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## UCLA Historical Journal

### Title

Jim Weeks, Gettysburg: *Memory, Market, and an American Shrine*.  
Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. 267 pp. \$29.95 (Hard).  
ISBN: 0691102716.

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7wf1s628>

### Journal

UCLA Historical Journal, 20(0)

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### Publication Date

2004

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debates and be employed in controversies. They do this by providing an *experience* for a reader which needs to be situated in relation to other knowledge, ideological beliefs, and self-identity. In this way texts can engender change – cultural and social change. No longer can historians continue to view texts as self-contained, bearing a clear, stable meaning. Instead, texts are in a dialectical relationship with culture a text can effect cultural change, which can then affect how a text is read.

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**Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. 267 pp. \$29.95 (Hard). ISBN: 0691102716.**

**Thomas A. Desjardin, *These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory*. Cambridge, Mass: Da Capo Press, 2003. 246 pp. \$26.00 (Hard). ISBN:0306812673.**

In 1865, two years after the Battle of Gettysburg, a Philadelphia reporter named George Gross was dispatched to write a series of follow-up stories on the battle. He long searched for something—anything—fresh to write about, and in the first story published he shared his frustrations with his readers, griping that, “It is difficult to say anything new on a theme already hackneyed.” Of course, time would show how wrong Gross was. Gettysburg has become one of the most written about events in American history, the topic of a thousand books, with many more published each year. Two new books on the memory of the battle, by Jim Weeks and Thomas A. Desjardin respectively, make useful contributions to that body of literature.

Weeks’ *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* is largely concerned with Gettysburg as a place, and how that place has been used by Americans over time. He divides the 140 years that have passed since the battle into four parts, each typified by a particular use of the battlefield that he feels reflects larger currents in American society. For example, he argues that Gettysburg served for the first 20 years of its post-Civil War life as a “genteel summer resort.” Promoters emphasized both the town’s natural

resources—particularly its mineral springs—as well its potential for teaching moral lessons and civic virtues. Weeks suggests that this particular bill of fare was meant to appeal to the genteel values of Victorian America, and thus is a reflection of the emergence of the middle class in the mid- to late-19th century.

Weeks' ideas, based on exhaustive research, are intriguing. It surely would never occur to any modern visitor to Gettysburg that the battlefield once had more in common with Niagara Falls as a tourist destination than it did with Plymouth Rock or Valley Forge. That said, the book often reads as a kind of polemic. The reader is left with the sense that Americans have used the battlefield for one phony purpose after another in the past 140 years, and that the author does not approve of any of it. Weeks' tone is so negative, so snide, that it becomes quite distracting at times and undermines confidence in the dispassion of his analysis.

In contrast to Weeks' focus on Gettysburg the place, Desjardin's *These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory* is interested largely in examining the mythology that has surrounded the battle. As he explains, "I came to Gettysburg thinking that I knew a lot about the battle, and like most others I quickly discovered that I knew a lot about what people think they know about the battle—and most of it was wrong." In a book notable for its readability, Desjardin examines and debunks many of the legends of the Battle of Gettysburg that he has encountered, some the product of inadvertent error, others deliberately constructed for one purpose or another.

Typical of Desjardin's approach is his examination of the oft-repeated chestnut that the Union's 20th Maine Infantry Regiment was grossly outnumbered by Confederate troops when the two sides clashed at Little Round Top on the second day of the battle. Tracing this information back to its source, Desjardin shows that it sprung from the two most widely circulated accounts of the assault, both of them erroneous. One was written by the Southern officer who commanded the Confederates' attack, and then—as Desjardin demonstrates—made mathematical errors when calculating his troop strength after the battle. The other was written by a Union soldier who was a member of the 20th Maine, and penned the only history of the regiment, in which he agreed that the Union defenders of Little Round Top were seriously outnumbered by their Southern foes. With the publication of this second account, Confederate and Yankee seemed to be in agreement about their "facts," and henceforth the desperate

situation of the 20th Maine at Little Round Top was taken as gospel by both contemporaries and by succeeding generations. It was left to Desjardin, 140 years later, to discover that this particular Union soldier was actually hospitalized during the battle, and so therefore had to rely on the exaggerated accounts of his colleagues-in-arms when writing that portion of the book. Thus, a bit of Southern miscalculation and Northern innuendo combined to give rise to one of the most famous legends of the Civil War, and indeed of American history.

Desjardin's main interest—in fact, his passion—is detective work of this sort. As such, the book contains a great many examples of fascinating myth-busting, but it rarely moves beyond this type of analysis. Desjardin generally gives little more than passing attention to the purposes these myths serve, and what they might say about Americans. Given the lack of connection between the specific examples that Desjardin examines and the bigger picture, the subtitle of the book—*How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory*—is a bit of a misnomer. The book does almost nothing to address this larger question.

Taken together, however, Weeks' and Desjardin's books function well as companion pieces. Desjardin offers a series of specific case studies, while Weeks fills in the broader story. And so, as a contribution to the literature of Gettysburg, the whole created by reading these two books together is greater than the sum of the parts.

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**Henning, Joseph M. *Outposts of Civilization: Race, Religion, and the Formative Years of American-Japanese Relations*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. \$50.00 (Hard). 249 pp. ISBN: 081473605X.**

“In mind, body, speech, thought, ways, institutions, [and] mental initiative,” the Japanese are “the most un-Mongolian people in Asia,” wrote William Elliot Griffis in the *North American Review* in 1911 (p. 160). Griffis, the leading authority on Japan of his era, was trying to resolve a Japanese paradox that bedeviled many turn-of-the-twentieth-century Americans: how could a non-white, heathen country be so technologically and politically