



AMERICAN
BATTLEFIELD
TRUST ★ ★ ★

One hundred and sixty years ago,
**THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG,
THE LARGEST BATTLE EVER
FOUGHT ON AMERICAN SOIL,**
became enshrined as part of our nation's history.

Today, with your urgent help, the American Battlefield Trust can
save an absolutely crucial part of where the battle began!

Dear Fellow Preservationist of America's Hallowed Ground,

Gettysburg!

For those like you and me who care so passionately about preserving our nation's highly threatened and rapidly disappearing hallowed ground, is there a single word that evokes more meaning or significance?

You know all the superlatives ... it's the costliest battle ever fought on the North American continent ... it has been called the "high-water mark of the Confederacy" and the "turning point" of the entire War, etc., etc.

But today, as I announce an opportunity to save one of the most important remaining tracts of hallowed ground left to protect at Gettysburg — a tract that 18 months ago I believed was all but lost to residential development — I need you to do something that is very hard to do:

I need you to forget everything you know about the Battle of Gettysburg and experience its opening moments as the soldiers who fought on this ground experienced it.

Go back in time with me to the early morning of July 1, 1863, on Chambersburg Pike, a few miles west of the small Pennsylvania town called Gettysburg. There has, so far, been very little fighting to speak of, let alone a First, Second, or Third Day of Battle.

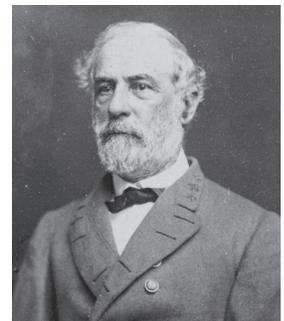
But the Confederates have reports of troops — perhaps just Pennsylvania militia or some isolated Union cavalry — near Gettysburg, and General Henry Heth sends part of his division to investigate, with the warning from his commander, Robert E. Lee, not to bring on a general engagement, as the widely spread army has not yet all arrived.

Union cavalry commander General John Buford knows there are Confederates west of Gettysburg, and likely in great numbers, but he also knows the Union infantry, though marching hard, is also not yet on the field, and his troopers must delay any advance as long as possible.



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General Henry Heth



© Library of Congress

General Robert Edward Lee

If you and I are marching with Heth's veterans that very warm morning, we approach a bridge over the small Marsh Creek. Several hundred yards to the east, Lt. Marcellus Jones of the 8th Illinois Cavalry borrows a carbine from a sergeant, saying to a nearby private who was aiming his rifle, "Hold on, George, give me the honor of opening this ball."

It is 7:30 a.m. Lt. Jones fires the first shot of the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Confederates are now alerted to the presence of real resistance to their front. Shaking out skirmishers and then deploying his brigades into battle lines, Heth slowly begins to push the tenacious dismounted cavalry back toward Gettysburg.

Now let's imagine we are alongside the 8th Illinois as they stubbornly fall back in good order down the incline from Herr Ridge, through a small valley cut by a stream called Willoughby's Run. Every man on the line knows that they must hold on for as long as possible, must fight for every inch of ground until the Union infantry arrives.

But as they look up Herr Ridge, they see long butternut and gray battle lines stretching north and south, hundreds, perhaps thousands more soldiers than they have, cresting that ridge and moving down the slope toward them relentlessly, overlapping their own lines. The Union carbines can fire faster, but the Alabamians and Mississippians have far more rifles on the firing line, with greater range.

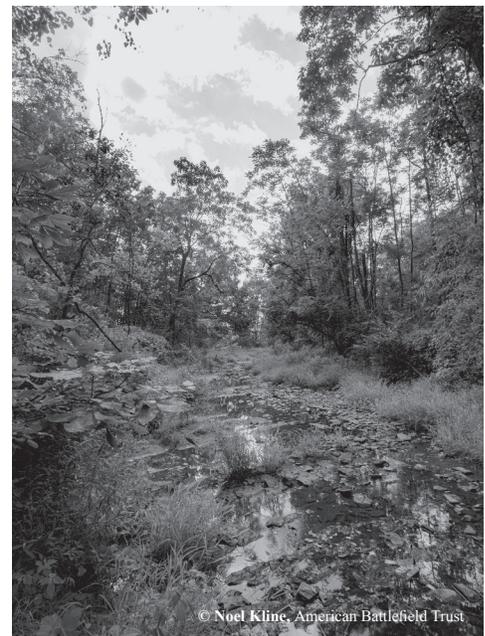
On page 468 of my copy of Shelby Foote's *The Civil War, A Narrative: Fredericksburg to Meridian* (or volume 2, for most of us), we read that "down into the shallow valley ... two [Confederate] brigades started through the standing grain, the skirmishers whooping and firing as they went ... leading the way into the greatest battle of the war."

(Spoiler alert: The land we are working so hard to save right now is that very same "shallow valley" between just east of Herr's Ridge down to the west bank of Willoughby's Run, as you can see on your enclosed battle map.)

The retreating troopers cross this crucial piece of land in the face of the Confederate advance, some stopping — with bullets clipping the leaves of the trees around them — in the shallow water of Willoughby's Run.

In his epic work *Gettysburg — The First Day*, Harry W. Pfanz writes, "The Union cavalymen had done their job; they had forced Heth's column to deploy skirmishers and had slowed the approach of his division. They had given Buford time to set up a cavalry line on McPherson Ridge to meet the Rebel onslaught and had provided Union infantry additional time to reach the field."

The men of the Union 1st Corps under General John F. Reynolds have indeed arrived, and they slam into the Confederates, driving them back across the stream onto the land we need to save, and capturing General James Archer very nearby.



At times under fire from the famed Iron and Bucktail Brigades, the Southerners traversed these 15 acres to do battle in Herbst's Woods and along the banks of Willoughby's Run.

But ultimately, the weight of Confederate numbers, first, wave upon wave from the west, the north, and then from the northeast — plus the untimely death of General Reynolds — take its toll on the Union infantry, and by the end of that terrible day, both sides would suffer more than 17,000 casualties. They could not know it then, but the First Day's Battle at Gettysburg, if taken in isolation, would turn out to be the 12th bloodiest battle of the entire Civil War — as costly as the two-week-long horror at Cold Harbor, and all in one day.

So today, my friend, I have the honor to announce to you that the American Battlefield Trust is launching a multi-year campaign to save this essential — and highly threatened — “First Blood at Willoughby's Run” tract ...

... 15 acres of incredibly hallowed land, which saw some of the earliest and most dramatic opening moments of the Battle of Gettysburg.

And as I mentioned, about 18 months ago, I had all but written off this crucial land as lost forever due to a massive new apartment complex that seemed unstoppable!

To give you an idea of what was slated to happen on this hallowed ground, which is already somewhat compromised by modern structures, please note the copy of the site plan which was provided to local officials enclosed.

As you can see, a local developer had planned to cover this hallowed ground with a complex of up to 112 apartments spread out over eight buildings of differing heights, much to the consternation of local homeowners.

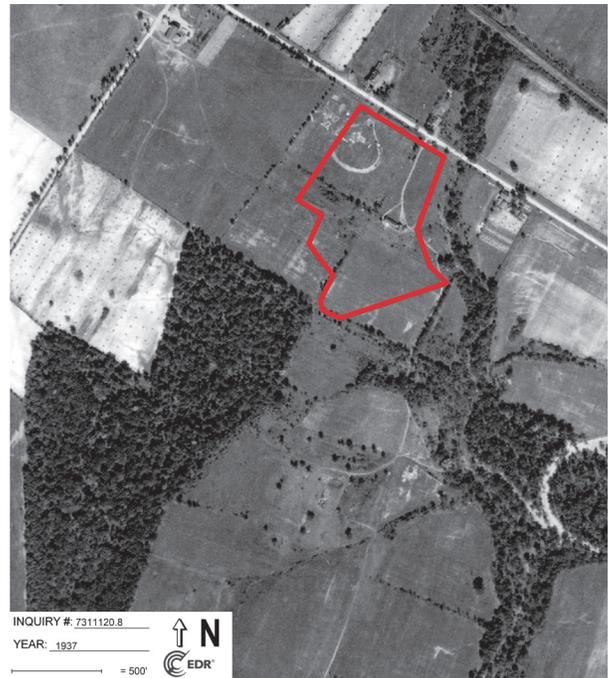
The Trust was interested in preserving this property — we had partnered with The Conservation Fund to save the adjoining 95 acres in 2011 — but the cost to acquire this land appeared to be dramatically out of reach, especially as this land is not eligible for the federal matching grant program.

In the meantime, the developer was moving forward with getting the needed permits and local government approvals to build this complex, which would have meant this hallowed ground, and the chance of ever fully telling the story of the opening of the Battle of Gettysburg, were going to be lost forever.

So, what happened to make the preservation of this all-but-lost land possible? Two very important things:

First, after months of negotiations, the developer agreed to sell it to us for the price of \$3 million (which, with your contributions and help from a multi-year loan, we should be able to afford).

And second, a generous donor who cares passionately about Gettysburg has stepped forward with an offer to give — over the next few years — fully half of that amount, or \$1.5 million, as a match, if we can raise the other half!



Aerial view of 15 acres of some of the most important remaining tracts of hallowed ground left to protect at Gettysburg.

Now, with our budget being as tight as it is, and with as many threats to hallowed ground that we are facing across America, I don't have a spare \$3 million right now, either. Plus, time is working against us. We need to pay half by November 20 of this year — now just six or seven weeks away — and the other half by July 1, 2024 — the 161st anniversary of the opening of the battle.

And as I said, eventually, we will receive \$1.5 million from a generous benefactor. But given our donor's schedule of when he can make his generous gifts, we will still need to borrow from an outside lender, just as we did with the Slaughter Pen Farm at Fredericksburg, and then work to pay off the loan in installments over the next three to four years.

So, we can prevent the residential development in the short-term, but in the long-term, as you well know, this hallowed ground can never be considered fully preserved until the loan is paid off.

It is not often — if ever — that we who care about saving America's Civil War battlefields get the opportunity to save something so important.

To buy this property now (and then hopefully transfer it to the Gettysburg National Military Park, after we restore the land to its wartime appearance) is like saving, preserving, and restoring a scarred part of the Mona Lisa or other precious work of art ... except this is even more meaningful, because this land was hallowed by those Americans who gave their lives upon it. And, millions of future visitors to Gettysburg can walk this land to learn about this sacrifice and appreciate what you have accomplished.

So please, if you possibly can, will you help me raise \$375,000 before November 20, so that we can match our donor's gift of \$375,000, making \$750,000 toward our contractually obligated payment of \$1.5 million, and we will borrow the rest — but I can say that every dollar you give today could help reduce the amount we need to borrow!

I want you to be a part of this historic effort, with a gift of any amount. You are the reason why the American Battlefield Trust has been able to save more than 57,000 acres, my friend; I appreciate everything you have done and are doing for our nation's battlefields.

Please let me hear back from you as soon as possible, and please accept my deepest thanks for your generosity.



Awaiting your reply,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David N. Duncan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Years ago, when we had to take out a \$6 million loan to preserve the Slaughter Pen Farm at Fredericksburg, and we weren't actually sure how we were ever going to pay it back, a 25-year supporter named David Keenan from Vermont told my predecessor, "Trust the membership. TRUST the Membership!" Today, I'm doing just that, placing my trust in you that you will step forward and help us save this land now, while we have the chance. It will take a few years and a total of \$1.5 million from us, but my friend, if this land were ever to be developed, I know we would be kicking ourselves for not saving it while we could. That time is now, and I sure need your help. Please be as generous as you can, and again, please accept my deepest thanks.