

Troop 49 – The Pathfinders
Gettysburg, PA
November, 2010

Friday, November 5:

We left OLPH at 6:15 am and headed down a dark, windy, rainy (albeit not too crowded) 287. The weather cleared up as we hit I-78 for an easier ride into eastern Pennsylvania. We assembled in the lobby of the Harley-Davidson factory at 9:30 for our tour and were split into 2 groups. The factory was almost idle as H-D has a 4-day workweek, but we were able to observe fenders being created from flat sheets of stainless steel. We also watch a machine performing cut outs with a laser.

We arrived at the National Park Visitors Center and watched a 20-minute movie on the history of the battle and then proceeded to observe the **Gettysburg Cyclorama**, a painting by the French artist [Paul Philippoteaux](#) depicting "[Pickett's Charge](#)", the climactic [Confederate](#) attack on the [Union](#) forces. The Center was renovated in 2008 and the diorama is truly an amazing experience. It is an oil-on-canvas painting depicting the climax of the battle on July 3rd, showing Pickett's Charge. The painting is 27! feet high and is hung on the circumference of the circular room, which is about 50 feet in diameter. A recording plays, and then includes lights flashing and sounds of the battle. It was a very moving thing to experience and a history lesson in itself learning about its creation.

Afterwards many checked out the gift shop and a few ventured into the museum. We started on the Historic Gettysburg trail and our first stop was the Leister farmhouse which was used by Union General George Meade for his headquarters. A woman was sitting on the porch and introduced herself as Lydia Leister, who lived there at the time of the battle. She apologized for not being in costume and went on to tell us about how she took refuge at a friend's farm and returned after the battle to a decimated farm with her livestock all killed. Yet she did not give up and was able to make a living again on the farm.

NOTE: As we passed through Ziegler's grove (prior to the Bryant House/Farm), someone asked about a 20th century rectangular building with a white, round section, that appeared to be unused. Wikipedia explains that the cyclorama was housed and displayed here prior to its restoration.

We continued on the trail through downtown Gettysburg and observed many points of Interest in addition to those in the guide book. We stopped at the Wills house, where Lincoln stayed overnight and worked on the Gettysburg address. One of the interesting facts we learned was the impact of the battle on the civilian population, which numbered 2,400. Think of the town dealing with the onslaught of 160,000 soldiers and over 30,000 horses, not only fighting on their farms and homes, but consuming whatever resources they could find.

We continued on and entered the Johnny Reb trail after passing the National Military Cemetery, where we paused for a moment of reflection, viewing the many headstones of fallen soldiers.

We arrived at Artillery Ridge Campground, quickly set up the tents, and got dinner going. The scouts prepared their meal quickly and finished prior to the adults finishing their appetizers. Dave Dishian prepared a delicious vegetable soup and fajitas adorned with guacamole. The families staying at a nearby hotel departed right before dinner.

The scouts explored the camp, and visited our neighbors, a troop which graciously left us some much-appreciated firewood and many horseback enthusiasts, who were in town for a show. The scouts really enjoyed checking out the various horses in their trailers, and their owners were quite gracious in letting us do so.

Lights out were out at approximately 10pm as we had another day of hiking ahead.

Saturday, November 6:

Reveille (courtesy of my IPOD) sounded at 7:00am followed by breakfast and the scouts and adults made bag lunches to take on hike. We started on the Billy Yank trail at 8:40 am near the Visitors Center. We headed up towards the "center" of the battlefields, admiring the many impressive monuments erected to honor the various companies and regiments of the Union along Cemetery Ridge.

We stopped at many points noted in the trail guide and listened to the narrative read from it which described in some detail the type of fighting which occurred at various points of the battle.

We spent some time navigating the various trails up to Little Round Top, and stopped there for lunch. The view was very impressive, and gave a good understanding of why the Union troops took command of that area and used it to fire their cannons at the Confederates.

We stepped up the pace for the second half of the hike as we wanted to make sure we were back for the 3pm bus to the Eisenhower Farm. The troop responded in kind, with everyone keeping pace (save Dan Fern, who commented he wish he had his aircraft).

Keeping with what we hope will be a recurring tradition on future trips to Gettysburg, We performed a reenactment of Pickett's Charge of 1863 (and the Troop 49 Charge of 2006) across the battlefield - carrying the Troop 49 Flag, the Union flag, and the Confederate Battle flag. (Photos are on the Kodak website).

At the cross road, two scouts waved the Union and Confederate flags to what appeared to be some confused automobile passengers driving by. Perhaps they thought they were witnessing a reenactment!

We made it back to the Visitors Center with plenty of time to spare, so we relaxed, visited the gift shop, relaxed, and visited the gift shop. We boarded the bus for the Eisenhower Estate/Farm and I think some of us wanted to stay on it and not get off ☺. It was pretty neat to see how Eisenhower and his wife, Mamie lived on the farm in

post-presidential fashion. The home had a very comfortable feeling to it and was not overtly furnished. Ike even had his own putting green out back! Afterwards, it was back to camp for another sumptuous dinner by Chef Dave, followed by a reading of the Gettysburg Address, a Flag retirement ceremony and some Civil War-era music from the Ken Burn's documentary.

Matt F and Andrew D attended one of the many Ghost Walking tours in town and came back very excited about what they had experienced. Lights were out at 11 and the temps dipped to 27 degrees during the night! Many thanks to the Cold Weather tips on our troop website!

Sunday, November 7th:

Reveille commenced at 7:00 am, followed by breakfast, cleanup and pack up . We departed the campground at 9:00 with some choosing stop at Cabela's on the way back. Needless to say, it was another great Troop 49 experience.

Submitted Dec 21, 2010,

Jim Folkerts