

BGES's Civil War 101:
Gettysburg: The Greatest Battle of the War
Presented by David Collins
July 17-19, 2020, from Gettysburg, PA

There are certain universal events that practically every American knows: The Shot Heard Round the World—Lexington and Concord; Pearl Harbor; The Alamo; Custer's Last Stand; and Gettysburg. Indeed, Gettysburg is the nation's most visited battlefield—it has its own movie, declared one of the best Civil War movies ever made when it debuted in 1993. Gettysburg has its own magazine, and, in our experience, its programs are the best subscribed and the interest consistently high year after year.

We are proud to offer you an inclusive survey tour of the great July 1863 battles. Led by David Collins, who recently passed the rigorous Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide written test, a regular student of the great battle, its fields, and the ramifications of the battle, you will walk away not only with a new appreciation for the field but also how it drove the course of the fighting there and why the battle continues to be so carefully studied.

We will set the stage on Friday night in an opening lecture and then we will spend two days systematically moving you to and through all the pivotal and key sites. It will be fast paced and comprehensive. Lunch is included each day, and we will dismiss in time for you to enjoy the late summer evening, having dinner and perhaps taking in one of the ever popular ghost tours that run by the score just after the sun sets. It is a great weekend.

This program has something for everyone. If you are a novice, you will be awed by the magnitude of the engagement and the fields of strife. If you know something of the war, this will give you a solid review and overview of the campaign and combat. If you are a Civil War student or buff, you will have access to well-considered conclusions and the enduring debates and issues that continue to stimulate debate about who, when, what, and why?

What a great way to spend a July weekend in Pennsylvania. Can't you already taste the ice cream and the prime rib with Amish apple pie at the Dobbins House restaurant?

Special Offer: Through the generosity of a donor, we offer a special opportunity for you to bring a young person who might benefit from this experience. Each full-priced registrant can bring two K-12 or college undergraduates to the entire program for just \$25 each. We have reserved 32 seats for those young folks, so bring your sons, daughters, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren. This is not for graduate school students.

Friday, July 17, 2020

6:00 PM. Check in at headquarters hotel for a meet and greet and to pick up your map handout. Dave will open with an overview of the two-day program and review some of the major issues related to this most famous of all Civil War engagements. Of particular interest will be Dave's insights as to how you should plan to walk a battlefield. They are some of our best classrooms with a colorful pallet of themes to make your experience unique and memorable. We will break in time for you to go get dinner—we will have some recommendations.

July 18, 2020

8:30 AM. We will start at 8:30 and head out to MacPherson Ridge, where the deployment of Federal cavalry displayed the versatility of that storied branch. Portrayed by actor Sam Elliot in the movie, Gen. John Buford's skilled use of his dismounted troops delayed the Confederate advance until Federal first Corps infantry arrived on the field.

As we unfold the day, you will see the generous use of monuments and sculptures. Your discussion will demonstrate how they contribute to the interpretation of the battlefield. At the same time, we will have you looking at the rolling hills, trees, and valleys—soldiers from time eternal have learned to read the land, and you must too, if you are to understand why this battle or any battle is fought.

The first day of fighting at Gettysburg is robust, with insights and the capacity and limitations of military firepower. At Oak Ridge you will see the long reach of advanced artillery, and at Barlow's Knoll the severe ramifications of poor position selection. Later, as the poor Union position collapses, we follow the route of the Union forces on the first day as they race through the town; you will see the graphic contemporary artwork at Coster Avenue that shows the details of the fighting at the brickyard.

Our axis switches back to the Confederates' newly won positions astride Seminary Ridge, where Lee consolidates his position and plans how he can get at the Union army. While there we also will talk about the Federals' determination to defend the hills outside Gettysburg. You will find out why, and ask yourself was that a good decision?

As the day wanes, we will look at Lee's attack on the afternoon of July 2. The fighting unfolded across the Peach Orchard, over the Little Round Top, and through the Devil's Den, Wheatfield, and onward to the Union positions atop Cemetery Ridge. The day will end with a discussion of medicine and the care of battlefield casualties, as you learn the colorful story of Union third Corps commander Dan Sickles.

There is no downtime today, and as we return to the hotel, you may find a good soaking bath is your best course. Lunch is included today, but dinner will be on your own.

July 19, 2020

This morning we will pick up where we left off on Saturday. So many quick tours of Gettysburg overlook some of the key elements of the battlefield, and we will spend a good portion of the morning on the key terrain of Culp's Hill. General Lee recognized the dominate position for what it was, and he wanted it on Day 1. That he did not get, setting the stage for some of the most severe fighting of the entire three days with two distinct controlling positions—a lower hill and the upper hill. We will spend between 2 ½ and 3 hours walking up and down this pivotal position, eventually coming to East Cemetery Hill, another magnificent position; look over the artillery within the cemetery; and consider the severe and profound nature of the fighting for this central piece of real estate. The growth of the town often overshadows the drama resident in this square mile of battlefield.

The great novelist William Faulkner, a Mississippian, wrote in his novel *Intruder in the Dust* that the legend of Gettysburg is the quintessential moment in the war: *There is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863, ... [and] it hasn't happened yet.* The war was in the balance. Pickett's Charge has been normalized over the years to the Pickett, Pettigrew, and Trimble Charge, but the romance of it remains in memorial. General Lee believed he had nearly broken the Federal forces, and with one great charge supported by a simultaneous assault on Culp's Hill, he might indeed crack the line and route the enemy forces from the field. We will discuss those plans and expectations, the objective, and the plan.

The penultimate event was this charge, and we will follow in the very footsteps until we come under the withering fire from the well-covered Federal positions and the raking fire of the canistered artillery in front and enfilade. We encounter the supporting Federal infantry and the decimation of Lee's heretofore invincible army. And then it was over. Lee fell back, and on the fourth of July 1863, started a long and difficult retreat to Virginia.

Five months later, the dead of the conflict were buried, and we will conclude as they did, with the ceremony that consecrated the battlefield and the men who fought and died there. Abraham Lincoln declared a new birth of freedom, and we will stand in the very shadow of where he made that profound speech.

After sober reflection, we will head back to the hotel. The battlefield has spoken again.

Please note that if you want to visit the visitor's center and Cyclorama, arrive midday Friday, or plan to take Monday to look around. It will be worth your time. You will have completed Civil War 101. Thanks for coming.

About the Faculty:

Dave Collins has spent a good portion of his life studying the Gettysburg battlefield. Having recently retired as a practicing physician, he challenged himself to master and pass the vaunted Gettysburg Licensed Battlefield Guide exam, and he did so. Ultimately, he did not seek the badge of a licensed guide and exchanged it for the freedom to craft programs such as this. You will find him with a sophisticated insight into the great battle and its role in the war.

Hotel Information:

This program will be based in Gettysburg. The hotel will be posted on this site. The headquarters hotel room block will likely be in the \$175-\$200 a night range. Cheaper hotels may be had in Hanover, Emmitsburg, and Chambersburg.

Transportation:

The servicing airport is Baltimore Washington International (BWI), located more than an hour east of Gettysburg. Harrisburg (MDT) also may be a suitable place to fly into. Gettysburg also is easily accessible by automobile.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. *Amazon.com* has a program to support non-profits IF YOU SIGN UP to support Blue and Gray Education Society (EIN 54-1720582) at [AmazonSmile](#). When you sign up there rather than the normal Amazon site, one-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon. This will apply not only on this purchase but others you may make at other times. BGES is selling the two Bearss books.

_____ Edwin C. Bearss and J. Parker Hills: *Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg: The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War*. \$30 (price inclusive of shipping)

_____ Edwin C. Bearss: *Fields of Honor*. \$24 (Enjoy Ed Bearss' narrative of Gettysburg)

Edwin B. Coddington: [*The Gettysburg Campaign, A Study in Command*](#)

Stephen Sears: [*Gettysburg*](#)

Registration Form

Gettysburg: The Greatest Battle of the War

A BGES Civil War 101 Program

Presented by Dave Collins

July 17-19, 2020, from Gettysburg, PA

Name (s):

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Phone:

Emails:

Registration includes two lunches, battlefield maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director, and transportation appropriate to the registration. We also will provide snacks, bottled water, and a limited selection of sodas.

_____ Registration \$550

_____ Current BGES member \$500

_____ Accompanying Student K-12, College undergraduate up to 2 people \$25 ea.

School:

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate, or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of \$ _____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax deductible).

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$150 plus full payment for any students, books or memberships. Total enclosed is \$ _____.

_____ I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed.

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$ _____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature:

Mail to BGES Seminars, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit cards to 434-432-0596. You can also register online at blueandgrayeducation.org.