



The Battle of Gettysburg

Frank Aretas Haskell

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This account of the Battle of Gettysburg was written by Union soldier Frank Haskell, who served with the Iron Brigade during the battle and continued to serve in the war until he was killed during the Battle of Cold Harbor.

Without question, the most famous battle of the American Civil War took place outside of the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, which happened to be a transportation hub, serving as the center of a wheel with several roads leading out to other Pennsylvanian towns. From July 1-3, Robert E. Lee's Confederate Army of Northern Virginia tried everything in its power to decisively defeat George Meade's Union Army of the Potomac, unleashing ferocious assaults that inflicted nearly 50,000 casualties in all.

Day 1 of the battle would have been one of the 25 biggest battles of the Civil War itself, and it ended with a tactical Confederate victory. But over the next two days, Lee would try and fail to dislodge the Union army with attacks on both of its flanks during the second day and Pickett's Charge on the third and final day. Meade's stout defense held, barely, repulsing each attempted assault, handing the Union a desperately needed victory that ended up being one of the Civil War's turning points.

After the South had lost the war, the importance of Gettysburg as one of the "high tide" marks of the Confederacy became apparent to everyone, making the battle all the more important in the years after it had been fought. While former Confederate generals cast about for scapegoats, with various officers pointing fingers at Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, and James Stuart, historians and avid Civil War fans became obsessed with studying and analyzing all the command decisions and army movements during the entire campaign. Despite the saturation of coverage, Americans refuse to grow tired of visiting the battlefield and reliving the biggest battle fought in North America.

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