



THE OLD LINER NEWSLETTER



Hanukkah during the American Civil War

*Guide Article by Nils Skudra ***

Reflecting on this past holiday season, in which members of the Jewish community celebrated Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights which commemorates the Maccabees' liberation of Israel from the tyrannical Greek king Antiochus, it should be remembered that during the Civil War, American Jews observed this sacred holiday while fighting against their co-religionists on opposing sides. While both Northern and Southern Jews practiced the same faith and celebrated its traditional holidays, they invoked God's name and the sacred Jewish texts in fighting against each other, giving different meanings to Jewish holidays through the lens of their respective causes. As a celebration of the Jews' military success against oppression, Hanukkah would certainly have been no different, with Jewish Confederates and Jewish Northerners interpreting it from opposing angles. However, while ideological differences strongly influenced their invocation of religion in wartime, these common religious ties were a powerful bond that provided occasion for the shared observance of Hanukkah and other Jewish holidays between Northern Jewish soldiers and Jewish Confederate civilians in Southern communities under Union occupation.

In 1860, there were approximately 150,000 Jews in the United States, largely immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe who had come to escape religious persecution and political upheaval in their home countries. Most of these Jewish immigrants settled in the Northern states, forming sizable communities in New York, Cincinnati, and Chicago, but a significant

minority also joined the established Jewish communities in Southern cities such as Charleston, New Orleans, and Richmond. Southern Jews accepted the prevailing customs of the society they lived in, including the institution of slavery and notions of race. Indeed, some Southern Jews became slaveholders or married into slaveholding families, most notably Judah Benjamin of Louisiana and the Mordecai family of Raleigh, North Carolina. Among Northern Jews, opinion was divided on the issue of slavery; during the secession crisis, Morris Raphall, an Orthodox rabbi and leader of New York's B'nai Jeshurun congregation, delivered a highly publicized sermon that invoked divine protection of slavery, citing passages from the Old Testament that sanctioned the holding of slaves, in the hope of calming sectional tensions. In response, Reform rabbi David Einhorn of Baltimore's Har Sinai Temple delivered a harsh rebuke that deconstructed Raphall's arguments and reinterpreted the Old Testament from an abolitionist perspective.¹

Upon the outbreak of the Civil War, the vast majority of Jews living in the North and South gave their support to their respective causes. Over the course of the conflict, approximately 8,000 Jews served in the Union Army while 3,000 Jews fought for the Confederacy, with many becoming high-ranking officers in both armies. For example, Marcus Spiegel, who had arrived from

¹ Bock, H. (2022). "Noah's Curse: On the Eve of the Civil War, a Rabbi Declares Black Slavery Biblical." TheTorah.com – Torah and Academic Biblical Scholarship. Accessed December 23, 2022. <https://www.thetorah.com/article/noahs-curse-on-the-eve-of-the-civil-war-a-rabbi-declares-black-slavery-biblical>



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Germany as a peddler, rose to become lieutenant colonel of the 120th Ohio Infantry Regiment, which would have been impossible for a Jew living in Germany at that time. On the Confederate side, Judah Benjamin became a trusted confidante of Jefferson Davis, serving as Attorney General, Secretary of War, and Secretary of State, overseeing diplomatic missions to seek European recognition and counseling Davis in managing the Confederate war effort. As the war progressed, Jewish soldiers in both armies sought to continue observing their religious traditions within the constraints of a predominantly Christian military setting while at the same time affirming their identity as American citizens through their service.

On both sides in the Civil War, religion played a major role as a motivating factor and as an instrument for maintaining morale among the troops. Military chaplains and religious leaders held services that invoked Scripture to inspire soldiers and affirm the righteousness of their national cause. This was particularly critical for the Confederate Army, which held a series of religious revivals in 1863 and 1864 to bolster morale in the wake of the defeats at Gettysburg, Vicksburg, and Lookout Mountain. Jewish Confederate soldiers observed a prayer composed by Rabbi Max Michelbacher, entitled “The Prayer of the C.S. Soldiers,” which infused the Confederacy with ancient Jewish imagery and emphasized the link between Jewish soldiers and their cause:

“This once happy country is inflamed by the fury of war; a menacing enemy is arrayed against the rights, liberties and freedom of this, our Confederacy... Here I stand now with many thousands of the sons of the sunny South, to face the foe, to drive him

back, and to defend our natural rights. O Lord, God of Israel, be with me in the hot season of the contending strife; protect and bless me with health and courage to bear cheerfully the hardships of war... Be unto the Army of this Confederacy, as thou wert of old, unto us, thy chosen people! Inspire them with patriotism! Give them when marching to meet, or, overtake the enemy, the wings of the eagle – in the camp be Thou their watch and ward – and in the battle, strike for them, O Almighty God of Israel, as thou didst strike for thy people on the plains of Canaan – guide them, O Lord of Battles, into the paths of victory, guard them from the shaft and missile of the enemy.”²

Against the backdrop of this invocation of divine favor, the ways in which Jewish soldiers on opposing sides interpreted Hanukkah is particularly worthy of examination. As a holiday that celebrated the Jews’ triumph over the occupying Greek army and the rededication of the ancient Temple, Northern and Southern Jewish soldiers likely interpreted the story with different emphases that were in line with their respective causes. For Jewish Confederates, the story of Hanukkah probably resonated with their own struggle for Southern independence since the Greeks had tried to abolish Judaism and impose Hellenistic culture on the Jewish people but were ultimately defeated by the heroic Maccabees, whom Jewish Confederates may have likened themselves to since they saw the North as a foreign invader trying to change the Southern way of life. For Jewish Confederate civilians of Savannah, Georgia, Union general William T. Sherman’s occupation of their city on December 22,

² Rosen, R. (2000). *The Jewish Confederates*. University of South Carolina Press. P. 211.



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1864, represented a bitterly ironic coincidence with Hanukkah since the holiday celebrated triumph over an invading enemy, but in this case, they experienced the opposite outcome.³

Although most Jewish soldiers in the Union army were not abolitionists, those who sympathized with the plight of African American slaves may have interpreted Hanukkah through an emphasis on fighting a war of liberation from oppression, which also coincided with their commemoration of Passover, the celebration of the Exodus from slavery in Egypt. Furthermore, the story of the Temple's rededication and the miracle of the ever-burning light would likely have fit the Northern Jewish soldiers' conception of preserving and rebuilding the Union, ensuring its perpetuity despite secessionists' efforts to dissolve it.

While their wartime allegiances significantly affected how Northern and Southern Jews interpreted the traditional Jewish holidays, their shared religious ties nonetheless represented a deep and profound bond that could bring them together for festive occasions in the midst of the conflict. For example, in the Union-occupied city of Memphis, Tennessee during Hanukkah in December 1862, Lt. Col. Marcus Spiegel approached a Jewish couple and wished them, "Happy Sabbath, dear people." Initially startled, the couple told Spiegel that he could have a kosher meal with them or go to Mr. Levy's boardinghouse, where he met thirty Jewish Tennesseans who were surprised at the arrival of a Union officer. When Spiegel requested a Hanukkah lunch, the proprietor asked him his name, after which Mr. Levy exclaimed, "a son of Rabbi

Mosche of Abenheim, a lieutenant colonel," as he had known Spiegel's family back in Germany. Spiegel was subsequently allowed to share Hanukkah with the other guests.⁴ Similar incidents took place in other Union-occupied Southern communities throughout the war, providing Jewish Union soldiers and Jewish Confederate civilians with the opportunity to celebrate Jewish holidays despite the widespread bitterness that the war created.

In summation, the divergent ways in which Northern and Southern Jews interpreted and commemorated Hanukkah represents a microcosm of the role that religion played in the broader divisions of the American Civil War, as the ways in which it could bring co-religionists together for festive occasions. Just as their non-Jewish comrades-in-arms invoked Christian theology to justify their causes and uphold morale, Jewish Union and Confederate soldiers turned to the stories of the Torah for motivation and to draw connections that affirmed the righteousness of their struggle, and Hanukkah provides a poignant example. Just as the Maccabees had triumphed over the Greek oppressors, Jewish Confederates believed that they would ultimately prevail in fighting to preserve the Southern way of life and repel the Yankee invader, while Jewish Union soldiers were equally determined to guarantee the perpetuity of the Union and, among some, to liberate slaves from bondage. Although these interpretations strongly impacted the sentiments that Jewish soldiers bore toward their opponents, their mutual religious ties constituted a powerful bond that led to instances of fraternization in which Northern Jewish soldiers observed Hanukkah with

³ Rosen, 2000, p. 307.

⁴ Rosen, 2000, p. 263.



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their Southern co-religionists, putting aside their ideological differences for a shared moment of festive joy. In a contemporary sense, this can be considered illustrative of the family dynamic at the heart of Hanukkah, as it provides family members with an occasion for gathering together to celebrate a cherished tradition, even if they can sometimes vehemently disagree with each other.

Rosen, 2000, p. 263.

Nils Skudra is a recent graduate of the Master's in Library and Information Sciences program at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, where he received a previous Master's degree in History in 2018. Originally from Berkeley, California, he moved to North Carolina in 2016 for graduate studies in Civil War history, a subject that has been his lifelong passion. Nils has written numerous freelance articles relating to the Civil War, which have been published in various newspapers including The Roanoke Times and the Greensboro News and Record. He aspires to work as a full-time professional historian, and he enjoys visiting different Civil War landmarks across North Carolina and Virginia.

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National Park Service awards contract to transform visitor experience at the Lincoln Memorial

New museum, other improvements benefit from public-private partnership with National Park Foundation



NPS image

By Mike Litterst & Chelsey McLin, NPS, February 20, 2023

WASHINGTON – The National Park Service has awarded a contract to add an immersive museum beneath the Lincoln Memorial and other upgrades to the visitor experience. Construction is expected to begin in March with completion targeted for 2026, in time for the 250th anniversary of American independence.

The nearly \$69 million project will create 15,000 square feet of exhibit space that tells a more complete story of the Lincoln Memorial and provides a look at the structure's foundations in a cavernous area known as the undercroft. New museum exhibits and multi-media presentations will highlight the construction history of the memorial and discuss how the Lincoln Memorial has become the nation's foremost backdrop for civil rights demonstrations. The project also includes new restrooms, a larger bookstore and a refurbished elevator to the chamber level of the memorial.

“The undercroft of the Lincoln Memorial, long hidden from public view, offers a fascinating setting to learn more about America's 16th president and the memorial that honors him,” Jeff Reinbold, superintendent of National Mall and Memorial Parks, said. “Thanks to the



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National Park Foundation and its generous donors, visitors will be able to view this dramatic architectural feature, learn about the how the memorial was built and how its meaning has evolved over the last century.”

The undercroft of the Lincoln Memorial is a tall grid of concrete columns surrounded by large expanses of open space. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls will provide a view of the undercroft, and an immersive theater presentation will project images of historic events onto the foundations. Visitors will also learn about the significance of the site as an international icon dedicated to the achievements of Abraham Lincoln and individuals such as Marian Anderson and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who have shaped the history of the memorial.

The public-private partnership project was first announced in 2016 with an \$18.5 million donation from businessman and philanthropist David M. Rubenstein. Including Rubenstein’s donation, to-date, the National Park Foundation has contributed more than \$43 million to fund the project, with \$38.5 million gifted from private donors including the John L. Nau, III Foundation; Rick L. and Vicki L. James Foundation; Citadel founder and CEO Kenneth C. Griffin; and Glenn W. Bailey Foundation. The National Park Service has invested more than \$26 million toward the project.

“For more than a century, the Lincoln Memorial has been the crucible of American democracy, an enduring platform for free speech, the site of civil protests that still shape society, and the scene of national celebrations,” Will Shafroth, president and CEO of the National Park Foundation, said.

“Thanks to generous donors, the National Park Service will ensure the Lincoln Memorial continues to make history for another 100 years.”

“Improving the visitor experience at the Lincoln Memorial is vitally important to connecting Americans to the rich history of our country, the triumphs, the failures, and the lessons learned,” said David M. Rubenstein, financier and philanthropist.

Access to the memorial, including the steps and chamber with the statue of Abraham Lincoln, will remain open to the public during the construction. The basement area exhibits, restrooms and elevator will close this spring, however temporary restrooms, bookstore and a handicapped accessible lift will be available for the duration of the work.

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National Park Service awards \$1.1 million to protect over 272 acres at four Civil War battlefields



Trails through the Siegen Forest offer opportunities for recreation and relaxation along the Rapidan River in Orange County, Virginia. Virginia Department of Historic Resources

NewsMedia@nps.gov, February 17, 2023



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WASHINGTON – The National Park Service’s (NPS) American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) awarded \$1,133,275 today in Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to protect 272.86 acres at four Civil War battlefields in Maryland, Mississippi, and Virginia. These projects support collaborations among state and local governments and their nonprofit partners to care for the places and stories that are significant to the nation’s history. The funds come from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which reinvests revenue from offshore oil and natural gas leases to strengthen conservation and recreational opportunities across the nation.

“Our work preserves and honors the places and stories of those who lost their lives in battle,” said NPS Director Chuck Sams.

“These grants support locally-led stewardship at state and county governments and reinvests to bring new experiences and powerful moments to places where so many lives were lost.”

Siegen Forest, along the banks of the Rapidan River in Orange County, Virginia is a significant place filled with history as a cultural crossroads. Native Americans, colonists, and enslaved people worked these lands for nourishment, profit, and survival for centuries until armed forces crossed this land during the Civil War before many famous battles. In late April 1863, after a bloody December 1862 defeat at Fredericksburg, the U.S. Army of the Potomac crossed the river and marched toward another deadly battle at Chancellorsville. A year later, at the opening of the Overland Campaign in May 1864, the United States Colored Troops approached the Battle of the Wilderness across the Germanna Ford and

marched towards a field of battle where neither side could claim victory despite 30,000 dead and wounded.

In 1956, the Germanna Foundation preserved Siegen Forest to commemorate 18th century German colonists who settled the area and to conserve this storied space for reflection and recreation. With today’s award to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the forest remains a park that invites public enjoyment, inspiration, and creative opportunities to share your stories of this special place.

Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants protect places that connect us to our past, and to one another through long-lasting partnerships. Recipients include:

- Mississippi Department of Archives and History (\$192,352.50) for preservation of 7.06 acres at Chickasaw Bayou Battlefield in Warren County, Mississippi.
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (\$655,070.85) for preservation of 163.88 acres at Chancellorsville Battlefield in Orange County, Virginia.
- Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (\$163,251.69) for preservation of 101 acres at Ream’s Station Battlefield in Dinwiddie County, Virginia.
- Board of County Commissioners, Washington, Maryland (\$122,600.56) for preservation of 0.92 acres at Antietam Battlefield in Washington County, Maryland.

The NPS ABPP’s Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants empower preservation



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partners nationwide to acquire and preserve threatened battlefields on American soil. In addition, the program administers three other grant programs: Preservation Planning, Battlefield Interpretation and Battlefield Restoration grants. Assistance from these grants supports sustainable, community-driven stewardship of natural and historic resources at the state, Tribal, and local levels.

Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants are available on a rolling basis. To learn more about how to apply, head to NPS ABPP's website. For questions about NPS ABPP's grants, contact the program at e-mail us. www.nps.gov

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Parker's Cross Roads Battlefield Grows Through Addition of the Original Intersection's Southwest Corner

Supported by federal, state and local entities, the American Battlefield Trust has acquired, restored and transferred just under one acre of hallowed ground at Parker's Cross Roads

By Colleen Cheslak-Poulton, ABT, January 24, 2023

(Parkers Crossroads, Tenn.) — Students of history recently marked the 160th anniversary of the Battle of Parker's Cross Roads, even as the American Battlefield Trust, the nation's premier battlefield land preservation organization, declared the site scene of its latest victory. Over the course of 2020 and 2021, the Trust acquired two adjacent Parker's Cross Roads properties with the support of the American Battlefield

Protection Program, the City of Parkers Crossroads and the Tennessee Historical Commission's Civil War Sites Preservation Fund (administered by the Tennessee Wars Commission). Totalling just under one acre, this land's historic pedigree is valuable in the fact that it was the southwest corner of the original intersection during the December 31, 1862, battle. Beyond acquisition, the Trust restored the acreage and proceeded to transfer it to the State of Tennessee in December, shortly before the battle's December 31 anniversary.

“Although small, this property is significant in the history it represents and the preservation story it advances, turning back commercial uses of battlefield land and extending a successful park,” said Trust President David Duncan. “Through our more than 20-year association with the Parker's Cross Roads Battlefield, we've seen our local and state partners make enormous strides to grow this site — which today accounts for more than 370 acres of preserved core battlefield — and are happy to have played a role in helping them accomplish much of this work.”

The National Park Service-affiliated battlefield is owned by the State of Tennessee and operated by the City of Parkers Crossroads, with the two working in collaboration to enhance the site.

“The Tennessee Historical Commission and Tennessee Wars Commission have worked with the American Battlefield Trust and City of Parkers Crossroads for over two decades to save and interpret this important battlefield,” said Patrick McIntyre, executive director of the Tennessee Historical Commission and the state historic preservation officer. “This acquisition



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represents the pivotal addition of another quarter of the namesake crossroads and another incredible preservation victory that has been accomplished in Tennessee through our continued partnership with the Trust.”



LEFT: The brick house that sat upon the approx. one-acre Parker's Cross Roads land prior to restoration. RIGHT: The same location after the removal of the brick house. American Battlefield Trust

The southwest quadrant of the original intersection was far from a pristine field when it first came into Trust hands; a brick home stood on one portion of the land, while a combination grocery store-gas station was situated on another. But Steve McDaniel — former deputy speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives, current city manager of Parkers Crossroads and longtime battlefield advocate — who was on-site to the demolition, cleanup and growth of new grass — is pleased with the restoration.

“Now, you can stand at the [southwest corner of the] intersection and look west to see the path the Federal troops under Col. Cyrus Dunham had used as they were pushed back” noted McDaniel. These troops were then repelled south of the crossroads by Brig. Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest and his men but, later in the battle, Col. John Fuller’s Federal brigade came in behind Forrest to reinforce Dunham.

With the added southwest corner acreage, the Parker’s Cross Roads Battlefield will now be accessible via Tennessee Highway

22, with the battlefield located near the intersection of the state highway and Interstate 40. While cutting across the historic landscape, highway access has been beneficial to the number of visitors the battlefield park receives. As Memphis sits approximately 108 miles west, Nashville roughly 100 miles east and Shiloh National Military Park about 51 miles south of Parker’s Cross Roads, location has also aided in its popularity.

Following the December transfer of the game-changing land to the State of Tennessee, the city-managed park is looking forward to exploring interpretive opportunities that will welcome visitors to the newly preserved corner of the Parker’s Cross Roads Battlefield.

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Life-Size 1865 Portrait of Abraham Lincoln Stands Tall at the National Portrait Gallery

The W.F.K. Travers painting hid in plain sight at a New Jersey town hall for 80 years before it was restored and brought back to Washington

By Roger Catlin, Museums Correspondent, Smithsonian, February 17, 2023



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"Abraham Lincoln" (1865) by W.F.K. Travers in the "America's Presidents" gallery at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, on loan from the Hartley Dodge Foundation. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

When a full-sized portrait of Abraham Lincoln by an obscure Dutch artist made its debut at the Centennial International Exhibition of 1876 in Philadelphia, it stunned viewers. And not just because it was 9 feet tall.

One longtime Lincoln associate said Willem Frederik Karel Travers' 1865 work was the most realistic portrait he had ever seen of the 16th president, who had been killed just 11 years earlier.

From the way he stood—amid an array of symbolic artifacts that included the recently signed 13th Amendment—to the sparkle in his eye and slight curl of the lip, it was an uncanny likeness. Widow Mary Todd Lincoln allegedly fainted at its sight and had to be helped away.

After the 10 million visitors to the nation's first official World's Fair had a chance to stand before it, triumphantly positioned alongside Gilbert Stuart's famed 8-foot-

tall Lansdowne portrait of George Washington from 1796, the Lincoln painting got a little lost. It hung in a New Jersey borough's council chambers for 80 years before it was restored and brought back to national prominence at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery this month in time for Presidents' Day.

"It will breathe new life into our republic, as we're now in our third century," historian and Lincoln scholar Ted Widmer said at the painting's ribbon-cutting last week. "It's a very, very happy day."



"Abraham Lincoln" (1865) by W.F.K. Travers in the "America's Presidents" gallery at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery, on loan from the Hartley Dodge Foundation. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

It was Widmer's advocacy in a *Washington Post* article last Presidents' Day that helped spark the portrait's return to Washington, where it once languished at the end of the



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19th and into the early 20th century, looking for a buyer.

“This is a living time capsule,” said Nicolas W. Platt, president of the Hartley Dodge Foundation, which is providing the long-term loan, courtesy of the citizens of the Borough of Madison, New Jersey.

“This painting was an orphan for a long time, which is another reason we’re so happy that it’s in this beautiful home,” museum director Kim Sajet said at the ribbon-cutting. “It couldn’t be better located with its pair, the great Gilbert Stuart Lansdowne portrait of George Washington, which is perhaps the most famous painting in the United States.”

That the two paintings are reunited as they were at the 1876 Centennial Exposition is another highlight of the museum’s ongoing “America’s Presidents” exhibition. The National Portrait Gallery is the only site outside the White House that holds portraits of all the U.S. presidents. The museum received a boost in attendance following the unveiling of the crowd-pleasing portrait of Barack Obama by Kehinde Wiley in 2018.

After the big showing at the Philadelphia exhibition, the Travers painting was nearly burned, historian Stefan Schöberlein said. William P. Webster, the American ambassador to Germany who had first purchased the painting, died in 1877. The painting was then stored at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where rumor has it, it was almost lost in a storage fire.

Then the painting became what Widmer called “kind of an orphan around Washington.”

“It hung in a hotel window,” he said. “It was in a naval subcommittee room inside the U.S. Capitol, where many senators really wanted

to buy it, but they did what senators do—they argued. They couldn’t quite agree on the price tag. And it just sat there, decade after decade.”

In the 1920s, the Rockefellers became the painting’s owners. Geraldine Rockefeller Dodge placed it in the Hartley Dodge Memorial, the municipal building in Madison, New Jersey, that she built in tribute to her only son, an heir to the Remington-Rockefeller fortune who had died in a car accident in France in 1930.

When the painting was restored in 2021, it was under layers of presumably hardware varnish poured on it about 40 years prior. “It was extremely thick, a little bit yellow, and it was quite opaque,” said conservator Mark Bockrath of Barbara A. Buckley & Associates of West Chester, Pennsylvania. “I had never removed varnish quite that thick.”

Then again, the varnish may have protected the painting from decades of smoking inside the council chambers, said Madison Borough Mayor Bob Conley.

Townpeople appreciated the painting, Conley said, but some took it for granted after a time, “like a piece of artwork in your own home.” The Hartley Dodge Memorial is an unusual town hall, built at the same time as New York’s Rockefeller Center using some of the same materials. For a time, its other artworks included a bust of Napoleon by Rodin.

“As mayor, I sat on the dais and this was on the far wall,” he said at the event. “So to sit there meeting after meeting and see Abraham Lincoln looking back at me, I think it’s kept us honest in our town meetings.”



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But, he added, “We would have packed meetings, and people would almost be leaning on it.”

Restoration of the painting—and its expert lighting in the Portrait Gallery—bring out the many symbolic elements in the paintings that appear alongside Lincoln in the composition, including two glimpses of George Washington, in a bust and in Emanuel Leutze’s famous image of the general crossing the Delaware.

The Constitution is shown prominently in the painting, just as it is in the nearby Washington Lansdowne portrait. And on the left-hand side of the frame is a globe, which, as Widmer pointed out, is turned toward the Caribbean and “might be showing Haiti, the country that Lincoln recognized for the first time more than 60 years after Haiti became an independent country.” Widmer added it also might be a nod to Travers’ childhood in Honduras in Central America. It’s one of the mysteries of the painting, which also includes a black glove on the floor that some may have missed before the painting was restored. It may be a signal of mourning in a painting that otherwise doesn’t show any, indicating it was painted during the last weeks of Lincoln’s life, Widmer said. “We believe it was painted in a pretty short window.”

It must have been completed between the passage of the 13th Amendment on January 31, 1865, and his assassination on April 15, 1865, minus the two weeks Lincoln went to Richmond immediately after the besieged city fell that spring. It’s not clear if Lincoln actually posed for the painting, one of three known full-length portraits of the president. “We believe that he did, but we don’t have proof,” Widmer said, adding that White

House visitation records from the period are spotty.

And unlike the many memorial paintings done after his death, “there’s no obvious mourning in it,” Schöberlein said. “Maybe that’s one way you could read that dropped glove as a late addition to acknowledge that in some way.”

“The mysteries deepen and deepen,” Widmer said, “and it’s been a wonderful experience for me as a historian.”

Sajet noted that Lincoln’s return to the Portrait Gallery building was significant and symbolic, since it was in these halls, back when it was the U.S. Patent Office, that Lincoln had applied for and received a patent for a boat floatation device intended to free boats from sandbars.

“The fact that it didn’t work is beside the point,” she said, “because he was the only president to submit a patent here in this building ... and [it] was of course a testament to his practical mind and ingenuity.”

The block-wide Greek Revival building, which Congress gave to the Smithsonian in 1962, was also notable for Lincoln as the site for his second inaugural ball, held a month before his death in 1865.



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Tactile display of 3D-printed copies of one face mask and a set of hands by Leonard Volk and one face mask by Clark Mills (based on the originals by Volk in 1860 and Mills in 1865) at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery. Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

Travers' Lincoln is one of a handful of portraits in the "America's Presidents" gallery that are not owned by the museum. Thomas Sully's 1824 oil of Andrew Jackson is from a private collection; George Peter Alexander Healy's 1858 Martin Van Buren was lent by the White House; Theodore Clement Steele's 1900 Benjamin Harrison is lent by Purdue University; Thomas E. Stephens' 1955 Dwight D. Eisenhower is lent by his presidential library.

The Lincoln portrait joins the more haggard portrayal of the president in a February 1865 photograph by Alexander Gardner, as well as a new tactile display, designed for the visually impaired, that includes three-dimensional replicas of a Lincoln face mask and a set of hands originally cast by Leonard Volk in 1860, as well as a face mask cast by Clark Mills in 1865.

A full-size digital reproduction of Travers' work has also been installed in Madison, New Jersey, hanging where the painting once stood, said Hartley Dodge Foundation trustee Anne MacCawatt. "The borough was understandably concerned that they were going to be without something, so we said we're going to really make it good for you," she said. "And I feel we accomplished that mission."

The W.F.K. Travers portrait of Abraham Lincoln joins the other paintings in the ongoing "America's Presidents" exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. and will be part of the museum's Presidential Family Fun Day on February 18 from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free.

Roger Catlin is a freelance writer in Washington D.C. who writes frequently about the arts for The Washington Post and other outlets. He wrote for many years at The Hartford Courant and writes mostly about TV on his blog rogercatlin.com.

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THIS PROSTHETIC LIMB GAVE CIVIL WAR AMPUTEES A CHANCE TO EMBRACE THEIR LOVED ONES AGAIN

Too old to fight, Marvin Lincoln instead used his skills to invent a prosthetic arm to help disabled veterans.

By HISTORYNET STAFF 2/21/2023





*A Lincoln Arm, invented by Marvin Lincoln.
(Courtesy of the National Museum of Civil War
Medicine)*

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Marvin Lincoln, an abolitionist from Massachusetts, was an organizer of the Massachusetts Anti-Man Hunting League and an agent of the Underground Railroad. In 1844, Lincoln began working as a carpenter with the famous prosthetic leg designer Benjamin Franklin Palmer. Too old to fight by the time of the Civil War, Lincoln instead used his skills to invent this prosthetic arm to help disabled veterans. His artificial arm featured, among other innovations, a detachable hand with a spring thumb that could grasp objects and an interior mechanism that allowed a jointed elbow to lock in place for easier lifting and clutching. “My aim has been to so construct an arm as to give increased holding and grasping powers, while it is much more simple and less expensive than those now in use,” he wrote in his patent application for the arm, which was quickly approved on August 11, 1863.

“I am again at home—an artificial Lincoln arm is doing what it can to supply the place of my right arm—it is somewhat awkward, and tho’ it is the mate of the remaining arm, yet it seems to be destitute of a ‘fellow feeling’—I chide it not,” wrote Private Henry W. Palmer, a veteran of the 31st Maine Infantry.

The Lincoln Arm remained a preferred prosthetic limb well into World War I. Pictured here is one of three versions that have been restored through funding by donors and members of the National Museum of Civil War Medicine in Frederick, Md. It is displayed on the first floor of the museum.



20th Massachusetts’ “Puddingstone” boulder memorial. Though often mocked today as Gettysburg’s “ugliest” monument, the 20th Massachusetts’ “Puddingstone” boulder memorial held special significance to the unit’s veterans. (Maurice Savage/Alamy Stock Photo)

WHY ARE GETTYSBURG MONUMENTS PLACED WHERE THEY ARE?

Early monumentation on the battlefield was chaotic until the park stepped in...

By D. SCOTT HARTWIG HISTORYNET
2/13/2023

When I worked at Gettysburg National Military Park, I regularly encountered visitors who imagined that some type of grand government master plan had created the park and accounted for the order and symmetry of its hundreds of monuments. Yet there is no master plan. The battlefield we see today with its orderly placement of monuments evolved over many years. The park was officially created by congressional legislation in 1895, but most of the regimental monuments were erected in the



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1880s, before the U.S. government assumed responsibility for managing the battlefield.

At the time, the field was managed by the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association, an organization created in 1864, which initially viewed the battlefield as a monument to the Union victory of July 1863. It sought to acquire land where evidence of the conflict still existed, such as Culp's Hill, East Cemetery Hill, and parts of Little Round Top—with their bullet-riddled trees, artillery lunettes, breastworks, and entrenchments.

In its early years, the GBMA was largely a local organization with a modest budget. Although it supported the idea of marking positions of Union Army units “by tablets, obelisks and other monumental structures,” its efforts centered on lobbying Northern states to pass laws and appropriate funds to make this a reality.

In 1880, the GBMA underwent a transformation, electing a new slate of officers and directors who had a larger vision than the original board. One of their decisions that would have far-reaching consequences for how regimental monuments would be located and what their inscriptions could say was to invite the amateur historian John B. Bachelder to join the board. Although he had not served in the Army during the war, Gettysburg had become Bachelder's life work, and he was considered the expert on the battle. Former Union Maj. Gen. Henry

Slocum wrote that Bachelder “can tell more of what I did there [at Gettysburg] than I can myself.”

In July 1883, the board elected Bachelder as Superintendent of Tablets and Legends. In this role he approved the proposed location, design, and inscription for regimental monuments.

When monuments went up had much to do with when state legislatures appropriated funding for them. Massachusetts, for example, appropriated \$500 in March 1884 for each regiment and battery of the state that had fought at Gettysburg. It would be up to the veterans of each unit to raise any additional funding necessary beyond this total. The result was almost all Massachusetts' regimental and battery monuments went up in 1885 and 1886.

In October 1885, the 15th, 19th, and 20th Massachusetts placed their monuments—with Bachelder's and the GBMA's approval—on the southern edge of the famous Copse of Trees, to which they had advanced during the repulse of Pickett's Charge on July 3. Bachelder, however, had second thoughts on allowing units to erect their principal monument at the point of their farthest advance. Ten other regiments had crowded into the same space the three Massachusetts regiments had in the counterattack to drive back the Confederate breakthrough near the Copse. If he allowed all these regiments to follow the Massachusetts example, the result would be a jumble of monuments near the trees. This, he believed, would “mislead the public in the future rather than illustrate the battle.”



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20th Massachusetts' "Puddingstone" boulder memorial in its earlier location. (Courtesy of the Adams County Historical Society)

While it was understandable that veterans wished to place their monument where they had lost the most men or achieved their greatest success, this could lead to clumps of monuments that would baffle future generations not steeped in Gettysburg's history, not to mention foment interminable arguments between veterans over who was where and when.

To resolve the issue, Bachelder met with Secretary of War William C. Endicott and Regular Army officers who had been in the volunteer service during the war. They reached a decision "that the desire of the memorial association would be better carried out if the lines of battle were marked, rather than the lines of contact when any regiment left their position to go into action."

In effect, regiments and batteries would mark the principal position they occupied in the general line of battle rather than to where they eventually advanced. Inscriptions on each monument could explain the regiment's actions and movements. Once a regiment had erected its principal monument, it could place an advance position

marker/monument/tablet if desired. In December 1887, the GBMA formally adopted this "line of battle" policy.



Later moved, the 19th Massachusetts' memorial was first placed at the regiment's July 3 advance position near the Copse of Trees. (Courtesy of the Adams County Historical Society)

One of Bachelder's first tasks was convincing veterans of the 15th, 19th, and 20th Massachusetts to move their monuments from their advance positions at the Copse to their July 2-3 lines of battle. The veterans agreed, though for the 19th Massachusetts that meant moving its monument to the second line of battle, where it had served in support. To soften the blow, each regiment was allowed to place an iron tablet at its advance position, where their monuments had originally been placed.

The new policy was generally a success, bringing a sense of order to how the field would be marked. Through the 1880s, the GBMA opened avenues that followed the Army of the Potomac's general lines while creating access to the monuments being erected. But determining "line of battle" proved to be a gray area. For example, all the monuments to Caldwell's 1st Division, 2nd Corps, are in the Wheatfield area to



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which the division advanced on July 2, rather than where the division was in line on the southern end of Cemetery Ridge most of the day. Artillery batteries were tricky because many of them moved numerous times throughout the battle. In these cases, Bachelder and the GBMA compromised and worked with veterans to meet the spirit of the policy but still honor the service of the unit.

The War Department continued this policy after the creation of Gettysburg National Military Park in 1895, when it assumed responsibility for all the lands of the GBMA. It generally worked well for the Army of the Potomac, but when the Confederate side of the field began to be acquired, Army of Northern Virginia veterans had little interest in erecting monuments on their “line of battle” positions, which were where their attacks originated from, not where they suffered their principal loss. But they also had less incentive than Union veterans to erect monuments, for starting in the 1890s the War Department marked the position of every brigade, battery, division, and corps of both armies with iron tablets. These tablets adhered to the same line of battle policy and typically marked where units were in position immediately before the fighting began.

Monuments are about memory, and numerous battles were fought over the years between veterans, and with the GBMA, over where a particular monument would be placed and what constituted the unit’s position in the line of battle on a particular day of the battle. But overall, the association’s policy was a success and reflected Bachelder’s vision in making the Gettysburg battlefield comprehensive for generations to come.

Scott Hartwig writes from the crossroads of Gettysburg.

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The Baby of Andersonville Prison

Robert S. Davis, January 27, 2023,
blueandgrayeducation.org



Andersonville prison and tents, August 1864 | public domain

Wartime smuggling, as a criminal enterprise, existed during the Civil War. And in one case, it resulted in a baby being born in prison. The story goes like this.

Herbert Hunt of Buffalo took a job from John H. Morris of Herkimer County, New York, to captain his steamship on a federal government contract voyage between New York City and North Carolina in 1864. Hunt brought his wife, Jane Francis Scadin of Chicago, on this journey. What the couple probably didn’t know was that creditors had called Morris a swindler as early as the 1840s—and he allegedly ran a smuggling operation, one in which they unknowingly became involved.

The Confederates captured the couple at the obscure lake harbor of Fairfield, North Carolina (the crew was released). The Hunts were taken to Augusta, Georgia, on May 17,



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1864. Confederate captain Henry Wirz, the commander of the Andersonville POW Camp, had the Hunts transferred to his prison and wrote that the couple had arrived there on May 18.

Jane Hunt gave birth to a son, Frank, on July 1. William Kerr, one of the prison doctors, discovered the Hunts living in a tent outside of the stockade, as reported in an article he wrote for the Confederate Veteran Magazine. Kerr found a job for Herbert and donations of clothes for the little family. Jane became friends with local women and the wives of Confederate officers.

Baby Frank lived as late as February 1865, but it's believed he died. The Hunts were paroled on April 15, essentially after the prison had closed. On April 24, a federal provost requested transportation for them from Cairo, Illinois, to Chicago. He made no mention of a baby.

Why did they leave Andersonville so late? Were the Hunts afraid to return home due to their connections to Morris. What possible illegal activities was Morris carrying out? And for which side? These questions have yet to be answered.

After the war, the Hunts settled in Newark and Communipaw, New Jersey, where they lived between 1865 and ca 1890, according to records from their children. They died in Rocky Hill, Connecticut—Jane in 1894 and Herbert in 1926.

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Nashville Confederate monument to stay

BY: ANITA WADHWANI, Tennessee
Lookout – Feb. 20, 2023



The Private Confederate Soldier Monument in Nashville's Centennial Park. (Photo: Nashville Public Library)

A Confederate monument will remain in one of Nashville's most-visited public parks after the Tennessee Historical Commission on Friday rejected the city's efforts to move it.

The commission, whose 24 voting members are appointed by Gov. Bill Lee, rejected a petition brought by Nashville parks officials to remove a life-sized statue of a Confederate soldier from Centennial Park, where it has sat across a field from an iconic replica of the Parthenon for more than a century.

The Metro Board of Parks and Recreation, the commission determined, failed to meet the burden of showing there was a need to move the bronze statue “based on historical or other compelling public interest.”

The law must be “liberally construed in favor of historic preservation,” the commission concluded.

The Private Confederate Soldier Monument was unveiled in 1909 during a reunion of a Confederate Veterans Association.



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The statue has largely escaped public scrutiny over other Confederate monuments displayed in Tennessee public spaces, including the years-long controversy over the display in the Tennessee State Capitol of a bust of early Ku Klux Klan leader Nathan Bedford Forrest. The bust was removed in 2021.

The bronze statue of the young, unnamed Confederate soldier in Centennial Park was vandalized in 2019, with the words “they were racists” in red paint. Nashville park officials debated then moving the statue, but voted instead to add a marker providing historical context.

The marker was never added. The next year, after the deaths of George Floyd and Breana Taylor, the Metro Board of Parks and Recreation revisited the decision, with one board member calling the statue of the sitting soldier a “divisive symbol.” The board last year petitioned the historical commission for permission to remove it, but did not specify where it might go.

Macy Amos, Nashville’s attorney, argued on Friday the monument may not be a “memorial” at all, which would remove it from the commission’s oversight. The statue was dedicated to the Lost Cause ideology, she argued, referring to a reinterpretation of the Civil War rather than a historical event or individual. Metro officials were also concerned about the possibility of the statue again attracting vandalism.

H. Edward Phillips, an attorney representing the Sons of Confederate Veterans Joseph E. Johnston Camp 28—which opposed the removal—argued the monument was in fact dedicated to individuals, noting that on it is inscribed the names of more than 500

soldiers, about half of whom had died at the time the memorial was erected.

The Tennessee Historical Commission has the authority to approve or deny petitions for waivers to the state’s Historic Preservation Act, which says that no memorial regarding a historic conflict, entity, event, figure or organization on public property may be moved or otherwise disturbed.

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