

Explore: Civil War Suburbia

By Kim O'Connell

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With its manicured lawns and mature trees, Pickwick Road in Centreville, Virginia, is a nice place to raise a family. But it was once a place to fight a war. Halfway down Pickwick Road, you can park and walk along what's called the Covered Way, a three-acre linear park that winds through the housing developments. Here, Union forces built a long series of defensive earthworks, many of which can still be seen. Befitting its name, Centreville was considered an important Northern Virginia crossroads, connecting several important towns including Manassas, Warrenton, and Washington, D.C. Throughout the war, fighting, ransacking, and bivouacking were common occurrences in Centreville and the neighboring town of Fairfax, as Union and Confederate armies crisscrossed the region, leaving damage and desolation in their wake. "If ever a village was killed in war," a Washington, D.C., newspaper declared in 1914, "it was Centerville [sic]." But news of the town's death was premature, as these two towns are now among the most populated suburbs of Washington, D.C. People can still view battlegrounds, field hospitals, winter quarters, plantation houses, and even two martyrs' graves, all in a single weekend. Most sites are located about a half-hour to 45 minutes west of Washington, D.C., off Interstate 66. —**Kim O'Connell**



The now quiet site of winter quarters

Tried by War

At the outbreak of hostilities, a clerk named Alfred Moss removed George Washington's will from the 1799 Fairfax Court House, but inexplicably left Martha Washington's will behind. Taken by Union Lt. Col. David Thomson, Martha's will eventually landed in the hands of steel magnate J.P. Morgan, who refused to return it to Virginia. Eventually, Morgan's heirs returned the will to Fairfax in 1915. The courthouse was also the site of a June 1861 fight that killed Captain John Quincy Marr, the first Confederate officer to die in a military engagement during the war, and a monument to the captain is located there. In June 1863, J.E.B. Stuart's men whipped an outnumbered force of Union troopers at the courthouse, but the skirmish slowed the Confederate horsemen yet one more day in their effort to rejoin the Army of Northern Virginia during its advance into Pennsylvania.



Slave cabin at Sully Plantation

Winter Quarters

Not far away from St. John's Episcopal Church sits an undeveloped park that was the site of Confederate winter quarters, rows of small pitched-roof log buildings that together resembled a shantytown. According to published plans, the county may eventually include an interpretive trail and some reconstructed quarters at this site, but for now, it's simply a quiet place for contemplation.

Churches in the Crosshairs



Built in 1854, Centreville's Old Stone Church (left), a Methodist Episcopal congregation, became a hospital for Union wounded after First and Second Manassas, and would change hands several times before war's end. Soldiers finally dismantled the property, but it was rebuilt in 1870 and currently operates as the Church of the Ascension. St. John's Episcopal Church (right) was also used

during the war. Soon after the first volleys at Manassas, Union troops reportedly vandalized the property. The church was later the site of a Confederate camp and partially burned in 1863. To one side of the church is a towering magnolia tree. Here you'll find two headstones—one memorializing the unknown Confederate dead in the churchyard and the other marking the graves of privates Michael O'Brien and Dennis Corcoran, Louisiana Tiger Zouaves who became the first two soldiers executed by the Confederacy, for a drunken attack on a superior.



Ox Hill Battlefield Park

Sully Plantation

Heading from Centreville to the city of Fairfax, stop at the picturesque Sully Historic Site, the 18th century estate of Richard Bland Lee. An uncle of Robert E. Lee, Richard and his family lived at Sully from 1794 to 1811, along with more than 30 enslaved African Americans. Now run by the Fairfax County Park Authority, the site contains five extant original buildings, including the main house, and a reconstructed slave quarters. J.E.B. Stuart and his men had breakfast at Sully, which must have caused consternation for Maria

Barlow, whose family was living on the property, given that the Barlows were Unionists.

“...The night air was chilly to men in wet clothes. At the regimental headquarters we built a fire, and to this fire the dead body was brought. We knew by the uniform that it was a Federal officer, but we did not know his name or rank.”

-Major Washington Grice, 49th Georgia Infantry, describes seeing the body of Union Maj. Gen. Philip Kearny, killed at the Battle of Ox Hill, or Chantilly, on September 1, 1862.



Two Horsemen

A small building that was rebuilt from the stones of a house where John Singleton Mosby met J.E.B. Stuart has now been reopened as the Stuart-Mosby Civil War Cavalry Museum. It includes several artifacts related to both of the lauded troopers, including sabers, a lock of Stuart's hair, and a photo album, above, that Stuart gave to female friend Nannie Price. Check their website stuart-mosby.com for hours and details.

Army on the Run

Today, the paved trail through Cub Run Stream Park is popular with runners, but an interpretive sign tells the story of another famous “run”—the frenzied retreat from the First Battle of Manassas. It was here that fleeing Union troops converged on the bridge over the stream, abandoning wagons and gear as Confederate artillery rained down on them.

A Double Battlefield

The Ox Hill Battlefield Park in Fairfax is well worth your time. This is the site of both a fierce battle on September 1, 1862, as well as a historic preservation battle. In the late 1980s, a determined group of preservationists—including the late Brian C. Pohanka—worked to save the battlefield from the rapid development that was taking over the rest of Fairfax County. Today, this five-acre site remains a monument to the power of preservation activists.



Grffiti at Blenheim House (Madison Best/HistoryNet Archive)

Writing on the Wall

Civil War soldiers commonly wrote graffiti on the walls of the buildings they occupied—either out of boredom, to leave their mark, or to taunt their enemies. Located only blocks from the center of Fairfax, Blenheim is a historic brick farmhouse built in 1859 that contains nearly 125 known signatures, sketches, and other commentary on the walls done by Union soldiers who camped on the property or who were hospitalized in the house. One graffito depicts the sinking morale of the common soldier: “No money. No whiskey. No friends. No rations. No peas. No beans. No pants. No patriotism.”

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Researchers fill in stories of Hampton slaves, link them to living descendants today

Mary Carole McCauley, Contact Reporter
The Baltimore Sun, 10/26/2018

George Batty led a difficult, dangerous life. In 1829, the then-54-year-old was one of the oldest enslaved men working in a forge north of Towson on the largest plantation in Maryland.

“It was hot, dangerous work,” said Bill Curtis, a ranger with the National Park Service, which operates the former plantation as Hampton National Historic Site. “If some of the burning coal fell on your shoe, you were toast. Of all the work that the Ridgelys extracted from enslaved people, this was probably the most hazardous.”

Batty is among the enslaved people beginning to emerge from the shadows as the result of a massive two-year research project undertaken by the University of Maryland, Towson University, the

University of Maryland Baltimore County, the National Park Service and the Nanny Jack & Co. archives. The 11-member Hampton Ethnographic Team combed through census directories, estate lists, land records, city directories, clothing records and other sources to illuminate the lives of perhaps 800 enslaved men, women and children who spanned seven generations.

The research is continuing, but the team will present what it has learned so far Friday at an afternoon symposium. On Saturday afternoon, living history interpreters in period attire will present guided tours throughout the now-62-acre estate.

Although Maryland was a slave state and had numerous plantations, “there is almost no cohesive narrative around slavery,” said Cheryl Janifer LaRoche, an associate research professor at the University of Maryland and the project’s principal investigator.

Before beginning the project, “we had individual names and small clues about a few people,” she said. “But what we have been able to do is not only find out about individuals but reconstitute family histories and trace them beyond the plantation into the 21st century. It’s been so gratifying to animate these lists and turn the names on them into human beings. We know them now like they are our friends.

“We can finally start to talk about them,” she said, “as real people.”

The ethnographic team has reconstructed six enslaved families and has traced roughly 100 of their progeny through the generations. Three families — the Beattys, the Cummingses and the Harrises — continue into the 21st century because their ancestors

survived and even thrived despite formidable odds.

Henry Cummins, for instance, endured a childhood of extreme deprivation. (Names were often spelled inconsistently.)

“He started out life as a small boy who was enslaved by the Ridgelys,” said Gregory Weidman, curator of the Hampton National Historic Site.

Henry’s mother was forced to work in the home of Ridgely heirs living on a part of the plantation in White Marsh. When she was freed in 1829, she had to leave her 2-year-old son behind, and he spent the next 26 years in servitude. Yet later in life Henry Cummins became a famous chef at the fanciest hotel in Baltimore and was known for his terrapin soup.

In contrast, Nathan Harris occupied a relatively prestigious role for an enslaved man in 19th century Maryland. A coachman famed for his ability to manage a four-in-hand — four horses pulling a carriage — Harris wore an elegant livery with special buttons, each shaped like a stag’s head.

After Maryland abolished slavery in 1864 the newly freed Harris started his own livery stable on Woodbourne Avenue. The enterprise was profitable enough that he could afford to take out newspaper advertisements offering stallions for sale.

Though these men and women have been dead for well over a century, their impact continues to be felt today.

Researchers have traced George Batty’s descendants to include Will Beatty, a native of York, Pa., and a football player with two Super Bowl rings. (He could not be reached for comment.) The ethnographic team

determined that Henry Cummins passed his lineage onto Harry S. Cummings, who in 1890 became the first African-American elected to Baltimore’s City Council. And Nathan Harris’ descendants seem to have taken root in Towson and can be found in families named Davis, Harris and Gross. (The Baltimore Sun was unable to contact these families; researchers declined to provide the descendants’ names because they have not yet established communication with these relatives.)

The project is an example of a nationwide trend at cultural institutions of all sizes — from Mount Vernon and Monticello to Baltimore’s Hackerman House at the Walters Art Museum — to tell a more complete history by resurrecting the lives of the enslaved people who built and maintained these palatial estates.

But LaRoche said that what set the project at Hampton apart from the beginning was the sheer magnitude of the estate, which was owned by the Ridgely family from 1745 to 1948. (The home’s second and most famous owner was Charles Carnan Ridgely, the 15th governor of Maryland.)

At its peak, the plantation comprised nearly 25,000 acres, stretching from an area north of Towson to Perry Hall and White Marsh. It included a dairy, orchards, barns, stables, gristmills, marble quarries and an ironworks. When construction on Hampton Mansion was completed in 1790, it was the largest private home in the U.S. and was kept clean and in good repair by the tireless efforts of a dozen house slaves.

“The way we tell history in the United States, slavery is never given credit for the

economic viability this country enjoys today,” LaRoche said.

“We make it sound like these estates and enterprises came about because of the brilliance and great political savvy of a few great men. We don’t acknowledge that all of this profit and largesse was based on the backs of human beings who were enslaved for 100 years. This is an opportunity for us to begin a more honest, truthful and realistic conversation about slavery. If we are brave enough, it could begin to heal this country.”

LaRoche said that it’s sometimes painful for 21st-century African-Americans to learn definitively that their ancestors had lived in captivity.

“It can take a minute for people to process this information if they haven’t thought of themselves as being associated with slavery,” she said. “Maryland doesn’t always pop right up in your mind when you think about slave states, so making that discovery can be a shock to the system.”

But for Myra DeShields-Moulton, it was a relief to definitively trace her lineage to the Hampton plantation. The 58-year-old genealogist always had a hunch that the people she attended school with in York, Pa. — the people whose kitchens she ate in and whose children she later watched grow up — were more than just neighbors and friends. They were cousins. DNA tests taken four years ago confirmed that George Batty was her great-great-great-great grandfather.

It wasn’t until LaRoche traced their common ancestry to the Hampton Plantation that DeShields-Moulton had the evidence she needed to confirm where their family line began.*

“I’ve been telling the people I grew up with for years and years and years that we’re all related, but nobody believed me,” she said. “I knew I was a Beatty, but now I have the proof. It’s nice to know that we’re all biologically connected and part of the same family.”

**Clarification: This story has been updated to reflect the circumstances under which Myra DeShields-Moulton learned she was descended from George Batty.*

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In His Footsteps: Gary Burke once sneaked into this railroad cut to gain an understanding about what his USCT ancestor experienced at the Battle of Nashville.

Rambling: Battlefield of The Mind

By John Banks
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You need a keen imagination to understand the fighting at Nashville

In a small Park along Granny White Pike in Nashville, joggers and walkers are busy burning calories early on a Sunday morning. Nearby looms the massive Battle of Nashville Peace Monument honoring Union and Confederate soldiers who fought over a

vast swath of land south and west of this city. But the early risers seem oblivious to its existence. In an adjacent parking lot, a few steps from unmowed grass and 15 yards from a battlefield “witness tree,” visitors find a nearly unreadable wayside marker. This scene on the old Noel farm, once the front line on December 15, 1864, but now a sprawling neighborhood, is hardly surprising.

The Nashville battlefield has a torturous history. Bulldozed, paved over, developed and mostly ignored, the hallowed ground on which John Bell Hood’s Army of Tennessee was nearly destroyed December, 15-16, 1864, is today unrecognizable as a battlefield. Only pockets of core battleground remain—in a grimy industrial area, on the grounds of a modern church, in residential neighborhoods, on a golf course, and elsewhere. Sadly, Nashville is mostly a battlefield of the mind.

Nashvillians had little desire to save the site of a major Confederate defeat

While Gary Burke was growing up here, his father—a Korean War veteran—had never mentioned Peter Bailey, a 5-foot-4-inch private in the 17th United States Colored Troops from Lebanon, Tenn. Then, Burke discovered Bailey’s name in a family history and began digging for more information. Bailey, he learned, was his great-great-grandfather, who had enlisted in January 1864 at age 18.

As Burke talks of Bailey’s service, we walk the grounds of Travellers Rest, the Civil War-era home of Judge John Overton and one of Hood’s headquarters during the battle. He mentions how *Glory*—the 1989 movie about the 54th Massachusetts—inspired him to reenact and opened his eyes to the battlefield experiences of African Americans. “When I was younger, it made me angry

because I didn’t understand the history of the Civil War,” the 54-year-old says. “I tell young people of color we should embrace it. Don’t feel ashamed.”

For Peter Bailey and eight USCT regiments, Nashville was their baptism of fire. At Peach Orchard Hill, across six lanes of I-65 from where we stand at Travellers Rest, the 13th USCT suffered 200 casualties, including five color-bearers, on the battle’s second day. “I never saw more heroic conduct shown on the field of battle than was exhibited by this body of men so recently slaves,” a Union officer said of the black troops’ performance that day.

Unfortunately, the site where Private Bailey and the rest of Maj. Gen. George Thomas’ Army of the Cumberland fought bears no resemblance to its wartime appearance. By the 1950s, Peach Orchard Hill had become a residential neighborhood, with road construction carving huge portions from core battlefield. A member of the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society, Burke isn’t pleased with the destruction, calling it “preposterous and sad.”

Later, we travel down Murfreesboro Pike, a gritty part of the city. It’s the same route Bailey and two USCT brigades took for a diversionary attack on the extreme far right of the Confederate line on the foggy morning of the battle’s first day. In industrial South Nashville, we inspect a small hill adjacent to a wrecker service. It is Granbury’s Lunette—all that remains of Confederate defenses here.



Remembrance: Framed by a “witness tree,” the Battle of Nashville Monument on Granny White Pike honors both sides of the December 1864 fight. Of 3,840 acres of core battlefield, only about 320 acres on which this critical late war fight occurred are preserved.

Four hundred feet west, we stand on a graffiti-marred, modern overpass to view a seldom-seen railroad cut—the very site where Bailey and his comrades, aiming to flank Confederates, instead were caught “like pickles in a barrel,” says Burke, and routed. He once sneaked into the cut—it’s about 10 feet deeper than it was during the war—because he wanted “to feel the fear that went through them.”

Unlike at Granbury’s Lunette, where a wooden marker placed by the Sons of Confederate Veterans notes its significance, there’s no battlefield marker heralding the service of the USCT. Burke, who has written a poem about the fight in the cut, hopes to rectify that someday in South Nashville. On December 15, Colonel Sylvester Hill’s 3rd Brigade routed Confederates at Redoubt No. 3, an attack today that would storm past children’s slides,

overturn benches, and damage the two-story brick building in back of Calvary United Methodist Church on Hillsboro Pike.

A 44-year-old Iowan, Colonel Hill was among those killed during the assault. Whether his death site is now in the parking lot of the Methodist church or postwar Woodmont Christian Church next door is open to interpretation. The shot that killed Hill, a married father of two children, is believed to have been fired about 300 yards away, from long-ago obliterated Redoubt No. 2, the site of a modern condominium complex.

After briefly discussing Hill’s fate, church archivist Dave Nichols and I inspect the meager remains of the redoubt. It’s really just a shallow trench in the ground, covered with vegetation to protect it from erosion. Still, parishioners readily agreed to save it when two large additions to the church were built in the 1990s.

Of the five redoubts constructed by Hood’s army in the countryside south of Nashville, only traces of Nos. 1, 3, and 4 survive. A marker along Hillsboro Pike once noted the location of Redoubt No. 3, but it was damaged when it was struck by a car several years ago and never replaced. But every so often, parishioners receive a reminder of the significance of the land their church was built upon in the late 1940s. “We have had sermons about how a battlefield was turned into a church,” says Nichols, 65. “This is a place where people were killed that has been turned into a place of peace.”

Fifteen seconds into our meeting at Richland Country Club, Jim Kay establishes his Civil War credentials. On the back seat of the 58-year-old lawyer’s black Lexus rests a Colt pocket pistol, a Schenkl artillery round recovered from a Battle of Nashville site,

and a Gwyn & Campbell carbine. On the short drive to his house in Oak Hill—scene of intense fighting on the second day and today a wealthy suburb—it’s quickly apparent Kay also has a deep connection to the Nashville battleground. In the yard of his impressive house, behind Confederate lines in 1864, he has discovered scores of relics from the battle. Kay—whose long, salt-and-pepper hair and sideburns give him the air of a Confederate officer—also is blessed with “Civil War vision” for the battle. Where you may see a modern house, Kay visualizes a battlefield, with all the infantry and cavalry movements and artillery positions.

As we drive down another street in the Oak Hill neighborhood, Kay points out the position of a Confederate battery in the front yard of a house, yards from a lengthy, wartime stone wall General William Loring’s soldiers used as cover against the Union 4th Corps. Near the battery position, a huge oak hangs on to life despite missing its top. That “witness tree,” Kay says, was a long-ago victim of cannon fire.



A Minié Ball Wash?: At Nashville’s Richland Country Club, site of 1864 fighting, tee boxes are marked by large replicas of Sharps carbine bullets.

Soon, we’re traveling south on Granny White Pike. When Kay was a kid, this area—about 15 miles from downtown—was farmland; now it’s largely developed. “I’m sick about it,” admits Kay.

In a desperate attempt to block pursuit of Union cavalry, Colonel Edmund Rucker’s brigade erected a barricade of fence rails and logs across macadamized Granny White Pike. Fierce, often hand-to-hand, fighting broke out that night during the “Battle of the Barricade”—the Army of Tennessee’s last gasp at Nashville—and Rucker was captured. Some of the fighting took place on the present-day site of the Richland Country Club, where Kay serves as president.

“There were campfires everywhere here,” says Kay as we stand by two replica 3-inch ordnance rifles near a fairway. Several years ago, a country club maintenance worker even eyeballed a Union belt plate on the ground. Perhaps an apt metaphor for the Nashville battlefield may be found opposite an apartment complex, a few miles from booming downtown. Hidden among trees, weeds, and briars, the base of the old Battle of Nashville monument sits on a knoll overlooking Franklin Pike. Dedicated in 1927, the monument stood there defiantly until 1974, when a tornado toppled and destroyed it.

By the early 1980s, construction of an interstate had made what was left of the monument a castaway on a tiny island in a sea of development. It was, according to the Battle of Nashville Preservation Society website, a “disaster.” Like the base on the second iteration of the monument, re-dedicated at the new site on Granny White Pike in 1999, the old pedestal includes this inscription:

“A monument like this, standing on such memories, having no reference to utilities,

becomes a sentiment, a poet, a prophet, an orator to every passerby.”

A fitting epitaph, too, for a battlefield lost.

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John Banks is the author of two Civil War books and his popular Civil War blog (johnbanks.blogspot.com). He lives in Nashville, Tenn.

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The Civil War

How Col. Ellsworth's Death Shocked the Union

It took the killing of their first officer to jolt the North into wholeheartedly supporting the Union cause

By Adam Goodheart, smithsonian.com
March 30, 2011

On May 23, 1861, Virginia seceded from the Union. President Abraham Lincoln ordered troops to occupy the port city of Alexandria. The next day, an enraged innkeeper there fired a shotgun point-blank into the chest of Col. Elmer Ellsworth of the 11th New York Volunteers. The innkeeper was immediately gunned down by one of Ellsworth's men; the colonel became the first Union officer to die in the Civil War. In his new book, 1861: The Civil War Awakening, Adam Goodheart explains that Ellsworth was not merely a surrogate little brother to Lincoln, but also an exemplar of the romantic idealism that characterized the generation of Americans that came of age in the 1850s. Here is how Goodheart portrays the aftermath of Ellsworth's death:

By the following evening, public gatherings in New York and other major cities offered grandiloquent testimonials and took up collections for the support of Ellsworth's parents, left destitute by the death of their only child. Army recruiting offices were mobbed as they had not been since the first week of the war. At the beginning of May, Lincoln had asked for 42,000 more volunteers to supplement the militiamen called up in April. Within the four weeks after Ellsworth's death, some five times that number would enlist.

A torrent of emotion, penned up during the anxious weeks since Sumter's fall, had been released, pouring out for a dead hero who had never fought a battle, but was rather, as one newspaper put it, been “shot down like a dog.” There was more to the response than just 19th-century sentimentality, more than just patriotic fervor. Across America, Ellsworth's death released a tide of hatred, of enmity and counter-enmity, of sectional bloodlust that had hitherto been dammed up, if only barely, amid the flag-waving and patriotic anthems.

Indeed, it was perhaps Ellsworth's death, even more than the attack on Sumter, that made Northerners ready not just to take up arms, but to kill. For the first month of the war, some had assumed that the war would play out more or less as a show of force: Union troops would march across the South and the rebels would capitulate. Yankees talked big about sending Jeff Davis and other secessionist leaders to the gallows, but almost never about shooting enemy soldiers. They preferred to think of Southerners in the terms that Lincoln would use throughout the war: as estranged brethren, misled by a few demagogues, who needed to be brought back into the national fold. Many Confederates, however, had already expressed relish at the prospect of

slaughtering their former countrymen. “Well, let them come, those minions of the North,” wrote one Virginian in a letter to the *Richmond Dispatch* on May 18. “We’ll meet them in a way they least expect; we will glut our carrion crows with their beastly carcasses.”

After the tragic morning in Alexandria, it suddenly dawned on the North that such talk had not been mere bluster. Newspapers dwelt on every lurid detail of the awful death scene—especially the “pool of blood clot, I should think three feet in diameter and an inch and one half deep at the center,” as one correspondent described it. On the Southern side, editorialists rejoiced, boasting that Ellsworth would be only the first dead Yankee of thousands. “Down with the tyrants!” proclaimed the *Richmond Whig*. “Let their accursed blood manure our fields.”

Although the Union rhetoric would never quite reach such levels, many in the North now began demanding blood for blood. Ellsworth’s troops, Lincoln’s secretary John Hay wrote with solemn approbation, had pledged to avenge Ellsworth’s death with many more: “They have sworn, with the grim earnestness that never trifles, to have a life for every hair of the dead colonel’s head. But even that will not repay.”

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In Washington, Ellsworth’s body was brought to lie in state in the East Room of the White House, his chest heaped with white lilies. On the second morning after his death, long lines of mourners, many in uniform, filed through to pay their respects; so many thronged into the Presidential Mansion that the funeral was delayed for hours. In the afternoon, the cortege finally moved down Pennsylvania Avenue, between rows of American flags bound in swaths of black crape, toward the depot where Ellsworth’s men had disembarked a few weeks earlier. Rank after rank of infantry and cavalry preceded the hearse, which was drawn by four white horses, and followed by Ellsworth’s own riderless mount, and more troops, and then a carriage with the president and members of his cabinet.

Even after Ellsworth’s body had, at last, been laid to rest on a hillside behind his boyhood home in Mechanicsville, New York, the nationwide fervor scarcely waned. Photographs, lithographs and pocket-size biographies paying tribute to the fallen hero poured forth by the tens of thousands. Music shops sold scores for such tunes as “Col. Ellsworth’s Funeral March,” “Ellsworth’s Requiem” and “Col. Ellsworth Gallopade.”

Ellsworth’s death was different from all those to follow over the next four years: like *Atlantic Monthly* reporter Nathaniel Hawthorne, most Northern writers referred to it as a “murder” or “assassination,” an act not of war but of individual malice and shocking brutality. By the time Hawthorne’s article appeared, however, many other American places had been soaked in blood. As the war’s inexorable toll rose, touching almost every family throughout the nation, Americans would lose their taste for collective mourning. Death became so commonplace that the demise of any one soldier, whether a gallant recruit or battle-

scarred hero, was drowned in the larger grief. Not until the war's final month—when another body would lie in state in the East Room, and another black-draped train make its slow way north—would Americans again shed common tears for a single martyr.

Ellsworth's memory never faded among those who knew him well. Lincoln's secretary John Nicolay, who lived to see the 20th century, wrote in his sweeping history of the war that the response to Ellsworth's death "opened an unlooked-for depth of individual hatred, into which the political animosities of years . . . had finally ripened."

As for Lincoln, his young friend's death affected him like no other soldier's in the four years that followed. On the morning that the news reached the president, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts and a companion—not yet aware of Ellsworth's death—called at the White House on a matter of urgent business. They found Lincoln standing alone beside a window in the library, looking out toward the Potomac. He seemed unaware of the visitors' presence until they were standing close behind him. Lincoln turned away from the window and extended his hand. "Excuse me," he said. "I cannot talk." Then suddenly, to the men's astonishment, the president burst into tears. Burying his face in a handkerchief, he walked up and down the room for some moments before at last finding his voice: "I will make no apology, gentlemen," said the president, "for my weakness; but I knew poor Ellsworth well, and held him in great regard."

Almost alone among the millions of mourners, perhaps, Lincoln understood that Ellsworth's death had not been glorious. Others might talk of his gallantry, might hail him as a modern knight cut down in the flower of youth. But for the president,

preparing to send armies of Americans into battle against their Southern brothers, the double homicide in a cheap hotel represented something else: the squalid brutality of civil war.

Excerpt adapted from *1861: The Civil War Awakening* by Adam Goodheart, to be published by Knopf on April 15, 2011

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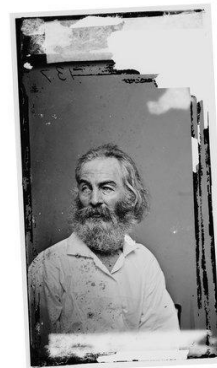
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When Walt Whitman Reported for The New York Times



When Walt Whitman was a Washington correspondent for The New York Times, the Capitol dome, like the nation, was still under construction. CreditCreditvia Library of Congress

By Will Dudding, New York Times
Oct. 22, 2018

Reporting on Abraham Lincoln's second inauguration just over a month before

Robert E. Lee's surrender, a New York Times reporter juxtaposed the scene of the inaugural ball that took place in the patent office in Washington to his memory, two years earlier, of when the same location housed the wounded and dying.

"Tonight," he wrote. "Beautiful women, perfumes, the violins' sweetness, the polka and the waltz; but then, the amputation, the blue face, the groan, the glassy eye of the dying, the clotted rag, the odor of the old wounds and blood and many a mother's son amid strangers, passing away unintended there."

That reporter was the poet Walt Whitman. During the Civil War, The Times employed a large staff to cover the war all across the country, sending information with unprecedented speed by way of railroad and telegraph. The rapidly evolving and war-torn country provided tales of journalists that were as rich as their reports. A grief-stricken Samuel Wilkeson, the Washington bureau chief, found his dead son on the battlefield at Gettysburg. In Charleston, a correspondent named Jasper was accused of espionage and forced to flee the South in disguise.

Yet for today's readers, one of the most recognizable wartime bylines isn't that of a correspondent on the front lines, but Mr. Whitman's. The poet had only just begun to acquire the popular appeal he would achieve over the second half of his life; at the time of the war, he was working as a government clerk in Washington and volunteering as a nurse. To supplement his salary, he worked as a freelancer for newspapers back in his native New York.

"He is eloquent in his praise of common soldiers, of their dignity, stoicism and dedication to the preservation of the Union,"

said Kenneth M. Price, co-editor of the Walt Whitman Archive at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. "Whitman had little patience with bloated accounts of war as grand and heroic. He saw the effects of war up close in the hospitals."

In the 1860s, The Times was a leading Republican paper. The editor, Henry Jarvis Raymond, was chairman of the Republican National Committee and a loyal supporter of Mr. Lincoln. Mr. Raymond's strong conviction in preserving the Union closely aligned with Whitman's own wartime politics, making the paper a natural outlet for his writing. Mr. Whitman also wrote for The Brooklyn Daily Union and The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, where he once worked as an editor.

Mr. Whitman's descriptions of Washington showed a diverse population coexisting in a city he saw as "royal plenty and nature's own bounty — American, prairie-like." The capital contained multitudes, a broken-but-functioning Congress working beneath an unfinished Capitol dome that would house the Statue of Freedom, cast by the slave craftsman Philip Reid.

Bridging the gap between Washington's elite and the everyday soldier was Lincoln. He painted a modest image of the president, "dressed in plain black, somewhat rusty and dusty" — yet in his features Mr. Whitman described a powerful aura.

**I have alluded to. None of the artists or pict
have caught the deep, though subtle and indi
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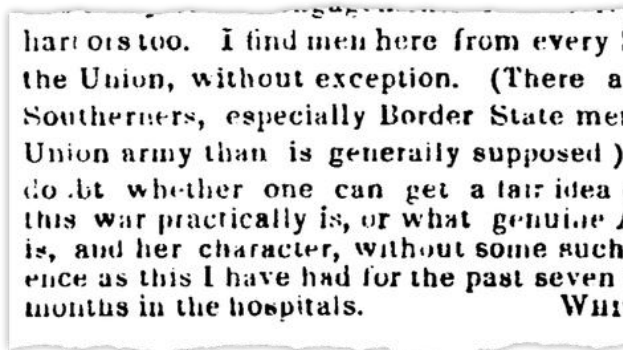
“None of the artists or pictures have caught the deep, though subtle and indirect expression of this man’s face,” he wrote. “They have only caught the surface. There is something else there. One of the great portrait painters of two or three centuries ago is needed.”

Mr. Whitman spent his free time listening to soldiers from all over the country, writing their letters and bringing them gifts or food. His literary portraits of the wounded provided readers with a view that focused on healing and commonality.

“Through kindness, small gifts and love he assisted some men through the pain of amputation and the indignities of dysentery,” Dr. Price said. “Several soldiers credited him with saving their lives.”

The war years inspired some of his most famous works: He would come to be called the “poet of democracy,” and in writing for The Times, Mr. Whitman was piecing together a divided, changing nation.

“I find men here from every State in the Union, without exception,” Mr. Whitman wrote in 1863. “I now doubt whether one can get a fair idea of what this war practically is, or what genuine America is, and her character, without some such experience as this I have had for the past seven or eight months in the hospitals.”



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A version of this article appears in print on Oct. 23, 2018, on Page A2 of the New York edition with the headline: Walt Whitman’s Washington Dateline.

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Texas Students Will Now Learn That Slavery Was ‘Central’ to the Civil War



Students at Wheatley High School in Houston, Texas’ educational standards for social studies previously listed three causes of the American Civil War: sectionalism, states’ rights and slavery, in that order. Now they’re being revised. CreditCreditIllana PanichLinsman for The New York Times

By Jacey Fortin, New York Times, Nov. 21, 2018

The Texas State Board of Education has revised its standards for social studies curriculums in public schools to say that the expansion of slavery played “the central role” in causing the American Civil War.

The revised standards also retained Hillary Clinton and Helen Keller as potential

subjects of study, after it was reported this year that those names might be removed.

The changes, approved last week, were an attempt to streamline social studies curriculums in the state after some teachers said there was too much material to cover; they were not meant as a total revision. But the process still garnered national attention, in part because of Texas' large population and its outsize influence on the textbook publishing industry nationwide.

Texas is home to about one-tenth of the country's public school students, and the textbooks that cater to the state's guidelines are also bought by other school systems across the country.

Under the current educational standards in Texas, adopted in 2010, slavery is listed as one of several causes of the Civil War, after sectionalism and states' rights. But after last week's revisions, the standards will say that elementary school students should be able to identify "the central role of the expansion of slavery in causing the Civil War and other contributing factors, including sectionalism and states' rights." (Middle school students will be held to similar standards, though the wording is slightly different.)

Lawrence A. Allen Jr., a Democratic member of the board, made the motion to change the language.

"I think it's an excellent start," he said, according to a news report from Texas Public Radio, though he added that Texans still did not agree on the subject. "And so if we can't drive it to a consensus in our state, we'll just let our students look at it from all points of view."

The changes are scheduled to take effect beginning in 2019.

The effort began about a year ago, when volunteer teams of educators, academics and other community members, overseen by the state, gathered to make revisions and deletions. In September, they submitted a first draft to the State Board of Education, which comprises five Democrats and 10 Republicans.

After the board approved the draft to open it up for public comment, it quickly made national headlines because Mrs. Clinton's and Ms. Keller's names had been removed. Comments poured in, and not all of them from within state lines.

Marty Rowley, a Republican member of the education board, said he had not immediately noticed the deleted names when he voted to make the document public in September. Two months later, he approved the version that had restored Mrs. Clinton's and Ms. Keller's names.

"I don't necessarily agree with Hillary Clinton's politics, but there was significant public outpouring that indicated that she was a significant political figure that needed to be included, so that's how I voted," Mr. Rowley said.

He added that he took out-of-state comments into consideration because "Texas has a level of influence, certainly, with regard to instructional materials."

Erika Beltran, a Democratic member of the board, said she learned about the removal of Mrs. Clinton's name when The Dallas Morning News reported on it in September. "I got so many phone calls and emails when that news broke, so from that perspective, I think it really helped the process," she said.

But she added that the backlash made it clearer to her that the board had failed to accommodate diverse points of view.

“It was a frustrating process, just wanting to get to somewhere that was better and feeling really constrained because I was in the minority,” she said. “We’ve lost this one.”

Debates over the curriculum have been going on for years, and critics of the revision process have criticized it for being too political, in part because the board members are elected officials.

The Texas Freedom Network, an Austin-based advocacy group, said in a statement that even after the revisions, the standards do not paint a full picture of civil rights movements in the United States, and they exaggerate the extent to which Christianity influenced the founding fathers.

A spotlight on the people reshaping our politics. A conversation with voters across the country. And a guiding hand through the endless news cycle, telling you what you really need to know.

Fritz Fischer, the chair of the history department at the University of Northern Colorado, said many of these problems could be solved if the school board prioritized making primary documents available to students, rather than deciding on which version of events ought to be taught.

“This sort of argument is inevitable if your definition of history is memorizing names and dates, rather than teaching students how to think, and how to use evidence, and what evidence is,” he said.

Dr. Fischer was the chairman of the National Council for History Education in 2010, when Texas was undergoing its last major

review of its social studies standards. (He is now a board member.) Then as now, political differences over particular additions and omissions drew national attention to the state’s revision process.

“From my point of view, having been through this eight years ago, it becomes tiresome because it’s just another debate between different people who have different visions,” he said.

Mr. Rowley defended the state’s way of doing things. “Public education is by nature public, and that means that there should be input from businesspeople, community members, certainly teachers, certainly educators and certainly curriculum specialists,” he said. “Our job is to make sure that the standards reflect what Texans want their children to be taught.”

But Ms. Beltran said that Texas could do better, and that this year’s revised standards did not go far enough.

“I don’t know that we really pushed any boundaries here,” she said. “I think it was a missed opportunity, and I don’t think that a partisan board is the right way to write standards.”

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Here’s a link to copies of Harper’s Weekly Original Civil War Newspapers

<http://www.sonofthesouth.net/leefoundation/civil-war-1863.htm>