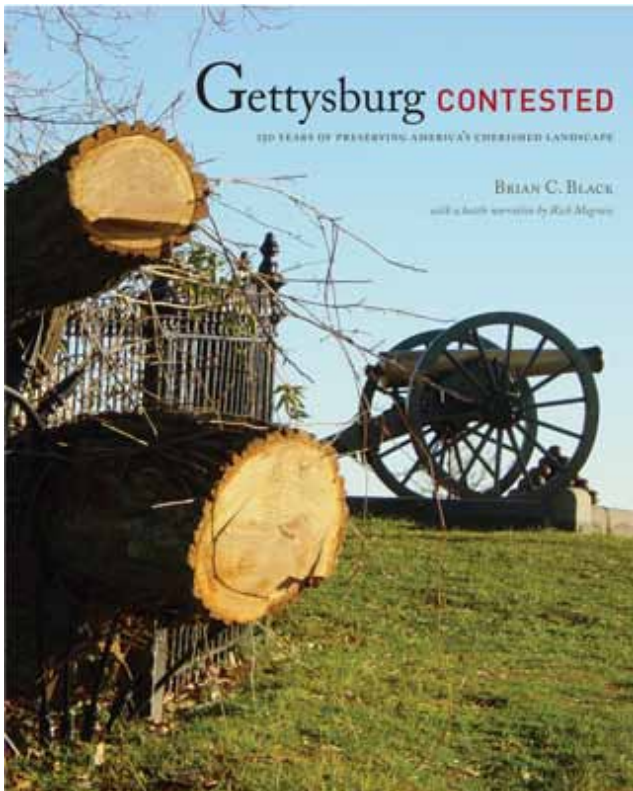


**Gettysburg Contested:
150 Years of Preserving America's
Cherished Battlefield**

by Brian Black
with a battle narrative by Richard B. Megraw



Ever since the American Revolution, sacred sites representing key events in American history have been crucial to the nation's efforts to formalize its emerging story. And, following the Civil War, national history became a primary vehicle for patriotic and spiritual reconstruction, with sites such as historic battlefields serving important roles of inspiration and reflection during the nation's subsequent dark periods, from the Great Depression to the Vietnam War.

Gettysburg Contested traces these patterns back to the well-known field of battle of July 1-3, 1863, earning for it a new and lasting legacy as sacred ground that remains today, 150 years later. But the landscape history and record of preservation at Gettysburg is complicated, for Gettysburg has wrestled large issues, ranging from public vs. private development, to the role of local vs. state vs. federal governments, to the actual implementation of commemoration on the battlefield itself.

While the story of the battle is ingrained in the fabric of American memory, Black's account considerably broadens the scope. Never before has the battlefield's story been told so completely, offering layer upon layer, story upon story, to great effect. Gettysburg becomes a springboard to understanding more fully the nation's need for sacred symbols—and cherished landscapes—of America's past. In *Gettysburg Contested*, America's treasured battlefield becomes the great laboratory for how Americans preserve and honor the past. Like America itself, the story continues to unfold right before our eyes.

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Tourists at the monument to the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry at the site of Pickett's charge, 2002. Photograph © David Wharton.



Girl posing at the Pennsylvania Monument, 2011. Photograph © David Wharton.

FROM THE INTRODUCTION

"The efforts to maintain the memory of Gettysburg have focused predominantly on the landscape that hosted the battling Confederate and Union forces in the hot summer of 1863. The landscape has passed through many differing episodes in the culture of historic preservation, many of which involved neither the National Park Service nor the federal government. Although Gettysburg has often acted as a measuring stick from which lessons of historic preservation could be applied nationwide, the unique importance of the battlefield in American history and culture has also, at times, made it very much an exception to national trends in preservation. Thus, the story of commemoration, memorialization, and landscape change at Gettysburg since the battle of 1863 offers important lessons to our collective understanding not only of that pivotal event, but the larger idea that President Abraham Lincoln conveyed just four and a half months later in his famous Gettysburg address of November 19: how best to remember, how best to consecrate the past so that those who died here 'did not die in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.'" —Brian Black



Tourists at the Pennsylvania Monument, 2011. Photograph © David Wharton.



Tourists photographing at Little Round Top, 2011. Photograph © David Wharton.