



# Gettysburg

*Noah Andre Trudeau*

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## Gettysburg Noah Andre Trudeau

America's Civil War raged for more than four years, but it is the three days of fighting in the Pennsylvania countryside in July 1863 that continues to fascinate, appall, and inspire new generations with its unparalleled saga of sacrifice and courage. From Chancellorsville, where General Robert E. Lee launched his high-risk campaign into the North, to the Confederates' last daring and ultimately-doomed act, forever known as Pickett's Charge, the battle of Gettysburg gave the Union army a victory that turned back the boldest and perhaps greatest chance for a Southern nation.

Now acclaimed historian Noah Andre Trudeau brings the most up-to-date research available to a brilliant, sweeping, and comprehensive history of the battle of Gettysburg that sheds fresh light on virtually every aspect of it. Deftly balancing his own narrative style with revealing firsthand accounts, Trudeau brings this engrossing human tale to life as never before.

## Gettysburg Details

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Author : Noah Andre Trudeau

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## From Reader Review Gettysburg for online ebook

### Emery Chase says

A different look at the battle.

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### Kevin says

This book was exactly what I was looking for or what I thought I was looking for. Having visited the Gettysburg battlefield a few years ago and having an intense interest in the Civil War for a few years before that, this book seemed right up my alley. And once again, it was all of that and more.

I was looking for an in depth overview (if that's not too much of an oxymoron as it sounds). I wanted something between detailing every soldier's days leading up to, during, and after the battle on the one side and something saying "3 days of hard fighting at Gettysburg happened." This fits that bill perfectly but I do believe that personally I was looking at something more the latter than the former.

It does indeed detail the battle, breaking it down not only day by day but also getting into as small margins as 15-minute intervals. These smaller intervals were pretty intense so they went smoothly and quickly. It's where the book went into regiments/brigades that my eyes began to gloss over. I tried to study before and during reading about who was in what regiment and under whom did they fight but try as I might, I hate to say that I eventually gave up because I felt that I was losing sight of what I wanted by constantly having to go back to my notes. I'm sure this is exactly the kind of detail that some may want but I found that I am not in that group.

On the other side, it does a fantastic job of helping to visualize the setups/battle lines and troop movements. I think this is more along the lines of what I was looking for. While the individual accounts were nice to help get into the battle itself, I feel there were a few too many for my liking. I also understand the need to detail the build up to the battle but there seemed to me a little much of that as well. I don't recall exactly but I think about 1/5th of the book was building to the battle.

I also didn't feel that the activities of newspaper reporters was all that valuable to the book and detract some from its overall vibe. It was somewhat jarring to be reading an action scene of a regiment charging and then switch to a newspaper man hopping on a train to Gettysburg. On the same token, the townspeople's accounts that were intermingled were something of a nice touch but too distracting for my tastes. I can see how this would add to the feel of the battle but it wasn't for me.

The review may come off more negative than what my actual impressions were but it's hard to nail down specific details of what I did enjoy because it was a large chunk of the book. The above negatives were the only issues I had with the book. Otherwise it would have been a 4 or more than likely a 5 star from me.

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### Sandy Carowick says

Detailed examination of the battle. Especially noteworthy are the views of residents during the battle. I also appreciated a complete list in the appendix of the units that participated.

## Steven Walle says

This book was impeccably researched and written. It shows the three day bloodiest and most deadly battle on American soil ever, from the points of view of the President, the officers, the enlisted man, and the civilian. It explains all the strategy and the mistakes that were made due to poor nutrition and almost starvation of the troops, to the difficulty of communication over long distances at that period of time.

I would highly recommend this book to all history buffs, and to all war buffs.

Enjoy and Be Blessed.

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## Captain Sir Roddy, R.N. (Ret.) says

This was an amazing book, and ever-so-well written! I have been to Gettysburg National Military Park several times over the course of my adult life, and I never fail but to be astounded at the overall importance of this battle and the Union Army being able to ultimately prevail over the Confederate Army during this battle on July 1-3, 1863. The other important element of this battle that Americans need to understand is the sheer ferocity with which this battle was fought between the two sides. It really was blood-letting on an almost unimaginable scale with about 45,000 men--blue and grey--killed, wounded, or missing over the three days of battle in this little Pennsylvanian town.

In 2002, Noah Andre Trudeau published his detailed account of this significant episode in American history, and it is a solid winner. With 65 superb maps, this is virtually an hour-by-hour, or blow-by-blow account of the battle, and for much of the book leaves the reader almost breathless with anticipation as one turns the pages, as this battle really was a very near-run thing and could just as easily have turned to the favor of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

A lot of books have been written about this seminal battle of the American Civil War, and it is easy to see why. The Battle of Gettysburg is generally considered to be the "High Tide of the Confederacy", and with Lee's loss at Gettysburg on July 1-3, and the Confederate surrender of Vicksburg to Grant's Army on July 4th, it really did become just a matter of time before the war would end in victory for Lincoln and the Union. I remember reading Edwin B. Coddington's *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* many, many years ago, and while Coddington's analysis is truly superb, I think that most readers are likely to enjoy Trudeau's even more. I've also yet to read Stephen Sears' one-volume account, *Gettysburg*, but have it on my 'Mount TBR' shelf waiting for me. Finally, if you're interested in fictional accounts of the Battle of Gettysburg, I urge you to read Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels* and the very recent novel, *Cain at Gettysburg*, by Ralph Peters.

If you're at all interested in the American Civil War, American history, or military strategy and tactics, I highly recommend Noah Andre Trudeau's book, *Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage*. Finally, it is worth pointing out that the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg is coming up next year--July 1-3, 2013. This book would be worth reading between now and then and ponder the consequences.

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## Robin Friedman says

The Battle of Gettysburg is, as Trudeau aptly points out in the Preface to his book, "*Gettysburg: A Testing of*

Courage", "one of the most unforgettable sagas in United States history." The Battle offers ample opportunity for reflection. It invites every reader to think and to work out for him or herself an understanding of the Battle and its significance.

Trudeau's book offers a comprehensive account of the Battle of Gettysburg, beginning with the factors which led to the Confederacy's second invasion of the North and concluding with President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address (November 19, 1863.) He sees the invasion, and the Battle of Gettysburg, as an attempt by General Robert E. Lee to wage a "war of annihilation" by destroying the Union Army and forcing a recognition of Southern independence. His account emphasizes the sheer ferocity and desperation of the fighting during these three terrible days (July 1 -- July 3, 1863) of the Battle. The subtitle of the book, "A Testing of Courage" describes its theme succinctly as Trudeau focuses on the carnage and the fighting over tremendous odds and hardship by the two contending armies. There was extraordinary heroism displayed by both sides during these days, by soldiers, by their officers and by civilians who witnessed the Battle. Trudeau's account of the Battle focuses on the fighting, the valor, and the suffering of the participants.

Trudeau's book bears comparison with Steven Sears's comprehensive study of the Battle of Gettysburg published this year. I found that Sears's book had the larger sweep. The individual chapters are, on the whole, longer and Sears's account tends to show how the events of one day cascaded into the events of the next. Also, Sears is much more prone to editorializing during the course of his narrative, offering the reader a point-by-point discussion of decisions by the armies' high commands.

Trudeau's account, in contrast, is more episodic. His chapters tend to be shorter, and each chapter is punctuated into short sections and paragraphs. Trudeau shifts his scenes, as Sears does not, from one portion of the battle to another. Thus, while giving the reader discussions of the progress of the Picket -- Pettigrew charge on July 3, Trudeau shifts focus several times to discuss the development of the cavalry battle between Jeb Stuart and George Custer that went on at roughly the same time for the Union rear. As for the July 2 Battle, Trudeau tends to shift the reader's attention between the battle for the Union left and the battle for its right. Trudeau is less prone than Sears to interrupt his narrative with editorializing about the various command decisions (although he does some of this) and more inclined to let the events of the day speak for themselves.

Trudeau spends more time than does Sears on day 2 of the Battle, particularly the uncoordinated yet fierce Southern attacks on the Union left; and Sears is more thorough on day 3. Sears devotes a great deal of attention to Lee's retreat from Pennsylvania following the battle and to Meade's pursuit. Trudeau's account is short on these matters. Sears' account is sharper in its portrayal of the Lee - Longstreet disagreements over the conduct of the Battle and also makes more of the impact of Jeb Stuart's absence during the Pennsylvania campaign. Thus in some ways, it takes a rather more holistic view of the Battle than does Trudeau's study.

I found both Trudeau's and Sears's accounts of the Battle of Gettysburg fascinating. A reading of either book, or of both books, is time well spent. The books will encourage the reader to think about the meaning of our Civil War and of the role of the tragedy of these days and years in forming our nation.

Robin Friedman

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### **Peter C Lyon says**

An excellent book chalk full of micro-level details. However, the Kindle edition contains numerous silly mistakes and could use copyediting.

## Vyvyan says

Phenomenally gripping.

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## Charles Cummings says

If you are looking for more details on the battle than is in the Shelby Foote or Bruce Catton Civil War volumes, than this is the place to be. One objection was the lack of footnotes, etc. However, if you are just interested in the story and you aren't actually going to check up on the author's work, then it really doesn't matter, in my opinion.

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## Paul says

Good, worthwhile but it has been a while since I have read it and I cannot remember specifics. Not the best book on Gettysburg. Cf. High Tide at Gettysburg for my favorite.

Dec. 8, 2015. I just read (reread?) this book. Now that I think about it, I may not have read it. Be that as it may my judgment of it is much higher than my prior judgment. The author unashamedly says he is writing another book about Gettysburg in order to put together the new insights from more focused works. He does a very good job.

On pp. 420-421, he gives a good summary of his take on Lee and Meade. His take on Lee is much the same as the author of High Tide at Gettysburg, whose summary of the Confederate leadership failings I think is still one of the best.

"July 2 laid bare the failings of Lee's command style and the dysfunctional nature of his army's operational culture. The broad front position Lee acceded to effectively isolated each corps, demanding even greater coordination on the part of his principal officers, few of whom rose to the occasion. There was no unity of purpose among Longstreet, Hill, and Ewell, only an ambiguous understanding of events that was replete with shades of interpretation. Lacking any clear direction from the top, division and brigade commanders were left on their own to determine how the overall assault was proceeding and what role they were meant to play in it.

From Hood's "digression" (which modified a modification of a busted plan) to Robert Rodes' inability to act with celerity or clarity, the contributions of Lee's division commanders were clouded by a fog or misunderstanding and miscommunication that muffled opportunities and needlessly squandered lives. Lee's responsibility for this miasma is painfully obvious. He did not impose his will upon his corps commanders, but neither did he convey a sufficient sense of purpose to enable them to operate according to any commonly understood objectives.

The breakdown of Confederate field intelligence this day was astounding. It resulted in an entire battle plan (such as it was) based on fatally incorrect information."

Similarly, Trudeau takes a hard look at Meade.

"On this day of his greatest martial trial, George Gordon Meade operated more as a sort of supernumerary corps commander rather than as an army leader. Once Daniel Sickles' insubordination had derailed his defensive scheme, Meade began to behave like a fireman, always drawn to the flames and ignoring wisps of smoke portending danger elsewhere. ... Ironically enough, had Meade and Sickles worked in tandem--that is, had the line taken by the Third Corps been shared with the Fifth, and had command matters been resolved and fallback plans established--Longstreet's troops would have been hard pressed to achieve any of their goals."

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### Mac McCormick III says

My most recent read was Noah Andre Trudeau's *Gettysburg: A Testing of Courage*. Many books have been written about the battle at Gettysburg, so you're easily forgiven if you ask - why bother reading another one? The answer is that I previously read Trudeau's book *Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea* and enjoyed it tremendously. *Southern Storm* was compelling and detailed, including the perspectives of not only the northern invaders and southern defenders but the population they were fighting among as well. Trudeau also took the time to explore the generals' decisions and thought processes. If *Gettysburg* was written like *Southern Storm* was, I thought that it too would be a great read.

The book is divided into sections. Trudeau begins with a section on the prelude to the battle, examining Lee's reasoning for the invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania as well as the Army of Northern Virginia's move northward and the Army of the Potomac's response to it. As the armies gather around Gettysburg and the battle begins, each day becomes a section of the book. Finally, as the Army of Northern Virginia begins to fall back southward a section covers their retreat and the fallout of the battle.

Trudeau's account of Gettysburg is very detailed. He doesn't stop at the Corps or Division level when examining the fighting; instead he gets right down to the regiment and company level. Using individual officers' and soldiers' accounts of the battle, the story is at times told from their perspective. When writing about an entire war or a theater of a war, this much detail is problematic, but when narrowing the focus down to a single battle, it sheds light on not just how things happened, but why things happened the way they did. Furthermore, he doesn't focus on just specific parts of the battle, he focuses on it as a whole. Day by day, hour by hour, his account demonstrates how successes and failures on one part of the field influenced what happened on other parts of the field. He also looks at how Lee and Meade managed their armies, why decisions and orders were made, and how those orders were interpreted. He considers how the personalities of the commanders and their interpersonal relationships effected the battle. Furthermore, he includes not only the accounts of the military participants, but accounts from newspaper reporters and citizens of Gettysburg. The citizen's perspectives are particularly useful; you not only get an understanding about how they were effected by the battle, you get a non-military look at how the battle unfolded.

One of Trudeau's missions in writing *Gettysburg* was to dispel some myths about the battle. Overall, one of the myths Trudeau examines is the one that lays a great deal of fault for the Confederate loss at Stuart's absence; instead of blaming Stuart, he shows how Stuart was delayed and why he was as late as well as showing that Lee did in fact have some cavalry available to him. On the first day, he looks at whether it was Heth's decisions that brought about the battle, coming to the conclusion that it was not Heth's but Ewell's actions that brought about the battle. On the third day after, he holds that Lee had nothing to apologize for; instead that he considered what had happened on the previous days and made a "well-considered plan." You may or

may not agree with his conclusions, but Trudeau does make solid arguments for all but the last. He argues that "If all the parts had worked as they were designed to do, the grand attack might very well have succeeded" yet throughout the book there are criticisms of his command style, exposures of fissures in the command structure, and evidence that Lee overestimated the damage done to the Army of the Potomac that weakens his argument that Lee didn't have anything to apologize for.

I only have one other complaint about the book, the final section on the Army of Northern Virginia's withdrawal and the battle's fallout. The first four sections of the book are incredibly detailed accounts of movement and fighting but the last section lacks that same detail. It would have made the book longer than its already considerable length but I still felt somewhat shortchanged at the end.

Despite that reservation, I thoroughly enjoyed reading Gettysburg, finding that it indeed was written similarly to Southern Storm. It's easily the best book I've read about the battle and one that I'd easily recommend to anyone who wants to learn about the battle. It could be easy to get lost in the details of the command structure, but Trudeau's writing style generally prevents it and there is an order of battle for both armies at the back of the book if you forget which brigade, division, or corps a unit belongs to. He also makes frequent use of maps which allow the reader to visualize the relationships of units on the field and their movements. As usual I read the Kindle version of the book and unusually, these maps were of excellent quality and placed with the relevant text. Rating this book took a lot of consideration; I really wanted to give it 5 stars but the lack of detail in that last section compared to the previous four just nagged on me. The result is a four star rating, but don't let that deter you from reading this book; it truly is a must read on one of our nation's most famous battles.

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### **Josh Liller says**

I have been an avid reader all my life, but in 2009 I picked up Gettysburg by Stephen W. Sears before my first visit to the Gettysburg battlefield. My visit there (and to Antietam) coupled with Sears' excellent writings were a life-changing experience for me.

When reading about Gettysburg in preparation for an upcoming presentation, rather than reread Sears and I decided to pick up another book on the battle (this one). I first read Trudeau's writing in his excellent Southern Storm: Sherman's March to the Sea and was interested to see how he would deal with Gettysburg differently. The two books are of very similar length and both came out around the time of the 140th anniversary of the battle, although Trudeau was published far enough ahead of Sears that the former appears in the bibliography of the latter.

In a purely by-the-page-numbers look, Sears has one notable advantage: a proper treatment of the ten day retreat from Gettysburg, something Trudeau skims over. It is a bit surprising, especially since both give nearly the same number of pages to the campaign leading up to July 1st. For the three days of battle, Trudeau uses more pages (mostly at the expense of the post-battle events), with the difference in page count being most notable on the first day. However, I don't think either author shortchanges any of the three days. Both books also contain endnote citations and bibliography.

The main content difference is Trudeau's focus on more human interest stories, including civilians. In terms of sheer enjoyable reading, this gives an advantage to Trudeau. However, this comes at the cost of a more detailed look at the events themselves.

Trudeau does have an advantage in maps. Sears' are not bad, but in the fashion of "Southern Storm" (which contained day-by-day maps of Sherman's march) Trudeau delivers more maps which are often better detailed and down to the regimental level. At the same time, they are frequent enough and large enough not to lose sight of the big picture.

I also have to praise this book's almost slavish dedication to chronological order of events. Historians usually write in a loose chronological order, but Trudeau makes a better than usual job of trying to show parallel events happening in parallel. At times this causes some repetitiveness, but I value the perspective it provides.

In conclusion, this is a really good book that offers enough stylistic differences from its peer. I think more casual readers will find more enjoyable reading from Trudeau while Sears will be preferred by bigger Civil War buffs (although they will likely find Trudeau also well worth the read).

(I offer no comparison to *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command* which seems to remain the most highly regarded book on the campaign, but which I have not yet read.)

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### **Jeffrey H Strickler says**

#### **Wordy History**

Accurate in detail, this reworking of the battle of Gettysburg is useful only for those aficionados who delight in the trivial details of the specific commanders of even the smallest units. More confusing than a Russian novel, this is a rendering that is better if missed

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### **Frances says**

This book was impeccably researched and written. It shows the three day bloodiest and most deadly battle on American soil ever, from the points of view of the President, the officers, the enlisted man, and the civilian. It explains all the strategy and the mistakes that were made due to poor nutrition and almost starvation of the troops, to the difficulty of communication over long distances at that period of time.

I would highly recommend this book to all history buffs, and to all war buffs.

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### **Steve says**

In my opinion, The best book I have ever read on the Battle of Gettysburg. What I truly liked about this book was that it was broken down on the dates the battle was fought. Very detailed and Highly Recommended.

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