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America's Civil War

Challenges
Perspectives
Opportunities

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Contents

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America's Civil War

America's Civil War—Challenges, Perspectives, Opportunities 3
Pamela K. Sanfilippo

The American Civil War and the Preservation of Memory 5
Dwight T. Pitcaithley

Interpreting the Civil War—Moving Beyond Battlefields 10
John Hennessy

Historians Under Fire—The Public and the Memory of the Civil War 13
John M. Coski

How Important Is Battlefield Archeology? 16
William B. Lees

Viewing the Civil War Through a Geological Window 21
Bob Higgins

Partners in Researching Fort Donelson's African American Past 25
Susan B. Hawkins

"We Have a Claim on This Estate"—Remembering Slavery at Arlington House 27
Karen Byrne

Untold Stories—Women in the Civil War 30
Cornelia Sexauer

In a Small Northern Town 33
Ella S. Rayburn

Gettysburg the Way the Soldiers Saw It in 1863 36
Katie Lawhon

Fort Sumter National Monument's New Facility at Liberty Square 40
Carlin Timmons and Sandy Pusey

Giving Voice to a Little Known Battlefield—South Carolina's Rivers Bridge State Historic Site 42
Daniel J. Bell and Bryan Scott Enter

The Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail—A Grassroots Battlefield Preservation Initiative 44
Mark K. Christ

From Personal Experiences to Public Actions—Using a Historic Home To Interpret Ulysses S. Grant During the Civil War 46
Karen Miller and Pamela K. Sanfilippo

Cover: clockwise, Battle of the Wilderness, illustration courtesy Don Pierce; 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers engaging Confederate forces at Island Mound, MO, October 28, 1862, courtesy Fort Scott National Historic Site; Ulysses S. and Julia Dent Grant House, see article, page 47; archeologist recording location of a battlefield find, see article, page 16.

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Pamela K. Sanfilippo

America's Civil War
Challenges, Perspectives, Opportunities

Let me begin by stating that I am not a military historian, much less a Civil War historian. Thus, I was surprised and honored when the National Park Service's Chief Historian Dwight Pitcaithley asked me to be the guest editor for this thematic issue of CRM on the Civil War. I do, however, work at a historic site that, had the Civil War never occurred, would probably be houses or condos in suburban South St. Louis, MO; knowledge of its 19th-century past all but forgotten. No, it is not a Civil War battlefield, nor a museum containing military artifacts. It is the home of Ulysses S. Grant; preserved to interpret the personal life of the Union's commanding general.

There are many defining moments in our country's past, but few had such an overwhelming and direct impact on all citizens as the Civil War. Today, descendants of soldiers, historians, reenactors and others spend time and money studying and reliving the Civil War era. The occasionally vociferous debates, the efforts to preserve battlefield sites, the growing number of reenactors, the ever-expanding list of publications, and the thousands of visitors to Civil War-related sites attest to the continued impact of the Civil War in our lives today.

Given that the Civil War is probably the most researched and written about topic in American history, one might wonder what could be said that hasn't already been written or said before. Yet the interest in, fascination with, and debate over the Civil War continues. The official beginning of the sesquicentennial of the war is 9 years away, yet an Internet search for sites on the American Civil War turned up nearly 1 million results. Individuals working at Civil War-related sites and trying to remain current in their knowledge cannot possibly keep up with the constant flow of information that is being published. The articles in this thematic issue of CRM only scratch the surface of the breadth of the work being done at local, state, and national levels to commemorate, preserve, interpret, and study the Civil War. The articles represent a wide variety of disciplines, institutions, and methods for managing Civil War-related sites and understanding the past. The topics presented reflect the challenges, perspectives, and opportunities that are being met and addressed. Challenges can be created when there is a lack of knowledge or when research expands our knowledge to the point where we must revise our views. Changing exhibits, reworking interpretive programs, conducting research, using modern technology, and developing networks are just a few ways the challenges are being met by various agencies and organizations throughout the country.

Challenges

The challenge of presenting Civil War history at historic sites and battlefields is addressed in several articles. In the past, most battlefield sites interpreted the specific battle that took place at that location, with little connection to where the battle fit in the larger story of the war. "Too often," according to former National Park Service Deputy Director Denis Galvin, "stories are told park-by-park. It is Antietam or Gettysburg, not the Civil War."* Dwight Pitcaithley found himself and the National Park Service in the midst of controversy as battlefield parks began expanding their interpretation beyond the story of the particular battle. They recognized the necessity of placing the battle within its larger historical context to educate the public; the majority of whom can no longer identify even the half century in which the war occurred. Pitcaithley's article addresses the controversy and the National Park Service response to charges of "politically correct" and "cookie cutter" interpretation. Telling the same story at each battlefield site is not the intent or goal. To ensure that each park continues to tell the story pertinent to its site, while at the same acknowledging that there is some commonality, among Civil War sites requires collaboration and planning. John Hennessy's article focuses on the work already underway among a wide variety of Civil War-related national parks to achieve this goal and to prepare for the commemoration of

the sesquicentennial of the war. The challenge of bridging the gap between academic historians and "neo-Confederates" is discussed in the article by John Coski of the Museum of the Confederacy. He encourages us in "Historians Under Fire," to fully participate in a dialogue rather than attacks over whose heritage should predominate.

Perspectives

Several of the articles present new research and perspectives on the Civil War. Archeology has long been a tool for learning about the past at historic sites, but not at battlefields. Using the Mine Creek Battlefield in Kansas as a case study, William Lees argues that battlefield archeology can aid in management decisions, improve interpretation, and increase visitor understanding. Bob Higgins shares his work on how geology influenced not only where battles occurred, but also how the knowledge of an area's geology shaped some commanders' decisions.

In recent years, numerous books and articles have explored the role of women and African Americans in the Civil War. Similarly, battlefield and non-battlefield sites began to reexamine their records and are now including stories of those previously excluded from their interpretation. Based on research conducted under cooperative partnerships, Susan Hawkins sheds new light on the role of African Americans during the campaign for Fort Donelson. "'We Have a Claim on This Estate' — Remembering Slavery at Arlington House," documents visitor responses to an exhibit on slavery at the antebellum home of Robert E. Lee. Karen Byrne's article discusses the challenges of presenting a more inclusive history at Lee's home, while emphasizing the need to expose visitors to different perspectives. The research by Cornelia Sexauer demonstrates the wide range of materials available on the role of women during the Civil War. Libraries, museums, historic sites, and battlefields usually find that the problem is not whether they have any information on women or minorities, but how to synthesize the wealth of information to provide a more complete story of the past. Ella Rayburn shows how sites that appear to have little connection to the Civil War can inform the public. The importance of railroads during the war was presented through an exhibit at Steamtown National Historic Site in Pennsylvania.

Opportunities

Challenges and perspectives abound in Civil War history, and many of the articles reflect how sites have turned them into opportunities. Gettysburg National Military Park is using primary source documents to restore the battlefield to its 1863 appearance. Katie Lawhon, in her article, "Gettysburg the Way the Soldiers Saw It in 1863" explains the long range plan for the restoration, including moving the museum to allow for rehabilitation of the Union battle line at Cemetery Ridge. Ft. Sumter recently opened a new Visitor Education Center that connects to other cultural activities in Charleston, SC. Carlin Timmons and Sandy Pusey discuss the careful research and planning that went into the new exhibits on the colonial period and the causes of the war. The only Civil War battle site administered by the South Carolina State Park Service is located in Rivers Bridge. Dan Bell and Bryan Enter write about this underinterpreted site and the educational programs being developed. Mark Christ's article on the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail discusses the opportunities available to sites through the American Battlefield Protection Program. Finally, an article by Karen Miller and me discusses the challenges and opportunities presented at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site as we develop exhibits for recently restored structures.

What ties the articles together, besides the Civil War theme, is the importance of partnerships, community support, and public participation in the process of preservation, interpretation, and education. While this is true for many aspects of cultural resource management, the emotional issues that the Civil War evoke for people today emphasize the need for interaction and inclusiveness. That the authors and the sites they represent include local, regional, national, private, government, and educational institutions demonstrates the encompassing role the Civil War still plays in our history and memory today. It is a pleasure to bring together these articles representing a wide variety of disciplines, institutions, and methods for managing Civil War-related sites. My thanks to each of the contributors for sharing their knowledge and expertise.

Note

* Denis P. Galvin, "Connecting the Dots: Parks, Preservation, and Heritage in the 21st Century," *CRM* 24:7 (2001): 5.

Pamela K. Sanfilippo is the site historian at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site in St. Louis, MO, and guest editor of this issue of CRM.

Dwight T. Pitcaithley

The American Civil War and the Preservation of Memory

The American Civil War, which raged from 1861 until 1865, was the United States' defining event. Anticipated for 40 years, from the time the United States Congress first limited the extension of slavery into the western territories, the war sealed the fate of the institution of slavery and ended forever the question of secession. And while the country was very different in, say 1870, than it had been a decade earlier, in some respects it had changed very little.

The war concluded with the passage of three constitutional amendments: the 13th (1865), which abolished the institution of slavery; the 14th (1868), which granted citizenship to 4 million freed slaves; and the 15th (1870), which gave them the right to vote. In 10 short years, the war had completely altered the social, political, and economic landscape of the country.

The suddenness of emancipation and the apparent reversal of African American fortunes can only be fully understood when one remembers that in 1857, a short 8 years before Congressional abolition of slavery, the Supreme Court determined in the *Dred Scott* case that African Americans, slave or free, could not attain full, or even partial, citizenship. "The unhappy black race," wrote Chief Justice Roger B. Taney, "were separated from the white by indelible marks, and laws long before established, and were never thought of or spoken of except as property....[blacks were deemed to be] beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."[1]

Throughout the country and among Members of Congress, North and South, there existed no political support for the termination of the institution of slavery. In early 1861, Congress, in an effort to forestall the secession movement, passed the first 13th Amendment which guaranteed African American slavery wherever it then existed against Federal interference. (It must be noted that while the amendment was ratified by three States, the ratification process was soon overtaken by the war. The amendment was quickly abandoned and replaced 4 years later with the 1865 amendment that abolished slavery.)[2] Moreover, had the war ended within the first 18 months after the firing on Fort Sumter, prior to the preliminary issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, slavery would have continued throughout the United States.

When the war began in 1861, the abolition of slavery, although the dream of William Lloyd Garrison, the country's leading abolitionist, and a small minority of northerners, was not a goal of the United States Government. In 1861, President Lincoln raised large numbers of volunteer troops to preserve the Union, not rid the country of the "peculiar institution." While possessing a moral aversion to slavery, Lincoln nevertheless feared the racial consequences of wholesale emancipation and was unsure about the constitutionality of abolition. One of the wonders and truly noteworthy aspects of the war years was how steadily and relatively quickly—by January 1863—the abolition of slavery joined preserving the Union as a war aim.

As much as the country had changed during the decade of the 1860s, in some very important respects it remained the same. As noted above, the war ended forever the question of secession and constitutionally abolished the institution of slavery. Achieving political equity for

This issue of CRM follows several others that have explored the Civil War era and its echoes to the present time. "Connections: African American History and CRM" 19:2, (1996); "Altogether Fitting and Proper: Saving America's Battlefields" 20:5 (1997); "African American History and Culture" 20:2 (1997); and "Slavery and Resistance" 21:4 (1998) contain articles on slavery, the Underground Railroad, causes of the Civil War, African Americans in the Civil War, preserving battlefields, and the modern Civil Rights movement. All past issues can be located online at <http://www.cr.nps.gov/crm>.

the former slaves, as envisioned in the 14th and 15th Amendments, proved to be more challenging.

The institution of slavery had been built on deep and imbedded racism toward African Americans and on the concomitant presumption of white supremacy. Indeed, the Confederacy and its Constitution were founded on, as Alexander Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy would put it, these cornerstones, these articles of faith. "Our new government is founded ...," he lectured in 1861, "upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery...is his natural and normal condition." And presumptions of white supremacy could not be legislated away.

Although the Reconstruction Era, 1865 to 1877, attempted to institute political equality upon the former states of the Confederacy, whatever successes were attained, were achieved on the strength of the United States military occupation of the South. Racism remained following Reconstruction and successfully undermined the spirit and intent of the just-ratified 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution. The failure to enforce these changes to the Constitution, it must be said, was not solely a southern failure, but a failure of the United States Government in all three branches: executive, judicial, and legislative. It was a failure of the nation.

Over the next several decades, the rights of black Americans slowly eroded throughout the American South with the enactment of Jim Crow laws which segregated blacks socially and marginalized them politically and economically. Indeed, the white supremacy evident before the war was, by 1900, just as evident throughout the South. It is not a stretch to observe that black Americans for 100 years following Appomattox were systematically deprived of those Jeffersonian ideals of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Between 1890 and 1920, three black Americans were lynched every week somewhere in the American South.[3] While obligated to pay taxes, black Americans were denied even basic benefits enjoyed by white Americans. Grossly inferior public schools; segregated and, again, inferior public transportation facilities and restrooms; segregated seating in theaters; and physical intimidation characterized the black southern experience for a century following the war.

As much of the white South was turning back the clock for its former slaves, it was also revising the memory of the war. Stunned by the devastating losses incurred during the 4-year struggle, southerners hoped to regain their equilibrium by rewriting the history of the war. The creation and defense of the Lost Cause philosophy dominated southern literary and historical production well into the 20th century. Under this interpretation, the South did not as much lose the war as it was overwhelmed by superior military might. Under this interpretation, slavery was a benign institution wherein slaves were content, even happy, and more importantly, faithful and devoted to their masters. Under this interpretation, the war had its origins not in disputes over the institution of slavery, but in the loftier ideals of States rights and constitutional authority.

So successful was this campaign to correct the memory of the war that Lost Cause ideology was endorsed not only in the South, but in many regions of the United States. A country eager to move ahead into the Industrial Age and the Progressive Era preferred to remember the glory of combat and the romance of an idealized war over an institution based on human servitude. Gaines Foster, Nina Silber, Gary Gallagher, and David Blight have all contributed brilliant insights into the development of this post-Civil War phenomenon.[4]

By the centennial of the war in 1961, the principles of the Lost Cause were so deeply ingrained in the American psyche that the 4-year celebration (emphasis on celebration!) rarely considered the role of slavery in prompting the war and rarely considered the legacy of slavery in contemporary society. Two who dared to think beyond the conventions of the deeply segregated country the United States had become by 1960 were Robert Penn Warren and Oscar Handlin.

Warren — son of the South, writer and historian — produced " The Legacy of the Civil War" in 1961 and accurately commented upon the myths, North and South, that had developed over the 100 years since the war and how those myths prevented the country from seeing the war for what it was and productively addressing the legacies of it. The psychological costs of the war, argued Warren, were more subtle, pervasive, and continuing than the economic costs. The South developed the "Great Alibi" wherein defeat was turned into victory and defects became virtues. The North, on the other hand, developed the "Treasury of Virtue" which made it the great redeemer, the savior of the nation, assigning to the North a morality and a clarity of purpose it never

possessed. "When one is happy in forgetfulness," Warren wrote, "facts get forgotten."[5]

Oscar Handlin, a professor of history at Harvard University, also commented upon the limitations of the Centennial celebration.

> An anniversary is an occasion for retrospective reconsideration. It affords an opportunity for analysis of what happened and why and for an estimate of the consequences that extend down to the present. But it is precisely in this respect that both the scholarly and the popular treatments of the Civil War touched off by the centennial fail us most seriously....the men of the North and of the South seized upon the war as a symbol. But in doing so, they grotesquely distorted the actuality of the war as it had been. And the continued preservation of that symbol also obscures the surviving problems left by the war.[6]

In spite of dozens of recent scholarly works on the war, its causes and its consequences, popular discussions of the war rarely engage the role arguments over the institution of slavery played in prompting the war, or consider how quickly the constitutional rights of black Americans were ignored in the rush toward sectional reconciliation. Indeed, in the opinion of Columbia University scholar Eric Foner, the popular 1990 television production "The Civil War," produced by Ken Burns, bore "more resemblance to turn-of-century romantic nationalism than to modern understandings of the war's complex and ambiguous consequences."[7] The miniseries, according to Foner, chose to remember the war as a family quarrel among white Americans and to celebrate the road to reunion "without considering the price paid for national reunification — the abandonment of the ideal of racial justice."

Foner's critique elaborated upon comments made a few years earlier by a prominent southern historian. At the conclusion of his analysis of the Confederacy and the development of the New South, Gaines Foster observed that,

> The rapid healing of national divisions and damaged southern self-image, however, came at the cost of deriving little insight or wisdom from the past. Rather than looking at the war as a tragic failure and trying to understand it, or even condemn it, Americans, North and South, chose to view it as a glorious time to be celebrated. Most ignored the fact that the nation had failed to resolve the debate over the nature of the Union and to eliminate the contradictions between its equalitarian ideals and the institution of slavery without resort to a bloody civil war. Instead, they celebrated the war's triumphant nationalism and martial glory.[8]

Much of the public conversation today about the Civil War and its meaning for contemporary society is shaped by structured forgetting and wishful thinking. As popular as the war is today, there is little interest — outside academic circles — in exploring the causes of the war and considering its profound legacies. Suggestions that slavery really was at the core of mid-19th-century

Almost a century after the ratification of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, President Lyndon B. Johnson, with Martin Luther King, Jr., looking on, signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This photo is part of an online travel itinerary, "Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement" created by the National Register of Historic Places at <www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/>. Photo by Cecil Stoughton, courtesy the National Archives and Records Administration.

disagreements between the Northern and Southern States are met with a charge of being "politically correct," a charge designed to shut down conversation on the subject rather than examine the documented links between the institution of slavery, westward expansion, and the balance of power in Congress.

Recognizing the truth in Robert Penn Warren and Oscar Handlin's assessment of the war and realizing that descriptions of battles alone do not lead to an understanding of war, the managers of the National Park Service's Civil War battlefields have decided to add to the military history in their interpretive programs an assessment of the war's causes and consequences. Interpreting historic sites in the context of the times in which they gained national prominence is fundamental to National Park Service educational programs. Presenting that context occurs at sites as diverse as Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY, site of the 1848 Women's Rights Convention; Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, VT, which commemorates the conservation movement in the United States; and the USS *Arizona* Memorial in Honolulu, HI, which remembers the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. But interpreting the causes of the Civil War at battlefield sites turns out to be highly controversial. A portion of the American public is adamantly opposed to it.[9]

Some believe, and believe strongly, that only military events should be discussed at battlefield sites; others believe that a discussion about the causes of the Civil War might lead to a discussion about slavery. This group, in spite of scholarly evidence to the contrary, denies that slavery was a cause of the Civil War. In short, they argue, military history is good; any attempt to explain why these armies were at each others' throats is bad. The editorials and letters attacking the National Park Service for its expanded interpretive programs demonstrate how emotionally Americans feel about their history, particularly the history of the Civil War. For its part, the National Park Service is being guided by the philosophy that organized killing requires an explanation; and organized killing on the scale of the American Civil War demands it. What the Service is confronting are the effects of over 100 years of many white southerners trying to find meaning, vindication, and perhaps redemption in a war that dealt them a crushing defeat, not only militarily, but also socially and economically.[10]

The purpose of the study of history is not to determine the heroes and the villains in the past, but to gain an understanding of how a society got from then to now, to understand what decisions and actions of the past affect current conditions, and to provide the basic tools of citizenship for more informed decision making in our own time. Alexander Stille, author of "The Future of the Past," puts it very simply, "knowing where you have come from is important in forming an idea of where you want to go."[11] An understanding of the American Civil War must involve a broad view. While the shooting began in 1861, the differences between Northern and Southern States began during Jefferson's time with the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the abolition of slavery in the North. And while the shooting stopped in 1865, the legacy of the war continues to resound throughout our society today.

As this country approaches the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in a few short years, it is the hope of the National Park Service that the 150th anniversary of that event will spark a national discussion about the meaning of the war in the 21st century. Such a discussion would logically and responsibly explore the war's causes and consequences, look unblinkingly at the issue of slavery as the principle dividing issue in 19th-century America, and consider the legacy of racism which prevented the country from experiencing Lincoln's "new birth of freedom" for a century following Appomattox. Such a discussion would, it is hoped, prompt a deeper and more thoughtful consideration of how the echoes of the war continue to resound throughout our society. Such a discussion could only benefit the country as it makes decisions about the kind of future it wants to create for its children and grandchildren.

Notes

1 Roger B. Taney, *Dred Scott* v. *Sandford* (1857). Reprinted in *The Annals of America, vol. 8, 1850-1857: The House Dividing* (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1976), 440-449.

2 Alfred H. Kelly and Winfred A. Harbison, *The American Constitution: Its Origins and Development* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970), 399-400.

3 This anguished chapter in American history is graphically and grimly portrayed in a photographic exhibit currently on display at Martin Luther King, Jr., National Historic Site in Atlanta, GA. The exhibit can also be found on the Internet at <http://www.journale.com/withoutsanctuary>.

4 See Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); and Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, editors, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

5 Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 54, 59-60. First published in 1961.

6 Oscar Handlin, "The Civil War as Symbol and as Actuality," *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. III (Autumn 1961): 133-143.

7 Eric Foner, "Ken Burns and the Romance of Reunion," in *Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 190. This critique was originally published in Ken Burn's *The Civil War: Historians Respond*, Robert Brent Toplin, editor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

8 Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 196.

9 Following the announcement that the National Park Service was planning to expand its interpretive programs to include information on the causes of the war, the Secretary of the Interior and the National Park Service received 2,500 cards and letters from the Sons of Confederate Veterans and Civil War Round Tables protesting the decision.

10 For an assessment of this country's, especially the South's, preoccupation with the Civil War, see David Goldfield, *Still Fighting the Civil War: The American South and Southern History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2002); and Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Random House/Pantheon, 1998).

11 Alexander Stille, *The Future of the Past* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2002), 325.

Dwight T. Pitcaithley is chief historian of the National Park Service.

The Civil War in Cyberspace

There are literally thousands of Web sites that relate to America's Civil War. As with everything on the Internet, some sites are soapboxes for their authors and fans, while others provide a wealth of information for interested searchers. For classroom instruction, teachers recommend or provide hot links for students to sites that have <.edu> (education), <.gov> (government), or <.mus> (museum), domain names because information on these sites is deemed more reliable and less likely to have an agenda that the author is promoting. With that said, however, there are individual sites that provide excellent information for studying the Civil War. James F. Epperson, a math professor, maintains three such Web sites. One discusses the causes of the Civil War and includes copies of, or links to, many primary documents from the period and can be found at <http://www.hometown.aol.com/jfepperson/civil.html>.

One of the most important benefits of the Internet for students of history is the accessibility to primary source documents. Rather than traveling to a library or museum, researchers are able to view these documents online through the collections of the Smithsonian Institution <http://www.si.edu>, the Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov>, and the National Archives and Records Administration <http://www.nara.gov>, to name just three. An excellent study of the Civil War in the Shenandoah Valley area that includes an extensive amount of primary source material is the "Valley of the Shadow" project through the University of Virginia's Center for Digital History, authored by Dr. Edward L. Ayers <http://jefferson.village.virginia.edu/vshadow2/>. The site is updated frequently, and educational lesson plans and a CD-ROM version are also offered.

Finally, the National Park Service Web site <www.nps.gov> provides links to each Civil War park (as well as all national parks), many of which have informational and educational materials online. In addition, the site's "Links to the Past" section <www.cr.nps.gov> has a wealth of material, including information about ongoing efforts to preserve battle sites and a searchable database of military records as well as online exhibits featuring objects from the National Park Service's museum collections.

Pamela K. Sanfilippo

John Hennessy

Interpreting the Civil War
Moving Beyond Battlefields

Our Civil War battlefields have become battlegrounds again — this time intellectual battlegrounds. A series of visits by historians from the Organization of American Historians in the late 1990s led to pointed criticism of National Park Service sites for being too narrowly focused on things purely military. Those historians suggested that more emphasis be put on causes and consequences, on civilians and slaves, on meaning and significance. Other historical groups, led by Civil War Round Tables and other heritage organizations, have railed at the idea of expanded or altered interpretation at Civil War battlefields; they assert that battlefields were set aside to tell the military history of the Civil War and nothing more.

At the landmark "Holding the High Ground" gathering in Nashville in August 1998, superintendents of Civil War-related parks — in large part the keepers of the national memory of the Civil War — initiated a hard look at the scope and nature of National Park Service interpretation of the Civil War. That look is finding form in a document now under development: "Interpreting the Civil War Through the Sites of the National Park System: An Initiative for the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War." The plan acknowledges profound shortcomings in the National Park Service approach to interpreting the Civil War, but it also reaffirms the Service's longstanding commitment to resource-based interpretation. The plan is still a work in progress — and has been approved by absolutely nobody — but what follows is a summary of the key thoughts that the plan will likely embody.

Battlefields and Memory

In the aftermath of national trauma, we as a nation have (consciously or unconsciously) assigned the rights of memory to a certain group or groups. In the wake of the September 11 disaster, the nation at large has stepped aside in deference to the families of victims, firefighters, and rescue workers. In the aftermath of the Civil War, we accorded the rights to the memory of the conflict to the veterans on both sides. They in turn fostered an astonishingly complete and swift reconciliation — one, it turns out, that was based in part on selective memory and forged at the expense of liberty for free blacks, newly freed slaves, and women.

Most of the legislation for America's battlefield parks is a legacy of the reconciliatory efforts of veterans. Though the veterans are now gone, their descendants — and indeed the National Park Service — have faithfully carried on the veterans' traditions. We as a nation still use our battlefields to define the nation's Civil War experience in largely military terms.

As a result, huge tracts of intellectual turf remain unplowed for the American public; large segments of the population fail to see the war's relevance (African American visitors are still shockingly uncommon at sites related to the Civil War). The public is far more knowledgeable about the experience of soldiers and the detail of battles than the significance of those battles to the war or the development of this nation. The single-minded focus on military aspects of the Civil War understates the conflict's significance and relevance. The wartime struggle over the existence of the Union has transformed into an omnipresent search for a more perfect Union. The profound constitutional changes wrought by war were but the point of departure for the on-going quest for legal and social equality for all Americans, the still-vigorous debate over the proper reach of the Federal Government, and the never-ending effort to reconcile differing cultural values held under a single national flag. The struggle to define America continues, and all paths to understanding that struggle invariably pass through the cauldron of America's Civil War.

The challenge faced by the National Park Service today is huge: to convey the significance and relevance of the Civil War while at the same time sustaining the Service's invaluable tradition of resource-based interpretation (a concept that is at the very foundation of the National Park Service mission). Meeting that challenge will involve not just improving interpretation at Civil War battle-

fields, but also expanding the accepted definition of what constitutes a Civil War site. In fact, the sites of the National Park System — from battlefields to antebellum homes to northern factories to the homes of the renowned — offer an unmatched venue for modern Americans to understand, contemplate, and debate what Robert Penn Warren called "the great single event of our history." The value of national parks is both individual and cumulative — each individually embodying drama, pathos, or brilliance while collectively reflecting a struggle that permeated every aspect of American society.

The Push Toward the Sesquicentennial

The approaching 150th anniversary of the American Civil War offers the current generation perhaps its most important opportunity to know, discuss, and commemorate America's greatest national crisis while at the same time exploring its enduring relevance to America of the 21st century. Yet, in 2002, the National Park Service is largely ill-equipped to lead such a national discussion.

In preparation for the Sesquicentennial (which, given a broader view of the Civil War that includes causation, should already be under way), superintendents of Civil War sites are proposing an ambitious initiative: a multi-faceted, multi-year program that will simultaneously transform and improve interpretation of the Civil War in our national parks while providing a national forum for reflection on America's greatest national crisis. The project will encourage Americans to use national parks — battlefields and non-battlefield sites — as the major vehicle for gaining greater understanding of the Civil War and its relevance today. Simultaneously, the National Park Service will use the full range of its sites related to the Civil War as forums for engaging visitors in discussions about major events, places, and themes associated with the war — some of which have not traditionally fallen within the realm of public history.

The superintendents' proposal — which is still very much in development — will include at least four major elements.

Redefining a "Civil War Site." Fundamental to expanding interpretation of the Civil War through the sites of the National Park System is identifying those sites that can contribute to telling a bigger story. While battlefields can certainly do a better job than they do of putting battles into a broader context and illustrating how, for example, the local community responded to secession or emancipation, battlefields are not well suited to sustain a broad-ranging exploration of cause, consequence, and significance. To engage Americans in those sorts of conversations, the National Park Service needs to show the public that Civil War sites include more than just battlefields. Springfield Armory National Historic Site in Springfield, MA; Booker T. Washington National Monument in Hardy, VA; Homestead National Monument of America in Beatrice, NE; Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, NY; Hampton National Historic Site in Towson, MD; Frederick Law Olmstead National Historic Site in Brookline, MA; Boston African American National Historic Site in Boston, MA; Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, IL; and the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, MO, are just a few of the non-battlefield sites that can illuminate important aspects of the nation's Civil War experience. The walls of time (1861-1865) and geography (battlefields) that have so limited our interpretation of the Civil War need to be taken down.

Establishing a Thematic Context. The National Park Service will, for the first time, articulate a comprehensive thematic context for interpreting the Civil War through the sites of the National Park System. These themes will be derived from the study and synthesis of more than 150 thematic statements submitted by national parks related to the American Civil War. They are intended to act as a point of departure for developing media and programs and engaging visitors in figurative or literal discussions about the nation's most destructive and transforming epoch.

Once the national themes are in place, individual parks will "plug in" to those that best reflect that particular park's story or resources. For exam-

Bloody Angle diorama at the Chancellorsville Visitor Center at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park. Photo courtesy National Park Service.

ple, in addition to illustrating themes related to military events, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park in Virginia vividly reflects the evermore difficult experience of civilians from 1862-1864. As the battle that precipitated the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation,* Antietam National in Maryland is perfectly suited to illuminate not just emancipation, but the interrelationship of politics and war. Wilson's Creek National Battlefield in Missouri reflects the unique experience of border States and communities during the Civil War. Hampton National Historic Site in Maryland can tell us much about the slave experience. By using resources and stories at the park level to illuminate larger issues, the National Park Service will avoid the much dreaded "cookie cutter" interpretation. A look through the local lens will also demonstrate that major issues connected with the war (slavery, States rights, emancipation) were not viewed homogeneously — that the human experience related to those issues varied greatly. Each park will tell these stories in its own way; collectively the sites of the National Park System will tell the broad story of the Civil War, with all its impacts and implications.

Upgrading Media. As proud as the National Park Service is of personal services, the stark fact is that at many sites only a fraction of its visitors receive the benefit of a front line interpreter. The majority of visitors to Civil War sites, and especially battlefield areas, are completely reliant upon media to describe and derive the significance of the park. At Gettysburg, only 15 percent of visitors attend ranger-guided programs; at Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania, the figure is 18 percent. Yet in many parks, investment in media to reach the majority of visitors has been but a fraction of the funds invested in personal services.

The media that does exist — museum exhibits, wayside exhibits, furnishings, and audio-visual programs — vary widely in quality and content. Many parks have media dating to the 1960s. The best exhibit in the Fredericksburg Battlefield Visitor Center is one installed in 1936. Money for, and interest in, updating that media has been scarce indeed. Some parks have more modern offerings — exhibits done in the last 20 years. But few of these exhibits go beyond the traditional boundaries of battlefield interpretation done 3 decades ago.

Any attempt to improve interpretation at Civil War sites must recognize the need to improve the media that are the primary means of communicating with visitors — an expensive proposition. "An Initiative for the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War" will include a Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for Civil War sites within the National Park System. This plan will do two things. First, it will link individual parks with the key national themes each park is best suited to help convey. Second, it will indicate what improvements in media and personal services each site needs to accomplish its mission within that larger context. The result: an interpretive framework within which Congress, individual parks, or partners can fund the media improvements needed to bring parks' interpretation in line with 21st-century thought and scholarship.

Beyond the Parks: Education and Interpretation Through the National Media and Internet. The sesquicentennial initiative will also reach beyond individual sites. Civil War parks, and perhaps the National Park Service at large, will seek partnerships within the media, on the Internet, and with America's schools that will use the national parks to tell the story of America's Civil War to visitors and non-visitors. Programs may include a series of public conversations about the Civil War along the line of the "American Presidents" series presented by C-SPAN a couple years ago—a high-quality series of programs aimed at the popular market—and a comprehensive Web site that provides a vast array of alternatives for engaging the public in the story of the Civil War as it is embodied by the national parks. Finally, the sesquicentennial initiative may include a large body of curriculum-based media (including satellite, Internet, and live programs) that will be the foundation of public education relating to the Civil War throughout the nation.

This sesquicentennial initiative is intended to be a far different animal than the popular celebrations that accompanied the centennial and the Nation's Bicentennial. Rather than being focused on events and observances, the superintendents hope that the sesquicentennial's legacy will be an array of interpretive media systems and educational programs at a variety of sites that dramatically expand the opportunities for all Americans to gain understanding and derive relevance from the nation's experience during the Civil War.

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* **Note**
The preliminary Emancipation Proclamation was issued by Lincoln in October 1862, testing the waters and warning that if the Confederacy didn't return to the Union he would put the Emancipation Proclamation into effect January 1, 1863.

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John M. Coski

Historians Under Fire

The Public and the Memory of the Civil War

A few years ago, I participated in a symposium on "southern symbols" at a southern university. After my presentation on the Confederate battle flag, an undergraduate student beckoned me out of the room and explained with startling candor his own feelings about the flag. He explained he was from rural Mississippi, ashamed of the virulent racism of his father, and now recognized why the flag offended African Americans. But, he insisted, he still did not abide the growing tendency to vilify all things Confederate and wanted to know why he should be ashamed of his ancestors. We had a long chat and returned to the room for the next presentation — which was about the latent, even subconscious, racism of some Civil War reenactors. The same student felt emboldened enough to stand up during the question and answer period and essentially repeat the story he had told me. The reaction of the session moderator was swift and unequivocal. She told him that he was out of line and, in so many words, to sit down and shut up. I'm ashamed to say that I did not intervene and insist that he and his question be treated with due respect.

There is an unfortunate dynamic that exists between professional historians and the millions of Americans who sympathize with the Confederacy in the Civil War. These neo-Confederates whom Tony Horwitz depicted — accurately, I believe — in his book "Confederates in the Attic"[1] are proud of their Confederate ancestors, conservative in their politics, and increasingly sensitive to what they believe are unfair attacks upon their ancestors and their values. Confederate sympathizers ascribe, consciously or unconsciously, to what many historians generally consider an erroneous and distorted interpretation of the Civil War that dates back to the Lost Cause era.[2] There is a large and easily-identified body of neo-Confederate literature that competes with academic scholarship, but the neo-Confederate viewpoint is more evident and oft-expressed in the frequent public disputes over Confederate flags, monuments, and other symbols and over the names of streets, bridges, or public buildings.

I confess that my perspective may be skewed. I have worked for nearly 14 years in an institution — the Museum of the Confederacy – that has had to find and maintain balance between sensitivity to the views of a core pro-Confederate constituency and scrupulous attention to scholarship and inclusiveness. Also affecting my viewpoint is the recent collapse of that balance. The museum is now explicitly courting the financial support of those individuals and groups who insist that it must be a museum for (not of) the Confederacy, a result that would threaten the institution's scholarly integrity and credibility.

The museum's fate is caught up in a strong backlash among white southerners and white Americans in general against a perceived political correctness running amok in America today. As we know from many other celebrated incidents, a large segment of the American population believes that politically correct or "revisionist" historians have hijacked history and have distorted truth with "context." The contested memory of the Civil War is just one example of the ongoing "history wars."

Resentment over political correctness and the ongoing campaign by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People against the publicly-sponsored or -endorsed display of Confederate symbols explains much about the gulf between scholars and the pro-Confederate public, but there are other contributing factors. The most important and consistent factor is ancestry. Perhaps more than any other avocational historians, many pro-Confederate Civil War buffs perceive the subject as synonymous with the honor and reputation of their ancestors. Discussions of slavery as the cause and issue of the war are considered an implicit condemnation of their ancestors. They are quick to fire back with arguments that have prima facie validity — but which historians dismiss as simplistic or irrelevant — that the vast

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majority of white southerners and Confederate soldiers in particular did not own slaves and that Abraham Lincoln was, by modern definition, a "racist" (as were most people of his generation by today's standards) for whom the emancipation of the slaves was not a primary objective and who tried mightily to colonize African Americans out of the country.

How should professional historians respond to such arguments? According to a recent trend within the profession, historians should encourage people to study their personal pasts and help create a "participatory historical culture." The most common personal pasts are built upon a foundation of family history.[3] When you add to this tendency an emphasis on the need for public historians to consult with and listen to their stakeholders, it would seem that historians ought to respect the arguments of Confederate descendants.[4]

Furthermore, the history profession has for decades encouraged the study and celebration of distinct racial, ethnic, and life-style-based subcultures, in what some within our ranks denounce as therapeutic, feel-good, or compensatory history.[5] Should not the study and celebration of Confederate American history also receive the blessing of the profession?

My experience suggests that most professional historians hold Confederate Americans and their brand of history in great contempt. Rarely do historians discuss neo-Confederate thought without expressing either incredulity that anyone ascribes to it or fear of its persistence and apparent influence. Where then is the respect for the opinions of people who are stakeholders in their Confederate/Civil War past? Is there a double standard at work? I believe there is.

The lack of respect extends even deeper. Professional historians who share the conservative faith of neo-Confederates have felt so unwelcome in the profession that they have formed their own organizations. At mainstream historical conferences, I have heard respected Civil War historians criticized because they are too soft on Robert E. Lee and other Confederate leaders. These historians frequently address popular audiences and emphasize the centrality of slavery in the coming of the war. Civil War historians in academia — especially those writing military history — face an uphill battle to prove the legitimacy of their subject, even though — probably because — it is so popular with the wider public. Is it any wonder that there is a gulf between historians and the public?

Many elements of neo-Confederate orthodoxy are interpretations familiar in academic circles. For instance, the South was as much American as the North in the antebellum era; the constitutionality of secession was open to debate in 1861; Abraham Lincoln maneuvered the Confederacy into firing the first shot of the war; Lincoln violated the Constitution in his successful effort to preserve the Union; Lincoln was not committed to emancipation at the beginning of the war; and northern victory in the war fundamentally changed the nature of the Union and was an important step in the creation of modern American capitalism and the "imperial presidency."

Why is it that these and other familiar arguments seem less valid, less acceptable when espoused by neo-Confederates? The answer, it seems, is the belief that neo-Confederate thought is more akin to religious dogma and propaganda than inquiry — received truth rather than the process of trying to determine truths. And, most importantly, neo-Confederate thought amasses and arranges facts and interpretations with the express objective of vindicating Confederates and the Confederacy and of disassociating the Confederacy and the war from slavery. Believing that the preservation of slavery was the Confederacy's cornerstone and that slavery was the indispensable cause of the war, professional historians are determined not to let neo-Confederates get away with this denial.

Historians are afraid of giving aid and encouragement to the neo-Confederates and seeming soft on people and ideas that in the modern era we find prudent to condemn. We are afraid of being party to an unholy bargain of the kind that David Blight describes in his book "Race and Reunion" and, yes, afraid of offending African Americans whose beliefs and feelings now figure prominently — as they should — in how we understand and present our history.[6] The result of these fears is being painted into corners when engaging in debates over Confederate symbols. Perhaps it is time to change the terms and the nature of these debates.

What I have come to believe is the desirability and necessity of giving serious attention to the neo-Confederate presentation of history — a policy of "constructive engagement." Won't this

give credibility to arguments that could be dismissed as the voice of a "lunatic fringe"? These views have credibility with untold numbers of Americans — numbers that swell when Confederate symbols come under attack. We must do a better job of presenting compelling explanations to non-academic audiences of what we must admit are complex conundrums — how, for example, slavery could have been the root cause of the Civil War even though 75 percent of white southerners and perhaps 90 percent of Confederate soldiers didn't own slaves. We must be more straightforward in acknowledging fundamental agreement with some of the neo-Confederate points about Lincoln's equivocation over emancipation and his abuses of power. Failure to acknowledge this lends credibility to the neo-Confederate's argument that these are suppressed truths. The case for the watershed importance of slavery to the Confederacy and the Civil War can be made while avoiding the perception that it is a condemnation of Confederate ancestors or the promotion of a neo-Reconstructionist agenda.

Historians should seek opportunities to address Civil War Round Tables and Sons of Confederate Veterans camps and engage members in serious dialogue. Many academic historians are already doing just that and are using the pages of North & South magazine, a publication that within a few years has established itself as the best of the popular Civil War magazines and has tackled sensitive issues and encouraged serious dialogue between academics and laymen. As others would quickly point out, however, North & South also offers sobering evidence of the limits of constructive engagement. The months-long dialogue over James McPherson's article on the causes of the war reveal that even deliberate and reasoned explanation cannot overcome some peoples' devotion to dogma.[7]

I am not proposing some kind of centrally organized campaign of scholarly propaganda; Confederate sympathizers can spot truth squads as easily as we can. What I am recommending is a genuine effort by academic historians to engage with a segment of our stakeholders and the historically aware public that have often been treated as pariahs. They, of course, have come to regard us as pariahs. We should not only talk; we must also listen. Like it or not, their understanding of the Civil War is persistent and influential. If historians of the Civil War are under fire, it is both logical and prudent that we seek to understand more about the people who are doing the firing.

Notes

1 Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Random House/Pantheon, 1998).

2 Originating with the book, *The Lost Cause* (1866) by Richmond editor and historian Edward A. Pollard, the South's Lost Cause ideology stressed that the North's greater numbers had destined the South to lose on the battlefield. Even more so, the war was not fought over slavery, an institution deemed beneficial to the happy and devoted slaves, but over States rights. Between the 1880s and the 1910s, Confederate veterans' and descendants' organizations elaborated upon this ideology and lobbied heavily and successfully to make it orthodoxy among white southerners; see also Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980); Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900* (Hamden, CT: Anchor Books, 1973).

3 Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

4 Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Englehardt, editors, *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1995); "Museum Exhibit Standards Society for History in the Federal Government," *OAH Newsletter*, May 2000, 29; Gary B. Nash, Charlotte Crabtree, and Ross E. Dunn, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the American Past* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

5 Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Disuniting of America: Reflections on a Multicultural Society* (New York: Norton, 1992).

6 David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001). Blight argues that postwar Americans chose "healing" over "justice" and that white northerners and white southerners fashioned a memory of the war that emphasized soldierly valor over the war's issues and neglected the contributions of African Americans.

7 James M. McPherson, "What Caused the Civil War?" *North & South* 4:1 (November 2000): 12-22; "Special Crossfire," *North & South* 4:3 (March 2001): 5-7+; 4:4 (April 2001): 5-6+; 4:5 (June 2001),: 5-6+; 4:7 (September 2001):5-7+.

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William B. Lees

How Important Is Battlefield Archeology?

When a family completes a visit to a national Civil War battlefield, they rarely question the accuracy of what they have seen. Instead, they happily accept the story presented by brochures, tour guides, interpretive trails, and rangers. Sometimes distinctive physical landmarks — such as a house, river, road, or earthwork that is clearly a landmark from the battle — fortify this confidence. Perhaps there are also monuments on the field that were erected long ago by veterans who fought there and that seem to say, "we were here." Often though, a battlefield park has none of these. Rather, the only physical evidence available to the visitor is the information center and the waysides along roads and trails created to tell the story of the battle.

As a result of many studies conducted since pioneering work at the Little Bighorn Battlefield in the 1980s,[1] archeologists have come to agree that the visitor's confidence in the accuracy of their Civil War battlefield tour may, in many cases, be at least slightly misplaced. Prior to this study, archeologists confined their work on battlefields to traditional excavation around buildings, earthworks, or graves. At Little Bighorn, site of the most famous of all Indian Wars confrontations, archeologists worked with volunteers to use metal detectors to find and document artifacts and their placement over large expanses of the battlefield.

Detector line. Volunteers equipped with metal detectors systematically scan the battlefield.

Because of the success of the Little Bighorn study, archeologists have come to embrace the entire battlefield, regardless of size, as an important subject for study.[2] Insights important for the proper management of battlefields and for their interpretive development or redevelopment are generally forthcoming from such studies, regardless of whether they focus on National Park Service properties, state or local historical sites, or sites held entirely in private hands.

Seeing the Whole Battlefield

Our Civil War battlefields can be said to consist of three essential components: 1) documents and oral history accounts, 2) physical remains of the battle, and 3) the modern landscape on which, many years ago, the battle was fought (at some locations this includes memorial elements such as monuments or markers). None of these alone is sufficient to provide an understanding of the battlefield. Archeologists argue, based on a growing body of case study, that all three must be considered in the management and interpretation of a battlefield of the Civil War.

A few monuments, memories still told or written down as stories, and first hand reports, letters, diaries, and memoirs are what planners of most of our battlefield parks had to work with when they transformed land into a battlefield park. An arduous process of detailed historical research and analysis was typically coupled with a careful study of the land on which the battle was known or thought to have occurred. Modern intrusions were eradicated, park roads constructed, waysides and walking trails built, cannons placed, and visitor centers with interpretive displays erected. This process imposed an interpretation of the battle on the modern landscape and created a landscape that is itself an interpretation. It represented the best fit between the available evidence and the modern landscape. At some battlefields this process has been done more than once, resulting in markedly different visitor experiences.

Because of the difficulty of accessing the widely dispersed physical remains of the battle until the relatively recent past, the process of

Enfield pattern Minie balls. Unfired specimen mark the location of a soldier who dropped or discarded them during the battle, whereas the fired specimen less precisely mark the location of fallen soldiers.

managing and developing Civil War battlefields has historically relied very little on the second of the three battlefield components reviewed above: the physical remains. Physical remains focus on the armaments — predominantly bullets and artillery projectiles — hurled back and forth by opposing troops. Here a distinction exists between ammunition that was fired in battle and that which may have been dropped, discarded, or lost during the battle. Unfired ammunition is important in that it marks the location (if but for a moment in time) of the soldier who dropped or discarded it. Fired ammunition, on the other hand, marks less directly the location of a perhaps fallen soldier at some point in the event.

In addition to ammunition, there are things that occur in lesser quantities: fragments of equipment, such as trigger guards and canteen spouts, and personal items, such as harmonicas and coins. Like the unfired ammunition, the placement of these items on the battlefield marks the location of an individual participant in the battle.

In some cases, these artifacts can be attributed to U.S. or Confederate usage, although this is difficult given the realities of supply during the Civil War. In even more unusual circumstances, artifacts can be attributed to specific regiments or companies. When this occurs, the ease with which documents can be correlated with a specific place on the modern landscape increases substantially.

The archeologist, through careful study, can access information represented by physical remains.[3] A systematic survey of the suspected battlefield will uncover battle-related artifacts that can be properly collected and their locations precisely recorded with modern surveying instruments. Information on the artifacts and their placement can then be used to develop detailed maps of the physical residue of the battle; and these can be examined for patterns that address questions of the location of the battle and its key elements, the nature of the fighting, and the progression of the event.

The first pattern of interest is the most general: where artifacts are, as opposed to where they are not. This most general pattern speaks to the limits of the battle (different from park boundaries). Once the limits are understood, the archeologist examines the findings for patterns that may be used for interpreting the placement of battle events on the landscape, the nature of the

fighting at these locations, and the overall progression of the fighting. This information has specific pertinence for the management and interpretive development of our Civil War battlefields.

Mine Creek as an Example

An example of the successful use of archeology to develop pertinent management and interpretive information is Mine Creek Battlefield, operated by the Kansas State Historical Society.[4] The Battle of Mine Creek was fought on October 25, 1864, between Major General Sterling Price's rear guard of 7,500 cavalry and Major General Alfred Pleasanton's advance cavalry of 2,500.[5] The Confederates were posted north of Mine Creek on both sides of an alternate route of the Fort Scott Road. The Confederates were protecting the rear of a long wagon train whose head, along with eight pieces of artillery and the balance of the Confederate Army, were already miles to the south.

Based on research by local historian Lumir Buresh,[6] the Kansas State Historical Society purchased 280 acres of land in Linn County, KS, for creation of a battlefield park. Buresh's interpretation of the battle had placed most of the significant troop positions and actions within the 280 acres. After being delayed for many years, a new initiative to develop the land was begun in the late 1980s. An archeological reconnaissance of the 280 acres was conducted in 1989 to determine if any artifacts related to the battle remained that might assist in the development efforts or that might serve as museum exhibits.[7]

This initial study found substantial evidence of the event within the 280-acre tract. In addition, however, the study showed ample evidence that the battlefield extended well beyond the limits of the State-owned land particularly

toward the east and north. While the artifact distribution dropped off to virtually nothing on the western edge of the property, it did not diminish on the northern and eastern boundaries. Further, Buresh showed the Fort Scott Road used during the battle (which was the approximate centerline of the battle) as running through the center of the State-owned property. No archeological evidence for a road in this location was found, but clear evidence for a road used during the battle was found along the eastern edge of the property south of Mine Creek. This evidence consisted of swales visible on the modern landscape and an associated alignment of battle-related artifacts. This road crossed on to private property just north of Mine Creek.[8]

Further archeological study of adjacent private land was set into motion by these discoveries. Work in 1990 and 1991 covered lands to the west, east, and north of the State-owned parcel and showed conclusively that the battle covered a much larger area than had previously been understood. The road identified in the 1989 study could not be followed very far north of Mine Creek, but its projected route was indeed close to the centerline of the distributions of artifacts documented north of the creek. The center of the battlefield was in reality in the vicinity of the eastern edge of the State-owned property.[9]

In addition to being larger than previously thought, the archeology also showed that the initial Confederate line and the main engagement was much further north of Mine Creek than previously thought. Several converging lines of evidence were important in reaching this conclusion, but the evidence for artillery fire was pivotal. U.S. artillery arrived too late to figure in the fighting, but the Confederate artillery was a key element in its line of defense.

The Buresh interpretation had the Confederate artillery posted immediately north of Mine Creek within the main Confederate line. Artillery ammunition was found, however, concentrated well north of the creek — in fact it was well north of the northern boundary of the State-owned property. While artillery projectiles can travel a considerable distance, the evidence included a concentration of canisters[10] that have a relatively short effective range of roughly 300 meters, though they would certainly travel further before grounding.[11]

Nonetheless, the canister was found some 1,600 meters north of Mine Creek and beyond a rise of ground that would have hidden the target from the gunners who fired this canister had they been posted at the creek. It is more reasonable to presume that the cannon were some 300 to 600 meters from where the canister was found. This places the Confederate line somewhere near the northern boundary of the State-owned property and over 1,000 meters north of the creek.[12]

This conclusion was supported by other evidence to show that the initial engagement of U.S. troops with the Confederate line was at best at the northern boundary of the State-owned property and on private lands to the east. It is easily conceivable that the line was even further north of this location. This area north of the State-owned property is in fact where the density of artifact finds was the greatest, suggesting this is where the most intense fighting occurred.[13]

The State-owned land, as well as private land directly to the east, presented evidence for the fighting after the U.S. attack had pushed through the initial Confederate line. This includes the increasingly disorganized fighting north of Mine Creek that resulted in the capture of some 900 Confederate soldiers, 2 Confederate generals, all 8 pieces of Confederate artillery, and many wagons of the Confederate train.[14]

These examples illustrate some of the major conclusions reached about the Battle of Mine Creek from a careful study of physical remains of this event. In general, the major lesson from the archeological study of Mine Creek concerns scale. The battle was found to cover a substantially larger area than had been indicated by the Buresh

A volunteer carefully searches the ground at Mine Creek for a battle-related artifact might help tell the story of the fighting.

An archeologist behind a total station records the precise location of a battlefield find.

interpretation. This showed that this interpretation, and the interpretation implied by the original State purchase of battlefield lands, was flawed in terms of scale. Without physical evidence or non-ambiguous landscape features to work with, it was possible to place the historically recorded battle events within a much smaller area than was actually the case. The physical evidence has served to anchor or reconnect the historical accounts of the battle to the modern landscape.

In a similar fashion, the placement of specific elements of the action within the newly defined battlefield boundaries was modified drastically from the earlier interpretation that placed the Confederate line immediately north of Mine Creek. The physical evidence clearly argues that the Confederate line was substantially north of the creek. Here, the physical evidence seems to serve to shatter what may be 20th-century concepts of scale in favor of those that were more familiar to the soldiers who fought at Mine Creek. Perhaps due to the ease with which we move from place to place via automobiles and paved roads, accounts that describe troops posted at Mine Creek seem to say to us today that they were immediately north of the creek. To the Civil War soldier, even those on horseback, being posted at Mine Creek certainly had a much larger geographic meaning than it does to us today.

Among other values, therefore, the archeological record serves to reconnect written and other records and our interpretation of these records with a landscape that is much changed from the moment in time when a Civil War battle was fought. This value alone makes the archeologist's work on our Civil War battlefields of great importance for the management and interpretation of these resources.

Importance of Battlefield Archeology

Mine Creek is but one of numerous case studies that speak to the same conclusion: approaches to the management and/or interpretive development of Civil War battlefields that have not taken advantage of archeological studies of the battlefield itself may be seriously inadequate, if not flawed. Archeological evidence is obviously the best means to determine where remains of the battle actually exist and, therefore, the location of grounds hallowed by intense fighting. Whether the goal is to protect resources on private lands through regulatory actions or to manage construction or interpretive development on long-existing battlefield parks or parks under initial development, knowing where physical remains are located is of obvious importance in avoiding their damage.

At Mine Creek, for example, the State thought they had purchased management control over the entire battlefield. Archeological research taught us lessons of scale at this place, but this insight is guiding new efforts to acquire the remainder of the battlefield lands so they can be properly managed and interpreted.

The interpretive value of archeology can obviously be profound. Had the site of Mine Creek been developed when the State first purchased it, the archeology would have shown that this interpretive development was flawed and needed rethinking to reflect the new understanding of the scale of this event. Archeology can also have a profound impact on other areas of interpretation especially regarding the nature of the fighting. These insights can impact not only locations, but also the story that is told about what happened there.

There are those that would argue that knowing precise locations and having new insights into the conduct of a battle is of little importance. They argue that regardless of where

Flintlock, canteen, and trigger guard found along an abandoned road at Mine Creek mark the route of the Confederate retreat.

you place the trails or markers, the public still sees only grass and woods, and regardless of the nature of the fighting, the outcome was still the same. What is wrong, they would ask, with telling the public that the entire battle of Mine Creek occurred on 280 acres and letting the lands that we now know were part of the battlefield remain in productive agricultural use and in private hands?

The answers to these questions are of course as individual as those who may hear them. The importance of battlefield preservation seems, though, to be almost inherent in the movement to save these places that started as soon as the smoke cleared in the 1860s and that continues unabated to this day. If we are to preserve and interpret places from the Civil War, it is important that we do so honestly with the benefit of the full range of information available: the oral and written documents, the archeological records, and the landscape itself.

Notes

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6 Ibid.

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8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Canisters are projectiles filled with metal balls and sawdust that burst open when shot from a cannon.

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Photos by the author.

Bob Higgins

Viewing the Civil War Through a Geological Window

Our understanding of history is enriched by viewing events from many perspectives. An unlikely window through which to view the American Civil War is geology, the study of the planet Earth — the materials of which it is made, the processes which act upon these materials, and the changes which it has undergone and is undergoing. Geology shapes terrain, and terrain is critical to any military venture. Both Union and Confederate soldiers used — or in some cases failed to use — terrain to their benefit in choosing defensive positions, maneuvering troops, and selecting supply and communication routes. In some instances, commanders had common knowledge of geology and employed it to their military advantage. Let us reach across the boundary of science and history and view three examples from the Civil War through a geological window.

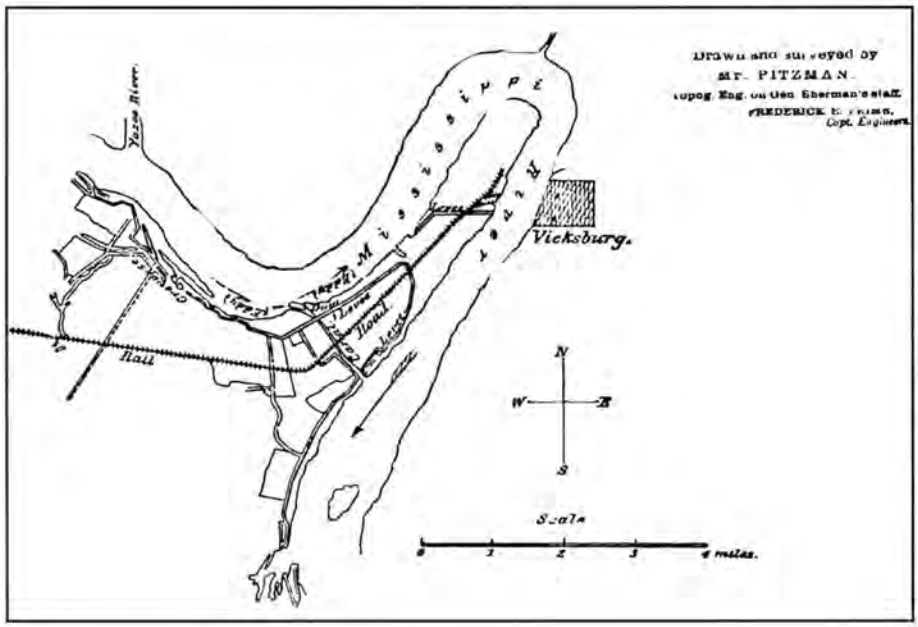
Battle of Vicksburg

The Mississippi River divided the country, east from west, and was a major transportation route. Today, and during Civil War times, geologic processes continually shape and reshape the river's course and carve out the surrounding landscape: bluffs, beaches, natural levies, and swamps. New channels are constantly cut, and old ones abandoned by the Mississippi.

During the Civil War, Confederate forces closed the river to navigation. Although the Union gained control of the river south at New Orleans and north of Memphis early in the war, the Confederates held Vicksburg and controlled the Mississippi at that point. This threatened to strangle northern commercial interests while it thwarted military objectives. President Lincoln believed that the river town of Vicksburg was of great importance for Union control of the lower Mississippi River and a key to ending the war. By taking control of Vicksburg and the lower Mississippi, the South would be split in two, severing a vital Confederate supply line. Nevertheless, Vicksburg and the surrounding forts — strongholds along the bluffs of the Mississippi River — seemed impregnable. Direct attack was considered impossible; maneuvering and small attacks provided no results. A plan was needed.

In the summer of 1862, a 3,000-man infantry brigade commanded by Union Brigadier General Thomas Williams began construction of a canal at the Tuscumbia Bend of the Mississippi River. The site was the location of an earlier canal south of Vicksburg that bypassed the city. It was hoped that the canal would divert the main river flow away from the large meander-loop channel located on the waterfront of Vicksburg. The Union commanders speculated that if the scouring effects of the Mississippi were strong enough, it would change the river's course, leaving the city high and dry and militarily worthless.

Canal construction began on June 27, 1862. Union soldiers felled



Map showing the hairpin bend in the Mississippi River at Vicksburg and the proposed canal to divert the river away from the city. Map reproduced from "The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies." (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1902).

trees and excavated soils. Progress was slow, and all manner of disease took its toll on the labor force. Eventually fugitive slave labor was added to the workforce. Nonetheless, work on the canal was halted on July 24 so that Williams and his soldiers could take part in other military operations.

In January 1863, work on the canal was resumed by troops under the command of Major General Ulysses S. Grant. He approved the idea, believing it would keep his soldiers in good physical condition for the spring campaign and, more important, keep the spirit of the offensive alive. In actuality, however, he placed little confidence in the success of this project. On almost a daily basis, President Abraham Lincoln inquired about the progress of the canal. In a previous career, Lincoln had been a land surveyor, so he was enthralled with the scheme; Grant always provided him with a somewhat optimistic reply.

The soldiers and the fugitive slaves that had been pressed into service continued to excavate. A sudden rise in the river caused a dam at the head of the canal to break. The area was flooded, and the canal filled with water and sediment. In a desperate attempt to rescue the project, *Hercules* and *Sampson*, two huge steam-driven dipper dredges, were put to work clearing the channel. Confederate artillery fire from the bluffs at Vicksburg ended the dredges' progress, and by late March 1863 Grant decided to abandon all operations on the canal.

Ironically, within a few years after the end of the war, the Mississippi River naturally diverted to a new channel that was located close to the Williams-Grant canal location. This event isolated Vicksburg from the main river and its traffic. It gave validity to the concept of mimicking the natural geologic processes by digging a canal to induce a meander cutoff. Over the years, most of the canal has been obliterated through agricultural operations; and only one segment retains its original width and much of its depth. In recent times, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged a connection to the old channel of the Mississippi that existed in 1863. Today, the Mississippi River flows past Vicksburg once again.

Battle of Gettysburg

For two bloody years (1861-1863) the Union and Confederate armies fought to a standstill in the countryside between Washington and Richmond, the two capitols. Another entire campaign also came to a standstill in 1862 on a peninsula of coastal lowland southeast of Richmond. In the summer of 1863, the two armies faced each other across the Rappahannock-Rapidan Rivers defense line. General Robert E. Lee decided to make a move to shift the war to the North and hopefully end it.

The resulting Gettysburg Campaign took place in four geologic provinces running roughly parallel from northeast to southwest. From southeast to northwest they are the Piedmont, the Basins of Triassic age (206 – 248 million years old), the Blue Ridge, and the Valley and Ridge (Great Valley). Each province has advantages and disadvantages for a military campaign. The rough, rocky terrain of the Piedmont was hard for armies to move through and favored the defenders. The Triassic basins had better roads, but rock outcrops restricted maneuverability. The Blue Ridge was a mountain barrier, impassable to armies except through the mountain gaps. The Great Valley, the first in the Valley and Ridge Province, was the interstate highway of the time. Broad flat valleys made for easy transport and excellent troop movement.

The Gettysburg Campaign began on June 3, 1863, when the Army of Northern Virginia left Fredericksburg, VA, under the direction of Lee. The campaign started in the Piedmont, and, not surprisingly, the armies left it as soon as possible. The exposed rocks, ridges, and ravines made roads rough and difficult for troops, animals, and equipment to pass. The only practical route for Lee's army to move north was by way of the Culpepper basin toward the high and narrow Blue Ridge. The Confederates would cross the rugged steep mountains through a series of gaps and into the Great Valley. The gaps were of great significance to the Gettysburg Campaign because they were the passages by which armies could cross the Blue Ridge Mountains. These mountains were equally important because they shielded the Confederates from view by the Union Army.

The hallmark of the Gettysburg Campaign was the skillful use of the terrain. Eighty thousand Confederate soldiers, with all of their equipment and supplies, moved into enemy territory almost unseen and unhampered. The geologic processes that faulted, widened, and sculpted the Cashtown Gap in the mountains of Pennsylvania made it the only possible route for Lee's army to move swiftly through the mountains, all at one

time, to attack Union targets. The gap destined Lee's army to pass through Gettysburg.

While Lee was moving northeast in the protected valley, General Meade was setting up a strong defensive position east of Gettysburg on Parr's Ridge. This position, in the Piedmont Province, provided an excellent defensive position.

The battle involved 3 fierce days of fighting. The first day, July 1, 1863, involved elements of both armies stumbling onto each other north of the town of Gettysburg. The Union forces were outnumbered and fell back while both commanders were desperately trying to reinforce their combatants. At the end of that day, the Union Army had the best field position, which was essentially located along the Gettysburg Sill, an outcrop of diabase (a dark-colored, intrusive rock). The outcrop is shaped like a fishhook and extends northward for approximately 3 miles from Round Top through Little Round Top, Cemetery Ridge to Cemetery Hill. Then, it turns east and south and terminates at Culps Hill. General Lee surveyed the strong Union position and occupied the next best position along Seminary Ridge, a broad layer of rock that cut across and infilled the country rock. Seminary Ridge is a diabase dike and an offshoot of the westward-dipping Gettysburg Sill.

On the second day, July 2, the Confederates attacked the flanks of the Union line. The left flank did not appear to be anchored to any significant feature, so Lee surmised that this was a weak point in the Union position. He then launched a series of attacks against the southern end of the Union line in the vicinity of the Round Tops. The natural defenses provided by rock outcrops and boulders at Cemetery Hill, the Round Tops, and Devils Den proved to be stronger than Lee thought; and the Confederates were unsuccessful. The final day of battle, July 3, would culminate in Lee's attempt to break the Union center by one final assault known as Pickett's Charge. The charge on Cemetery Ridge failed, and the Union Army held its position.

The Union Army suffered 23,000 casualties while the Confederates lost 28,000. The numbers are disproportionate given that the Union Army was the defending force in the battle. In previous battles, the defender would normally be entrenched and have a 1 to 2 advantage, and in some cases, as high as 1 to 4. The Union position had a weakness that became more apparent as the battle progressed. Owing to the local geology, only a thin layer of dirt covered rock making it virtually impossible for the Union soldiers to "dig-in." The only protection was provided by isolated boulders and stone walls, such as the rock outcrop of Devils Den.

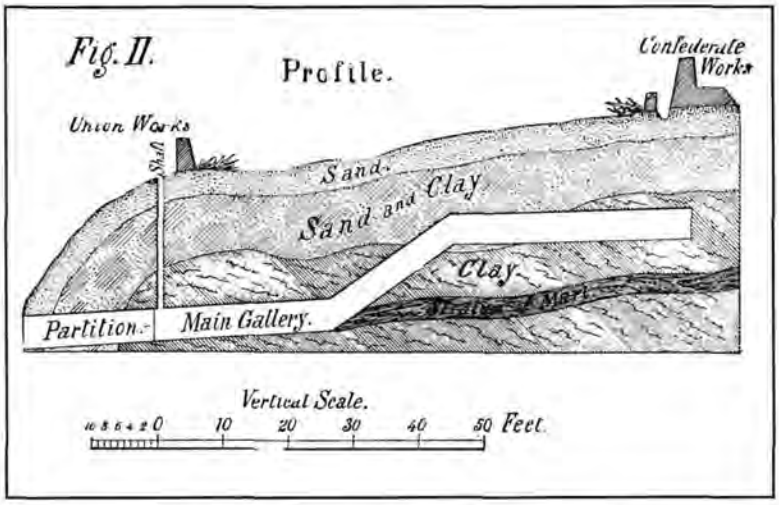
Under storm clouds and heavy rain, Lee and the Confederate Army retreated back to Virginia, signaling the end of the battle. Within a matter of weeks, both armies were on the Rappahannock-Rapidan Rivers defense line where they had started back in June 1863.

Battle of the Crater

Petersburg is situated on the south bank of the Appomattox River in a geologic area known as the Prince George Upland. The city of Petersburg was important to the Confederate Army because of its connection to Richmond's supply lines. Three rail lines and two roads, which linked Petersburg with the region to the south and southwest, converged on the city. The siege of Petersburg was part of General Grant's strategy to force General Lee to extend and thin his lines in an attempt to prevent the Union from cutting off vital communication routes. The siege of Petersburg was the longest of the Civil War, lasting more than 9 months.

By June 1864, an extensive system of trenches and forts had been constructed along the eastern side of Petersburg at a distance of more than 4 miles. A 500- to 1,000-foot-wide siege line separated the two armies. Just west of Poor Creek, the lines approached the narrowest distance between them. These lines remained fairly stationary for the next 9 months. A professional mining engineer in Pennsylvania before the war, Colonel Henry Pleasants was in command of a brigade that held the Union position opposite the Confederates at this point. Colonel Pleasants conceived the idea of digging a tunnel from his regiment's position to the west of Poor Creek under a Confederate fort. Pleasants contended that by filling the end of the tunnel with magazines of black powder, a tremendous hole could be blown in the rebel line. This would allow the Union Army to rush through the opening and drive the Confederates out of Petersburg. With support for his plan from the commander, he began to dig.

The excavation of the tunnel went well for the first 200 feet. At this point, miners encountered "marl" — a clay-rich deposit — which was extremely difficult to tunnel through. Pleasants ordered the tunnel to be ramped slightly upward



An illustration of the tunnel showing the upward diversion due to the strata of "marl." Illustration reproduced from "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War."

for approximately 20 feet to avoid the marl and facilitate digging. The final tunnel excavation was brought to within 20 vertical feet of the Confederate fort.

At 4:45 a.m. on July 30, the tunnel was exploded. A 200-foot-wide gap was created in the Confederate line, and numerous Union soldiers were sent into the crater. The tunnel was an engineering success, but the poorly led Union soldiers headed into the crater and not around it as planned. The Union forces outnumbered the Confederates, yet they were unable to advance from the crater or easily retreat. At 9:30 a.m., the attack was called off and no more support was provided to the Union soldiers in the crater. The Confederates sealed the gap and slowly advanced on the crater. The Union troops, who still outnumbered the Confederates, were forced to surrender. Although the tunnel and explosion were an engineering success, history records it as a failure. The best chance for ending the siege has instead become a symbol of a military debacle. After 10 hours of fighting and the combined loss of nearly 6,000 lives, nothing had tactically changed.

For over 130 years, geologists have theorized that the Union miners encountered a fault[1] while digging the tunnel and that the marl was displaced strata of the Eastover Formation. In August 2000, the Virginia Geological Survey and the National Park Service's Geologic Resources Division decided to test this theory to finally understand what caused the difficulty that Pleasant's men encountered while excavating the tunnel. Using a 4-inch auger drill to penetrate the sedimentary layers at the site, two holes were drilled adjacent to the tunnel at the crater. The information gained from the rock cores produced a geologic cross section,

The drilling confirmed that the tunneling took place in the Yorktown Formation. The Yorktown Formation consists of rock strata that are 3 –5 million years old with the lower formation consisting of marine deposits that include quartz pebbles and cobbles, shark teeth, coral, and sand-sized shell debris. Geologists confirmed that the marl encountered by the Union troops was an abandoned channel deposit located in the upper Yorktown Formation. The abandoned channel formed an oxbow lake[2] that was filled with extremely fine-grained material and consisted of dense sticky clay. The abandoned channel deposit found during the drill investigation was located precisely at the level where the Union soldiers reported having great difficulty excavating. The Eastover Formation was found in the drill hole at approximately 10 feet below the tunnel.

Since the Battle of the Crater in 1864, geologists have speculated on why the strata changed in the Union miners tunnel thereby causing a change in military operations. The answer is the presence of an ancient oxbow lake, not a fault and displaced strata, as originally speculated.

Conclusion

The Battle of Vicksburg, the Battle of Gettysburg, and the Battle of the Crater near Petersburg were events greatly influenced by geology. By becoming geologic detectives and historians, we gain a better understanding of the circumstances surrounding the events that enrich the telling of the Civil War story.

Notes

1 A fault is a fracture or fractures in rock together with movement that displaces the sides relative to one another.

2 An ox-bow lake is a U-shaped lake, so named because of its similarity to the part of a yoke that goes around an ox's neck.

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Susan B. Hawkins

Partners in Researching Fort Donelson's African American Past

Historians often downplay the importance of the campaign for Tennessee's Fort Donelson in February 1862, compared to the larger, bloodier battles at Shiloh, Antietam, and Chickamauga. This first major Union victory of the Civil War was significant, for the Army gained control of much of Middle and West Tennessee and of major waterways that flowed out of the Confederate heartland. The capital at Nashville eventually became a center of communications for the Union Army — a river and rail network that was vital to future wartime successes. Similarly, the significance of these battles for freedom-seeking slaves and their families has been ignored. By their own initiative, thousands of runaway slaves used the opportunity of Union victory to escape from their masters.[1]

Now, 140 years later, we are learning more. Volunteers from the community, university professors, and local schoolteachers have provided valuable information and support to help the Fort Donelson National Battlefield staff document and interpret the African American experience at these battles. This volunteer initiative and enthusiasm has allowed the park to piece together the overlooked African American legacy. We now know that runaway slaves used Fort Donelson (and other forts) as safe havens, where they built homes and schools, cared for their families near the forts, and enlisted as Union soldiers in African American units.

Research Partnerships

One of the first project supporters was John Cimprich, professor of history at Thomas More College in Crestview Hills, KY. His work, "Slavery's End in Tennessee, 1861-1865," documented some of the hardships that escaped slaves endured at Fort Donelson. His book was only one of the many contributions he made. Professor Cimprich continues to offer suggestions and sources for research; and he frequently reviews text for site bulletins, web pages, and future exhibits. He recently lectured to the local community about his research on the African American experience.[2]

View of Cumberland River overlooking the gun batteries at Fort Donelson NB. The river served as an escape route for freedom-seeking slaves. Photo by James P. Bagsby.

Barbara Tagger, National Park Service historian, Southeast Regional Office, Atlanta, GA, answers questions after her lecture on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program in Dover, TN. Tagger's lecture is just one way that Fort Donelson National Battlefield plans to educate the visiting public about the story of the Underground Railroad. National Park Service photo.

Our park has also benefited from the expertise and support of Barbara Tagger, National Park Service historian and Southeast Regional Underground Railroad coordinator in Atlanta, GA. With her guidance, Fort Donelson National Battlefield was named to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program.[3]

Of course, research is never possible without financial support. Generous grant monies obtained from Eastern National Parks and Monuments funded an important research trip to the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington, DC. This provided the park with documentary evidence of the existence of freedmen's camps and the recruitment of African American troops at Fort Donelson.

With a Little Help from Volunteers

Community support from local teachers and private individuals has perhaps been the most rewarding partnership. Betty Treherne-Harris, a 20-year Davidson County, TN, middle school teacher, spent time with park staff, explaining her ancestor's experience at Fort Donelson, his subsequent escape from his slave master, and his post-war success — just because she loves history and she wants her ancestor's story to be told. Other individuals in the community have either shared stories or offered to serve on review boards to help the National Park Service create new exhibits. Neighboring historic sites have expressed interest in learning about our research and how they can promote a better understanding of Civil War history. For the annual summer reading program, the local public library and Fort Donelson National Battlefield joined forces to educate students about the Underground Railroad, using stories associated with the battlefield.

For the Future

What lessons can we learn by forging partnerships outside the National Park Service? What does this mean for other historic sites? First, it is important to build community support. Much of our park's success has come from the expertise, initiative, and guidance of volunteers. We have also learned that although the National Park Service is charged with the mission to educate and research, sometimes we must seek partnerships to help us achieve that mission. As stewards of our national treasures, it is equally important for museum professionals to listen to what visitors, teachers, and historians have to say. Historic scholarship changes, elementary classroom needs vary, and Americans differ in their opinions about the importance of historic sites. For schoolteacher Betty Treherne-Harris, the Union victory at Fort Donelson meant much more than the Union Army's strategic capture of the forts and rivers. Her understanding of this battlefield's history also involves her ancestor's eventual escape from his slave master as a result of the Confederate defeat at Fort Donelson in 1862. Sharing Mrs. Treherne-Harris' story is one way that we can make historic sites valuable to all Americans.[4]

Notes

1. The battle at Fort Donelson was part of a campaign that also involved Forts Heiman and Henry. For an analysis of these battles, see Benjamin F. Cooling, *Forts Henry & Donelson: Key to the Confederate Heartland* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987) and Thomas Lawrence Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967). For more information about the entire campaign, visit Fort Donelson's Web site at <www.nps.gov/fodo>.
2. John Cimprich, *Slavery's End in Tennessee, 1861-1865* (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1985).
3. For more information about the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program, check out its Web site at <www.cr.nps.gov/ugrr>.
4. National Park Service Advisory Board Report, *Rethinking the National Parks for the 21st Century.* Washington, DC: National Geographic Society, 2001 or <www.nps.gov/policy/futurereport/htm>.

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Karen Byrne

"We Have a Claim on This Estate"
Remembering Slavery at Arlington House

Four years after his surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House, Robert E. Lee reflected on his beliefs concerning the relationship between slavery and the Civil War. "So far from engaging in a war to perpetuate slavery, I am rejoiced that slavery is abolished. I would cheerfully have lost all that I have lost and have suffered all that I have suffered to have this object obtained." Contemporary academic historians may question the sincerity of Lee's statement since most argue that slavery was the primary cause of the Civil War. For public historians, particularly those who work at Civil War sites, any discussion of the war's causes remains subject to controversy. As Tony Horwitz demonstrated in his bestseller "Confederates in the Attic," many Americans are obsessed with the "unfinished" Civil War. For them, the meaning and causes of the war remain contested terrain.[1]

Undaunted by sometimes hostile audiences, some Civil War sites have broadened their interpretation to include a discussion of slavery and its relationship to the war. Some critics, however, believe that a more concerted effort is necessary, particularly at national parks. U.S. Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) inserted language in the Fiscal Year 2000 National Park Service appropriations bill that directed the Secretary of the Interior "to encourage the NPS managers of Civil War battle sites to recognize and include in all of their public displays and multi-media presentations, the unique role slavery played in causing the Civil War and its role, if any, at the individual battle sites."

This wartime photograph shows a former Arlington slave sitting in the doorway of one of the slave quarters.

Arlington House, The Robert E. Lee Memorial, a part of the George Washington Memorial Parkway in Virginia, as well as many other national parks, had already begun the difficult task of interpreting the institution of slavery. Although not a battle site, Arlington House was Robert E. Lee's home for over 30 years, and the 1,100-acre estate functioned as a plantation for over half a century. The National Park Service assumed stewardship of the home in 1933. Slavery has been incorporated into the site's interpretation for some time — in museum exhibits, brochures, interpretive talks, special events, and most notably in the site's "Parks As Classrooms" programs for students.

Arlington originally belonged to George Washington Parke Custis, the grandson of Martha Washington. In 1802, Custis left Mount Vernon to establish a new home on the Arlington Estate. Accompanying him were a large number of slaves. Over the next 50 years, these and succeeding generations of slaves would grow crops and raise livestock on the plantation. They made the bricks to build Arlington House and assisted in its construction. House slaves facilitated the gracious hospitality for which Arlington was famous.

In 1857, Custis died without having accomplished his long-term goal of emancipation. Following Custis' death, Robert E. Lee, Custis' son-in-law, administered the estate for several years. During the Civil War, Mrs. Lee lost the plantation due to her inability to pay property taxes. Subsequently, the Federal Government purchased the property at a public auction. In

1864, a portion of the estate was set aside as a cemetery for war dead.

In 1925, Arlington was designated a national memorial in honor of Robert E. Lee. Congress called for Arlington House, the surviving slave quarters, and grounds to be restored "to the condition in which it existed immediately prior to the Civil War." Unfortunately, the funding allocated to the National Park Service has never been sufficient to completely restore the site, including the slave quarters. The original restoration of the main house and slave quarters was carried out by the War Department in the 1920s. When Arlington House was acquired in 1933, the National Park Service inherited a flawed restoration that was based more on the popular preservation philosophy of the times than detailed, accurate research. Concern over the questionable restoration of the slave quarters and insufficient funding eventually resulted in the closure of most of the "restored" rooms. Long-term plans call for the quarters to be restored in keeping with their true historical appearance. In 2000, Arlington House received a Save America's Treasures grant of $150,000; this amount must be matched with private donations. Once the fundraising is complete, an accurate restoration of the slave quarters will be possible.

This restoration will take several years. In the meantime, a temporary exhibit on slave life at Arlington was placed in the south slave quarters in March 2001. "We Have a Claim on This Estate" is divided into three sections — the first gives an overview of slavery at Arlington before the Civil War and discusses future research endeavors; another discusses the Civil War's impact on the plantation and the creation of a community of former slaves known as Freedman's Village; the last section addresses community partnerships that were fundamental in securing the Save America's Treasures grant and describes how the money will be used.

Analysis of audience comment logs has revealed several distinct themes. The most recurring response has been a genuine hunger for information on a subject so long ignored at some historic sites. Many visitors expressed delight in seeing a tangible recognition of the existence of slavery at a former plantation. "Most restorations completely ignore the role slavery played in the comfortable lives of the plantation owners," one visitor noted. A woman from Montreal was noticeably moved: "This is my first time on a former plantation and the exhibit really brought home the cruel realities of the past." Another stated that "it was great to see an exhibit on the people who really made this place — slaves are usually forgotten." Many echoed the words of a visitor who observed "This is a very important piece of history. Please continue and expand this exhibit!" These and similar comments indicate that many visitors to plantation sites want a balanced presentation of history that also addresses the lives of those who lived in bondage "in back of the big house."

African Americans have particularly welcomed the recognition of slavery at Arlington. Of those who identified themselves as African American in the comment logs, the vast majority responded favorably to the exhibit. A local resident believed the exhibit was "a great honor to my ancestors who have been in the area since 1798." A Pennsylvanian noted, "This is a wonderful homage to our African American heritage. Thanks for paying a service and sincere recognition to our ancestors!" Another visitor commented that the exhibit "filled her with a sense of history." She viewed it as "an honorable tribute to an unhonorable time in history." She concluded "I have learned and I feel so many things at this moment as an African American." The history of Arlington's slave community provided a sense of inclusiveness for many visitors, such as one who wrote, "As an African American I greatly hunger for my people's place in American history. Here I felt a sense of belonging and ownership." Another echoed this sense of belonging: "The exhibit really touched me, and now I know we as African Americans built this country."

Another distinguishing characteristic of audience response to "We Have A Claim on This Estate" is the emotional volatility that frequently accompanies discussions about slavery at historic sites. Some visitors responded angrily to the exhibit text that described Robert E. Lee as "a more stringent taskmaster than Custis." This statement resulted in accusations such as "You paint Lee, the well-known opponent of slavery, as being something he was not." While some audience members resented what they perceived as negative treatment of Lee, others expressed outrage at the "second class" status of the slavery exhibit compared to Arlington House itself. One charged, "This exhibit does not seem to get the respect that others do!" Most critical of all was the angry accusation, "It is interesting to see how

Selina Gray, Jr., and her family lived in the slave quarters behind Arlington House. Her parents, Selina and Thornton Gray, were married in the parlor of Arlington House.

'they' still manage to exclude in a small section the history of blacks. It would be nice if for one second those who were enslaved for hundreds of years would receive the credit and honor they deserve." Many believed that the lack of air conditioning in the slave quarters, the absence of special signs directing them to the exhibit, and the "relegation" of the exhibit to the slave quarters was a deliberate attempt to diminish the history of the enslaved people of Arlington. For some Americans, slavery remains such a painful issue that any treatment of slave life may seem inadequate.

Careful analysis of the exhibit comment logs also reveals disturbing public perceptions of slavery that should be of serious concern to historians. First is the dangerous misconception that slavery was monolithic in nature. As noted historian James Horton has pointed out, the first task of the public historian is to address the popular ignorance of slavery's diversity and complexity. Many visitors voiced concern about the living conditions depicted in Selina Gray's quarters. Gray was the housekeeper at Arlington and a highly favored slave. The period room exhibit contains manufactured furniture, which incensed some visitors. One declared "Furniture in the Gray room does not give a correct picture of slavery at all." Another angrily accused, "This depiction of slave life is a lie!! Slaves did not live in quarters as depicted in the furnished room! This is revisionist history, not history." These and similar comments reveal that many people view slavery as a brutally generic condition with no diversity of experience for those who were enslaved. Such assumptions are dangerous for they cast all slaves into the role of faceless victims and render obsolete the personal experiences of individual enslaved people.

Equally disturbing, many comments indicated that some Americans can not associate the abolition of slavery with the Civil War, or even correctly identify the decade in which slavery ended. One respondent believed slavery still existed in the United States in 1876, and other comments indicate many Americans have no idea when the institution was abolished. Author Tony Horwitz noticed a similar pattern among students who guessed that slavery ended in 1900 or 1940. Clearly much work remains to be done in educating audiences about slavery, both in public and academic settings.[2]

Discussing slavery at historic sites, particularly those associated with the Civil War, remains a daunting task, an "unenviable, yet critically important job" in the words of James Horton. Yet in spite of the many obstacles that encumber conversations about the war and slavery, these dialogues are necessary. The prevailing response to "We Have a Claim on This Estate" indicates that a majority of the public is truly interested in learning about slavery. The staff of Arlington House is committed to telling the story of Arlington's enslaved community. It is our hope that more of our visitors will be inspired to participate in conversations about the meaning of slavery and its relationship to the war. For as Edward Linenthal, professor of history at the University of Wisconsin, has reminded us, "We honor Civil War ancestors most profoundly when we present them not as stick figures in a comforting reality play, but as complex human beings capable of all the violence, heroism, folly, and contradictory impulses that continue to define the human condition."[3]

Notes

1 Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee, A Biography Vol. IV* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), 401; Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Random House/Pantheon, 1998), 6.

2 James Oliver Horton, "Presenting History: The Perils of Telling America's Racial Story," *The Public Historian* 21:4 (1999):21; Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic*, 372.

3 Edward T. Linenthal, "Heritage and History: The Dilemmas of Interpretation," *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2001), 42.

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Photos courtesy Arlington House Collection, National Park Service.

Cornelia Sexauer

Untold Stories
Women in the Civil War

The American Civil War occupies a paramount place in national memory. The conflict marked a turning point in the history of the United States, ending slavery as well as integrating and centralizing the Northern States in a fight to save the Union. Much attention to the confrontation highlights the military campaigns and strategies; yet, the war could not have continued without the efforts of the home front. In particular, as Elizabeth Cady Stanton stated in her autobiography, "The story of the Civil War will never be fully written if the achievements of women are left untold."[1] Many opportunities exist at historic sites, battlefields, and museums to tell of those achievements. Some sites have already started expanding their interpretation in many areas, including the role of women in the Civil War, while others are just beginning to explore the numerous sources that were previously ignored. The following are only a few examples of the wealth of materials available to researchers, interpreters, and museum professionals interested in presenting a more inclusive story of the Civil War — one that includes the myriad experiences of women.

Once the war began and thousands of men volunteered for military service, equal numbers of women saw an obligation to bring their unique talents, capabilities, and understandings to the forefront.[2] Their motives for joining the activities of the Civil War were as diverse as those of the men. Some had a pure and simple desire to serve their country. Others had sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, or lovers in the army, and served to be near, either physically or spiritually, the object of their love. Others felt a religious calling. Some threw themselves into charitable activities to soothe the pain of bitter bereavement. Many women, having lost their sole breadwinner, had no choice but to leave the safety of their home and go to work. For whatever reasons they joined, women's involvement gave them experience in public life. Hundreds of thousands of women from all classes, races, ethnicities, and ages volunteered in numerous ways. A small number of women became camp followers, while others, like Julia Dent Grant, wife of General Ulysses S. Grant, occasionally visited their husbands to tend their needs, lift their spirits, and give them a glimpse of their children.[3] A few women worked as couriers, spies, camp cooks, or prostitutes. Some disguised themselves as men to serve on the battlefields.

The vast majority of women performed typical domestic tasks associated with benevolent works such as taking care of the supplies, meals, and hospital quarters of the soldiers. They organized Soldiers' Aid Societies, Sewing Circles, Soldiers' Homes, and Homes for Refugees.[4] They visited suspected sympathizers with the express intent of spying.[5] They formed thousands of societies for relief, where they raised funds, collected clothing and supplies, made uniforms, rolled bandages, prepared meals, ministered to the sick and wounded, wrote letters of information and comfort, provided reading materials, offered consolation, supplied encouragement, taught basic reading and writing skills, and trained other women in benevolent work. Northern and southern women assisted in the inspection of army camps and labored in hospitals, first aid camps, and floating hospital ships.

When the fighting began, the U.S. Army had no general hospital. There were only military and post hospitals, with the largest containing only 40 beds. There were no female nurses at all, and the male nurses had little or no professional training. In 1861, Miss Dorothea L. Dix, widely known for her work with prisoners and the insane, received the appointment of General Superintendent of the Nurses of Military Hospitals. Dix initially recruited women to train as nurses from a core of healthy, strong, well-educated women between the ages of 25 and 50; but as the war progressed many other women joined the ranks of nursing in formal and informal positions. According to one doctor, these women "changed the bloody, torn, and muddy garments of the wounded soldiers; bathed them; [and] performed all kinds of manual work."[6]

The nurses took on more responsibilities than ministering to those wounded in battle. As one St. Louis nurse, Emily Parsons, noted, she cared for nearly 400 sick men when she arrived in Cairo, IL. Some had diphtheria, others erysipelas, cholera, measles, smallpox, scurvy, consumption,

malaria, dysentery, and other illnesses. Additionally, these women were concerned for the diets of the men. The monotonous army diet of hard bread, salted meat, and coffee without milk needed to be supplemented with fruits, vegetables, and dairy products; and inexperienced soldiers needed to learn about proper drainage in the camps and how to set up the tents for maximum ventilation. Parsons and others took it upon themselves to give proper attention to the dietary needs and hygiene of the soldiers.[7]

The various sanitary commissions, as well as the United States Christian Commission, the Ladies Union Aid Society (LUAS), the Colored Union Society, and other relief agencies ministered to the armies and refugees. The principal auxiliary of the Western Sanitary Commission, the LUAS, formed in July 1861. The women members provided prompt, supportive, and enduring service to the Union. They demonstrated their pro-Union political stand from the start, using red, white, and blue stationery imprinted with "Union Forever" for all correspondence, and each lady flew a silk Union flag at her home.[8] They operated several homes for refugees and escaped slaves and coordinated volunteer workers in the camps, hospitals, and orphan asylums.[9]

While most of the women working for the war effort volunteered their services, there were others in need of wages to supplement their income. The LUAS helped women in need of employment obtain Government contract work. The first contract for sewing hospital garments and bedding grossed $6,130 for 127,550 items and employed 500 women who worked out of their homes making the items with material supplied by the Government through a private contractor. Spurred by the success of this endeavor, the LUAS sought additional Government contracts; and by 1864 the organization had secured all the hospital garment work for the Department of the West. The women completed 3,000 – 4,000 items per week, receiving an average wage of $3 – $4 a week. It is not clear whether these women worked prior to the war, but they undoubtedly contributed to the economic welfare of their family while at the same time helping the war effort.

According to historian Drew Gilpin Faust, few southern women were salaried hospital workers, and their efforts in the care of the sick and wounded continued only through the end of the war. In contrast, many northern women used this opportunity to continue in the "public sphere" after the war, expanding their role as nurturers from the home to the workplace. Faust's work on southern women, "Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War," is an excellent source for exploring the changing roles of women during and after the war.[10]

As slaves fled north to freedom, they increasingly found cities overcrowded and overwhelmed with the needs of the refugees. Organizations such as the Freedmen's Relief Society stepped in to supply food, clothing, shelter and further assistance. Among other things the freedmen received "clothing...the expenses of their journey...[and] homes, mostly in the Free States.[11] The assigned hospitals cared for the sick and dying freedmen and offered them spiritual comfort.

Schools for the refugees were established in the North; and despite acts of violence and prejudice, children and adults received education in elementary studies and civilization as well as cooking, housework, and laundry skills. Some northern women volunteered to go to the South to teach the illiterate freedmen. Miss Maria R. Mann, an educator from Massachusetts, presents an example of what the women found in these areas and demonstrates the work they did. Mann left for Helena, AR, in January 1863 to help with the special relief of several hundred black families gathered and living in miserable conditions in "Camp Ethiopia." Mann reported that they worked under a forced system of labor, "driven by mounted orderlies to work on the fortifications, and to unload steamboats and coal barges; and discharged at night without compensation or a comfortable shelter."[12] Miss Mann arrived and set up a hospital to supply the "contrabands"[13] with clothing, sanitary goods, and physical aid. With the cooperation of the chaplains and Major General Prentiss, she promptly took charge of staffing, obtained better camping grounds, supervised the building of shelters, established a school for the children, and saw that the women learned the rudimentary tasks of caring for their families. She also taught the women how to cut and make useful garments. Thanks to the efforts of Mann and her staff, their plight changed from "utter misery and despair, to one of thrift, improvement and comparative happiness."[14]

Records of black women in the late 19th century, especially personal accounts, are more difficult to locate; but we do know that women slaves who fled north often had no possessions, no money, and no job, yet they did acquire their freedom. Arriving in large cities, they were usually given food, shelter, and education. Some of the women received training in nursing and took care of soldiers and refugees at hospitals designated for African Americans. It is assumed these women continued to work when the war ended, but it is unclear what their specific jobs were.

The story of women during the Civil War is not only the story of the work that they did to support the war effort through charitable and hospital work. Much information can also be gleaned from letters, journals, and reminiscences that explain the effects of the war on those left behind to manage affairs while the men were at the front. Women took on the tasks of running farms and plantations, handling financial matters, working in the factories to keep men in uniforms and weapons, and teaching; all of which were previously reserved to males, especially in the South.[15] Given the numbers of men who left their homes to serve in the war, the impact on women's day-to-day lives is clear. Whether they desired the power that the absence of the men gave them or not, women found themselves struggling, and succeeding, at managing family and business affairs.

Discussion of how women's lives and roles were transformed is crucial to understanding the changes that took place throughout the nation during the war and Reconstruction. Local historical societies and archives, family histories, and many other organizations are available to assist those who are seeking primary source materials to expand their interpretive and educational programs. Just as sites now talk about the valor and daily experiences of the individual men on the battlefield, the women who supported the war in the public and private spheres deserve to have their stories told. A more inclusive study of the past has the added benefit of including groups that previously felt little connection to a site because their stories appeared to be unimportant, if not nonexistent.

Notes

1 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, et al., *The History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester: Susan B. Anthony, 1881), 82-83.

2 Brockett and Vaughn estimate that hundreds of thousands of women answered the call to help their country throughout the war. L. P. Brockett and Mary C. Vaughn, *Woman's Work in the Civil War: A Record of Heroism, Patriotism and Patience* (Philadelphia: Zeigler, McCurdy & Co., 1867), 57.

3 While it is known that Julia Dent Grant did tend to the needs of her husband, General Ulysses S. Grant, and did other things for the Union effort, the General forbade her from joining the women bringing supplies for the sick and wounded to the front, for when she "returned [from the hospitals] each time laden with petitions for discharges," he would say, "I hear of these all day long and I sent for you to come that I might have a rest from all this sad part. I do not want you to know about these things. I want you to tell me of the children and yourself. I want and need a little rest and sunshine." *Julia Dent Grant, The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant (Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant)* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press), 125.

4 Twentieth-century USOs are patterned after the Soldier's Aid Societies.

5 William G. B. Carson, "Secesh," *Missouri Historical Society Bulletin* 23:2 (January 1967):140-1.

6 Simon Pollak, *The Autobiography and Reminiscences of S. Pollak, M.D., St. Louis, Mo.* (St. Louis: St. Louis Medical Review, 1904), 269-72.

7 Emily Elizabeth Parsons, *Memoir of Emily Elizabeth Parsons*, (Boston: Little Brown, 1880), Letter III dated January 29, 1863, from Emily Parsons to her mother.

8 Mrs. Hannah Stagg, "Local Incidents of the Civil War," *Missouri Historical Society Collections* 5:67 (January 1910).

9 Third Annual Report of the Ladies' Union Aid Society of St. Louis, 1864, LUAS records, 10.

10 Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Homefront" *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2001), 87; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

11 "The Annual Report of the Freedmen's Relief Society, of St. Louis, Mo., for 1863," Missouri Historical Society, p. 3

12 Frank Moore, *Women of the War: Their Heroism and Self-Sacrifice* (Hartford: S.S. Scranton & Co., 1867), 698.

13 "Contraband" was the term used to describe those slaves who escaped from their owners and sought refuge behind Union lines. At the start of the war, slaveowners attempted to enter Union camps to search for and recapture runaway slaves under the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. They were declared contraband by the military, and as such could be confiscated by the army during the war to deprive Confederates of the labor of the enslaved.

14 Ibid., 700.

15 Faust, "The Civil War Homefront," *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2001), 84.

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Ella S. Rayburn

In a Small Northern Town

An examination of Civil War period history and events sometimes takes place in an unexpected venue, like a railroad museum in a small northern city bordering the Pocono Mountains. The museum, Steamtown National Historic Site, located in Scranton, PA, recently hosted "Iron Rails in the Civil War" a temporary exhibit. The exhibit brought together four organizations and several individuals — loaning objects and materials and contributing information for the text. In addition to the National Park Service, the groups included the Hammer Galleries of New York City, the Lackawanna Historical Society, and members of the local camp of the Sons of Union Veterans. As the exhibit developed, a surprising amount of Civil War-related material held in the area was loaned for public viewing.

The impetus for developing the exhibit was two oil paintings by the artist Mort Kunstler, who is reknowned for his Civil War scenes. Through the Hammer Galleries of New York City, the owner of Kunstler's Jackson Commandeers the Railroad, Martinsburg, Virginia, June 20, 1861, contacted the park offering to share his painting with a wider audience. Kunstler himself then offered a copy of his Iron Horses, Men of Steel, Winchester, Virginia, June 1861, painting to the park. These two paintings provided the theme for the exhibit: the use and application of railroads during the Civil War. A secondary goal was relating the Civil War and railroads back to the local region of northeast Pennsylvania.

Model of the Spitfire *locomotive, one of the first locomotives purchased by the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company prior to the Civil War.*

The exhibit occupied an 18-foot by 23-foot room in the park's Visitor Center. The visual focus upon entering the space was the Martinsburg painting. This and the Winchester painting relate the event of Confederate Colonel Thomas J. Jackson's raid upon the Baltimore and Ohio (B&O) Railroad round house and shops in Martinsburg. Jackson brought in expert railroaders and teamsters who moved 14 locomotives, cars, track, and machine tools with 40 horse teams over 38 miles of wagon road to Strasburg, VA, where the equipment was placed on the Manassas Gap Railroad for use inside Confederate territory. Visitors learned that these events were early in the Civil War. Jackson had not yet earned his nom de guerre of "Stonewall," but his military brilliance was being established through activities such as the B&O raids. Also, two years later, in 1863, the towns of Martinsburg and Harpers Ferry and the western Virginia counties exercised a form of States rights and seceded to form the State of West Virginia.

In retrospect, the exhibit demonstrated the ongoing interest in the Civil War as it brought together recent art works, a 50-year-old locomotive model, a 115-year-old commemorative cane, and remnants of objects from the Civil War period. Kunstler's paintings were completed in 1999 and 2000. Both required detailed research culminating in physically large paintings presented in a grand historic documentary style. The Lackawanna Historical Society loaned kepis, minie balls, shell fragments, prisoner of war artifacts, and a 4-foot long model of the *Spitfire* locomotive. The *Spitfire* was one of the first locomotives purchased by the local railroad company, the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western, prior to

the Civil War. The model was made in 1951 in commemoration of Lackawanna's centennial. In the Steamtown exhibit, it served as a representative of Civil War era engines.

Color photocopying, image scanning, digital photography, manipulating text with images, and printing out the final product onto glossy photographic paper or selected colored paper has made design and installation of temporary exhibits easier and less expensive than similar endeavors 3 or 4 years ago. The image scanning technology was particularly useful for copying photographs of the local soldiers and sailors from the files of the Sons of Union Veterans. Ripple's lantern slides were also transferred to a digital media. Digitizing lithographs and maps made for easier display in the allotted space.

However, placing the railroads in political context required a traditional written discussion of both Governments' understanding of the transportation system. In truth, the United States overwhelmed the Confederate States. There were no locomotive manufacturing plants in the South, therefore the related skills and industries were missing. Each Southern State exerted independent control over railroads within individual borders, while in the Federal view the railroad companies worked under contract to the U.S. Government. Even though their Government did not grasp the railroads' role, the southern banks knew railroads were important, as illustrated on several specie of currency shown in the exhibit. The notes had a central vignette depicting a train with smoke billowing from the locomotive's stack. After the war, railroads emerged as an economic force. Railroads became America's first big business.

The Civil War is well known for its accumulation of "firsts" — photography, income tax, and the draft are a few examples. As with any new developments or advancements, at the beginning of the war only a few tacticians could forecast the military importance of railroads. By 1860, the railroads were well established in the American landscape; but they were an untried wartime element. Soon both sides transported soldiers and their gear to and from the front lines via railroad, sometimes arriving in the proverbial "nick of time." Boxcars that moved supplies forward to battle in turn carried the wounded away. Railroad track and equipment became military objectives to capture or destroy. The exhibit explored some applications of the rail transportation system by combining images, text, and artifacts.

Both Union and Confederate artillery crews experimented with mounting artillery weapons on flat cars. The best known gun in this experiment was a very large seacoast mortar nicknamed the "Dictator." Mounted on a small, reinforced flat car, the attacking Union Army hurled 13-inch diameter shells from the mortar into the town of Petersburg, VA, in 1864. On exhibit was a fragment of one of the 200 pound shells hurled from the "Dictator." U-rail, which is rarely seen today, was placed next to period T-rail. Shaped like an upside-down "U," this early iron rail was superceded by "T" shaped track which remains in use today. Copies of photographs and drawings of the "Dictator" and other mounted guns provided the visual explanation.

Artifacts, recruiting posters, and other items loaned from local groups and individuals gave the exhibit its regional flavor and interest. The local camp of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War has a collection of several hundred photographs of soldiers and sailors taken during the war and often a companion photograph taken later. Visitors were attracted to the 27 chosen faces. Faces, even in the somewhat formal style of the period, gave life to the exhibit. Each photograph was accompanied by a synopsis of the person's regimental history, post-war home address, and post-war employment. These men illustrate an aspect of regional history during or after the war. In 1856, Scranton had 3,000 residents; by 1866 the expansion of the coal mines, iron smelting, and the railroads attracted veterans to the town, thus partially accounting for the leap to 20,000 residents. Many of the soldiers arriving in Scranton were born in Europe or moved from other U.S. cities. Descendants of some of the men remain in the area today. One junior high boy on a class trip saw the photograph of a paternal ancestor and discovered the family had migrated only two blocks during the intervening 140 years.

Additionally, some of the soldiers had bad luck, were captured, and served out the war in a prison camp. About 1890, a Civil War veteran made two similar lathe-turned, 36-inch maple canes. One cane is in private ownership in Connecticut, and the other is in Scranton. Into these canes, he carved the names of 164 Union soldiers then living in Scranton who were taken

Shackles and cane. Cane was carved with the names of soldiers who were prisoners of war and resided in Scranton in the late 1880s.

prisoner of war by the Confederate Army. A magnifying glass is needed to read the name, unit, engagement when captured, date released, and prison. Soldiers captured during the last year of the war were sent to prison camps. The camps were purposefully built along a railroad for ease of delivering the prisoners. The Erie Railroad served a nearby Union prison camp in Elmira, NY, that held 12,000 Confederate prisoners. southern railroads carried Union prisoners to Andersonville, GA, and Florence, SC.

One treasure at the Lackawanna Historical Society is Ezra Ripple's chronicle of his 9 months spent in the Andersonville and Florence prisons. Captured July 3, 1864, in Charleston, SC, Ripple and other prisoners were jammed into unventilated 28-foot-long boxcars for a jolting ride over poorly maintained track in the blasting heat of a Georgia summer. Ripple wrote, "Full of the misery of the present" the prisoners arrived at Andersonville. He remembered that the track was so rough that the prisoners were "thrown on each other like ten pins in a bowling alley." Ripple prepared the memoirs for his family. He commissioned illustrator James E. Taylor of Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper to produce a number of colorized lantern slides to visually emphasize his experiences during speaking engagements. Copies of a couple of the slides were placed in the exhibit to show the horrors of the boxcar ride and the prison camp. Ripple became a mayor of Scranton while Col. Henry M. Hoyt, also captured with the 52nd Pennsylvania Regiment, became a governor of Pennsylvania. The 132nd Pennsylvania Infantry was another regiment with northeastern Pennsylvania ties. So many Lackawanna Railroad employees volunteered for Company K of the 132nd that it was nicknamed "The Railroad Guard."

In the Scranton area, which probably reflects most places today, Civil War related resource preservation issues have more to do with education in the museum or the classroom than with physical preservation of objects and battlefield sites. Unlike Gettysburg and points south, the Civil War has little presence except for the occasional mention in history class. Through "Iron Rails in the Civil War," visitors to Steamtown were exposed to both railroading and the Civil War as intertwined topics. The Lackawanna Historical Society is open to the public, but the artifacts and archives of the Sons group and the private collectors are not accessible. Visitors saw objects that are rarely on public display. The Historical Society reported several researchers mentioned the exhibit while requesting Civil War or genealogical information. Preservation of Civil War history has come about by pointing exhibit visitors to the channels of research possibilities and by sharing the information and related objects available in a small northern town.

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Photos courtesy Steamtown National Historic Site.

Katie Lawhon

Gettysburg the Way the Soldiers Saw It in 1863

Late in the afternoon on July 2, 1863, Union General Winfield Scott Hancock ordered the sacrificial charge of the 1st Minnesota Infantry in an effort to slow the advance of Confederate Brigadier General Cadmus Wilcox's Alabama Brigade at Gettysburg. The result of that legendary charge was the death of 215 men, leaving the 1st Minnesota with 82 percent of the regiment lost — the highest casualty rate of any unit in a single action in the Civil War.

In the years after the battle, the thicket where this deadly fighting took place grew into a wall of trees, creating an interpretive no man's land that few park rangers or battlefield guides could effectively decipher for visitors. The National Park Service wants battlefield visitors to see this ground the way the soldiers saw it in 1863 and has started a project to rehabilitate the Codori-Trostle thicket and other major battle action areas at Gettysburg National Military Park.

Battlefield rehabilitation is one of the major initiatives called for in Gettysburg's General Management Plan. The plan and environmental impact statement are the culmination of a multi-year planning process, during which the park held 50 public meetings and considered 4,375 written comments.

The proposed museum and visitor center for Gettysburg National Military Park. Image courtesy The Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation.

Battlefield rehabilitation will restore Gettysburg's historic integrity. The National Park Service recognizes that changes to the landscapes have occurred over time, including the growth of trees, changing field sizes, and missing fences, orchards, and farm lanes. These changes obscure the key terrain, avenues of approach, and fields of fire that affected the outcome of the battle. As a result, some portions of the battlefield have changed physically. They can no longer convey to people today what it was like for the men who fought there.

The park intends to restore as much as possible the historic terrain, fence lines, and viewsheds of the battlefield. The project will be phased over the next 15 years and will include the replacement of historic fence lines, orchards, and farm lanes as well as the return of grasslands, farmlands, and woodlands that played important roles in the battle.

Battlefield rehabilitation will also enhance visitor opportunities and understanding. Restoring the integrity of key battle areas will contribute to improved educational experiences and an overall greater understanding of the events as they unfolded July 1–3, 1863. It will allow visitors to understand the obstacles faced by those on the field as well as the command decisions made by both armies.

In order to do this, the staff at Gettysburg first had to understand the natural and topographic features that were crucial to the outcome of the battle. To determine the influence that various battlefield features had upon the fighting, we used the time-honored military methods of terrain analysis. Known today by the acronym, KOCOA, this method analyzes:

- Key terrain
- Observation and fields of fire
- Cover and concealment
- Obstacles (both natural and man-made)
- Avenues of approach

The Trostle Lane, undergoing restoration. Photo by the author.

In order to understand how the generals organized the terrain for battle, the park is rehabilitating the major features of the battlefield — the pattern of open versus wooded land and the 1863 circulation systems. As a result, the public will be able to understand how these features influenced the tactical decisions made during the battle and how the troops moved into their battle positions. For example, the little knoll just off the park's Hancock Avenue, from which General Hancock observed the second day's battle and from which he desperately marshaled reinforcements to plug holes in the Union line, is difficult to understand today. Hancock had a clear view over the thicket from the knoll all the way out to Emmitsburg Road and as far south as the Peach Orchard. Today, a wall of trees has replaced the thicket, blocking this important sight line.

Smaller features such as fences, orchards, open woodlots, and buildings affected the movements of individual units and in many cases made the difference between life and death for individual soldiers. These missing, dilapidated, or damaged features will be repaired or replaced so that the visitor can clearly understand the terrain, obstacles, and avenues of approach that affected the soldiers during combat. For example, today's visitors to Gettysburg see an unbroken field of Pickett's Charge, but when fences and other obstacles that were there in 1863 are replaced, the difficulties and challenges facing those troops can be understood.

Another major goal of the project is that battlefield restoration will create a sustainable historic environment by improving wetlands, water quality, and wildlife habitat. A key point of understanding the Gettysburg battlefield, as it was almost a century and a half ago is the rehabilitation of the environment. Non-native species, hardwood stands, and changing agricultural landscapes have had a negative effect on the historic terrain.

By replacing grassland, restoring wetlands, replanting orchards, and removing non-historic timber stands the National Park Service can rehabilitate the historic assets of the battlefield. Use of phased rehabilitation plans and the enactment of long-term maintenance priorities will provide effectively increased historic education and a sustainable environment.

Five actions will improve wetlands, water quality, and wildlife habitat over the next 10 – 15 years:

- Gradually removing field drains in agricultural areas to restore up to 100 acres of wetlands, benefiting plants and wildlife that live in these areas
- Fencing cattle from streams and wetlands to reduce soil compaction, erosion, excess nutrient loading, and ground cover loss, and improve water quality in the park and the Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Increasing grassland areas to expand habitat for grassland species like the Upland Sandpiper, Loggerhead Shrike, and others, many of which are State-listed species of special concern (Delaying the cutting of hay will allow ground-nesting birds such as the Bobolink to thrive.)
- Removing exotic plant species to provide opportunities for reestablishment of native plant species
- Partnering with local governments and conservation organizations to plant new trees in areas outside the park, where needed along stream banks and in other areas, as part of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative

In July 2001, the park initiated battlefield rehabilitation with a demonstration project at the Codori-Trostle thicket. Non-historic trees have been removed in two phases, shrubs have been replanted to reestablish the thicket. A third phase of non-historic tree removal will take place in the thicket once the shrubs have become established.

Old trees scattered throughout the battlefield that were here in 1863, known as witness trees, will be protected and preserved by the park.

Rehabilitation of Cemetery Ridge

Gettysburg's General Management Plan also calls for a major partnership with the non-profit Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation for the fundraising, design, construction, and operation of a new museum and visitor center for the park. This will include removal of current visitor facilities and parking lots from the Union battle line at Cemetery Ridge where 34 Union regiments fought and over 900 soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured during the Battle of Gettysburg.

Additional goals of the museum are:

Protection of the park's collection of artifacts and archives. New facilities are needed to provide appropriate storage conditions, proper care, and display of the park's collections including 38,000 artifacts and 350,000 printed texts, historic photographs, and other archival documents.

Preservation of the Cyclorama painting. An appropriate gallery space will be provided to stop the continued deterioration of the largest and one of the most significant objects in the collection, a colossal painting measuring 26 feet by 370 feet, illustrating Pickett's Charge. The painting is designated a National Historic Object.

Provision of high-quality interpretation and educational opportunities for park visitors. New exhibits and broader interpretation will provide visitors with an understanding of the Gettysburg Campaign in the broad context of the Civil War and American history.

How The Partnership Works

The entire project carries a $95 million price tag, which includes construction of the building, design and installation of the museum exhibits, purchase of the 47-acre site for the new museum and visitor center (privately owned land, within the boundary of the park, that is close to, but not on the major battle action areas and is two-thirds of a mile from the current visitor center site), restoration of the historic Cyclorama painting, restoration of the area occupied by the current facilities to its historic appearance, necessary off site improvements, and a $10 million endowment to help cover the maintenance costs of the new facility. The Foundation's fundraising campaign is now underway.

The facility would include museum exhibits, a Cyclorama gallery, the electric map, theater/classrooms, a public research center, a book and museum store, limited food service, a tour center for Licensed Battlefield Guide tours and other educational tours, and park and Foundation administrative offices.

Codori-Trostle Thicket Rehab—The view from the Sickles Monument looking northwest before the second phase of the project in November 2001. Photo by the author.

The same view after non-historic trees were removed to bring the thicket back to its historic footprint. The Codori farm is visible in the distance. Photo by the author.

The park would probably have had to wait a lifetime to receive the Federal funding required to properly preserve our historic resources and provide the level of visitor services today's museum-goers expect. By joining with the Foundation in our first public-private partnership of this scope, we hope to set a new standard for park facilities. The Foundation will raise the funds to construct and build the new facility, and, after it opens, will run the visitor center in cooperation with the park. After 20 years, the Foundation will donate the land and the facilities to the National Park Service, debt-free.

The new museum will tell a coherent story of the Gettysburg campaign within the full context of the Civil War and American history through state-of-the-art exhibits that are designed to be interesting and engaging for children as well as adults. Mr. Robert Wilburn, former president and CEO of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, is the Foundation president and chief executive officer. A Museum Advisory Committee created by the Foundation includes Gabor S. Boritt, Dr. Dwight Pitcaithley, Ms. Olivia Mahoney, Dr. Nina Silber, Dr. Eric Foner, Mr. Robin Reed, Dr. Gary W. Gallagher, and Dr. James M. McPherson. The Advisory Committee helped develop a storyline for the new museum.

The Foundation expects to break ground for the facility in early 2004, and to complete the project in early 2006. The current facilities will be demolished at that time and the historic landscape restoration will begin that same year.

More information on battlefield rehabilitation and the Gettysburg museum and visitor center project is available on the following Web sites:

- Gettysburg National Military Park – <www.nps.gov/gett>
- Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg – <www.friendsofgettysburg.org>
- Gettysburg National Battlefield Museum Foundation – <www.gettysburgfoundation.org>

Katie Lawhon is the public affairs specialist for Gettysburg National Military Park.

On July 3, 2000, the 137th anniversary of Pickett's Charge which concluded the Battle of Gettysburg, smoke and clamor of a different sort began to fade from the battlefield as a crowd of 10,000 watched the National Park Service demolish the National Tower at Gettysburg. The privately owned and operated National Tower was built as a tourist attraction in the early 1970s. Preservationists made it the poster child of unwanted development near historic sites. USA Today called it "the ugliest commercial structure ever to intrude on the sanctity of a national park."

The demolition followed the Government's condemnation of the property through a Department of Justice declaration of taking. The National Park Service had authority to acquire the property beginning in 1990 when it was added to the boundary of the park. Discussions with the property owners had been unsuccessful for years. In Fiscal Year 1999, Congress funded the acquisition, and the Justice Department filed for condemnation soon after.

The demolition of the tower marked the first dramatic step in the park's major effort to restore Gettysburg's battlefield landscapes.

Photo by Harry Waters, volunteer, Gettysburg National Military Park.

Carlin Timmons and Sandy Pusey

Fort Sumter National Monument's New Facility at Liberty Square

The August 2001 opening of the long-awaited Fort Sumter Visitor Education Center marked the completion of plans 40 years in the making. For the first time, visitors traveling by concessionaire ferry to Fort Sumter meet park personnel at the point of embarkation. A first-class facility, the building incorporates architectural elements that echo the design of Fort Sumter. Located on a reclaimed "superfund" site on the Cooper River waterfront in Charleston, SC, Liberty Square represents a multi-agency effort to convert a contaminated "brown" coal gasification industrial space into public "green" space. The once abandoned area is now a destination for Charlestonians and tourists alike. The National Park Service building joins the South Carolina Aquarium, an IMAX theater, shopping, restaurants, and various harbor activities that provide educational and recreational opportunities at the water's edge.

A Home for the Garrison Flag

The focal point of the interior exhibits is Major Robert Anderson's U.S. garrison flag. This is the flag that flew over Fort Sumter from December 27, 1860, until the opening bombardment of the Civil War. It was torn in two by high winds on April 11, 1861, just as the country was tearing apart. Saved by Anderson's family, the flag was given to the War Department and eventually turned over to the National Park Service. It has not been on public display in 22 years. After extensive conservation treatment by the National Park Service's Conservation Center at Harpers Ferry, WV, the 33-star flag rests in a specially constructed case, and a 36- by 20-foot full-scale replica hangs above. The original flag is much too fragile to hang. Issues of artifact conservation such as lighting, humidity, and temperature controls had to be resolved before the flag was moved into the new building. The logistics of moving the flag 10 miles from curatorial storage to the exhibit hall were challenging, requiring creative solutions by Fort Sumter's Resource Management staff.

Exhibits on Causes of the Civil War

Not only does the park's facility bring a National Park Service presence into the city, the building offers a great opportunity for expanding Civil War interpretation. The park had already begun a more holistic approach in the early 1990s when staff renovated the 1960s era museum at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor. Completed in 1995, that museum retains many of the treasured artifacts that were a part of the old museum, but exhibited in fresh surroundings and with a more sweeping and inclusive story line. Blocking out damaging sunlight and providing handicap accessibility were important priorities designed to safeguard artifacts and improve the visitor experience. Another high priority was bringing the exhibit in line with current scholarship. New exhibit text and graphics include an introductory section on the growth of sectionalism, antebellum politics, and the expansion of slavery as the underlying cause of secession and war. But most of the exhibit remains site specific, dealing with topics such as the fort's construction, people and events leading to the firing of the first shot, and what happened to the fort during the Civil War.

An even more ambitious exhibit project began in the fall of 1999 with exhibit planning for the new tour boat facility. In February 2000, park staff met with exhibit designer Krister Olmon from California and National Park Service colleagues Anita T. Smith, the exhibit planner from Harpers Ferry Design Center, staff from the Denver Service Center, and historian Marie Tyler-McGraw of the Washington history office to outline major themes. Tyler-McGraw completed the initial research and writing for content development. Park staff submitted research materials and graphics to designer Olmon which were incorporated in his concept package. Two years later, in February 2002, the exhibits were finally installed. The interim period was filled with five major text revisions and numerous editorial changes, graphic selection and acquisition, and peer review as park staff grappled with sensitive topics in a politically charged atmosphere.

Assigning both a military historian and a social historian to edit and write the text meant that while it would be a cumbersome and at times contentious process, the end product would satisfy diverse interests. The use of language and graphics has been painstakingly examined. Idyllic images of golden rice fields are balanced with those of scarred backs. The haunting photograph of an enslaved body servant armed to fight for the Confederacy, women's voices, and first person quotes help flesh out a multi-layered story.

The final product closely resembles the original outline. Entitled "The First Shot: What Brought the Nation to Civil War at Fort Sumter?," the exhibit contains six sections moving from a broad description of colonial times to the specific site of Fort Sumter in 1861. The panels include "Colonial Roots of the Conflict," "Ambiguities of the Constitution," "Antebellum United States," "Charleston in 1860," "South Carolina Declares its Independence," and "Fort Sumter: Countdown to Conflict."

The introductory text reads,

> When the Civil War finally exploded in Charleston Harbor, it was the result of a half-century of growing sectionalism. Escalating crises over property rights, human rights, states rights and constitutional rights divided the country as it expanded westward. Underlying all the economic, social and political rhetoric was the volatile question of slavery. Because its economic life had long depended on enslaved labor, South Carolina was the first state to secede when this way of life was threatened. Confederate forces fired the first shot in South Carolina. The federal government responded with force. Decades of compromise were over. The very nature of the Union was at stake.

The input of Dr. Walter Edgar of the University of South Carolina and Dr. Bernard Powers of the College of Charleston was invaluable. They both reviewed the text and offered insightful suggestions to improve the content. Marie Tyler-McGraw and National Park Service Chief Historian Dr. Dwight Pitcaithley were also instrumental in refining the text. Everyone on the park staff had an opportunity to critique the drafts. As the draft progressed, the project attracted the interest of local politicians who wanted to review the park's Federal viewpoint of the "recent unpleasantness." So far the perception has passed muster by these politicians. But there are rumblings. There are people who believe that Fort Sumter should be preserved as a shrine to the Confederacy and that the Yankee park presence has desecrated sacred ground. Any talk of slavery as opposed to States rights is perceived as anti-southern. Would our new exhibits skew history to a Yankee perspective? Does a full-size replica of Major Anderson's 33-star garrison flag send that message? A week after the opening in mid-August, a young woman darted into the exhibit hall and took a photograph of the flag. The woman told the ranger on duty: "We will be back to protest the size of that flag." Since September 11th no one has complained about the size of that U.S. flag. But memories are short, and some visitors bring deep-seated belief systems with them. The protesters will be back.

During the months between the time the facility opened and the permanent exhibits were installed, full-scale color prints of each exhibit were hung on temporary plywood frames. This gave visitors a chance to see and comment on the text and graphics prior to its final review. Many comments were received ranging from glowing to condemning. Most were positive, appreciative, and constructive. But there was a blistering letter to the editor of the local newspaper that blasted the "biased political agenda" of the exhibits. The lack of Confederate flags on exhibit caused the writer to urge readers to send letters of protest to Interior Secretary Gale Norton. On the other hand, an elderly black gentleman asked for a copy of the text dealing with the Constitution's treatment of slavery as well as a Library of Congress photograph of an enslaved family. He wanted to take the documents home and show his grandchildren.

The challenges of presenting public history, including multiple and conflicting viewpoints, and of fleshing out military history within a social and political context made the 2 years of exhibit planning an exciting time for park staff. Given the volatile nature of the subject, the exhibits have already engaged the public and promoted lively and healthy discussions.

Carlin Timmons is a park ranger at Fort Sumter National Monument. She worked on editing and writing the exhibit text from the perspective of a social historian.

Sandy Pusey is a cultural resource manager at Fort Sumter National Monument.

Daniel J. Bell and Bryan Scott Enter

Giving Voice to a Little Known Battlefield

South Carolina's Rivers Bridge State Historic Site

Located in rural Bamberg County, SC, about 80 miles west of Charleston and 75 miles south of Columbia, Rivers Bridge is the site of a Civil War battle fought February 2 – 3, 1865. It is the only Civil War battle site managed by the South Carolina State Park Service and the only public battlefield in the State from the Carolinas Campaign. Despite its many advantages and the fact that it has been a property of the South Carolina State Park Service since 1945, Rivers Bridge has been underinterpreted. It is relatively unknown outside of the small part of rural South Carolina where it is located. The State Park Service has taken action in recent years to rectify that.

Changes began in earnest in 1997 with the adoption and implementation of an agency-wide plan that redefined the mission of the South Carolina State Park Service. Rivers Bridge was officially classified as a historic site that would be managed according to the needs of its unique resources. An indication of the agency's commitment to the change occurred recently when a swimming pool, a prominent feature at the site since the 1950s, was finally removed as an inconsistent use at a historic battle site and a drain on the site's financial resources. Improved interpretation of the site's primary resource, the battlefield, has long been recognized as a pressing need at Rivers Bridge.

Besides telling the story of the battle of Rivers Bridge, the most determined Confederate resistance to Sherman's march through the State, the site can tell many other stories as well: what motivated the troops of both sides to continue fighting at this late stage of the war, how soldiers responded to the technological changes that had made the battlefield so much deadlier, how Sherman's veteran troops maneuvered Confederate forces out of strong positions by flanking and corduroying roads.[1] The battlefield's well-preserved breastworks offer graphic lessons on the construction and use of field fortifications during the war. And because the preservation of the battlefield stems from an annual commemoration of the Confederate dead that began in 1876, Rivers Bridge also allows for explorations of the memory of the war and the changing nature of the Lost Cause[2] and its symbols.

A full-time on-site interpreter was hired in 1998, but even this most basic improvement to the site's management was not enough to properly present the story of the battle. The interpreter is one of only three full-time employees who manage the site's 390 acres; he cannot be available at all times to give guided tours to every casual visitor. To tell the story of the battle to all visitors, the State Park Service is creating a self-guided battlefield trail. A series of waysides will lead visitors across the battlefield and describe the 2-day fight from start to finish. Secondary stories in each wayside will provide context on how veteran soldiers marched, fought, and tried to survive on the battlefield in 1865. The trail will follow existing roadbeds and paths to route visitors around the earthworks while the waysides educate visitors of the need to help preserve these irreplaceable features of our common past.

The site interpreter has played a major role in the development and implementation of programs for the State Park Service's "Discover Carolina" education initiative. This initiative was created to provide school children with hands-on discovery of South Carolina's natural and cultural resources at State parks. All "Discover Carolina" programs are curriculum-based, contain pre- and post-visit materials, and are reviewed by educators for their ability to communicate subject matter and meet learning objectives. At Rivers Bridge and other State historic sites, children encounter history at places where history was made.

"A Day in the Life of a Soldier," recently developed by the site staff, is a curriculum-based "Discover Carolina" program that introduces fourth grade students to the experience of average Civil War soldiers of both North and South. Using reproduction uniforms, weapons, and gear, the site interpreter leads students through hands-on activities that reveal how soldiers of the time met their basic needs for food, clothing, shelter,

and battlefield survival, and how these soldiers became veterans in the process.

Other "Discover Carolina" programs will be developed to address other grade levels in which the curriculum involves the subject matter of the site. In "The Words of War" students will explore the motivations and emotions of people of the era as they prepared for, fought, and dealt with the aftermath of the Civil War. This program will utilize period poems, speeches, songs, letters, and other spoken and musical sources to gain a better understanding of the people involved in this, our nation's bloodiest conflict.

The Confederate monument at Rivers Bridge. Photo courtesy South Carolina State Park Service.

To build a greater awareness of Rivers Bridge and its interpretive potential, the State Park Service created a lesson plan for the National Park Service's "Teaching with Historic Places" program. The plan gives teachers an additional resource for teaching about the Civil War in the classroom. "These Honored Dead: The Battle of Rivers Bridge and Civil War Combat Casualties" takes advantage of the battle's small scale to make the war more understandable on a personal level. Both sides lost approximately 100 men in the fighting at Rivers Bridge, far fewer than the terrible casualties incurred in the war's major battles. Nearly all of the casualties from Rivers Bridge have been identified, however, and the stories of these men bring home the effects of the war with an immediacy and emotional impact that cannot be conveyed by a dry recitation of numbers of dead and wounded. "These Honored Dead" uses the words and images of men who were shot in the battle to present a powerful message on the human toll of the war and the need to preserve battle sites as memorials to the soldiers. The lesson plan went online in August 2002 and can be found at <www.cr.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/94rivers/94rivers.htm>.

To guide the development of future interpretive programs and media, agency staff wrote the following formal interpretive themes for Rivers Bridge:

- The Civil War battle of Rivers Bridge reflects the campaign strategy and battle tactics employed by Union and Confederate forces during Sherman's march through South Carolina, and the small scale of the combat shows the war and its human costs on an individual level.
- Interpretation of the battle of Rivers Bridge permits explorations into wider contexts such as the causes of the war, Civil War military technology and tactics, Civil War medical treatment, the lives of average soldiers, and the effects of war on civilians.
- The commemoration of the battle of Rivers Bridge reveals how the Civil War and the Lost Cause have held different meanings for different generations.

The themes, which are explicitly recognized as being of equal value, institutionalize the broad topics and ideas that may be presented at Rivers Bridge. Besides providing a framework for telling the story of the battle and for telling the other stories that are essential to an understanding of the fight: how and why the men fought, how the campaign affected black and white civilians in the paths of the armies, and how changing and sometimes conflicting memories of the battle and the war shape and color our understanding of the past.

Efforts to convey interpretive themes and resource management messages at Rivers Bridge State Historic Site are not innovative. Similar work has already been done at other Civil War sites. They are the application of interpretive fundamentals at an underinterpreted site and, perhaps most importantly, they are a reflection of how the South Carolina State Park Service is attacking on several fronts to improve interpretation at its only Civil War battlefield.

Notes

1 "Corduroying" was the term used to describe the placing of logs over muddy or swampy roads to allow for troop and supply movement.

2 The South's Lost Cause ideology stressed that the North's greater numbers had destined the South to lose on the battlefield. Even more so, the war was not fought over slavery, an institution deemed beneficial to the happy and devoted slaves, but over States rights.

Daniel J. Bell is a historic resource coordinator with the South Carolina State Park Service.

Bryan Scott Enter is the interpreter at Rivers Bridge State Historic Site.

Mark K. Christ

The Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail
A Grassroots Battlefield Preservation Initiative

When then-Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan announced the formation of the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) in 1990, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program (AHPP) was an enthusiastic partner, seeing the initiative as a great vehicle for researching some of the more than 770 Civil War actions that took place in the State.

The AHPP joined in the initial ABPP survey, mapping and evaluating Civil War battle sites included on a National Park Service list of Arkansas battles. Ultimately, only one site, Prairie Grove in Washington County, site of a bloody December 7, 1862, battle, was deemed a priority site for preservation. The other mapped battlefields were relegated to lower positions on the priority list, and no allowance was made for the hundreds of other skirmishes, actions, and engagements that took place throughout the State.

Then-Director Cathy Slater and staff members wanted to use the momentum of the ABPP activities to continue efforts to identify, protect, interpret, and promote the State's Civil War-related historic resources. Aware of the success of the Main Street Arkansas program, the AHPP sought to develop a network of partnerships that would take the initiative on local efforts for local sites. To that end (and jump-started by an ABPP planning grant), the AHPP established the Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail (ACWHT), a statewide series of regional volunteer organizations that would focus on Civil War sites in their areas.

AHPP staff members first divided the State into five regions, setting admittedly arbitrary boundaries that have been altered somewhat over the years as the ACWHT groups developed their own projects and priorities. Then, after identifying organizations and individuals who would likely be interested in participating in the program, organizational meetings were held over a 3-year period.

In these meetings, the AHPP explained the formation of the ABPP, the concept of the ACWHT, and the need to identify Civil War sites that were forgotten or lost for good to development. Volunteers were then asked to serve as officers in the groups, a request that usually led to a long, uncomfortable silence in the meeting room, but always resulted in someone agreeing to take the leadership role for their region.

In 1994, the first ACWHT group was formed in northwest Arkansas. Over the course of the next 3 years, four other ACWHT groups were formed in northeast, southeast, southwest, and central Arkansas. The northwest group later split in two to better focus on different sites within the region.

Efforts are being made to purchase the core area of the Reed's Bridge Battlefield in Jacksonville, AR. The wayside exhibit in the foreground was created by the Central Arkansas Civil War Heritage Trail using partnership funds from the ABPP. Photo courtesy AHPP.

AHPP oversight of the Trail groups is minimal, with the State agency producing a quarterly newsletter (available online at <http://www.arkansaspreservation.org/history/publications.asp>) and providing technical assistance to the local trails. The AHPP also seeks grant funding for local ACWHT projects. From the beginning, though, the strength of the ACWHT has been its grassroots advocacy for local sites.

Membership in the ACWHT groups has attracted an interesting mix of people. While some groups include employees of the National Park Service, Arkansas State Parks, or other public agencies, the majority are private citizens motivated by an interest in Civil War history. And while a large percentage are also members of Confederate descendant organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the focus of the ACWHT groups has remained on the sites instead of becoming sidetracked by Southern heritage-related issues.

Perhaps predictably, a lot of the initial focus of the ACWHT groups has been heritage tourism. Installation of wayside interpretation (much of which was aided by ABPP funding), development of brochures, and inclusion in the Civil War Preservation Trust's National Civil War Discovery Trail have been priorities as the local grassroots organizations sought to show that battlefield preservation can serve as an economic development tool. As time has gone by, however, efforts have moved toward what was the AHPP's top priority from the start: identification and preservation of battlefield land.

Over the past 8 years, the ACWHT groups have amassed a noteworthy series of accomplishments:

- The Central ACWHT group created a driving tour of the 1863 Little Rock Campaign by placing wayside exhibits at several sites related to the campaign. In addition to the distribution of thousands of driving tour brochures, the project helped initiate creation of the Reed's Bridge Battlefield Preservation Society in Jacksonville, which is actively acquiring key pieces of that August 27, 1863, battlefield.
- The Southeast ACWHT group worked in partnership with local newspapers to devise ways to create inexpensive wayside exhibits at Civil War sites in the region, paving the way for several properties to be included in national and state heritage tourism efforts.
- The Northeast ACWHT group created a series of brochures focusing on Civil War actions and personalities in the region, creating a "paper trail" that will serve as the basis for future efforts to place wayside exhibits in the area.
- The Southwest ACWHT group initiated efforts and is working with the Civil War Preservation Trust to find ways to protect additional acreage at the April 30, 1864, Jenkins' Ferry Battlefield, a National Historic Landmark associated with the Camden Expedition.
- The Northwest ACWHT group created an Arkansas in the Civil War curriculum for Arkansas school children, hosted a Civil War heritage tourism symposium, and developed regional tourism brochures.
- The West Central ACWHT group (formed from the lower counties of the Northwest ACWHT) is working with a city commission to protect and develop the Massard Prairie battlefield in Fort Smith and was instrumental in having that battlefield and a series of rifle pits listed on the Arkansas Register of Historic Places.

The ACWHT has proven to be effective while reflecting the widely varied motivations, personalities, and priorities of the volunteers who make up its core and its spirit. Their efforts will continue to increase public awareness of Arkansas' role in the Civil War and the protection of the tangible reminders of that conflict.

Mark K. Christ is community outreach director for the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, where he directs the agency's National Register/Survey, Education, Special Projects, and Public Information programs. He has edited several books for the University of Arkansas Press, including "Rugged and Sublime: The Civil War in Arkansas in 1994" and "Sentinels of History: Reflections on Arkansas Properties Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2000." The latter won an Award of Merit from the American Association for State and Local History. The UA Press published his next book, "Getting Used To Being Shot At: The Spence Family Civil War Letters," in spring 2002.

Karen Miller and Pamela K. Sanfilippo

From Personal Experiences to Public Actions

Using a Historic Home To Interpret Ulysses S. Grant During the Civil War

Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site, located near St. Louis, MO, consists of approximately 10 acres of what was an 850-acre estate known as White Haven in the 19th century. Five historic structures remain on the property: the main house, which is a National Historic Landmark; a stone building, housing a summer kitchen; a chicken house; an ice house; and a 4,000 square-foot barn, built to Grant's specifications in the early 1870s. The main house and three outbuildings have undergone extensive restoration, for which the site received the 2002 John Wesley Powell Prize for Historic Preservation.

Grant was associated with the White Haven farm for over 40 years, first as a guest of the Dent family where he met Julia Dent in 1844. Her childhood home served as the setting for their courtship, and later as a home for their own family in the late 1850s. During the Civil War, Grant began purchasing property from his in-laws. Throughout his careers as General of the Army and President of the United States, Grant developed his estate with an eye toward retirement. He changed the focus of the farm from agriculture to thoroughbred horse breeding. Although that dream of retirement never materialized, Grant continued to own the property until shortly before his death in 1885.

The St. Louis home of Ulysses and Julia Grant, historically known as White Haven. The home and outbuildings have been restored to their 1875 appearance when President Grant owned the property.

The site was authorized in 1989 to "preserve and interpret for the benefit and inspiration of all Americans a key property associated with the life of General and later President Ulysses S. Grant and the life of First Lady Julia Dent Grant, knowledge of which is essential to understanding, in the context of mid-nineteenth-century American history, his rise to greatness, his heroic deeds and public service, and her partnership in them."[1]

As historian Drew Gilpin Faust has noted, "the growing importance of social history in the 1970s and 1980s affected almost every area of the study of the past," expanding our knowledge of those previously excluded from traditional histories — women, minorities, and those of lower socioeconomic classes.[2] With this in mind, the park's enabling legislation was intentionally written to include those themes. The inclusion of "Julia Grant" and the "context of mid-nineteenth century American history" requires us to address themes of agriculture, women's roles, and slavery as well as local, regional, and national cultural and political events as they relate to Ulysses and Julia and their St. Louis home.

The Challenge

The challenge of fulfilling our interpretive mission is daunting since the knowledge necessary to address each of these themes appropriately involves extensive research. The site currently has only a few exhibit panels and a short introductory video available to the visitor and relies heavily on personal interpretation through ranger-led tours of the main house. We are further challenged in our interpretation by the fact that the house is unfurnished. Since most visitors to his-

The antebellum winter kitchen connects the visitor to the experiences of the enslaved who worked in the room and visually reflects the moral dilemma Grant faced while living and working on his father-in-law's slaveholding farm. Proposed exhibits in this space will interpret the lives of the enslaved at White Haven.

toric homes anticipate learning about a material culture associated with the owner of the home, they expect to see the White Haven home furnished as it was during the Grants' ownership. However, the Grants' furniture was destroyed in a fire in 1873, and no description of it exists. The National Park Service has chosen not to put reproduction period pieces in the house, challenging visitors to use their imagination to see the house as it was.

Exhibit design has proven to be no less of a challenge than the interpretive goals. The design challenges are threefold. First, staff members are working with limited space for the new exhibits since most of them will be placed in the historic structures. Second, placing the exhibits in the structures requires special attention to the design in order to maintain the historical integrity of the buildings. Finally, the main house adds another layer to the challenge since our goal there is to retain the atmosphere of the home. Exhibits are being carefully designed not to institutionalize the space with traditional exhibit panels or display cases.

Determining how to provide a complete experience that encompasses all interpretive and exhibit challenges without confusing the visitor entails constant reassessment. Park staff members at all levels are working closely with the exhibit design firm and with academic historians to ensure the accuracy and integrity of the finished product. Public participation in the process has been encouraged through meetings and interviews and will continue as the plans become reality.

The Opportunity

The challenges faced at the site are also opportunities to develop interpretation and exhibits along a different line in order to fulfill our mission. Interpreting unfurnished structures became an opportunity to avoid talking about the "stuff" and focus on the people and events. Similarly, the challenge of developing exhibits was also an opportunity to seek new ways to achieve our goals. Traditionally, historic homes become a venue for a chronological biography of the primary resident. We have consciously chosen not to approach the interpretation and exhibits in this way and to focus on the personal experiences of the Grants as a basis for understanding their public actions.

The Plan

The exhibits planned for the site will demonstrate the interconnectedness of the Grants' private lives at White Haven with significant events of the 19th century. Developing exhibits that reflect the private basis for Grant's public actions demonstrates that a single cultural resource (a historic home) carries with it a wider body of knowledge. The resource gains further importance as a link to understand the historical events that have shaped our nation's history. One way to accomplish this at the Grant site is by linking the historic home to national events such as the Civil War. Specifically, Grant's experiences at White Haven had a direct influence on his actions as a general during the Civil War.

Helping visitors make that connection is accomplished through interpretive programs and tours, but exhibits will also address this issue. For example, as visitors tour the house, one of the stories they will learn about the Grants addresses the issue of slavery. In the dining room, visitors will come to understand that debates about slavery created political and cultural tensions that affected family life and the relationship between Grant and Colonel Dent, Julia's father. In the new museum, an exhibit will take that experience at White Haven and directly tie it to Grant's actions as a general during the Civil War. One panel will present Grant's view, stated privately at the beginning of the war and publicly in his "The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant"[3] written near the end of his life, that the cause of the Civil War

was slavery. His marriage into a slaveholding family and his involvement with slavery at White Haven provides context for understanding Grant's opinion. Another section of the same panel will present Grant's military policy of recruiting and utilizing African American combat soldiers. By examining his relationship with the enslaved at White Haven, we are able to extrapolate that he was influenced in his attitude toward blacks and the institution of slavery, and that, in turn, influenced Grant's actions as military commander in regard to African Americans.

The Result

In the area of Civil War history, social historians began exploring the lives of the common soldier, the meaning of their experiences, and according to Faust, "to look beyond the battle at the world behind the lines, at the experiences of civilians white and black, male and female, as they found themselves caught up in the maelstrom of war."[4] Battlefield sites are responding to this scholarship through interpretation and exhibits that are more inclusive. Similarly, the Grant site places the residents of White Haven within the larger context of 19th-century history to understand Ulysses and Julia Grant as individuals, their relationship with one another and their families, and their role in our nation's history. Individuals such as Grant, like battle sites, cannot be placed in a vacuum as if the events and people around them had no influence or bearing on their individual actions.

Connecting Grant's personal life to his public service, with all the challenges and complexities of the 19th century, connects the visitors to their personal lives as well. Just as experiences and events shaped Grant's actions, we, too, are shaped by the day-to-day happenings in the world around us. Making that connection helps us bridge the gap between the past and the present, enriching our understanding of the nation, the individuals who have shaped our history, and ourselves. The result is a complete visitor experience that will be "for the benefit and inspiration" of all visitors, as addressed in the site's legislation.

Notes

1 Public Law 101-106.

2 Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Civil War Homefront," *Rally on the High Ground: The National Park Service Symposium on the Civil War* (Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2001), 81.

3 John Y. Simon, editor, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), v. II, 3-4; letter from U.S. Grant to his father-in-law, Frederick Dent, April 19, 1861; Ulysses S. Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant* (New York: Charles A. Webster, 1885), reprint New York: *Literary Classics of the United States,* 1990, 773.

4 Faust, op cit.

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