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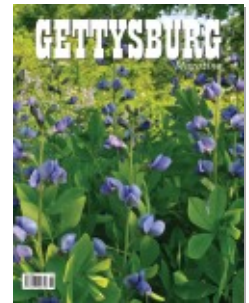
*The Gettysburg Cyclorama: The Turning Point of the Civil War
on Canvas* by Chris Brenneman and Sue Boardman (review)

Jonathan M. Steplyk

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Chris Brenneman and Sue Boardman. *The Gettysburg Cyclorama: The Turning Point of the Civil War on Canvas*. El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2015. 224 pp. Hardcover, \$34.95. ISBN: 978-1-61121-264-8.

Shortly after opening a new visitor center in 2008, Gettysburg National Military Park reopened the famous Gettysburg Cyclorama at the same facility. After an extensive \$13 million restoration of the painting, visitors to the site of America's bloodiest battle could once again view the epic panorama of the Confederate attack against Union-held Cemetery Ridge. Now, with Savas Beatie's publication of *The Gettysburg Cyclorama*, there is a handsome and freshly up-to-date book to complement the newly restored artwork and its new and improved home.

Authors Chris Brenneman and Sue Boardman have brought their expertise as licensed battlefield guides at Gettysburg to the text of *The Gettysburg Cyclorama*. Their work is the product of extensive research into both the Battle of Gettysburg and the creation of the painting. Brenneman and Boardman address these subjects in the necessary depth and breadth that will likely appeal to both casual and dedicated students of the battle. This coffee-table-style book is further enhanced with photography by Bill Dowling, another licensed battlefield guide as well as an award-winning photographer. Photographs include wide shots and close-ups of the cyclorama itself, as well as archival images of the cyclorama's creation alongside period and modern photographs of the battlefield.

Brenneman, Boardman, and Dowling's work has much to teach, regardless of how well the reader knows Gettysburg and its cyclorama. Today, many visitors to the battlefield do not realize they are viewing the second of four versions that toured the country more than a century ago. French artist Paul D. Philippoteaux and his team of assistants painted versions of their Pickett's charge panorama that were originally exhibited in Chicago, Boston (Gettysburg NMP's version), Philadelphia, and New York, respectively, each time making slight changes based on aesthetics and advice from Civil War veterans. Well-informed Civil War students may know Philippoteaux incorrectly depicted General Armistead on horseback. In fact, surviving veterans

pointed out this mistake, which he corrected in the cyclorama's later incarnations.

Ten of the book's fifteen chapters focus on specific sections of the Gettysburg Cyclorama. Each of these chapters begins with a beautiful two-page photograph of the section in question, followed by a numbered key explaining noteworthy vignettes. The chapters also include exquisite close-ups, such as the appearance of Robert E. Lee and his staff on distant Seminary Ridge, details that visitors to the cyclorama might never be able to pick out in just one viewing. The authors also weigh in on the debate over whether the bell-topped haystacks around the Union field hospital are European anachronisms or not, suggesting that stacks might be authentic to 1863 Adams County. Brenneman and Boardman also explain how certain errors came to be. For instance, Philippoteaux relied on a series of battlefield photographs commissioned in 1882, some of which included houses and roads built after the battle. Civil War veterans largely praised Philippoteaux's work, although some reasonably pointed out that his team had erred on some uniform details, such as European-style knapsacks and white trousers on Union soldiers.

With the 2008 restoration of the Gettysburg Cyclorama, visitors can once more appreciate the epic painting in all its glory. With the publication of *The Gettysburg Cyclorama*, readers can treat themselves to a detailed and wonderfully illustrated book that will enhance their understanding and appreciation of that painting.

Jonathan M. Steplyk
Texas Christian University