



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★
PRESERVE. EDUCATE. INSPIRE.

The stars have aligned! An unparalleled opportunity at Gettysburg.
*Help save a piece of land that witnessed monumental points in history,
including Pickett's Charge and two World War camps!*

Developers are desperate to swoop it up. The landowner
prefers to sell to us. But we need to raise \$550,000 before December 15.

Give now, and your year-end donation can be TRIPLED!

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

I am so excited about our newest opportunity to save land at Gettysburg that I woke up at 4:00 am to begin writing this letter to you.

When I first visited Gettysburg more than 25 years ago (and a few years before I began my career in battlefield preservation), I went there specifically to walk in the footsteps of my great-great-grandfather who, as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 57th Virginia regiment, participated in what would become known to history as either "Pickett's Charge" or the "Pickett-Pettigrew-Trimble Assault."



Gettysburg Battlefield ©Buddy Secor, American Battlefield Trust

At about 3:15 pm on a blazing hot July 3rd, I stepped off from the woods near the modern-day Virginia monument, heading for the distant copse of trees, just as my ancestor did in 1863.

Nearing the Emmitsburg Road, imagining what that horrific scene must have looked like to the more than 12,000 Confederates, their comrades dropping left and right, as they approached the bristling Union defenses behind the low stone wall on the other side, I scanned the landscape all around me.

As I looked north, I was chagrined to see that modern development had already encroached onto the edge of the field of Pickett's Charge. But, perhaps feeling my great-great-grandfather's hand at my back, I continued my march across that hallowed field, and over the stone wall. Perhaps you have done that same walk.

Turning to look back over the mile of hallowed ground I just traversed, I was once again distracted by the modern development that encroached upon the northern edge of the battlefield. I walked the short distance back down to the road to find out what it was and saw a building with a sign for a restaurant called "General Pickett's Buffet." The sign on the side of the building featured a hand-drawn rendering of the General himself.

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Judging by the number of cars and buses in the parking lot, I could tell it was obviously a popular place for people to eat, but I must admit I wished it were somewhere else in Gettysburg, rather than right on the battlefield.

Now, let me remind you: At that point in my life, saving battlefields full time was still only a dream of mine, and not yet my line of work. Still, I clearly remember thinking, *“Wouldn’t it be great if, someday, someone could somehow buy this place, and restore this land to the way it looked on the day of the battle?”*

Well, my friend, that someday... is today, and that someone... is us!

Through a remarkable chain of events, the American Battlefield Trust
now has the opportunity to purchase the General Pickett’s Buffet
and restore this hallowed ground at Gettysburg!

The long-time owner of the property has chosen to restructure his business by working with another local businessman to relocate it several miles away and off the battlefield as part of a broader redevelopment effort. We are fortunate that in this process, he approached the Trust about preservation options for the original restaurant site. It’s a true win-win for everyone: more preserved battlefield and a beloved institution thriving in a new location, retaining local jobs and accommodating even more customers.

But if we are unable to come up with the money — in this case, \$1.5 million — he will be forced to sell to someone else, and that, my friend, would be a disaster.

This land, while just over half an acre in size, would be a prime location for any number of new structures, such as a small chain hotel or apartment building, another restaurant, medical office building, or other structures, which could become even more of an intrusion than the General Pickett’s Buffet, which was constructed there decades ago.

In addition to the \$1.5 million price tag, we estimate (based on what we had to spend to restore the property at Lee’s Headquarters on the First Day’s battlefield nearby) that it will cost another \$155,000 to take down the current structure, remove the asphalt parking lot, and restore the landscape, preparing the property for an interpretation and visitor experience that will attract heritage tourists for years to come.



Gettysburg ©Lynn Light Heller, American Battlefield Trust

The good news is that this land is eligible for a whopping \$750,000 in federal matching funds. The bad news is that the owner needs to close on the property by the end of this year, and we will not have the federal grant in hand in time.

However, this landowner deserves some kind of medal, because he is willing to accept 50% of the purchase price this December and give us until next December (2023) to get the federal grant in hand and pay off the rest, interest-free!

So, while that means we need to pay the first \$750,000 in just a few weeks, there is even better news: We already have half that amount either pledged or in hand from anonymous donors and our great partner organization, the Gettysburg Foundation!

The bottom line is that we still need to raise \$550,000 (\$375,000 + \$20,000 in closing costs + \$155,000 in restoration costs) between now and December 15 to ensure that we can close on the property and then have the funds on hand to begin the restoration and interpretation of the property once the federal matching grant is received.

This means that every dollar you donate today for this effort will be multiplied by \$3.05 — your gift will be more than tripled!

And while this tract of land is small, it has witnessed an unbelievable amount of history.

On the First Day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Union cavalry and then Union infantry galloped or double-quickened to the sound of the guns right past this land, only to be driven back on the same roads later that day to the relative safety of Cemetery Hill where they made their stand.

From this tract on the next day, you would have been able to watch as Confederates swept across the farm fields and Emmittsburg Road to attack the Union III Corps of General Daniel Sickles in the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield and could have seen battle smoke and heard the distant fighting for Little Round Top. On that Second Day, there was also skirmishing on this very land, as the Confederates probed the Union defenses for any advantage.

Then, from this land, on the fateful Third Day, you would have had a front-row seat to one of the largest and most significant charges of the entire Civil War. The last time I was at Gettysburg, just a few weeks ago, I saw a group of young men and women, binders in hand, who were obviously part of a military training program, studying that charge and absorbing its lessons more than 159 years after the battle.

You know the rest. By the end of those three days, 51,000 soldiers would either lie dead on the battlefield, be wounded (some lightly, many more grievously), become prisoners, or go missing, perhaps never to be seen again.

But this land also witnessed so much more history! In November of 1863, you would have seen crowds arriving on Cemetery Hill to see and hear President Lincoln deliver one of the most famous speeches in American history, his Gettysburg Address — speaking words that he had written only the night before.

Years later, in 1917, new-fangled weapons of war called “tanks” rumbled across the battlefield. What is now the restaurant’s parking lot was the location of the headquarters of the Camp of the United States Troops at Gettysburg (later dubbed Camp Colt), which was one of 34 WWI training camps in the United States. A young officer named Dwight David Eisenhower would soon be put in command here in 1918, and he would come to love the battlefield and town of Gettysburg, eventually making it his home, which you can still visit today.

Years later, there was also a prisoner of war camp for German WWII POWs, on the same land as the training camp.

In short, from every point on the compass, this small parcel of ground has been a unique witness-place of American history. And today, you and I have the chance to reclaim it, restore it, and preserve its stories forever for our grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Will you join me in this urgent effort?



Gettysburg ©Buddy Secor, American Battlefield Trust

I wish we had more time to raise the needed funds, especially given the economic headwinds many of us are facing right now, but we simply don't.

When I call this opportunity unparalleled, I do so with a sense of deep respect that every single hallowed acre you have helped us purchase, protect, and preserve is of vital importance to our nation.

With your help, we have now saved nearly 56,000 acres of battlefield land in 25 states, many of which would have been paved over or destroyed if we had not stepped in before the developers. And please remember, the American Battlefield Trust is not anti-development — we simply believe that we do not need to destroy our nation's history in the pursuit of progress. We can responsibly have both, as this transaction proves.

I treasure each acre we've saved, because they each tell an important story about our history, our courage, and our character. And boy, do we ever need to hear, learn, and pass on these stories today! I'm sure you agree.

My friend, the stars have aligned as never before. For General Pickett's Buffet, the time has come. The restaurant will be moved to another desirable location, off the battlefield, where it can employ more people and serve more customers.

We have some major donors who, despite the uncertainty in the economy, are willing to put in substantial amounts of their own money. With your support, the American Battlefield Trust has been able to secure the battlefield matching funds that help put this effort within reach, financially, and to multiply the power of your donation by a factor of \$3.05-to-\$1. We have a landowner who is going above and beyond to work with us, not charging us a penny of interest.

If we do not succeed in raising the \$550,000, we need in the next few weeks to close the gap and match the more than \$1 million that is on the table, or we will have lost a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and could end up with a structure far more distracting than the General Pickett's Buffet that I saw on my first trip.

And that structure could loom over the battlefield for the next 50 or 100 years.

I know times are challenging and budgets are stretched thin, but I ask you to please help in any way you can today with your generous donation to help take advantage of this unique and fleeting opportunity.

Then, the next time you go to Gettysburg (after we restore the property), I hope you will make the effort to walk over to that tract, linger for a moment reflecting on all its history, and then recall that today, I said "Thank You!" in advance, on behalf of those who hallowed this ground, as well as for those future generations who will get to experience it because of you.



With warmest regards, your obed't serv't,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. By the way, my great-great-grandfather somehow survived that fateful July 3! Even if you did not have an ancestor at Gettysburg, you know how important that place is to our nation, and I pray that you will send your most generous gift today, even going online to make your donation at battlefield.org/3to1match. Remember that your gift will be multiplied \$3.05-to-\$1! Thank you!