



The Mitten

A Publication of Michigan History magazine

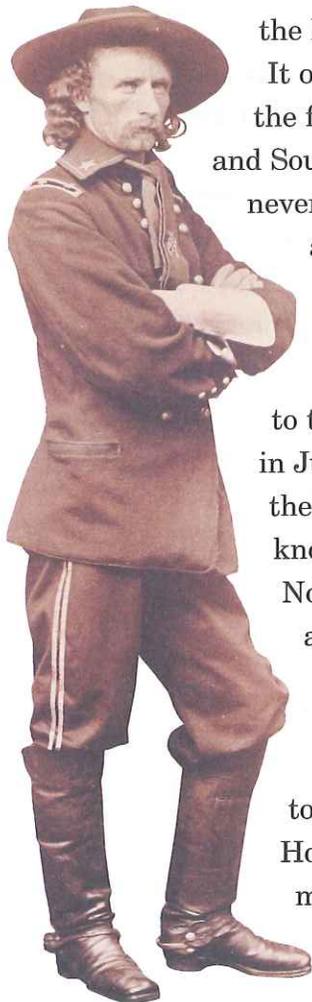
Michigan at GETTYSBURG

THE BATTLE of Gettysburg was the greatest battle of the Civil War. For three days in July 1863, tens of thousands of Americans fought in the streets and fields around Gettysburg, a small town in south-central Pennsylvania.

The Battle of Gettysburg was the high point of the Civil War. It occurred midway through the four-year war and Southern forces never fully recovered after losing the battle.

The campaign that led to the battle began in June 1863 when the Southern army, known as Rebels by Northerners, left Virginia and invaded Pennsylvania. The Northern army followed.

Neither side expected to fight at Gettysburg. However a small fight on the morning of July 1 **escalated** as both sides rushed



reinforcements to Gettysburg. By the end of the three-day battle, more than 51,000 Americans

were casualties (killed, wounded, missing or captured).

At least 4,000 Michiganians served in the Union army at Gettysburg. They included little-known soldiers like John and Alfred Ryder of Plymouth (see page 2), and famous General George Custer of Monroe (left).

When the battle ended, more than 1,110 Michiganians were listed as casualties. Many of the dead were buried in the Gettysburg National Cemetery (top).

THE TALE OF Two Brothers

Brothers John and Alfred Ryder of Plymouth, Michigan, were among the thousands of soldiers who fought at the Battle of Gettysburg.

Alfred Ryder, who was 20 years old, joined the Northern army shortly after the Civil War started. His younger brother, who was 19 years old, joined a year later.

We know much about their wartime experiences because the boys wrote many letters home.

Alfred was excited about joining the 1st Michigan Cavalry. After his unit arrived in Washington, DC, he wrote that Southerners viewed the Michigan cavalymen as “regular tigers.” However, after living in the mud, catching measles, being shot at and then being captured by the Rebels, he admitted that army life sometimes was not much fun. Once, after being without anything to eat for several days he wrote, “raw cats would have tasted well in such a time.”

Alfred urged his brother not to join the army. But in August 1862, John Ryder joined the 24th Michigan Infantry.

On the way to Washington, DC, John’s unit passed a place where a battle had been fought. He wrote that he saw sights that were “too horrible to explain.”

Alfred and John served in the same army, but they had not seen each other since Alfred had become a soldier. As the army marched towards Gettysburg in June 1863, John wrote that nothing was going to stop him from seeing Alfred.

On June 26, the boys saw each other, but only for a few minutes. John wrote that seeing his older brother gave him “new life.”

The next day, John received permission to visit Alfred’s camp, which was two miles away. John and Alfred talked late into the night. John returned to his camp, but the brothers hoped “to meet again some day.”

The brothers wrote their parents about their brief visit. Alfred wrote, “God blessed me today with a sight of my brother, Johnny.”

The brothers never saw each other again. On July 1, John was killed in fighting at Gettysburg. Two days later, Alfred was seriously wounded.

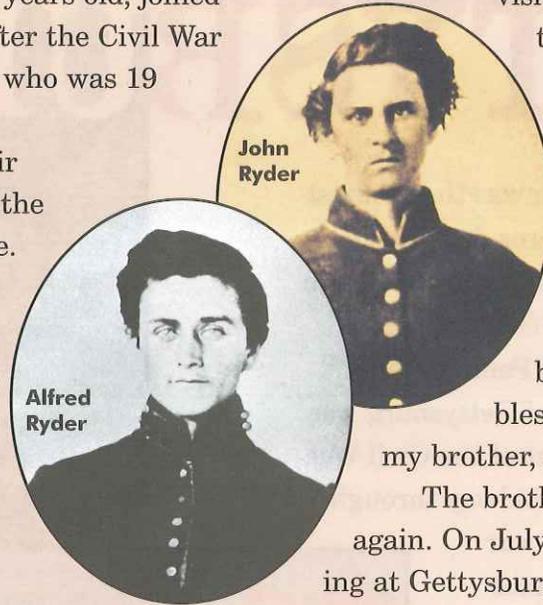
Resting in a Gettysburg hospital, Alfred wrote his parents that he thought he might recover. He also believed that John was in another hospital and “not badly wounded.”

Soon the chaplain of the 24th Michigan wrote Mr. and Mrs. Ryder telling them that John was dead. The Reverend William Way also feared that Alfred, who had been shot in the chest, was “in a dangerous condition.”

When the boys’ father heard that his sons were wounded, he left Plymouth for Gettysburg. George Ryder arrived at the battlefield to learn that John had died and that Alfred was not doing well.

On July 22, Alfred Ryder died.

The Ryder brothers were two of the nearly fifteen thousand Michiganians who died in the Civil War.

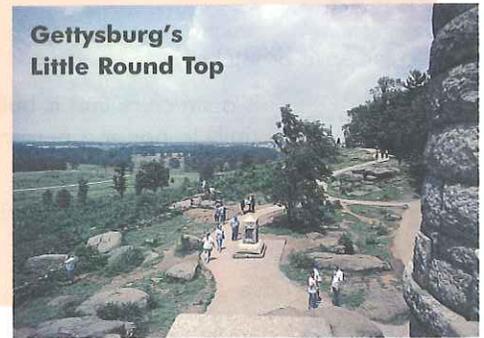


John Ryder

Alfred Ryder

Where to Take Your Family

Start your visit to **Gettysburg** by obtaining a visitor's guide from the Gettysburg Convention and Visitors Bureau at 35 Carlisle Street, Gettysburg, PA 17325, (717) 334-6274 or visit www.gettysburgcvb.org. The Gettysburg National Military Park is administered by the National Park Service, visit GETT_Superintendent@nps.gov or call (717) 334-1124.



Gettysburg's
Little Round Top

Years after the Civil War, veterans of the Battle of Gettysburg placed stone monuments at the site of the Civil War's biggest battle. Today, these **tributes** are among the more than 1,400 monuments, markers and cannon scattered over the Gettysburg National Military Park in Pennsylvania.

Remembering **THOSE WHO SERVED**

There are 10 monuments to the 4,000 Michigianians who fought at Gettysburg.

One monument honors the 26-year-old commander of the 4th Michigan Infantry (right). On the second day of battle, Colonel Harrison H. Jeffords of Dexter was mortally

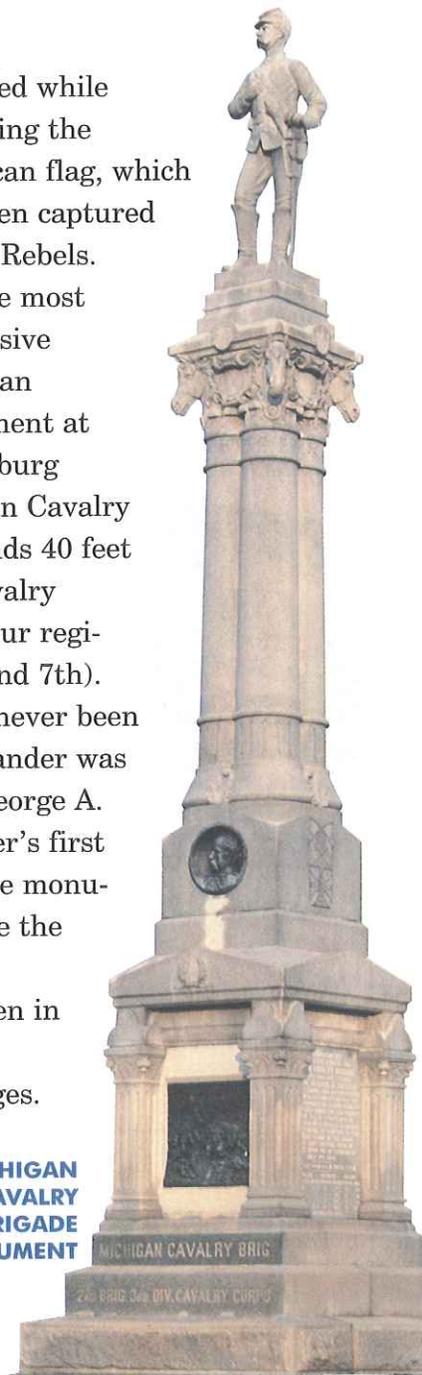
wounded while defending the American flag, which had been captured by the Rebels.

The most impressive Michigan monument at Gettysburg

belongs to the Michigan Cavalry Brigade (right). It stands 40 feet tall. The Michigan Cavalry Brigade consisted of four regiments (1st, 5th, 6th, and 7th). Many of the men had never been in battle. Their commander was 24-year-old General George A. Custer. This was Custer's first battle as a general. The monument was placed where the Michigan horsemen stopped Rebel horsemen in one of the war's most dramatic cavalry charges.



**4TH MICHIGAN
MONUMENT**



**MICHIGAN
CAVALRY
BRIGADE
MONUMENT**

MICHIGAN CAVALRY BRIG
240 BRIG 3rd DIV. CAVALRY CORPS

What Did You Learn?

ACROSS

- To increase or intensify
- A _____ is a structure that is built as a memorial, usually to honor a person or group of people.
- John and Alfred Ryder both fought in the Battle of _____.
- People who have served in the military

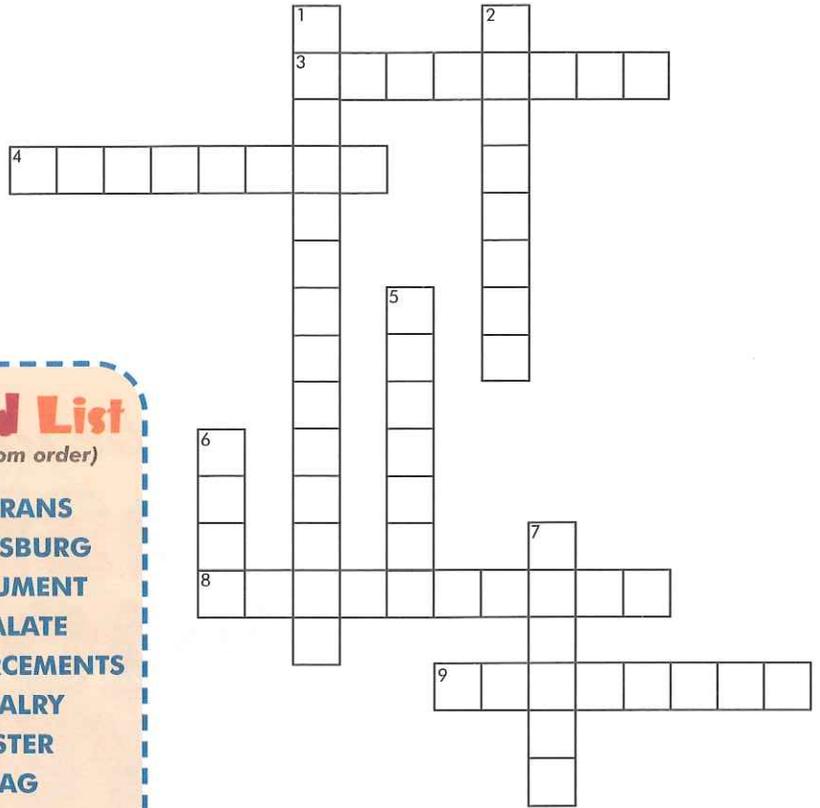
DOWN

- Men sent to fight with others in battle
- John and Alfred Ryder were from _____, Michigan.
- Troops who ride on horseback
- Colonel Harrison H. Jeffords was wounded while defending the American _____.
- The Michigan Cavalry Brigade was led by General George A. _____.

Word List

(in random order)

VETERANS
GETTYSBURG
MONUMENT
ESCALATE
REINFORCEMENTS
CAVALRY
CUSTER
FLAG
PLYMOUTH



Vocabulary

Escalate: to increase, enlarge, or intensify

Reinforcements: men sent to fight with others in battle

Tribute: praise for an important achievement