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Your Commencement Weekend Guide to Visiting Gettysburg

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Abstract

Commencement weekend is nearing, which has inspired us to compile a list of Civil War activities and programs you can take part in during your visit. The following events and activities are suitable whether you are a Civil War buff, general history enthusiast, or are just curious about learning more about the Civil War.
[excerpt]

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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

Your Commencement Weekend Guide to Visiting Gettysburg

By [*Abigail Major '19*](#)

Commencement weekend is nearing, which has inspired us to compile a list of Civil War activities and programs you can take part in during your visit. The following events and activities are suitable whether you are a Civil War buff, general history enthusiast, or are just curious about learning more about the Civil War.

On Campus

While you're on campus, check out some of the many wayside exhibits along the campus walkways to get a better idea of the College's role in the battle. During the battle, soldiers on both sides streamed through campus to get to—or away from—the action. Pennsylvania Hall, the venue for the Commencement ceremony, was used as a field hospital during the battle, treating some 700 soldiers.

Cemetery Ridge Hike: Crisis at the Union Center (NPS Program)

Meet at Ranger Site 1 behind the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center to hike to Cemetery Ridge—the defensive position for the Union Army. The Confederate Army attempted to attack the Union Army on July 2nd and 3rd of 1863, but were driven back each time. During this hike, you will be able to visit the site of Pickett's Charge and the Bloody Angle. This free event is offered Friday, May 18, 2018; Saturday, May 19, 2018; and Sunday, May 20, 2018, and occurs from 10:30 AM until 12:00 PM.

Hardtack, Mud, and Marching: The Life of the Civil War Soldier (NPS Program)

Meet at Ranger Site 1 behind the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum and Visitor Center. You will be able to gain a better understanding of the average Civil War soldier's experience. This free event is offered Friday, May 18, 2018; Saturday, May 19, 2018; and Sunday, May 20, 2018, and occurs from 2:00 PM until 2:45 PM.



Former CWI Fellow Savannah Rose '17 gives a battlefield program at Little Round Top. Courtesy of National Park Service.

Civil War Living History Weekends

A free event located throughout the Gettysburg National Military Park. Come visit Confederate and Union living history groups as they encamp at Spangler's Spring, Pitzer Woods, and the Pennsylvania Memorial.

Four Score and Seven Years Ago: Lincoln and the Soldiers' National Cemetery

Meet at the Taneytown Road Gate of the National Cemetery to visit where Abraham Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address was delivered. The cemetery is the final resting place for more than 3,500 Union soldiers who were killed during the Battle of Gettysburg. This free event is offered Friday, May 18, 2018; Saturday, May 19, 2018; and Sunday, May 20, 2018, and occurs from 11:00 AM until 11:45 AM; 2:00 PM until 2:45 PM.

Tip: If you are unable to make the set times, you can still visit. The Soldiers' National Cemetery is open from dawn and closes at sunset.

Did You Know? In 1863, Gettysburg College students walked through the town of Gettysburg to the [Gettysburg National Cemetery](#), and heard President Abraham Lincoln deliver the Gettysburg Address. Each year, first year students recreate this historic moment by participating in the [First-Year Walk](#).

Visit the David Wills House

The National Park Service museum opened in 2009—the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln’s birth. Walk throughout the house to learn about the story of David Wills, Abraham Lincoln, and the Gettysburg Address. The museum holds six galleries, and two rooms which have been restored to their 1863 appearance: David Wills’ office, and the bedroom where Lincoln stayed. The museum is open from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM. You can buy tickets online, or at the museum.

Visit the Rupp House History Center

John and Caroline Rupp, along with their six children, lived in this house when the battle of Gettysburg began. The center offers visitors an idea of what life was like for civilians during the Civil War, using the Rupp family as the prime example. The house is open on Friday and Saturday from 12:00 PM until 8:00 PM, and Sunday 12:00 PM until 5:00 PM. The public is welcome to explore the lower level of the Rupp House for free.

Visit the Shriver House Museum

George and Hettie Shriver, along with their two daughters, lived in the house during the battle of Gettysburg. This house has been restored to its 1860s appearance, and offers you the opportunity to embark on a guided tour of the house and learn more about what life was like during the mid-19th century. Guided tours last approximately thirty minutes, but remember to explore the grounds, garden, artifact display and museum shop on your own. The house is open on Friday and Saturday from 10:00 AM until 6:00 PM, and Sunday 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Purchase tickets at the museum.

Visit Mr. G’s Old Fashioned Ice Cream Shop

Stop by to enjoy some delicious homemade ice cream in a historic setting. The shop used to be a house where Confederate sharpshooters fired upon Union soldiers. Make sure to keep an eye out for the bullet holes on the south side of the building, the sycamore tree which is a witness tree from the battle of Gettysburg, and the well which dates back to the 1800s.