Just Fields: 30 June 1863

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Abstract
South of Gettysburg as midnight chimed on June 30th and the calendar flipped over to July, a quiet peach orchard sat at the corner of a narrow lane and the road to Emmitsburg. It was just a peach orchard.

Keywords
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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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South of Gettysburg as midnight chimed on June 30th and the calendar flipped over to July, a quiet peach orchard sat at the corner of a narrow lane and the road to Emmitsburg. It was just a peach orchard.

Across the road from that orchard, a large wooden barn stood stocked with hay, wheat and other precious agricultural products from the fields of the Sherfy family. It was a sturdy barn, built to last decades. It was just a barn.

Down that narrow lane, John Rose's wheatfield swayed in time as wind gusted by, the small kernels the fruits of a farmer's hard labor. It was just a wheatfield.

In town, in the darkened streets after the streetlights were extinguished, shutters hung on a massive brick house on the square and cast shadows of stark lines across the red bricks as the Wills family slept inside. It was just a house.

North of the square, students doused their lamps and pulled their covers over their tired frames, a hard Tuesday's work done with more classes, worship and studying to look forward to on Wednesday morning. It was just another Wednesday.

The night dissolved into morning. Light peaked over the eastern horizon and cast a hazy glow through thick clouds on the town. When daybreak came that morning of July 1st, Gettysburg was just a town.

Nothing more.