



ON THE FIELDS OF HISTORY

It is July, and three boys at the threshold of manhood sit on a large stone on Little Round Top, looking down on the Devil's Den where Rebel sharpshooters once hid. The same boys also survey the farmland stretching toward Seminary Ridge, where clouds of Confederate infantry and artillery waited in the summer heat. The three are not distracted by one another, or by anyone else. Instead, they are quiet and contemplative, as in the last minutes before battle.

Their teacher points out the scene to me, and to another father who must also have been compelled to consider his own good fortune. Because our boys, and this teacher's students, are not in dirt-laden blue wool over-looking soldiers of the same age dressed in dirt-laden gray. Our boys are unarmed; they wear long shorts and unmatched shirts and their caps are turned backwards. We wonder whether or not they might be thinking what we are thinking, that but for divine accident of time and place, they might have been among the 51,000 of their age who died in America's most famous, most important and most contentious battle. As Americans have been for almost a century and a half, we are caught in the transfixing experience of Gettysburg.

Because there are no oval tables, no students with ties, no door closed at the ringing of a bell, it might not seem to be a Harkness moment. But it surely is, because here in Pennsylvania, there is a coterie of Exonians who have done the reading, who are ready with both question and argument and who are guided by the steady hand of a teacher determined not to give them one answer, but to suggest to them many.

We are in Gettysburg in the care of Rick Schubart '56, '78, '79, '93, '03, '08 (Hon.); P'96, P'00, P'04, Bates-Russell Distinguished Professor and instigator of this remarkable ON BEYOND EXETER summer alumni/ae symposium on Gettysburg and the Civil War. For the past four years, Schubart has been taking a Harkness class and a half to Gettysburg for a five-day study of the battle and of the war—the outcome of which was altered by this single, singular battle.

Gettysburg is Schubart's life's work, in part because of the centrality the Civil War plays in a historian's understanding of our American experience. Over several decades, he has listened as military strategists reargued the battle plan in minute detail, as theologians have rewalked the cemetery and as all of us have reread Lincoln's celebrated address for higher meanings. For American historians, the three-day Battle of Gettysburg is endless in interpretation and manifold in conclusion. For Exonians, it is lavish intellectual engagement.

For Schubart, Gettysburg is not only professional interest but also boyhood backyard. He grew up on property within rifle shot of the battlefield. He brings both a scholar's discipline and a boy's enthusiasm to the project, including, as he does, a drive-by of the family home on the schedule of the week's events.

He arranges the discussions to be built around the battle itself. On our first day, there is a bus

Exeter at Gettysburg included (back row, left to right) Leon Morse, Leon Morse III '88, Jerry Pyle '55, Cynthia Pyle, Dr. Nathaniel Clark '71, Nancy Shead, Mark Connelly '79, Lesley Workman '84, Dylan Connelly, Lindsay Miller, Peter Ambler '52, Cmdr: Victor Krulak '55 and Thomas "Walker" Hallett '11. (Front row, left to right) Bruce Hallett III '67, Col. Dallas Brown III '74, Rick Schubart, Nat Butler '64 and Terence J.L. Conklin '10.

Gettysburg Restored

A century before there was 3-D, IMAX or HD, there was the Gettysburg Cyclorama. The enormous, 360-degree painting of Pickett's famous charge, completed in 1884 by the French painter Paul Philippoteaux and a team of 20, stretched 366 feet around and 42 feet high.

Veterans who saw it were reportedly brought to tears by its vivid retelling of the crucial battle. By 1910, the Cyclorama had been cut into sections for display in a New Jersey department store, beginning decades of neglect, deterioration and haphazard attempts at restoration.

Now the Cyclorama is again in Gettysburg. It hangs, perfectly restored, around the perimeter of a round barn at the new \$100 million Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center, a showcase facility that was imagined, designed and funded in part through the leadership of Richard Edelman '72. The center not only houses the Cyclorama but also a film theater, art galleries, a research library, and a first-rate Civil War bookstore.

Edelman has been a key player in the Campaign to Preserve Gettysburg, a public/private partnership that has spent the last decade expanding the military park and returning the landscape to the conditions that existed at the time of the battle. It also is educating and inspiring generations of Americans about the most important battle of America's most important war. A self-admitted Civil War junkie since his Chicago childhood (whose enthusiasm was stoked at Exeter by History Instructor Henry Bragdon), Edelman used his passion, persuasiveness and considerable Rolodex as head of his eponymous public relations firm to bring the project from concept to creation.

The ambitious goals of the campaign "were a big gamble," Edelman says, "but it all worked. We've increased park attendance. We are seeing over a million visitors a year and, amazingly, what they see on the battlefield today is pretty much what the soldiers saw 146 years ago." —B.H.

trip over to the site of the Antietam battle in Sharpsburg, MD, where the bloodiest single day of fighting in the Civil War had taken place the year before Gettysburg. Here Schubart raises the larger themes of the Civil War, putting political, religious and economic, as well as military, issues on the table. Some in the class, like Leon Morse '88 and his dad, also Leon P'88, P'02, have read deeply on the subject and surprise Schubart with their insights. They cite fresh statistics and tell stories about the Massachusetts division in which their ancestors fought.

We are back in Gettysburg the next day, finding the marker where the first shots were fired, considering the initial Union retreat, and wondering, as General Lee had, where Jeb Stuart and his cavalry corps were that day and whether their absence might have changed the outcome of the war. We tour the sparkling new visitor center (see sidebar) and see the restored panoramic painting of the battlefield. We walk the campus of Gettysburg College and climb the wide stairs of the main building where some retreating Union soldiers once fled, only to be discovered and killed.

At breakfast the following morning, Lindsay Miller, a decorated New York journalist and the wife of Peter Ambler '52, brings out a handwritten memoir by her great-grandfather, Joseph E. Folkes. He was a volunteer who fought at Gettysburg for Mahone's Brigade, a part of A.P. Hill's corps in the Army of Northern Virginia. She reads to the class from his ledger, and when her great-grandfather writes about the South's determination to preserve the Spirit of 1776 an energetic discussion ensues about which side had the larger claim to our revolutionary birthright. When we visit the Union positions later, spending time at either end of the long lines, the sites are more alive, animated by the passion of the soldiers who fought there. At Culp's Hill, Schubart tells of close, exhausting fighting that ends with blue-coated soldiers falling asleep beside gray-coated ones. The safety of their retreat would wait for dawn.

The following day we take up our position on the other side, on Seminary Ridge where Pickett had assembled 12,000 troops for the disastrous charge. In an inconspicuous grove in the woods, we find a statue without platform

(continued on page 8)

around the table



VICTOR KRULAK

On Hallowed Ground

The Harkness table found its place on hallowed ground [at Gettysburg]. The group walked in the footsteps of heroes in whose threadbare and blood-spattered shoes we could never march. Brave men died for ambiguous and varying notions of country, ideals, and freedom, but many died simply for each other. Brother followed brother into the fire of destiny unknown, each offering the ultimate salute to the other—life itself.

As future generations drink of liberty and build lives on the foundations of the very ideals sanctified by these brave men, we must pause to salute anew. History remembers their sacrifices, which stand taller than any statue. But on a more personal level, do we not all owe a debt of gratitude, appreciation and respect? Should we not all walk in the footsteps of their bravery and pay tribute with our hearts, minds and understanding? Does the Harkness table not implore us to remember bold and courageous actions, indeed to honor them, in openhearted study?

— Lesley Workman '84,
ON BEYOND EXETER participant

