



10-13-2014

## Soldiers Past and Future: The Civil War and Great War Meet in Gettysburg

S. Marianne Johnson  
*Gettysburg College*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/compiler>

 Part of the [Military History Commons](#), [Public History Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

**Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.**

---

Johnson, S. Marianne, "Soldiers Past and Future: The Civil War and Great War Meet in Gettysburg" (2014). *The Gettysburg Compiler: On the Front Lines of History*. 65.  
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/compiler/65>

This is the author's version of the work. This publication appears in Gettysburg College's institutional repository by permission of the copyright owner for personal use, not for redistribution. Cupola permanent link: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/compiler/65>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact [cupola@gettysburg.edu](mailto:cupola@gettysburg.edu).

---

# Soldiers Past and Future: The Civil War and Great War Meet in Gettysburg

## **Abstract**

Gettysburg, a town already so intimately acquainted with war, was the scene of particularly interesting historical encounters. The still too present memory of the Civil War impacted the way Gettysburgians viewed the Great War. Many veterans of the Civil War were still alive, although very old, and it was not uncommon for The Gettysburg Times to run headlines about the death of a prominent Civil War veteran right alongside coverage of the war raging in Europe. [*excerpt*]

## **Keywords**

The Gettysburg Compiler, Civil War, 150th Anniversary, Gettysburg, Civil War Memory, World War I, WWI, Training Camp, Gettysburg National Military Park

## **Disciplines**

History | Military History | Public History | United States History

## **Comments**

This blog post originally appeared in [The Gettysburg Compiler](#) and was created by students at Gettysburg College.

# THE GETTYSBURG COMPILER

## ON THE FRONT LINES OF HISTORY

---

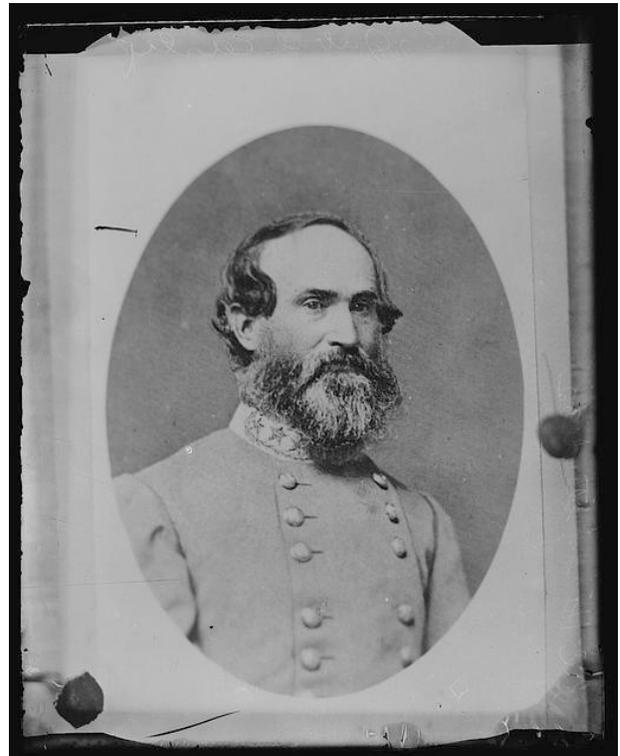
### Soldiers Past and Future: The Civil War and Great War Meet in Gettysburg

October 13, 2014

by Sarah Johnson '15

*This piece was originally posted on the blog [“Gettysburg and the Great War: Discovering the First World War Through an American Town”](#) and is reprinted here with permission from the author.*

Gettysburg, a town already so intimately acquainted with war, was the scene of particularly interesting historical encounters. The still too present memory of the Civil War impacted the way Gettysburgians viewed the Great War. Many veterans of the Civil War were still alive, although very old, and it was not uncommon for *The Gettysburg Times* to run headlines about the death of a prominent Civil War veteran right alongside coverage of the war raging in Europe. As the Red Cross in Gettysburg began all-out efforts to raise money to aid refugees in Belgium, the town of Frederick, Maryland, just to the south of Gettysburg, was still pushing the United States government for war reparations amounting to \$200,000 for damages done by Confederate General Jubal Early's raid.



In the summer of 1917, the 4th, 7th, and 61st United States Regular Infantry came to Gettysburg to form a summer training camp. What is today the Gettysburg National Military Park was then owned by the War Department, and Civil War battlefields across the nation served as convenient places to house and train men. Soldiers trained right on the historic ground. Today, when you visit the Gettysburg battlefield, you will find three observation towers located on Confederate Avenue, Culp's Hill, and Oak Ridge. These are left over from the days of battlefield training camps. Built in 1895 by the War Department, men training used the towers as points of observation and to familiarize themselves with the terrain.



Dorey Halsted, Captain of the 4th Infantry, photo taken 1916.  
LC-DIG-hec-07386

In 1917, Civil War Veterans were still alive and visited Gettysburg with some frequency. On September 3, 1917, an extraordinary march took place. *“Gettysburg’s soldiers of the past,”* wrote the *Times*, *“joined with seasoned United States Regulars of the present, in honoring Adam’s County’s future fighters, Saturday evening, when the much heralded parade and patriotic exercises were held in the presence of several thousand persons.”* Union Veterans, *“wearing the blue made so dear in the struggle a half a century ago,”* marched proudly not in honor of themselves, but to honor the next generation of fighters. *“Then came the registrants (draftees) –a bare dozen of*

*them-but what they lacked in numbers was fully made up in the enthusiasm which greeted them all along the line of the march. Everywhere they were applauded, frequently people cheered them, and at a few places Regulars watching the parade let out lusty yells to show their welcome to the men who will soon bear with them the title of “Sammies.”* These old men quite literally led the young men into their future and shared legacy as American fighters. Although the wizened veterans had no first-hand knowledge of machine guns or tanks, they knew combat and what it meant to be a “Sammy.” (“Sammy” was a late nineteenth century term for an American soldier serving Uncle Sam. This term would be replaced by “doughboy” later on.)

A week later, the workmen of the 61st Infantry Camp made a macabre discovery. While digging to water lines, they unearthed the bones of Civil War soldiers right in the middle of their camp. Skulls and bullets were unearthed. Some of the men began trophy hunting for bullets they could then take as souvenirs “Over There.” The incident makes one wonder what exactly went through the minds of the men of the 61st as they reaped the unholy harvest of war. There was no glory here, simply unidentifiable pieces of what had once been living men, just like themselves.

The next day, however, about 1500 men from Camp Gettysburg paraded through town singing “Hang Kaiser Bill from a Sour Apple Tree.” Civil War scholars will note the title as the famous song in the Civil War North “Hang Jeff Davis from a Sour Apple Tree.” Like so many other areas of early twentieth century soldiering, the Civil War intimately shaped the way Americans thought of war and served as a lens of viewing warfare.

## The SOUR APPLE-TREE.

The music, published by Oliver Ditson & Co. of  
No. 277 Washington Street, Boston, can be obtained  
at the Music-Establishment of Wm. A. Pond & Co.  
No. 547 Broadway, New-York.

The Yankee boys have caught him,  
The Traitor, old Jeff D. !  
I wonder if they'll hang him  
To the Sour Apple-tree !  
Don't you think it will be right  
And justice, I declare,  
To hang him up to dry, my boys,  
And dangle in the air !

Chorus : The Yankee boys have caught him,  
The Traitor, old Jeff D. !  
I wonder if they'll hang him  
On the Sour Apple-tree !

Oh ! when our soldiers found him,  
I'll bet he did Look rich,  
With the Petticoats around him,  
As he stood in his Last ditch !  
Old Jeff he wasn't wise,  
With Boots on, don't you see ?  
It was a splendid sight, I'm sure,  
Such Southern Chivalry !

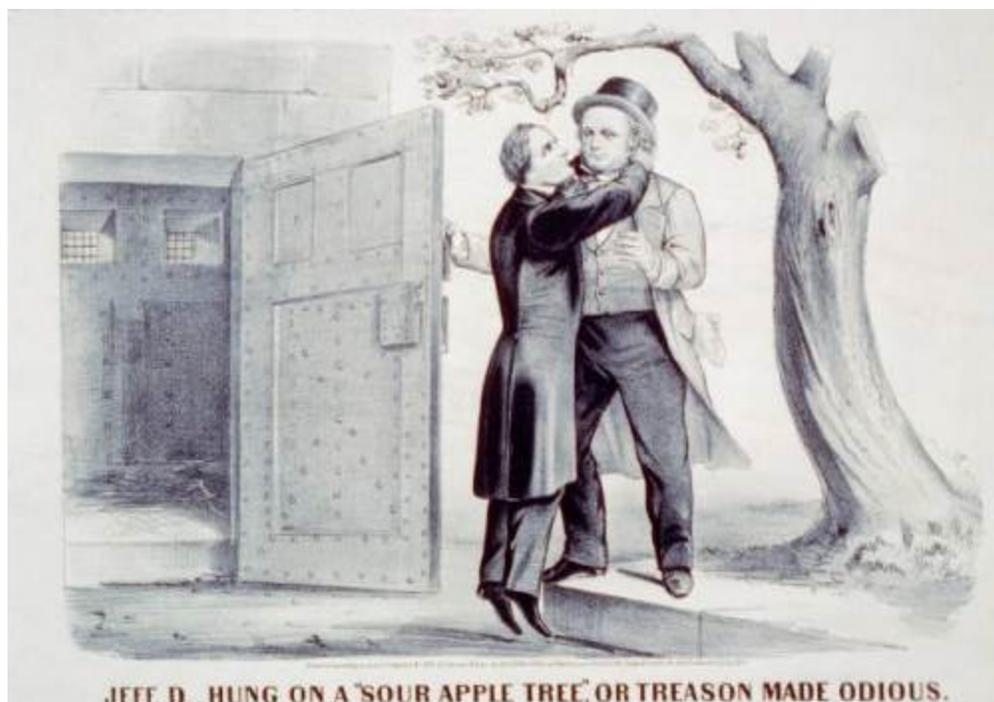
Chorus.

Now, if they hang him, it will be  
A moral lesson taught  
To those who might, in future time,  
Like him, be evil fraught.  
Some think it will be right—  
Whatever it may be.  
I really think they'll hang him  
To the Sour Apple-Tree !

Chorus.

**M. DE MARSAN, Publisher,  
84 Chatham Street, New-York.**

Sheet Music, Courtesy of Library Congress Photo Catalog



LC-USZC2-3218

<http://gettysburgcompiler.com/2014/10/13/soldiers-past-and-future-the-civil-war-and-great-war-meet-in-gettysburg/>