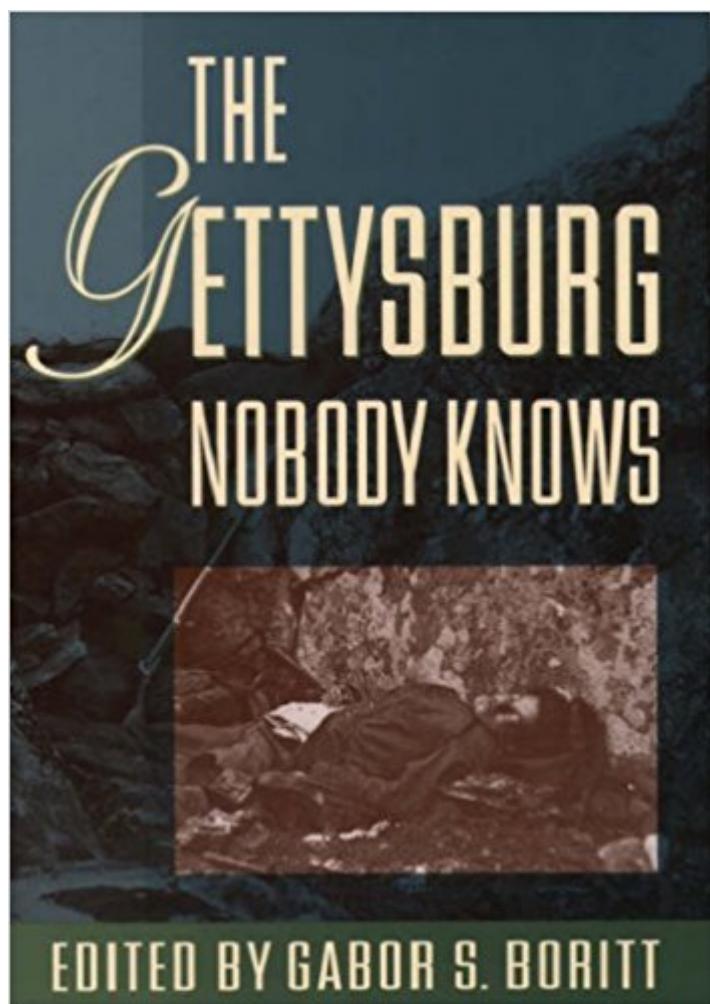


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# The Gettysburg Nobody Knows (Gettysburg Civil War Institute Books)



## Synopsis

On the first three days of July in 1863, more than 160,000 Union and Rebel soldiers fought a monumental battle in Gettysburg, a bloody contest that has been hailed as "the turning point of the Civil War." It is without a doubt the best known engagement of the war and may in fact be the best known battle in American military history. It is certainly the most studied battle Americans have ever fought in. And yet, for all its prominence, this singular moment in our history still stirs heated debate. Did Jeb Stuart's absence leave General Lee blind? Should Ewell have attacked Cemetery Hill? Was Joshua Chamberlain really the hero of Little Round Top? How close did the Confederates come to winning at Gettysburg? And if the Confederates had won, how would history have been different?

Now, Gabor Boritt, the director of the Civil War Institute at Gettysburg College, has invited nine leading authorities to shed new light on the greatest battle in our history. Following the example of Richard Nelson Current's acclaimed history *The Lincoln Nobody Knows*, the contributors focus in particular on the unknown, the controversial, and what might have been. Readers learn, for instance, that though Jeb Stuart's cavalry provided no intelligence to the rebel army for several key days, Lee knew from other sources the location of the Army of the Potomac and he was able to concentrate his army before General Meade arrived at the battlefield in strength. Readers are treated to a fresh account of "the most celebrated forty minutes in all of American military history"--Pickett's Charge--watching that famed encounter from a perspective rarely described: the point of view of Union soldiers. There are careful analyses of the battlefield actions of General Ewell (whose failure to attack Cemetery Hill has been blamed for the South's loss at Gettysburg) and of General Daniel Sickles (whose dangerous repositioning of troops on July 2nd has been credited with stopping Longstreet's advance): Ewell is exonerated here, Sickles criticized for probably causing more Union losses than necessary. And throughout the volume, there is much vivid writing, such as a stirring account of the moment when General Winfield Scott Hancock ordered the First Minnesota to "take those colors," sending the Minnesotans into a desperate struggle that would cost most of them their lives but would help save the day for the Union. Well over a century has gone by since the guns fell silent at Gettysburg. Yet every year millions of tourists make the pilgrimage to this venerable site, to see for themselves the spot where thousands died so that the Union could be preserved. The *Gettysburg Nobody Knows* offers a marvelous reconsideration of this epic event. It will be must reading for the legions of Civil War buffs around the country and for everyone interested in American history.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Gabor Boritt has assembled a collection of fresh, original, and outstanding essays that explore some less familiar aspects of the Gettysburg story, and which challenge the notion that everything has already been said of Gettysburg."--D. Scott Hartwig, Historian, Gettysburg National Military Park" Fascinated by the battle from boyhood, I have been reading books about Gettysburg since I was eight. Not since I first knew the basic outlines of the battle have I learned so much from one book as I have from Gabor S. Boritt's collection of nine authoritative essays, he Gettysburg Nobody Knows.--Russell F. Weigley, Distinguished University Professor, Temple University" These historians, all eminent in the Civil War field, extract what can be positively known about the tactics of the actual battle and the strategy that led up to it. Astute appraisals that should exert definite appeal on buffs."--Booklist

About the Editor: Gabor Boritt is Director of the Civil War Institute and Fluhr Professor at Gettysburg College. He has written or edited numerous volumes on the Civil War era, including Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream, Why the Confederacy Lost, and Why the Civil War Came.

Interesting read !!! Nobody really thinks about what it did to Gettysburg the town after both army's pulled away leaving the carnage behind for them to clean up. The book is written from people real

life accounts so some of it is redundant but that's to be expected when getting different views from different people of the same account. Just glad I wasn't there just from the accounts of the smell of death.

An excellent primer on Gettysburg!.

I read this in preparation for attending the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. Most of the essays were very interesting and added to my knowledge of the battle. Kent Gramm's chapter alone was worth buying this book.

I really enjoyed this book. It wasn't the same old information that you read in many books about the battle. It gave me some new insight, and it was quick read.

This is a book of essays dealing with different aspects of the battle of Gettysburg which have not been dealt with in the more popular books on Gettysburg. The authors here have tried to hone in on specific aspects of the battle, before, during, and after, to give the reader a different look of what we think we know of this famous battle. The viewpoints are varied and range from the common soldier, the generals, the local residents, and the nation at large toward this event. The essays also explain how this battle became locked into the American conscious as the battle epitomized the war as a whole. There are some legends and myths which get busted here, but it is not done in a malicious way, but are used to highlight how certain aspects of the battle got locked into the American memory they way that they did. One of the more interesting essays deals with the "Sickles Controversy" over why General Dan Sickles moved his men forward against orders into a more vulnerable position. Here is the first time someone has detailed why the move was made and not just written it up as he thought he knew better. There is real analysis of the why and the pros and cons of the event and is not dealt with in a brief once over. Several essays refer back to the issue and indicate how in the immediate aftermath of the battle before the turn of the century, how many believed his move saved the Union Army that day. An assertion he never hesitated to make the rest of his life. That is just one essay and I could write at least a single paragraph (or more) on each of the essays, but I leave that to the readers to see. I was a little disappointed that there was not an essay dealing with the picture on the cover of the book since that photo is one that there has been a lot of discussion in recent literature on the battle indicating how it was staged and how it was determined much later that it was staged. This is certainly a smaller story and may have been out of

place in some of the larger views given here, but since it is a made up memory of the battle, I think it would have its place here. I would recommend this book to anyone who is familiar with the battle since they need to know a lot of the basic storyline for these essays to be understandable. This is not a book for someone new to the battle or the time period. I consider this book to be a strong addition to my library on the American Civil War and on Gettysburg. Will definitely have to look for more books by Mr. Boritt.

The Battle of Gettysburg was fought from July 1-13, 1863 and ended the Confederacy's second invasion of the North. It was the bloodiest battle fought in North America. (The Battle of Antietam was the bloodiest single day.) Although there are many outstanding narrative accounts of the battle, the literature which carefully examines aspects of the battle and their significance is less extensive. Gabor Boritt's collection "The Gettysburg Nobody Knows" (1997) consists of nine essays by outstanding scholars which elucidate the battle and its consequences. Each essay is accompanied by notes and by comments by each author suggesting further reading. The book derives from presentations at the annual summer Civil War Institute in Gettysburg. Professor Boritt is the Director of the Institute. There is a wonderful tone of scholarship and of the desire to learn that pervades this volume. One of the authors reflects that all the participants in the seminars -- and the readers as well -- are students trying to learn rather than experts with all the answers. This attitude is one that could well be emulated in scholarship and intellectual activity of all kinds. It is a joy to have it presented in this book. The essays cover a great variety of topics. The first essay by Joseph Glatthaar discusses the role of the common soldier in the Gettysburg campaign and points out how the Confederate Army may have been at once tired, overconfident, and undisciplined in its movement to the North. Glenn LaFantasie follows this essay with a discussion of Joshua Chamberlain, the hero of Little Round Top which endeavors to separate the facts from the myths that have grown around Chamberlain. To my reading, Chamberlain still emerges from the essay as a highly impressive figure. Harry Pfanz has written three extensive narratives on the Battle of Gettysburg. In this volume, he contributes a slim but succinct essay on the Confederate General Richard Ewell. Pfanz largely exonerates Ewell from the criticism he has suffered in many quarters for failing to advance on Cemetery and Culp's Hills on the first day of the battle. Kent Gramm's essay on the First Minnesota is an outstanding meditation on the hazards and chances of war and of the role of individual responsibility and action. It also has a great deal worthwhile to say about the Generalship of Lee, Meade, Longstreet, and Sickles. This is highly reflective, thoughtful historical writing. Emory Thomas's essay examines the role of JEB Stuart's cavalry in the battle and the

impact of his absence. Unlike many studies, it focuses on the fighting on East Cavalry on the third day and his some insightful thoughts about the importance of that action and why it turned out the way it did. Carol Reardon is a highly-regarded student of Pickett's Charge. Her essay focuses on the Union side of the line and on the difficulty of separating fact from myth in considering this legendary charge. Three essays focus on the aftermath of the battle. Matthew Gallman and Susan Baker present an interesting essay on the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg upon the town -- focusing upon the social structure of the town and of the heroic efforts made by many to take care of the sick and wounded. Amy Kinsel's essay is also a meditation upon a history and considers how the image of the Battle of Gettysburg has changed over the years as Americans rethink the Civil War and its significance. Finally, an outstanding essay by Richard McMurry considers the military significance of the Battle of Gettysburg. McMurry presents a strong case that the Union won the Civil War in the West, in the battles of Fort Donelson and Shiloh and in the subsequent capitulation of Vicksburg, which occurred at the same time as the Battle of Gettysburg. Thus he tends to downplay the military importance of Gettysburg. His essay is well-argued and provocative but does not fully address the hold Gettysburg retains on the American imagination. This is an excellent book for people who have read about the Battle of Gettysburg and want to expand their thinking. New readers may be moved to explore the Battle in detail. Altogether the book offers an excellent illustration of how to approach and address historical and cultural questions of moment. Robin Friedman

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