Our Civil War:
Civil War Reenactors and Historical Memory

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Introduction: Reenacting and Sites of Memory

During 1995, an event took place that was both normal and unusual. On Friday, July 1, 600 people, mainly from the east coast, gathered at a rain-soaked and fog-draped Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and began setting up tents on high ground west of town. Some arrived by car and had to contend with difficult road conditions caused by the torrential rains that inundated the region the previous week.

The men bedded down that evening in canvas tents and slept as much as they could on the wet, muddy ground. The following morning, the foggy, damp, and generally miserable weather had not abated, so the men cleaned the rust off the rifled muskets they had brought. Meanwhile others milled about a sutler area examining and purchasing wares provided by the numerous venders present, while many more made their way to an impressive line of Port-a-Johns to conduct their morning business. Later in the morning, officers assembled the men in blue and gray uniforms, conducted roll call, and supervised dress parade and drill. This was interrupted by the onset of a large thunderstorm, which sent the men scurrying for cover. Meanwhile, hundreds of local spectators began arriving to witness the drama that would unfold.

The 600 men, dressed in Union blue and Confederate gray, were about to reenact a portion of the Battle of Herr's Ridge, one of the opening engagements of the Battle of Gettysburg. When the thunder finally abated, the men marched out in

muck that was ankle-deep, and grass that was in some places knee-high. As the men in gray, representing the 14th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry, came upon their opponents in blue, who were portraying the 2nd Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, they let out two rifle volleys, expecting a good number of the blue-clad men to fall, representing casualties, but none were willing to "take a hit" in the morass of a field. As the Union side returned fire along with close-range artillery, the Confederates likewise refused to go down. After some time, the Confederates fell back and another torrential downpour brought the festivities to a close for the day.

The following day, Sunday, July 3, a greatly reduced number of participants engaged in a mock battle once again for spectators, this time with much more favorable weather. Fifty remaining Union reenactors portrayed Buford's cavalry on the first day of Gettysburg, and true to history, stubbornly gave ground to the Confederates, who portrayed Heth's division. The engagement ended in a stalemate, to the delight of the participants and the spectators.

This is Civil War reenacting. Events like this one, as well as ones smaller and much larger, have been taking place across the United States for over fifty years. "The Hobby," as it is often described, seems odd, even crazy perhaps, to outsiders, but to its adherents, the rifles, period clothes, and even the bad weather, simply come with the territory and are even part of the allure. Clearly, Civil War reenactors possess a strong memory of and attachment to the American Civil War.

Even though Civil War reenacting has a ubiquitous place in America's Civil War landscape, especially now during the sesquicentennial of the conflict, historians have given it little attention. This is the case even as historians have

examined the history of memory, especially as it relates to the American Civil War, in great detail over the last two decades. These studies have greatly enhanced understanding of the war and its aftermath, and also how political and social factors affect people's memory of the past. Most of this scholarship, however, has focused on the critical decades from Appomattox through the early decades of the 20th century, as this was the time when key themes in Civil War memory emerged. Historians have not explored why Americans embraced Civil War reenactment in the years following the centennial of 1961-65.

There are three important questions about Civil War reenactors that need to be addressed. First, and most importantly, how do Civil War reenactors remember and interpret the Civil War? By "how" is meant both how they view the causes and consequences of the war as well as "how," meaning their actual practice. Second, why do they remember the war the way they do? Critical to this assessment is an examination of why reenactors do what they do, since their motivations will provide the best clues as to how they remember the Civil War. Finally, how has their memory and practice related to the war, as well as their motivation, changed over time, and why?

These are important questions to ask. First, Civil War reenactors play a role in shaping the public's understanding of the Civil War, and are from a historian's perspective members of "the public" themselves. Reenactors can therefore be understood as occupying a kind of "middle ground" in that they often see themselves as educators and custodians of Civil War history, but historians see themselves as occupying the same role and would view reenactors as objects

of study. So not only is it important to know what reenactors teach the public, it is also necessary to understand their memory of the Civil War as members of the public with a very strong, unique connection to the war. Many take the hobby to fanatical, even quasi-religious, extremes. “The process by which societies or nations remember collectively itself has a history,” wrote historian David Blight; the memory of Civil War reenactors has one as well.

Fundamentally, the answer to these questions lies in the fact that Civil War reenactors form what French historian Pierre Nora called a *lieux de memoire,* or “site of memory.” In this case it means a group of people that adheres to a memory tradition and seeks to transmit that memory to others, meaning both living persons and future generations. This also explains the conflict between reenactors and historians, since “Memory and history, far from being synonymous, appear now to be in fundamental opposition.” In fact, “History is perpetually suspicious of memory, and its true mission is to suppress and destroy it.” Reenactors generally fall into what David Blight called the “reconciliationist” memory of the Civil War. Reconciliationists seek to honor the soldiers that fought on both sides of the conflict by focusing on the heroism of the soldiers and the leadership of the generals, and avoid discussion of the causes and consequences of the war. This reconciliationist focus, however, does not preclude the inclusion of other memory traditions as well. Although the reconciliationist memory is primary for reenactors, some have always embraced Lost Cause sentiments as well. In addition, by the late 1990s, a Unionist/Emancipationist memory began to emerge to challenge it, which challenged those who believed in the Lost Cause of the

Confederacy.

This study focuses on the last quarter century of Civil War reenacting, largely due to primary source availability. The most important source employed for this paper is the *Camp Chase Gazette*, a publication made by and for reenactors. The paper was founded as a small, regimental newspaper by the now-deceased William P. Keitz in 1973, but later billed itself as the "The Voice of Civil War Reenacting," and so indeed it was. The paper under Keitz, and subsequent publisher William Holschuh, who took over in 1990 and ran the paper until 2004, provided a surprisingly unfiltered monthly soapbox for reenactors of all stripes to voice their opinions on any and all issues and controversies related to reenacting and the Civil War. The publication was, throughout this time, largely user-submitted. The majority of the articles and editorials were submitted by readers. It is difficult to overstate the importance of the "Camp Gossip" section of the paper. This acted as the "letter to the editor" section, which often ran as many as six or seven pages in length. The lenient editorial policy for much of the late 1980s and 1990s made the publication a kind of pre-internet sounding board for the reenacting community. In this way, it has the feel of a modern internet message board or blog. Back issues of *Camp Chase Gazette* going back to 1983 can be accessed electronically via a subscription.

Two other important sources are of note. By the middle of the first decade of the 20th Century, *Camp Chase Gazette* abandoned its no-holds-barred editorial policy, at least in part because the increasing use of the internet made monthly features like "Camp Gossip" obsolete. Editor Nicky Hughes wrote that "Camp

Gossip…was the single most important and influential sounding board of opinion, comment, inquiry, and information" for reenactors, but then, "somebody invented the internet." The internet, therefore, would be the second primary source on which this paper will rely. Websites of reenacting organizations themselves provide a valuable look at where reenacting is and has been over the last decade. This paper's research includes nearly eighty such websites. The internet sources also includes blogs run by reenactors, which most closely resemble the old "Camp Gossip." Lastly, a survey of reenactors conducted in the fall of 2011 provides a snapshot of reenactors primarily from New England. This survey was conducted at Central Connecticut State University under the auspices of Professor Matthew Warshauer. The value of the responses to questions like "What aspect of the Civil War interests you most," and "How would you describe your political beliefs" along with views on the causes of the war and the motivations of Civil War soldiers are certainly germane to this study.

Some discussion of Nora's concept of memory is in order. "Memory," according to Nora, "is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past." What he is arguing in essence is that sites of memory, be they things, people, groups, or events, are inexorably tied to contemporary culture, values, and beliefs, which, as they change, will in turn change the memory of the past. History, on the other hand, seeks to represent the past, to the greatest degree possible, stripped of modern cultural or political encumbrances.

David Blight put it another way. He wrote that, "*History* – what trained

historians do – is a reasoned reconstruction of the past rooted in research…” while “*Memory* is often treated as a sacred set of potentially absolute meanings and stories, possessed as the heritage or identity of a community” (emphasis in original). In Blight’s estimation, the fundamental conflict between history and memory is that memory begins with certain basic assumptions or values connected to heritage that need to be upheld or at least go unchallenged, while history seeks to represent the past without regard for heritage, and even to challenge underlying assumptions and values.

Three conclusions can be drawn from these two iterations of memory. First, historians and sites of memory begin with different agendas. Secondly, history is self-critical, while memory is not. Thirdly, memory’s fundamental role is to propagate a particular belief system, which can be based on heritage, but also politics or other cultural values, often in a quasi-religious way. Moreover, as society changes, the memory tradition will change in order to accommodate the change, constantly reinventing itself to defend and justify itself.

This schism between memory and history happened because history made itself the object of critique. “A historiographical anxiety arises when history assigns itself the task of tracing alien impulses within itself and discovers that it is the victim of memories which it has sought to master.” Historians, then, as they examined the history of their own profession, began to recognize that they themselves, whether they were aware of it or not, were influenced by their own values and prejudices. When this “historiographic age” started, it made history “perpetually suspicious of memory.” In fact, history became “the self-knowledge

of society" and in so doing disclaimed its "national identity" and therefore "lost its pedagogical authority to transmit values." Essentially, in their quest to attain objectivity, they have tried to purge memory in the name of professionalism, while memory, in response, has become even more sacralized.

By challenging memory traditions, history came into conflict with memory. Memory's "sacred set of absolute meanings," as Blight said, carries the "powerful authority of community membership and experience." To question the set of assumptions of a particular community, whether it be a nation, region, state, or even family, by historians or competing memory traditions, would, therefore, be seen as unwelcome intrusions on what they see as their "authority," and lead them to defend their heritage. In other words, as historians challenged people's memory (be it nation, state, or even family), those who preserve memory see these efforts as unwelcome intrusions, leading them to defend their "heritage" even more keenly.

A good way to think about reenactors and memory is to say that they employ intellect to serve memory. Their dedication and research is often quite impressive, but their goals are often personal, emotional, and even visceral in nature. This should not be surprising, since the public often has a more personal and emotional – and less abstract/intellectual – relationship with the past. Roy Rosenzwig and David Thelen conducted broad surveys 15 years ago to study how Americans understand and use the past. They found that, though people engaged in many activities having to do with the past, "history," as professionals understand it, was absent from the surveys. Family, it turned out, was the most

important theme in people's minds, as compared to the history of the nation, ethnic group, or community. Family was also respondents' most frequently researched topic. This is certainly true of many reenactors, many of whom have family that fought on one side or the other, and their interest in that era and membership in the reenacting community are meant to honor them. Perceived attacks on ancestors, therefore, would be construed as personal attacks. For example a woman from Kentucky who was interviewed by Rosenzweig and Thelen scoffed that the NAACP, in its campaign against public display of the Confederate flag, and the Ku Klux Klan, who used the flag for their own purposes, were trying to steal "our history." Certainly, this is a woman who objected to the attacks on her memory of the past from both the NAACP as well as the KKK.

If reenactors are a site of memory, what can be learned about reenactment if we accept that it is a site of memory that promulgates reconciliationist sentiments? The term was coined by David W. Blight, whose analysis is perhaps the most influential in the body of work on Civil War memory. Blight argued that in the decades after the Civil War, three competing memory traditions arose. Emancipationist memory was cultivated by African Americans and abolitionists, identifying slavery as the fundamental cause of the conflict, and emancipation as its primary achievement. It viewed the war as "the reinvention of the republic and the liberation of blacks to citizenship and equality." Secondly, white supremacist memory, often associated with the Lost Cause myth, identified most closely with groups like the Ku Klux Klan and other former Confederates, seeking to vindicate

the Confederacy and slavery. This memory would over time merge with reconciliationist memory, emphasize sectional healing, and sought to honor the soldiers who fought on both sides and ignored the causes of the conflict. This combination of the white supremacist and reconciliationist memory traditions would, "by the turn of the century deliver the country a segregated memory of its Civil War on Southern terms," even though African Americans kept the emancipationist memory of the war alive during the nadir of American race relations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Blight emphasized the problems of coping with the carnage of battle and the politics of Reconstruction. "The most immediate legacy of the war," he wrote, "was its slaughter and how to remember it." At the same time however, "Republican Reconstruction was at least an attempt to build a new house – a reinvented republic," with blacks as full citizens. It became clear, though, that these two competing ideas – healing the wounds of war and doing justice for four million newly freed people were incompatible. The tragedy of Reconstruction is rooted in this American paradox: the imperative of healing and the imperative of justice could not, ultimately, cohabit the same house." In other words, sectional healing between whites in the North and South required some northerners to forget their emancipationist sentiments, denying what they had earlier understood as the causes of the conflict and ignoring the continuing plight of African Americans.

It is into this reconciliationist tradition that Civil War reenactors can be placed. Beginning in the 1880s, Civil War veterans began publishing their

accounts of the war. In these narratives, they "cleaned up the battles and campaigns of the real war, rendering it exciting and normal all at once, and made it difficult to face the extended, political meaning of the war." One can see reenactors as continuing this legacy. Reenactors have an almost fanatical devotion to the battles, soldiers, and material culture of the period, as did the veterans themselves in their published accounts, yet what is most striking about their voices from the mid-1980s on, with some notable exceptions, is the almost complete absence of any discussion of the causes and consequences of the war.

Though Blight's work provides the overall framework, other scholars have tweaked or challenged Blight's thesis. William Blair, for example, argued that "the categories of reconciliations, emancipationist, and white supremacist do not always hold up." Most notably, what he called the "Unionist memory" was left out. Northerners, Blair argued, "wanted to protect a Unionist memory of the war – a memory that did not so easily forget the culpability of a slaveowning oligarchy that had nearly divided the nation." Many northerners, Blair would say, wanted to remember the war as one in which the North was right in fighting to preserve the Union, and the South was wrong for attempting to tear it apart to protect slavery; they did not simply surrender the field to southern Lost Cause advocates.

The most recent comprehensive work on Civil War memory is Caroline Janney's *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation*. Janney goes even further than Blair, arguing that "reconciliation was never the predominant memory of the war among its participants." What is more, she argued that in the minds of Americans, what Blight saw as competing memory

traditions were not mutually exclusive. “Union Veterans,” she wrote, “could embrace both reconciliation and emancipation. One did not preclude the other.” If this seems contradictory, she has an answer. “White Unionists had not forgotten that African Americans – or slavery – had been part of the war. But this does not mean that most white U.S. veterans or white northerners in general sought civil and political rights for newly freed men and women. Slavery and race were not interchangeable in the minds of white Union veterans and should not be conflated by us today.” Just because they celebrated the end of slavery, then, does not mean that they favored elevating African Americans to equal citizenship. She based her research on the records of veteran organizations like the Union Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans, as well as ladies organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy. What she finds is that “both Union and Confederate veterans favored national unity – albeit on their own terms.”

Reenactors over the last 25 years can certainly fit into this framework. Although reconciliation is the primary strain within the hobby, Lost Cause elements lurk beneath the surface. Rarely before the mid-1990s were such neo-Confederate views seen in the pages of *Camp Chase Gazette* (or, for that matter, views advocating for either side), but a shift occurred in the mid-1990s, as the emergence of the Unionist/Emancipationist memory began to take hold, and it was at this time that Lost Cause advocates fired back. This culminated in the conflict over public display of the Confederate flag, specifically the flag over the South Carolina Capitol, a controversy that engulfed reenactors not simply because they added their voices to the debate, but because they were featured prominently

in a *History Channel* documentary entitled *The Unfinished Civil War*, which aired in February of 2001. This program did not portray reenactors, particularly Confederate reenactors, in a favorable light, and led to no small amount of consternation and some soul searching among reenactors. There was even a call for reenactors to strongly reconsider their views on whether slavery caused the Civil War. "By believing, as far too many reenactors do, that slavery was not a major cause of the Civil War," one reenactor warned, "we fall into a category of superficiality that makes us looks foolish to serious students of that era."

The final theme of this paper is an examination of what motivates Americans to become Civil War reenactors in the first place. It is by looking at their motivations that clues about their views on the Civil War and how they remember it can be found. Specifically, the motivations of Civil War soldiers can be divided into four groups that are certainly not mutually exclusive. The first is that their admiration for and identification with Civil War soldiers imparts a desire to experience what they experienced, a desire that is typified by the somewhat elusive quest for "magic moments." These are moments during living history events or battle reenactments when, if just for a brief moment, a reenactor "feels as if he's actually there." This impulse drives the desire of many reenactors towards greater authenticity and helped lead to the rise of the hardcore campaigner movement beginning in the 1990s that sought to replicate the lives of Civil War soldiers to the greatest degree possible.

The second reason many people become involved in reenacting is simply because they enjoy it. Jeff Driscoll explained in 1987 why he liked to eat period

food and sleep in bad weather without a lot of camp equipment. He said, “For me, having fun is being a little miserable.” More recently, Scott Sarich explained on his blog why he became a reenactor with the 28th Massachusetts. “I’ve been feeling lately like I need something for myself. I felt I owed it to myself to allow some time to get away from things. I love my family dearly but still feel like I do need a break from time-to-time.” For Sarich, reenacting was a break from his responsibilities to his job and his family.

A third motivation, particularly prominent among Confederate reenactors, is the desire to honor their ancestors. Many Confederate reenactors feel very strongly about this, to the point that they refuse to consider wearing a Union uniform. One, responding to why he would refuse to reenact as a Union soldier, said, “If there are those out there who want to [dress as Union soldiers]…that’s fine. But to those of us who wish to preserve and honor our heritage, leave us alone.” Sometimes, this can be broadened to include honoring all soldiers that fought, or just those on either side. The 21st Virginia’s website, for example, says that, “"Our way to offer tribute to these great men of the Civil War is to study as much as possible the many facets of army life during the Civil War period” Reenactors feel a kind of connection to the men who fought in the Civil War, and not necessarily because they had blood relatives that fought.

One final motivation expressed by reenactors is the desire to educate the public. A reenactor from Florida, for example, explained why he felt women should not be allowed to participate as soldiers in reenactments. “I could care less if they [women] are in uniform, provided there are no spectators watching….” His

major concern was that having women dressing as soldiers would send the wrong message to the public. In a similar vein, one Union reenactor who participated in the 2011 CCSU survey said his favorite thing about reenacting is "portraying a particular individual and conveying his story to spectators as well as the public." Though most reenactors have personal draws to the hobby, many still have the public in mind when they participate.

The subsequent chapters of this thesis will follow the history of reenacting from the 25th anniversary of the Civil War in the 1980s until the present, and cover the major issues and controversies pertaining to the hobby, and how they reinforced, challenged, or even forced changes to reeenactors, their memory of the war, and their practice. It is important to note that these controversies are important for what they tell us about reenactors' motivations and how they remember the war. The second chapter will focus on reenacting during the 125th Anniversary events. The spine of this chapter will be what the reenactors themselves thought of commemoration reenactments held at that time. These events, which include reenactments of Shiloh, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, and Appomattox, dwarfed previous efforts and lived long in reenactors' lore. Because of the size of these reenactments, the era also saw the rise of a number of regional organzations to help organize larger units, as well as an ill-fated effort to form a for-profit national organization to sponsor large events. These efforts were not always well received by reenactors themselves. The third major issue of chapter two will be the budding movement to push the limits of authenticity beyond simply wearing wool uniforms and carrying proper firearms to eating authentic

food and eliminating modern comforts from camps.

The third chapter will cover the growth and controversy surrounding the hobby in the middle-to-late 1990s. One major disagreement beginning in 1990 was the question of whether, and under what conditions, women could participate in reenactments as soldiers. A second issue which really revealed and challenged Confederate reenactors' *raison d'etre* was the issue of galvanizing, or the voluntary or forced practice that required Confederate reenators to portray Union soldiers, particularly at events in the Deep South, due to a paucity in Federal participants. This was a problem reenactor Kevin Duke called "graybackitis." A third topic from the mid-1990s was the rise in interest among reenactors in battlefield preservation, led by noted hard-core reenactor Robert Lee Hodge, who briefly had a column in the *Camp Chase Gazette* dedicated to preservation issues.

Chapter three will also follow the movement toward authenticity through the 1990s and chronicle the rise of the "hardcore" movement, asking how this has essentially split the reenacting community into a large, mainstream group and a smaller hardcore, or "campaigner" group. The mid-1990s also saw issues pertaining to modern politics, which were merely sporadic before then, creep into the foreground of reenactor consciousness. The wedge issue that fired up reenactors was the issue of gun control.

The fourth chapter will cover the late 1990s and early 2000s, and focus primarily on the rise of sectional discord and the controversy surrounding public display of the Confederate flag. No issue so challenged the reconciliation consensus like this one, and eventually led *Camp Chase Gazette* to restrain its

heretofore open-ended editorial policy. New voices, for the first time, challenged the reconciliationist and Lost Cause views that dominated the hobby by injecting issues of slavery and race into the discussion, which prompted replies from more extreme, seemingly unreconstructed, rebels. In the middle, adherents to the reconciliationist memory tried to fend off attacks from both sides and continue to honor the soldiers who wore both uniforms. As part of this chapter, there will be a discussion of the early days of modern re-enacting during the centennial. A serial by Ross Kimmell told of his experiences as a reenactor in the early 1960s, and how there was, at that time, a strong racist, segregationist impulse among Confederate reenactors. The controversy culminated with the airing of a *History Channel* documentary entitled *The Unfinished Civil War* in February of 2001, which featured reenactors embroiled in the debate in South Carolina over the Confederate flag that flew over that state's capitol dome. The show's portrayal of reenactors led to a great deal of soul-searching and questioning within the hobby.

The final chapter will employ online sources as well as the CCSU Reenactor Survey of 2011 to bring the study to the present day. It will discuss all of the major themes and issues developed throughout the first four chapters as they relate to reenacting today. The chapter will conclude with a deeper discussion of what, if anything, can be done to bridge the divide between reenactors and professional historians.

The Reconciliationist Consensus: The Quasquicentennial Commemoration

The commemoration events for the 125th anniversary of the Civil War represented an opportunity for Civil War reenactors in America to really make an impression on the American public. For the first time since the centennial in the early 1960s, major, national commemoration ceremonies were held at places like Manassas, Gettysburg, Chickamauga, among others. This particular period is important to reenactors for a variety of reasons. First, the years from 1986 through

1990 provide a good starting point to examine changes in reenacting since that time. Secondly, the events of the 125th anniversary, particularly the Gettysburg reenactment, were particularly meaningful to reeanctors themselves. Their reactions, both positive and negative, to these events give us a clear indication of what reenactors' motivations were at that time, and also evinces their reconciliationist bent. Thirdly, the events of this era helped springboard the hobby into a period of growth in the 1990s, as membership increased and the number of events held would steadily climb throughout the last decade of the 20th Century.

One of the leading, and most controversial, figures in the planning of the quasquicentennial was Pat Massengill. He wrote in 1984 why he thought the 125th anniversary of the Civil War was worth commemorating. In it, he develops two major themes of reenacting both then and now. His first was one that he admitted was "selfish to reenactors." He argued that "Everybody is always celebrating anniversaries," and that "we have had the Civil War Centennial and they say it was grand – and there is the rub." He lamented that "Nearly everyone reenacting now were either kids or not yet born in 1961." This was a chance, according to Massengill, to have a memorable commemoration, the kind that few in the hobby could remember or fully appreciate. "…the Centennial was our fathers' celebration, the 125th can be ours." He turned, in essence to reenactors' infatuation with the Civil War and desire to relive it. Suggesting a 1986 encampment to work on proficiency in large-unit drill, he said it would be "the perfect opportunity to replicate history," in that the reenactors would be imitating the green soldiers of 1861.

This connection reenactors had, and still have, to the Civil War, and especially the common soldiers on both sides, is seen in a serial that *CCG* began in January 1985 called *Corporal Si Klegg and His Pard*. *Si Klegg* is a fictional story originally published in the 1880s by veteran Union army officer Wilbur Hinman as a serial in *The National Tribune*, a magazine popular with Union veterans. ." Hinman collected the chapters and published them as a book in 1887. Historian and reenactor Brian Pohanka wrote in the published edition that "there was something special about the Si Klegg saga, something that struck a chord with Yankee veterans," and the series developed a loyal following. The book is a fictional narrative from the perspective of Josiah, "Si" Klegg, and his partner, known as "Shorty" and their sometimes serious, often comical adventures in "Company Q" of the "200th Indiana." Despite the fact that it is fiction, the tale still rang true with veterans of the 1880s, as the book "loosed a flood of memories," among reenactors who recognized its fidelity to actual Civil War service.

One passage from Hinman's work, however, seems to encapsulate exactly what both the veterans of the 1880s and reenactors of the 1980s found so endearing. One of the most important relationships that Civil War soldiers developed was with their comrades, and most specifically, their "pard," or the person with whom they would share a shelter half, as well as food and other accouterments. Historian James McPherson argued that "Bonded by the common danger they face in battle, this primary group becomes a true band of brothers." Hinman illustrates the same point, as Si and his "pard" Shorty join forces:

> "The ties that bound near comrades and associates in the army were more than those of friendship. In contrast companionship, bearing one another's

> burdens and sharing the toil and danger and suffering and the hard-earned glory of a soldier's life, their hearts were drawn together by a feeling that can find a parallel only in the tenderest relations of life. These cords were fast tightening around Si and Shorty."

Camp Chase Gazette called *Si Klegg* "the most fascinating book ever written about the common Civil War soldier." Cal Kinzer, a prominent Union reenactor who wrote an introduction for the serial in *CCG*, stated that after being introduced to the book, he "fell in love with this 'gem,'" and that it remained his favorite. Kinzer hoped that as the serial went on, reenactors would "grow to identify with [main characters Si and Shorty] and to appreciate them as much as I have." Though fictional, Kinzer saw Si and Shorty as role models for modern reenactors of all stripes. "Si and Shorty are the quintessential Civil War soldiers," and the book as "one of the best and most complete accounts of what daily life was like for the typical Billy Yank (and Johnny Reb, too!)" It is Hinman's image of the comrades in arms sharing both suffering and glory that is so attractive to reenactors.

Pat Massengill's next reason for making the 125th Anniversary one to remember pertains to the general public beyond reenactors themselves. "More importantly," he wrote, "we need it [the quasquicentennial] in perpetuation of *the greatest benefit derived from our hobby*: *education*" (emphasis added). He underscored not only the education provided to the public, but also that "we learn from each other." When it came to what, exactly, reenactors were teaching themselves and others, Massengill stressed something that had been and would continue to be a major theme and major point of interest for reenactors. He said

reenactors had become more “authentic” since the centennial. “While the events of that celebration contained many patriotic and emotionally inspiring moments, it is also true that very little of it was historically accurate or “authentic.” By “authentic,” he meant the weapons, uniforms, and accouterments. He later suggested that all major events should adhere to a standard concerning authenticity, with the rule of thumb: “If you wear it or shot it, be prepared to defend it…”

The importance of material culture to reenactors cannot be overstated, as it was an increasingly important issue in the late 1980s. Take one article from an issue in 1985 as an example. Steve Taylor gave his in-depth advice on how to become more authentic, and what sources to consult to further your goal. “If reenactors want to authentically portray the battlefield soldier,” he warned, “they need to dress just as the real soldiers dressed…” Another rather mundane example is from January 1986, when the *CCG* opted to reprint a “how to” article about how to roll authentic powder cartridges, claiming that “While quite a number of subscribers are ‘veterans’…, there are a lot of ‘fresh fish’ who have never seen the ‘elephant’ and it is only fair and proper that they too, be given the opportunity to have this source of information to better their own impressions.” The article went beyond a step-by-step guide on how to roll them, but also how they were issued and carried by soldiers, so that reeanctors could replicate this.

“Authentic” reenactors increasingly became less tolerant of unauthentic comrades. Though the origin of the word is uncertain, the term “farb” (or its related adjective “farby”) was already in use by the mid-1980s. It was used

generally to refer to a reenactor who sported unauthentic weapons, uniforms, gear, or even food. "Farbs" were an object of derision, as the following lyrics illustrate. Written to the tune of the Civil War ballad "Just Before the Battle Mother," reenactors David Cornwill and Ken Haskett poked fun at the more egregious offenses to authenticity that had plagued the hobby in the past:

"Just before the battle, farby –
We are thinking most of you!
While upon our field you're marching,
In your Adidas tennis shoes.
You tramp upon our field of honor,
Resplendent in your denim jeans,
You proudly tip your cardboard kepi –
Your nylon flag waves in the breeze.

"You load your brand new Hawkens gun –
A Coleman cooler sits in view.
You pour into your aluminum cookpot –
A can of Dinty Moore Beef Stew.
Your Timex wristwatch signals Beep/Beep
As the hour of skirmish hastens nigh;
You stash your plastic bluegrass banjo
And march off to this battle cry…"

The humorous piece continues with more alternate verses to "Battle Cry of Freedom." What is most interesting about this is not the humorous references to reenactors marching into battle with tennis shoes and consuming beef stew. The line "You tramp upon our field of honor," seems to insinuate that not only are the actions of "farbs" comical, but they actually do disservice to the hobby, and perhaps to the memory of the soldiers themselves. The reference to "our field of honor" is vague, and perhaps has a double meaning. "Farbs" by their failure to adhere to basic standards of material authenticity, dishonor their fellow reenactors

and Civil War soldiers.

There were those at this time, however, who were willing to take the idea of authenticity and move it beyond what was visible to the public eye. In early 1987, Jeff Driscoll, a Pennsylvania reenactor, argued that it was no longer enough to simply wear the correct uniform and sport the proper equipment; you also had to live the life of a soldier to the greatest degree possible. “Carry a candy bar in your haversack, or can’t handle the occasional displeasures that ‘Mother Nature’ brings, then in my opinion, you cannot call yourself ‘authentic.’” Driscoll scolded his fellow reenactors that they should be “living in camp, and in the proper way,” (meaning the way Civil War soldiers lived) and that they should have the right attitude. “If you are only out there to play ‘shoot em’ up,’ to do your latest movie impressions, or to pretend you’re shooting down imaginary planes…then you have no right to call yourself an ‘authentic.’

To some degree, Driscoll tried to rid the hobby of a kind of “cowboy” element, and he would probably say that such antics make everyone look bad, but Driscoll was not concerned here with education or public image, at least not primarily. He said reenactors should avoid “running off to [their] cars or to the nearest motel” at night when it begins to rain. It would not matter, from an educational standpoint, whether the reenactors spent the evening in a motel; what they would miss, according to Driscoll, would be the experience of living the life of the soldier, of being able to commune with them. “I will never know what it was like in battle,” he wrote, “but I try to use my imagination and go from there.” As for the discomforts of camp life, “For me, having fun is being a little

miserable…To throw myself back in time is my aim – to both escape the cares of the modern world, and to gain some sense of what it was like for the real CW soldiers. I like that."

Driscoll took it one step further, and argued that to reenact and not put your best foot forward would dishonor the men who actually fought. "To go out and intentionally misrepresent what they did would be a gross injustice, and yes, even an insult, to the great sacrifices not only my ancestors made, but that all the men who fought North and South made…" Farbism, as defined by Driscoll, runs contrary to reconicliationist memory, since the primary goal is to honor the men who fought by replicating their lifestyle as closely as possible.

Other reenactors agreed. Cal Kinzer was prophetic in 1989 when he said that "A time will come in which a dichotomy will appear between those "authentics" who are little more than 'drugstore soldiers' and the true 'hard-core' troops." The rift would divide those who see the hobby as a means to have fun and those "who want to experience a taste of what it must have been like to 'have been there.'" Kinzer even questioned the efficacy of staged battles for the public, arguing that they were "something less than satisfying" because the public "ruin [ed] the 'time travel' experience." He therefore suggested that organizers should plan for non-public battles, to greater facilitate these "magic moments."

Predictably, these ideas were not universally accepted. Those who objected primarily argued that Driscoll and Kinzer simply did not share their definition of "fun." "This has become a family hobby," wrote an angry Rik Bowling from Maryland. "It doesn't sound as if Mr. Driscoll or Mr. Kinzer have

families with them when they reenact." Glenn Smith of Louisville, Kentucky also thought extreme authenticity might just put a damper on a good time. "We are a free people, it's a hobby to enjoy, not to live it. Someone's forgetting the reason of being there, a hobby to enjoy. I push backhoe all week (I dig graves) when the weekend comes I want to have fun."

It was Pat Massengill's goal to bring all these reenactors together for major, memorable commemorative events. To this end, he founded an organization the American Civil War Commemorative Committee (ACWCC) to help organize the major events of the quasquicentennial. The first major event, an encampment and reenactment of the Battle of Manassas (Bull Run), the first major battle of the war, was held from July 17-21, 1986, in Centreville, Virginia. It was billed as being "for AUTHENTIC Infantry, Mounted Cavarly, Full-Scale Artillery…," and that "strict authenticity and obeyance of regulations will be observed, with a heavy emphasis on an 1861 impression."

The early returns on the event from reenactors were effusive. "Manassas has come and gone," wrote Alan McBrayer of Charlotte, NC, "and I can truly say it was the most spectacular event in Civil War reenacting history." He said that despite the "oppressive heat," which according to *CCG* editor Bill Keitz reached 107 degrees, "the spirit of the troops was high, and I didn't hear one person say that they didn't enjoy themselves." He had only one complaint, that "there were far too many modern civilians with cameras on the field during the battle." Presumably, this detracted from the experience of the reenactors, as seeing modern civilians snapping pictures would have prevented any kind of "magic

moment" of "time travel."

Robert Gryga of Grand Rapids, Michigan was equally energetic in his praise of the Manassas event, which bordered on hyperbolic. "Those among us have been up the mountain and almost touched the face of God!" He elaborated on what he found most beneficial about the experience. "If anything was learned or gained, it was an insight and personal experience as to how it felt to be a soldier in 1861…No one can ever take that away from us." Gryga here was not so much concerned with educating the public. His memory of the war emphasized the shared experience of the common soldier, and it is this feeling of camaraderie that he most wanted to replicate.

In a similar vein, Bill Strong wrote in tones that sound like a 19th century romantic.

> "Sights and sounds which remain cherished; 2,500 Confederates marching down a road as far as I could see, light flashing off their bayonets…Union and Confederate fife and drum bands having a jam session at night; the sight of that cast camp lighted only by candles and lanterns…the cheers of the Virginia spectators as the rebels won the day (wait until Appomattox!) …it was all burned in the memory of those there."

It is of note that Strong, though obviously a Union reenactor, was carried away with the marching Confederate columns. In classic reconciliationist mode, he showed respect for his adversaries, perhaps comforted that his side will have the ultimate victory, and even made note of the "jam session" involving bands on both sides. His main complaint was, once again, "the intrusion of any 20th century contraptions in to [the] 1861 camp life and mood." One Connecticut reenactor reported that he did experience a "magic moment" despite the occasional modern

intrusion. “When I saw General McDowell on his horse…I thought I’d stepped back in time.”

Furthermore, many went out of their way to praise the work done by the ACWCC in their planning and executing of the event. Floyd Bayne of Midlothian, Virginia wrote “The logistics involved with this event had to be unbelievable and to have to deal with them must have been quite a burden.” Reenactors, according to Bayne, would have missed out on “the largest reenactment in the past 30 years,” had it not been for the ACWCC.

One respondent from Maine, Joseph T. Smith, did have a suggestion for future events. Due to the heat and the fact that many participants are past their prime and “not as accustomed or acclimated as their actual counterparts” to the oppressive heat and humidity, he asked “why wouldn’t it be possible to schedule future events in September and October…” when the weather is more agreeable.

Major reenactments such as Manassas traditionally take place as close to the actual battlefield as possible, and as close as possible to the exact date. The reason speaks to reeanctors’ memory of the war, and their almost religious connection to the boys of 1861-1865. The 1987 reenactments of Shiloh, which was not an ACWCC event, was held on April 4 and 5, and was similarly an occasion for reenactors to feel a connection with the past. The event was held on part of the original battlefield adjacent to the present Shiloh National Military Park. Like most reenactments, it featured walk through re-creations of Union and Confederate camps featuring the daily life of the common soldier. The battle demonstration on Sunday featured “authentically uniformed and equipped”

reenactors on part of the original battlefield.

Kari Geiger, a sutler from Grand Island Nebraska who attended the Shiloh event, summed up why reenactors, despite the infelicities that come with summer weather or the almost inevitable rains that come with spring events like Shiloh, would prefer to have events as close as possible to the anniversary. “Our visit to the original battlefield at Shiloh was an emotional experience for me, especially since we were at the Hornet’s Nest at the exact moment in time 125 years after the event occurred. Bloody Pond enveloped me with a sense of gloom I cannot ever recall having.” For Geiger, being on the battlefield meant more on the anniversary that it would have otherwise.

The organizers of the Shiloh event boasted the largest ever number of participants (5,927) as well as the most cannon assembled (68), and it was the first time 150 mounted cavalry fought using dismounted battle tactics. This made the event another example of reenactors living out their desire to recreate the Civil War soldiers’ experience. David Helm said “it was the greatest battle that I ever attended in years, except for the annoying/ aggravating helicopters”. The helicopters, it seems, detracted from the experience. Lee Millar complained that they “were subject to the kamikaze media helicopters and the civilian plane on what appeared to be simulated bombing runs.”

As significant as the early quasquicentennial reenactments were to the participants, for them, Gettysburg in 1988 was *la piece de resistance*. The event, however, was originally shrouded in some controversy. It was sponsored by the ACWCC, and a new, for profit initiative run by Pat Massengill, called

“Napoleonic Tactics” (NTI). By March 1988, NTI boasted that they had over 8,000 preregistered soldiers for the event, along with 100 guns, 300 cavalry, and over 2,000 civilian reenactors. It was open to all “authentic” reenactors, and was planned for June 24-26, 1988. There were, at first however, at least two competing events. Reenactor-historian Brian Pohanka warned that “…there are now TWO events scheduled, each purporting to be THE Gettysburg event”. One was the NTI event, the other was sponsored by the “Gettysburg 125th Committee” and was affiliated with the National Regiment. He warned reenactors specifically of Massengill and his profit motive. “I have grave doubts about the legitimacy of a privately-sponsored event that is going to make Mr. Pat Massengill of “Napoleonic Tactics” a good deal of money.” *CCG* even put an image of Army of the Potomac commander General George Meade on the cover of their September 1987 issue with a humorous word balloon alluding to the Gettysburg reenactment controversy (see figure 1).

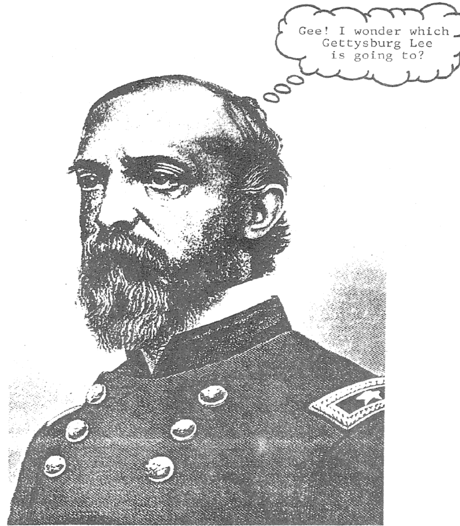


Fig. 1: Image on the cover of the September 1987 issue of Camp Chase Gazette, which alluded to the controversy over multiple Gettysburg reenactment events held for the quasquicentennial.

Evidently, many reenactors had qualms with Napoleonic Tactics. For one, they objected to the idea of someone making money off of the hobby. One sutler from Waterloo, NY objected to paying sutler fees, but he would “ABSOLUTELY REFUSE to pay any registration fee that is based on anyone’s anticipated margin of profit. It appears,” he lamented, “that all the applauding that we reenactors have done [for the job ACWCC did with previous events like Manassas] has put Mr. Massengill upon a self-constructed pedestal….”

A second concern some reenactors had with Massengill was that he would have too much power over the hobby. The hobby was and is made up of scores of local units, each of which seemed reluctant to surrender power to larger organizations. “Why do you put up with Pat Massengill?” one Virginia reenactor asked rhetorically. “It is quite obvious that he intends to make the entire hobby into his private empire.”

Reenactors had to perform a balancing act of sorts when it came to individual unit autonomy and being able to put on the kind of large-scale events that that they so cherished because of the “magic moments” it sometimes provided. In order to be able to put on large scale events for the 125th Anniversary, umbrella organizations made up of several smaller units were born. A prominent example is a group of Union units known as The National Regiment (NR). The idea for the organization was hatched on January 20, 1985, the day of President Ronald Reagan’s second inauguration. Reenactors from the Midwest and East Coast were invited to participate. Though the parade was cancelled due to the extreme cold of the day, “Out of the spirit of authenticity exhibited by these

reenactors, and the camaraderie which resulted from their working together…the idea was conceived of a national generic infantry regiment…" The individual units united under the same officers for major events. Eventually, after 125th, the eastern and western halves split amicably, forming the eastern "National Regiment" and the "Western Brigade." To this day, according to their website, "Both maintain the original high standards in authenticity…and continue to cooperate closely when together at events."

A Confederate, and western, counterpart to the National Regiment is the First Confederate Division. Like the NR, it found its roots in the quasquicentennial. By 1995, the organization was the largest in the hobby, boasting over 3,000 members. Notably, the unit, despite its name, had units based in all of the states of the former Confederacy and the North. Today, the unit is known as The Armies of Tennessee (AOT), largely the result of a rift that occurred over issues of authenticity guidelines.

The rise of ACWCC as well as regional reenacting umbrella organizations like the NR and 1st Confederate Division were met with some trepidation. *CCG* editor Bill Keitz chimed in in July of 1987. Speaking of the "regional power structures that are permitted by many of you to exist," he wrote, "It is about a few who rule many!" He warned of "self-appointed officers" and "total disregard of the well-being of all of us." He was essentially standing up for individual unit autonomy. "No one man or organization should be able to tell you that you must pay an exorbitant fee…to all look the same in dress uniform, weapon or accoutrements!. He concluded by grudgingly accepting that a larger organization

might be necessary, "BUT, not without the necessary Checks and Balances system to prevent the abuse of power."

One complaint sometimes heard was about "politics" in reenacting, by which writers meant competition for power between and within organizations. One person who applauded Keitz's stand wrote that he had seen someone told to go home by leadership and quipped "I believe we all go to reenactment to have fun, NOT TO PLAY GOD." Similarly, an unnamed reeanctor calling himself "Unnecessary Other" from Waterloo, Iowa, complained that at the 125th Gettysburg event, at one particular battle, a reenactment of the Peach Orchard engagement from July 2, 1863, he was given only a marginal role because he was not affiliated with the National Regiment. He lamented that the NR had too much power.

Some reenactors were far more sanguine towards national and regional organizations. Doug Cooper from Alexandria, Virginia replied to "Unnecessary Other," giving credit to the NR for upping the ante in the authenticity department. The NR, he wrote, "looks good and fights good because of the efforts of everyone involved…" Additionally, Cooper argued that large reenactments would not be possible without the NR, because it, "represents the various units involved as one body at the large reenactments and protects our interests far better than smaller units could do themselves."

Cooper's claim that organizations like the NR "protect our interests," points to a reason many reenactors supported the notion of an even broader organization representing all reenactors: to prevent them from being taken

advantage of. Gordon L. Jones wrote condemning Tri-Star pictures for the production of the film *Glory*. His issue had nothing to do with the content; he took umbrage with the producers' use of reenactors because of their "cost effectiveness." Specifically, he complained that at Olustee, Florida, they had filmed reenactors for scenes in the movie, but reenactors got nothing out of the arrangement. "As reenactors," Jones wrote, "we need to be aware that our activities can and will be exploited for profit by whoever we allow to get away with it." He closed by endorsing Keitz's proposal of a limited national organization to represent the interests of the hobby as a whole.

In any event, Pat Massengill and NTI won out, and their event became "the" Gettysburg event in 1988, and it was certainly a memorable one. No other event topped Gettysburg in the minds of reenactors for fulfilling their hopes. Peter D'Onofrio of Reynoldsburg, Ohio wrote that "The 125th Gettysburg will, in all likelihood, be an event of such magnitude that few of us will ever witness again. They, with the able assistance of NTI, have steadily improved the quality of these events." Another praised the realism of the sequences. "They [NTI] organized an outstanding event, and the scenarios were realistic with realistic distances (artillery ranges) involved." Evidently, NTI's greatest asset was in orchestrating major events that facilitated reenactors' desire for more realistic scenarios and "magic moments."

This event also showcased reenactors' attachment to the soldiers' memory and the reconciliationist tradition to which it is associated. Don Patterson, who commanded the Confederate forces at the event, praised the participants and

original soldiers on both sides:

"We all worked together to make history this past June and your [reenactors'] efforts will always be a source of great pride to me. Both armies North and South worked with supreme dedication to make the event fitting memorial to the gallant men who marched those fields so long ago. Those of you who wore blue and those who wore gray exemplified what is good and true about our country."

The high point of the event was, as might be expected, the reenactment of Pickett's Charge, and its aftermath, when a bugler played taps to an otherwise silent field. After giving grudging praise to NTI and Pat Massengill, Jim Walters struggled to describe his time at Gettysburg. "I still am having a hard time finding the right words to describe my G-burg experience. It was perhaps the most spectacular and the most emotional event I've ever attended…When you see large numbers of reenactors in tears after recreating Pickett's charge…you know how emotional the experience was." He added that even their "'stiff upper lip' English brothers" were in tears as well. Similarly, Phillip Kirdulis of Worchester, Massachusetts, wrote that "A lot of very tough, veteran reenactors were brought to tears by the spectacle & moment of the last day. As we walked away, I heard many say, 'Where do we go from here,' or 'it's all down hill from here'."

It was left to Dennis Harrington of Melivlle, New York, however, to sum up the crowning moment of the Pickett's Charge reenactment:

> "My head is swimming with beautiful memories. I think my most lasting memory will be the period of silence that followed Pickett's Charge. With thousands of Northern and Southern troops kneeling, uncovered on the battlefield, the only sounds that could be heard were the snapping of the battle flags in the breeze. Then a bugle played taps, and the Confederate cannons fired a salute from 'Seminary Ridge.' I think we were all more suddenly aware than ever before of the tragedy that was the American Civil War. Then, as taps echoes from the Confederate position, someone yelled out 'Three cheers for America!' the air filled with cheers as Union and Confederate troops exchanged handshakes."

Clearly, the event was very emotional and endearing for the reenactors who participated, which illuminates the very visceral, almost religious, relationship reenactors have with the Civil War and the men who fought therein. Harrington's letter contains many of the hallmarks of the reconciliationist tradition that this emotional attachment engenders. The focus on and honoring of the soldiers on both sides is the primary strain here, and the last part, where both Union and Confederate troops shook hands sounded like they reenacted the veterans themselves at the 50th Anniversary event at Gettysburg in 1913.

Though the reenactors' reconciliationist sentiment shined through in the wake of Gettysburg '88, this did not mean that the Lost Cause or Unionist memories of the war were entirely absent. A company called Classic Images produced and sold a commemorative video to reenactors, and not everyone was happy with it. According to Brian Carpenter from Endicott, New York, the narration of Jack Foley was a gigantic Lost Cause apology. "There is a constant tone," he complained, "of the 'noble, invincible Confederate' going up against the 'despised, incompetent Yankee.'" He objected to Foley's "romantic, simplistic view of the war," but finally conceded that "there will always be those who will perpetuate the myths. Such is the hold that conflict has upon our imaginations, upon our very souls as Americans." Carpenter recognized the emotional hold the war had on Americans, and also that beneath the reconcilationist gushing, conflicting memories of the war still existed.

The final event of the 125th Anniversary further revealed simmering Lost

Cause sentiment among Confederate reenactors. The finale of the 125th, like Gettysburg, had two very similar events. One was sponsored by the National Parks Service and focused on the Sayler's Creek battle, and the other was an NTI event focusing on Appomattox. The conflict got ugly, as both Massengill and the Sayler's Creek Reenactment and Preservation Committee printed letters in *CCG* defending their event and attacking the other. The NPS-Sayler's Creek event was plagued by rain, but David Gallagher, a Union reenactor from Huber Heights, Ohio praised the organizers who "handled the uncooperative weather in fine fashion," and commended his Confederate counterparts. "You men did your ancestor proud. I never cease to get chills when your lines advance upon ours during and engagement." The NTI-Appomattox event, on the other hand, did not go well. Tom Corbett of Massachusetts was hoping for several thousand attendees, but he was "personally disillusioned by the attendance." The fact that the event was held over Easter weekend and that it snowed did not help matters. Even worse than the low attendance and weather was what happened during the reenactment of the surrender ceremony. Apparently, many Confederate reenactors packed up for home rather than partake in the surrender ceremony to conclude the event. Cynthia Topps was shocked and chagrined. "As the majority of the Confederates packed their gear and left before the surrender ceremonies stating 'Lee surrendered, I didn't,' I was embarrassed to be a Southerner. When the ceremonies took place and the few Confederates attending stacked arms, I wanted to cry, not tears of sorrow, but of shame."

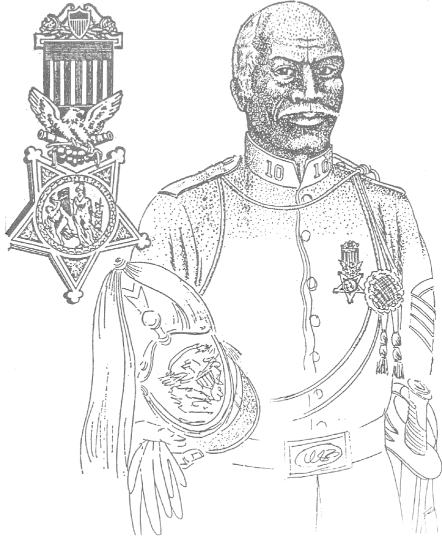
What this exposed is a rift between the reconcilationist memory of the

war and a more extreme, Lost Cause memory. The former takes pride in the South and Confederate heritage while acknowledging defeat (though still convinced of the justness of the Confederate cause), while the latter maintains a more unreconstructed stance. Topps certainly thought she, and those Confederate reenactors who stayed, were in the right. "Every Southern Reenactor who refused to participate…spit on the face of General Robert E. Lee, trod on the Confederate flag, and desecrated all the cemeteries and monuments to the men who fell on that field of battle defending our birthrights."

Ultimately, NTI would fail to become a long-lived organization for reenactors, and the reason for the failure, according to Pat Massengill, was Chickamauga. If Gettysburg was the crowning event of the quasquicentennial, and of Pat Massengill's Napoleonic Tacitics, Inc., Chickamauga, which was held on September 16-18, 1988, was a disaster. The remnants of Hurricane Gilbert descended on Tennessee the week of the event, and things bogged down into a quagmire. Predictably, participants were upset with NTI, charging them with poor planning and scrimping on precautions in the name of profits. "How could they plan an event when they knew it was going to rain?" asked Ed Beier of Martin Springs, Tennessee. Ray Harris of Morton, Illinois said he did not mind the weather, but what really got under his skin was "NTI's poor management." NTI purchased two bridges to secure access to the site, but they had both washed out. Shortly after the conclusion of the quasquicentennial, Massengill announced that he and his wife were filing for bankruptcy. "The bankruptcy is a delayed, but direct result of one thing, Chickamauga," he wrote. "We were simply never able

to recover from the six-figure loss sustained as a result of Hurricane Gilbert." With the demise of NTI also went the first attempt to sustain a for-profit initiative to plan and orchestrate major reenacting events. Thus ended the reenactors' commemoration of the quasquicentennial of the Civil War.

With all of reenactors' focus on authenticity, the life of the soldier, the rise of groups like the National Regiment, there was one issue that was conspicuous by its almost complete absence: slavery. The few exceptions to this rule evince reenactors' adherence to a reconciliationist memory of the war by the lack of interest and sensitivity given the subject. One example was the September 1986 issue, which featured a drawing of an African American soldier wearing a Medal of Honor on the cover (see figure 2). The issue came with a short article by Thomas Buford, where he argued that "It is ironic…that whereas the negroes seem to be the beneficiaries of the war, it is evident that the nation as a whole is the greatest beneficiary," and closed with a nod to William H. Carney, the first African American to win the Medal of Honor. Significantly, the article



received no comments from readers in

subsequent issues, indicating little interest in the topic

Fig. 2: Cover of September 1986 issue, featuring an image of Medal of Honor recipient William H. Carney. It represents one of the few times during the late 1980s where slavery and race were acknowledged in Camp Chase Gazette.

A second, and somewhat more disturbing mention of race in *CCG* was a story that ran in January of 1989. Entitled "The Adventures of John Henry," the story chronicles "the thrilling adventures of a little black rag doll come to life and his quest to become a real boy." A Union soldier named Higgly carried the doll in his haversack as the first day's battle at Gettysburg commenced, when "John Henry poked his wee black head out of the opening and looked around. His button eyes grew wide with fright and his kinky black braids stood straight up." Almost predictably, John Henry spoke in a "black dialect." He proclaimed "Lor' hab mercy on dis Po' colored doll, I'se don wanna be kilt by no webbil can'n-bawl!" Higgly helps to delay the enemy advance, and when John Henry is captured by a rebel soldier and is about to be killed, Higgly saved him. The complete lack of racial sensitivity evident in a story about a black doll speaking in stereotypical dialect who wants to be "a real boy" (indicating that he is not already a real person) can be contrasted with the utter seriousness many reenactors took issues

like uniforms and weapons, and the much greater sensitivity they showed for soldiers' memories. Also, the doll must ultimately be "saved" by the Union soldier, ignoring the pivotal role African Americans played in the war. Moreover, the article received no responses; nobody found it offensive. Like other adherents to a reconciliationist or Lost Cause memory, race and slavery are issues that are not treated seriously, if at all.

The final mention of race in *Camp Chase Gazette* throughout the late 1980s was a cartoon published in March of 1989 (see figure 3). It featured a Confederate officer standing in the rain with his sword held to the sky, saying "A cursed weather! After a hard day a'fighting in this rain, I reckon a man 'oughter be entitled to a fire fer a pot 'a coffee!" In the second panel, the officer is struck by lightning. The final panel features the officer transformed by the lightning bolt into a stereotypical black person with large lips who proclaims "Oh Lawsy me! Ah's done gone an' done it now. Mercipul Hebbens me. Ah's in trubble fo'sho'!"

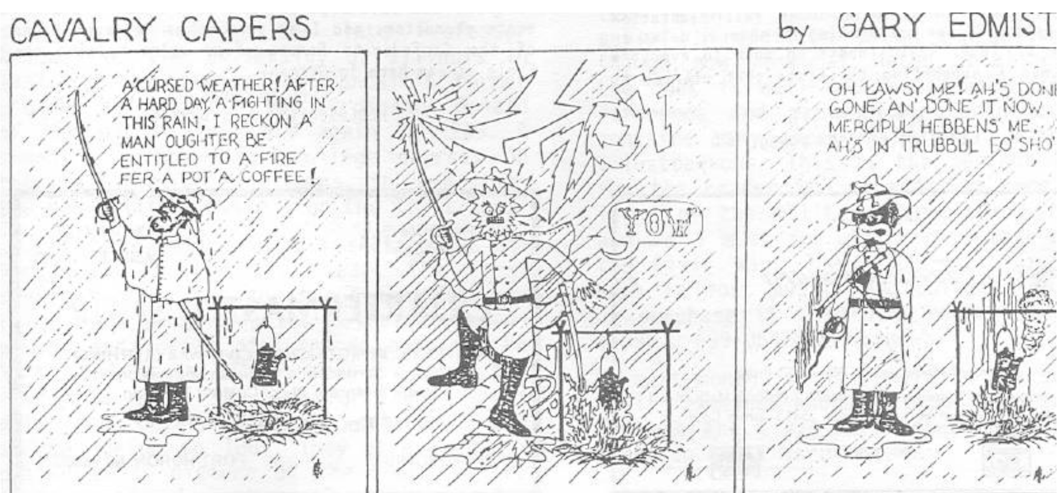


Fig. 3: Gary Edmisten's cartoon depicting a Confederate officer transformed by a lightning bolt into an African American, who speaks in dialect. Such cartoons, and their lack of response, evince a lack of interest in race and slavery as historical issues, but also a certain degree of racial insensitivity

One person, Steve Von Vima of Sacramento, California took exception to the cartoon. "Every individual is free to express his views," Von Vilma wrote to the editor, "however, if racist humor is the direction *CCG* is headed, I will no longer continue to subscribe." He also thought he would be one of many to complain about the cartoon. "I'm sure I'm not the only person to find it racist, degrading, and offensive" he wrote, but an editor's note below his letter politely thanked him for expressing his opinion, but said his was the only complaint they had received. Von Vilma was a lone voice here; in a hobby still ensconced in reconiliationist or Lost Cause sentiment, negative portrayals of African Americans that denigrate their contributions to the war did not seem out of the ordinary.

There are two things that are clear from these few instances. One is that reenactors at that time generally regarded race and slavery as ancillary to the history of the Civil War. Thomas Buford's article regarded emancipation as secondary to the unification of the nation. This view makes more sense within the context of reenactors' adherence to a reconciliationist memory of the conflict, as

evinced by their experiences at 125th events. Secondly, there was an element of racism – or at least racial insensitivity – among reenactors. Articles such as "John Henry" and the cartoon depicting the Confederate officer which feature stereotypically black characters – and one that strives to become "real" – are cringe-worthy. They came at a time when an African American presence in the hobby was virtually non-existent.

Reenactors' experiences in the quasquicentennial reveal a hobby that was strongly ensconced in a reconciliationist memory of the Civil War. Their most cherished experiences, Bull Run in 1986 and Gettysburg in 1988 chief among them, show that they wanted to experience the camaraderie remembered by Civil War veterans like Wilbur Hinman and, perhaps above all, wanted to honor them. To this end, many wanted to weed out "farbs" in the hobby and some even wanted to push the hobby to greater levels of authenticity. Unfortunately, in the few instances when race and slavery were raised, the topic was treated with a great deal if insensitivity. The 125th anniversary commemorations did have the effect of helping propel the hobby into the 1990s. The last decade of the 20th century would prove to be one of significant growth for the hobby. This growth, however, would be accompanied by numerous controversies, involving forces both within the hobby and without.

Growth and Controversy: Reenacting in the 1990s

In 1988, reenactor Philip Kirdulis, commenting on his emotional experience participating in the 125th anniversary reenactment of Gettysburg, asked "Where do we go from here?" Indeed, it was *the* question facing reenacting by 1990. With the long-anticipated quasquicentennial in the rear-view mirror, in what

directions would the hobby go? The decade that followed, the 1990s, ended up being a period of growth and controversy for the hobby. The 125th reenactments, as well as the release of the films *Glory* and *Gettysburg*, along with the Ken Burns PBS documentary *The Civil War* all led to increased interest in the Civil War and participation in reenacting. It is impossible to do a head count of reenactors, but an illustration of this is the number of events listed in *Camp Chase Gazette*. Each issue has a feature called "Upcoming Campaigns," which lists reenacting events in the coming months from all over the country. Because it is early in the season, April is generally the month of the year in which you find the most advertisements. In April of 1987, for example, CCG advertised 76 events; this in the midst of the quasquicientennial, whereas by 1990's April edition, there were 115. By 1993, the issue was advertising 198 events, which covered most of 21 pages of the issue.

Reenactors themselves, however, increasingly became embroiled in their own internal controversies during this period. These battles gave further voice to reenactors' motivations, be it to honor the soldiers that fought, educate the public, or to simply have fun. Increasingly, and significantly though, these motivations began to be marshalled against one another, and in some cases, interpreted differently by different people. This chapter will examine these controversies to see how various motivations were debated and challenged. In some cases, these controversies challenged the reconciliationist consensus that holds reenacting together.

The arguments did not come and go in strictly chronological order; it is not

as if reenactors began debating one thing, stopped, and picked another fight. On the contrary, arguments happened simultaneously, with each having its own ebbs and flows. It is impossible, therefore, to examine them in strictly chronological order. Instead, this chapter will begin with the increasing divide between the mainstream reeanctors and the more radical push towards greater authenticity, leading to the rise of the "hard core" campaigner movement. This issue mainly divided those who, on the one hand, wished to experience the life of the Civil War soldier and honor them through increasing adherence to more Spartan standards of living, and on the other, those who saw reenacting as a hobby, and did not feel convinced that honoring soldiers necessarily meant living like them, with all the deprivations it often brought.

This section will document two controversies that actually united reenactors against what they felt were outside forces. The first was centered on a new *raison d'etre* for reeactors: battlefield preservation. Increasingly, reenactors started to take a more active role in preserving sites that were in danger of development; this was something that appealed to all reenactors, regardless of their motivation. Secondly, reenactors showed near unanimity in their opposition to gun control. This is the first time that issues involving contemporary politics began to creep into reenactors' debates, but the vast majority of reenactors were decidedly against any measure, and this, as much as any issue to this point, evinced reenactors' conservative political leanings.

Another issue pitted reenactors against themselves, and saw them marshal their motivations for competing sides. It involved the question of whether women

should be allowed to serve as soldiers at encampments and in battle simulations. Those against allowing women to participate generally thought that it was historically inaccurate and tended to be skeptical of a woman's ability to hide their gender. They also objected to soldiers who were "obviously" female ruining their time travel experience, or simply ruining their fun time with the guys. Still more saw women's attempts to participate as evidence of "political correctness" run amok. Those in favor pointed to the historical documentation of the women who portrayed soldiers on both sides, and the desire among some females to honor and experience the lives of soldiers as well; they also pointed out the incongruity of barring females when many men did not "look the part" because of age or body type either.

As controversial as these issues were to reenactors, however, none cut to the core of their motivations and challenged the reenators' reconciliationist consensus the way that the debate over galvanizing did. Galvanizing is the practice where Confederate reenactors, either by choice or by the policy of event organizers, portray Union soldiers at reenactments to redress the imbalance often seen, particularly at events in the Deep South, where Confederates, who historically were numerically inferior, greatly outnumber their Union counterparts. In addition to providing a "clash of motivations," the varying sides disagreed sharply as to what it meant to honor the soldiers of the Civil War and who, exactly, deserves to be honored. This is because the debate stirred up latent Lost Cause sentiment among Confederate reenactors who simply refused to "wear the blue." This is a harbinger for what would come in the late 1990s, as reenactors

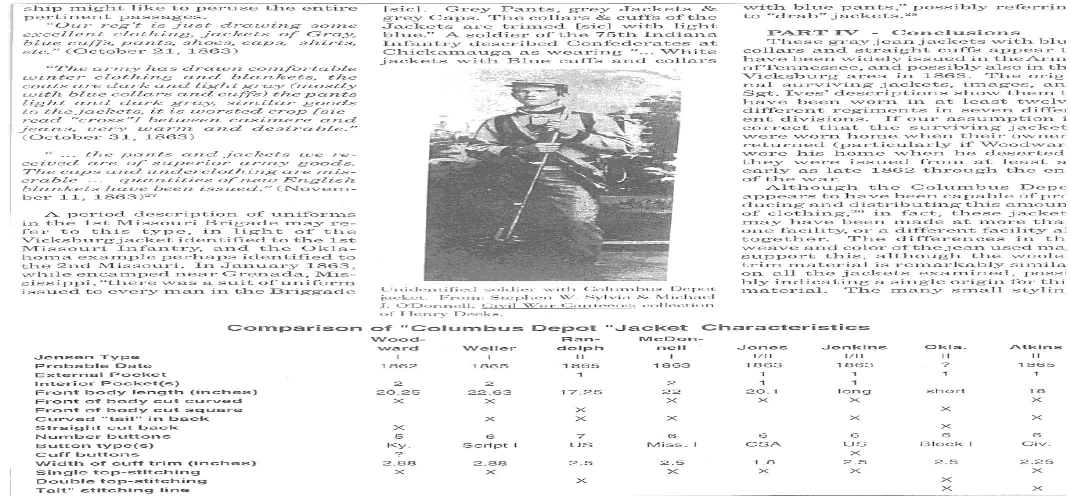
become increasingly politicized by the national controversy over public display of the Confederate flag.

Authenticity

One ongoing controversy that predated the 1990s concerned authenticity. By the late 1990s, a majority of reenactors agreed upon certain basic standards of authenticity. In May of 1993, Arch Stanton wrote "How Not to Be a Farb," in which he advised reenactors to make sure that they avoid a score or so of faux pas, which included being too fat, wearing modern shoes, and employing modern beverage containers. He also implored his fellows to not be ignorant of the basics of drill and to avoid "personal heroics," which he described as "anyone who makes a 'John Wayne' one-man charge out of formation into the enemy…" Stanton added, though, that although the term farb "brings to the surface all manner of resentment and ill will," the problem remained that "no one agrees on what the word means." This was because "the definition changes constantly, as the hobby changes." What was at one point acceptable, in other words, might later be considered "farby." This might also be true at any given point, as it increasingly became clear that reenactors themselves began to disagree over its application.

During this era, many reenactors' attention to material culture only increased. One representative example of this is a multi-part article by Geoff Walden describing the Confederate Columbus Depot Jacket, so called because of its manufacture at Columbus, GA. Walden examined period pieces and photographs for his articles, which go into some detail. He described the collars,

for example as having “straight cuff trim about 2-1/2 inches wide of a medium or indigo blue kersey wave wool…” He also included a chart detailing the various features present on various surviving examples (see figure 1).



ship might like to peruse the entire pertinent passages.

“Our reg’t is just drawing some excellent clothing, jackets of Gray, blue cuffs, pants, shoes, caps, shirts, etc.” (October 21, 1863)

“The army has drawn comfortable winter clothing and blankets, the coats are dark and light gray (mostly with blue collars and cuffs) the pants light and dark gray, similar goods to the jackets, it is worsted crop [sic - read “cross”] between casimere and jeans, very warm and desirable.” (October 31, 1863)

“ ... the pants and jackets we received are of superior army goods. The caps and underclothing are miserable ... quantities of new English blankets have been issued.” (November 11, 1863)[27]

A period description of uniforms in the 1st Missouri Brigade may refer to this type, in light of the Vicksburg jacket identified to the 1st Missouri Infantry, and the Oklahoma example perhaps identified to the 2nd Missouri. In January 1863, while encamped near Grenada, Mississippi, “there was a suit of uniform issued to every man in the Briggade [sic]. Grey Pants, grey Jackets & grey Caps. The collars & cuffs of the Jackets are trimed [sic] with light blue.” A soldier of the 75th Indiana Infantry described Confederates at Chickamauga as wearing “... White jackets with Blue cuffs and collars with blue pants,” possibly referrin to “drab” jackets.[28]

Unidentified soldier with Columbus Depot jacket. From: Stephen W. Sylvia & Michael J. O'Donnell, Civil War Canteens; collection of Henry Deeks.

PART IV - Conclusions

These gray jean jackets with blu collars and straight cuffs appear t have been widely issued in the Arm of Tennessee, and possibly also in th Vicksburg area in 1863. The orig nal surviving jackets, images, an Sgt. Ives’ descriptions show them t have been worn in at least twelv different regiments in seven diffe ent divisions. If our assumption i correct that the surviving jacket were worn home when their owner returned (particularly if Woodwar wore his home when he deserted they were issued from at least a early as late 1862 through the en of the war.

Although the Columbus Depo appears to have been capable of pro ducing and distributing this amoun of clothing,[29] in fact, these jacket may have been made at more tha one facility, or a different facility al together. The differences in th weave and color of the jean used ma support this, although the woole trim material is remarkably simila on all the jackets examined, possi bly indicating a single origin for thi material. The many small stylin

Comparison of "Columbus Depot "Jacket Characteristics

	Wood-ward	Weller	Ran-dolph	McDon-nell	Jones	Jenkins	Okla.	Atkins
Jensen Type	I	I	II	I	I/II	I/II	II	II
Probable Date	1862	1865	1865	1863	1863	1863	?	1865
External Pocket			1		1	1	1	1
Interior Pocket(s)	2	2		2	1	1		
Front body length (inches)	20.25	22.63	17.25	22	20.1	long	short	18
Front of body cut curved	X	X		X	X	X		X
Front of body cut square			X				X	
Curved "tail" in back		X	X	X		X		X
Straight cut back	X						X	
Number buttons	5	6	7	6	6	6	6	6
Button type(s)	Ky.	Script I	US	Miss. I	CSA	US	Block I	Civ.
Cuff buttons	?					X		
Width of cuff trim (inches)	2.88	2.88	2.5	2.5	1.8	2.5	2.5	2.25
Single top-stitching	X	X		X	X	X		X
Double top-stitching			X				X	
Tait" stitching line							X	X

Fig. 1: Chart comparing the characteristics present on various examples of the Confederate Columbus Depot Jacket. Such charts show how focused reenactors of the 1990s were on the minutiae of Civil War material culture.

In addition to a continued focus on material culture was the rise of a new kind of event: the tactical. Unlike most spectator-oriented reenactments, where participants reenact a particular, historical or “generic” battle for spectators, the tactical is a reenactor-only, non-spectator event. Also unlike traditional

reenactments, a tactical is unscripted, and a "winner" is often decided by judges. Frequently, at weekend events, there is a brief tactical that may last several hours, but in the 1990s one finds events of this kind that lasted an entire weekend. The idea of this event is clearly to push the limits of reenacting and to "live the soldier's life;" It was not meant to educate the public, since they were not invited. An event, held from March 15-17, 1991, was advertised as: "A rigorous event, only for the strong of body and spirit. The armies will be on the march. Extra baggage will surely fall to the side of the road. No Planned camp activities, no spectators, no modern camping, no meals provided, no civilian activities…now powder issue." The information sheet sent to participants warned that:

> "All participants at this event should expect to endure forced marches, 24 hour picket duty, miserable conditions, no sleep, and very little food. This event is NOT for the inexperienced, those with health conditions, the out-of-shape Winnebago warriors, or skulkers. If you want to stay warm, comfortable, dry, well-fed, and avoid strenuous duty, STAY AT HOME. The LBL Tactical Committee will not provide refunds or other recourse to individuals who attend, then find the event more rigorous than they can handle.

The event was expected to have more participation than it ended up having. The Federal side especially fell short. There were 230 registered Federals compared to 850 Confederates, and there were only 39 Union men still in the ranks by Sunday morning. Despite this, one of the judges, Roger Smith, said that "The Federals were successful in conducting what amounted to a raid." They managed to hold a strategic location for an extended period and escape when confronted by superior Confederate numbers. Ultimately, the judges gave the Federals the slight edge because they "utilized the potential of their limited resources to a greater extent

than the Confederates were able to...”

As ballyhooed as this event was (*CCG* devoted their entire May 1991 issue to the event), the turnout was disappointing because the number of reenactors who were interested in such an experience was limited. Still, its adherents were increasingly vocal. Mainly, they were motivated by a strong connection to the Civil War soldier and a desire to live as much like them as possible, with the hope of experiencing that “magic moment.” With the less authentic either converted to their cause or scared off, this would make such moments increasingly likely. When asking rhetorically “Why do you reenact?” Scott Buffington dismissed the usual “to educate the public,” and “to honor those who have gone before us,” and proclaimed that “the real reason why we reenact…lies only within ourselves. It is a feeling one has when another offers to help getting your camp up,” and in words that echo Hinman’s Corporal Si Klegg, “The feeling is one of sitting around the fire with your pards in conversation or song…I can only describe [the hobby] as a brotherhood.”

Many reenactors, often called “mainstream” in the authenticity debate, push back at those who they take authenticity to extreme, even unhealthy levels. “It’s hard to go to an event without someone criticizing another’s impression,” wrote Steve Burnt. “Everyone is calling for realism; but it has gotten out of hand.” He pled for a bit of “common sense” in authenticity, arguing that “Many people bring hard tack to events, but I know of no one who eats moldy or worm-infested crackers.” Even *CCG*’s publisher, Bill Holschuh, who took over for Bill Keitz in 1990, addressing the “hardcore vs. farb” dichotomy conceded that reenactors,

rather than being divided into two opposed camps, were "all…a shade of gray. Until someone invents a time machine, none of us can ever claim to be 100% authentic." Another critic was Jonah Begone, a frequent contributor to *CCG*, and one always quick to point out when reenactors began taking themselves too seriously. He quoted a friend who suggested that anyone who has a desire to "experience what it was really like…be tied to the ground and shot in the leg with a .58 caliber elephant gun/musket, and left to writhe in the agony for a day or two under a hot sun (or in the snow for the Fredericksburg scenario). Later he can be picked up and given miserable medical treatment." Begone simply thought "reenacting is, or should be, recreational fun…as long as authenticity is held to the level of a 'reasonable facsimilie thereof.'"

Perhaps nobody in reenacting epitomized this hardcore debate more than Robert Lee Hodge. Hodge is a Conederate reenactor who was featured in a 1994 *Wall Street Journal* article by Tony Horwitz, who would later pen *Confederates in the Attic*. This was the first glimpse of the "hard core" cadre in the mass media. Horwitz describes Hodge and others who soak their buttons in urine "to achieve an oxidized, 1860s patina," and who had lost 35 pounds and suffered broken ribs from being dragged by a horse at a reenactment. Rather than being content with the term "reenactor," hard cores began preferring the term "living historian," which they took to mean someone who actually lives the history in as much of its unpleasant glory as possible. Rob Young, a hard core quoted by Horwitz, said "Sometimes it takes me three or four days to come back to the 20th century," and that sums up the devotion and "time travel" motivation that drives the movement,

which, Horwitz estimated, numbered about 10 percent of all those in the hobby.

Unsurprisingly, Horwitz's article was not well-received by most reenactors. Many like Rodger D. Smith, thought it misrepresented the hobby. Writing directly to Horwitz, he charged that he mistakenly "concentrates solely on the fringe groups at opposite ends of the reenacting spectrum. By doing so, you [Horwitz] ignore the vast majority of the participants…who fall into neither camp." Magazine editor Grant MacMeans was blunter. Granting that Hodge may have been quoted out of context, he warned "if this is how some hard cores feel, my advice to them is to get a grip." Another line of criticism was from Steven M. Harness, who argued that hard cores' infatuation with the material of the Civil War misses the larger issues. "I assume this hobby is mostly about things, as the criteria on whether you are portraying an average soldier of 1863 is your knowledge about button holes and fabric composition." He went on to say that "recreating the human that wore the uniform," is more important than the uniform itself." "We need uniforms and equipment to SUPPORT our living history efforts. It's not the other way around."

Robert Lee Hodge would indeed respond to the article and criticism thereof. He wrote that he had been taken out of context to some degree (though he admitted that the quotes themselves were accurate). He defended the hard cores, stating that "to strive to experience many activities of the 1860s era…is probably the principle asset of this community." He then explained his motivation, which borders on a kind of religious faith. "I have thought of this interest [in the Civil War] in somewhat mystical tones for ages. I have been infatuated with the Civil

War since I was 4 years old. I was hooked. Around this time my brother told me who I was named after." He closed by admitting that he can never truly be like the boys of the 1860s. "I will always be a farb to some degree, everyone is." Despite this, his devotion to the soldiers of the Civil War drives him to come as close as he can to their lifestyle.

Battlefield Preservation

If authenticity divided reenactors, the desire to protect battlefield land from developers united them. One again, Robert Lee Hodge led the charge. In a brief column entitled "This Hallowed Ground," Hodge wrote that "It came as a major shock to me to see up close what is happening to the sacred soil of our country's past." Hodge appealed to both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, not just the Confederate side with which he is normally associated. He then issued a call to arms. "It would be fair and safe to say that the majority of us are guilty," of allowing battlefield land or land adjacent to it to be swallowed up by developers. "The sites of the very events that we are reenacting are gradually being destroyed while we blissfully shoot black powder at each other."

Camp Chase Gazette itself had already begun to throw its weight behind the preservation movement. Beginning in August of 1991, the magazine began superimposing a gray star on the advertisements in "Upcoming Campaigns" that vowed to donate a portion of their proceeds to historic preservation. By March of 1992, 29 events received the gray star designation, or one-fifth of all events listed that month. Readers were genuinely pleased with this new emphasis. Andy Gelman wrote that "Your publication is to be commended on its newly

emphasized support of Battlefield Preservation efforts. If all reenactors would put their commitment behind this cause, what a difference we could make."

The topic of endangered battlefields really had the effect of raising reenactors' ire. "I have seen some pictures of the destruction done to The Gettysburg Battlefield, (Expletives Deleted)," wrote Steve Bouldin from Valparaiso, Indiana. "Even though Reenactors are a relatively disorganized group, we can still do a lot to prevent this type of thing." He then encouraged his fellows to contact their congressional representatives, since "Politicians don't like to get nasty letters in an election year."

Perhaps no preservation issue angered reenactors more than the planned Disney development outside the Manassas (Bull Run) battlefield. A worried Al Poor of Massachusetts wrote to *CCG* warning "By the time this letter reaches you it would appear the Disney Theme Park just outside the Manassas Battlefield is to become a reality." He acknowledged that such an attraction might boost battlefield awareness and education, but then wondered "why, why must it be placed just outside the battlefield?" Only a fool with his head in the sand would deny that the sprawl associated with such an undertaking won't reach the very boundaries of Manassas," and then raised the specter of fast food restaurants dotting the landscape around and within site of the battlefield. The Disney/Manassas issue actually united reenactors with historians. "It warms my heart to see," John Kanelis wrote in August of 1994, "American historians up in arms over Disney's plans to build a theme park near the sites of some of our nation's bloodiest conflicts." He then named such professional history notables as C. Vann

Woodward, Shelby Foote, and Barbara Fields who voiced their opposition to the development.

News Item - Disney officials have announced that historical reenactors will recreate famous American battle scenes at the proposed "Disney's America" theme park.

Part of what drove reenactors to vociferously reject the proposed Disney plan was a perceived attack

on their ownership of Civil War history; they saw an attack, in other words, on their memory of the war. Some were afraid that, through the Disney's lenses, the war would be mocked. A cartoon from September 1994 (see Figure 2), for example depicted seven dwarves with names like "Flatulent," "Farby," and "Greasy," dressed in a motley manner and carrying all kinds of firearms, including a modern looking assault rifle, while assorted woodland creatures look on in amazement. The dwarves sing "Heigh-Ho, Heigh Ho, It's off to work we go!!!" with doves carrying flowers descend above the "troops."

Fig. 2: Cartoon blasting the proposed Disney Theme Park near the Manassas battlefield in Virginia. The Dwarves are depicted in all manner of "farb" regalia, including sun glasses. Notice the dwarf on the far right, "Larry," the only one with a normal name, and the only one with quotation marks around it, is actually female. She references another divisive issue for reenactors: women portraying soldiers.

Other reenactors may have seen Disney's move as a subterfuge to inject what they saw as "political correctness" into Civil War history. Jonah Begone and (presumably) his wife, Honoria Begone wrote a satirical piece entitled "Disney's

Amerika: A Secret Agenda Revealed." They said the theme park would present "an excruciatingly politically correct, corporate version of American History." He then described a proposed "Gaston's Land of Masculinity" wherein "An Audio Animatronic Betty Friedan invites guests to discuss how Amerika's history has been corrupted by testosterone-poisoned male stereotypes."

Another of the Begones' satirical entries was a proposed attraction he called "It's a Global Village." This would feature Disney characters Aladdin and Mowgli from the Jungle Book giving a tour of "various ethnic enclaves, featuring their lifestyles and activities." They noted that "only positive images will be shown – ethnic gang violence will be scrupulously avoided." Also included would be "Denounce Racism Land," where "Robert Gould Shaw narrates an historical overview of wrong thinking in Amerika," and "Uncle Remus leads guests in a symbolic burning of Nathan Bedford Forrest – theme historical art prints…and Confederate battle flags."

The Begones' piece was, as most of his submissions tend to be, intended for humor; he of course did not seriously think that these proposals would come about. It does, however, provide some context to the battlefield preservation issue. Some reenactors, Begone included, may have seen the encroachment of Disney into their sacred land as part and parcel of perceived attacks on their memory of the conflict, as exemplified by the "political correctness" movement.

From a historical standpoint, the furor over "political correctness," which provides the backdrop for not only Begone's satire but other reenacting issues, is in large part the results of the changes in scholarship over the last three decades of

the 20th century. With the advent of social history, as opposed to traditional political and military history, scholars focused more attention on groups that had been ignored (women, working class people, and racial minorities). Peter Stearns argued in 1995 that it was this new focus that had conservatives up in arms. Despite the fact that the national *History Standards* of 1994 maintained a political-centric focus, for example, conservatives nonetheless cried foul. The *Standards* "included lessons on the political roles of a variety of groups…But the idea of painting a diverse canvas, while retaining a substantially political focus, was anathema enough to the resurgent right."

Historian Peter Stearns argued that conservatives found three major problems with social history. First, was simply "the undeniable fact that many social historians are politically to the left," so attacks on them constitute a "distressingly successful" attempt to "impute political agendas to scholars." Secondly, and most significantly, was the fact that social historians "*have not usually taken as their principal task the glorification of real or imagined American ideals*" (emphasis added). Here is where one sees, to use Nora's terminology, the severing of history and memory, so that they are now "in fundamental opposition." The third reason is related to the first. Social historians recognize lower-class people and minority groups as "significant subjects of historical study," which worries conservatives, because by focusing attention on their voices, one may call into question the "real or imagined American ideals" conservatives wish to protect.

<u>Opposition to Gun Control</u>

A second issue that united most reenactors and further evinced their conservative political leanings was gun control. Reenactors' opposition to gun control was almost universal. The perceived danger to black powder weapons, since that would affect reenactors most directly, was obviously a concern. "I think you should get in contact with the NRA," advised Virginian Dennis Boettcher, "and they can advise you of what bills the 'Gun Grabbers' have in congress and how they pertain to black powder guns." Californian Ted Neal of the "2nd Amendment Guards" wrote that "The GGs [gun grabbers] see no positive use for guns but we all know different every time we attend an event, and there are thousands of other positive uses for firearms…" What was most dramatic was the reaction from reenactors to those who argued that the hysteria surrounding gun legislation was unwarranted and based off of misinformation. Contributor William Jackson, who in 1998 would become editor of *CCG,* argued just this in 1994. A memo from a group called Handgun Control, Inc. had purportedly been leaked and contained plans for "draconian" gun laws that would place "severe restrictions on the ownership of firearms." Jackson cried foul. "The thing stinks of falsehood a mile off," he wrote, pointing out that "the document was carefully crafted to include material that would offend almost everybody, regardless of race, creed of political affiliation." He closed by saying though reenactors should be flattered that they were included as a target group in the bogus document, he found it "disturbing that they thought any of us would be foolish enough to believe it."

Jackson's article, however, did little to abate the anxiety reenactors had

over the issue, and some even held Jackson in contempt. Richard Mansfield of New York wrote that Jackson was "either naïve or missed the point…Any restriction of freedom affects all of us, whether it is mandatory motorcycle/bicycle helmet laws or mandatory seat belts." He felt it was only a matter of time before reenactors would become a target, since "representing the Confederate forces fighting for States Rights is "Politically Incorrect." Ted Neal of the "2nd Amendment Guards" said Jackson's article was "a disturbing apology for an appalling organization." Another reenactor, Steven Harness of California, wrote of the virtues of firearms, and even tried to draw parallels between the 1990s gun control debate and Nazi Germany. He described how his grandfather "was in a concentration camp during World War II. He was there with a Thompson Submachine gun knocking the gate down and shooting any damn Nazi he could get in his sites." He then said his lesson was that the inmates of the camp were "former free men that had sacrificed their liberties slowly and could not resist the tyranny because the first items they had surrendered were their weapons in the name of crime control."

Chris Nelson's guest editorial in September of 1994 came under similar fire. "Many reenactors will share interests with all gun owners," Nelson wrote, "but by no means do all reenactors share all gun community interests." He then pointed out that "retaining our muskets and cartridges does not depend on the likes of a David Koresh being allowed to stockpile automatic weapons, explosives, and ammunition." Such a "false community" would, in his view, "pose a greater threat to the rights of reenactors than anything likely to pass the

Congress of the United States." Although he was polite and referred to gun-rights advocates as "well meaning," his editorial had the effect of throwing a grenade into a crowded room. "Is he for real?" asked Alan Petit of Wisconsin, "Nelson is either the most naïve person I've ever heard of or he is a complete fool…To the totally dedicated gun banners the goal is a complete ban of all guns and repeal of the 2nd Amendment." James M. Ruley of Ohio was similarly outraged. He did not oppose an assault weapons ban "because the NRA told me I ought to" he wrote; he did so because "It's unnecessary," and because "It's stupid." He also warned that the "gun-control 'mafia'" would soon target reenactors. It did not matter that proposed legislation did not affect them or the hobby directly, but saw it as part of a larger conspiracy that would eventually envelop them.

Though a majority of reenactors were strongly opposed to gun legislation, some defended Jackson and Nelson. Wiliam Hamilton of South Carolina lamented the extremism that seemed to characterize the issue. "The middle seems to be disappearing from American politics" he wrote. He did not agree with Nelson, but said "he made a very important and valid point about resisting the tendency to gut the middle and consider only extremes." Clay Norman of California even turned the "political correctness" charge on its head. "It is amazing to me," he observed, "that many dedicated people, committed to the struggle against political correctness in the 1990s, will none the less castigate others who are judged to be not 'Second Amendment correct' in their eyes."

Women Reenactors

If reenactors saw political correctness creeping in issues like gun control

and battlefield development, it really began to hit home over the question of whether women should be allowed to participate as soldiers in reenactments. In 1990, Nicky Hughes, who briefly edited *Camp Chase Gazette* in the early 2000s, wrote that women who attempted to portray soldiers needed to maintain an extremely high standard. After first proclaiming that he was "on the liberal side compared to most reenactors" he maintained that just as those few women who did pass as soldiers in the Civil War "masqueraded successfully as men. "Women who want to do that impression today must live up to the same standard." In other words, they should be undetectable. He argued that anything less would make the reenacting community look bad. "We don't need to supply them [other history professionals/academics] with ammunition to shoot back at us." To Hughes, a poorly disguised female soldier is similar to a male reenactor wearing tennis shoes on the field. Reenactors would be "noticed," and "laughed at," by their many skeptics. For many reenactors, including Hughes, one of the major reasons to reenact is to experience what the soldiers experienced. But most women who have the same motivation, their argument went, are simply out of luck. Huges described one very dedicated woman who portrays a civilian at most events but chose not to try and portray a soldier. He said of her "No one could be more interested in the battle experiences of the Civil War soldier, but she will never experience them at a reenactment." The woman in question refused "to compromise historical truth for their [women's] own gratification."

Hughes tried to take a middle position – between those who would ban women entirely and those who might be more open set a lower bar for women's

participation. Frank Cutler fell into the former category when he called Hughes's opinion "trash" and wrote that Hughes "comes off sounding like the type of male who has fallen into the trap of the ERA women & the N.O.W. crowd who want to make the red blooded American male into a 'yes dear' wimp." He finished by proclaiming that "women are not fit for combat duty and if we have to fill our ranks with women then we should close down reenacting." In addition to the political reasoning, some argued that women, despite great efforts, were still recognizable, and that would misinform the public or ruin their own experiences. Tad Saylards, a newcomer to reenacting at the time, said that at his first reenactment, his experience was "partially halted" by seeing a woman who in his view did a poor job of hiding her gender. Floridian Doug Woodall wrote that he did not care if women were in uniform, "provided there are no spectators watching and I am not in the same unit, but when the public is watching I am sure it looks silly to them when they see a lady dressed as a soldier. It is historically inaccurate by any stretch of the imagination." Seeing a woman in the ranks, in other words, put a cramp on male reenators' attempts at living the life of the Civil War soldier. Woodhall would also blame feminist politics for starting the controversy with a cartoon published in May of 1991 (see figure 3). It features a woman in uniform brandishing a sword and a shield emblazoned with the letters "E.R.A" A dead soldier lies near her with a sign reading "Historic Fact R.I.P." and another soldier carrying a banner that reads "Truth: Grandma Stayed at Home!"

Camp Gossip

Women in The Ranks and Camp

I wish this whole issue of women in the ranks and women in camp could be put to rest. Lets face it, reenacting is one of the few activities that has no rules. It is purely up to the whim of individual units to define history as they see fit.

In my opinion, there are 3 basic type of reenactors. First, you have the dedicated types. These are the people who do the research, and constantly strive to become a living image right out of Brady or Gardner's camera. They do not play soldier for the spectators, then drag everything, including the kitchen sink, into camp after the spectators leave. They strive to educate the general public about the hardships of battle, the march, and camp life. But equally important, from a personal point of view, they strive to educate themselves on the hardships of battle, the march, and camp life, by living for an entire weekend (not just when spectators are around) with only the gear and food they can carry, and fighting, marching, drilling, eating, camping, and sleeping as Johnny and Billy during the war.

Second, you have the pseudo-authentics. These individuals are interested in doing it right, BUT only to the point that it becomes inconvenient to themselves. Their battle cry is "if the spectators can't see it, its ok!" They wear modern underwear and socks because they are more comfortable; they sneak food and cold drinks out of hidden coolers; they drag out the sleeping bags, beer, lawn chairs, and even retreat to the campers when night comes. Theirs is the attitude that you're not breaking the law unless you get caught. After all, isn't it OK to drive 10 miles over the speed limit, UNLESS there is a cop around?

Third, you have the weekend warriors and polyester patriots who are most interested in reenacting a Hollywood recreation of a Civil War battle. They come with thousands of rounds, powder poured into penny wrappers, blow a lot of smoke, make daring one man assaults on entire companies, and die dramatic deaths, because the spectators came to see "A SHOW." When they return to the miniature mobile home park they call camp, they regale the spectators with stories of other great feats they've performed on the battlefield, instead of providing them with a glimpse of how the real soldier lived and acted. But most importantly, they can justify everything. "If they had had it, they would have used it," is often heard from them.

Peoples' attitudes on the women in the ranks and camp issue reflects their attitude toward "the hobby." For the weekend warriors, anything goes - hey, adding women in the ranks means more members! And what does it hurt to have the whole family around the trailer camp? The pseudo-authentic will tell you that it is OK to have the family in camp after the spectators leave, and will usually be split on women in the ranks. As for the true living historian, they will apply the same rule to women in camp and the ranks as they do to everything they themselves do, "if it is documentable as historically correct, then it is fine." And no one's opinion will change unless their attitude toward reenacting changes.

I have changed my attitude several times, and as a result, evolved from a weekend warrior to a dedicated living historian with the help of many people. I feel that it is the true authentic's role to educate and help change the attitudes of fellow reenactors as well as the public. Unfortunately there will always be those that refuse to see the light. But think of all those men and women who are not being as authentic as possible simply because they don't know any better - these are the ones we MUST assist.

As far as the women in uniform, my view is that if they can fool the spectators and other reenactors (obviously her fellow unit members will know her secret) she has every right to be in the ranks. But, the minute her true gender is discovered, she should be forced to leave the ranks as her predecessors would have been forced to do.

Concerning women in camp, again if it is an authentic impression, by all means allow it. But let the "family affair reenactors" remember, the war WAS NOT a family activity. It was rare that a Civil War soldier (officer or enlisted) would have allowed a proper lady to remain overnight

Fig. 3: Doug Woodhall's cartoon criticizing women attempting to portray soldiers. Woodhall saw women wanting to be soldiers within the context of 1990s gender debates.

Women reenactors did indeed defend their position and argue their point.

Linda Fogarty of Illinois took issue with Hughes's apparent denial of the same experience of "time travel" and living the life of the soldier that men enjoy. "After devoting myself to the study of the Civil War for many years," she wrote, "I deal with an intensely haunting feeling about that war by reenacting. I must tell you, as a woman, it does feel a bit unfair to be treated as a second class Reenactor." In the same way, Elise Parker, who portrayed a specific, historical woman who enlisted in the 2nd Michigan as a man, was "curtly dismissed from the ranks" at an event "despite my stated historical precedence." The only reason given was her gender, and she argued that "IF competence is the issue then women who perform as adequately as their male counterparts should be allowed the same courtesies and rights." Her mother, she wrote, "does not recognize her own daughter" when she dressed as a soldier.

The issue really came to a head in 1993 when a woman named Lauren Cook Burgess won a lawsuit in Federal Circuit Court against the National Parks Service, guaranteeing her right to participate. In 1989, Antietam National Military Park would not allow her to participate in a living history presentation with the 21st Georgia unit to which she belongs. The only reason given was her gender. Unsurprisingly, the reaction to the decision was not positive. Confederate reenactor Geoff Walden, addressing Lauren Cook Burgess directly, wrote that "your politics go a long way toward ruining what's good about this hobby…It's a shame that Ms. Cook/Burgess use modern politics…to further their own modern liberal viewpoint, and force it onto the rest of us." At this point, Lauren Cook Burgess herself stepped into the fray to defend herself against Walden and others.

Interestingly enough, she grounded her defense not on a “modern liberal viewpoint” that Walden and others tried to impart on her, but firmly within Lost Cause ideology. “My lawsuit was about history,” she wrote, “not about multiculturalism/feminist hysteria…I was told by the NPS officials that this particular history DIDN’T MATTER, and that the only thing that did matter was my gender” (emphasis in original). She then connected her fight to what she believed the Confederacy stood for. “ I happen to hold our Constitution as sacred with respect to the protection it guarantees to individuals for their rights against illegal tyranny…” Then, in classic southern apology, reminded Walden (also a Confederate reenactor), “In case you forgot, that is what the Confederacy’s cause was all about.” Walden, still unconvinced, decided to not “belabor the point any longer” (perhaps surrendering the field to Burgess) because “I have better battles to fight, such as opposing those who would ban private ownership of firearms or display of the Confederate flag.”

By the mid-1990s, more reenactors appeared to be more open to Nicky Hughes’s original proposal that women should be allowed if they do a good job of hiding their gender. Long time reenactor Cal Kinzer described a “man” named “John” with a North Carolina unit at an event but it took some time before he realized that “he” might be a “she.” “I can only say that ‘Private Jones’ was a ‘bully’ soldier,” he complemented her, adding that she “would put most male reenactors to shame” when it came to authenticity. “I can only say, ‘Private Jones,’ I WAS IMPRESSED!” *Camp Chase Gazette* illustrated the change the hobby had undergone when it published a kind of “how to” article by Catherine

Hunter Wise, describing how women can credibly hide their gender. The article was accompanied by "before" and "after" pictures of Wise, showing how she transformed herself into a Confederate cavalryman (see figure 4). They also poked a little fun at the controversies with their April "fools" 1995 issue. The cover included five "unusual features," and any reader who correctly identified all five would be given a year's subscription for free. Nobody got all five because most readers failed to point out that the soldier pictured on the cover was a female (see figure 5).

off to these who are gentlemen enough to accept a fellow reenactor regardless of gender.

Once a male reenactor asked me, "why do you want to be a man?" I explained to him that I had no wish to be a man. I just wanted to fight, and if I was going to be on the field, then I was going to do it right.

For more information on the US/CS Military Women's Association, or for guidelines on women in military roles, contact Catherine Hunter Wise, 1165 Liberty Grove Rd., Alpharetta, GA, 30201; or call 770-752-0678.

Behind the Byline: *Catherine Hunter Wise has been reenacting for seven years. She is a member of the 2nd Georgia Cavalry, 12th Tenn. Cavalry and Hampton's Legion. She has written for national and regional publications on topics ranging from reenacting to horse care. Along with fellow Georgian Debbie Mattee, she is co-founder of the US/CS Military Women's Association.*

The two faces of Catherine Hunter Wise. (Photos by Eric Diez)

Fug 4: Catherine Hunter Wise both disguised as a Confederate cavalryman and in her normal, modern attire. By the mid-1990s, many reenactors had come to accept women so long as they did a good job disguising their gender.

Fig. 5: Image of the April 1995 cover of Camp Chase Gazette, *depicting a woman dressed as a Union soldier on the cover. Not a single reader identified her as a woman.*

Galvanizing

Many reenactors saw debates about women in the ranks and battlefield preservation through the lens of 1990s political debates. These issues did not

divide reenactors along sectional lines, however. Geoff Walden and Lauren Cook Burgess, for example, were both Confederate reenactors, yet fell on different sides of the of the woman-as-soldier issue. Similarly, Jonah Begone, a Union reenactor, fell in on the same side as his Confederate counterparts in debates about battlefield preservation and gun control. The same thing cannot be said about the issue of galvanizing, the practice of Confederate reenactors portraying Union reenactors for events to redress an imbalance of participants. This issue, perhaps more than any other, saw some Confederate reenactors aggressively defend their Confederate memory of the conflict against perceived dangers. At its core, it pitted a more militant Lost Cause memory of the conflict against the mainstream reconciliationist memory.

The debate first began in May of 1991 with a very bold editorial by a Confederate reenactor named Kevin Duke. He lamented the imbalance of participants on the Union side at events, but identified the culprit. "When organizers beg for 'galvanizers,' they often meet the real 'Stonewall' of the hobby…ancestral crap." Duke argued that if reenactors were really concerned with authenticity and "reenacting the way things were," than they needed to do something about this issue. He complained that "over and over, we give the public what amounts to an SCV [Sons of Confederate Veterans] parade."

The misinformation being fed to the public was only one reason this problem needed to be addressed. Reenacting was about honoring the soldiers on both sides of the conflict, and the lack of galvanizing, to Duke, did a disservice to both. Duke would "bet his last Richmond dollar" that Confederate soldiers, seeing

the farce many reenactments were, “would ask if they could borrow a blue coat themselves.” He added that, although the Union side “may not be filled with charisma as the warriors for ‘the cause...’” their story “deserves telling” and it is “an important part of American history.” Given the animosity soldiers during the conflict felt towards those on the other side, animosity which to some degree continued well into the 20th century, the idea that Confederate soldiers would put on a blue coat seems far-fetched, but Duke was a true reconciliationist and he was taking the radical Los Caus-ers head on.

“Full-Time Southern Federal” reenactor Cal Kinzer commended Duke’s stand, but felt it would ultimately fail. “Trying to reason with the Rebs into donning blue – is a lot like trying to talk the Mississippi River into running North,” he warned. Kinzer then wrote that his “sneaking suspicion” was that most Union reenactors are in it to be “soldiers,” Confederate reenactors are there to be “Rebels.” Robert Bolton suggested Confederates had a more prosaic motive for their distaste for wearing blue. “…a lot of the Confederates I’ve talked to have a real distaste with the uniformity and regulation standards of the Federal impression…”

Most who defended Duke did so from a reconciliationist viewpoint. Jeff Hendershott wrote that new recruits should “strongly consider” a Federal impression. His view “is not in any way a cut against the fine men and women” who are involved in Confederate reenacting, but hoped that more would be willing to portray Federals in the name of “true objective scholarship,” and “for the integrity of the hobby.” Dave Schacher, who was a Confederate for 16 years,

wondered "what's the big deal about wearing blue?" He started going Federal and said he now enjoyed it because "it's a different aspect and it helps you understand what the hobby is like from both sides." He still claimed his ancestor, a Confederate soldier, was "murdered by the Yankees & their government," so his loyalties are obvious, but for him, reconciliation and a Lost Cause memory can indeed coexist, because it "doesn't bother" him to portray a federal.

This controversy flared up one again in 1993, when Wayne Roberts wrote an inflammatory letter to *CCG* voicing his opposition to galvanizing. Regrettably, the June 1993 issue in which the letter appeared is unavailable, but the replies, which mostly supported galvanizing, tell us much about what Confederates thought about reconciliation, honoring soldiers, and educating the public. Wayne apparently could not honor Union soldiers because he disagreed with their cause. Matt Merta, in reply to Roberts, took reconciliation to an extreme, comparing soldiers in the Civil War with World War II soldiers. He said that "Political attitudes aside, the WWII Nazi soldier was exactly the same as the WWII American soldier: a young kid away from home dodging bullets, wishing that the whole thing was over with so he could see his family again." Merta was able to compartmentalize "the soldier" from the nation, country, or cause they fought for, and respect him, while ignoring the politics or causes behind the conflict.

Confederate reenactor Lee Candy took exception to Roberts's contention that portraying Federals would dishonor Confederate ancestors. Candy wrote that he was "a die-hard Confederate with many proud ancestors," and that he, like Robers, was "disgusted with the overwhelming Yankee bueaurocracy that has

taken over the U.S. government." Candy fell solidly within the Lost Cause camp, and saw parallels between the Confederacy and the 1990s, but despite this, he proclaimed "by GOD sire, I do indeed galvanize!" His reason? A reenactment is "the ultimate form of honoring our ancestors…" and an opportunity to "convey to spectators and ourselves what our ancestors went through and increase public interest in them." For Candy, part of honoring ancestors involved accurately portraying the fact that it was the Confederates who were outnumbered and persevered, and to show otherwise would be a disservice to them.

This issue came to a head in 1995, when Dick Smart, and other leaders of the First Confederate Division decided that for their planned 1864 Campaign event, the policy would hold that "all CS troops attending…must be prepared to galvanize as Federals for one scenario if required by the host." If a reenactors or unit were unwilling to abide by this policy, "THEY AREN"T WELCOME AT THIS EVENT!" Cal Kinzer was impressed by the move, writing that he hoped the hobby was "maturing to the point that we no long see ourselves as "Federals" or "Confederates," but rather as "living historians" who admire the valor and sacrifice of both sides." He implored his fellows to "put aside partisanship – just like the real Yanks and Rebs did after the war."

Of course, the anti-galvanizers also had their say. C.W. Matlick from Virginia bluntly proclaimed that "I'll be damned if I'll wear that blue uniform…In the South we take pride in our past, and honor our ancestor who defended their country and lost their lives while wearing the gray uniform." He then described General Philip Sheridan's destruction of the Shenandoah Valley in 1864. John W.

Bert of Pennsylvania replied from a reconciliationist view that "The War is over!" and that "I am in this hobby to preserve all of American heritage, even those brave souls who fought and died for the South." He compared Lost Cause warriors like Matlick to "some blacks who claim the government should pay reparations to them for slavery…" Here, Bert was actually lumping radical Lost Cause sympathizers with people with an emancipationist memory of the Civil War.

Matlick's letter elicited more angry defenses of reconciliation. J.B. Harness warned of the implications of bringing wartime atrocities into the discussion. "Do you feel the same way about this nation's firebombing of Frankfurt, Berlin, or Tokyo?" he asked. Mike Bolley similarly raised the specter of Bleeding Kansas and "cowardly raids" by William Quantrill, concluding that "evil acts were committed by both sides." He could, he said, refuse to wear gray because "after all, those men were fighting to establish a nation that protected, even promoted, human slavery," but added "*I choose not to think that way*" (emphasis added). For Bolley, it would be best if the unpleasantness of the conflict were forgotten, because, when you do that, "the color of the uniform is not so important." Like Matt Merta, Bolley was able to compartmentalize the causes from the soldiers that fought, separating them so that the latter could be honored.

Clearly, galvanizing touched a nerve with the emotions of those on both sides of the issue. Though some Confederates found wearing the blue uniform would cause, in Virginian Jerry Aldhizer's words "a tremendous pain that would soar through his heart and soul," one reenactor on the Union side could not help

but feel insulted by southerners' angry defense of their side. Geoffrey B. Michael wrote to Matlick, "Sir your remark…hurt me deeply, as I have always been proud to wear the Army blue." Michael, a former member of the United States Army, felt "a great amount of pride in wearing the uniform of my country…The flag that I line up next to on the field at events may not have the same number of stars [as the modern flag], but it is indeed the same flag." He pointed out the example of Confederate General Joseph Wheeler, who would serve the United States in the Spanish-American War and thought modern Confederate reenactors should emulate him. He closed by asking rhetorically, "What sort of heritage are you preserving Mr. Matlick? Bitterness? Resentment? Hatred?"

In 1991, early on in the galvanizing debates, Timothy Shaw, who portrayed both Union and Confederate soldiers, made an observation that probably cut to the core of what the reconcilationist memory meant (and likely still means) to the hobby. "I can only see that the survival of this hobby will depend on people who throw away their over-zealous notions and ideas of who was right and who was wrong and walk an extra mile in that other soldier's shoes." As the galvanizing debate showed, the reconcilationist memory did indeed hold the hobby together against a challenge posed to it by a more radical, Lost Cause element. By the late 1990s, however, a new challenge emerged, as a more staunchly pro-Unionist element began to emerge and challenge both the Lost Cause version of the conflict as well as the reconciliationist consensus.

The Emancipationist Challenge: The Cause and Confederate Symbols

If the galvanizing issue raised the ire of the Lost Cause camp within the reenacting community, and spurred a defense from the reconciliationist camp, new voices would permeate reenacting in the late 1990s. New voices emerged representing a Unionist and emancipationist challenge to Lost Cause advocates primarily, but also the broader reconiliationist consensus that had the hobby together. This was because the emancipationist viewpoint emphasized slavery and race as important themes in the Civil War, and specifically, recognized the South's *raison d'etre* as the preservation of slavery. This upset Lost Cause advocates who continued to exonerate the South and deny that slavery was in any way a motivating factor for the Confederacy or Confederate soldiers. This also challenged many Union reenactors who might have agreed with Union reenactor Mike Bolley when he said that while he could remember the Confederate soldiers as supporting slavery he instead "choose not to think that way."

The heated debate that raged within the pages of *Camp Chase Gazette* flared up several times, but culminated with the controversy surrounding the

Confederate flag that flew over the South Carolina Capitol in 2000. This controversy involved Confederate reenactors directly. A *History Channel* documentary in 2001 chronicled this involvement, specifically the beliefs of some Confederate reenactors. When it aired in February of 2002, it stirred up a great deal of controversy among reenactors, and even led to some soul-seaching. For the first time, major contributors to *Camp Chase Gazette* (primarily on the Union side) began to argue that it was no longer acceptable to believe that slavery was ancillary to the war.

References to race and slavery like the one Bolley made were the rare exception rather than the norm in reenacting circles during the 1980s and early 1990s. During the centennial events of the early 1960s, however, there is evidence that during that volatile time, reenacting did have a significant element of openly racist, pro-segregationist members. The evidence for this comes from Ross Kimmel, who in 1999 and 2000 published a serial detailing his exploits with his friends during the early 1960s as members of a group called the "Blackhats." He based his recollections, so he claims, in part on a journal that he kept throughout the period. The Blackhats were a Confederate unit that was part of the North-South Skirmish Association (N-SSA), a group that was and still is primarily based on competitive shooting of Civil War era black powder weapons. Despite their competitive structure, when the Centennial events were planned, they and other N-SSA units signed on to reenact major battles such as Manassas and Antietam. What got Kimmel involved in the Civil War-related hobby was probably familiar to most reenactors even up to today: material culture. "The Civil War," Kimmel

wrote, “particularly its guns and uniforms, fascinated me from the earliest childhood.” He was very proud of the fact that he and his cohorts were more particular about their uniforms than other groups. “Our efforts [at authenticity] were pretty deficient, but we were at least head and shoulders above other skirmishers and reenactors in that regard.” This was because they attempted to, in the absence of vendors, make the uniforms themselves out of the correct material, even going so far as to look at originals in museums.

Though much of his prose is taken with the particulars of the events, from time to time Kimmel mentioned the presence of racist elements within this early period of modern reenacting. “Many times” he wrote, “I thought that a lot of the people I saw portraying Confederates at centennial events were there because there were no Klan events to go to that weekend. To be honest, we Blackhats were not among the most enlightened white people at the time, but we certainly had no ulterior motives as white supremacists. I am afraid some Confederate reenactors did.” Kimmel’s reference here gives it some air of credibility. Given the paucity of references to slavery and race in reenacting, and in *CCG*, why bring the subject up at all? He could have simply left it out of the narrative. Instead, he not only acknowledges the presence of white supremacists, but says he noticed it “many times.” He said of himself and his cohorts that they were “not the most enlightened white people at the time.” This may indeed be the case, but to what level he sympathized with white supremacy is unknown (he certainly tried to distance himself from it), but his admission in a reenactors’ magazine suggests that reenacting had a significant white supremacist element.

There were times when Kimmel made specific reference to overt acts of racism. One event occurred at Fort Meade in Maryland in April of 1964. He wrote that he had no memory of the event, but that he reported it in his journal, but "there was a cross-burning along with the usual skirmisher carrings-on Saturday night." Later that year in Nashville, he claimed that there were "Rednecks…running amok throughout the armory screaming 'George Wallace for President!' and "kill the n---------s!" Another incident occurred in 1964 in Dunn, North Carolina, where there had been a Ku Klux Klan rally the previous week; he witnessed "plenty of anti-Civil Rights sentiment…the scenes and sayings…were reminiscent of those in…Nashville."

Notably, Kimmel was able to place the events he witnessed within the context of the time. "Nothing occurs in a vacuum" he wrote, "and neither did the Civil War centennial." He could not help but notice that with these events taking place during the Civil Rights Movement, "so many white guys running around with Confederate flags, some centennial events bore an uncomfortable resemblance to white resistance." He was correct that the commemoration did not go smoothly. Unlike the recent sesquicentennial, the centennial had a national committee, the United States Civil War Centennial Commission (USCWCC). It was set to hold a national meeting, comprising various state committees, in Charleston, SC. Trouble erupted when the New Jersey Centennial Commission announced that it would not be attending; one of its members, Madeline A. Williams, was African American, and Charleston's hotels were segregated. The row even led Bruce Catton, head of the New York commission to bow out as well.

This debate led South Carolina's segregationist Senator Strom Thurmond to quip that New Jersey "might like to put the South back into a Reconstruction straightjacket." By comparing the debate over segregation to Reconstruction, Thurmond, according to Kevin Allen, not only made a political argument against the Civil Rights Movement, but also "linked the historic argument that the Civil War was an act of oppressive northern tyranny with the contemporary debate over federal control." Ultimately, a compromise was reached, and the meeting was moved to the Charleston Navy Base which was, because it was Federal property, not segregated. South Carolina's Centennial Commission, however, effectively "seceded" from the national group, and organized a separate meeting with the commissions of the other 11 Confederate states at the segregated Francis Marion Hotel.

If reenacting had racist elements by the 1990s, they did not appear very often. One notable exception was Larry Steward's letter of October 1991, speaking about an event that occurred at a reenactment of the Battle of Wilson's Creek. He claimed that after an engagement during which he and some friends had been casualties, they were walking through a mixture of Confederate reenactors and spectators. They happened upon a man dressed as a Confederate officer, who was "loudly proclaiming to his friends the recent sale of several of his 'Niggers', and that he was proud to be prejudiced cuz that's the way his Daddy raised him." Steward reported that he was "ashamed" that neither he nor his friends confronted him about his behavior, but added that "He shamed us all with his behavior and has no right wearing the uniform of a Southern Officer."

If race itself was not in overt evidence, sectional animosity was on the rise by the mid-1990s. With the cultural battles over political correctness and the public display of the Confederate flag, it is perhaps easy to conclude that, in the words of galvanizing Texas reenactor Charles Traxler, "a great many of the more vitriolic "Union Haters" do not always make the distinction between the present day American and the Union of the past." He said he was in the hobby to "pay tribute to ALL the brave men, on BOTH sides who fought and died for the ideals they believed in."

This sectional tension was evidence by periodic episodes of real violence that occurred on the reenacting field. Chris Nelson, who aroused the ire of many in the reenacting community for his plea for sanity on gun control, would again issue a plea in April of 1996, this time for reenactors to better police themselves at events, given the uptake in violent altercations. "For the past couple of years," according to Nelson, "I have witnessed and been told about increasing numbers of 'knock 'em over' incidents, up to and including flag-ripping and actual fistfights when men refuse to let up, despite officers' commands."

Nelson wrote that his "concern is not 'sectional,' but generic for the safety, reputation, and future of the hobby," since violent incidents were being instigated, he wrote, by both sides. At least some of the violent outbursts were the result of sectional feeling. He quoted one Federal reenactor who said that at a Franklin/Nashville event in 1995, "he had never seen so many incidents of what he called 'real expressions of hatred'" by Confederate reenactors. Another Federal said that Black reenactors "were greeted with occasional racist epithets, mixed in

with a sincere welcome from the majority." Nelson implored his pards in reenacting to "police each other for the attitudes and personal agendas which can, and clearly do, lead to violence…[to] face up to the growing cancer of shouting 'sectional epithets,' and the fistfights, and the flag ripping, and the refusal to let go when ordered by an officer." He closed with a familiar reconciliationist proposal. "We should stop spending our energies questioning each other's patriotism, or the motives of our ancestors, and start thinking more about working together to SAFELY honor each other and our common American Experience."

If sectionalism was evident on the reenacting field, it did not appear explicitly in the pages of *Camp Chase Gazette* until 1998, and it began in a rather innocuous way. The summer of 1988 saw the 135th reenactment of the Battle of Gettysburg, an event that was even larger than the 125th in terms of number of spectators; they had enough participants to execute a full scale reenactment of Pickett's Charge, a feat that evoked similar emotions to the famous 125th event. One Confederate reenactor spoke of a "magic moment" when marching out for the Pickett's Charge scenario. "A wee small lad stepped out of the crowd. He handed me a small wild flower, and said 'God Bless you sir'…As we marched off to our doom, the dust on my cheeks was washed away with hot tears."

The row began with a letter a few months later, though, from Mike Garbus, the Chaplain of the Federal Frontier Brigade reenacting group. He complained that because of the fixation some reenactors have with the Civil War, some believe they fought in the war in another life and that the ghosts of the soldiers that fought might still be around. His primary objection was with the

presence of a "hypnotherapist" at the 135th Gettysburg, along with the ubiquitous ghost tours, which he said violated Christian scripture. But it was an offhand comment that raised the ire of Confederates. "Looks like, to some degree, Gettysburg is back in Rebel hands – the biggest rebel ever: Satan."

The fact that Garbus may not have meant anything overtly sectional by the remark was largely irrelevant. Though some, like Marilee Lewis objected to Garbus on First Amendment grounds, and Robert Thomas simply because he was "a self-described pagan," others detected an attack on the Confederate memory of the war. Belinda Lee Gentry Holloway of Alabama snapped back defensively. "I vehemently resent the association of 'Rebels' with Satan! Here in Alabama as in most other Southern states, we are fighting cultural genocide every day, and thoughtless comments like those of Mr. Garbus only add fuel to the fire." She questioned why "in these days of embracing all…cultures…Southerners are the only ones who are not allowed to be proud of their ancestors and heritage?"

Holloway's opinions were part of a larger, neo-Confederate movement that began during the 1990s. The modern spark for this neo-Confederate movement was a document called "The New Dixie Manifesto: States' Rights Will Rise Again," by Michael Hill and Thomas Fleming, which was first published in the *Washington Post* on October 29, 1995. One of the hallmarks of this movement was the belief that white southerners formed a kind of oppressed minority. Hill and Fleming, for example, objected to the fact that "In the United States, where ethnic slurs are punishable as hate crimes, it is still socially acceptable to describe Southerners as 'rednecks' and 'crackers…'" They proclaimed, similarly to

Holloway, that “The war that is being waged against the Southern identity and its traditional symbols must cease.” Hill and Fleming later founded the neo-Confederate group The League of the South to help further their cause; The Southern Poverty Law Center regards the organization as a hate group.

Holloway’s spirited defense of the Lost Cause did not go unanswered. Someone named DeWayne Willis of Missouri, known as “The Rabbi,” fired back in what was the perhaps the first overt assertion of an emancipationist memory of the war in *CCG* up to that point. He wanted to inform Holloway “as a Rabbi of some study of the world of the lord of creation” that, “the Confederate battle flag is a symbol of man’s evil to his fellow man.” Willis could not have been blunter. “To say the war was fought for southern independence against northern centralization of federal power is a lie. It was fought over the evil of slavery.” He even ascertained the root of the Lost Cause belief. Southern women after the war asked themselves “How could their brave God-fearing men have fought for an evil cause? Well, they came up with the answer! The lie of the romantic struggle for a glorious lost cause.”

“The Rabbi,” as strange as he may have seemed, was indeed on to something. Women did play a key role in the development and fostering of the Lost Cause. Karen Cox, in her study of the Daughters of the Confederacy, argued that “women were longtime leaders in the movement to memorialize the Confederacy…” and that “the organization’s overarching objective…was vindication of the Confederate generation.” Indeed, Caroline Janney argued that southern white women stood in opposition to reconciliation in the late 1800s, and

"actively sought to hinder the lovefest propounded by veterans." She wrote that especially early on, white women took the lead in memorializing the Confederacy, since "women certainly could not be viewed as traitorous – they were simply exhibiting the qualities of nineteenth-century Victorian ideology attributed to women: sentiment, emotion, and devotion to one's menfolk." They would therefore not be targeted as "rebels" by Union soldiers.

Mike Quigley, a Union reenactor from California, made similar points to the Rabbi, though in a more measured way. "The war was a social/economic crisis about slavery and not a constitutional one" he wrote, objecting to the characterization of the war as being primarily fought over federal vs. state sovereignty. He told *CCG* that "One only has to read the various Declarations of secession by [Confederate states], Jefferson Davis' 'Inaugural Speech before the Confederate Congress,' or Andrew Stephens' 'Cornerstone Speech' to get the spirit of the times." He chastised his fellows, pointing out that "While many reenactors…are very aware of the military and material culture of the Civil War…it is a rare quality for reenactors to know the social and political dynamics of the time."

It can be assumed that the responses to "The Rabbi" (his letter, because of its tone, likely received the lion's share of responses) were both spirited and high in number, but the next four issues of *Camp Chase Gazette* are regrettably unavailable. The only mention of him in the next available issue (July 1999) is from publisher Bill Holschuh, who wrote that "We are still receiving responses and counter-responses to the Rabbi almost daily. But based on our readers' clearly

expressed desire to get on with their lives, we decided it was time to pull the plug on this subject and let the matter die with whatever dignity it still had left." Though this is the first time that the first time that overt sectionalist arguments appeared in the magazine, it is clear by the flood of responses that the feelings had been there for some time; the Rabbi can be thanked for lighting the fuse.

Holschuh, however, was unable to put the genie back in the bottle, so to speak. If there was a conflict between his desire to keep the peace among reenactors and maintain an open forum in the "Camp Gossip" section, the latter won out. Arguments over the symbols of the Confederacy and the causes of the war continued throughout 1999. T.E Waltrop of Canon, Georgia boldly defended the Lost Cause, writing that "I believe that I will continue to fly my battle flag [the Confederate flag] alone [as opposed to flying it together with the American Flag," to which Jim Maggliore of Roselle Illinois replied, defending reconciliation, "Shame on you for your comments! Yes, you should be proud of your battle flag, but to write such an article is disgraceful for an American to submit to a publication that honors all Americans."

Waltrop then replied by asserting a belief in a neo-Confederate, Lost Cause ideology. "Sir, your confusion begins when you claim that we live in the same country. I live in an occupied country as my government never surrendered." Brian Orgeron thanked Waltrop for his letter, and signed it "Brian E. Orgeron, Hammond, LA, CSA." He would later write that attacks on the Confederacy and Confederate symbols were the result of "politically correct stupidity, liberal socialism, and revisionist history."

In December of 1999, David Pleger of California, who also gave voice to a more overt Unionist/emancipationist memory, stepped into the maelstrom. He chastised Waltrop for "offering up fantasies and untruths" and pointed out the return of redeemer governments in the South after Reconstruction (to counter his "occupied country" notion), adding, "In an occupied country the conquerors don't give power to locals, and they certainly don't let subjugated victims gain power within the conqueror's government." Pleger wrote that Waltrop "may delude himself that he is a defiant hero fighting oppression, but the plain truth is that he is just a crybaby."

If reenactors like Waltrop represented the Lost Cause viewpoint, and Pelger and Quigley advocated for the emancipationist memory of the war, the reconciliationist memory would not simply be silent in the debate. David Mullins of Jacksonville, Florida took on both sides. He took on *CCG*'s "insufferable belligerents" first by confronting Waltrop. He confessed that Waltrop "should feel great pride" in the Confederate flag "despite the current trend to try and turn it onto a badge of shame," but scolded him about his belief that he was in an "occupied country," since the Confederacy was never recognized by the Federal government, and therefore would not demand a formal surrender. "We were whipped sir, and fairly so; that doesn't mean we have to like it, but as honorable men we must accept it."

Mullins saved his heaviest guns, however, for Pleger. "What we don't have to accept…is the politically correct, revisionary nonsense which describes our Confederate ancestors as being nothing more than racist scum." Mullins

agreed with Pleger that recent scholarship is at odds with the Lost Cause. “You needn’t remind us that ‘historians’ have been rewriting history about the Civil War,” he wrote, but “Personally, I don’t care to study the material produced by ‘enlightened’ individuals to any great extent.”

Perhaps nothing illustrates the mood of reenactors in mid-2000 better than their reaction to an editorial penned by *CCG*’s resident instigator, Johan Begone. Entitled “Advancing the Southern Cause,” Begone, a lifelong Union reenactor, qualified his remarks by admitting that “I am politically and socially conservative.” He then explained why he believed the southern cause needed to be espoused. He explicitly identified the Confederate cause with modern, conservatism, sidestepping race and slavery entirely. “I am for a restrained federal government, more political power given to the states, Second Amendment rights…and the maintenance of the usual social customs and traditions. Racism, obviously, is not one of the customs I would endorse (It’s always best to establish this early, don’t you think?).” Only later does he get to his main point, that “although the Southern point of view has relevance in the great national debate, it is rarely championed well by Southerners themselves.” What Begone was saying was that, though Southerners might be on the right side of the argument, their arguments were more too emotional, unreasoned, and suffered often from a lack of grammar.

As expected, Begone’s article drew attacks from all sides. Thomas Boaz of Pennsylvania, a self-described “fourteenth generation Southerner,” felt it necessary to point out that “scholarly writing” advancing the Southern cause “is

available in the pages of…*Southern Patriot*, the journal of the League of the South." Meanwhile, Robert Hill of Kentucky found it "laughable that now…many, many Northerners are whining for less government and more personal liberty. Finally, the money-grubbing Yankees are coming around."

Not to be outdone, David Pleger poked holes in Begone's assumption that the Confederate cause and that of modern Conservatives were one in the same. Pleger correctly pointed out that "The South was willing to expand the power of the Federal government to protect Southern white supremacy through the protection of slavery…It's high time," he wrote, "that Jonah Begone and other modern conservatives question the assumption that modern conservativsm had anything to do with the antebellum and Civil War South." In a lengthy treatise, Pleger mentioned instances during the antebellum era, most notably the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, in which Southerners supported expanded federal power, as well as the New Deal, military spending, the Interstate Highway System, and the Great Society all as post-war examples of southerners supporting federal power. "The only time 'States Rights' was heard was when a governor was brandishing an ax handle on the stairs of a school promising segregation forever."

Interestingly, some conservatives today have actually come around to Pleger's view. Jason Kuznicki of no less a conservative authority than the Cato Institute posted a video in 2013 arguing that the Confederacy was no friend of liberty. "The symbols we choose matter a lot," he said, and that, despite arguments that the Civil War was about states' rights, "the historical record does not bear this out. The South did not leave for the sake of states' rights…they left

to protect slavery. We know this because they said so." He warned modern libertarians that "Confederates weren't your friends." He warned that "if we pick the wrong examples" to make our argument, "we end up distorting our own message…and bringing contempt on libertarianism." He even went so far as to argue that the Confederate flag would "probably not" be able to stand as merely a symbol of rebellion, comparing those who wave or wear it to "campus leftists" who sport Che Guevara shirts. "If you don't look into the implications of your political symbols, someone else will," he closed, "and you probably won't like the results."

In any event, by the end of 2000, publisher Bill Holschuh had had enough. "I think we have arrived at an appropriate moment in this debate to call for a cease fire. This argument over the cause of the war has been going on for many, many months, and frankly, it is beginning to make my teeth hurt." David Pleger himself agreed to honor the "cease fire," and thanked Holschuh, a known Confederate reenactor, for publishing his views in spite of his personal views.

In the midst of this ongoing and unprecedented debate among reenactors over the causes of the war, there was a new dimension that would end up having wider ramifications. By early 2000, the issue of public display of the Confederate flag affected reenacting directly. Confederate reenactors now attended Confederate flag rallies in Confederate uniform. Mike Quigley sounded a warning in April of 2000 when he wrote that when the League of the South staged a demonstration in Montgomery, Alabama, and national television coverage of the event featured "Confederate-clad reenactors in the vanguard, proudly marching as

they carried various flags flown during the time of the Confederacy." He asked rhetorically if Confederate reenactors would someday be "the Southern storm troopers of tomorrow?" and issued a challenge to his Southern compatriots. "Start showing up at Civil War Roundtables and start learning your heritage…the truth shall set you free!"

CCG editor William Jackson, a Union reenactor, voiced his concerns more formally in a June 2000 editorial. Jackson was primarily concerned about how such actions would portray the hobby to the broader public. "What is disturbing is that every now and then in television and newspaper coverage of political events, I see reenactors marching in full uniform, carrying their flags as if they were political symbols rather than historical artifacts." He implored his fellow reenactors that they must "make it clear that we are able to distinguish between political symbols and historical artifacts." He advised those who object to the modern Federal Government to "do the hobby a favor and to not confuse your reenacting with your cause." Jackson saw that if people began to identify reenactors with modern politics, that it would make the hobby look bad and ultimately hinder it. His were words of caution, but they were taken by Lost Cause advocates as an attack. "You viciously attacked our Confederate flag," wrote Charles Briggs of Illinois. "I feel this is not only an attack on our most noble banner, but also on the reenactors who so proudly carry this flag."

Bill Holschuh, the publisher, stepped in to defend his editor. "As the Confederate ambassador to *CCG*," he wrote, "my usual response in a situation like this is to simply keep my mouth shut and let Jackson twist in the wind." This

time, however, Holschuh saw the attacks from neo-Confederates as going too far. “Well gang, we can’t have it both ways. If we are going to use the ‘we’re just recreating history’ tactic to justify ourselves, we can’t also turn up on the six o’ clock news in company formation and full uniform to protest the removal of our flags from public buildings.” Holschuh’s plea did little to calm the spirits of reenactors, which had reached a fevered pitch.

It should not be surprising that these debates over the causes of the war and over Confederate symbols should arise among reenactors in the late 1990s. This was a period of heated public debate over these very issues, mainly surrounding public display of the flag over state capitol buildings. This is largely because, as historian Robert Bonner wrote, “Banners themselves conveyed messages not only by the distinctive elements of their design, but by the sort of associations that could be distilled into mere communications. Depending on their use, flags spoke to different audiences and with different ultimate effects.” Defense of the Confederate flag, for those who are the descendants of Confederates and want to exonerate their ancestors, often borders on fanatical. The roots of this passion go back to the war itself, when men often literally died for the flag of their regiments. “The more intimate act of dying for a flag placed these objects in a new, quasi-religious category of symbols.” To attack the flag, in other words, was to attack those that died for it, in many cases reenactors’ own ancestors

What the flag has meant to different people at different times, then, is essential in understanding the issue. To be sure, by the late 20th Century, many

southern apologists had taken pains to disassociate the Confederacy and its symbols from slavery, but this was not the case for Confederates themselves. John M. Coski in his excellent history of the flag, argued that since Confederate leaders had no qualms about defending the institution, “It follows that…the St. Andrew’s cross is inherently associated with slavery.” In the post-war decades, however, as former Confederates justified their actions and developed the Lost Cause, they used it only to honor Confederate soldiers, and it was only used for soldiers’ memorials or monuments. This was largely due to the dictates of Confederate heritage organizations themselves. The Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy objected to uses of the flag that fell outside of Confederate memorialization (e.g. popular cultural or political uses), since they “were concerned that they would lose control of the flag and its meaning.”

By the mid-20th Century, the groups did indeed lose control of the emblem. It became a symbol prominent in popular culture, and after 1948, when college students marched into the Birmingham, Alabama, convention of the States Rights Party bearing the Confederate flag, it became a banner explicitly associated with white supremacy. In addition to the Ku Klux Klan, “Ordinary white southerners protesting integration carried the flag, along with signs whose messages concerning race were unmistakable.” It was during this time, as a reaction to the Civil Rights Movement, that the Confederate flag was incorporated into some state flags, and placed atop the South Carolina Capitol in Columbia.

By the 1990s, a series of “flag flaps” gripped the public’s imagination. Confederate apologists now sought to defend any and all attacks on their sacred

emblem. Many of these controversies focused on the flag flying in a sovereign context, such as a capitol dome, rather than a historical one, like a museum or a monument. This is because "Flags flying at government facilities imply sovereignty and communicate symbolic messages of inclusion and exclusion that may have real consequences," while "Flags exhibited in museums are in an unambiguously historical context." Coski identified this as the root of the matter. For the flag's defenders, "what is at stake is not so much history as *heritage*, which "is more akin to religion than history." Heritage is not "based on critical evaluation of evidence," which defines the study of history, "but on faith and the acceptance of dogma." Confederate heritage groups, including reenactors themselves, felt that their heritage – their memory of the conflict – was under attack.

Another perspective helps explain the hot tempers Confederate reenactors evinced over the flag row. That Confederate reenactors think that the Confederacy stood for states' rights and not for slavery, and that Confederate soldiers are deserving of the highest praises is duly noted, but Peter Carmichael, discussing those who vehemently defended the legacy of Confederate hero Robert E. Lee, argued that it was important to pay attention to "How people think – as distinct from what they think…" Carmichael argued that like Lee himself, his defenders (and defenders of the Confederacy more generally), attempt to rid themselves of "moral confusion, intellectual clutter, and emotional ambiguity" by harkening back to "the Victorian belief that the world was governed by fixed truths of right and wrong…" Though he did not say so, Carmichael was simply stating that

Confederates have continued to advance their memory of the war as the history profession, in raising morally confusing questions, has become less accommodating by presenting ever more nuanced views of the conflict.

Bill Holshcuh's cease fire in *Camp Chase Gazette* came just before the release of a documentary that would rock the reenacting world. In February of 2001, the *History Channel* network aired a documentary entitled *The Unfinished Civil War*. "We set out to make a film about these weekend warriors," the film's narrators say early on, "what we found was something completely unexpected. We discovered an unfinished Civil War." The filmmakers originally wanted to document reenactors and why they do what they do. They quote one reenactor, Vince Savino, giving standard fare commentary to why he reenacts, "For a moment there, maybe a minute or two," at a reenactment of Cedar Creek, "I really thought I was back during the Civil War." They interviewed Rob Hodge as well, and he explained that the reason a person would want to sleep outside and "freeze their ass off" was because it was "a way of communing with those guys," meaning the soldiers of the Civil War.

The filmmakers, however, quickly switched gears to discuss the differing memories of the war by focusing primarily on two individuals. One was a Confederate reenactor from Maryland named John Krausse. Krausse, when he prepared for an event in his basement, activated a large hourglass, which he says, "starts the time travel." As he got dressed, he looked at an image of dead Confederate soldiers from Antietam to remind himself that "it's not me, it's them, it's all them, that's who I do this for." He, when asked, said he would never wear

a Union uniform. “The only way I would ever wear blue is if I was lying in a coffin and they exhumed me and put that uniform on me.”

Juxtaposed against Krausse was the filmmakers second primary subject, an African American Union reenactor named Joseph McGill of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who portrays the 54th Massachusetts. He had a very different memory of the Civil War than does Krausse and the other Confederates featured in the film. At one point, he actually spent the night in a slave cabin in South Carolina. He did so to give himself “an appreciation of what my ancestors dealt with as slaves.” When he arrived in the cabin, he was asked what he would say to someone who did not believe the Civil War was about slavery. McGill said “I would say come and see what I’m seeing. I think they would have a different opinion. This is a part of our history that is shameful, but it is a part of our history nonetheless.”

If the film simply chronicled the fanatical exploits of reenacctors, it would not have been controversial, but when the topic turned to the war’s politics, things got ugly. Perhaps no one featured in the film was as controversial as Wayne and Sharon Hutzell, who, according to Sharon, have lived lives “centered around reenacting.” Wayne said “I believe in the Confederate cause…you have our own right to live the way you want to live,” and Sharon added that the war “had nothing to do with the slavery issue for me. I just totally believe that when they came in and said ‘this is how we want you to live…’ I think that was wrong.” Wayne then insinuated that “the blacks” talked about northerners “invading their land” because “it was a way of life for them” and that “they were taken care of.” After the war, argued Wayne, they “didn’t know what to do because they were

used to someone else taking care of them." When asked if they thought blacks had a better quality of life under slavery, Sharon answered "I think they did."

Ultimately, the film climaxed with the battle over the flag flying above the South Carolina Capitol. It featured several pro- and anti-flag rallies, one courtesy of the Council of Conservative Citizens, the modern incarnation of the Citizens Councils that sprang up in opposition to integration, and a group that the Southern Poverty Law Center regards as a hate group. The film did show one man in Confederate uniform in attendance. Dennis Wheeler of the CCC gave a speech at the rally where he proclaimed, "For those [Africans] who came here, it was a great upliftment, a great step forward…we [whites] taught you the Christian religion, familial affection, and civilization…and you should be grateful to us for what we did." The connection between the CCC and reenacting is difficult to ascertain, but the fact that they placed the CCC, as well as former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke (who gave a speech in front of the Arthur Ashe statue in Richmond, VA), on the same side of the flag issue did not paint reenactors in a positive light. Moreover, Dennis Wheeler's comments sounded very similar to those of Wayne and Sharon Hutzell. At the least, it showed a shocking ignorance of the reality of the history of enslavement in America among at least some Confederate reenactors.

Most Confederate reenactors, however, sought to honor of their ancestors while disassociating the Confederacy from slavery. Later on, Krausse and numerous others attended a flag rally sponsored by the Sons of Confederate Veterans at which he distanced himself from extreme groups like skinheads and

the KKK, proclaiming that he simply "loved the Southern soldier and what he fought for…I'm out here to save my heritage." Even Rob Hodge (who was not at the rally) admitted that "within a 20th Century context," that the flag was indeed a hateful symbol, recognizing its use by groups opposed to racial integration, but added that "there's also a 19th Century context…to have an open mind to." For Hodge and Krausse, the flag is pure because those that fought for it were not, in their view, fighting for slavery.

Joseph McGill, on the other hand, would attend an even larger anti-flag rally sponsored by the NAACP. Shortly thereafter, the flag was removed and placed next to a monument in front of the dome. The event featured competing rallies, which included both of the documentary's protagonists. At the end, Krausse, whose face was painted red to represent the blood of Confederate dead, met with McGill. The two hugged and had a heart to heart, honest discussion, in which McGill admitted he was glad it was coming down and that he would like to see it in a museum and would "honor it in a museum." When Krausse expressed his fear that the flag would disappear, McGill said he was not in favor of its eradication, largely because of his respect for the bravery of the soldiers that fought under it. After McGill said that they, the soldiers, would ultimately settle the dispute, the two shook hands and saluted, "man to man, soldier to soldier," in Krausse's words.

The high note on which the film ended says a lot about reenactors. For one, it proved once again Caroline Janney's assertion that reconciliationist sentiment is not mutually exclusive with a Lost Cause or emancipationist

sentiment. Both had very strong, entrenched views of that conflict that were seemingly incomprehensible to each other, but they were ultimately able to find common ground when it came to honoring soldiers; despite their divergent beliefs about the causes of the conflict, they could come together for that. Moreover, this controversy, and the arguments over the war's causes over the previous few years, indicated that the hobby of reenacting may in fact be *dependent*, at least in part, on the maintenance of a reconciliationist consensus.

In *Camp Chase Gazette,* the reaction to the film was overwhelmingly negative. One complaint was that, contrary to the film's promotion, it had little to do with reenacting and was more about the flag controversy. "All of the TV promos and advanced biling…led us to believe the topic would be reenacting. It was not," complained Bill Holshuh. The primary complaint, however, was that they felt it misrepresented reenactors by placing many of them on the same side of the issue as extremists. Though admitting that Confederate reenactors made it easy to lump them in with extremists, Holschuh proclaimed that "We are not…members of the clan and we are not skinheads. We are lovers of history, heritage, and historic preservation, and we respect and honor all soldiers who fought bravely for their countries."

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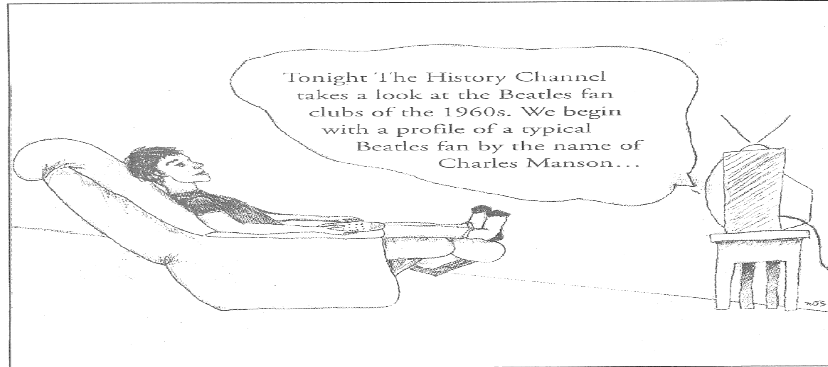

Similarly, Robert Hodge wrote of Krausse, “It could be argued that Krausse was fuel for the stereotypical fire. If the producers wanted a ‘Rebel,’ he filled the bill perfectly. I like John a lot, but he is not typical of what reenactors are, yet he became our poster boy. By interviewing and focusing heavily on Krausse, they gave the false impression that all reenactors are like him.” William Jackson, the

publication's editor also quipped "What happened was a case of misrepresentation that marred an otherwise interesting and informative program." Reenactors were all too aware that this program, thorough its perceived misrepresentation of the hobby, might end up hindering the hobby's image with the general public. This was illustrated further by a cartoon on the back of the April 2001 issue (see figure 1). Some even went so far as to start a petition boycotting the network over the documentary.

Fig. 1: Cartoon critical of the History *network's documentary* The Unfinished Civil War. *Many reenactors felt that the film unfairly portrayed them as extremists.*

The most pointed criticism came from Union reenactor Greg Romaneck. He agreed with the others that "through their selection of the reenactors interviewed and their respective statements and actions, we come away with a grossly distorted image of living historians." Romaneck saved his most biting criticism, however, for reenactors themselves. "By believing, as far too many reenactors do, that slavery was not a major cause of the Civil War, we fall into the

category of superficiality that makes us look foolish to serious students of that era." Romaneck did not pull any punches, and insinuated that the future of the hobby might be at stake. "We really cannot afford to air this sort of dirty laundry on national television and then hope to be taken seriously by anyone." He thought the film might act as "a clarion call to the broader reenacting community to reflect on our hobby and how it may appear to outside viewers."

For Romaneck, a denial of slavery as fundamental to the Civil War was simply no longer acceptable. The film may have given him the opening to bring up a related topic later in 2001: racism in reenacting. Christopher Cooper and H. Gibbs Knotts argued that among other factors (politics, region, and religion), "conservative racial attitudes" correlated strongly with support for the Confederate flag, and Romaneck found expressions of racist sentiments all too common at reenacting events. "I have noticed a disturbing trend," he wrote, "Issues of racism seem to crop up more than in the past." This was likely due to the flag controversy and the vocal opposition by groups such as the NAACP. "In some cases, the overt nature of the racism struck me as clearly offensive."

No overt expressions of racism appeared in CCG, but there were others who would die on the Lost Cause hill and defend their position to the last. "It appears that the dividing, racist, complaining, hateful factions of the NAACP have gone too far this time," wrote Jeff McIntire of Lebanon Ohio, "For the most part, I believe whites are being discriminated against in this country." McIntire blamed the "uneducated" NAACP and advocated going so far as to take the money earned for battlefield preservation and use it for "reenacting preservation," expecting a

spate of court cases against the hobby. Others, though, like California Unionist Mike Quigley, thought reaching out was a better. “Why not contact that organization and ask them if they would support Black Union reenacting units as well as offering them an opportunity at various reenactments to set up information booths about slavery and the struggles of African Americans.” Predictably, these differing opinions fell along memory lines. McIntire, a Lost Cause advocate, saw nothing less than an attack, while Quigley, known for his emancipationist bent, agreed with much of what the NAACP stood for and is willing to work with them.

The flag controversy and the *The Unfinished Civil War* caused many reenactors to question the direction of the hobby, largely because these issues exposed fissures among reenactors themselves over memories of the war. Willaim Denison probably spoke for many Lost Cause Confederate reenactors when he penned the melancholy short story, “The Last Reenactor: One Cool June Evening in 2034.” In it, one old, ragged reenactor beds down in his backyard, alone, the last reenactor. The demise, Denison wrote, was because of “various groups that had long wanted very much for Civil War reenacting to just disappear.” The groups banned all Confederate symbols, including the battle flag as well as gray, woolen jackets, and many left the hobby out of shame. Denison blamed the fictional demise of the hobby on outside groups who objected to and attacked their memory of the war.

Others, like Romaneck and William Jackson thought reenactors themselves deserved at least part of the blame. “When there has been negative publicity for the hobby,” Jackson wrote, “it usually turns out that our worst

enemies are reenactors who insist on thrusting the hobby into these controversies." Significantly, they were both Union reenactors, and wanted to bring reenacting into line with more recent scholarship that challenged the Lost Cause. It was Patrick Giradin, however, who perhaps came closest to the mark in illustrating just where reenacting was at the start of the 21st Century. "If we as reenactors…are going to expand our hobby and preserve our nation's heritage," he warned, "the constant quibbling over 'causes' has to stop." If the controversies of the late 1990s and early 2000s proved one thing, it was that conflicts over the causes of the war they wished to commemorate could tear the hobby asunder. The hobby's future would depend on its ability to mesh these heterogeneous viewpoints.

To the Sesquicentennial and Beyond: The Present and Future of Reenacting

If the late 1980s through the early 200s proved one thing, it was that, despite challenges, reconciliationist sentiment remained strong in Civil War reenacting. In fact, such sentiment was necessary for the healthy functioning of the hobby, since the fractious arguments over the causes of the war and Confederate

symbols threatened to tear the hobby apart. These controversies gave the 21st Century a very inauspicious beginning for the hobby, and the big question that remained involved the direction that the hobby would take in the decades to come. By 2002, the majority of reenactors appeared ready to put the ugliness of the 1990s controversies behind them and return to the roots of the hobby, portraying the soldiers of the Civil War through recreating the material culture and lives of the soldiers themselves.

Yet one immediate concern among the hobby was an apparent decline in membership. The 1990s were indeed a kind of high water mark for reenacting. They saw what was probably the largest ever reenactment, a full-scale rendition of Pickett's Charge at the 135th Anniversary of Gettysburg in 1998. According to reenactor.net, the event saw 41,000 participants, but in the aftermath of the event, *Camp Chase Gazette* reported only 15,000. When judged by the number of event listings in *Camp Chase Gazette*, the hobby declined since then. In May of 1998, the magazine listed 210 events, whereas in May of 2003, it was down to 163. This decline, which may have begun earlier, did not go unnoticed. "About ten years ago, we hit an all-time high of around 350 events," publisher Bill Holschuh lamented in March of 2003, and "The trend has been steadily downward since then, and last year (2002) the number was 270."

The reasons for this decline are not entirely clear. Often, reenactors simply "burn out" and decide enough is enough; sometimes age is a factor, and other times he or she just loses interest. Perhaps nobody exemplified this more than *CCG's* own publisher Bill Holschuh, who in 2004 bowed out of the position he

had held for 14 years, selling the publication to Lakeway Publishers, Inc., who still own and operate the magazine today. His second-to last column was a harbinger of what was to come. In explaining why some reenactors believe in reincarnation, he wrote that "I guess it's not surprising to find that people who try to relive the past are just naturally curious about such a closely related subject. Part of what attracts us to reenacting is the connection we establish between ourselves and people who died many, many years ago." He said this fascination led him to experience, with the help of a hypnotist, a "regression" in 1997, where, he reports, he "literally became another person, even my voice changed and I had a different accent." Holschuh claimed, though, that the experience left him changed. He continued reenacting, but it just wasn't the same for him. "I'm not nearly as obsessed with the subject as I was before. I don't pursue it with the same intensity…I have forgiven myself for choosing to live rather than die for a hapless cause. I have made peace with my Civil War demons, and for me the war is now finally over." Sure enough, the next month he announced the sale, proclaiming, "To do this job right, you have to have your very heart and soul in Civil War reenacting, and I don't. The fire has burned itself out, and now it is time to move on."

It is anybody's guess as to why exactly Bill Holschuh's fire "burned itself out," but it is not unreasonable to surmise that the controversies that raged over the previous few years took their toll, especially given that he, as publisher of "The Voice of Civil War Reenacting," felt the brunt of it. Holschuh, being a Confederate reenactor himself, may have questioned his own allegiance and

participation – his own memory of the war - and concluded that the Civil War really had no “good guys” after all. He could have meant this by his reference to living for “a hapless cause,” though he likely meant something more spiritual and personal. Nevertheless, the fact that this loss of interest coincided with the ignition of the reenacting “flag flap” is probably more than coincidental.

The controversies also hindered the hobby in that it may have made the hobby less attractive to new recruits. There would be no *Gettysburg* or Ken Burns *Civil War* series to reignite interest and pull the hobby out of the doldrums, but in 2002, Holschuh advocated “grassroots recruiting,” to fix the declining participation, emphasizing that “every reenactor needs to be a recruiter.” He also identified public relations as key, perhaps to counter the bad press the hobby had been hit with. “…we need to consider…telling our story to large audiences through national media exposure.” Particularly disturbing to some, was the observation that most of the newer reenactors were Yankees. In 2001, an a review of an event in Rich Mountain, West Virginia in July of 2001, J.P. Rogers lamented that “a majority of the Confederates…had almost as much gray hair on their heads as gray wool on their backs. All of the strapping young boys were wearing blue.” Rodgers blamed “the recent five plus years of unrelenting political and media bashing of the Confederacy, the Battle flag, Robert E. Lee, and the South, etc. etc.”

Rogers’ assessment is in some sense correct; The flag controversies proved that the fight over the memory of the war was not simply a reenacting phenomenon, but a nationwide one; it was a fight that ended with the Confederate

flag being removed from the South Carolina State House as well as from the state flag of Georgia in 2001. A decade later, this effect can be seen most starkly in the North. In the 2011 Central Connecticut State University conducted a survey of New England area reenactors under the auspices of Professor Matthew Warshauer. The survey asked respondents to identify what side they portray (or in the event they did both sides, with what side they most identify). 78 out of 102 New England respondents identified with the Union, while 22 identified with the Confederacy (2 were unclear). Though geography certainly played a role in the results, it could also be a sign of a diminishing of the Lost Cause among new entrants into the hobby.

Camp Chase Gazette certainly recognized the negative impact that arguments over the war's memory had on the hobby, and sought to "retrench" itself by refocusing on the roots of reenacting: the soldier's life and material culture. I other words, they recalibrated themselves to a reconcilationist memory of the war. Beginning in May of 2002, the publication announced that they would, for the first time, be employing new guidelines for the "Camp Gossip" section. From that point forward, they would only publish letters if they were making specific reference to articles in past issues; there would be no more debates over the causes of the Civil War. In part, this change in policy was because the internet provided a more convenient, and expeditious means of voicing one's opinion to a wide audience. Regardless, the powers that be at *CCG* were only too happy to not have to deal with that particularly divisive issue.

The editorial choice of articles reflected this change as well. The May

2002 issue, for example, included a how-to article on how to make pegs to secure one's shelter half to the ground. Another article, over ten pages in length with copious pictures, sought to "provide some guidance in obtaining and using [glass] bottles in re-creating Civil War settings." Perhaps the most interesting was a March 2004 article explaining what sorts of hairstyles reenactors should wear (and avoid) based on period photographs; the article even included charts (see figure 1).

THE LONG AND SHORT OF IT

Hair Dos & Hair Don'ts

BY JOHN A. BRADEN

Along with derailed scenarios, a notable characteristic of 140th Gettysburg was the bizarre hairstyles in evidence. I saw flowing, shoulder-length manes, hair swept up into kepis, permanents, ponytails (one secured with a studded leather ring), even one specimen with purple hair.

Since no one is going to change a hairstyle merely on my say-so, I did some research to discover what hairstyles were worn by the Civil War enlisted man. My methodology was simple: I reviewed the photos in D.A. Serrano's *Even More Confederate Faces* (Metropolitan Co., Bayside, NY 1992), and present the compiled results below. A few more observations about methodology:

1. Since commissioned officers wore their hair any way they wanted, officer hairstyles are not authority for appropriate enlisted hairstyles, and consequently were not included.
2. Although the survey includes only Confederates, Federal hairstyles would not be significantly different (though I suspect that a survey of Federals would disclose on average shorter hairstyles and less facial hair).
3. Any survey of photos is going to be biased to early war, when most photos were taken. However, I suspect later-war styles would not be significantly different, since the tendency to "go to seed" when on campaign was probably offset by the practicality of short hair when confronted with dirt and lice.
4. The survey includes all three branches, which means that cavalry reenactors cannot claim that they are entitled to shaggier hair than was seen in this survey.

HAIRSTYLES

The following table classifies hairstyle by four characteristics:

1. Length of hair over the ears, classed as "short" (above or just over the top of the ear) or "long" (covering half or more of the ear). Hair long enough to cover the entire ear was rare (only three examples found, two of those with a beard).
2. Length of sideburns, "none," meaning shaved off at or near the top of the ear, "½" being halfway down the ear. Sideburns longer than that were virtually unknown (unless part of a beard). In addition, this table lists sideburns only when a beard is absent. See "facial hair," below, for sideburns when a beard is present.
3. Length of backhair (meaning hair at the back of the head, not hair on the back!) Since almost all photos are taken from the front, one has to infer the length of backhair from what is visible from the front. I've put this factor in two categories:

   "None" means none visible under the ear. In such situations, it may be inferred that the backhair was short, (cut to the hairline or above).

   "Present" means hair visible under the ear. In such cases, it may be inferred that the backhair is at or near collar level in back. I found no examples of longer hair (extending as far as the base of the collar in back) among enlisted men.
4. Whether the hair was close-cropped (sticking out no more than the ears) or bushy (wider than the ears). Hair as short as a brushcut was rare, but not unknown.

Length on ear	Sideburns	BACKHAIR						TOTAL
		NONE			PRESENT			
		Close	Bushy	Subtotal	Close	Bushy	Subtotal	
Short	none	88	10	98	6	4	10	108
	½	11	4	15	4	1	5	20
Subtotal		99	14	113	10	5	15	128
Long	none	0	4	4	1	1	2	6
	½	15	16	31	10	14	24	55
Subtotal		15	20	35	11	15	36	71
TOTAL		114	34	148	21	20	41	199

Fig. 1: Chart detailing the appearances of various forms of hairstyles in Civil War photographs. This chart exemplifies the shift back to "bread and butter" issues for reenactors in the wake of the late 1990s controversies involving conflicting memories of the Civil War.

This focus still predominates in the hobby to this day. In a blog entitled "Dispatches from Company Q," an unnamed author wrote an amazingly in-depth how-to guide to fashioning your own cartridge boxes, as they were a ubiquitous item in camp, and provided a great means of storage and seating. Moreover, many websites for reenactors now contain pages describing exactly what kind of uniforms and accouterments should be purchased, and a list of sutlers from whom to purchase them. An excellent representative example comes from the website of Company F of the 14th Connecticut, which includes detailed descriptions of each items as well as photographs. Similarly, a perusal of a reenacting message board finds such topics as "Cartridge Box Patterns," "Question Regarding Western Confederate Jackets," and "Civil War Dance Callers."

This focus on material culture and the life of the soldier is, of course, part and parcel of an adherence to a reconciliationist memory of the war, the hallmark of which is to honor the soldiers that fought in the Civil War, often by recreating the soldiers' experiences and camaraderie in an attempt to feel a connection with them. As the website for the 24th Virginia Infantry stated, "We believe that this is a hobby, and one that thrives on the love of history and that we try to kindle that

feeling in the public (who may one day join us as recruits). Lastly and most importantly we are in this to have fun and experience that with our brothers in arms." Similarly, the 40th Pennsylvania described its purpose. "We and others like us work to preserve the valor, dedication, sacrifice and memories of so many, of a time when honor meant duty and duty meant sacrifice." Perhaps nobody put the mystical connection that Civil War reenactors still have with the past better than the website for Company E of the 37th Virginia:

> We are people to whom the past is forever speaking. We listen to it because we cannot help ourselves, for the past speaks to us with many voices. Far out of that dark nowhere, which is the time before we were born, men who were flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, went through fire and storm to break a path to the future. We are part of the future they died for. They are part of the past that brought the future. What they did – the lives they lived, the sacrifices they made, the stories they told and the songs they sung and finally, the deaths they died – make up a part of our own experience. We cannot cut ourselves off from it. It is as real to us as something that happened last week.

This focus on the lives of the soldiers, however, is not shared to the same degree by all reenactors. The divide between mainstream reenactors and those known as "hardcore" or "campaigners," that saw its roots in the 125th Anniversary commemorations and really took shape during the 1990s, continued through the early 2000s and persists today. Perhaps there is no authority better equipped to explain the state of reenacting in the 21st Century as it pertains to authenticity than one of the hobby's graybeards, Cal Kinzer, who has been in reenacting for over 30 years. In an article originally penned in 2000 but reprinted for the website authentic-campaigner.com in 2007, he divided the hobby into four groups. He listed them in increasing levels of authenticity beginning with "farb," a term he

would use to describe “A unit or event which literally has NO authenticity requirements.” They may dress in “altered modern clothing” in lieu of actual uniforms, for example, and “make little effort to learn drill.” They only exist, according to Kinzer, for the fun of battle reenactments. He adds that there are very few such units left, at least in the Infantry, though some may exist in other branches (cavalry and artillery) or as civilian impressionists.

Kinzer’s second group is known as “mainstream.” According to Kinzer, before the 1970s, most units were “farb,” but the 1970s saw a movement towards authenticity that focused on proper uniforms and equipment. This was the movement that culminated with the 125th anniversary celebrations. For mainstreamers, “personal equipment is usually of fairly good construction, although it often reflects mass production techniques not in use during the period.” Regardless of the event, mainstream reenactors camp in what is called “garrison style,” meaning they use “A tents” (though they were not used on an actual campaign), but they do employ and abide by period drill manuals. They also allow some modern conveniences in camp, but these items are generally kept hidden during public viewing hours, while “after hours, this ‘illusion’ is no longer maintained and the rules are considerably relaxed.”

Third for Kinzer is a group known as “progressives.” They are the product of the movement begun by Kinzer and others during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Progressives “may RECOMMEND ‘museum quality’ reproductions (uniforms, weapons and equipment), they do not require such items as a PRE-CONDITION for participation with the unit or at events.” Unlike their

mainstream comrades, they “seek to maintain the ‘illusion’ of authenticity IN CAMP 24-hours a day while at an event – not just during public viewing hours,” this means modern conveniences are banned (save medications and perhaps small, pocket cameras). They do a combination of “garrison” events with large A tents and “campaigner” scenarios where they use shelter tents or go without shelter entirely. They also add various soldierly activities that mainstreamers usually avoid, such as fatigue duty.”

The last, and most extreme, element on the reenacting spectrum today is the “hardcore,” or “campaigner” branch. Their level of material authenticity is roughly similar to those of progressives, but they make the guidelines a “PRE-CONDITION for participation in their groups and at events.” They generally stick to “campaign” style events and do not use large tents or even the portable shelter halves. This means they tend to self-segregate themselves from the mainstreamers and progressives, who often camp together. Most “hardcore” units are Confederate due to the “great diversity of equipment used by the Confederacy” and even they are generally very small. Kinzer recognized that though hardcores emphasize primary research, “their findings are often tainted by a lack of time and of professional training, an ‘antiquarian’ approach to artifacts, and an often superficial or ‘anecdotal’ approach to primary documentary evidence…”

These divisions do tend to cause some consternation among reenactors today. Several respondents to the CCSU Reenactor Survey commented on this. One Confederate re-enactor from Maine objected to, “Military camps with more equipment than a tractor trailer can haul (less is more).” Another said he did not

like, “Participating in poorly done (fake) battle demonstration[s].” Similarly, a Massachusets Union respondent took umbrage with the, “Lack of military discipline when on parade.”

In addition to the desire to connect with and replicate the lives of soldiers, reenactors have put more emphasis on the desire to educate the public. As the 52nd Tennessee’s website puts it, it reenacts to “promote an authentic portrayal of Civil War history to the best of our ability and to have fun doing it.” In the CCSU survey, a plurality, 46 percent, said the most important reason they re-enact is to educate the public. This ranked well ahead of honoring an ancestor (25 percent) and the desire to replicate the experience of soldiers (20 percent). Only 5 percent responded that their primary motivation was to spend time with others who share a common interest. Even with that number, education might be more important than even these numbers indicate. The survey asked respondents for the “most important” reason they reenact. It is reasonable to assume, then, that some who choose another reason might list education as a secondary reason.

Reenactor Scott Sarich listed the same motivations in his blog in 2012. In addition to sleeping on the ground, getting wet, and marching in the summer heat, the “good part” was the “camaraderie, being part of something bigger than myself, teaching history, taking part in battle recreations and sitting around a campfire at night swapping stories and drinks with the men.” Education, then has become wrapped up in the *experience* of reenacting. As one Massachusetts Union re-enactor said, “A combination of educating the public BY experiencing the conditions of soldiers. One informs the other.”

If education has become so important to reenactors in the 21st Century, it is important to then question what, exactly, they teach the public. Why teach the public about the lives of Civil War soldiers and their civilian counterparts? Historians are divided. On the one hand, Glenn LaFantaise questioned both the authenticity and efficacy of battle re-enactments. "In the first place, these pretend battles look and sound nothing like the real thing, although reenactors have convinced the public (and themselves) that they do. In the second place, these theatricals lose every bit of authenticity the moment the demonstration draws to a close and the faux dead and wounded on the field rise up in a mass resurrection resembling the Rapture, which is usually accompanied by the applause of the onlookers."

LaFantasie's critique is true enough as far as it goes, but he may be putting the cart before the horse; the "pretend battles" should be seen not as the culmination of one's Civil War education, but as the beginning. Historian Robert Isham argued that re-enactors are, "a vital scholastic bridge that can connect the public to the 150th [anniversary of the Civil War]. An oft-quoted maxim of tutelage usually attributed to Confucius reads: 'I read and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.'" He elaborated further that scholarly histories are not the first place people should look but the ultimate end of an intellectual journey that begins with witnessing a reenactment. "Perhaps re-enacting is not really history," he said, "but it establishes a person's primordial connection with history." In other words, re-enacting is "the first step" that the average person experiences, since perhaps nobody has a "primordial connection" with the Civil

War quite like reenactors, and leads them to pick up a scholarly book.

But if reenactors seek to educate the 21st Century public on the lives of soldiers, how good a job do they do? The answer is somewhat mixed, largely due to the fact that they are a site of memory with an adherence to a reconciliationist memory tradition, that comes with baggage. Even if education has in recent years eclipsed other motivations, reenactors still identify with the soldiers themselves, and often more with one side or another; this means that they would tend to avoid things that may paint them in a negative light.

What this means is that reenactors sound remarkably similar to the scholarly work of sixty or seventy years ago, at a time when historians themselves were still influenced by reconciliationist themes. Take as a prime example the books by Bell Wiley. Like reenactors, he focused on the common soldier, declaring that "the 'lowly' people gave a better account of thesmselves" than did their more affluent counterparts. His works, first published in the 1940s and 1950s, did tackle the issue of motivation early on, arguing for example that "Most Southerners were convinced that Northerners were utterly unreasonable in their attitude towards the 'peculiar institution,'" but emphasized instead that "the dominant urge" that led many southerners to enlist was a more universally comprehensible motive, "the desire for adventure." On the Union side though, Wiley wrote that northern soldiers' "patriotism appears to have been deeper and more enduring" than that of their southern counterparts, and "it was the devotion of the masses to the Union…that sustained the Northern cause." Despite this, the main thrust of Wiley's books is to paint a picture of the daily lives and sufferings

of the common soldier.

References to the motivations of soldiers are difficult to come by on reenacting websites. Most would agree with the 21st Virginia Infantry, who say they honor the soldiers that fought by studying "as much as possible the many facets of army life during the Civil War period, to include the uniforms, equipment, military training, army experiences, etc." The CCSU survey does deal directly with this issue, but its focus is limited geographically to reenactors from New England. Nevertheless, it provides a window into what reenactors teach the public about Civil War soldiers, and is not contradicted by anything found online. The survey contained two questions asking respondents to identify the causes for which Union and Confederate soldiers fought. For each, several choices were given, and they could choose as many as they thought applied. Two other questions asked responders to name the *most important* motive for each. The choices in the first set of questions were based on research done by professional historians, and all were, to some degree, true.

There have been a number of published works on the motivations of Civil War soldiers over the last three decades, but the best is James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom: Why Men Fought in the Civil War.* It remains the best work in part because of his source material. Acknowledging that there are many published, first-hand accounts written by Civil War soldiers that describe their experiences, McPherson actively avoided such sources. "They suffer from a critical defect," he wrote, "they were meant for publication. Their authors consciously or subconsciously constructed their narratives with a public audience

in mind. Accounts written after the war present an additional problem of potential distortion by faulty memory or hindsight." According to McPherson, if you want an accurate picture of what soldiers thought during the war, you have to look at what they wrote *during the war*.

McPherson argued that, in addition to the bonds forged between soldiers that held them together during combat, soldiers on both sides were motivated by a variety of ideological causes that are largely absent from published accounts written decades after the war. For Union soldiers, they included values like patriotism, liberty, and of course, Union, all of which were wrapped together. McPherson quoted one soldier who encompassed all three: "'I do not want to live,'" the soldier said, "'if our free Nation is to die or be broken [by]…the foul hand of treason.'" He fought for his "Nation" (patriotism), which is "free" (liberty), against it being "broken" (Union). One Union survey respondent actually gave a summary of McPherson's thesis. "Based on extensive research of soldiers' letters home Union and patriotism are the causes I have seen documented the most in their own words…Cause and comrades in McPherson's words."

If there was one central theme for Northern soldiers, according to McPherson, it was saving the Union. Indeed, 91 percent of Union respondents identified "to save the Union" as a motivation for Union soldiers. Of equal importance was the second-most-common response: "they thought it was their patriotic duty," which was mentioned by 69 percent of respondents; the third most common response was "They didn't want to let their comrades down."

These results might come as a great relief to one prominent historian. In a

study of how the Civil War has been portrayed through film and art, Gary Gallagher noted that of the many possible Civil War themes, the cause of Union was the most inconspicuous in films. “No recent film,” said Gallagher, “captures the abiding devotion to Union that animated soldiers and civilians in the North.” Similarly, Earl Hess wrote that preserving “the republican heritage of the United States…was a potent force in mobilizing the northern population.” Considering the survey results for those identifying themselves as Union reenactors, and in particular the one who wrote that the most important Union motivation was “To keep the United States, united,” or simply “Preserve the union,” it seems reasonable to conclude that today’s reenactors have a solid grasp of why the men they portray went off to war.”

When it comes to the motivations of Confederate soldiers, McPherson argued that, “The urge to defend home and hearth that had impelled so many Southerners to enlist in 1861 took on greater urgency when large-scale invasions became a reality in 1862.” He later quoted a Tennessee captain after Shiloh who said, “that his men were ‘now more fully determined than ever before to sacrifice their lives, if need be, for the invaded soil of their bleeding country.’”

Respondents to the reenactor survey similarly identified defense of home and family as the primary Confederate motivation. Thirty five percent of all respondents said that “to protect homes and families” was the primary motive, which was more than any other response, but when asked to list all motivations, the defense of home and family paced a close second behind “State’s Rights.” One Confederate re-enactor from Massachusetts, who said he was born and raised in

the South, said, "I think that prior to the Civil War there was not an emphasis on 'the United States,' but rather an emphasis on 'home.' For that reason I believe the Confederate soldier fought to protect his home from what he believed were invading forces." The 20th Texas reenacting unit would agree, declaring that "yes, we are still fighting the Northern invasion." Most re-enactors would agree with his assessment, and historians would probably agree as well, to an extent.

Issues of Union and defense of home and family are, to one degree or another, easy to comprehend today, and less controversial. When issues of race and slavery arise, especially as motivating factors, it runs into reconciliationist and Lost Cause traditions. For example, only 30 percent of Union respondents and only 8 percent of Confederate respondents identified protection of slavery and white supremacy as a motivating factor for Confederate soldiers. "The average Johnny [Confederate soldier] didn't own slaves and didn't give a hang about that," wrote one Union reenactor. Another train of thought was that since slavery had existed in the North, it followed that the war could not have been fought over slavery, and thus exonerate the South's soldiers. The 20th Texas mission statement made precisely this argument. "All across America there was slavery," it says, "heck, a slave market was in New York City, New York, and that my friends is not in the South."

Several historians disagree with reenactors when it comes to Confederate soldiers' motivations. McPherson wrote that "Indeed, white supremacy and the right to own slaves were at the core of the ideology for which Confederate soldiers fought." McPherson identified only 20 percent of Confederates' letters and diaries

expressing such views but pointed out that slavery was so engrained into southern consciousness that "they took slavery for granted as one of the 'southern rights' and institutions for which they fought, and did not feel compelled to discuss it." Aaron Sheehan-Dean concurred with McPherson's assessment, noting, "The scarcity of references to slavery as an explicit motivating factor should not mask the fact that fighting to defend Virginia meant fighting to defend slavery. In actuality, it is easy to embrace the belief that most southerners had little explicit interest in slavery. The vast majority owned no slaves, had no direct economic ties to the institution, and no motivation to fight for someone else's property. Historian Chandra Manning, however, writes that "Slavery supplied an unambiguous mechanism of race control in a region where 40 percent of the population was black. Non-slaveholding Confederate soldiers' willingness to fight for slavery grew from a much deeper source than the calculation of economic interest to be expected among those who owned slaves. It grew from white southern men's gut-level conviction that survival – of themselves, their families, and the social order – depended on slavery's continued existence." In other words, the desire to protect their homes and families, which many reenactors regarded correctly as the most important of all Confederate motives, was itself enmeshed in the slave culture, and thus they perceived in the war a threat to that way of life. Many reenactors either miss this nuance or argue against it.

This adherence to white supremacy also evinces itself in how Confederate soldiers reacted when confronted with the reality of fighting against black soldiers. This is seen on numerous occasions, most notably at the Battle of

Olustee, Florida on February 20, 1864, at Fort Pillow, Tennessee on April 12, 1864, and at The Battle of the Crater, fought on June 12, 1864. Historian Kevin Levin noted that the presence of black soldiers in the Union army at The Crater "reinforced horrific fears of miscegenation, the raping of white Southern women, and black political control." The encounter, a crushing Union defeat, ended with a Confederate massacre of black soldiers; they "understood the nature of the threat that black soldiers posed but, more importantly, understood what needed to be done in response." After the battle, Confederate soldiers wrote about the experience and in so doing, "relished the opportunity to share their experiences in the Crater…and they did so in a way that bordered on cathartic."

The reality of racially motivated violence during the Civil War raises the question of how to deal with these issues when teaching the public. There has been a reenactment of the Battle of Olustee, for example, every year for almost 30 years. How should these acts be recreated and interpreted for the public? Historian Kevin Levin is highly skeptical that reenactors could pull it off. He wrote in 2013 that when taking racially charged events such as Olustee, "the crucial component is the understanding of why it happened and how it fits into a broader interpretation of the war as a whole. Perhaps I am going to get into trouble for saying this, but I just don't trust reenactors to be able to do this. Of course, there are exceptions, but I've seen way too many examples of reenactors – both blue and gray – who have skirted the tough questions of race when raised." The public, Levin argued, many if not most of whom come in with little to no background knowledge of the period, would need "significant scaffolding before being

exposed to such a reenactment."

Levin has good reason to be wary. Though education is a key goal of reenactors, what they mean by "education" is fundamentally different from professional educators and professors like Levin. Reenactors want to educate the public in a way that preserves their memory tradition. Whether they adhere to a reconciliationist tradition, Lost Cause, or Unionist/emancipationist vision, there is reason for them to downplay racially charged issues. Many units, like the 7th Maryland, claim that they exist to "honor the men and women who fought to preserve the Union during the War of the Rebellion…" How would such a unit, with such a mission, portray the racial attitudes of Union soldiers of the era to a modern audience that has rejected such sentiments? Other Union reenactors may also have simply no interest in that aspect of the Civil War, even as critical as it was.

Sometimes, reenactors will even play loose with the facts to uphold their memory of the war, with very misleading results. The most prominent example of this is the belief that there were tens of thousands of black Confederate soldiers that voluntarily fought for the South. There is reason to believe that at least some reenactors subscribe to this notion. J.P. Rogers and Elmer Woodard wrote about the 140th reenactment of Manassas in 2001, and noted "a few gray casualties were black. This is not only a hopeful and growing trend in The Hobby, but is also historically accurate, as much as some people would prefer to deny that reality." Traces of this can also be found online. Under the "Suggested Reading" page for the 1st North Carolina's website is a book called *Black Southerners in Gray* by

Richard Rollins, and published by Southern Heritage Press; it is one of the books that perpetuates this myth. In addition, the 20th Texas, quoted earlier, claims that they "do not determine color line or sex on who can or cannot be in uniform." If African Americans were included in the unit's living history presentations to portray enslaved people impressed into service or those forced to follow their owners to the front as servants, it would be accurate, but would have to be handled with great care, but it is doubtful that a group whose goal is to "promote Southern Heritage and keep the Old South alive" has that in mind. The belief in so-called "black Confederates" is easy to understand from the perspective of Lost Cause advocates. HistoianBruce Levine was correct when he said that "emphasizing the supposedly biracial character of the southern army and war effort aims to make both the old Confederacy and the neo-Confederates more attractive to a modern audience." It should not be surprising to discover that this belief was meant to "demonstrate once and for all that the Confederacy did not stand and did not fight for slavery."

Such facts should not be construed to mean that even dyed-in-the-wool Confederates are not capable of thoughtful reflections on race. Phil McBride, who wrote for *Camp Chase Gazette* a decade ago, was forced to reflect on his memory of the war when he discovered that his ancestors had in fact owned slaves. He admitted that he, like most reenactors, "was not particularly interested in the political or social causes or effects [of the Civil War]," but instead was "a compulsive student of the battles, campaigns, generals and most importantly the citizen soldiers who fought…" He then discovered that his relative, J.J. McBride

was a Confederate soldier who was killed at the Battle of the Wilderness in May 1864, and that Levi Miller, his slave, continued to care for him when doctors thought there was no hope of recovery. Levi Miller belonged to Phil's great, great grandmother, but was "loaned" to J.J. as a body servant. Phil McBride could have, like others, used Levi's life to illustrate the alleged biracial nature of the Confederacy, but he did not. He instead emphasized that Levi Miller's "job was to cook, wash and fetch as the master fought a war in which victory would perpetuate the right of my family to own other men and women and children…I can't imagine." He closed his article by admitting that his outlook on the Civil War had been changed by this new revelation. "I will continue to reenact the Civil War battles as a Confederate soldier. I will continue to march in parades as a Confederate soldier. I will continue to give school talks as a Confederate soldier…But Levi Miler has made sure I also will not be seduced by an overly zealous pride in my Southern heritage." McBride's memory of the war was challenged, but in this case, it led him to a deeper understanding of the conflict.

Thoughtful representations on slavery and race are at least possible, and have been done before. Beginning in 1994, Colonial Williamsburg developed living history demonstrations that included a slave auction, dealing with this issue head on. Though some have justifiable misgivings about something so serious being misconstrued as "entertainment," historians were "generally in favor" provided steps were taken that it not be misconstrued. This means that context is important. At an educational setting like Colonial Williamsburg, and with the appropriate interpretive framework and scaffolding, it can work. Rex Ellis, an

African American who participated in such a presentation at a shopping mall instead of an educational setting, realized that “this was not interpreting slavery…this was playing a slave for a white elite audience.”

Since context matters, a reenactment event, with an atmosphere that sometimes includes people cheering for one side or the other a la a football game, and, as at the 140th Gettysburg, had Confederate troops march brazenly through the Union camp chanting “Longstreet! Longstreet!” at 3:00 a.m. might not be the best milieu. Later, at the Gettysburg 140th event, during a scripted engagement of Pickett’s Charge, a small group of Confederates violated the script by attempting to flank the Federals. “At this point,” Rogers and Woodard wrote, “all pretense to historical accuracy had gone up in smoke.” Spectators, they said, regarded the event as “astoundingly bloodless and historyless,” and the authors wondered whether reenactors were “in danger of becoming what our most virulent critics say that we are: yahoos, big boys with big deadly toys?”

This shows that reenactors are concerned with interpretation, but their concern only underscores the gulf that exists between them and historians. John Pagano in 2001 scolded reenactors for their lack of interpretation, but confined his critique to tried and true topics of military accuracy and material culture. “The battles are completely awful” he complained, “with both sides moving about the field like half time at the Rose Bowl.” “The camps,” he added, “are a mockery of the life lived by actual soldiers.” The idea that reenactors are missing the big picture, as historians understand it, did not occur to him since for Pagano and other reenactors, they are in an entirely different museum, since they are

perpetuating memory, not history as historians understand it.

One answer to this is to bring reenactors together with professional historians under a kind of national organization that could not only set basic standards with regards to material authenticity, but also develop pedagogical standards and living history interpretations that would bring reenactors in line with modern scholarship. A model could be the National Council for the Social Studies. Their Board of Directors is made up of a combination of University-level educators as well as secondary school teachers and school administrators. They also set clear pedagogical guidelines for what local school districts should follow. This type of organizational structure, with the participation of those on both sides, might bridge the gap the re-enactor-historian gap, and bring what re-enactors teach in line with what historians teach.

Such an organization faces some stiff challenges. Most notably, reenactors, particularly those who hold very strongly to their particular memory of the war, will not want in, as historical interpretations, especially those involving race, would not be attractive to them. Another reason is more practical: those that hold power within the hobby – the leaders of groups like the National Regiment for example – as well as those who head local reenacting units, simply may be unwilling to surrender power. Bill Holschuh in 2003 touted the benefits of a national organization. They included developing safety standards, coordinating large events, and helping grow the hobby. Holschuh was, however, not sanguine about the prospects of such a unit. "Despite these advantages," he lamented, "no one has even come close to pulling it off, and probably never will." This was

because "our leaders are very reluctant to let go of any of their autonomy." Perhaps the best that could be hoped for from a "National Association of Reenactors" is the development of pedagogical standards, reading lists, and ideas for public programs and training sessions for them. Inclusion would have to be voluntary, but perhaps with the professional and educational gravitas it would provide, the organization could find a niche giving presentations to the general public.

The hobby of reenacting has its advantages moving forward past the Sesquicentennial. They are uniquely equipped to ensure that the Civil War maintains its prominent place in America's mental furniture. In the words of historian Matthew Warshauer, "nothing provides…residents with such visceral sights, sounds, and smells as do the encampments. They have served to drive further interest and study of the Civil War era." This they have done for the last 25 years. The question going forward between now and the 175th anniversary in the 2030s is can they be more? Can they be a real partner in promoting a fuller and deeper understanding of the era, in all of its complexity?

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Mr. Michael Conlin's interests are in the American Civil War and Civil War memory. He is also a reenactor with Company F of the Fourteenth Connecticut Infantry, and his research grew from his involvement in, and fascination with, both reenacting and academic history, as well as the broader question of representation of the civil War in popular culture. Conlin teaches middle school history and language arts at Saint Gabriel School in Windsor, Connecticut.