

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Addressing
Gettysburg

THE MISSION

Maintain the integrity of this historically significant site as its visitors center relocates elsewhere on the premises.

The Gettysburg battlefield is a reminder of three fateful days in July 1863, when the tide of the American Civil War shifted from Confederate to Union advantage.

Commemorating this historic battle and its significance was originally undertaken in the 1960s, with a visitors center and cyclorama building designed by renowned architect Richard Neutra. But to return the battlefield to its original state and relocate the center to ground that saw no major battle action, the National Park Service, in conjunction with the Gettysburg Foundation, undertook the construction of a new 139,000-sq.-ft. center in 2008.

Ruppert Landscape, based in Laytonsville, Md., was responsible for planting, removing existing turf, re-grading, sodding, drainage and irrigation at the new facility. The team also installed pavers, the concrete subslab, a bench, a statuary, boulders, river rock, lighting and trees; restored the rubble wall; and installed pedestrian-control safety fencing.

Perhaps the biggest challenge on this project was that the visitors center and paths leading to and from it were open during the landscape installation. There also were boulders (some in excess of 20 tons) and large caliper trees (one with a rootball weighing nearly 15 tons) that had to be craned into position.

Ruppert's Landscape Construction Foreman Leroy Barton worked closely with the landscape architect, Andy Balderson of Donovan Feola Balderson, and grower Halka Nurseries to dig a flat side of the rootball to more easily "face" the project's large 40-ft. specimen tree toward the courtyard area.

"When all was said and done, our team had assisted the client with their original intent of drawing and allowing visitor access during construction," says Bob Jones, vice president and director of Ruppert's Landscape Construction division.



PHOTOS 1 AND 5: GETTYSBURG VISITORS CENTER;
PHOTOS 2, 3, 4 AND 6: ANDY BALDERSON /
DONOVAN FEOLA BALDERSON



3

THE WORK

1 | Living history. The Gettysburg Museum & Visitor Center and its landscape have been melded to create a site that's sensitive to the historic nature of the surrounding landscape and evokes the emotions of 1863 while meeting visitors' expectations of a 21st-century museum experience.

2 | Rock solid. This 20-ton boulder is one of several included in the design as an homage to rock formations at Devil's Den, which were used during the battle to shield soldiers from gunfire.

3 | Sky's the limit. To lift this tree and its 30,000-lb. rootball into its final position required two moves: First from a lower parking lot to midpoint, which was as far as the crane boom would extend. The crane was then repositioned and the tree was deposited to its final destination.

4 | LEED-certified. To satisfy LEED requirements, materials had to be sourced from within 500 miles of the project and come from a palate of native plant material, increasing sourcing time by 25 percent. Some of the native species: fragrant sumac, Itea, arrowwood Viburnum and winterberry.

5 | Multipurpose. Stone walls commonly seen throughout Pennsylvania fields and the battlefield were echoed along walkways for visual effect, to stabilize the slope and to control erosion.

6 | The big reveal. Prior to the statue's unveiling in fall 2008, it had to be shielded from view. Ruppert procured and erected a Civil War-era tent so it would blend in with the surroundings until its unveiling.



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Laytonville, Md.-based Ruppert Landscape offers estimating and pre-construction services, general installation, project management and design. For more information, visit RuppertLandscape.com.

