

Select Comments, Answers and Observations from Garry Adelman on History's Gettysburg production, spring 2011.

I am perfectly aware that this may make people who disliked the show even madder. My purpose, however, is to demonstrate that they did respond to the hundreds of historical inaccuracies.

In no particular order, here are fewer than 10% of the comments, answers and suggestions Scott Hartwig and I offered. Those below are all mine. I hope you enjoy the lack of context (hey, just like the show!) for some of these. I think most of you will know what I am addressing in almost every case, though.

- If you can, please change Railway Cut to its known name "Railroad Cut."
- Cannons at Gettysburg were not fired by pouring powder down the vent and then lighting it with an open flame. This is a pre-civil war method. Cannons at Gettysburg were fired using friction primers—small implements inserted into the vent which when attached to a lanyard and pulled, they set off a small charge. This will require, I know, changing the shots in which you use the linstock as well as the CGI piece where the powder is poured down the vent, but this part of the production will, I strongly feel, get skewered if it's not changed somehow.
- "after less than an hour, 3000 are dead." This number describes total casualties—not dead.
- "disease kills twice as many soldiers as bombs or bullets." This is a great turn of phrase but "bombs" doesn't really make sense. Could you say "Bayonets and bullets?" Cannonballs and bullets? Iron and lead?
- "both sides agree to exchange or parole" this strongly implies that a) there were no prisoners marched away from Gettysburg when in fact most were and b) that there was some sort of special arrangement for Gettysburg. It was quite the reverse if anything. Can we say something like "have nowhere to put thousands of captives. Some are exchanged or paroled instead..."
- This is not the quote. General Hancock called it, "the strongest natural position I ever saw."
- "and the iron brigade's 6th Wisconsin corps" The 6th was a regiment. Leave off the word "corps"
- "Dawes and his men dig all night creating miles of defenses" Dawes' men contributed but by no means dug miles of defenses themselves. Can we say "Dawes's men and other soldiers dig all night..."
- The dead figures given at the beginning of the act actually describe the dead wounded and captured. We either need to change the wording to say "casualties" instead of dead or "killed wounded or missing"
- As I mentioned to you, Meade has 3 stars on his shoulders and he should only have two.
- No no no. Sickles men defended much of the line all the way from Devil's Den to north of the orchard on the Emmitsburg road. That pitted them and the Union Fifth Corps

against all of hoods and mclaws divisions 23000 yanks against 14000 Rebs. At the orchard sickles had perhaps 2200 men plus lots of cannons.

- The 1st and 3rd divisions are fighting heavily to defend the town but Humiston is in the second division and that one brigade of that 2nd division does indeed serve as the last line to cover the town. If there's any way to leave out the division stuff, you'd be better off, I think.
- "Communication with Washington has become nearly impossible" and "Communication with Washington takes days" These are exaggerations. A soldier could ride the news in days but there were closer telegraph stations in Maryland and some of the wig-waming mitigated the distance as well. I fear this section in general makes too much of the telegraph and communications for 3 reasons: It makes it seem like Lincoln is directing battles from afar via the telegraph. This was not the case. It also makes it seem like Meade is at some disadvantage for not being connected—this is also not the case. Finally, it implies that the telegraph is at most battles run directly to the front and actually regularly used between parts of an army concentrated for battle. Not necessarily. If you choose to rewrite this section, I think most of the same graphics can be used and in the same time, but the story here is that Meade has available to him various means of communications. Among them, the telegraph, which at Gettysburg was cut and did not run to the battlefield. For shorter distances Meade used the flags and (this would take a change of graphics) for shorter distances--places that lacked signal stations or for particularly important orders--men simply rose on horseback and delivered orders verbally. I will be pleased to work with you to change this if you'd like.
- 21000 troops attacking Meade's left. I would place a more accurate figure at 18000 (7000 in Hood, 7000 in McLaws and only 4000 of Anderson's 7000 man division actually attacking).
- Not a super big deal here, but: "pulls 12000 troops from the right flank to defend Cemetery Ridge" Meade sends lots of troops to plug gaps and bolster his left, but these went generically to the Union left. By no means did 12000 reinforcements defend cemetery ridge—most went to Little round top, the Wheatfield and it would be better to say "pulls more than 12000 troops from his right flank and moves them to his left flank."
- "sitting ducks for artillery at the foot of cemetery ridge" I would say more correctly "on" cemetery ridge.
- On a particularly cool CGI. The CGI shows a round cannonball shot out of a rifled cannon. This would not happen. The two are incompatible—rifled cannons fire shells which are made to spin by the rifling grooves. It's barely visible in the first shot but it's particularly focused on in the CG that shows the loading.
- "the Baltimore Pike, the main road to Washington." As the name implies, this is the road to Baltimore, not DC. The key here is that it's Meade's last good road left should he need to retreat. Perhaps "the Baltimore Pike, the last good road available to Meade."
- "but across lower Culp's hill rebel troops are overwhelming Union positions." It would be far more accurate if we could say "rebel troops are

entering Union positions, some of which were left unoccupied as Meade reinforced his left." Something like that. This whole section is tough. The intense fighting was on upper Culp's Hill but there was rather little on the lower hill where Howard was...until the next day. I think Howard's unit did fight near the breastworks they took so I think we're OK. I would only hope to qualify that Meade's movement of soldiers rendered some of his Culp's hill positions undefended.

- If you want to make it even more dramatic, you can change 600 yards from the Baltimore Pike to "less than 500 yards." I just double checked on Google Earth.
- "For the first and only time in the battle, Meade attacks." This is not correct. Meade attacked and counterattacked on several occasions and this attack on lower Culp's Hill is specifically a counterattack to recover positions lost. The Yankees for instance counterattacked at Devil's Den and the Wheatfield, with them changing hands 3 and 6 times respectively. It would be correct to say something like. "Around Culp's Hill, Meade launches his largest offensive of the battle."
- "Hundreds of cannon are lining up on Seminary ridge..." This is too many. I don't know if we can even say it's 200. Could we say "more than 150 cannons?"
- "13,000 men with Pickett and Davis will charge." Two issues here. The total number is well accepted as close to 12,000. Also, as written it implies that there's Pickett and then there's Davis and that's the force. If we could get the following across, it will solve both. "12,000 men, including Pickett's Division, Davis's brigade and others..." Make sure you change to 12,000 later references to 13,000 as well.
- During Schurz's quote about the silence, I find the close-up on the soldier apparently warming his hands in from of the fire on such a hot day very odd. Perhaps that's not what he's doing but it seems that way.
- If the CGI that shows projectiles in flight could include some spinning shells, too, it would be more realistic.
- "If he can break through, his men will be able to attack the flanks of the enemy." This off base. In breaking through the center, it would indeed create new flanks (Meade would have 4 instead of two) but this won't be clear to viewers. The key is, if he breaks though, he will cut the Union army in two and Lee can defeat these disparate parts in detail.
- Gage: "Another shell has tore his left arm off" but just a second before, he is using his left hand and arm. You could say "tore into his left arm."
- After the very cool CGI and special attention to the 3" Ordnance Rifle, the CGI shows a cannonball flying through the air. This *absolutely* has to be a shell. Even the narration says "shell." Rifles don't fire cannonballs and smoothbore cannons don't fire shells.
- "Canister shells are made up of" It's just "canister" or "canister rounds" not "canister shells."
- "The farthest any rebel gets at Gettysburg." This statement is fraught with real and potential issues. First off, a regiment in Pettigrew's brigade is commonly credited with getting further east and Pickett's men don't get as far east but do break through

the Union line. Either way, it will be hard to justify the statement and I think it should be removed or toned down.

- The melee at the angle shows several close-ups of CS troops covered in wet mud. Not sure if there's anything you can do about this, but it's not in keeping with elements that day. It was dry and hot. In the farther pans of the melee nobody seems to be muddy at all.
- "eight times the US casualties as on D-Day." This is probably OK, but the DDAY Museum uses a higher US casualty figure than the usually used 6000, I think. If you went with their higher figures, you could still say "several times greater than D-day and with far less advanced weapons." This would also work well should you choose to go with Scott's Gettysburg casualty figures in the last email.
- "But at Gettysburg the Confederate spirit is broken." The CS troops were not happy, to be sure, but contemporary evidence suggests that their spirit is far from "broken." Could we say "dealt a stinging blow" or "The reality of such a tremendous loss weighs upon the Confederates"? Something like that.
- The shoe thing is complete myth and has been completely and widely discredited. I would remove this at all costs. There was no warehouse and the source for this came more than a decade after the battle and from one with motives to add myth.
- I would say "died six weeks ago." He definitely wasn't killed and even saying mortally wounded could be a stretch since really he died of Pneumonia.
- He took command at 3am on the 28th, so I would say it's his fourth day. I know it depends on how you count but I don't think we can call fewer than 96 hours five days.
- This is a real stretch. Even if Meade knew that Pickett was the only fresh division, Pickett was not yet in position in the Center and the BMI could not even precisely know that when it happened. From what I know, Meade used his own logic to predict the assault point, based upon the reports of his field commanders and his knowledge of Lee's style. This block gives the BMI way too much credit. Meade knew that he had been attacked on both flanks and didn't need the BMI to tell him that. I like leaving in the part about BMI learning of which unit was missing, but for the prediction, I would strongly suggest that you credit Meade with his statement to his general posted in the center (Gibbon) "If the enemy attacks tomorrow, it will be on your front."
- The main point here is not that trails dug into the ground. Rather it's that the stillness of the day resulted in smoke just hanging there (unlike usually when even a light breeze would carry smoke away) rendered sight lines obscured and THAT is why they continued to overshoot. The script implies that this Gettysburg was a rarity in gun trails digging in and that the gunners, army wide, were unable to deal with this. This is incorrect. I would change the whole focus here to inability to see through the hanging smoke.
- The 11th Mississippi (company A was the Grays) was not with the brigade at the fight in the RR cut on July 1. They did join and fight on the 3rd in Pickett's Charge.