

Perspectives in Military History 48th Annual Lecture Series

“The Confederate Approach on Harrisburg: The Gettysburg Campaign’s Northernmost Reaches”

Mr. Cooper H. Wingert
Author

The Gettysburg Campaign and the resulting battle is among the most studied topics in military history. As General Robert E. Lee’s army coalesced around the tiny crossroads town, a significant yet lesser-known skirmish, 38 miles to northeast, had a distinct impact on the larger battle: the June 1863 Battle of Sporting Hill, Harrisburg. The fight resulted from Lee’s larger goal for an invasion of Pennsylvania, a takeover of the capital, and a forcing of the state, and possibly the Union, to capitulate. Lee sent Brigadier General Albert Jenkins to Harrisburg to confirm the city’s vulnerability and to increase the number of rebel troops in the area. A Harrisburg militia out on a reconnaissance mission met and forced Jenkins’ cavalry back at Sporting Hill into Carlisle. This led to a fight, which left the area ablaze as another of Lee’s cavalry brigades shelled Carlisle and the Union general defending the city refused repeated demands for surrender. The Confederates set the entirety of the U.S. Army’s Carlisle Barracks aflame before moving, resigned, towards Gettysburg, leaving Harrisburg and the surrounding country under Union control. An overview of this interval, as well as its role in the Gettysburg Campaign, is presented in detail in Mr. Cooper H. Wingert’s 2012 book, *The Confederate Approach on Harrisburg: The Gettysburg Campaign’s Northernmost Reaches*. Wingert will give a lecture about his book and the extensive research that informed it, some of which he conducted at the U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center.

Mr. Wingert is a well-known author and historian, especially in Pennsylvania and the Harrisburg region. He is the author of three published books about Harrisburg and the Gettysburg Campaign in the Civil War including, *The Confederate Approach on Harrisburg*. In 2013, at the age of 15, Wingert released, *Emergency Men!: The 26th Pennsylvania Volunteer Militia* and *Harrisburg and the Civil War: Defending the Keystone of the Union*. Prior to 2013, he published his first piece, *A Virginian in the Vanguard: The Diary of Lt. Hermann Schuricht, 14th Virginia Cavalry Regiment*, at the age of 12. He draws inspiration from historical societies, archives, and Civil War collections across Pennsylvania and the northeast. Wingert’s future ambitions include studying history in college and completing a book on the pre-Civil War period.

DATE: Wednesday, June 17, 2015

TIME: Doors open at 6:30 PM and the talk begins at 7:15 PM.

PLACE: USAHEC, Visitor and Education Center, Multi-Purpose Room

For updates and any last minute changes in meeting times and places, please check the USAHEC homepage: www.USAHEC.org or call the Information Desk: (717) 245-3972.