

= Gettysburg Cyclorama =

The Battle of Gettysburg , also known as the Gettysburg Cyclorama , is a cyclorama painting by the French artist Paul Philippoteaux depicting Pickett 's Charge , the climactic Confederate attack on the Union forces during the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3 , 1863 . Four versions were painted , two of which are among the last surviving cycloramas in the United States .

The first version of the painting , completed in 1883 and originally exhibited in Chicago , was lost for some time . It was rediscovered in 1965 and purchased by a group of North Carolina investors in 2007 for an undisclosed amount . Until November 2005 , the second painting , originally exhibited in the Cyclorama Building in Boston , was on display at the Gettysburg National Military Park . It was removed for restoration work and the exhibition was reopened September 2008 in the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center . The third version , exhibited in Philadelphia , is known to have been destroyed . The location of the fourth version , originally exhibited in Brooklyn , is unknown .

= = Description = =

The painting is the work of French artist Paul Dominique Philippoteaux . It depicts Pickett 's Charge , the failed infantry assault that was the climax of the Battle of Gettysburg . The painting is a cyclorama , a type of 360 ° cylindrical painting . The intended effect is to immerse the viewer in the scene being depicted , often with the addition of foreground models and life @-@ sized replicas to enhance the illusion . Among the sites documented in the painting are Cemetery Ridge , the Angle , and the " High @-@ water mark of the Confederacy " . The completed original painting was 22 feet (6 @. @ 7 m) high and 279 feet (85 m) in circumference . The version that hangs in Gettysburg , a recent (2005) restoration of the version created for Boston , is 42 feet (13 m) high and 377 feet (115 m) in circumference .

Details of the painting :

= = Development = =

Philippoteaux became interested in cycloramas and , in collaboration with his father , created The Defence of the Fort d 'Issy in 1871 . Other successful works included Taking of Plevna (Turko @-@ Russian War) , the Passage of the Balkans , The Belgian Revolution of 1830 , Attack in the Park , The Battle of Kars , The Battle of Tel @-@ el @-@ Kebir , and the Derniere Sortie . He was commissioned by a group of Chicago investors in 1879 to create the Gettysburg Cyclorama . He spent several weeks in April 1882 at the site of the Gettysburg Battlefield to sketch and photograph the scene , and extensively researched the battle and its events over several months . He erected a wooden platform along present @-@ day Hancock Avenue and drew a circle around it , eighty feet in diameter , driving stakes into the ground to divide it into ten sections . Local photographer William H. Tipton took three photographs of each section , focusing in turn on the foreground , the land behind it , and the horizon . The photos , pasted together , formed the basis of the composition . Philippoteaux also interviewed several survivors of the battle , including Union generals Winfield S. Hancock , Abner Doubleday , Oliver O. Howard , and Alexander S. Webb , and based his work partly on their recollections .

Philippoteaux enlisted a team of five assistants , including his father until his death , to create the final work . It took over a year and a half to complete . The finished painting was nearly 100 yards long and weighed six tons . When completed for display , the full work included not just the painting , but numerous artifacts and sculptures , including stone walls , trees , and fences . The effect of the painting has been likened to the nineteenth century equivalent of an IMAX theater .

= = Exhibition and reception = =

The work opened to the public in Chicago on October 22 , 1883 , to critical acclaim . General John

Gibbon , one of the commanders of the Union forces who repelled Pickett 's Charge , was among the veterans of the battle who gave it favorable reviews . So realistic was the painting that many veterans of the war were reported to have wept upon seeing it .

The Chicago exhibition was sufficiently successful to prompt businessman Charles L. Willoughby to commission a second version , which opened in Boston , Massachusetts , on December 22 , 1884 . From its opening until 1892 , approximately 200 @,@ 000 people viewed the painting . The Boston version was housed in a specially designed building , the Cyclorama Building , on Tremont Street , and was the site of popular public lectures on the battle . Two additional copies of the cyclorama were made : the third was first exhibited in Philadelphia , Pennsylvania , beginning in February 1886 and a fourth debuted in Brooklyn , New York , in October 1886 .

Many reviewers and visitors agreed with the Boston Daily Advertiser that " it is impossible to tell where reality ends and the painting begins . " One veteran , pointing at the painting , said to his friend : " You see that puff of smoke ? Just wait a moment till that clears away , and I 'll show you just where I stood . " In New York , police responding to a report of a nighttime burglary and disoriented by the illusion twice seized dummies representing dead soldiers , convinced that they were live burglars .

In 1894 , Chase & Everhart displayed their " Cyclorama of the Battle of Gettysburg " during a National Guard encampment at Gettysburg .

= = Boston version = =

In 1891 , the Boston cyclorama , housed in the Cyclorama Building , was exchanged temporarily with the cyclorama Crucifixion of Christ in Philadelphia . When it returned in 1892 , it was stored in a 50 @-@ foot (15 m) crate behind the exhibition hall , where it was subjected to damage from weather , vandals removing boards from the crate , and two fires . It was eventually purchased in its deteriorated state by Albert J. Hahne of Newark , New Jersey , in 1910 . Hahne displayed sections of the cyclorama in his department store in Newark beginning in 1911 , and sections were also shown in government buildings in New York City , Baltimore , Maryland , and Washington , D.C. In the Baltimore exhibition , George E. Pickett 's widow , " Sallie " Pickett , lectured on her husband 's experiences and found herself very moved by the experience .

On September 3 , 1912 , ground was broken for a new cyclorama building on Baltimore Street in Gettysburg , on Cemetery Hill (on the site of the present day Holiday Inn) , near the entrance to the Soldiers ' National Cemetery . It opened to the public in 1913 , in time for the 50th anniversary of the battle , once again displayed as a full circular painting , rather than in sections . The unheated , leaky brick building took a further toll on the condition of the painting . The Boston cyclorama was purchased by the National Park Service in 1942 , and moved to a site on Ziegler 's Grove near the new Visitor 's Center in 1961 , after a second round of restoration .

The exhibition remained open to the public until 2005 , when it was closed for a third restoration . The \$ 12 @-@ million restoration , by Olin Conservation , Inc . , of Great Falls , Virginia , started with the 26 sections of the painting and recreated its original shape of 14 panels hung from a circular railing , slightly flared out at the bottom . In the process , some original pieces were found of the 12 circumferential feet that had been cut away . Fourteen vertical feet of sky was also restored .

The painting restoration was accompanied by the construction of a facility to house the painting , the new Gettysburg Museum and Visitor Center on Hunt Avenue , located away from any areas in which fighting occurred in 1863 . The restored Cyclorama exhibition was reopened to the public in September 2008 . The proposed demolition of the old Cyclorama building in Ziegler 's Grove has been a source of some controversy among history and architecture buffs , with some opposing the destruction of the modernist structure designed by architect Richard Neutra .

= = Chicago version = =

The original Chicago work went on a tour of eight cities before returning to Chicago in 1933 where it was displayed at the World 's Fair . It was in a warehouse until it was purchased by Winston @-@

Salem , North Carolina , artist and collector Joseph Wallace King in 1965 . King had first seen the painting in 1933 at the Chicago World 's Fair . Years later he described the painting and how magnificent it was seeing it displayed in Chicago to his friend Ed Grout of Maryland . Mr. Grout arranged a meeting with the nephew of George McConnel and the painting was purchased by Mr. King . King appeared on the panel game show I 've Got A Secret on May 30 , 1966 , displaying a 22 ' by 25 ' section of the painting (his secret was that this was only part of the painting) . It was revealed that King had been searching for it for some time , and now that he 'd found it , he hoped to construct a new cyclorama building .

When King bought the painting it consisted of 13 panels sewn together and rolled into one piece . To more easily store and transport the painting King unstitched the 13 panels and stored them individually together with two separate panels of scenery used to make the painting a bit longer depending on the exhibition space . The 13 panels along with the two extra scenery panels bring the painting to 410 feet long according to King . The painting has , for the most part , remained rolled up since 1933 , though it was donated by King to Wake Forest University upon his death in 1996 . The university sold the painting in 2007 to an anonymous group of Raleigh , North Carolina , investors . The painting has been appraised at a value of US \$ 5 @. @ 5 million , but the value of the sale remains unknown . The group intends to resell the painting to a new buyer who will commit to restoring the work and building a suitable structure to house it .