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One Year On: June 28th

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One Year On: June 28th

Abstract

A year ago, rebels swarmed the street. Now they don't. A year ago, the town was on edge. Now it's not. A year ago, time stood still. Now it rushes on. "The arrangements are in process of completion," the *Adams Sentinel* trumpeted, "for a handsome celebration at Culp's Hill." The town was organizing a grand picnic. The moment wasn't simply for the people of the borough so recently made famous by fate and bad luck. "There will be many strangers here," the newspaper's tight print reminded Gettysburgians, "and we hope that every one of our citizens will have a pride in sending them away pleased with our town and its surroundings, as they did on the 19th November." [excerpt]

Keywords

CW150, Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Civil War Era Studies, Emancipation

Disciplines

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Comments

Interpreting the Civil War: Connecting the Civil War to the American Public is written by alum and adjunct professor, John Rudy. Each post is his own opinions, musings, discussions, and questions about the Civil War era, public history, historical interpretation, and the future of history. In his own words, it is "a blog talking about how we talk about a war where over 600,000 died, 4 million were freed and a nation forever changed. Meditating on interpretation, both theory and practice, at no charge to you."

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Interpreting the Civil War

Connecting the Civil War to the American Public

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One Year On: June 28th

SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 2014

A year ago, rebels swarmed the street. Now they don't. A year ago, the town was on edge. Now it's not. A year ago, time stood still. Now it rushes on.

"The arrangements are in process of completion," the [Adams Sentinel trumpeted](#), "for a handsome celebration at Culp's Hill." The town was organizing a grand picnic. The moment wasn't simply for the people of the borough so recently made famous by fate and bad luck. "There will be many strangers here," the newspaper's tight print reminded Gettysburgians, "and we hope that every one of our citizens will have a pride in sending them away pleased with our town and its surroundings, as they did on the 19th November."

Shopkeeper John L. Schick was pooling the resources for the meal. A year ago, he had been staring at the empty shelves of his store in the waning days of June; any stock of value had been sent toward Carlisle, safely out of rebel hands. But this year, June was different. His store was filling up with donations from around the borough, just like it had filled up with donations from around the nation when the United States Christian Commission used it as a storehouse.

Somewhere else in town, a bevy of local Republicans were making plans for celebration on the battlefield. They promised pomp and circumstance. The Governor himself (undoubtedly helped along by the party affiliation of the organizing committee) would be speaking. "The ceremonies are expected to be," the [committee announced](#), "of a most interesting and imposing character."

The nation too was slightly different since last year. Adjacent to the Sentinel's notice of the Governor's planned attendance was a short article on Maryland's new constitution. The southerly neighbor was finally catching up with the Keystone state, who had begun the process of destroying slavery in 1780 and finally placed it firmly into its well-deserved grave in 1847. The new constitution would read: "Hereafter, in this State, there shall be neither Slavery nor involuntary servitude, except in punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted; and all persons held to labor, as slaves, are hereby declared free."

Though slavery might linger in Virginia as long as war held out, Adams County was now assured that by year's end, she would no longer be the frontline of the ideological war over human freedom.

The prospect of what freeing the slaves might mean was shifting too. "I cannot resist the temptation to inform you of the bravery of the colored troops in this department," a soldier in the 2nd Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery reported in the folds of the *Sentinel*. "Yesterday they were thoroughly tested, and the result was the capture of seven forts, seventeen pieces of artillery, and several

hundred prisoners." They were brave and true, the type of hearty stock worthy of the title 'citizen.' And every rumor against the fitness of these black men to have that honorific, to be known as men, was false. "As to the report heretofore of them breaking and running from the enemy, I believe it to be a very great mistake, for I saw last evening that they were more desperate than any body of men put in action during this war."

A year before, as June 28th dawned, Gettysburg was still catching its breath from one rebel invasion. It was still worried about another which might come. But today, the world was different at its very core.