gettysburg restaurant see <https://apnews.com/article/2d8253b6ddfd4d80a40b5eef1c0ec059> [https://www.gettysburgtimes.com/news/local/article\\_c782f639-aaba-5958-955d-01ef780cf3bc.html](https://www.gettysburgtimes.com/news/local/article_c782f639-aaba-5958-955d-01ef780cf3bc.html).



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This viewpoint of a Union soldier facing Pickett's Charge reveals a pivotal moment at Gettysburg, foreshadowing the Civil War's outcome.

[GARY E. DAVIS](#)