

little study deserves a wider readership
than it will probably get.

From the review of
GETTYSBURG'S UNKNOWN SOLDIER
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Historian would leave the Dodgers in Brooklyn

Things might have taken a different turn if Mark Dunkelman and his bride-to-be had just had a few more dollars in their pockets as they drove through Cooperstown, N.Y., on that day back in 1970. For one thing, his new book, *Gettysburg's Unknown Soldier* (see review on this page), probably wouldn't have been written.

"It happened to be my birthday, and I wanted to stop at the Baseball Hall of Fame, having an interest in the game. But the admission fee precluded that; we had only enough money for gas to get us back to Rhode Island," the longtime Providence resident recalled the other day.



**DOUG
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Book notes

Just down the road, however, was the New York State Historical Association library, which had Civil War memorabilia and no admission fee whatsoever. Dunkelman had been impressed by childhood stories about his great-grandfather, John Langhans, a corporal with the 154th New York Infantry Regiment. In fact, he was gathering material on the regiment.

"So I stopped in there and discovered a master's thesis written by this guy Mike Winey — a history of the 154th New York! I thought I was the only person in the world studying this regiment."

He got in touch with Winey, a professional historian now in charge of the largest collection of Civil War photos in the country, at the U.S.

Army Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, Pa. They agreed to collaborate on a regimental history, which they published in 1982.

In that history, Dunkelman dealt with Amos Humiston in a few paragraphs — the soldier known only for having been found on the battlefield clutching a photograph of his three sons in his lifeless hand. Dunkelman knew that Humiston's story, which had caused a national sensation at the time, was worth a separate book, if he could find enough material. And eventually he did — including letters from Amos Humiston himself.



CIVIL WARRIOR: Historian and longtime Providence resident Mark Dunkelman has never given up his love of the Brooklyn Dodgers. Center fielder Duke Snider is his idol.

"In one of these letters, Amos mentions receiving the soon-to-be-famous photograph of the three children," Dunkelman recalled. "He wrote to his wife, 'You couldn't have sent me anything that would mean more to me.' His letters are full of expressions of love and devotion to his family; it makes it seem that he was meant to be in this role that he eventually played."

That role began when the Philadelphia Inquirer printed the story, and it went all over the country. "It was a mystery, and it just touched people," Dunkelman says. "When he was identified, a second great wave of publicity swept across the North."

The story ended sadly (see review), but Dunkelman's admiration for his great-grandfather's regiment is undiminished. His next book, again focusing on the 154th, is about regimental esprit de corps during the Civil War. And he has an article coming out soon in North and South magazine about fraternization between the two sides during the war:

"I have found that virtually every time the 154th New York got within hailing distance of the enemy, outside of a combat situation, they dealt with each other. They traded tobacco for coffee. They traded newspapers, Northern for Southern. They traded banter. They traded insults. They were very friendly, very respectful of their foes — particularly after their first combat, when both sides realized the bravery of the other."

Often the two armies were separated by a river. Sometimes the men would meet in the middle for a swim, or one soldier would wade across and mingle with the enemy, then return to his own side, Dunkelman says. "Some of them actually constructed miniature toy boats to convey stuff across the river to each other. And it was considered murder to take a potshot at a picket across the river."

Locally, Dunkelman has written sober-sided histories of The Gordon School and Women & Infants Hospital. But he has another side. It turns out he not only writes history, he also writes *alternate* history — and not just about the Civil War.

"I am a member of the Southeastern New England Brooklyn Dodgers Fan Club," he explains. "It's a group of 65-70 guys, most of whom live in this area and have never given up our love for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Pee Wee Reese just died a few days ago, and we're all draped in mourning."

Dunkelman edited the group's newsletter for about six years, during which he introduced cartoon panels (he has an art degree from RISD), in which he altered the pivotal moments of various games, changing baseball history.

"I have long thought of blowing this up into a graphic novel, as they are calling it these days. My plot is, the Dodgers stay in Brooklyn in 1957, and as a result the world changes in many ways, for the better. Race riots, serial killers, Vietnam, assassinations, aren't going to be in the headlines. Sorry about that. They don't happen, because we are a 'kinder, gentler place' — George Bush's only contribution to the national vernacular.

"It's going to center around me, under a pseudonym, who somehow discovers that Walter O'Malley is a dupe, a foil of the evil forces of the world, which are truly personified by the New York Yankees.

"Somehow, we prevent O'Malley from moving the team out of Brooklyn and eventually I take over Duke Snider's place — my idol — in center field. My career is tragically cut short by a freak injury which precludes me from ever going into the Hall of Fame. But the Brooklyn fans regard me with tremendous admiration for all the rest of my days, and I spend my time playing steel guitar behind female country and western singers and am perfectly happy."

Maybe in his next book Dunkelman should find a couple of bucks under the seat that day back in Cooperstown . . .