



The name Gettysburg evokes something deep in the American heart. It's a place where time seems to slow down. Where the noise of the present gives way to the echoes of the past. And where ordinary citizens performed extraordinary acts of courage while the future of our country hung in the balance. No other battlefield stirs our nation's soul the same way.

Today, we have an extraordinary opportunity to return and restore critical parts of the Gettysburg battlefield to their 1863 appearance, bringing history to life. Will you help?

Dear Friend and Fellow Preservationist,

If you've ever been fortunate enough to visit the Gettysburg battlefield, you know there's something about standing on those hallowed acres that stops you in your tracks.

Imagine it for a moment — you're walking through Devil's Den or up the slopes of Little Round Top when the wind stills. A hush falls over the leaves. You can almost imagine the scene: bayonets glinting through the trees, the earth trembling from the cannon fire, the shouts of men fighting for a future they believe in.

Visiting this sacred site, where so many men gave their last full measure of devotion, can transport one back in time. From the fateful first shots west of Gettysburg and the assaults on Culp's Hill to Pickett's Charge and even President Lincoln's solemn address months later, being on the ground where history unfolded provides an incredible glimpse into the past.

You know the facts ... it's the costliest battle fought on the North American continent ... it has been called the "high-water mark of the Confederacy" and a "turning point" of the Civil War.

But here's something you may not know: Some parts of the Gettysburg battlefield — truly hallowed ground — are in desperate need of restoration and renewal.

The land is protected — thanks to you and your fellow members — but the bigger task of **bringing the past to life** is a work in progress. That's why I'm writing to you today.

The American Battlefield Trust is launching an exciting, multi-year restoration effort at Gettysburg. Over the next few years, we are embarking on a series of transformational projects: demolishing and removing non-historic structures, restoring those that bore witness to the battle, installing needed interpretive markers and signage, and revitalizing the landscape so that the battle's remarkable history emerges.

Taking these critical steps at Gettysburg is essential to our mission. Your wonderful support has made it possible to save this unparalleled and sacred land, and now, we must work just as hard to bring history to life for all future generations to experience.

To complete the first phase, we need to raise a total of \$700,000. I don't pretend to think this will be easy. That's why we're reaching out to all our generous, longtime donors as well as those who have recently joined our cause. It's going to take all of us working together to realize this ambitious goal and to restore Gettysburg as it should be!

But the exciting news is that we already have \$212,000 in funds from three generous donors! That leaves a need of \$488,000 for phase one. When you see the images of what it will look like, I just know you're going to feel inspired to be part of this transformation, and to help make up that difference.

I hope I can count on you to help in this effort by making a generous gift today.

Our work begins with two key projects on the east side of Cemetery Hill. These projects will help return the land to its **wartime appearance**, restore original sightlines, and unlock powerful, untold stories for every visitor who walks these grounds.

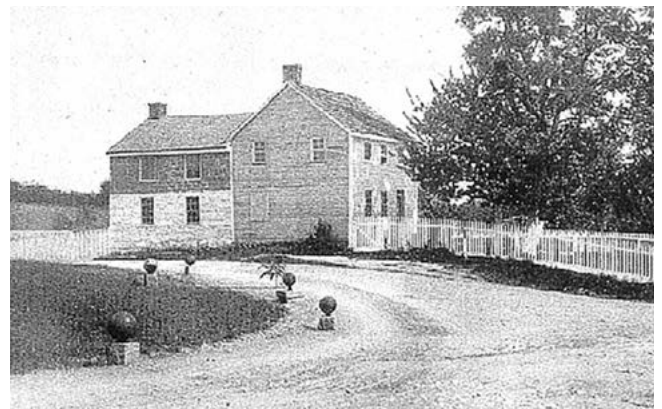
PHASE 1: THE MCKNIGHT HOUSE AND FARM

There are four contiguous tracts of land located along the slopes of East Cemetery Hill that, all thanks to you, the Trust purchased and preserved several years ago. This land is located on the east side of the Baltimore Pike and played a significant, albeit not widely known, role in the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1 and 2, 1863. Most of it was owned by farmer James McKnight during the battle.

Located on the McKnight property is the former Gettysburg Battlefield Military Museum, a very large modern building that is no longer in use. Our intent is to demolish it and return the land to the condition that the Union troops at Gettysburg would have seen at the time of the battle.

Once the museum is removed, visitors will gain a sweeping, unmarred view that has been unavailable for more than a century. I've always maintained that preserving viewscapes like this is incredibly important. It allows visitors the chance to connect with the historical context of the events that transpired there. It can offer visitors a greater sense of the courage and character it must have taken to fight on that ground. It creates a tangible link to the past and allows future generations to step into history, imagining the battle unfolding around them.

If you were able to take a step back in time to 1863, you'd see that the Baltimore Pike was one of only two roads available to the Union after the first day's battle, and the more important of the two. The federals used it to bring fresh supplies and troops to the battlefield and cart the wounded away. As you can see on your map, its high ground offered a commanding view of the battlefield.



A historic witness to a pivotal battle, the McKnight farmhouse stands as a testament to the past, awaiting restoration to its original form as Union troops once saw it. © American Battlefield Trust

During the first two days of the battle, tens of thousands of Union troops marched past, paused on, moved over, and fought and died on McKnight's land. Period documentation indicates that Union casualties were temporarily buried around the McKnight property before the establishment of the Soldiers' National Cemetery.

On July 1, the Union Army strategically positioned the 5th Maine Battery on what became known as "McKnight's Hill" (now commonly referred to as Stevens' Knoll). This artillery played a crucial role in defending the Union right flank.

On the evening of July 2, when Confederate troops under General Jubal Early launched a fierce assault on East Cemetery Hill, the 5th Maine Battery, positioned on McKnight's land, held its ground. This resolute defense provided crucial time for Union reinforcements to arrive and ultimately push back the Confederate forces. The McKnight Farm also served as a silent witness to the intense movements and combat that characterized the fighting on the first and second days.

Over the years, the farmhouse has been altered with modern features. We need to reverse those changes, stabilize the structure, and seal the exterior. The plan is to return the house to its appearance on those scorching July days when Union troops marched by its windows.

Additionally, the area around the McKnight house will be restored to include a walking trail with historical markers and signs. Together, the demolition of the museum and the restoration of the McKnight Farm will open important new interpretive possibilities. You can see our vision in the enclosed sketch.

Our vision for the McKnight property may take a year or so to complete, but we have always played the long game and are confident the final result will be well worth the time it took to achieve it.

As I said earlier, we've estimated the cost of completing Phase 1 to be \$700,000. That's no pittance to be sure, but together, we've climbed steeper hills. I'm confident with your support and the support of your fellow members — and the three generous donors — we can succeed in this critical undertaking. The hardest part is behind us — we've already protected the land. Now, we just have to finish the job.



The removal of the Gettysburg Battlefield Military Museum will unveil a sweeping view from Culp's Hill to Cemetery Ridge, just as it appeared in 1863.

© Melissa A. Winn, American Battlefield Trust



This illustration provides a glimpse into the vision for the restoration of the Gettysburg Battlefield Military Museum site. © Dale Watson

WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

I know it's only summer, but one of my favorite Christmas movies is *It's a Wonderful Life*. If you've seen it, you'll recall that the main character, George Bailey, gets to see how the world might have been a different place had he never been born. To imagine what the McKnight Farm might have been like had the Trust never existed, all you have to do is look across the street. The west side of Baltimore Pike is home to a hotel, a former restaurant, and other modern buildings that could have easily been constructed on the McKnight property had it not been saved by the Trust. But it used to be even worse.

Over the years, the battlefield at Gettysburg has endured myriad forms of inappropriate and harmful development. Junk yards, misplaced roadside motels and tourist attractions, and more once dotted the hallowed ground here. But thanks to the Trust — **thanks to you** — many are a thing of the past.

In fact, restoration efforts at Gettysburg have been going on since the late 1890s, when the U.S. War Department, at that time responsible for battlefield stewardship (now under the National Park Service), installed tour roads, placed tablets and markers, and began returning the landscape to its 1863 appearance. Perhaps your ancestors played a part. Over the past 38 years, the American Battlefield Trust has saved more than 1,200 acres at Gettysburg and completed numerous restoration projects that included removing buildings, recreating sightlines, installing trails, and expanding interpretation.

You have played a critical role in preserving battlefields at Gettysburg and beyond. Now we have a chance to leave a lasting legacy for future generations and for our nation. Please make a gift today to help chip away at the \$488,000 still needed towards our \$700,000 goal so we can restore these significant properties at Gettysburg. Every gift will make a difference!

You truly are the heart and soul of the American Battlefield Trust, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your support — now and yet to come — to give Gettysburg the respect it deserves.

It's hard to imagine a more patriotic gesture.



With gratitude and respect,

David N. Duncan

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. We owe this to the courageous soldiers who fought and died here. To their families and descendants. To all Americans. To our nation! **Please help today.** Regardless of the size of your gift, you will be making an important contribution to restoring the McKnight House and Farm to its wartime appearance and bringing the history to life for all.

Your support has been vital in preserving America's battlefields, and now, with your gift, you can help us reach our goal to restore Gettysburg's historic landscapes for future generations.