

Southern New Hampshire University

The Grand Veteran Organizations and their Affiliates

Lobbyists and Revolutionaries

A Capstone Project Submitted to the College of Online and Continuing Education in Partial
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By

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Abstract

The Grand Army of the Republic was a critical and underappreciated organizations that historians view with a narrow lens. Organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic, United Confederate Veterans and the women's organizations that aligned themselves with these two veterans' organizations developed educational curriculum and traditions that continued in contemporary schools in the United States. The GAR allowed integration, and thus a voice to African-Americans. For women had a social outlet and political influence by associating with both northern and southern veterans. Many times, these details take a back seat to the restrictions these populations faced. Civil War soldiers and veterans brought about changes to United States pension and voting policy. The Union veterans and the Women's Relief and Corps solidified a national identity, while the UCV and the southern women created the Lost Cause which has permeated the American consciousness.

Using primary and secondary sources this paper evaluates the GAR, WRC, UCV, and the Daughters of the Confederacy and the role they had on American society. Many areas these organizations influenced continue to have major impacts on contemporary America. This paper also uses sources view these organizations as having positive and negative influences.

Dedication

For my two pups, Summer and Yogi who always greeted me with nothing but love. My wife who always pushed and encouraged me throughout the entire process. My late grandfather, Charles P. Donachie Sr., who would bring me to various historical sites. For my late grandmother, Marcia J. Donachie, who told me family stories instead of bedtime stories. My ancestors who fought in various wars making history themselves. Lastly for my ancestor Warren E. Lewis, who fought in the Civil War and was a member of Grand Army of the Republic.

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List of Abbreviations

GAR – Grand Army of the Republic

SUVCW – Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War

UCV – United Confederate Veterans

UDC – United Daughters of the Confederacy

Introduction

The American Civil War was one of the most traumatic conflicts in our nation's history. This war, as with any other, provided later generations with stories of courage and sorrow featuring both family member and faceless every-man that attracts many to study history. The Civil War is so traumatic because it was a war that saw not only families torn apart but nearly the nation itself. Sadder still, some families never had the chance to reconcile such as the story of Lieutenant Commander Edward Lea serving with the Union Army and his father General Albert M. Lea who would serve in the Confederate Army. Assigned to the *USS Harriet Lane*, Edward Lea died during a battle against the Confederates at Galveston.¹ This would not have been an especially notable story, except for what would happen after Edward Lea became mortally wounded during the battle. His father, Albert was in the same battle. He boarded the ship in search of his son, and the two of them could have a heartfelt exchange before the father left the ship in search of a method to bring his son ashore. Sadly, he did not return before his son's death.² This family, never truly reconciled. While the Civil War itself is important, it is these are the type of stories Americans need to remember and talk about. Organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic ensured that these stories survived.

The Civil War era has generated a lot of popular interest from the public and historians alike. Estimates for the number of books and articles published between 1962 and 1993 range

¹ Z.B., "A Tribute to Lieut. Edward Lea." *The New York Times*, February 8, 1863, <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.snhu.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/91735282/AF8A29988A014172PQ/1?accountid=3783>.

² "Pathetic War Incident." *New York Times*, September 25, 1892, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/94993847>

from 50,000 to 100,000. The entertainment industry has produced several well-known films such as *Glory and Gettysburg* and countless documentaries such as Ken Burn's series, *the Civil War*.³ However, the lives of these men that fought to preserve the Union did not always end with the battles. Many continued to fight and live well beyond the war that damaged them both physically and mentally. While historians recognize this post-Civil War period, the contributions these men and the organizations they belonged to tend to go unrecognized or downplayed.

Veterans' organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic, the United Confederate Veterans and the ladies' organizations that attached themselves to the veterans influenced the United States in the Reconstruction period and beyond. In many ways, these groups helped the nation heal from the divide of the Civil War, however, in other ways, they contributed to furthering other discords within the nation. Still, without these organizations, a greater divide would remain within the United States. The South continued this schism within the nation by attempting to redefine the roots of the war to states' rights instead of slavery. At the same time some in the north attempted to correct this misconception, especially men like General Grant, most seem to accept this new definition. Coincidentally without the efforts of the Civil War veterans to welcome and forgive each other the nation might have seen another Civil War.

Formation of veterans' organizations occurred almost immediately after the war. Much of what historians know about the early years of the Grand Army of the Republic comes from Past Commander-in-Chief Robert Beath who wrote his comprehensive history of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1889. While the United Confederate Veterans would not produce as

³ Stuart McConnell, "The Civil War and Historical Memory: A Historiographical Survey," *OAH Magazine of History* 8, no. 1 (1993), 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25162917>

comprehensive piece as the Grand Army of the Republic, they did publish a monthly magazine titled *Confederate Veterans*.

The Grand Army of the Republic officially formed in 1866 upon the basic principles of fraternity, charity, and loyalty.⁴ However, the organization of Union veterans really stems from the closing days of the Civil War. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton recommended a final formal review of the armies under Meade and Sherman in Washington D.C. in 1865. Citizens decorated the capital to celebration the Union's victory.⁵ Beath described approximately 150,000 soldiers marching through the capital for this review.⁶ The concept of the Grand Army of the Republic grew from regimental organizations such as Third Army Corps Union. Reverend William J. Rutledge would suggest the formation of a group to preserve the friendships forged through the struggle of war.⁷ The Grand Army of the Republic organized itself into posts that belonged to departments that would operate in one to two states. These departments then reported to the national level of the organization.⁸

The Confederates eventually created their own similar organization. They also built their organization from smaller regional groups. The first of these regional organizations formed in 1866 under a group of officers. The Robert E. Lee Camp No. 1 formed in Richmond, Virginia in April of 1883 thus establishing the United Confederate Veterans.⁹ The UCV developed the

⁴ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1889), III.

⁵ Beath, 2-3.

⁶ Beath, 9.

⁷ Beath, 33-35.

⁸ Donald Robert Shaffer, "Marching On: African-American Civil War Veterans in Postbellum America, 1865-1951" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 251.

⁹ James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014., 2014) (accessed Oct 9, 2017), 12.

mission to preserve the memory of their fallen Confederate comrades and to care for those veterans permanently who were disabled in the war. On numerous occasions extend the olive branch to the Grand Army of the Republic.¹⁰

Throughout the war women joined social groups for several reasons including abolitionism, patriotism and the temperance movement. Women's patriotic organizations joined forces with veteran organizations both in the North and the South for assorted goals. By 1882 through the support of the GAR a group of women created an organization named the Women's Relief Corps.¹¹ In its early days the WRC supported Union veterans for the GAR's different goals including helping with the organizing and celebrating of Memorial Day events. Eventually the WRC expanded into other patriotic activities.¹² Southern women created their own organizations to demonstrate their regional patriotism. The charter members of the Daughters of the Confederacy previously belonged to other women's association including from those of hospitals, sewing and knitting circles. These women served as auxiliaries to the Confederate veteran organizations.

Union Veterans founded the Grand Army of the Republic, a unique organization at the end of the American Civil War. This organization had an impact on politics and society itself. It pioneered social organizations when African-American veterans became welcomed. The GAR was one of the major contributors to the creation of a formal Memorial Day holiday. It also

¹⁰ Virginia Historical Society, "United Confederate Veterans. R.E. Lee Camp, no. 1 | Virginia Historical Society," Virginia Historical Society, <http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/how-we-can-help-your-research/researcher-resources/finding-aids/united> (accessed January 13, 2018)

¹¹ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 268-269.

¹² Silber, 269.

fought to preserve the memory of those who fought in the Civil War in perpetuity. The GAR was the organization that served as the model for future veteran's organizations. It is important to continue bringing awareness to the organization and the work it did in the past, as well to continue its mission in the present and future: honoring the memory of those who fought and died to preserve the Union. The GAR fought to make the nation better through calls for acts of patriotism and fighting for veteran benefits.

It was Lincoln himself who stated, "with malice toward none, with charity for all," continuing with, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."¹³ It was this statement that Union veterans pointed to when arguing the United States government held a responsibility to take care of soldiers and veterans. This evolved to the opinion of those Union veterans who petitioned for a pension for their service. Historians point to Mary Dearing's thesis about the GAR only siding with the Democrats when the Republican leadership does not align with their interests. However, Stuart McConnell makes the valid claim that this is only a small part of understanding the GAR. The Grand Army of the Republic became much more including special interest lobbyists, social group, charitable association and a patriotic organization.¹⁴ The WRC followed suit, attaching itself to the GAR. The UCV would also become this type of organization for the Confederate veterans and on a much more local and state level rather than the national level.

¹³ Abraham Lincoln, "Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address 1865," in *Milestone Documents in American History: Exploring the Primary Sources that Shaped America*, ed. Gerry Anders et al. (Dallas: Salem Press, Inc, 2008), 854.

¹⁴ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic: 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), XIII-XIV.

Veterans are citizens who at one time laid their lives on the line to protect those of citizens. It is only natural that these veterans progress and become political on one level or another. Civil War veterans and their organizations were no different. The major contribution of the GAR was the fight for veterans' pensions, something that is well documented. As the hallmark of their political activity, any academic piece about the GAR must include discussion about pension. This however, was only one facet of their political activity. Their support could get politicians elected, but they also did not shy away from condemning politicians who did not promote their agenda.

During the Civil War, the struggle of a soldier's right to vote helped to shape voting patterns after the war. Prior to 1864 many states refused to allow soldiers to vote via absentee ballot. The Democratic Party saw soldiers and veterans' tendency to vote for the Republican Party, so they attempted to prevent the soldiers from being able to vote. States controlled by the democrats prohibited the use of absentee ballots and thus soldiers were unable to cast their votes. This alienated the soldiers and angered them, pushing them toward the Republican Party. This loyalty toward the Republican Party would continue even after state governments granted the right to vote using absentee ballots.¹⁵

After the war, a major political and social change occurred; African-Americans became free in the eyes of the Constitution as well as granted a semblance of rights for the first time. Sadly, for African-American veterans the fight to exercise these rights continued long after the war and required them to fight harder than white veterans. The New Orleans Riots in 1866

¹⁵ Donald S. Inbody, "Grand Army of the Republic or Grand Army of the Republicans?: Political Party and Ideological Preferences of American Enlisted Personnel" (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 67-69.

illustrates their political struggle against status quo antebellum attitudes toward African-Americans. The southern whites made attempts to regain the power lost because of the war's outcome. An example of their success is Confederate pensions.

The Civil War created many disabled men in both the North and the South. Brian Edward Donovan points out that the devastation of war on men is crucial to understand, but remains under-studied throughout history.¹⁶ Prior to the Civil War the definition of disabled had two categories. The traditional definition of “the blind, the halt, the lame, etc.” placed those in this category of disabled under the care of local resources.¹⁷ However, the second category was the small population of those fought and became injured in wars. Because of this, the federal government gave them a small pension.¹⁸ The Civil War needed a higher mobilization of soldiers thus they began drafting the public for soldiers. The increase of soldiers resulted in more men injured from fighting in the war.¹⁹ With the government drafting citizens who become injured in service, than naturally, the government is responsible for the care of those citizens. Before conscription, the Union already offered a disability pension to soldiers. The government hoped that this pension would increase volunteer enlistment and avoid a draft. No one wanted to deny these men a pension when they had sacrificed so much and as a result marginalize them. Union veterans took advantage of this sentiment by negotiating disability and pensions as campaign points.²⁰

¹⁶ Brian Edward Donovan, “The Harder Heroism of the Hospital: Union Veterans and the Creation of Disability,” (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 2015), 1.

¹⁷ Donovan, 4.

¹⁸ Donovan, 4.

¹⁹ Theda Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (Spring, 1993), 90, <http://corvette.salemstate.edu:2100/stable/2152487> (accessed Jan 12, 2018)

²⁰ Donovan, 5.

Grand Army of the Republic members also strove to become politicians at various levels of government. General Ulysses S. Grant would become President Grant and was a dues-paying member of the GAR as of 1877. He would go on to appoint thousands of veterans and widows to jobs within the government at positions in the postal service and in customs.²¹ Grant was not the only president that aided Civil War veterans with jobs. Benjamin Harrison appointed James Tanner as Commissioner of Pensions after showing tremendous loyalty toward Harrison during his campaigns for various political offices.²²

While white veterans enjoyed political success, African-American veterans did not share in this experience. It is true that being a member of the GAR gave African-American veterans more of a voice, but they did not have easier time as white veterans. Donald R. Shaffer makes the point that the African-American veteran existence gave a stronger voice to the suffrage movement because they served in the army, and therefore should hold equal rights as white citizens.²³ Regrettably, citizenship and the rights that go with it did not come quickly or easily for African-Americans. Upon the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in 1865, Andrew Johnson succeeded to Presidency. Johnson was a Tennessee Unionist who remained indifferent to African-Americans and their citizenship cause. This was even more apparent when he quickly reestablished citizenship and civil rights to southern white men. This led to harsh and unfair state laws collectively called Jim Crow laws.²⁴ Andrew Johnson felt that his amnesty

²¹ Joan Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press., 2009), 184-185.

²² James Alan Marten, *America's Corporal: James Tanner in War and Peace* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 90.

²³ Donald Robert Shaffer, "Marching On: African-American Civil War Veterans in Postbellum America, 1865-1951" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 84.

²⁴ Shaffer, 85.

proclamation of May 1865 would finally bring peace to the nation, but in reality, it allowed those who previously rebelled against the Union to elect Confederate veterans and former secessionists into positions of power.²⁵ This led to the struggle between the African-Americans living in the south and white southerners.

While the Grand Army of the Republic held the primary mission of fraternity, loyalty, and charity a different unofficial mission emerged. This was the drive for historical preservation and the historical memory of the Civil War. Naturally, the Confederates held a desire to preserve history, albeit a more positive history of themselves. The Confederates attempted to pass down a historical legacy that portrayed their role in a more pleasing way with the Lost Cause version of the Civil War.

Joan Waugh points out that as Grant was growing ever sicker and closer to death; visitors, especially veterans visited and marched by his home out of respect for the man who had led the Union to victory. Grant would show the same respect for his men by saluting them. Waugh argues that in doing this, veterans and Grant showed honor for their service and remembered what they had fought for. They also demonstrated loyalty to the values they had fought for, namely, the emancipation of slaves. This, she points out, contrasts with the southern recollections of the Lost Cause proposed by the Confederates and their families. The elements of

²⁵ "President Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation.: Restoration to Rights of Property Except in Slaves. an Oath of Loyalty as a Condition Precedent. Legality of Confiscation Proceedings Recognized. Exception of Certain Offenders from this Amnesty. by these Special Applications for Pardon may be made. Reorganization in North Carolina. Appointment of a Provisional Governor. A State Convention to be Chosen by Loyal Citizens. the Machinery of the Federal Government to be Put in Operation. AMNESTY PROCLAMATION." *New York Times*, May 30, 1865, <https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/91902306/DB2F0205EBEB449EPQ/2?accountid=13661> (accessed December 10, 2017).

the Lost Cause are: the roots of war lay in states' rights, not slavery, the north did not defeat the south, but simply overwhelmed them with their larger numbers and supplies. Lastly, they honored their soldiers by citing their bravery and determination to emulate their hero, General Robert E. Lee.²⁶

The North worked to preserve a wartime memory by memorializing fallen comrades. This memorialization led to the creation of a formalized Memorial Day by Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan's General Order number eleven given on May 5, 1868. Some cheered this day while others feared it. Those who feared it, expressed the sentiment that it would only keep alive the war, preventing the healing the nation needed. Some neither feared nor cheered it, but instead questioned the cost of such a day.²⁷ Those that welcomed this day of memory won out as celebrations with parades and memorials continue into the present. The fallen from each conflict since the Civil War remain honored and are remembered for their sacrifice. The successors to the GAR, the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, continue to honor their ancestors with these memorials.

Almost immediately after the Civil War the South attempted to explain and validate the conflict. Their attempt, would last for many years after the war.²⁸ This justification continues in one form or another with the controversy regarding Confederate memorials and the ethics involved in maintain them. Pre-Spanish-American War literature promoting the Lost Cause flooded the nation with idealist images of antebellum south. This literature embedded itself in

²⁶ Waugh, 185.

²⁷ Hosea W. Rood, "The Grand Army of the Republic," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 6, no. 4 (1923), <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/4630452> (accessed Oct 1, 2017), 404-406.

²⁸ Mary L. Wilson, "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia: The Programs and the People" (PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2004), 1.

the nation's collective memory and many in the north forgot the true cause of the Civil War.²⁹ Southern women advocated the Lost Cause just as hard as men. Southern organizations for women at times became some of the biggest advocates pushing for a positive memory of the Confederacy. Some gender historians point out that the gentle Confederate women fueled the unremorseful rebellious attitude that still exists in some southern locales. Unionists seethed over reports of Confederate celebrations.³⁰

Both the Union and Confederate sides made positive contributions to our historical preservation. One of the most famous are the reunions, especially those at Gettysburg. These reunions were well documented through newspaper articles and other primary sources. Reports described men crossing the battlefield as they had done during the war but instead of fighting or even mock fighting they extended their hands in peace with their former enemy. Notable Gettysburg reunions with extensive reporting include the fifty-year and the seventy-fifth-year reunion. These gatherings continue into the 21st century in the form of Remembrance Day celebrations in Gettysburg. Another original contribution of these organizations and continued by their descendants are encampments. Veterans would attend these events, dressing in uniforms and sleeping in tents to remember the days they had served in the army. Eventually the encampments transformed into reenactments.³¹

The Grand Army of the Republic and the Women's Relief Corps as well as the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic helped establish historical memory through their push for

²⁹ Wilson, 1-2.

³⁰ Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2012), 69.

³¹ Tom Dunning, "Civil War Re-Enactments: Performance as a Cultural Practice," *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 21, no 1 (July 2002), 63.

patriotic education. Academics like Charles Frank Speierl claim that the GAR's influence on education grew out of fear. They feared that the United States was under attack from foreign ideas. Speierl claims veterans felt the need to combat this threat of foreign ideology through education. To do this the GAR supported the elimination of foreign language classes, pro-American texts and a review of teachers for loyalty.³²

Patriotic instruction did not remain exclusive to the Grand Army of the Republic. The Women's Relief Corp would hand out American flags and encourage patriotism especially within schools. They were mindful of Confederate influences on the curriculum about the war. The women devoted considerable energy on establishing patriotic traditions in American schools.³³ Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War continue the traditions of the forefathers by educating the public, particularly school children about Civil War, Reconstruction and the Grand Army of the Republic in general. The Fredrick Lander Post #5 in the Lynn, Massachusetts brings guest speakers to two high schools in Lynn and provides other educational opportunities.

Most people know that African-Americans fought in the American Civil War thanks to movies such as *Glory* and *Buffalo Soldiers*. For obvious reasons the Union armed African-Americans on a much larger scale than their Confederates counterparts. This meant African-Americans veterans were eligible to join veteran organizations especially in the north. The GAR welcomed African-Americans on the national level, however on state department level and local post level whites and African-Americans did not always integrate. Regardless, at whichever

³² Speierl, 5.

³³ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 269-270.

level the African-American veterans joined with the GAR remained a great outlet for African Americans to participate in politics.

Just like white veterans, African-Americans felt a need to maintain friendships that developed during their time in the service. This need along with the feeling that their duty remained incomplete resulted in the formation of the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League. In time members of the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League joined the GAR after the main need of the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League became fulfilled.³⁴ When the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League dissolved, members went on to join the Grand Army of the Republic which presented a problem for the Grand Army of the Republic. Requirements to join remained simple: you must have received an honorable discharge from the Union army, navy or marines. The GAR never mentions race as a requirement but sadly, racial prejudice existed regardless. Some white GAR members refused to socialize with black veterans, while other white GAR members could not forget the valor shown by the African-Americans. This created debate within the Grand Army of the Republic on all levels.

The Women's Relief Corps was not exempt from racial tensions. It allowed all loyal women to join their ranks, but eventually race became an issue for women in the south. White southerners made attempts to segregate themselves from African-American chapters. Initially national leaders came to the African-American women's defense.³⁵ Alas the WRC did not maintain this attitude and accepted segregation in southern chapters to prevent alienation from these white members.³⁶

³⁴ Shaffer, 246-247.

³⁵ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 271-272.

³⁶ Silber, 272.

It was through the efforts of organizations such as the GAR that a national identity and pride was solidified. Prior to the Civil War, regional pride continued over from the colonial period. The Constitution replaced the Articles of Confederation, a document that loosely united the colonies under a federal government. The Articles were weak, giving little to no power to that federal government. Under the new Constitution, the federal government was granted more power over the states. There remained one part of this document that prevented the states from fully uniting; slavery. The Civil War, although tragic, along with the welcoming attitudes of its veterans helped solidify a national identity.

Racial tensions continued long after the war, even though African-Americans nobly served in the military. Equality did not fully come to African-Americans until the 1960's, however, the GAR's nation-wide acceptance of African-Americans into their organization was the start of racial equality. Women's equality is very similar, this is the start of equality for women. These veteran and auxiliary organizations were the start of equality for both women and men. Small victories are what win wars and these are a few of those small victories for African-Americans and for women of the United States.

All the patriotic and veteran organizations that came out of the Civil War became activist organizations. They lobbied for patriotic education, for disability rights, for better pensions for veterans. As a result of their lobbying they obtained newer and better rights for women and African-Americans. Gradually these populations went on to gain even conditions. These veteran-led organizations did all of this while taking matters into their own hands through charity for brotherhood and loyalty.

Chapter 1: Brotherhoods and the Women that Support Them

The formation of Civil War veteran organizations occurred almost immediately after the war. Historians and the public are lucky that Robert Beath wrote a comprehensive history of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1889. According to the Library of Congress, it has remained the standard resource of GAR's history. This work was the first major history of the organization and derives credibility from the fact that Beath served as an early commander-in-chief. The United Confederate Veterans would understandably not create a compendium of primary source literature for future historians. The UCV did publish a monthly magazine for veterans titled *Confederate Veterans*. For several decades after the war Union and Confederate veterans held reunions. However, these traditions did not truly die with the death of the last veterans. Interest groups such as the Civil War Round Table, the Sons of the United Veterans of the Civil War, and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans keep the memory of these men alive. These organizations keep the memory alive through reenactments, lectures for schools and public, charity, and encampments.

The Grand Army of the Republic

The Grand Army of the Republic was founded in 1866 upon the very basic principles of fraternity, charity, and loyalty. Through the principle of fraternity, the GAR embraced all those who enlisted in the Union Army. They embraced charity by supporting those veterans and their families regardless of class, race, or region of the country. The members also showed their

allegiance to the United States by denouncing anything that weakened loyalty to the country, provoked rebellion and treason.¹

To understand how why the GAR one on must look at the final days of the Civil War. In 1865, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton recommended the formal review of the armies of Generals Meade and Sherman in Washington D.C. before the final discharge of the armies. Citizens decorated public and private buildings to celebrate victory and preservation of the Union. Review stands were became set up along the parade route.² Citizens hung a banner on the front of the capitol, which read “The only national debt we can never pay is the debt we owe the victorious Union soldiers.”³ The GAR carried on this tradition of formal review at various encampments and parades. Sons of Veterans Reserve, the military department of the Sons of the Union Veterans, also continued these parades with the Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies.⁴ This victory parade set a precedent and tradition for the veterans and their sons that organizations like the GAR upheld. Robert Beath describes this parade as a group of approximately 150,000 men marching through the capital. These veterans, after serving with valor had saved the Union and had arrived to complete the final requirements before rejoining a nation at peace as citizens. Beath transcribes what he believes are the thoughts of many of those men as they marched past the viewing stands: about their fallen president, Abraham Lincoln, and remembering their fallen comrades. Many of these deceased comrades, as Beath describes, had been childhood friends who answered the call by the townful to preserve the Union. These men

¹ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1889), III.

² Beath, 2-3.

³ Beath, 3.

⁴ "Remembrance Day Parade and Ceremonies | Event in Gettysburg PA.", <http://www.destinationgettysburg.com/event/details/2626> (accessed Oct 21, 2017)

comrades had shared meals in camp, blankets, shared the meager contents of haversacks and canteens.⁵ One can only guess the degree in which these survivors marching through Washington D.C., and all veterans of the war missed their fallen comrades and the recently assassinated president.

Robert Beath points to the number of men who fought to preserve the Union. As of in April 1865, there were more than a million of men in the United States military with a larger number of men previously enrolled and discharged from the military. Beath points out that these men played a crucial role in the war.⁶ It should be no surprise that the veterans shared a sense of camaraderie regardless of their branch and felt a desire to reunited with one another. Reunions began by regiments and then grew to larger societies such as the Third Army Corps Union. It formed on March 16, 1862. General Daniel E. Sickles took command in February of 1863 serving until the loss of his leg at Gettysburg. Others followed such as the First Division, the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, and Society of the Army of the Cumberland. Many veteran organizations have their origins in the years before the end of the war.

During Sherman's Expedition to Meridian, Reverend William J. Rutledge's, who served as chaplain of the 14th Illinois Infantry, suggested that soldiers who shared the immense suffering would want to form a fellowship to preserve the friendships. Eventually, Rutledge and several other men formed the Grand Army of the Republic in 1866. Early names included The Advanced Guard of America or even the Grand Army of Progress.⁷ Grand Army of the Republic became the recognized title of the organization. From the early concept of the organizations till

⁵ Beath, 9.

⁶ Beath, 2.

⁷ Beath, 33-35.

May 1869 no rules for naming a post existed. After May 1869, the GAR established a provision that allowed a post to use the name of a deceased person who fought during the Civil War or a well-known person during the war that showed allegiance to the Union. A restriction of one post within the department could take that name, and the department commander needed to approve the name.⁸

Robert Beath points out the political leanings of the Grand Army of the Republic. He indicates that to understand these inclinations one must look at the political situation of the time. Reconstruction had started, with Lincoln paying close attention to reuniting the North and the South.⁹ The last public speech given by Lincoln introduced the concept of reconstruction. Lincoln vowed that reconstruction would be “magnanimous, forgiving, and generous” as he spoke to a delegation of Virginians.¹⁰ Robert Beath argues that the assassination of Lincoln truly deprived and retarded the generous feelings in the North that had accompanied victory. Andrew Johnson assumed the presidency under the conditions of Lincoln’s murder and many believed he should condemn Booth and his supporters. While many others feared this judgment would result in a more vengeful reconstruction through policies. However, President Johnson widely distanced himself from the Republican party, causing hostile political discussion.¹¹

⁸ Robert B. Beath, *The Grand Army Blue-Book: Containing the Rules and Regulations of the Grand Army of the Republic and Decisions and Opinions Thereon with Additional Notes*. (Philadelphia: Burk & McFetridge, 1884), <http://archive.org/details/grandarmybluebo00beatgoog> (accessed Jan 10, 2018), 3.

⁹ Beath, 24.

¹⁰ Beath, 24.

¹¹ Beath, 24-25.

Hierarchy of the Grand Army of the Republic

The Grand Army of the Republic on at the local, state and national level. Locally veterans organized into posts. Small towns might have one post, while larger cities might have several posts. A department usually ran one state, however, in areas such as the lower south a department might control a couple to several states since fewer Union veterans settled in those regions. The department would oversee all the posts in the departments in their regions. The departments reported to the national GAR leadership. Posts sent representatives to department encampments to vote for department officers. Representatives from departments then sent representatives to national encampments to vote for national officers.¹²

Robert Beath, the author of the most comprehensive history of the Grand Army of the Republic in fact served as Commander in the GAR. This fact suggests the obvious bias but his military service and leadership role within the GAR grants him credibility. This book offers details regarding the administrations of the various National Commanders. Although including every detail was impossible, he outlines his purpose in recording the GAR's history. Members of the Grand Army of the Republic longed to have their story transcribed into a historical record, both individually and of their organization emphasizing their tenets of fraternity, charity, and loyalty. Robert Beath deserves proper recognition for his preservation of the history of this organization. He describes his process for writing this history; admitting he classified some records as imperfect and recognizing that others no longer existed due to a fire.¹³

¹² Donald Robert Shaffer, "Marching On: African-American Civil War Veterans in Postbellum America, 1865-1951" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 251.

¹³ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1889), V.

Beath's method for giving the history of the GAR is to offer as much details as possible. The consequences of this method are that it is tediously volume. He gathered these details by looking over the personal papers of members as well as those collected by the organizations as well as his own interviews and recollections. Beath does an exceptional job in collecting and narrating the history of the Grand Army of the Republic both nationally and department level while not acknowledging several posts in each department.

With the death of the last Union veteran, Albert Woolson on August 2, 1956, the Grand Army of the Republic truly ceased to exist.¹⁴ The Grand Army of the Republic disbanded at the last encampment in Indianapolis held in 1949.¹⁵ It was Woolson's death finalized the Grand Army of the Republic. Upon his death, there was no chance of opportunity to organize under that banner again. It was the end of a legacy.

United Confederate Veterans

The Confederates organizations started later and were much smaller than the GAR. The first Confederate veteran organization formed with officers of the 3rd North Carolina in 1866 at a funeral. Soon after the 3rd North Carolina formed Maryland's Society of the Army and Navy of the Confederate States, Old First Virginia Infantry and Pegram's Battalion in Richmond formed. Various representatives from the various local Confederate veterans' organizations met to form a larger Confederate organization. In 1884 this organization received their charter with the following missions; to preserve the memory of fallen comrades and to care for those permanently

¹⁴ Bruce Catton, "The Death of the Last Union Soldier and of an Era: Muffled Role for Grand Army," *Life Magazine*, August 20, 1956

¹⁵ "C.L. Chappel-102 Official of G.A.R.: Senior Vice Commander Who Missed Top Post when Group Ended Encampments Dies." *New York Times*, September 21, 1949, <https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/docview/105932014?accountid=13661> (accessed December 28, 2018)

disabled in the war. They also desired to maintain and protect the brotherhood that came from the shared adversities and dangers shared by the veterans. This organization also expressed a willingness to desired to extend the olive branch to their former adversaries on occasion.¹⁶ It was with this that the more permanent Robert E. Lee Camp No. 1 formed in Richmond in April 1883. The Lee camp would go on to take the lead in organizing the United Confederate Veterans in 1889 with as many as 160,000 men joining.¹⁷

The Union veterans saw a promise of help from the Lincoln and the federal government. This promise did not extend to those that had fought for the Confederacy. However, the Confederates did find an equivalent in a bill passed by the Confederate House of Representatives late in 1863 that established veteran homes.¹⁸ James Marten points out that even though this did not meet the same standard Lincoln spoke of, it was still a charitable gesture that the former Confederate states honored through veteran homes and state-paid pensions.¹⁹

Marten is a historian at Marquette University where he serves as the Chair of the history department and American history courses, focusing on the Civil War era. In his book, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America*, Marten starts by discussing what the book is not. One of those things, according to James Marten, is a

¹⁶ Virginia Historical Society, "United Confederate Veterans. R.E. Lee Camp, no. 1 | Virginia Historical Society," Virginia Historical Society, <http://www.vahistorical.org/collections-and-resources/how-we-can-help-your-research/researcher-resources/finding-aids/united> (accessed January 13, 2018)

¹⁷ James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014., 2014) (accessed Oct 9, 2017), 12.

¹⁸ Confederate States of America. Congress, *An Act to Provide for Wounded and Disabled Soldiers and Asylum to be called "The Veteran Soldiers Home."* (Richmond, 1863), 1, accessed January 13, 2018,

[https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=dul1.ark:/13960/t06x04g1c;view=1up;seq=1.](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=dul1.ark:/13960/t06x04g1c;view=1up;seq=1)

¹⁹ Marten, 12-13.

comprehensive account of Civil War veterans. He claims that this book describes the lives of a large number of Americans in the period after the Civil War, but he also points out that one of the most common considerations of many Americans at that time was a shared military experience. This applied to veterans from both sides of the conflict.²⁰ In essence it is comprehensive history of the veterans in the post-Civil War period despite Marten's argument that it is not. In the north, forty-one percent of white men born between 1822 and 1845 served in the Union Army, and this number goes up to sixty percent for those born between 1837 and 1845. Those born in 1843, were the men who turned eighteen in 1861, the statistics raise to eighty-one percent. Data collected on Southern men is similar to that from the North.²¹ These numbers demonstrate that any history about the American people in this age bracket is a history of the veterans in one form or another.

Dr. Marten attempts to explore the way that white veterans of both the Union and the Confederate armies reentered society during the Gilded Age. His book explores how that generation, both civilian and veteran interacted.²² Simply put, Marten argues that veterans in that time period "were set apart and the specific ways in which this process took place encompass subsets of the larger, distinct group of old soldiers."²³ He does note that the sad stories of ruined men that appear within the pages of his book might only speak for a small portion of the actual veterans pointing out few men could claim that the war severely disabled them. In reality many of the veterans might have viewed the war as a contributing factor in their minor handicaps.

²⁰ Marten, 3.

²¹ Marten, 3-4.

²² Marten, 5.

²³ Marten, 5.

Women's Auxiliary Groups

A woman joining social groups not unusual, especially in the period surrounding the Civil War. The post-Civil War Era saw an organization of women that became attached to the Grand Army of the Republic. These organizations were second in popularity only to the temperance societies. By the late 1860s, the women of the Northern states began to gather in various clubs with the purpose of fundraising and fostering support for the men who organized veteran societies. By 1882, with support from the GAR, a group of Massachusetts women led the way in unifying several clubs into the Women's Relief Corps which became the official women's auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic. The WRC included women who previously belonged exclusively to church based organizations. Eventually, the WRC spread throughout the nation, including the South. Initially it would welcome white women and black women. By 1900 the Women's Relief Corps had expanded to include nearly 120,000 members within about 3,000 local chapters.²⁴

In its early days, the WRC focused on supporting Union veterans and participated in the GAR's activities including the important Memorial Day observances. From the earliest celebrations of Memorial Day, the Grand Army of the Republic and the accompanying Women's Relief Corp played a crucial role in pushing and planning its observation. WRC members gathered flowers and flags to decorate graves and coaxed school children to participate in pageants and parades commemorating battles and soldiers. Nina Silber argues that this day gave women the rare the opportunity for public expression as the WRC members would give speeches or read poems. Silber points out that every chapter of this organization would participate in

²⁴ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 268-269.

Memorial Day and accents that fact with an anecdote about a small group of African-American women who were few and poor but never left a grave bare or in disrepair. Gradually the WRC expanded their mission to include other patriotic activities.²⁵

Women's Relief Corp membership was different from that of the GAR but also from other women's organizations that sprung from the Civil War. In the early days, they faced criticism as well as competition from organizations with strict membership requirements such as admitting only female relatives of Union soldiers, while the WRC accepted all loyal women into its organization. It was this practice that secured the support of the GAR as well as gaining a larger following than the other women's organizations.²⁶

Southern Women

South the women demonstrated patriotism to the former Confederacy in a comparable way to their northern counterparts. The women of the Confederacy founded the United Daughters of the Confederacy. According to their website the United Daughters of the Confederacy was established in Nashville, Tennessee on September 10, 1894. The original members came from other numerous women's associations including those from hospitals, sewing and knitting. These women worked throughout the Civil War to help the Confederate soldiers. During the Reconstruction Era, their roles evolved into helping veterans and preserving the memory of the war through work in cemeteries, memorials, the various monuments, and Confederate Home Associations. The United Daughters of the Confederacy served as auxiliaries to Confederate veteran organizations

²⁵ Silber, 269.

²⁶ Silber, 270.

The Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veteran were born from esprit de corps shared by veterans of the Civil War, and were supplemented by the WRC and the Daughters of the Confederacy who attached themselves to the GAR and the UCV respectively. Other organizations established themselves based on their relationships with the veterans. Organizations such as the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Sons of Confederate Veterans as well as daughters of each of the war and numerous interest groups all have had lengthy membership rolls. One could argue that the Civil War has produced the largest number of organizations related to a single topic. There were and continue to be a great number of hobbyists, descendent organizations, women support organizations and all-around brotherhood and sisterhood organizations. Encampments, lectures, parades and charity works continue to honor the men and women who sacrificed during the Civil War.

Chapter 2: The Fight Continues

Veterans are citizens who at one time laid their lives on the line to protect the lives of other citizens. This duty encourages many of these citizens to become political after or even during their military service. Civil War veterans and their organizations are no different. One of the major battles the Grand Army of the Republic undertook was to provide veterans with a pension. This was a major focus of their political activities. The GAR became highly politicized, lobbying for causes ranging from pensions to campaigning for or against politicians. The struggle for soldiers to cast a vote during the Civil War helped shape their post-war voting patterns. Prior to and during a portion of the war, many states refused to allow soldiers to vote via absentee ballot. Soldiers and veterans tended to vote for the Republican Party and the Democratic Party felt threatened. This leaning toward the Republican Party would continue after state governments granted the right to vote using absentee ballots after the Civil War.

The Reconstruction period also marks the constitutional emancipation of African-Americans and the granting of some semblance of civil rights. However, just because they had rights on paper did not mean reality was without fights. African-Americans veterans, more so than white veterans needed to fight for their political and civil rights. Events such as the New Orleans Riots in 1866 exemplify this struggle. The southern whites also made attempts to regain power they had lost with their defeat in the Civil War. This in many ways was successful and resulted in Confederate veterans receiving pensions from southern states.

The Veteran Republican Vote

The United States had not seen a conflict where so many soldiers stationed and fighting away from their home state since the American Revolution. Donald S. Inbody points out, in his

doctoral dissertation, that the elections held in 1862 held the distinction of sparking the first questions about how and whether active-duty military personnel should vote. Prior to that election, the United States had a small Army and a smaller Navy which created few voting concerns. Many states controlled voting with laws about procedure and designated locations confined with state boundaries. These laws made it illegal for a soldier outside of their home state, regardless of where they were stationed under military order to vote. Some states did allow voting outside of home precincts if it could be proved that the voter was out of state for official state or federal business, but sadly, soldiers remained excluded from this provision. By the 1864 general election, roughly one million men were serving in uniform with the majority stationed out of their home state.¹

The 1864 elections brought about changes in that most states took steps to ensure soldiers outside of their registered state could vote. Options voting by proxy or as Wisconsin did in 1862, by absentee voting. Some states went further, sending election commissioners to the fields to supervise the elections. No states order an identical support system. Some states opposed these extra measures for the soldiers; citing favoritism, fraud or other reasons. The Democrats argued against such changes because they believed the soldiers would vote Republican. One such state was Illinois, whose state legislature was controlled by Democrats. That states legislature refused to create laws allowing soldiers to vote by absentee ballot, or other measures. Stricter still, Indiana would go on to refuse to approve any soldier to vote while on active duty.²

¹ Donald S. Inbody, "Grand Army of the Republic or Grand Army of the Republicans?: Political Party and Ideological Preferences of American Enlisted Personnel" (PhD diss., The University of Texas at Austin, 2009), 67-68.

² Inbody, 68-69.

The efforts of the Democratic Party as they undermined attempts to make accommodations for the soldiers created marginalization among the of Union troops. This appears to have backfired on the Democratic Party when around 150,000 soldiers cast absentee ballots from the field in 1864. Many soldiers did return home to cast a vote with Inbody pointing out that no record of how many soldiers could return home exists. However, of those 150,000 soldiers' absentee votes 119,754 voted for Abraham Lincoln and 34,291 voted for the Democratic candidate McClellan.³

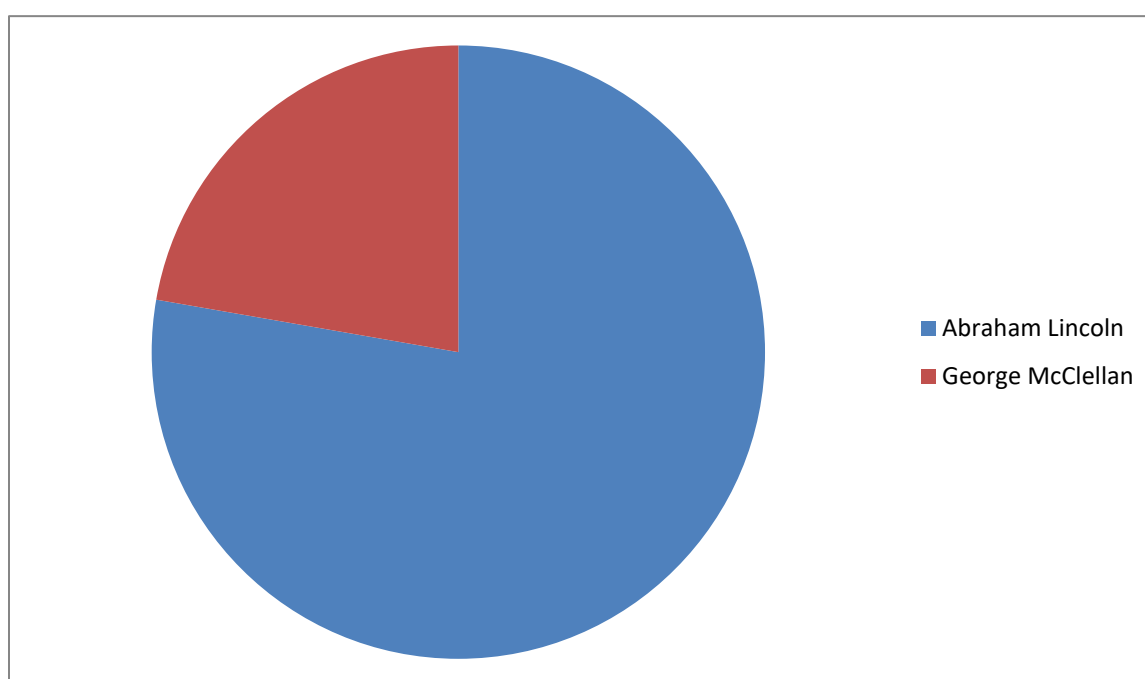


Figure 1: The Presidential Soldier Absentee Votes

Dr. Inbody is a political science professor at Texas State University.⁴ He presents a clear picture of the history of voting among soldiers leading up to and including the American Civil War in his doctoral dissertation, as well as the soldiers influence on the Republican Party. While

³ Inbody, 69.

⁴ "Don Inbody: Department of Political Science: Texas State University." Texas State University, <http://www.polisci.txstate.edu/people/faculty/inbody.html> (accessed December 10, 2017).

Dr. Inbody's intent was not to show the voting habits of Civil War veterans solely, it does raise key facts about these men. The fact that many of the soldiers remained loyal to the Republican Party is critical to understanding the political aspirations of the Grand Army of the Republic. In his dissertation, he writes about the relationship between the military and political parties. He claims that military voting since the American Civil War suggests that the primary party identification of within the military tends toward the Republican Party although the demographics data does not support this. Further he points out that minority groups in the general population tend to identify with the Democratic Party rather than the Republican Party.

In 1866, a group of Union veterans formed the GAR which became the first modern veterans' organization. Stuart McConnell argues that the GAR, in essence, operated as a wing of the Republican Party with their support of Union veterans and their campaigns for various political offices.⁵ Inbody points out that a decline in the GAR's membership began in 1872 and reaching its lowest point in 1876. It then shifted its political activity to the question of pensions. By 1890 the Grand Army of the Republic's membership had increased to 409,489 which mirrored the strength of its influence on politics and daily life. This political influence became important when the GAR supported the Republican Party and condemned the Democratic Party. The GAR labeled the Democrats as traitors who had spoken out against the war and would have allowed the south to secede.⁶ Regardless of the actual membership numbers of the fact remains that a large portion of American men actively participated in the war. Stuart McConnell points out that approximately 2 million men out of a population of 22 million served in the Union army

⁵ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic: 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 113.

⁶ Inbody, 70.

and 750,000 men served in the Confederacy out of a population of 9 million (3.5 million of which were slaves). He concludes that this means even in 1890 a resounding 2.3 percent of the population would have been as a veteran.⁷ It should stand noted at this stage of American history, women did not have the right to vote. This means that although 2.3 percent does not seem like a large amount, it was a generous portion of the enfranchised population. It should be no wonder that the veterans wielded the political power they did.

A Fair Pension to those who Sacrificed

The United States has long offered pensions for veterans especially who were disabled in service. A law from Plymouth in 1639 stated that those injured while defending the colony against Indian attacks would receive a pension, other colonies followed Plymouth's model. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress attempted to encourage the enlistment and prevent desertions by passing the first national pension law. It granted half pay for life to any soldier who suffered the loss of limb or any other serious disability. Sadly, the Continental Congress could not follow through as it had neither the cash nor the authority, to make such payments. These payments became the responsibility of the individual states who followed the law in varying degrees, resulting in only around 3,000 Revolutionary War veterans ever drawing a pension. However, veterans, who served to the end of the war received public land in payment. With the U.S. Constitution ratified in 1789 and the subsequent passing of the first federal pension legislation, the first Congress assumed the role of paying veteran benefits by carrying over pension law passed by Continental Congress. The pension law that followed the ratification of the Constitution went on to see veterans and their dependents from the War of

⁷ Stuart McConnell, "A Social History of the Grand Army of the Republic, 1867-1900" (PhD diss., The John Hopkins University, 1987), 67-68.

1812 gaining pensions, resulting in 2,200 pensioners by 1816. That same year saw a rise in stipends for all disabled veterans and the granting of half-pay pensions for a length of five years to widows and orphans of soldiers of the War of 1812 based on the cost of living under the authority of Congress. The 1818 Service Pension Law would provide a new concept of benefits by offering a pension based on need. The law declared that any veteran who had served in the American Revolution and who needed help could collect a fixed pension for life at the rate of \$20 a month for officers and \$8 a month for enlisted men. Previously, laws entitled only disabled veterans to a pension, however, under this new law pensioners numbers were increased from 2,200 to 17,730 between 1816 and 1820. The cost of pensions increased from \$120,000 to \$1.4 million.⁸

By the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861, there were about 80,000 veterans nationwide. At the end of the Civil War, another 1.9 million veterans joined their ranks.⁹ Initially, it became necessary to establish a policy regarding disloyal pensioners. To obtain or continue drawing a veteran's pension an individual had to take an oath of allegiance.¹⁰ At the war's conclusion only the Union veterans were eligible for veteran benefits, while Confederate veterans would receive no federal benefits. The barring of benefits to Confederates remained in place until 1958 when Congress readdressed the issue by granting an official pardon to

⁸ The Department of Veteran Affairs, *VA History in Brief*, 3-4, accessed December 2, 2017, https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/archives/docs/history_in_brief.pdf.

⁹ The Department of Veteran Affairs, 4.

¹⁰ William Henry Glasson, "History of Military Pension Legislation in the United States," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1900), 71, accessed December 14, 2017, <https://archive.org/stream/historymilitary00glasgoog#page/n72/mode/2up>.

Confederates soldiers. This granted benefits to the sole surviving Confederate soldier.¹¹

Congress would in 1862 go further in granting pensions declaring:

that if any officer, non-commissioned officer, musician, or private of the army, including regulars, volunteers, and militia, or any officer, warrant, or petty officer, musician, seaman, ordinary seaman, flotilla-man, marine, clerk, landsman, pilot, or other person in the navy or marine corps, has been, since the fourth day of March, eighteen hundred and sixty-one, or shall hereafter be, disabled by reason of any wound received or disease contracted while in the service of the United States, and in the line of duty, he shall, upon making due proof of the fact according to such forms and regulations as are or may be provided by or in pursuance of law, be placed upon the list of invalid pensions of the United States.¹²

Congress also declared that if the said person died in the service of the United States then his widow was entitled to a pension for the duration of her widowhood. If there was no widow, his children would receive the pension until the age of sixteen.¹³ It was the first time that the United States recognized and included a need to compensate for diseases acquired while in service. Additionally, all Union veterans received priority in the Homestead Act with a discounted price of \$1.25 an acre.¹⁴

Stuart McConnell is a professor of history at Pitzer College where his specialty areas include nationalism and the Civil War-Reconstruction eras.¹⁵ His concentration on area of history research within a historian's view on the pension issue for Civil War veterans as well as an overall view of the Grand Army of the Republic. He has published a book about the GAR, which was the subject of his dissertation. His book is a narrative about the GAR and its political

¹¹ The Department of Veteran Affairs, 4.

¹² U.S. Congress, THIRTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS, second session. *An Act to Grant Pensions*. (Washington, D.C., 1862), 566, accessed December 5, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/37th-congress/session-2/c37s2ch166.pdf>.

¹³ U.S. Congress, 567.

¹⁴ The Department of Veteran Affairs, 4.

¹⁵ "Stuart McConnell: Department of History: Pitzer College" Pitzer College, <https://www.pitzer.edu/academics/faculty/stuart-mcconnell/> (accessed December 22, 2017).

lobbying while coping with veteran issues. These same issues plague contemporary society as much as they did during the days of the Grand Army of the Republic. McConnell addresses the argument of social obligation to the injured, poor, maintaining memories of war during peace, and the meaning of the term “nation”. McConnell mentions Mary Dearing’s early thesis that the GAR rarely sided with Democrats, leaning instead toward Republicanism. McConnell goes further by claiming that this is only part of the GAR’s story. Instead, the Grand Army of the Republic influence is deeper, especially after Grant’s reelection to the presidency. The Grand Army of the Republic should be considered a special interest lobbyist, social group, charitable organization and patriotic organization at least.¹⁶

Dr. William Henry Glasson worked as an economist and served as the first dean of Duke University Graduate School. He received degrees from Cornell University, Columbia University, and Duke University and taught in a range of subjects including political science and history. His work applies an economic history perspective into the discussion of the veteran pensions.¹⁷ In his dissertation Glasson described the evolution of pension legislature from pre-American Revolution up to 1899 and is critical of the pension system. This paper describes and evaluates the evolution of soldiers’ pensions. Glasson states that the laws on the record books as of 1900, the time of the creation of his piece, is one that awards pensions veterans of the Civil War and their widows where disability and death did not occur during military service.¹⁸ This

¹⁶ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic: 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), XIII-XIV.

¹⁷ Esther Evans, "Glasson, William Henry | NCpedia," , <https://www.ncpedia.org/biography/glasson-william-henry> (accessed December 25, 2017).

¹⁸ Glasson, 129.

being the most generous law for pensioners at the time, he feels is the most “vulnerable point in our pension system.”¹⁹

Dr. Theda Skocpol claims there an argument that the liberalization of Civil War pensions comes from pressure groups. One of the most prolific pressure groups is that of the Grand Army of the Republic. This organization would go on to repeatedly pressure Congress to improve veteran benefits. She indicates that while it is plausible that their high visibility played a role in lobbying for the Dependent Act of 1890, the organization was struggling in the 1870s. Many state departments and local posts were in disarray with the more stable ones avoiding political activities by concentrating solely on local comradeship and aid. The GAR was in no position to pressure Congress in the 1870s when Congress passed the Arrears Act.²⁰ The Arrears Act, “granted pension from the discharge or death of the soldier in all late war claims of the first class which had been or should thereafter be allowed, provided that application should be filed prior to July 1, 1880; otherwise, from the date of the application.”²¹ This act would have a major impact on the GAR, and stimulated membership into organizations such as the GAR.²²

Dr. Skocpol is a professor at Harvard University where she teaches in the sociology department. Her specialty ranges from political sociology to social revolutions and modern

¹⁹ Glasson, 127.

²⁰ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) (accessed Dec 17, 2017): 111

²¹ Edward White, "Veteran's Pensions: The Law and its Administration from the Revolutionary War to the Civil War," *Harper's Magazine*, January, 1893, <https://socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/social-security/veterans-pensions-early-history/> (accessed Jan 20, 2018)

²² Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) (accessed Dec 17, 2017): 111

welfare states.²³ These specialties create an interesting angle to the study of pension systems for veterans. She claims that American historians who look at welfare politics from the nineteenth century up to 1930's fill their accounts of that time period with the idea of heroic reformers. These reformers would elevate the country from local poor law procedures toward the national social security.²⁴ Although true; however, nothing is ever simple. There are stories of struggle between the government and the population over better benefits and increased protections. Non-historians typically gloss over these stories despite their overall impact on pension reforms.

Laurie Medford discusses the Civil War Veteran pension system at great length in her Master's thesis. Medford and Theda Skocpol both point to the call for service pensions as a being a break from the standard set veterans of earlier wars. The two scholars claim that the call for these pensions originated as early as the mid-1880s, at the local GAR posts. By 1888, the national Grand Army of the Republic would join the call for service pensions. The national GAR openly called upon Congress to offer pensions to any Civil War veteran who had served the Union for more than ninety days. The resulting legislation passed in 1890,²⁵ and stated that any persons who served the Union during the Civil War and was honorably discharged, and suffered permanent mental or physical disability that they themselves did not cause was entitled to draw a pension. The veteran would have to provide proof that they meet all of said terms.

²³ "Theda Skocpol: Department of Sociology: Harvard University" Harvard University, <https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/people/theda-skocpol> (accessed December 22, 2017).

²⁴ Skocpol, 6.

²⁵ Laurie J. Medford, "Deserving of a Small Pension: Navigating the Civil War Pension System," (Master's thesis, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), 3-4.

The act included an extension to the right to a pension for widows and children under the age of sixteen.²⁶

It is the notion of providing proof that one can find the concept of veteran brotherhood brought to a political level. While pension officials conducted interviews of potential pensioners, members of Company C, Eighth Wisconsin Infantry continued to voice their belief of entitlement to pensions throughout the 1880s, 1890s, and 1900s.²⁷ Veterans such as Jacob Aaron of that very company would apply for pensions, producing fellow veterans who would testify that a disability was a direct result of military service.²⁸ These actions, as Laurie Medford claims, reveal that members of Company C, and no doubt other veterans had not only formed and acted with a new sense of the government's responsibilities to the veterans.²⁹

Lincoln gives the foundation for the Grand Army of the Republic's argument. President Lincoln does this when he declares that the United States must care for the soldiers, the widows and orphans.³⁰ Laurie Medford indicates the belief held by veterans that the government owed the veterans a pension for their service through First Lieutenant Thomas Butler. Butler ended his letter to the Commissioner of Pensions that he firmly believed Aaron deserved a pension and that Butler believed he would get one.³¹ This statement by Butler reaffirms the belief held by many

²⁶ William M. McKinney, ed., "Federal Statues Annotated," 2nd ed. (Edward Thompson Company: Northport, 1918), 1084-1086, accessed December 14, 2017, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=tqsFAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PA1086>.

²⁷ Medford, 3-4.

²⁸ Medford, 1.

²⁹ Medford, 3-4.

³⁰ Abraham Lincoln, "Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address 1865," in *Milestone Documents in American History: Exploring the Primary Sources that Shaped America*, ed. Gerry Anders et al. (Dallas: Salem Press, Inc, 2008), 854.

³¹ Medford, 2.

that the men who sacrificed so much were deserving of help from the government they fought to protect.

Men who served the Union and became injured or ill, along with support for the widows and children left behind deserved help from the government was a concept that no one ever opposed. The trouble began when veterans, with the support of the veteran organizations, pushed for higher and wider covering pensions. Republican politicians, many of whom were veterans themselves, enjoyed the support a large veteran populace, were willing to concede to these larger and wider pensions. A percentage of Americans including Democrats resisted these new and larger service pensions covering honorably discharged veterans regardless of health or need. They voiced concerns about potentially unworthy men would receive pensions while citing the spirit of volunteerism and loyalty which fed the Union cause had become corrupted and sinister. These concerns would have been incomprehensible in the initial stages of the Civil War when Congress passed the General Law 1861, which Congress eventually amended several times. This law established pensions for widows and orphans of soldiers and veterans who became disabled as a direct result of military service.³²

Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck wrote an article about pension and race. In this article, they discuss the fact that the laws regarding pensions and related announcements by lawmakers never make mention of race. These statements and statutes would certainly raise hope of equality for the nearly 200,000 African Americans who served in the Union armed forces. However, according to Logue and Blanck, those who executed and administered pension laws

³² James Alan Marten, *America's Corporal: James Tanner in War and Peace* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 92-94.

did not ignore race. Simultaneously, government officials remained untroubled by irregularities in the management of pensions for African-American veterans and their families.³³

Peter Blanck is a professor of law at Syracuse University and Larry M. Logue, prior to joining Blanck at the Burton Blatt Institution, held a position at Mississippi College. In their article examining the African-American Civil War veteran pension experience, they argue that the federal government failed to defend the rights of African-Americans as equal soldiers of the Union. African-Americans frequently found themselves rejected or receiving smaller pensions than white veterans. The two authors attempt to then examine whether African-Americans felt discouraged from applying for pensions.³⁴

The Disabled Veteran

Brian Edward Donovan in his doctoral thesis discusses his motive in writing is the desire to explore and promote disability history. He points out his research was not a history of people with disabilities or a contribution to the theories about disability, rather to admit, that any historical research on disabled people and their experiences are going to contribute to that field. His research brings both theories on disability and the historical experiences of disabled persons together within a group of men: Union veterans who were permanently disabled during the Civil War. He also points out that war was devastating upon the men who fought is important to understand and underexplored.³⁵

³³ Larry M. Logue and Peter Blanck, "Benefit of the Doubt: African-American Civil War Veterans and Pensions," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 38, no. 3 (2008), 377-378, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20143649>.

³⁴ Logue and Blanck, 379.

³⁵ Brian Edward Donovan, "The Harder Heroism of the Hospital: Union Veterans and the Creation of Disability," (PhD diss., The University of Iowa, 2015), 1.

Prior to the civil war the definition for disabled fell into two categories. One was the traditional definition of “the blind, the halt, the lame, etc.”³⁶ Local resources took care of Americans who fell under this category. While the second category were injured or ill from wars and received a pension from the federal government. These federal pensions are considered small, while the local resources might vary by location.³⁷ This changes with the Civil War. Theda Skocpol compares the Civil War to the British during World War I experience. Both times the government needed a higher mobilization of soldiers.³⁸ This mobilization created a greater number of men taking a risk of disability from fighting in the war. Skocpol argues that the government can draft citizens and therefore they also have the obligation to provide care for those citizens who injured in the service of the government. The Union offered pensions to disabled soldiers who become injured to boost volunteerism. Union officials still needed to turn to conscription. Since no one dared suggest denying, and thus disenfranchising the men who had sacrificed for the Union, veterans reserved and exercised their ability to negotiate disability and pension through their votes.³⁹

Confederate Pensions

The Civil War inspired many obvious political changes but it produced social policy changes. The demand for soldiers resulted in the first American conscription. It also prompted the previously mentioned changes in the federal pension system. As an attempt to encourage enlistment, Congress approved an expanded pension giving more generous benefits than

³⁶ Donovan, 4.

³⁷ Donovan, 4.

³⁸ Theda Skocpol, "America's First Social Security System: The Expansion of Benefits for Civil War Veterans," *Political Science Quarterly* 108, no. 1 (Spring, 1993), 90, <http://corvette.salemstate.edu:2100/stable/2152487> (accessed Jan 12, 2018)

³⁹ Donovan, 5.

previous programs. Although Confederate veterans did not qualify for these federal pensions, white conservatives who reclaimed control over the former Confederate states and their legislatures instituted state pension programs that echoing the national ones.⁴⁰

The early-twentieth-century saw these states committing extensive portions of their state budgets to provide care for Confederate veterans and their families. Dr. Elna Green wrote that points out military pensions in both the North and the South formed a notable base of the nation's public welfare policy. She continues to discuss the lack of attention and dedication to Civil War pensions and how despite how these helped shape modern American social policy, but more importantly, that academics have neglected the Southern pension system.⁴¹ She is not wrong. The number of materials regarding Confederate pensions is startling and disappointing.

Political Experience: Whites versus Black

Many men who belonged to the Grand Army of the Republic would go on to hold political offices. James Tanner unsuccessfully bid for the sheriff's office of Kings County in 1884⁴² but Tanner would make his real mark after his appointment to the position of Commissioner of Pensions. Tanner would predict the Republican Party would do wonderful things, both locally and nationally. He would back Harrison as the 1884 Republican nomination for president after supporting Harrison's unsuccessful run for governor in 1876. Although Harrison was unsuccessful in 1884, he would be elected president in 1888. In return for Tanner's long record of support, Harrison appointed Tanner Commissioner of Pensions. In this

⁴⁰ Elna C. Green, "Protecting Confederate Soldiers and Mothers: Pensions, Gender, and the Welfare State in the U.S. South, a Case Study from Florida," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 4 (Jul 1, 2006),1079, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3790241>.

⁴¹ Green, 1080.

⁴² Marten,61 and 90.

position, Tanner directed hundreds of clerks that administer the pensions and evaluate pension claims for Civil War veterans.⁴³

The integration of African-Americans into the Grand Army of the Republic gave the black veterans political influence. Donald R. Shaffer points out in his doctoral dissertation that the African-American veterans participated in and gave a voice to the black suffrage movement. He claims that the military service provided by African-American veterans lent strength to the argument for African-American suffrage. Many white Americans held the firm belief that African-Americans were not citizens and should hold no rights. This argument became critical for those who wanted to deny African-Americans entry into the army early in the war. However, being granted admission to the army later in the war, African-Americans found a counter for the argument of non-citizenship.⁴⁴ Shaffer uses a quote from a collection of work by Henry McNeal Turner to present the major argument for African-American suffrage. "He who is worthy to be trusted with a musket can and ought to be trusted with the ballot."⁴⁵ Essentially the African-American veterans felt that since they had done the same service and taken the same risks, if not greater, as the white Union veterans they deserved the same citizen rights. The African-American community, as well as the white supporters for black suffrage, would use this argument.⁴⁶

Regrettably, citizenship rights, including the right to vote did not come quickly to African-Americans. Andrew Johnson succeeded to Presidency upon the death of Abraham

⁴³ Marten, 90-91.

⁴⁴ Donald Robert Shaffer, "Marching On: African-American Civil War Veterans in Postbellum America, 1865-1951" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 84.

⁴⁵ Shaffer, 84.

⁴⁶ Shaffer, 84-85.

Lincoln. Johnson was a Tennessee Unionist who remained unsympathetic to African-Americans, quickly reestablished citizenship to for southern white men. which resulted in state governments who established laws that we now collectively call Jim Crow laws.⁴⁷ This is not the only consequence of Johnson's actions. The marginalization of the African-Americans resulted violent acts throughout the south. One of these events, the New Orleans Riots of 1866 resulted in the deaths of both white and black Americans.

The Louisiana Constitution of 1864 would emancipate slaves, including those within the Union, controlled districts by stating that "slavery and involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime."⁴⁸ Requests to reconvene the 1864 Louisiana convention met with several different arguments against it. Some felt a general bitterness, since many of the new convention members' goals would disfranchise a large portion of the white population while giving the African-American population more power. Some defended the Constitution of 1864 as the law and opposed civil equality.⁴⁹ An added opposition to this convention was the amendment proposed for the 1866 convention would have upset citizens who fought for the Confederacy by removing them from their employment in the local or state government.⁵⁰ According to Giles Vandal, A.P. Field's statement before Select Committee in Congress regarding the New Orleans Riots points to the knowledge of many southern men that they would be out of a job. Mr. Field responses that a fear existed that if the convention successfully changed the state constitution

⁴⁷ Shaffer, 85.

⁴⁸ Louisiana Constitution of 1864, art. 1, sec. 1, cl. 1, accessed December 10, 2017, <http://www.stateconstitutions.umd.edu/Search/results.aspx?srch=1&state=%27LA%27&CID=210&art=&sec=&amd=&key=&Yr=>

⁴⁹ Gilles Vandal, "The Origins of the New Orleans Riot of 1866, Revisited," *Louisiana Journal* 22, no. 2 (Spring 1981), 141.

⁵⁰ Vandal, 143.

then Congress would be able to insert itself into the states affairs.⁵¹ It was events such as the New Orleans Riot in 1866 that would bring about Radical Reconstruction, the push by Republican controlled Congress to control Reconstruction instead of the President.⁵²

Gilles Vandal a professor at Sherbrooke University in Quebec discusses the New Orleans Riot and its role in the role for African-American rights.⁵³ He points out many historians will point to the importance this riot and other similar riots had in terms of Reconstruction. He claims that it influenced the congressional elections of 1866 and eventually the passing of Reconstruction Acts in 1867. Vandal also claims that the riot demonstrated an unwillingness of those men in power to give up any power to by Unionists. It also exposed the general sentiment held by many whites to recognize the citizenship and thus the right to vote of African-Americans. Within two years after the riot Louisiana's state government fell under the control of Republicans and established a new constitution that recognizing African-Americans as equal citizens. This equality opened voting rights, public offices as well as prohibited discrimination.⁵⁴

President Johnson hoped the amnesty proclamation in May 1865 might enable the nation to finally feel peace.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, it also allowed former rebellious individuals to

⁵¹ U.S. Congress, Select Committee of the House of Representatives. *New Orleans Riots*. (Washington, D.C., 1862), 409, accessed December 10, 2017, <https://archive.org/stream/reportofselectco03unit#page/n677/mode/2up>.

⁵² Vandal, 135.

⁵³ "William & Mary- Gilles Vandal.", https://www.wm.edu/as/history/gradprogram/the-phd/phdplacement/phd-listing/Vandal_g.php (accessed December 10, 2017).

⁵⁴ Vandal, 15-136.

⁵⁵ "President Johnson's Amnesty Proclamation.: Restoration to Rights of Property Except in Slaves. an Oath of Loyalty as a Condition Precedent. Legality of Confiscation Proceedings Recognized. Exception of Certain Offenders from this Amnesty. by these Special Applications for Pardon may be made. Reorganization in North Carolina. Appointment of a Provisional Governor. A State Covention to be Chosen by Loyal Citizens. the Machinery of the Federal Government to be Putin Operation. AMNESTY PROCLAMATION." *New York Times*, May 30, 1865,

elect Confederate veterans and even ex-secessionists to political offices. James Hollandsworth points out that by the end of 1865, the many men who led the southern states before the war had regained control. Hollandsworth also argues that the Louisiana Unionists who held power prior to the amnesty and regaining of power by the former Confederates did not play their one card to remain in power. This was the extension of black suffrage.⁵⁶

The question of pensions dominated political discussion for veterans during the Gilded Age. The issues over pension included many aspects including size of the pension and their scope. Few Americans denied the reasonableness of pensions for soldiers, especially for those unable to support themselves and for the family members who had been dependent on fallen soldiers.⁵⁷ Confederates wanted a pension system since they were ineligible for a federally issued pension. Johnson's amnesty proclamation created an alternative method for Confederates to gain a pension. After regaining control of southern states, the Confederate veterans were able to create and implement a pension program financed and maintained by the state. African-Americans including the veterans of the Civil War and future wars for that matter struggled for equality and political fairness for generations. Some of these struggles resulted in deaths such as those at the New Orleans riots in 1866.

<https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/91902306/DB2F0205EBEB449EPQ/2?accountid=13661> (accessed December 10, 2017).

⁵⁶ James G. Hollandsworth, *An Absolute Massacre: The New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 1-2.

⁵⁷ Marten, 92.

Chapter 3: Integrated Organizations

It is common knowledge that African-Americans fought in the American Civil War. Arguably, the most famous group being the 54th Massachusetts that the movie *Glory* depicts. The Union, unlike the Confederates armed African-Americans on a much larger scale. This arming of African-Americans certainly contributed to the war effort as well as their treatment as veterans in the south. Since African-Americans did become veterans this made them eligible to be part of veteran organizations. The Grand Army of the Republic and their handling of race is an interesting piece of history for the organization's history. This treatment of black veterans was mirrored by the women's organization that attached itself to the GAR handled racial membership.

The Grand Army of the Republic itself, at least on the national level, became an integrated organization while much of the country followed Jim Crow laws. Comrade Jacob Hector, a member of the GAR organization and an African-American gave a speech talking about it being the only place on Earth where a black man and white man are equal and can mingle. Another popular speaker commented at an all African-American post that the GAR was an interracial organization unlike many other prominent historic organizations such as the Masons, Oddfellows, and the Knights of Pythias. The GAR did not shut their doors to blacks like the other organizations had done.¹ The GAR was an integrated organization for the simple reason that both black and white veterans wanted it to be and so they could reflect on their shared Civil War experience. African American veterans wanted to join and could, because the white

¹ Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 15.

members felt that all African American veterans should be able to join. This was a great social outlet for African Americans and allowed them to participate. With GAR backing African-Americans participated throughout the political field at the state level. While there was racism, it is amazing that there were white veterans who saw African American veterans as political equals at a time when these men had only experienced a society that accepted slavery based on the color of a person's skin.²

African-Americans Organize

Donald Shaffer points out that like the white veterans from both the North and the South, African-American veterans felt the need to maintain their fellowship after the war and formed the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League. The Grand Army of the Republic would go on to replace the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League in the 1880's and 1890's as the primary outlet for connecting for African-Americans veterans. African-American veterans who reached out to white veterans were met with mixed results. Mindful of their surroundings, southern white Union veterans attempted to distance themselves from African-American veterans. While whites in the northern and upper southern regions were friendlier. Shaffer mentions African-American members did not always enjoy equality in the GAR; but their presence in the organization was an important exception to racial segregation in the United States.³

According to Shaffer, African-Americans veterans had more of a reason to maintain the relationships they formed in wartime than white veterans. White veterans returned home secure in the knowledge that they had preserved the Union and were able to easily readjust to home life.

² Gannon, 15-16.

³ Donald Robert Shaffer, "Marching On: African-American Civil War Veterans in Postbellum America, 1865-1951" (PhD diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1996), 245-246.

However, Shaffer argued that African-American veterans left service feeling half fulfilled. They had helped end the institution of slavery, but they did not accomplish racial equality. Thus, this group was driven to fight for the equality they did not achieve after leaving the battlefields of the Civil War. A large part of why organizations such as the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League formed was to gain voting rights for African-Americans. They argued enfranchisement had been by their military service. As they had fought valiantly in service of their country, that entitled all veterans the basic rights of any citizen including the right to vote in elections.⁴

The Colored Soldiers and Sailors League used every available tactic to bring attention to their cause. First, they invited all African-American veterans to a convention that would start on January 8, 1867. That specific date was chosen with the intent of bringing recognition to the long history of African-Americans service to the United States. On that date in 1815, Andrew Jackson had led a force comprised of both white and colored troops in a victory against the British at the Battle of New Orleans. The leagues next tactic was to invite white officers that serviced in colored regiments. Although they knew they had a strong case for suffrage, they believed that argument would be made stronger with the support of white officers. This Convention set a precedent for African-American veterans to share fellowship with their former officers.⁵

This African-American veterans' organization was very popular, in fact Donald Shaffer states that prior to Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution a chapter of the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League formed in Wilmington, North Carolina. However, after the amendment the organization lost its central reason to exist. Since the main purpose of the Colored Soldiers and

⁴ Shaffer, 246-247.

⁵ Shaffer, 247.

Sailors League was the right to vote, the granting of this right brought about the dissolution of the organization. Political reasons brought this organization together which was the opposite of the Grand Army of the Republic. The GAR had a political component but remained a veteran's social organization as well. Other reasons for the dissolving of the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League also existed including, white southerners' hostility toward the organization including in Washington D.C. and difficulty in finding proper space for meetings. The further south the more openly hostile whites were to the organization of African-Americans. A Louisiana man sent a letter in support to the 1867 convention, however, he insisted on anonymity in fear that he would face assassination if anyone found out about his willingness to support the African-American cause. This fear along with the fear caused by riots in Memphis and New Orleans, resulted in many African-Americans trying to keep their heads down. These factors also contributed to the Colored Soldiers and Sailors League's downfall.⁶

Grand Army of the Republic an Equal Brotherhood

At the May 11, 1870 National Encampment in Washington D.C., Commander-in-Chief John A. Logan presided over the festivities.⁷ It was here that Logan publicly addressed the audience on race and its role in the war. He discussed that they met not as relics of war begging for charity, but as survivors of a successful venture to secure freedom for all men. Logan goes on to compare Civil War veterans to those who served in the American Revolution, offering themselves as a sacrifice so that freedom would endure. Commander Logan recognized that many of the men in the Grand Army of the Republic participated in political affairs but not as

⁶ Shaffer, 248.

⁷ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., 1889), 109.

representatives of the organization.⁸ He claims the GAR has three responsibilities, “promote the love and practice of fraternity, liberal distributions of charity, and unequivocal loyalty.”⁹ He would go on to state that it is his hope that every honorably discharged soldier and sailor from the Union would be brought into the folds of the Grand Army of the Republic.¹⁰ One could believe that it was this type of goodwill that allowed African-Americans to join the Grand Army of the Republic.

Shaffer claims African-American membership presented a problem for the Grand Army of the Republic because of prejudicial attitudes. Requirements to join the Grand Army of the Republic stated that an individual must have an honorable discharge from the Union army, navy or marines and made mention of race. Realistically racial prejudice existed nationwide. Some white veterans did not want to socialize with African-American veterans, while others refused to ignore the valor shown by the African-Americans during wartime. Their embrace of wartime alliance made it far more difficult to deny admittance to the Grand Army of the Republic, differing from other popular organizations such as the Masons.¹¹ However, this did not mean that the GAR did not debate African-American inclusion. The debate was not over racial separation but rather at what level it should exist: national, department or at the post levels.¹²

Shaffer states segregation was practiced at the post level. In areas with large African-American veteran populations they formed all African-American posts. However, he also maintains that existed, although typically not in the south. Locations with only a few African-

⁸ Beath, 110.

⁹ Beath, 110.

¹⁰ Beath, 111.

¹¹ Shaffer, 250.

¹² Shaffer, 250-251.

Americans they might find admittance to those posts. One example is Robert Anderson who lived in western Nebraska and was permitted to join the local post. Large northern cities generally welcomed African-American veterans. William H. Dupree was elected to a commander of a predominantly white Boston post. Shaffer expresses, Dupree's situation was a rarity. Ultimately the Grand Army of the Republic leadership left the decision of segregation in the hands of local posts.¹³

Regarding the state departments of the GAR, the issue integration was a contentious subject. In the lower south, some organizers turned African-American veterans away at the state level. At the 1887 national encampment, Philip Cheek, a Wisconsin veteran, made the proposal to amend the rules allowing those rejected at the department level to reapply directly to the national level. Southern white delegates fought against this proposal, the northern delegates outnumbered them and the amendment passed.¹⁴

According to Donald Shaffer the initial rush of African-American veterans to the Grand Army of the Republic did not stem from the 1887 national encampment. However, he did refer to individuals such as Jacob Gray as inspiration. In 1889, Gray served as commander of the Louisiana and Mississippi Department of the GAR acted as a pallbearer for Jefferson Davis. Gray faced enormous backlash of his actions, damaging reputation; so, he quickly organized nine African-American posts to boost support for himself. Opponents of Gray opposed the creation of new posts. The Adjutant General ruled that it was too soon before the encampment to allow these new posts to send representatives. This did not however settle the real question of whether

¹³ Shaffer, 251-252.

¹⁴ Shaffer, 252-253.

to have integration in this department. The ruling did allow delegates from these new posts to attend the following encampment.¹⁵

The Grand Army of the Republic members located in the southern states made the argument that they needed to conform to the social norms of their region, meaning racial segregation. They felt that they needed to separate themselves from the African-American posts for this reason. Shaffer suggests while social norms contributed to their request for separate departments, politics played also a role in that decision. Gray and other segregationists feared that African-Americans members would outnumber the white members thus leaving the organization defenseless to the desires of the African-Americans. They also feared losing the acceptance and goodwill they had earned from the southern community and former confederate adversaries. Members outside of the lower south objected to separate departments. They understood and accepted separate posts but could not agree to segregated departments. This, to them, remained a question of wartime loyalties rather than that of social norms.¹⁶

It is critical to recognize the differences between the veterans and the civilians. One of those differences was the fact that African-American veterans enjoyed a more fortunate childhood than those who did not serve. Another key difference is the ability of veterans in the post-war could use their military service as an argument for equality, while other African-Americans could not. Shaffer claims that service led to many benefits that nonveteran African-Americans did not have enjoy, including pensions and admittance to the GAR. Military service granted African-Americans a less discrimination from white veterans that other African-American did not enjoy. In his dissertation Shaffer asserts the war alone did not create all the

¹⁵ Shaffer, 253.

¹⁶ Shaffer, 254-256.

differences experienced between veteran and civilian African-Americans. Shaffer maintains many of the veterans were free before the war, meaning that these African-Americans enjoyed more benefits than the majority of African-Americans. In addition, it needs to be considered that a large number of these veterans settled in the north or upper south after the war. These region's conditions were for African-Americans less discriminating than the deep south.¹⁷

A Segregated Women's Relief Corps

The Women's Relief Corps admitted all loyal women to the Union to their ranks. This did include women from the south who pledged loyalty to the United States. It is belief in loyalty that enabled the WRC to allowed African-American women into the organization initially. They supported the full and equal participation of all women. The idea was that patriotism could not be racial. White southern members attempted to keep chapters segregated but national leadership came to the defense of those victimized chapters. One WRC president claimed that the African-American chapters were composed of the only true patriots in the South.¹⁸

Sadly, the Women's Relief Corps did not maintain this attitude and never truly supported biracial sisterhood. They offered little to no help to the African-American chapters leaving many of them poor and inadequately organized. Eventually, the National Women's Relief Corps accepted segregation in many of the southern chapters so as to not alienate the white membership in those states.¹⁹

¹⁷ Shaffer, II-III.

¹⁸ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 271-272.

¹⁹ Silber, 272.

Nina Silber starts her book about women in the north during the Civil War by talking about the perceived pinnacle of a southern belle: Scarlett O'Hara. This image arose from reports of the fierceness of southern women in their devotion to the Confederate cause. These reports ranged from the plausible; insulting federal troops, to the outrageous; using Union soldiers' bones for jewelry. She notes the reality of Confederate women showing significant uncertainty about the conflict. This was especially true as the death toll grew with no resolution in sight. However, the North believed the false reports of extreme patriotism and support from Confederate women. By the midpoint of the war many northerners felt northern women's patriotism needed to match the southern women's patriotism. Even after two years of the Civil War, northern women still found their patriotism questioned and themselves compared with their southern.²⁰

Silber warns against reading the Civil War as a key moment in the history of women's liberation because she does not see it as an instance when women needed to choose between liberation and oppression. Instead, Silber sees the war as a means of situating northern women in a new public setting where their ideological commitments to the nation and their contribution to the home, especially economically became valued. She sees the wartime experiences of northern women as a story of an expanding nation and the way it affected them. In her book, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War*, Silber claims that in later stages of the war, women found themselves affected by a wide range of state-sponsored plans. For veterans' pensions and loyalty oaths. The Civil War conveyed new attitudes about social expectations of women's submissiveness and subordination. This made it clear to women that they were

²⁰ Silber, 1-2.

considered second-class citizens in the public realm.²¹ It could be argued that in itself makes it a moment in women's liberation. Women still had a long way to go before reaching suffrage and equality, if they have even obtained equality in the 21st century. However, this realization would certainly spark an even stronger move in the hopes of women toward suffrage. This gender inequality certainly can be compared to the African-Americans' plight for equality, especially given the fact that even women's organizations such as the WRC let their loyal African-American members down.

Southern Slave Soldiers

In the North slavery emancipation was critical component of the Civil War. The 54th Massachusetts regiment is well-known and widely discussed, however a proposed plan to free and arm slaves for the Confederacy does not receive the same recognition. In a book by Bruce Levine titled, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves During the Civil War*, looks at this subject. It is a fact that some slaves did support the Confederacy. Such as Nelson Winbush, an African-American member of the Sons of the Confederate Veterans who struggled to correct misunderstandings in order to protect what he considered his heritage. The argument circles back to the Lost Cause and the attempts to redirect the cause of the Civil War as being the south fought for state's rights not for slavery. The biggest evidence supporting this argument are the thousands of African-Americans who fought for the Confederacy.²²

Bruce Levine attempts to debunk these misunderstandings and explain how African-Americans became Confederate soldiers. The thought of arming slaves came early in the war;

²¹ Silber, 12.

²² Caroline E. Janney, "Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War," *Labor History*, no. 2 (2009): 234.

however Confederate President Jefferson Davis did not endorse this idea until much later.²³ Prior to that endorsement Davis attempted to suppress the idea thereby avoid any controversy that could arise from discussion over emancipation. Jefferson Davis, at the start of the war pointed to slavery as being the central idea to secessionists ideology.²⁴ Finally, Davis only entertained the thought of African American enlistment into the Confederate army once the Confederacy was in trouble. Some of the able bodied white men received draft exemptions in order keep plantations running. This led to tension between the exempted and those who were not.²⁵ After the battles of Vicksburg and Gettysburg many Southern men abandoned their posts, fleeing the front lines thousands of men went absent without leave, creating an even bigger need for soldiers.²⁶

Levine argues that any form of emancipation by Confederates was a compromise that would preserve slavery in some fashion in the south. With the Confederacy facing trouble in late 1864 Davis needed to do something to try and regain ground against the Union.²⁷ However, Davis convincing slave owners to emancipate slaves would be nearly impossible. Unsurprisingly, it never happened. Many of the masters wanted to preserve slavery even at the cost of the war and the utter destruction of the Confederacy.²⁸ If the Confederate army enlisted the slaves, a major resource in the south, the Confederate States of America might still exist.

²³ Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War*, (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006): 3.

²⁴ Levine, 2.

²⁵ Levine, 22.

²⁶ Levine, 24.

²⁷ Levine., 95.

²⁸ Levine, 134.

Although several states enforced Jim Crow laws, and were experiencing formation and rise to power of the Klu Klux Klan, the Grand Army of the Republic rose above discrimination to welcome African-Americans veterans into a nationally organized brotherhood based not on race but by their sacrifice. Even though a dilemma about African-Americans arose from the social norms, the GAR made a step right direction. African American's became veterans entitling them to benefits economically and politically.

Chapter 4: Patriotic Historical Memory Keepers

The mission of the Grand Army of the Republic and its successor the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War is: fraternity, loyalty, and charity. However, these goals were not the organizations only mission. One of their missions became historical preservation and the historical memory of the Civil War. The Confederate veteran organizations also adopted this responsibility toward history. For this reason, the Civil War veterans, from both sides, were collectors of memory and history. They collected stories, mementos, ephemera, and other historical pieces. Unfortunately, historical memory can be used as propaganda. The defeated Confederates justified their involvement in the war by creating the Lost Cause version of the Civil War. The question of slavery should be considered the ultimate cause of the Civil War. Setting the question of state's rights aside, one must remember that the Confederate States were fighting for their right to hold slaves and remain slave states. The Lost Cause although not a lie it is carefully phrased.

John Hope Franklin, a historian with many accomplishments including serving as lead historian for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund for research in *Brown v. Board of Education* case, states that "few things are more important in a nation's history the experience of suffering and sacrifice."¹ Creating a national identity does not seem possible without those experiences. Although John Franklin was referring to African-American history; especially regarding slavery, it is important also to look at other examples of suffering and sacrifice. The veterans of the Civil War used reunions and public education to share memories of their sacrifice alive. Thankfully

¹ John Hope Franklin, "A Century of Civil War Observance," *The Journal of Negro History*, 47, no. 2 (April 1962), 97, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/2716528>.

organizations such as the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Sons of the Confederate Veterans continue to preserve this history. Both organizations celebrate the sacrifice of their ancestor groups, the GAR and the UCV. Through the organization of a day of memorial, later called Memorial Day, the GAR formed a day to remember the past. Organizations such as the SUVCW uphold the GAR's traditions by celebrating Memorial Day and educating students about the Civil War era.

The Civil War is one of the few periods of history that does suffer from a lack of interest. Tours of battlefields has become a big business and a large income for surrounding cities and towns. James McPherson estimates more than between 1962 and 1993 approximately 50,000 books and articles were produced and published, while Don Fehrenbacher puts the number closer to 100,000. Films such as *Glory* and *Gettysburg* are well known and respected films. These films along with documentaries such as Ken Burn's "The Civil War" are notable examples of visual transcriptions of Civil War stories.² Hollywood regularly sacrifices historical fact for entertainment. However, the period between the Civil War and World War I is generally ignored by the public, even though many misconceptions and traditions took hold in that period. While historians recognize this period of history, the contributions of these organizations remain forgotten.

Southern "Memory"

Right after the Civil War, white southerners began to rationalize and justify their actions. The Confederates wanted to ensure their version of the war's cause would be promoted as the

² Stuart McConnell, "The Civil War and Historical Memory: A Historiographical Survey," *OAH Magazine of History* 8, no. 1 (1993), 3, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25162917>

right cause.³ Even forty-five years after the Civil War, southerners continued to engage in this struggle to convince the rest of the world that secession from the Union was the correct decision.

Mary Wilson refers to the 1910 speech given by Grand Commander John Ewell at the 23rd Annual Meeting of Confederate Veterans.⁴ Ewell stated:

Southern men and women...established the facts that the States had the right to secede, that they had just cause for secession, and that when an unjustifiable and unconstitutional war was made upon them, they maintained their struggle heroically...Our struggle is now scarcely of less importance...to convince the civilized world that notwithstanding our failure in arms, we had a just cause, and maintained it in a highly honorable manner.⁵

This glorification disregarded the labor system, slavery, which supported the antebellum south financially. This shift in belief gave birth to the Lost Cause movement and pressure to reunite the country allowed it grow in popularity not just in the south but the north despite the efforts of those who understood the antebellum South.

A decade before the Spanish-American War in 1898 literature exalting the Lost Cause flooded the nation. An fantasy idealistic image of the antebellum South colored the entrenched the reconciliation efforts and many northerners seemed to forget why the war had actually happened. The Spanish-American War aided reunification with the south's determined enthusiasm in defense of the United States.⁶ It should be remembered that Alexander Stephen, Vice President of the Confederate States, stated in his "Cornerstone Speech" on March 21, 1861, that the Confederate Constitution "put at rest forever, all the agitating questions" about slavery

³ Mary L. Wilson, "The Confederate Pension Systems in Texas, Georgia, and Virginia: The Programs and the People" (PhD diss., University of North Texas, 2004), 1.

⁴ Wilson, 1.

⁵ Wilson, 1.

⁶ Wilson, 1-2.

and status of African-Americans in society.⁷ This announced that felt slavery remained in the minds of the drafters of the Confederate Constitution. He goes on to say that it “was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution.”⁸ Even men such as William H. Seward recognized that eventually, slave states would enter into conflict with free states on a colossal scale before there could be an end to the slavery problem. He says this in his “Irrepressible Conflict” speech given in Rochester on October 25, 1858. He speaks in detail about slavery and freedom, pointing to Europe as having already abolished slavery, except Russia who at the time featured a despotic government. Seward went on to say, “it is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces” that will result in the United States becoming “either entirely a slave-holding nation, or entirely a free-labor nation.”⁹ However, the Lost Cause still prevailed in American memory.

The Lost Cause version of history became a tool for the Confederacy to justify their actions both in participating in the war and for secession. The claim that fighting for state rights caused the south to leave the Union sounds better than acknowledging that slavery had played a major role. William Davis describes myths as not being lies but perceived truths or even having morsels of truth somewhere in the story. He suggests that conflicts, such as the Civil War often create myths, especially on behalf of the losing side. Winners have nothing to justify, while the

⁷ Alexander H. Stephens, "The Cornerstone Speech," in *Alexander H. Stephens: In Public and Private: With Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War*, ed. Henry Cleveland (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1866), 721.

⁸ Stephens, 721.

⁹ William H. Seward, "William H. Seward of New York," in *American Eloquence: Studies in American Political History*, ed. Alexander Johnson and James Wooburn, Vol. III (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2005), accessed January 1, 2018, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/15393/15393-h/15393-h.htm#link2H_4_0012.

loser feels a need to present the conflict from their side.¹⁰ In 1939, many believed the Confederacy had formed because of state's rights. Burton Hendrick puts forth his theory for the failure of the Confederacy when he stated that the South produced no statesmen and that its principle foundation of sovereign statehood doomed itself after joining by a weak central power.¹¹

Southern women's organizations became some of the biggest advocates to create a positive memory of the Confederacy. Caroline Janney states even in the hands of the Confederate women, memorial celebrations had an unapologetic and rebellious attitude associated with it. She claims that the merciful period of Reconstruction fueled this disobedient behavior rather than squashing it. Unionists raged over these reports, declaring that while they tried to reconcile the former Confederates only exhibited the same sectionalist attitude that led to Civil War.¹² Theories about why Confederate memory was kept alive and glorified ranged from to "keep alive the rancors of hate," to "keep alive for the future use the hopes, purposes, and organization of the late disunion conspiracy."¹³ In a rare example of gender collaboration women's associations worked to promote and maintain a white southern camaraderie. These groups also acted as surrogate government agencies in place of the fallen Confederacy. All of these actions condoned and supported by the white men of the south allowing southern women to

¹⁰ William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 175.

¹¹ Burton J. Hendrick, *Statesmen of the Lost Cause Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet* (New York: The Literary Guild of America, Inc., 1939), <http://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.151750> (accessed Dec 31, 2017), 10-11.

¹² Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 2012), 69.

¹³ Janney, 69.

engage in politics in a way that they never could before. Using this power, women called upon state and local governments to support projects such as orphanages and almshouses.¹⁴

Dr. Caroline Janney, a professor of history at Purdue University, focusing on the Civil War era and Civil War memory. Janney explains her purpose for writing *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* as to restore the recognition for the role that women played in crafting a positive image of the Confederacy. Her argument is that women had a major role in supporting and producing this glorified image of the Confederacy. Women and their role in Confederate memory, according to Dr. Janney seem to be forgotten although she claims this is more of a contemporary issue. According to her between 1865 and 1915 the opposite was true; these women were regarded as being instrumental in the traditions and memory of the Confederate cause. It was the Ladies' Memorial Association who created memorials to honor the Confederate dead.¹⁵

Veterans Preserve the Memory of their Comrades

While the Grand Army of the Republic's mission remained fraternity, loyalty, and charity it also expanded to include historical preservation and historical memory. One of the ways that the GAR chose to memorialize their fallen comrades was to select a day dedicated to remembering their sacrifice. It became Memorial Day, a tradition that has carried over to include all deceased military personnel. The GAR commander-in-chief General John A. Logan made this recommendation through a general order. Prior to this general order, adjutant general N. P. Chipman received a letter from a German Union veteran whose name is unknown, telling of Germany's traditions of honoring the dead, followed by a suggestion that the GAR should do

¹⁴ Janney, 70.

¹⁵ Janney, 2.

the same. Chipman would go on to draft a general order and present the it, along with the letter to General Logan. Logan was inspired and sent out General Orders No. 11 on May 5, 1868.¹⁶

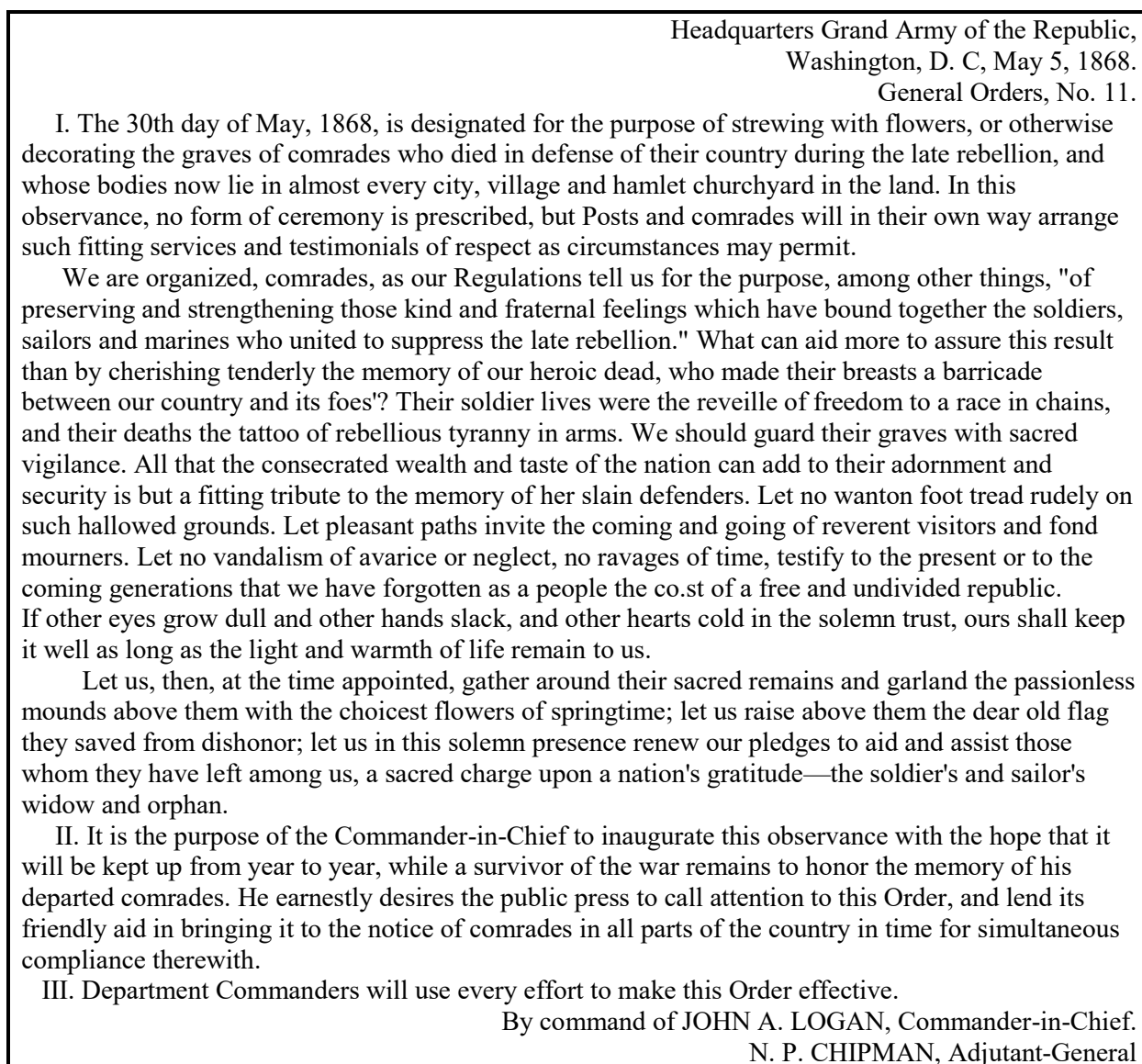


Figure 2: General Order #11

Today, Memorial Day is a federal holiday recognizing those who fought and died. What became Memorial Day still is a day to remember the fallen soldiers. Hosea Rood another

¹⁶ Hosea W. Rood, "The Grand Army of the Republic," *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 6, no. 4 (1923), <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.snhu.edu/stable/4630452> (accessed Oct 1, 2017), 404-405.

veteran of the Civil War, explains that in 1923 Memorial Day was regularly attended and remembered, though the aged veterans were becoming less able to make the preparations. This meant that veterans from the Spanish-American and World War were taking up the responsibilities. Today, camps such as that of Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War Post#5 continue the work of remembering the men who came before. They along with other posts and organizations continue to memorialize the dead every year on and around Memorial Day. The Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War commemorate the sacrifice of those from the Civil War by educating, parading and laying flowers on the graves of the dead.¹⁷ They recognize veterans from other wars by attending a Christmas party at the soldiers home in Chelsea, Massachusetts. The SUVCW celebrated Christmas in 2017 by laying this past year by laying wreaths at the GAR building, the Civil War memorial on the common, and the memorial within the Grand Army of the Republic's lot at the Pine Grove Cemetery.¹⁸

Hosea W. Rood, like Robert Beath served in the Union army during the Civil War. He also would go on to join the GAR. His article is about the GAR provides a member perspective. Rood does not go into as great of a detail as Beath, however, he does further discuss many of the key aspects that Beath mentions in his book. In the article by Hosea Rood, he makes a claim that the Grand Army of the Republic is a unique organization.

¹⁷ Dexter Bishop and Adam Donachie, "Sons of the Union of the Civil War General Lander Post #5 May 22nd Monthly Meeting," (Report given at the Monthly Meeting of the Sons of the Union of the Civil War General Lander Post #5 Lynn, Massachusetts, May 22, 2017).

¹⁸ Dexter Bishop and Robert Mathius, "Sons of the Union of the Civil War General Lander Post # December 18th Monthly Meeting," (Report given at the Monthly Meeting of the Sons of the Union of the Civil War General Lander Post #5 Lynn, Massachusetts, December 18, 2017).

Union and Confederate Working Together

Both the Union and Confederate veterans took it upon themselves to preserve their history while sharing this brotherhood. One of the ways they did this was by having reunions. The most famous of these is the reunions held in Gettysburg with both Union and Confederates joining together. Today this tradition of remembering Gettysburg continues with decedents, hobbyists and tourists gathering in Gettysburg in November every year.

The fifty-year reunion of Gettysburg was well documented in newspapers. Maybe the most inspirational aspect of this reunion is the reenactment of the Confederates and Union veterans charging at each other. The New York Times reports that “instead of advancing with firearms, the veterans will meet with outstretched hands.”¹⁹ According to Tom Dunning, an adjunct professor in the history and classics department, the Grand Army of the Republic put on the first small re-enactments in the form of reunions called encampments. Members would attend these encampments wearing old uniforms. They slept in tents and ran drills, replaying their soldier days. This soon evolved to reenactments of battles. In 1878, 1881 and 1883 encampments, in New Jersey the GAR members recreated battles with National Guard units standing in for the Confederate side.²⁰

Dunning claims that the 1913 reenactment at Gettysburg became one of the last in which a substantial number of Civil War veterans participated in.²¹ However, the 1938 reunion at

¹⁹. "To Restage Gettysburg: Only, at Reunion, Contenders Will Meet with Handclasps." *The New York Times*, May 2, 1913, <https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/97486876/FC884D782F4E400FPQ/1?accountid=13661> (accessed Jan 2, 2018).

²⁰ Tom Dunning, “Civil War Re-Enactments: Performance as a Cultural Practice,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 21, no 1 (July 2002), 63.

²¹ Dunning, 65.

Gettysburg was aided by federal support that had been pledged as early as 1936. President Franklin D. Roosevelt concurred with suggestions that the federal government should collaborate with a Pennsylvania State committee that was attempting to organize a joint encampment of Northern and Southern veterans at Gettysburg in 1938.²² Nearly 1,600 veterans from both sides of the Civil War met and slept at the 1938 Gettysburg reunion. It was expected that this would be one of the last reunions, as many of these men were well into their nineties. If soldier had been fifteen years old at the time of service they have been ninety by the time of the reunion event.²³

The 1913 Gettysburg Reunion was a highly respected event on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line because it honored the sacrifice by many during the Civil War. In the June 1913 edition of the *Confederate Veteran*, they discussed the reunion at Gettysburg, by pointing out that the battle is was a subject of concern for many, especially the patriotic men of the Union. The article refused to use the words “reunion” or “celebration,” instead referring to it as an occasion for the patriotic men who fought for their nation regardless of their chosen side, to gather and exchange memories. What is interesting to note is that the state of Pennsylvania and the federal government each appropriated \$150,000 to the event. The author claims that the southern

²² "Backs Gettysburg Plan: Roosevelt Favors Federal Cooperation in Blue-Gray Reunion." *The New York Times*, March 13, 1936, <https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/101905588/60466C334094D29PQ/5?accountid=13661> (accessed Jan 5, 2018).

²³ W. A. Macdonald, "BLUE AND GRAY VAN TAKES GETTYSBURG: Nearly 1,600 Veterans Bivouac in Last Reunion 75 Years After Famous Battle SEVEN TAKEN TO HOSPITAL Elaborate Precautions Taken for Care of Old Fighters Now Near Century Mark Last Blue and Gray Reunion President to Speak Sunday Boy Scouts Aid Veterans ' THE BLUE AND THE GRAY' MEET AGAIN AT GETTYSBURG," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1938, <https://corvette.salemstate.edu:5208/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/102602513/3123C5C9F7524C28PQ/4?accountid=13661> (accessed Jan 5, 2018)

states did not assist as much as the occasion warrants given it was the fifty-year anniversary.²⁴ The August 1913 edition of *Confederate Veteran* discusses the event and its grandness with 35,000 federals and one-seventh as many Confederates spending between four to six days peacefully at Gettysburg. Incredibly not one word of discord was spoken. He offered his opinion of why this occurred, explaining that the men invited had fought at the battle and felt a mutual respect towards one another for surviving. Therefore, these men viewed other attendees as valiant soldiers who had fought for their beliefs. Participants would never consider personal bitterness.²⁵

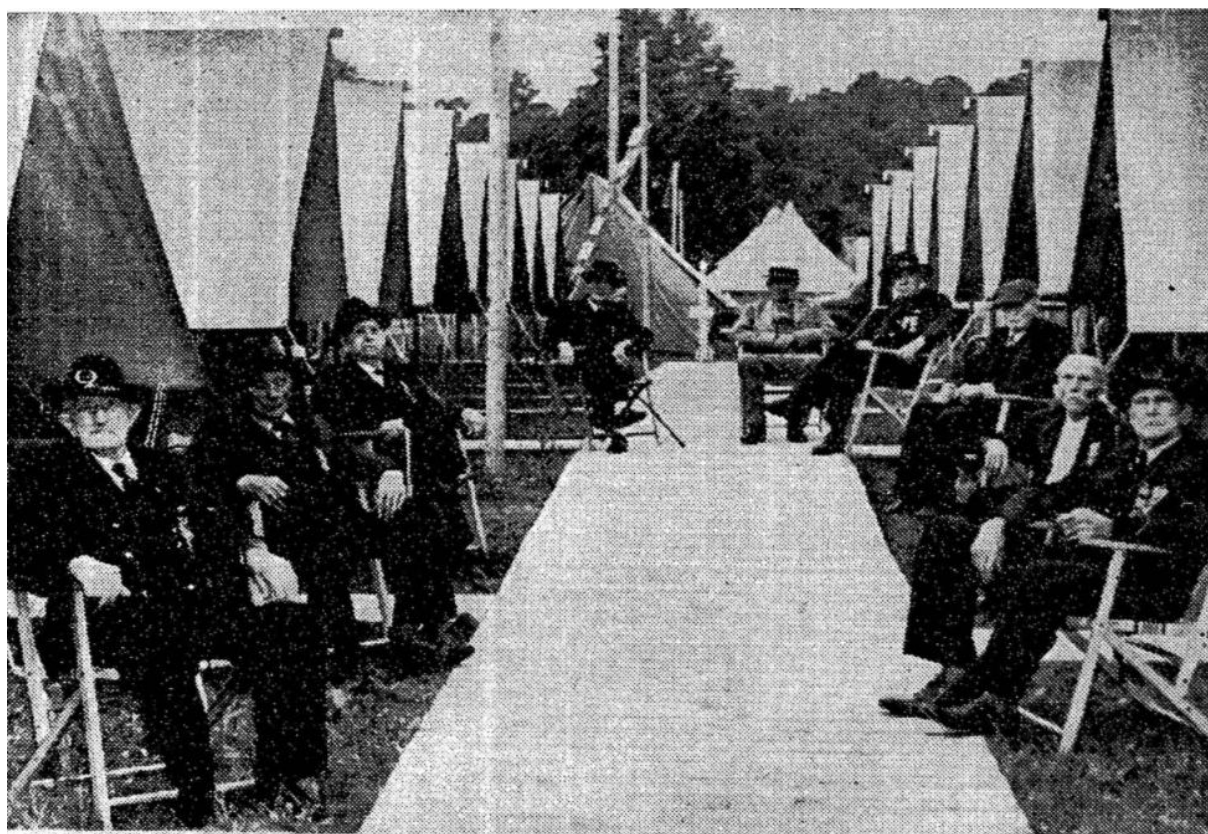


Figure 3: Soldiers of the '60s²⁶

²⁴ *Confederate Veteran*, ed. S. A. Cunningham, Vol. XXI (Nashville, 1913), 280.

²⁵ *Confederate Veteran*, ed. S. A. Cunningham, Vol. XXI (Nashville, 1913), 377.

²⁶ From the W. A. Macdonald, "BLUE AND GRAY VAN TAKES GETTYSBURG" article

As of 2017, the tradition carries on in Gettysburg of celebrating the battle and the men who fought in it. Commander-in-Chief of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Mark R. Day points out Remembrance Day, in his opinion, is possibly the most important event for the SUVCW and the Allied Orders. On that day, these groups take the time to remember the Union soldiers who fought to preserve our great nation, Abraham Lincoln, and the men of the Grand Army of the Republic who set the example of dedication to the preservation of our history. It is also a time for many decedents of the men who fought at Gettysburg pay their respects to their ancestors.²⁷

The Civil War Education

The Civil War should stand as a monumental section of history education. The Grand Army of the Republic, Women's Relief Corp and the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, helped with patriotic education. Charles Frank Speierl studied the GAR's influence on education in New Jersey schools. He claims that primary sources created by the GAR in New Jersey publicize the organizations belief that America was susceptible to foreign ideas and that it was their responsibility to combat that threat as they had during the Civil War. This time the strategies they would use were not weapons but rather the tool of to combat this threat. This took the form of flag raisings and visits to local schools.²⁸

Charles Speierl claims that patriotic organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic feared immigrants because they could introduce un-American ideas and values into the society they had fought to preserve. This led to their support for the elimination of foreign

²⁷ Mark R. Day, "Commander in Chief's Message November, 2017," , <http://www.suvcw.org/?p=2664> (accessed Jan 6, 2018).

²⁸ Charles Frank Speierl Jr., "Influence of the Grand Army of the Republic on Education in New Jersey between 1866-1935" (PhD diss., Fairleigh Dickinson University, 1987), 1.

languages, reviewing the loyalty of teachers, and examination of history texts to make sure patriotism was present.²⁹ The GAR was a patriotic organization composed of veterans who fought to preserve a nation from dissolution. Disregarding the United States' long history of fear of towards immigration. Some Native Americans feared the white man as much as Americans in 2018 fear immigration. This hold true for many other nations who spurn those who are different. Speierl claims the values held by the Grand Army of the Republic are contrary to the American spirit.³⁰ American history has no shortage of anti-immigration laws and feelings. The Alien and Sedition Acts under John Adams to the several Naturalization Laws throughout our nation's history. This anti-immigration mentality and fear continues right up to 2018 with the more recent attempts to block immigrants from certain Muslim nations.

Encampments served several purposes and two unique features that appeared at every GAR encampment. The campfire and the parade held special importance to the veterans. The campfire occurred on the evening of the first day, while the parade occurred on the morning of the second day. During the campfire, a strong speaker gave a presentation along with music. The encampment parade always drew a large crowd. Schools dismissed for the day with children attending with flags and banners. At times, allied patriotic organizations would also join in the parade making it even more attractive to the crowds.

Charles Speierl wrote his doctoral dissertation for education about the GAR. There is an anti-patriotic organization tone to his dissertation. He attempts to argue that "one-hundred-percent American" was a concept perpetrated by the Grand Army of the Republic which was

²⁹ Speierl, 5.

³⁰ Speierl, 5.

expanded upon by the American Legion after World War I.³¹ He claims that adverse reactions to immigrants occur after wars and that the attempts to indoctrinate patriotism and hamper foreign ideas are present throughout American history.³² Speierl claims that patriotic organizations such as the GAR can be a problem in several ways. He looks at the degree outside organizations influence topics taught within schools, their influence on textbooks among other areas related to education and the GAR.

While the Stars and Stripes, National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance existed prior to the Civil War, sectional and regional differences remained so deeply ingrained in society that many times local and state allegiances overshadowed a national allegiance. Previous conflicts such as the War of 1812 and the U.S.-Mexican War saw soldiers form attachments to regimental flags since Regiments drew from state-based militias. The U.S. Mexican War inspired the the Stars and Stripes to be seen as a symbol of national unity, however, the Civil War marked the first-time national symbols appeared in battle and the Stars and Stripes emerged as one of the most important. The GAR, among other organizations, carried this symbolic national unity into the Reconstruction Era and beyond by promoting the appearance of flags in schools and petitioning for laws against its desecration.³³

Patriotic instruction was not exclusive to the Grand Army of the Republic. The Women's Relief Corp would also hand out American flags as well as encourage patriotic teachings within the local schools. They were mindful of neutralizing any Confederate influences in the curriculum. Most women's patriotic organizations of that period saw national loyalty as

³¹ Speierl, 4-5.

³² Speierl, 6.

³³ Christopher S. Parker, "Symbolic Versus Blind Patriotism: Distinction without Difference?" *Political Research Quarterly* 63, no. 1 (March 2010), 99, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27759889>.

instinctive. They also feared immigrant influences and believed that children, especially those of immigrants needed to be taught the simple concepts of civic obedience and allegiance. They devoted enormous effort to establishing patriotic traditions in American schools such as reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and singing the national anthem. These traditions continue today in schools.³⁴

Today, Civil War organizations such as the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War attempt to educate the public about the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Grand Army of the Republic in general. The local camp in Lynn, Massachusetts brings guest speakers to two of the high schools in Lynn. In 2017, one guest speaker went to both high schools to discuss the Navy during the Civil War focusing on the topic of African Americans in the Navy, as well as the role of the Navy in during the Civil War. Students were able to ask questions during his talk.³⁵ The SUVCW has previously brought other guest speakers including reenactors of Fredrick Douglass, Robert E. Lee, General Grant to name a few. They also cosponsor classes for professional development for local teachers.

Nationally, the SUVCW has a whole page on their website dedicated to education. They include information on a wide range of topics related to patriotism and the Civil War. They offer scholarships to both male and female students. The organization produces material about adopting a local school as well as finding a guest speaker locally.³⁶ While the national Sons of

³⁴ Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) (accessed Oct 8, 2017), 269-270.

³⁵ Chuck Veit, "The Civil War Navy" (speech, Lynn, Ma, May 30, 2017).

³⁶ "Education." Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, http://www.suvcw.org/?page_id=274 (accessed Jan 12, 2018)

Confederate Veterans website do not offer much in the way of educational resources. The only page remotely related to education lists the education/historical committee.³⁷

One of the most beneficial contributions of the GAR, UCV, the women's organizations and the descendants of these groups is their greatest mission: presenting historical memory and preservation of history. The veterans of the Civil War, the women who supported them attempted to keep the memory of their sacrifice alive, while their sons and daughters keep their memory alive.

³⁷ "Education/Historical." Sons of Confederate Veterans, <http://www.scv.org/new/directories/educationhistorical/> (accessed Jan 12, 2018).

Conclusion

The Civil War nearly split the United States into two separate nations. The organizations that emerged from this war especially the patriotic and veteran organizations are critical to understand the past, present and future of the United States. The history of these organizations and their contributions is widely. Patriotism prior to the Civil War remained regionally based, especially between the north and the south. However, in contemporary America this regional division has eased and a stronger American identity has emerged. The roots of this national identity are evident in part to the organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic extending the olive branch to their former adversaries in attempts to heal the wounds of the Civil War. While this bond is stronger at times of pain and suffering such as after terrorist attacks, the American identity is ever present in classrooms where students stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. This is in thanks to the GAR and the WRC who early in the twentieth century educated and pushed for patriotic instruction in the curriculum.

Both the GAR and the UCV along women's organizations pushed a strong national identity into schoolchildren through education and patriotism. Regrettably, the north and south did not necessarily agree on these two critical issues. The south attempted to preserve a positive and nostalgic image of the south through their Lost Cause revisionism, while northern organizations focused their efforts on patriotism, wartime memories and remembering the sacrifice made by soldiers on behalf of the Union. The North focusing on these previously mentioned efforts, along with ignoring the Lost Cause they became complacent for the sake of healing the Union. This attempt to reunite actually divided it in many aspects. As of 2017-2018, a strong Confederate allegiance and identity still exists the South. One news article that

appeared in a St. Louis newspaper describes a group of men who claim they descend from Confederate soldiers gathered for a Confederate Memorial Day event. It goes on to describe the recent movement to remove statues and flags associated with the Confederacy.¹ This celebration of the Confederacy shows the divide still exists in our nation. This division was allowed to continue through the acceptance of the Lost Cause.

Since African-Americans and women did not have any social power; they gathered pieces of social power through their associations with white veterans. While gender and racial issues in the United States continues long after these groups gained rights, such as the right to vote. The GAR worked with African-Americans and allowed integration within the organization without which racial tensions might not have improved. The willingness to welcome African-Americans into the organization was a major step toward racial equality in the United States. For women more, equality came through the joining of women's organization and veterans' organizations. That collaboration granted northern and southern women some power.

Historians have understated the importance of these organizations. The historians who do look at some aspect of the Grand Army of the Republic, United Confederate Veterans and the Women's Relief Corp, generally focus on the fight for pensions without appreciation for the other contributions that these fights made for future veterans. As of 2018, veterans are entitled to pensions under certain conditions. First and foremost, the veteran is required to have served a certain amount of time in the military, with at least one day served during wartime. Beyond this, they must meet one of several conditions including; be at least 65 years old, totally and

¹ Jesse Bogan, "Dozens Gather in Bridgeton Cemetery for Confederate Memorial Day Event," St. Louis Post, May 22, 2017, <http://ezproxy.snhu.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1900876459?accountid=3783> (accessed January 26, 2018).

permanently disabled, in a nursing home or receiving some other form of government benefits.² This is a vast improvement over only aiding those permanently injured during a war as the veterans prior to the Civil War received. These modern pensions are a major political and economic step for veterans that the GAR fought for and shows the political power this organization had on a national level.

Another aspect historians tend to overlook is relationship that African-Americans veterans had with white veterans. When historians look at these relationships, they focus on segregation while downplaying the fact that those men belonged to a population that was only recently freed and yet were welcomed on a national level as well as the department or even the local post levels. This is astonishing considering the general racial attitude of this period in United States history. Historians tend to focus on the negative interactions, especially in the south, while down playing the positive and progressive attitude of the Grand Army of the Republic. While it is important for historians to acknowledge these negative interactions, it is also just as important to recognize the positive.

The experience of women in this era mirrors that of the African-Americans to an extent. Women's social input grew exponentially thanks to their relationship with the GAR in the north and the UCV in the south. Women who belonged to these affiliated organizations utilized newfound influence by fundraising and shaping education. United Daughters of the Confederacy raised funds for monuments to the Lost Cause and while it is clear the UDC was and is a "social,

² "Veterans Pension - Pension." United States Department of Veteran Affairs, <https://www.benefits.va.gov/PENSION/vetpen.asp> (accessed January 13, 2018).

literary, historical, monumental, and benevolent association”³ it also became a political organization. By erecting memorials dedicated to the memory of the Lost Cause and the Confederacy it made and is still making a political statement. In many ways the men of the UCV and other organizations respected the new sphere of influence of women socially and politically. Colonel Hilary Herbert attended the 1907 Daughters Convention to seek the UDC’s help on behalf of the Arlington Confederate Monument Association.⁴

As well as being progressive in terms of race and gender, Civil War organizations became lobbyists and activists for better benefits. The GAR, the WRC, and even the UCV lobbied for education. All the patriotic and veteran organizations birthed from the Civil War became activist organizations. They lobbied for patriotic education, disability rights, better pensions for veterans, gender rights and racial rights. They were successful in obtaining newer and better conditions for these populations of people. This was an extension of their beliefs regarding brotherhood and loyalty. Southern veterans lobbying the former Confederate states for pensions which had been awarded to Union veterans by the federal government added to the tension between the north and the south.

While historians such as Dr. Theda Skocpol readily point out that liberalization of Civil War pensions came from pressure groups such as the GAR, they hardly mention what this means for the African-American veterans. As members of the Grand Army of the Republic African-Americans benefited from the influence this organization exerted upon the United States

³ Cameron Freeman Napier, "United Daughters of the Confederacy," in *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, ed. Nancy Bercau and Ted Ownby (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 352-353.

⁴ Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 53.

government for better pensions. Although African-Americans did not have received as generous pensions as their white counterparts they would have found it harder to access these pensions with the GAR's efforts. The GAR's efforts led to their legal right, as did white veterans, to receive a pension.⁵ This is something historians cannot ignore about the GAR's influence on politics and racial progressiveness in the decades following the Civil War.

Long after the last veteran of the Civil War passed away the impact these patriotic and veteran organization had can still be felt in United States society and culture. Without these organizations the divide between the north and the south may never have healed. The Grand Army of the Republic and the Women's Relief Corp helped shape pension policy and politics for the United States. They also preserved the memory of their fallen comrades by taking steps to create Memorial Day and recognized the importance of the African-American population, especially the veterans. This in turn gave some measure of political voice to that population. The United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy shaped historical interpretation for generations and the Lost Cause has never truly died. All four organizations granted a measure of political influence for women in a time when women had none. Patriotism and historical memory remained important for these organizations, while pushing for social, political, and economic changes.

⁵ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992) (accessed Dec 17, 2017): 111

Appendix: Photographs

Photographs from the 2017 Remembrance Day Parade by Al Smith









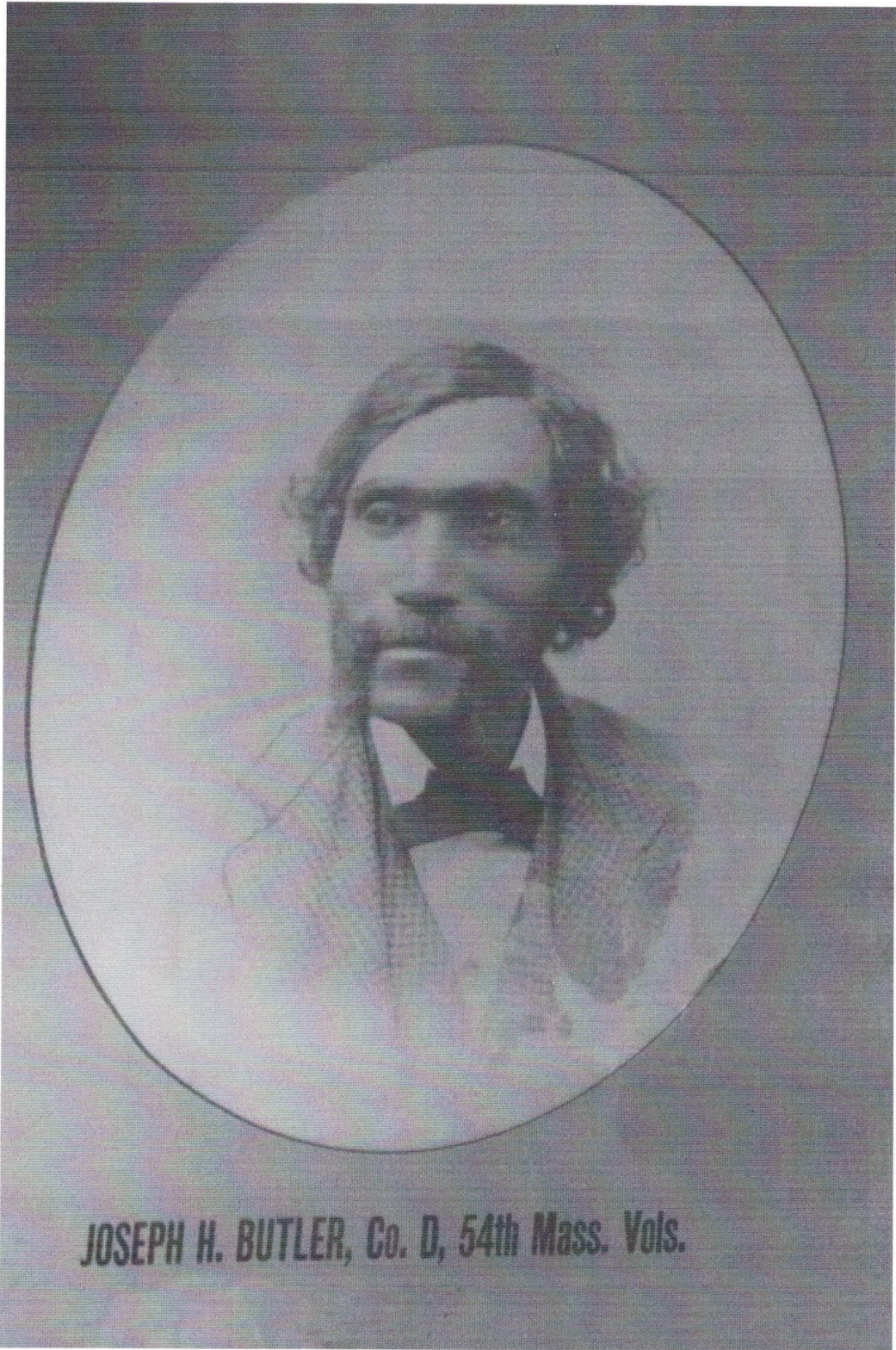


54th Massachusetts Members of the General Lander Post #5 Lynn Parade





JAMES M. ADGURSON, Priv. Co. F. 54th Mass. Inf'y



JOSEPH H. BUTLER, Co. D, 54th Mass. Vols.

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