

★ GENERAL ABNER DOUBLEDAY ★

As Portrayed by Skip Schirmer

Doubleday was a career United States Army officer and Union general in the American Civil War. He fired the first shot in defense of Fort Sumter, the opening battle of the war, and had a pivotal role in the early fighting at the Battle of Gettysburg. Gettysburg was his finest hour, but his relief by Major General George Gordon Meade caused lasting enmity between the two men.

Born in a small house on June 26 1819, in Ballston Spa, NY, Doubleday and his family all slept in the attic loft of the one-room house. Abner spent his childhood in Auburn and later was sent to Cooperstown NY to live with his uncle and attend a private preparatory high school.

Abner practiced as a surveyor and civil engineer for two years before entering the West Point in 1838, from which he graduated in 1842. In 1852, he married Mary Hewitt of Baltimore.

Doubleday initially served in the Mexican War and in the Seminole Wars. By the start of the Civil War, he was a captain and second in command in the garrison at Fort Sumter, under Major Robert Anderson. Doubleday aimed the cannon that fired the first return shot in answer to the Confederate bombardment on April 12, 1861, starting the war.

On February 3, 1862, Doubleday was promoted brigadier general of volunteers and was assigned to lead a brigade in the Army of Virginia. He then led a division at the Second Battle of Bull Run, and the battles of South Mountain and Antietam. In March 1863, Doubleday was promoted to major general of volunteers. Doubleday's division sat idle at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville.

When the I corps commander, Major General John Reynolds, was killed very early during the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg, Doubleday found himself

in command of the I corps. His men fought well, but as overwhelming Confederate forces massed against them, the I Corps line eventually broke and retreated back to the relative safety of Cemetery Hill, south of town. It was Doubleday's finest performance during the war, five hours leading 9,500 men against ten Confederate brigades that numbered more than 16,000.

On July 2, 1863, Major General Meade replaced Doubleday with Major General John Newton, a more junior officer from another corps. Doubleday was humiliated by this snub and held a lasting grudge against Meade. Doubleday formally requested reinstatement as I Corps commander, but Meade refused. Doubleday left Gettysburg on July 7th for Washington.

Doubleday assumed administrative duties in the defenses of Washington, D.C., where he was in charge of courts martial, giving him legal experience that he used after the war. While in Washington, Doubleday remained a staunch supporter of President Lincoln. Doubleday rode with Lincoln on the train to Gettysburg for the Gettysburg Address, and Mr. and Mrs. Doubleday attended events with Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln in Washington.

After the Civil War, Doubleday mustered out on August 24, 1865. In 1869, while stationed in San Francisco, Doubleday took out a patent for the cable car railway, which is still running. In 1873, he practiced law in Mendham NJ, and he became a prominent member of the Theosophical Society. Contrary to myths and legends, Doubleday did not invent the game of Baseball but did refine the rules of the game. Part of the confusion could stem from there being another man by the same name in Cooperstown in 1839.

Doubleday died of heart disease in Mendham NJ in 1893, and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia.



Abner Doubleday is portrayed by Skip Schirmer.