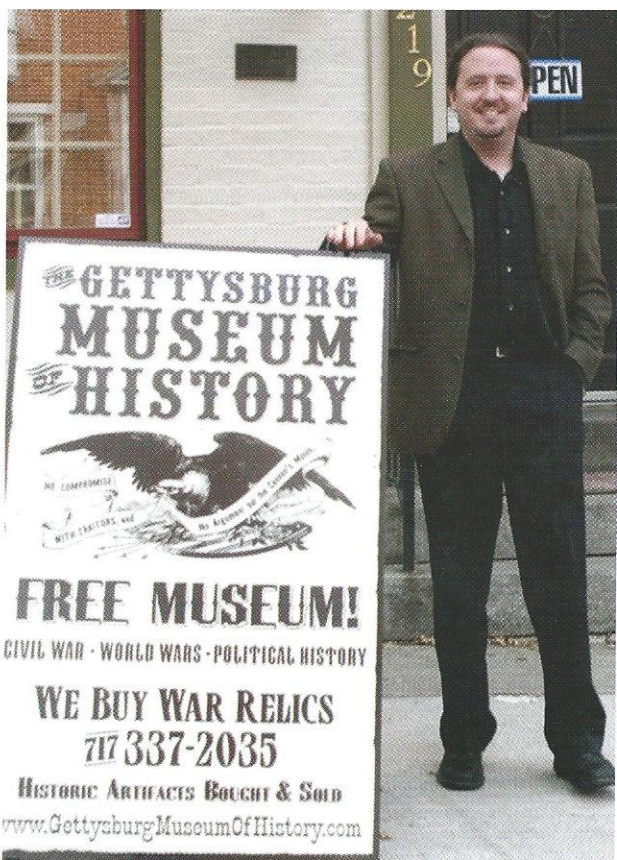




# A free trip through history

*"I want people to see this collection."*

– Erik L. Dorr, Owner



President Abraham Lincoln's wallet, JFK's rocking chair, Mamie Eisenhower's lipstick, and World War II relics found near Omaha Beach are among the 4,000 artifacts on display in a new museum in downtown Gettysburg.

The Gettysburg Museum of History, located along the 200 block of Baltimore Street, is free and open to the public, and owner Erik Dorr does not intend to implement an admissions fee anytime soon.

"Why? Because I want people to see this collection," explains Dorr.

"I wanted to have an attraction that would bring people downtown and help the economy, because businesses downtown are struggling," Dorr says regarding the museum that opened in August 2009.

Dorr started accumulating artifacts about 25 years ago, building from his family's privately-owned collection.

His great-great grandfather, Fred Pfeffer, lived in Freedom Township during the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863. Pfeffer collected dozens of relics from the farmland along Emmitsburg Road, the site of Pickett's Charge.

"The reason that this is important is that most family collections have been sold, or they're just not in tact anymore," says Dorr, adding that the artifacts in the museum represent the "world's largest, private collection."

By Scot  
Andrew Pitzer

Photography by  
Bill Schwartz &  
Darryl Wheeler

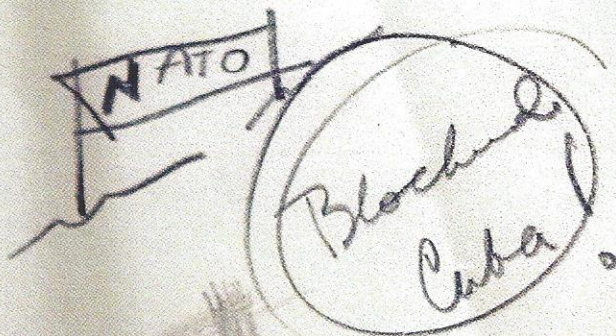


The World War Room featuring items from the First World War on the left, Camp Colt in the center, and World War II on the right.





THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON



Notes made by President Kennedy at a cabinet meeting during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. Originally part of a collection owned by Evelyn Lincoln, personal secretary to President Kennedy.

"This collection was never broken up over time," continues Dorr. "It's one of the last documented Gettysburg family collections that are still with the original family."

Dorr says his museum is unlike any other in town, "not only because it's free," but because it has a "heavy emphasis on Gettysburg relics."

"I think the National Park Service Visitor Center has sort of drifted away from that," says Dorr, noting that only 1500 artifacts are on display at the park's museum, and nearly one million other relics are stored away in its basement.

Dorr builds his collection by dealing with local, regional and national artifact collectors, including Gettysburg Police Department Sgt. Larry Runk. The veteran sergeant has uncovered hundreds of Civil War bullets and buttons at area farms and fields surrounding Gettysburg. Runk's findings are now on display inside Dorr's museum.

"It's a great museum for Gettysburg, because people want to see artifacts from the Battle of Gettysburg," says Runk.

There are five display rooms inside the museum, devoted to the Civil War, with an emphasis on Gettysburg presidents, with an emphasis on Abraham Lincoln; World War I and II; and two rooms that house an extensive Kennedy collection.

Most of the relics in the John F. Kennedy collection were saved by the President's personal secretary, Evelyn Lincoln. She preserved the President's diary and notebook, among other unique items.







**Colt Army Revolver from the Fred G. Pfeffer collection. Pfeffer was a Gettysburg farmer who fled his home when the Confederates arrived. Upon his return, he found this pistol on his kitchen table. Pfeffer is the great-great grandfather of Erik Dorr, museum owner.**



**Model 1840 cavalry sabre.**

**Musket struck by a canister ball at the Battle of Gettysburg.**



A keystone piece in the collection is the blood-stained upholstery from the presidential limo, when Kennedy was assassinated in Texas.

An original seal from Marine One hangs from a wall inside one of the Kennedy rooms. President Kennedy authorized the seal to be placed on presidential helicopters in 1962.

The collection includes rare pieces, such as a suit that JFK wore in the Senate from 1955-60, Kennedy's sunglasses, the President's tennis ball, and items related to the Cuban Missile Crisis. Also on display is the 38-caliber shell casing from Jack Ruby's gun, which killed Lee Harvey Oswald in 1963.

The presidential gallery features a bandage that was used to dress Lincoln's wound, when he was assassinated; John Wilkes Booth relics; a lock of Martha Washington's hair; Harry Truman's hat; Gerald Ford's glasses; and a White House phone from the Nixon administration. A sticker on the phone says: "Not secure — do not use for classified information."

"We have something signed by every president, from George Washington through George W. Bush," said Dorr.

There are three presidential wallets in Dorr's collection: Abe Lincoln, Chester Arthur and Warren Harding. Dorr also has golf balls that were used by Bill Clinton and Ronald Reagan.

The World War I and II rooms are home to uniforms and machinery, artifacts found near Omaha Beach and other items from Gettysburg.

"The room has a big focus on Camp Colt in Gettysburg, which was a U.S. training ground during World War I," explained Dorr.

The training group was under the command of Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in World War II.

Artifacts on display in the Civil War room include grave markers, glasses belonging to Gen. Dan Sickles, a door knob from General Robert E. Lee's house in Arlington, and a struck Civil War musket.

Tours are self guided within the first-floor museum, which opened in the summer of 2009.

The museum's winter hours are: Wednesday-Thursday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

For more information about the museum, call 717-337-2031. 