

THROUGH THE LENS OF HISTORY

Images impact Americans

By Katrina Quinn

A soldier stands tall at attention in his Union uniform, buttons and buckle shining. He has a bayoneted musket at his side and a gaunt look on his face. Behind him, a hanging tapestry depicts army tents in rows. A package or canteen is just visible, tucked under his arm.

The date was Monday, Feb. 9, 1863, and Robert S. Cooper, of Buffalo Township, a private in the 137th Pennsylvania Infantry Regiment, had done what many thousands of soldiers would do. In exchange for a sizeable portion of his weekly pay, the 22-year-old Butler County resident had his picture taken.

That picture and thousands like it would be sent home, commemorating the soldier's service and preserving his memory, collectively telling a story of the nation's sacrifice and patriotism.

What's more, thousands of photographers, equipped with the latest photographic technology, followed the soldiers to camp and battlefield to document the largest, the most-divisive and the most-bloody conflict in American history: the U.S. Civil War.

In the minds of many Americans, both then and now, the Civil War is framed in photos. From famous generals and historic battles to the common soldier's experience, photography told the complex story of the war, shaping our understanding and memory of the nation's greatest conflict.

Approximately 2.8 million soldiers took up arms in defense of their nation, North or South, and more than 750,000 of them were killed in battle or died of disease. Pennsylvania provided 360,000 troops for the Union Army and another 40,000 for the Union Navy. These numbers include more than 8,600 African Americans from Pennsylvania — more than any other northern state. Of the Civil War fatalities, more than 27,000 — sons, brothers, husbands, fathers and friends — had called Pennsylvania home.

The Civil War was notable not only for the number of combatants and the scope of death, however, but also because it was the first war comprehensively documented in visual media.

The federal government employed photographers to document army life and personnel, medical facilities and procedures, military equipment and fortifications, and, of course, military action.

But many behind the lens were independent, professional photographers who saw an opportunity to capture an important historical moment. One of the best-known photographers of his day, Mathew Brady, with a huge personal investment, hired a team of photographers to take photos of famous generals, battlefield scenes and places of interest.

Many of the iconic photos of the war documented the aftermath of battle. Because photographic technology required cameras with extended exposure times and complicat-

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Soldiers of the 31st Pennsylvania Infantry in Camp Soldiers of the Civil War did not spend all in battle. Photographers documented many aspects of military service, including daily life in camp, as in this 1862 image of a woman and children at the camp of the 31st Pennsylvania Infantry near Washington, D.C. The regiment was organized in Philadelphia in 1861 and served for three years.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

The Battle of Gettysburg

Clash called turning point in Civil War

By Brad Pflugh

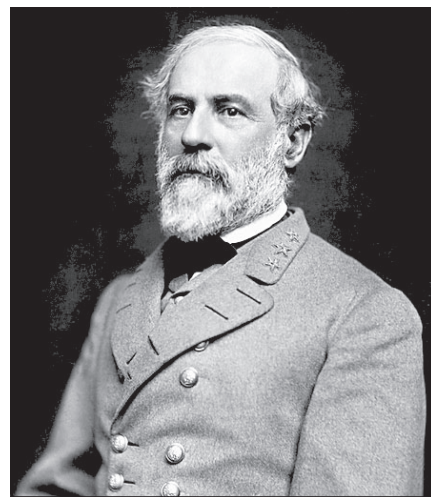
By the summer of 1863, the American Civil War was largely seen as a war in two distinct theaters — the East and the West.

In the West, Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, who was commanding the Army of Tennessee was fighting the Confederacy with great success. However, that was not the situation in the East.

Although the North outnumbered the South and had a great deal of resources to call upon, the Confederacy had managed to win a series of significant battles under the leadership of Gen. Robert E. Lee, who had previously been offered command in the Union. Adding to this, the North had gone through a series of commanders rapidly that kept the army in disarray.

In June, Lee was informed that he would have enough resources to make a push onto northern soil, if deemed opportune. The idea was that if the Confederacy could win a significant battle, and perhaps take a key city in the Union, then the northern political structure would begin to waver and pull out of the war.

Some states, such as Illinois and Indiana, had already discussed leaving



Fate placed Gen. Robert E. Lee, left, and Gen. George G. Meade at Gettysburg in July of 1863. The three-day battle changed the course of the Civil War. The photographs of these historical figures are found in the Library of Congress.

the war and many had become wary of a conflict that had lasted so long already. Lee decided on an invasion of Pennsylvania, with Harrisburg as the target city.

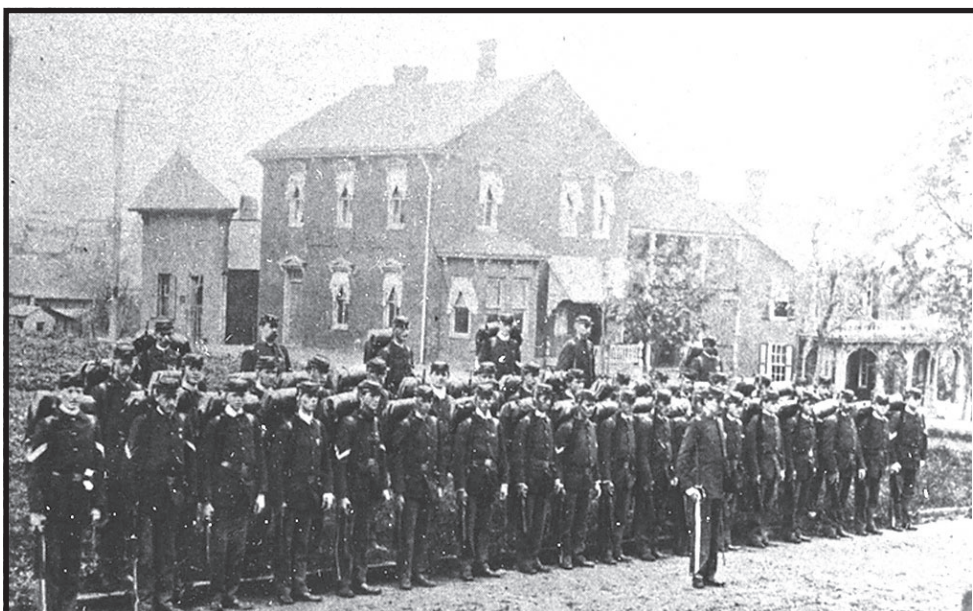
The campaign to invade Pennsylvania came to fruition in June 1863, as Lee's Army of Northern Virginia traveled north through the Shenandoah Valley.

Meanwhile, Lee's trusted cavalry commander, Gen. J. E. B. Stuart, had moved off to create a series of disturbances behind enemy lines. This

would prove a mistake. Instead of guiding the army and providing reconnaissance, Stuart fell into a series of traps by Union cavalry. He was unable to join his commander until the final hours of the Battle of Gettysburg.

In a 1868 letter recounting the battle, Lee said, "It was commenced in the absence of correct intelligence. It was continued in the effort to overcome the difficulties by which we were surrounded, and it would have been

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Members of Company E of the 15th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard, turn out. Among them, as a private, was Charles Albert Waters of Butler, who died in 1898 of typhoid fever during the Spanish American War. He is buried in North Cemetery.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Waters broke color barriers with service

By Jennifer Ford

The stone is weathered — taller and older than its neighbors. The man's story passed from living memory long ago; it now hovers between written history and deep time. But it's a great story, one worth preserving.

Charles "Albert" Waters' friends and fellow soldiers purchased the monument that marks his grave. Its dedication ceremony on Memorial Day 1899 was attended by the A.G. Reed Post 105, Grand Army of the Republic; and Company E of the 15th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard.

A nice turnout, but small compared with his funeral 10 months earlier, when most of Butler came to walk Waters home.

According to an undated article in the Butler Citizen, Waters' funeral service on Aug. 12, 1898, was "the talk of the town for weeks."

It was attended by "all ministers in the city and several from the county." The lengthy procession up Main Street to North Cemetery was headed by the Butler Germania Band, carriages for Waters' widow and

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By Steve Cicero

We can easily imagine a young man looking out the porthole of his ship in Havana Harbor and admiring the Cuban sunset.

Friend Jenkins was a 32-year-old first lieutenant from Pittsburgh and he must have been immensely proud to serve on the first battleship constructed for the U.S. Navy, the USS Maine. At 9:40 p.m. Feb. 15, 1898, a gigantic explosion devastated the forward section of the ship, killing over 260 of the crew within minutes. Lt. Jenkins was one of only two officers to die that night.

### Lead-up to war

By 1890 the once great Spanish Empire in the new world had been reduced to the islands of Cuba and Puerto Rico. Long simmering tensions in Cuba erupted into open rebellion in 1895 and the Spanish government had resorted to brutal methods to crush it.

Americans were outraged by these terrible events so close to our shores. Business leaders worried about their investments.

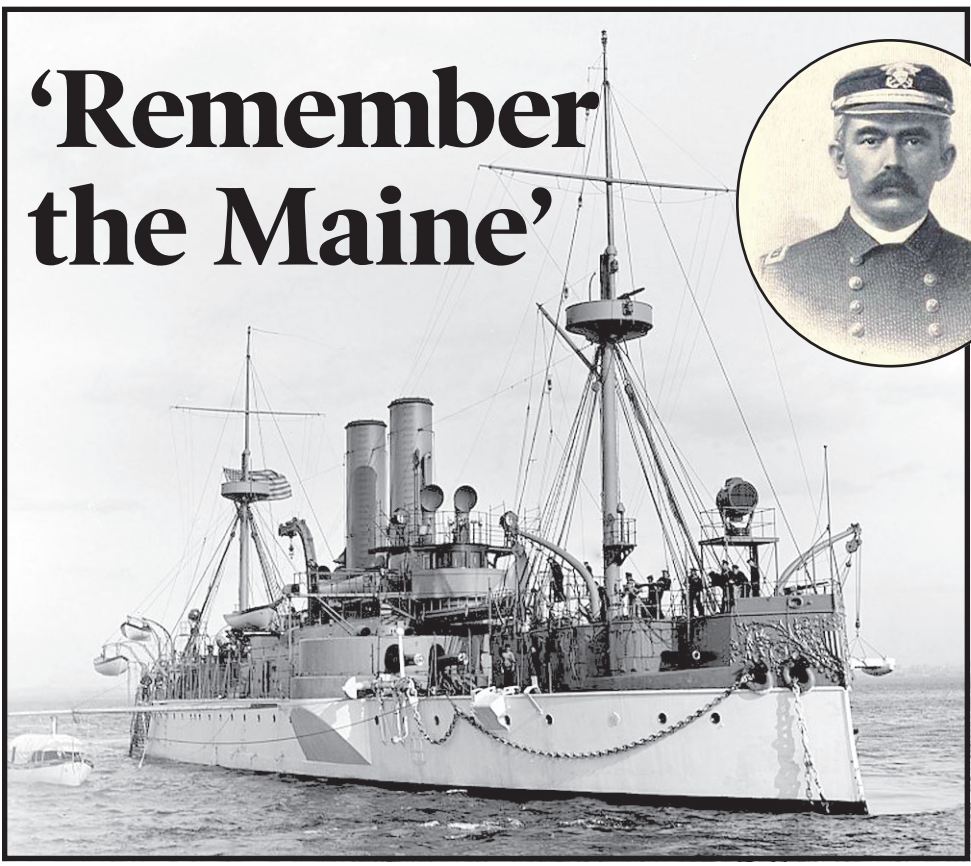
At the same time, rapid communication was transforming the news.

Cheap mass market newspapers fought for readers in the rapidly expanding cities of America. Most well-known were Joseph Pulitzer's New York World and William Randolph Hearst's New York Journal, which both used increasingly hysterical headlines to sell papers.

The situation in Cuba was made-to-order for this war of words and pictures. Stories were often twisted beyond recognition. Journal artist Frederick Remington's request to come home because "there is no war" was met with this reply from Hearst, "You furnish the pictures; I'll furnish the war."

Into this rapidly deteriorating situation, the battleship Maine had been sent to Havana to protect American citizens.

The immediate U.S. Navy investigation concluded that a bomb had exploded outside the ship and war became inevitable. Nobody, then or now, has ever determined exactly what happened to the Maine, but few people cared.



This is a photograph of the USS Maine from 1897. Top right, Friend Jenkins, 32, a first lieutenant from Pittsburgh died Feb. 15, 1898 when the Maine was attacked.

PHOTO COURTESY OF LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Newspaper headlines screamed this was "The Work of an Enemy" and the cry went up to "Remember the Maine." Only President William McKinley, a Civil War veteran, seemed reluctant.

"I have been through one war, and I do not want to see another," he said.

Events were soon beyond his control and war with Spain was declared in April 1898.

### An American military tradition

Because of our Revolution, Americans developed a reflexive distrust of "standing armies."

The practical result was an almost total disregard for any national preparation to fight a major conflict. A pattern of start-

ing from scratch was repeated several times. Most notably, after the Civil War the armies were disbanded, weapons were discarded and the soldiers sent home.

As a result, America was ill-equipped to go to war with a major European power in 1898. Or so it seemed.

As it happens, one element of our national defense had received considerable attention in the two decades before the Maine disaster. A series of events around the world and within the nation led to a growing realization that America needed a strong navy to survive and thrive in a world of international trade and competing empires.

Two great oceans had kept us isolated

from world affairs, but modern technology was making it increasingly difficult to stay aloof, while rapidly expanding businesses needed new markets for their goods.

The Maine was the first of a new class of all steel hull warships developed to meet the demands of this changing world. Not surprisingly, 6,000 tons of nickel steel plate armor came from the Homestead Works of Carnegie Steel Company. By 1898 the Maine had been joined by several other battleships and armored cruisers to form a modern fighting force that was ready to meet this new challenge.

### Battle of Manila Bay

As war clouds loomed, the Asiatic Fleet was ordered to make ready to challenge a Spanish squadron stationed in the Philippine Islands.

Under the command of Commodore George Dewey, the ships sailed to the large British base in Hong Kong. When war was declared, Dewey received orders to attack, and his officers were given a farewell dinner by their hosts.

Dewey later recalled overhearing a common remark, "A fine set of fellows, but unhappily we shall never see them again." In the British view, the Spanish fleet and harbor defenses would destroy these gallant Americans.

The Battle of Manila Bay commenced at dawn April 30, 1898, after the fleet slipped past the harbor forts during the night.

Dewey stood on a small deck of the flagship USS Olympia and calmly issued an order to the ship's captain, "You may fire when ready Gridley."

Two hours later, most of the Spanish fleet was on fire or sinking, and the Americans broke off the fighting to have breakfast.

Resuming the battle, the American guns destroyed the surviving ships and shore defenses. By noon the battle was over. One American sailor had died of sunstroke.

### San Juan Hill

The fight did not go as smoothly for the

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## Waters

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children, and the hearse bearing his remains. Behind the hearse came A.G. Reed Post 105; Camp 45 of the Union Veteran Legion; Company G, 21st Regiment Provisional Guard; six Volunteer Fire Departments; and hundreds of civilians.

At the cemetery, the hillside surrounding Waters' grave "was crowded with people of all walks and vocations in the city."

Who was this man? War hero? Senator? Banker? Industrialist? None of those. Waters was just a volunteer private in the 15th Regiment of the Pennsylvania National Guard. He died in a hospital ward, not the field of battle. And he was African-American.

Waters was born circa 1860 in Libertytown, Md. Records of his early years are practically nonexistent, but we know that he made his way to Pennsylvania in the late 1870s.

His decision to move north made sense; in the mid-1800s, Maryland was not the best place for an ambitious young Black man to make his fortune. And Waters was determined to build an exceptionally bright future for himself.

Waters left Maryland circa 1877, traveled across Pennsylvania, and eventually arrived in Butler. Why Waters settled here is unknown, but 1880 census records indicate that he had obtained a good position as a servant in the household of prominent attorney John M. Thompson.

In 1881, Waters volunteered for the National Guard of Pennsylvania in Butler's 15th Regiment, Company E, even though he could not enlist as a soldier. At that time, only white men were permitted to serve in the National Guard.

Waters immediately started a campaign to break through that barrier. He began by accepting the only job men of color were permitted to in the guard — cook/orderly.

The day after he reported for duty, Waters began petitioning Company E's captain to enlist him as a soldier. While he worked on persuading the officer, Waters set about winning the admiration of every soldier in his unit by working longer, harder and more willingly than any of them.

His efforts paid off — the captain eventually relented on one condition: all of Company E had to agree to Waters' enlistment. When every single man voted

to admit him, Waters became the first (and for decades the only) Black soldier in the Pennsylvania National Guard.

Why was Albert so determined to serve in the local volunteer militia?

We can't know for certain, but several possibilities present themselves. Growing up in Maryland in the 1860s, he would have witnessed institutionalized slavery and the role that Black Union soldiers played in hastening its end. While serving in Thompson's household, Waters likely noted the deference accorded his employer, a Civil War veteran with the rank of lieutenant colonel.

Perhaps most importantly, he observed young men in Company E — including Thompson's son, William — participating in public events such as presidential inaugurations, expositions at the State Fair in Harrisburg, and local parades.

For any young man with aspirations, service in the guard afforded unique opportunities to be noticed, forge lifelong social connections and further his ambitions.

Over the next 17 years, Waters continued making his mark in Butler.

He became an active member of and teacher at the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1891, he married Minerva Holmes, daughter of Butler pioneers Robert and Euphemia Holmes.

He ran for county corner as "C. Albert Waters" in 1896. He didn't win, but by unanimous vote "showing the goodwill prevailing in the company," Waters was elected to Company E's board of directors (Butler Citizen, Jan. 13, 1898).

Later that year, the United States went to war with Spain over the control of strategically located Caribbean and Pacific islands. Pennsylvania Gov. Daniel Hastings called for state militia men to muster and prepare to assist regular Army troops.

Company E answered, including Pvt. Waters, whose age and status as a married man with four children would have legitimately excused him, had he chosen to stay at home.

On April 28, 1898, volunteers from across northwest Pennsylvania converged on Butler to take trains for Camp Hastings near Harrisburg. The entire city turned out to give the soldiers a grand sendoff. Residents served the troops coffee, sandwiches and pie, then paraded with them



This April 28, 1898, photograph from the Butler Citizen shows tables filled with sandwiches, cake and coffee for National Guard troops ready to board trains to Camp Hastings during the Spanish-American War. The tables were around the courthouse and on Diamond square. Pvt. Charles Albert Waters was a member of Company E of the 15th Regiment, Pennsylvania National Guard.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BUTLER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

through town to the train station.

When the 15th Regiment arrived in Harrisburg, several National Guardsmen objected to mustering in with a Black soldier. The Butler men would have none of that; their friend and fellow soldier Waters remained in camp!

The 15th stayed at Camp Hastings until June 11, when the Army dispatched the volunteer soldiers to help regular troops defend the Potomac River. Excitement ran high; many of the Butler soldiers were eager to return home with tales of battlefield glory, like those told by their Civil War veteran fathers and uncles.

Their own wartime experience was much different. Men of the 15th spent the summer of 1898 cooking, digging latrines, hauling firewood, burning trash, moving tents and pulling guard duty at Fort Washington, Md.

No matter how often they burned rubbish or dug fresh latrines to maintain sanitary conditions, typhoid fever struck the camp in late summer. Soldiers stationed further south suffered dreadful outbreaks; Fort Washington was spared the worst.

But by mid-July, Waters and several other men fell ill with typhoid. In his Aug. 4 "Our Boys In Camp" newsletter for the Butler Citizen, Commander E.H. Negley wrote that although Waters was hospital-

ized with typhoid, he was being very well cared for. Five days later, Com. Negley shared news of the worst.

"August 9, 1898 — Charles Albert Waters died of typhoid fever in the hospital here early this morning. He was a faithful and efficient soldier, true and companionable comrade, and an upright righteous man."

That evening his comrades and officers conducted a memorial service for Pvt. Waters, then a special guard escorted his remains to Fort Washington's river landing to begin his journey home. They, and the people of Butler who received his body, regarded Waters with the highest esteem.

Waters was born with no social or economic advantages, but he did possess a fierce determination to succeed on his own terms. Many men he served with were privileged sons of Butler's professional class; certainly not one of them had to think twice about his right to serve in the National Guard.

Eventually they, and so many others, understood how much strength of will and character it took for Waters to create a place for himself in their ranks, their community and their affections.

*Jennifer Ford, Ph.D., is the executive director of the Butler County Historical Society.*

# Butler Eagle

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# America250

## A Journey Through Time

Look for it next month:

- Nation: WWI Choctaw code talkers
- State: Rallying to support the WWI troops
- County connection: Spanish flu epidemic
- Municipal: Butler Township
- Profile: Clara Barton

## Images

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ed processing, live-action battlefield photography was not possible. Instead, photographers arrived afterward, tramping through bloody fields, strewn with shattered equipment and bodies.

The bloodiest day in American history, Sept. 17, 1862, resulted in nearly 23,000 dead, wounded or missing at the Battle of Antietam. Among the 125,000 soldiers fighting that day were men (and possibly women) from Pennsylvania, comprising approximately 80 infantry, cavalry and artillery units.

That battle also produced some of the most memorable photos of the war.

Two days after the battle, as bodies and debris still lay across the fields, Alexander Gardner and his assistant, James Gibson, arrived. They captured scenes that could turn the stomach.

The photos were displayed to large crowds in Brady's New York City gallery in October, prompting one New-York Times reporter to observe that the images conveyed the "terrible reality" of war to audiences on the home front.

"If (Brady) has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets," he wrote, "he has done something very like it." Then, as now, audiences were drawn by a morbid fascination with the sensational.

This realism is a core communication function of Civil War photography, according to public historian and Pittsburgh native Rich Condon.

"For the first time in history, the public sees the horror of war," he said.

"The images had the power to transport the viewer to the battlefield. Even today, we can still connect to the Civil War through these photos."

Photographers were well-aware of the commercial value of sensational images and took steps to construct scenes that would appeal to the public. Often, this included placing a camera in a location that would best capture a landscape. But sometimes photographers took things a bit further.

Condon described one case, in the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg, July 1 to 3, 1863. It had been the costliest battle in U.S. history, accounting for approximately 50,000 dead, wounded and missing.

Attempting to reconstruct a scene months after the battle, according to Condon, one photographer posed local soldiers on the battlefield as though they were dead.

"One 'casualty' in that photo was in fact a hospital steward from Western Pennsylvania," Condon explained. The man, quite alive, could be seen in another photo — and in another location.

In another post-Gettysburg image, photographer Gardner and his colleagues famously carried the body of a Confederate soldier 40 yards to a position behind a stone wall. The image, "Home of a Rebel Sharpshooter," became one of the most-recognizable images of the war — but was, indeed, a work of photographic fiction.

Although most Americans would not have access to photographers' studios or galleries, images of the Civil War were widely circulated, both during and after the war.

Mass-produced stereo-



"Well now I must tell you that I have just come in from getting my likeness taken and I am going to send it home and I want you to keep it nice for me till I come home," wrote Robert S. Cooper, of Buffalo Township, to his sister, Margaret, on Feb. 9, 1863. Jennifer Ford, executive director of the Butler County Historical Society, displays that very image.

KATRINA QUINN/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

graphic cards could be purchased from studios or ordered through the mail. The technology uses two versions of a photograph, taken at very slightly different angles and printed side-by-side on a stereograph card. When inserted into a hand-held stereographic viewer, the result was a vivid, three-dimensional image.

While popular stereographic subjects included natural wonders and exotic places, viewers could also gaze upon scenes of life in a Civil War army camp, bleak prisons and field hospitals, and even close-up views of battlefield dead.

The illustrated press also played a role in disseminating images of the Civil War.

Because halftone technology would not reproduce a photograph in the press

until the 1880s, widely circulated illustrated periodicals such as Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper and Harper's Weekly, started in 1855 and 1857, respectively, published images as woodcuts.

With the advent of the war, these publications sent sketch artists into the field to capture action as it was unfolding. Unlike photographers, with their bulky equipment and complicated processes, artists could capture the live action of battle, according to journalism historian William E. Huntzicker.

After receiving a photograph or sketch, the publications' engravers would first draw and then carve the image on a block of wood so that it could be inked and transferred to paper.

"Publishers boasted the images were 'true to life,'" Huntzicker said. "And with innovative production techniques, an illustration could reach readers as soon as week after an event took place."

Civil War photographers and illustrators captured more than military scenes, however. Photographs also document ceremonies, expose heroes and villains, commemorate prisoners of war and depict wounded soldiers, including amputees.

But to the families of the Civil War, no image, perhaps, was as precious as the image of their own soldier.

Collectors estimate that between 6 million and 8 million soldier photos were made, according to Ronn Palm, owner of Ronn Palm's Museum in Gettysburg, a

facility that houses 8,000 to 9,000 original Civil War soldier photos and memorabilia.

"Some soldiers would have their image taken several times," Palm said. "They were proud of their service to their country."

Those photos typically feature a single Union or Confederate soldier posing in uniform, often holding a musket, knife, canteen or other item. Some images depict African American soldiers, who could enlist in the Union army beginning in 1863, and some depict women who took on roles as nurses, as aides in camp, and — yes — as soldiers.

Butler County Historical Society executive director Jennifer Ford explained that the photo of Cooper, taken that Monday in 1863, quickly took on a new meaning for his family. Cooper died 12 days after returning to Butler County.

"Families of the Civil War probably held these photographs as dear family keepsakes, especially after a soldier's death," Ford said. "In fact, we know they did, because they have come down to us."

Today, thousands of Civil War photographs and illustrations can be found in museums and archives, as well as digitally through the Library of Congress and other online repositories.

Sweeping, intimate, reassuring or shocking, the photographs of the Civil War constitute a rich visual legacy for all Americans, keeping the memory of the war and its soldiers alive.

*Katrina J. Quinn is a professor at Slippery Rock University and an editor of two books on journalism history, "Adventure Journalism in the Gilded Age" (McFarland, 2021) and "The Civil War Soldier and the Press" (Routledge, 2023).*

## Battle

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gained could one determined and united blow have been delivered by our whole line."

### At the intersection

By the final days of June, the army's vanguard was approaching Harrisburg, while Lee and the rest of the army were following behind, approaching Gettysburg from the West.

Gettysburg itself held no true value, other than its significance as a key intersection in which the Army of Northern Virginia would enter and then turn due north.

In a stroke of luck, the Union had dispersed its cavalry to find Lee's army and one of these elements bumped into its main body at Gettysburg on the morning of July 1.

For the North, the new commanding officer was Gen. George G. Meade. President Abraham Lincoln hoped that Meade could do what the generals before him could not — stop the Confederates once and for all.

Meade was known as a rugged, tough commander who had a West Point education coupled with experience in previous wars.

On the morning of July 1, United States cavalry had placed itself in a position to buy time until Meade could pull the various parts of the Army of the Potomac into position to stop Lee in his tracks at Gettysburg.

The small town of Gettysburg became a fulcrum of activity as two armies clashed unexpectedly across rolling hills and small farms. Civilians quickly evacuated to the surrounding countryside with a few remaining to protect their livelihoods or to help the "boys in blue" with food and care.

One resident, Sarah Broadhead, was going about her daily business

when the first shots were fired, "I had just put my bread in the pans when the cannons began to fire, and, true enough, the battle had begun in earnest ... What to do or where to go, I did not know."

The battle began north of town as the two forces struggled for strategic ground.

In the initial conflict, Confederate troops got the better of the Union soldiers and drove them south of town. In that moment, Lee actually had more men and was able to consolidate more quickly. The elements of Meade's army were approaching from various roads, largely scattered and unorganized.

By nightfall, the Southerners had secured the town and everything north of it. However, Meade's army had fallen back to key positions south of town that would make a next day's fighting an entirely different affair.

### No choice but to fight

On the morning of July 2, Lee had no choice but to engage Meade.

By mid-day, the Union army had anchored itself on two pieces of high ground that are well-known today; Culp's Hill and Little Round Top. Between these two, the Northern troops created a line on an elevated piece of ground known as Cemetery Ridge, thus forming a battle line known today as the "fishhook."

Throughout the day, Lee pushed wave after wave of troops against the two corners of the line at Little Round Top and Culp's Hill. But the Union was entrenched on the high ground behind rocks and,



Reenactors perform at Gettysburg National Military Park.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, GETTYSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

in many cases, breastworks.

Col. Joshua L. Chamberlain of the 20th Maine was on the extreme left of the Union line on Little Round Top. He held back several Confederate assaults. Running out of ammunition, Chamberlain ordered a counterattack that secured the Union left flank.

"At that crisis, I ordered the bayonet," Chamberlain said of the battle. "The word was enough. It ran like fire along the line, from man to man, and rose into a shout, with which they sprang forward upon the enemy, now not 30 yards away."

Chamberlain's actions that day would earn him the respect of the nation and a Congressional Medal of Honor.

As darkness approached, both sides had taken a heavy toll but Meade had held the Union line intact.

At 11 p.m. July 2, Meade said of the battle, "The enemy attacked me about 4 p.m. this day, and after one of the severest contests of the war, was repulsed at all points."

### Last-ditch effort

As the morning of July 3 approached, the Union was in one of the best defensive positions it held the entire war.

The same could not be

said of Lee.

His choices were retreat back home — with the possibility of never having the strength to return — or make one last push.

Lee decided to take the parts of his army that had not yet engaged and use them in a last ditch effort to strike the middle of Meade's line on Cemetery Ridge. This was to be coupled with an attack from the rear by Stuart's cavalry which had arrived on the battlefield.

However, this plan was blocked by the unexpected arrival of the Union Cavalry.

In the middle of the afternoon, 11,000, or more, Confederate men marched three-quarters of a mile over open ground against the center of Meade's line, which largely rested behind stone walls on elevated ground.

This became the infamous "Pickett's Charge" of the Civil War, named after Gen. George Pickett, one of Lee's division commanders. Pickett's men took close to 50% casualties as they tried to close the gap and reach the stone wall.

Through shell and musket fire, the Confederates were cut down in droves, with only a few reaching the enemy, and even then, those few were repulsed



This monument at Gettysburg National Military Park is for the 11th Pennsylvania Reserve (40th Infantry Regiment), located near Little Round Top. Twenty percent of this unit were from Butler County.

BRAD PFLUGH/SPECIAL TO THE EAGLE

quickly.

Lt. Lemuel Hoyle, who was in the North Carolina Regiment that made the charge, in a letter home told of the carnage.

"The fighting was painfully fearful, and the slaughter tremendous," Hoyle wrote to his family. "Our men fought with the accustomed valor and determination of Southern soldiers, but in vain, we had to fall back to our original positions, and all of our men, who were so badly wounded that they could not crawl off or killed, near their hands."

With nothing left to give and heavy casualties, Lee received one of his first solid defeats.

What was supposed to be a surprise attack into Pennsylvania had turned into an unexpected battle by both sides that amounted in the vicinity of 50,000 casualties, making it easily one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War.

At the Battle of Gettysburg were approximately 90,000 Union and 70,000 Confederate soldiers — making it one of the larger battles of the war, as well. By the morning of July 4,

Lee's army began the long trek back home, leaving many killed and wounded from both sides behind.

### Facing the aftermath

Gettysburg was devastated. Every home in the town became a hospital. Many buildings were burned or destroyed.

For months, wounded were treated in homes and farms. The dead were buried in farm fields up to five miles away.

For the North, the early days of July 1863 were the first significant victory — it raised morale across the Union and placed fear in many Southerners who had not known defeat before.

Gettysburg is often considered the turning point of the war. While this holds some truth, it is coupled with an event on July 4. The day following the Battle of Gettysburg, Grant defeated and captured the Confederate Army in the West, thus ending the conflict in that theater.

However, the conflict with the Confederate Army in the East would continue until April 9, 1865.

*Brad Pflugh is department chair of history at Knoch High School.*



# Harmony on road to religious freedom

By Rodney Gasch

**O**n Feb. 15, 1805, a few dozen German immigrants huddled together in a log house near the Connoquenessing Creek and signed papers creating Harmony, Pa.

They certainly didn't know it at the time, but they were about to build one of the most successful communal societies in America. These early settlers, and others who followed, worked together as the Harmony Society, creating a community without personal property, sharing equally in the bounty of their labors.

Between 1804 and 1814 they built, from scratch, more than 130 buildings and a thriving trade in agricultural products and woolen cloth.

But the birth of Harmony actually begins a couple decades earlier, in the village of Iptingen, in the Duchy of Württemberg, in what is now southern Germany.

Johann Georg Rapp, often called Father Rapp, was a weaver by trade and a self-proclaimed religious prophet. His studies of the Bible led him to believe things were very wrong with the Lutheran Church that dominated this part of Germany in the late 1700s.

The church at the time had become an extension of the government. Citizens had to attend Lutheran church services each Sunday — it was the law.

Rapp flouted this law not only by skipping church, but by holding his own religious services in people's homes, just like the apostles did in the earliest days of the Christian Church.

Father Rapp preached pacifism, another idea not popular with the authorities. He was horrified by endless wars and conflicts that had plagued Europe over the previous generations — many of them pitting one Christian faction against another.

Another tenet of Rapp's teaching was shared property. He noted that the early Christian apostles shared all their wealth, as noted in the Bible, Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 4, Verse 32: "All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any possession was their own, but they shared everything they had."

Rapp's activities caused an official investigation of his preaching where, in 1791, he proclaimed to authorities — "I am a prophet and am called to be one."

This statement, by itself, might not have concerned local leaders, but Rapp was attracting followers, upwards of 10,000 followers, many refusing to serve in the mil-



This Harmonist building, at the corner of Main and Mercer streets, was built as a warehouse in 1809. It features a huge wine cellar constructed of hand-quarried stone. The building now houses many Harmony Museum exhibits.



Father Johann Georg Rapp, charismatic preacher and founder of the Harmony Society; painted from memory by Phineas Staunton in 1835.

COURTESY OF OLD ECONOMY VILLAGE

PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC HARMONY

itary or attend required Lutheran services.

By 1800, Rapp and his followers, often called Rappites, had worn out their welcome in Württemberg.

Beside government harassment, Rapp saw other, more spiritual reasons to leave Germany — the rise of Napoleon.

Napoleon's quest for power and the devastation of his conquests were watched with great interest by the self-proclaimed prophet. Rapp felt these were signs that the Second Coming of Jesus was near, and that the end of this world was just around the corner. The Rappites needed to prepare for that glorious event in a new home, where they could practice a pure lifestyle without harassment.

So in 1803, Georg Rapp and two companions sailed to Philadelphia. Traveling west by land, they ended up in Zelienville to inspect a large tract of land for sale.

The land was part of the holdings of another German immigrant, Detmar Basse, the founder of Zelienville.

Father Rapp liked the potential he saw and purchased 5,000 acres of undeveloped land along the Connoquenessing Creek. It was good timing since many of Rapp's followers had sold their property in Germany and turned the money over to Father Rapp and his son, Frederick.

One hundred and fifty families sailed for America. A first contingent of 40 families arrived at the banks of the Connoquenessing Creek in November 1804, where

they promptly build nine log houses to survive the winter.

(Stop a moment to review the math — nine houses for 40 families. There was much togetherness that first winter.)

Fifty more families arrived the next spring.

Frederick Rapp, Georg's son, laid out the town square and streets (much as they are today) and in commemoration of the unity and brotherly affection they felt, they called their new town Harmony. The Rappites had become the Harmonists.

That year, 1805, they built 46 log houses, a large barn, and a grist mill with a hand-dug mill race nearly three-quarters of a mile in length.

In their spare time, the Harmonists cleared 150 acres of ground for corn, 40 acres for potatoes and 15 acres for meadow. They not only worked hard, they kept excellent records.

All this was done with no wish for personal gain, but rather for improving the wealth of the entire community. Rapp's plan of communal living, shared wealth and work without thought of personal profit was doing very well.

And the progress continued. By 1809, just five years after that first winter, they had built many new buildings to process their various crops, including a brick warehouse complete with a huge, vault-ceiling wine cellar.

That building today is the Harmony Museum. You can still see the wine cellar the Harmonists built.

The Harmonists needed the

warehouse to store their harvest that year: 6,000 bushels of Indian corn, 4,000 bushels of wheat, 4,000 bushels of rye, 5,000 bushels of oats, 10,000 bushels of potatoes, 50 gallons of sweet oil pressed from white poppy, as well as barrels of whiskey and beer, and 4,000 pounds of hemp (for rope-making, we presume).

The Harmonists were not all work and prayer. They loved music and played for church services and personal entertainment.

A visitor to Harmony in 1811 recorded many details of a three-day stay in Rapp's communal settlement. It included a concert performed on "three violins, a bass, a clarinet, a flute and two French horns."

The city of Pittsburgh would have nothing to compare to this musical ensemble for another decade. (That 1811 article is available in booklet form at the Harmony Museum shop on Mercer Street.)

As successful as the Harmonists were, not everything was harmonious in Harmony.

As their agricultural production increased, they longed for better transportation to sell their products. Back in the early 19th century, Western Pennsylvania roads were often impassable, especially in wet and wintery weather. Plus, the Connoquenessing Creek was barely navigable most of the year.

The Harmonists also had neighbor issues. Their success and prosperity caused jealousy and resentment.

The War of 1812 may have also

## EXPERIENCE HISTORY

### Harmony Museum tours, events

By Rodney Gasch

Historic Harmony is a nonprofit that operates the Harmony Museum. Our mission is three-fold: to restore, preserve, and educate.

We currently preserve seven buildings and nine sites of historical significance in and around Harmony, including the oldest Mennonite meetinghouse and one of the oldest barns west of the Allegheny Mountain.

Four of those nine sites are part of the Harmony Museum

tour, which attracts visitors from across the country and around the world. Museum tours are 1 and 2:30 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Reservations are required for larger groups.

During the tour, you'll learn about the Harmonists who founded Harmony, and you'll see how early settlers lived and worked.

You'll also learn about George Washington's 1753 visit to the area. Washington was just 21 years old and on a diplomatic mission in search of French forts when he camped on the banks of Connoquenessing Creek near Harmony.

Washington's 1753 mission and the French forts he found, quickly lead to the outbreak of the French and Indian War.

The Harmony Museum is also known for the wide variety of events we sponsor, including demonstrations, concerts, a historic hike, home and garden tours, and an antique gun show. The biggest event of the year is the annual German Christmas Market: Harmony's WeihnachtsMarkt. It attracts thousands to Harmony each November to enjoy German food, music and dancing, as well as the opportunity to buy unique items from skilled artisans.

The museum also co-sponsors Harmony's German New Year's Eve celebration, called Silvester, which happens on German time. The event features traditional German food, a 5k race and a Christmas tree toss, along with a ball drop and fireworks at 6 p.m., which is midnight in Germany.

The Harmony Museum is a membership organization, and we depend on member support and volunteers to maintain our buildings and pull off our many events. Learn more about Harmony Museum exhibits, properties, membership, events, and rental venues at HarmonyMuseum.org.



The Harmony Museum has decorated this circa 1820 log cabin as an early Mennonite home. It is part of the Harmony Museum tour. The original cabin was built by one of Abraham Ziegler's sons.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HISTORIC HARMONY

## Maine

From Page 2

army. Thousands of men were hastily equipped with antique guns and woolen uniforms before departing for battle in the tropical heat.

By mid-June, the first troops landed near the capital of Santiago and major fighting began for control of the hills around the city.

The Spanish defenders were finally driven off San Juan Hill shortly after Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders and several units of Black troops charged up and captured nearby Kettle Hill.

John "Black Jack" Pershing, serving as a leader in the African American 10th Cavalry Regiment, later recalled with pride the remarkable sight of white and Black units fighting side by side.

The capture of Santiago left the remaining Spanish fleet in Cuba at the mercy of American guns on the high ground. On July 3, those ships made a run for it to escape the Atlantic Fleet blockading the harbor.

The results were entirely predictable. Only hours after the chase began all the Spanish ships were run aground or sunk, with the loss of one American sailor.

Independence Day dawned with the United States taking a new place in the order of nations. The fighting had lasted only 10 weeks and a peace treaty was signed in December 1898. Secretary of State John Hay would soon refer to this conflict as "a splendid little war."

It was not the least bit "splendid" for the soldiers and sailors who died in the war, most of

whom were victims of diseases, rather than Spanish bullets. Yet this little-known conflict would lead to monumental changes for America that reverberate to this day.

For better or worse, the United States was now an imperial power with new possessions to govern. The fates of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines have been the subject of endless debate for over a century.

### A wave of change

Teddy Roosevelt emerged as a war hero and began a meteoric rise to the presidency only three years later. As president, he supported the landmark Pure Food and Drug Act largely because of the "embalmed beef" that had been sold to the army during the war. Roosevelt once said he

"would rather have eaten my hat."

In 1900, U.S. Army Doctor Walter Reed led a team tasked with ending the plague of tropical diseases. Confirming a theory from Cuban Dr. Carlos Finlay that mosquitoes spread yellow fever and malaria, Reed's group developed techniques that would save countless lives.

Early in the war, the battleship USS Oregon began a 14,000-mile 66-day race from San Francisco to Florida, arriving just in time to reinforce the Atlantic Fleet. This nerve-wracking odyssey led directly to the push for an inter-ocean canal across Panama. The earlier French effort, derailed by disease, was restarted by President Roosevelt in 1904.

Last, and most important, America was now recognized as

a first-rate military force, and the navy became the main tool for projecting that power. To this day, aircraft carrier battle groups are the embodiment of Teddy's favorite phrase, "Walk softly, but carry a big stick."

The destruction of the USS Maine set off a series of events that culminated in a period that many historians now refer to as The American Century. Two World Wars would confirm that our isolation from world events was gone forever. The United States would become, and remains, the undisputed leader of the free world.

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