

2007

*David L. Richards*

*As I approach my 35<sup>th</sup> class reunion, I look back on my years at Hughesville High School with great fondness and satisfaction. Born and reared in Picture Rocks, PA, I have had an ardent interest in history since my earliest childhood. My strength in school was always social studies, in part nursed along by my parents, the late Jay L. and Mary E. Richards and four teachers at George A. Ferrell Elementary School - Miss. Elva Cruse, Mrs. Abigail Boyer, Mrs. Rachel Kline and Mr. Silvey. Throughout my following years in High School, I met Mr. Lewis Creveling, who instilled in me a desire to travel and see the country, and Mr. Robert Webster, geography teacher *extraordinaire*. Hughesville's "local mapmaker" taught me how to appreciate and understand the role of geography in history and I am proud to say, he was the finest teacher I ever had the pleasure to know. In fact, my greatest academic *disappointment* at Hughesville High School was scoring a 99% on my final exam in Mr. Webster's Economic Geography class my senior year. If only I could remember where the Kalahari Dessert was located? Had I, a *perfect 100%* would have been mine!*

*After graduating in 1974, I found local employment which enabled me to travel extensively across America, in search of battlefields and other historic and scenic places. Eventually, my interest in history led me to Lycoming College, where I graduated in 1985 with a B.A. in History. I immediately began working for the Lycoming County Historical Museum in Williamsport, PA and while there I made several life-long relationships. In the winter of 1985 I took the rigorous examination in order to become a Licensed Battlefield Guide at Gettysburg National Military Park, and scored fourth in a group of well over one hundred people who took the exam. Within a few months, I moved to Gettysburg where I have been employed ever since as a Battlefield Guide. At the time, I was one of only a seventy-five member force. Today, over one hundred-fifty individuals hold the coveted license enabling them to guide professionally on the Gettysburg battlefield.*

*Over the following twenty-two years, I have been able to immerse myself in history, collecting a variety of Civil War memorabilia, and I possess a personal research library of nearly 2000 books. I currently own a home on land that was fought over during the Battle of Gettysburg - the realization of a lifelong dream.*

*In my position as a Licensed Battlefield Guide, I have given lectures, presented field programs and participated in seminars for the following institutions and organizations: Muncy Historical Society, East Lycoming Historical Society, Montgomery Historical Society, Lycoming County Historical Society, Tiadaghton Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Susquehanna Valley Civil War Round Table in Sunbury, Gettysburg Civil War Round Table, Western Pennsylvania Civil War Round Table, Civil War Round Table of Philadelphia, Sons of Confederate Veterans groups from Baltimore, MD, Richmond, VA, and Greensboro, NC, Association of Licensed Battlefield Guides, Military History Online, Gettysburg Discussion Group, The Center for Civil War Photography, Harrisburg Area Community College, Gettysburg College, Gettysburg Area High School, The Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg, Gettysburg Foundation, National Park Service, crew members of the U.S.S. Eisenhower, and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. My most memorable presentation was for Lieutenant-General Hamid Nawaz Khan, Defense Minister of Pakistan. Among the group were a large number of Lieutenant-Generals, Major-Generals and other members of the Pakistani military. Behind the scenes, a great deal of Secret Service personnel were close at hand for security purposes. All in all, it was a most remarkable day. In the past I have also met a large number of celebrities, actors and athletes - all while they were visiting the Gettysburg battlefield. You never know who you may see.*

*Over the years, however, on a far more normal basis, I have introduced literally tens of thousands of school students to the story of the American Civil War in general and the Battle of Gettysburg in particular. And it is this work that I actually find most rewarding. I am a teacher and the battlefield is my classroom.*

*Since 1985, I have written numerous articles for local historical societies and veterans publication in both Williamsport and Muncy. This culminated with the publication of my first book, Priceless Treasures in 2001 by the Muncy Historical Society. This is a detailed study of the Muncy Soldiers Memorial in Muncy Cemetery and seventy-one soldiers from the Muncy vicinity who lost their lives during the Civil War. Their names are inscribed on the monument, but in the course of research I uncovered numerous additional soldiers who died in the war, yet for reasons now unknown, their names were never recorded on the monument. With the Civil War Sesquicentennial fast approaching, it is hoped that we can publish these findings in a follow-up tome, Priceless Treasures, Volume II. After decades of research, I now consider myself an authority on Pennsylvania units and soldiers that served in the Civil War from the Lycoming County area. In addition my first of two Gettysburg related essays were published in 2002 in Blue & Gray Magazine, a nationwide periodical with a circulation of almost 20,000 copies. I am also currently researching for publication a history of the Eighty-fourth Pennsylvania Volunteers and ghost towns across the North-central Pennsylvania region.*

*At present, I live near Gettysburg with my wife of twenty-three years, Teresa and our two teen-aged children, Jesse and Alyssa.*