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Bill calls for Roger Taney statue to be removed from Maryland State House grounds

By Michael Dresser, Baltimore Sun, February 24, 2016

Legislation might have had the statue of Civil War-era Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney at the Maryland State House destroyed, but proponents now say they'd be satisfied to see the memorial to the author of the Dred Scott decision removed.

Del. Jill Carter of Baltimore, whose original bill called for the state's Commission on Artistic Property to destroy the brooding statue, said she has agreed to a compromise that would pack the Frederick County jurist off to the Maryland State Archives.

The bill, which has a Senate version introduced by Sen. Anthony Muse of Prince George's County, is scheduled for a hearing in a House of Delegates committee Wednesday. Carter, like Muse an African-American Democrat, said the legislation reflects a growing interest in reviewing public images of "slavery, discrimination and dehumanization of black people."

"More and more people realize these symbols represent part of the past we should not celebrate," Carter said.

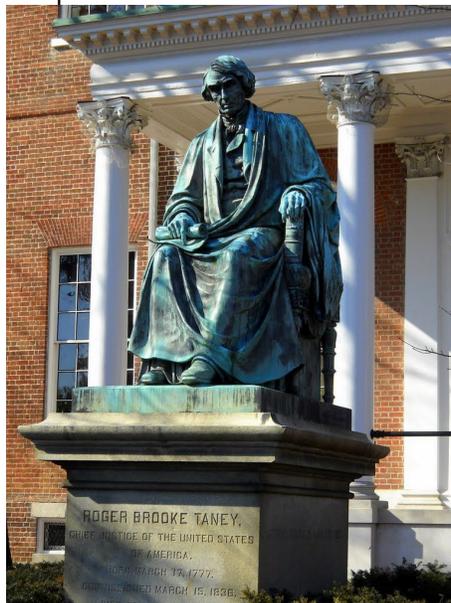
Taney was the author of the 1857 Supreme Court decision in Dred Scott vs. Sanford, which held that African Americans were not citizens and "had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

The decision is widely regarded as one of the worst in Supreme Court history and a contributing factor in the drift toward Civil War.

The 83,000-pound sculpture of Taney was placed on the State House grounds in 1872, at a time of pro-

Southern sympathies in Maryland in the aftermath of the war. Taney remained with the Union after secession and died in office in 1864.

There have been many proposals in recent decades to remove the Taney statue, but a compromise was struck in the 1990s under which a statue of Thurgood Marshall, a Marylander who became of the first African-American to serve on the Supreme Court, was erected on Lawyers Mall, on the other side of the State House. Many lawmakers, including House Speaker Michael E. Busch, have expressed support for that compromise.



Roger Brooke Taney statue – Annapolis, MD
Carter's proposal stood out from others because it called for the statue's destruction. She said she would have no qualms about destroying the artwork but said moving it to a museum could defuse some opposition.

The state Department of Legislative Services estimated the removal would cost \$77,500 and annual storage would cost more than \$5,000 a year.

The bill that seeks to remove the Taney statue follows a wave of revulsion against Confederate symbols after the mass shooting at a Charleston, S.C., church in June.

A young man known for displaying the Confederate battle flag was charged in that attack, and South Carolina subsequently removed that symbol of white resistance to desegregation from the state capitol grounds.

Last month, a commission appointed by Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake recommended that the city remove a monument to Taney at Mount Vernon Place as well as the monument to Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson in the Wyman Park Dell.

Virginia receives \$2.7 million in grants to protect Civil War battlefields

Augusta Free Press, March 3, 2016

Governor Terry McAuliffe today announced that Virginia has been awarded nearly \$2.7 million in federal Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants to help protect and preserve Civil War battlefields across the state.

Grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund were awarded by the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program to seven states. Virginia was awarded the most money for the most projects, which will be completed in partnership with the Civil War Trust and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation.

"I am proud that nine of the 17 battlefields benefiting from these grants are in Virginia," Governor McAuliffe said. "Virginia has a history worth preserving and sharing, and



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Land and Water Conservation Fund grants will help us do just that. Heritage tourism is critical to Virginia's economy, with many first-time visitors coming to see our battlefields, historic sites and cultural landscapes."

"These grants won't just protect history; they'll protect our natural resources. Battlefields include wetlands, forests, open-space landscapes, and other habitats prized by humans and animals alike. This support from the National Park Service brings us one step closer to accomplishing our conservation and recreation goals." said Virginia Secretary of Natural Resources Molly Ward.

State and local governments are eligible for Battlefield Land Acquisition Grants. Private nonprofit groups may apply with state or local government sponsors. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Virginia Department of Historic Resources are the state sponsors of these grants.

"As one of two state sponsors of these grants, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation has the opportunity to continue its mission of encouraging and enabling people to enjoy, protect and restore Virginia's natural resources and cultural treasures," said DCR Director Clyde Cristman.

"The National Park Service is a key partner in our fight to conserve Virginia's battlefields," said DHR Director Julie Langan. "These grants will complement the Commonwealth's efforts to preserve historically significant sites and help the public to better understand the past."

Grants are awarded through a competitive process and require a dollar-for-dollar non-federal match.

"The federal Battlefield Land Acquisition Grant program is a powerful tool for preserving battlefield land in Virginia," said Jim Lighthizer, president of the Civil War Trust. "Since 2000, the program has provided more than \$40 million in matching grants for battlefield protection in the Commonwealth. The program is often combined with the Commonwealth's own Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund to provide a powerful one-two punch to protect hallowed ground in the Old Dominion."

Mayor: Antique pistols stolen from National Civil War museum may be fakes

By Dawn White, February 18, 2016, HARRISBURG, Pa. (WHTM) – Mayor Eric Papenfuse says two antique guns stolen during a burglary at the National Civil War Museum were sold to the city for a lot of money – and he says the pistols may be fakes.

ABC27 was the first news station to get its hands on the sales receipt that shows the city in November 1996 paid Russ Pritchard III \$256,400 for a collection that included the Colt revolvers.

"The cost of those guns back in 1996 is ultimately millions of dollars in debt payments that continue to this day," Papenfuse said.

Papenfuse says former mayor Stephen Reed used taxpayer money to buy the collection. Pritchard claimed the revolvers had been presented to Secretary of War Simon Cameron by Colonel Samuel Colt in November 1861.

"I am troubled by the fact that a questionable antiques dealer could simply write a letter to the mayor and

say, 'here's my price,' and the mayor would say, 'sure, I'll write you a check for the full amount' with no negotiation and no question as to whether or not this was actually real or even worth it," Papenfuse said.

"The taxpayer money is well worth it. In fact, studies have shown that this museum brings a tremendous economic benefit to the community in terms of people staying here," said Gene Barr, a National Civil War Museum board member.

Papenfuse says what's questionable about Pritchard is he falsely presented himself as an agent of the museum to descendants of Confederate General George Pickett and sold some of the Pickett's artifacts to the city for \$880,000, about 10 times what he paid the family. Court records show Pritchard pleaded guilty to fraud in connection to that case in 2001.



Photo courtesy National Civil War Museum

"The individual who apparently sold these weapons did have some questionable dealings. They were taken care of," Barr said.

Barr says he believes the stolen artifacts are authentic, and he thinks the museum is an important part of the community.

"Given that we've got a facility here that does a tremendous job for this community in terms of the programming, in terms of the links to American history that are here, in



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terms of all volunteer board the staff that's tremendously dedicated, it's unfortunate the mayor seems to try to be divisive in terms of how he goes about this," Barr said.

City leaders are still unsure if they will be able to collect insurance money for the stolen items.

"We have an insurance policy that we pay thousands of dollars a year for, and now we are on the hook of trying to reclaim these costs," Papenfuse said. "Whether or not we can collect that insurance I think is an open debate, and we are currently meeting on that and trying to see what we can do now."

Harrisburg police are still looking for the person who stole the two pistols and rifle. They released pictures of the stolen guns Wednesday. Police confirmed the guns were in a glass case and were part of a National Rifle Association-sponsored exhibit that had drawn protests.

Bill to protect Civil War monuments heads to McAuliffe

Newport News Daily Press, February 29, 2016

Legislation to protect Civil War and other monuments from localities that might want to move them won final passage Monday and is heading for Gov. Terry McAuliffe's desk.

McAuliffe has not said whether he'll sign the bill, which won bipartisan support in the House of Delegates, but passed the Senate Monday on a party-line 21-17 vote.

House Bill 587 builds on existing law, which already forbids local governments from removing or damaging war monuments. The law specifically mentions "The War Between the States," forbidding

localities from replacing Confederate monuments with Union ones.

That law was passed in 1998, and in a recent court case out of Danville, dealing with removal of the Confederate flag, a judge determined the law only protects monuments raised since 1998, according to Del. Charles Poindexter, R-Glade Hill and the bill sponsor.

Poindexter's bill addresses that, stating that the protection extends to all war monuments, "regardless of when erected." The bill mentions conflicts all the way back to 1622, and Poindexter has said repeatedly the measure isn't simply about the Civil War.

Debate in the Senate Monday got testy. State Sen. Thomas Garrett, R-Louisiana, said removing monuments is "in effect censoring what we know about ourselves." He said he can respect Confederate leaders much as he respects Martin Luther King Jr.

"It's all our history," said Garrett, who's running for Congress in Virginia's 5th District. "All of it."

State Sen. Richard Black, R-Leesburg, refuted that the Civil War was fought over slavery, saying southerners who picked up old rifles and went barefoot into battle didn't do so for the plantation class.

"I've bled all over the battlefield," said Black, who was wounded in Vietnam.

"And it was not for any rich guy."

State Sen. Donald McEachin, the Democratic Caucus chair, rose at one point to say Confederates "fought to keep my ancestors enslaved." State Sen. Mamie Lock, D-Hampton and chairwoman of the legislative black caucus, didn't speak on the floor, but said after the vote that the state shouldn't tell localities "how to remember the past."

"It couched itself as being against any changes to any monument," she said

of the bill. "In reality it was about Civil War monuments."

A McAuliffe spokesman wouldn't predict the bill's ultimate fate Monday, saying only "we'll review it when it gets here."

Bones discovered at Fredericksburg park may have been those of Union soldiers

BY CATHY JETT, THE FREE LANCE-STAR, November 17, 2015

A dig following excavation work at the Fredericksburg Riverfront Park has turned up more bones—and most are likely those of Civil War soldiers.

Dovetail Cultural Resource Group's report on the site of the old Prince Hall Lodge 61 at 609 Sophia St. said more than 100 bone fragments were found mixed in with buttons and bits of fabric from Union infantry uniforms and other items in what may have been a root cellar.

Dovetail President Kerri S. Barile said that the Rowe-Goolrick house, which was next to the site, served as a hospital during the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1862. There are written accounts from several individuals, including some serving in the 14th Regiment, Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, which describe convalescing on the house's grounds.

Kerry Gonzales, who works at Dovetail, said the bones found at the site "were all kind of jumbled up, but did not show signs of amputations or saw marks. The buttons and fabric could have been from at least one pair of pants and a coat, and appeared to have been tossed in the cellar with the bones.

Eric Mink, cultural resources manager for the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park, said crews were sent out to identify and mark



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soldier's graves following the end of the Civil War in 1865. Union soldiers' bodies were then disinterred and moved from as far away as the Northern Neck to the Fredericksburg National Cemetery when it opened a year later.

"Undoubtedly graves were overlooked," he said. "You're talking four years after the Battle of Fredericksburg. Remains continued to be found up to the early part of the 20th century."

Mink said if the bones found at the park site are confirmed to be those of Union soldiers, they would qualify to be buried in Fredericksburg National Cemetery.

"We haven't had a request like that in decades, so we'd have to figure out what the process is," he said.

Barile said that Dovetail is working with the National Park Service to research its findings as there are no records of soldiers being disinterred from the grounds of the Rowe-Goolrick house.

Her company is also hampered by the fact that English Construction Co. mistakenly removed numerous truckloads of soil when it demolished the lodge and leveled the site. Those truckloads included about half of the area where the bones were found.

"Because we have only three feet of it left—the backhoe took out the rest—we're kind of looking at half the story," Barile said. "It's hard to put things back together when you only have part of the data."

The dirt was dumped in a 30-foot deep ravine on a farm off Massaponax Church Road in Spotsylvania County along with debris from the lodge. The ravine is being filled in to create a parking area. Barile said that Brad Hatch, a member of her staff, went to the site to document it for the Virginia

Department of Historic Resources, so that people who uncover any other bones in the fill will know where they came from. She said Hatch found so many big chunks of metal and concrete from the demolition on top of the dirt "that there was no way to do anything with it."

Dovetail's dig also turned up a number of cow and pig bones left over from meals and a rare local example of a dog burial. Hatch said that humans have been burying dogs since prehistoric times, but he only knows of a couple in the Chesapeake Bay area.

Soil here is typically acidic, but the calcium in oyster shells found at the dig site helped raise the pH level and preserve them, he said.

Other findings at the park site include: The old lodge had topped a mound that was a natural feature formed by accumulations from an ancient riverbed. It has been used since prehistoric times, and was enlarged in 1920 when the building that became the lodge was constructed.

Evidence of previous structures on the site, including remains from slave quarters from the 18th and 19th centuries and a trench that may have been dug during the Civil War.

Thousands of artifacts, including ceramics, glass, architectural elements, personal items and prehistoric fragments.

City Councilman Matt Kelly said that Dovetail made some "great discoveries," but wonders how many Native American and slave artifacts were lost when English mistakenly trucked off some of the dirt.

"That's a big concern for me," he said, "and I'm a little concerned that we don't seem to be as concerned about it as we should."

Rare Walt Whitman letter, written for a dying

soldier, found in National Archives

By Michael E. Ruane, Washington Post, March 9, 2016

Pvt. Robert N. Jabo, of the 8th New Hampshire infantry, was dying of tuberculosis in Washington's Harewood Hospital and needed to write to his family.

The Civil War had been over for months. Most soldiers had gone home. And Jabo's wife and six children were no doubt wondering where he was.

But he was sick and illiterate. So a cheerful, bearded man who regularly visited hospitalized soldiers offered to write a letter for him.

"My dear wife," it began, "you must excuse me for not having written. I have not been very well." The letter explained that it was penned by "a friend who is now sitting by my side." And in a postscript, the friend identified himself: "Walt Whitman."

The rare Whitman "soldier letter," one of only three known to exist, was discovered last month by a National Archives volunteer who is part of a team preparing Civil War widows' pension files to be digitized and placed online.

"It doesn't get much bigger, in my eyes," said Jackie Budell, an archive specialist who oversees the project. "It's just simply stunning. We're not going to find another one like this, probably, for a while."

Whitman, the American poet, journalist and essayist, was known for making the rounds of the local hospitals, where he would dispense snacks and money. He would also sit with wounded and dying soldiers and write letters for them.

"I do a good deal of this, of course, writing all kinds, including love letters," Whitman wrote in a dispatch for the New York Times in 1864.



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"Many sick and wounded soldiers have not written home to parents, brothers, sisters, and even wives for a long, long time," he wrote. "Some are poor writers, some cannot get paper ... many dread to worry the folks at home — the facts about them are so sad to tell."

"I always encourage the men to write, and promptly write for them," he wrote.

A century and a half later, few of those letters have surfaced.

But late on the afternoon of Feb. 3, volunteer Catherine Cusack Wilson found one.

Wilson, a librarian in Falls Church, was sorting through pension files in the preparation room at the archives building in downtown Washington when she pulled the Jabo file from its large brown envelope.

Her task was to look through the papers to make sure nothing had been wrongly filed and check to see whether any document was damaged and needed conservation.

The files often contain letters from soldiers to their families, which Wilson said she loves to read.

Frequently, soldiers wrote to say that they were sending home money or to describe camp life. "It's fascinating to me," she said in a telephone interview last week.

Last month, she said, "I'm looking through the file, and I see this letter, and I start reading it," she said. "You don't expect anything, but you look forward to finding something."

The letter was written on both sides of a plain sheet of lined paper, which was probably Whitman's. It was written with a pen in neat, legible script, probably on Jan. 21, 1866.

"I am mustered out of the service but am not at present well enough to come home," it says on the front side. "My complaint is an affection of the

lungs. I hope you will try to write back as soon as you receive this and let me know how you all are."

Wilson, of Arlington, turned the letter over.

"Well I send you all my love, and must now close," it ends. "Your affectionate husband".

Two lines down, came the surprise: "Written by Walt Whitman, a friend."

"Ah!" Wilson said she exclaimed. "Look what I found!"

Wilson, one of 25 volunteers, showed the letter to Budell, who was at first cautious. "Part of my job is authenticating such finds," Budell said. She contacted David S. Ferriero, who heads the National Archives.

Ferriero is a huge Whitman fan, and as a young Navy hospital corpsman during the Vietnam War, he wrote letters home for wounded Marines.

He sent a scan of the letter to Whitman scholar Kenneth M. Price, at the University of Nebraska, where he is co-director of the Walt Whitman Archive and an expert on Whitman's handwriting.

Price noted the unique way Whitman wrote the letters x, d, and l, as well as how he often used a plus sign instead of the word "and."

Whitman's signature at the end of the letter resembles other Whitman signatures, Price said in an email.

And the fact that the letter turned up in the archives, and not on the market, makes "forgery extremely unlikely," he said.

Price determined that the letter was Whitman's. It will now be housed in a vault at the National Archives with other valuable documents.

Jabo was a French Canadian who lived in Clinton County, N.Y., on the Canadian border, Budell said. He was in his 40s, and his real name appears to have been Robert Narcisse Gibeau, she said.

Jabo first enlisted in the 96th New York infantry regiment but was discharged after a year because of a disability, Budell said.

He spent several months at home and then signed on with the 8th New Hampshire as a "substitute," an arrangement in which he was probably paid about \$300 to serve in place of another.

"He obviously is a man with six kids at home who needs the money," Budell said.

But he remained sickly and cycled through a series of hospitals, suffering from back trouble, typhoid, diarrhea and bronchitis, according to his file.

He was discharged from the army in October 1865, seven months after the war ended, but was still too sick to go home, Budell said. She added that Jabo was probably illiterate because he signed his name with an X on other documents.

"What happens is he spends his time still in D.C. hospitals," she said. "And, of course, his wife is probably still wondering what's happened to him.... So Walt would be his saving grace to say, 'I can write this letter for you home to your wife.'"

It must have been an intimate moment.

Perhaps Whitman coached the soldier, Budell said. Jabo might have said, "I'm not sure what to say to my wife," she said. "Maybe [Whitman's] kind of helping pull out his thoughts."

To Adeline Jabo, Whitman wrote on her husband's behalf, "I hope it will be God's will that we shall yet meet again."

The letter likely wound up in the Jabo pension file because it was needed to prove that his illness was related to his military service. That was required for his wife to get a pension.



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One other such Whitman letter is in the Library of Congress, and another is in private hands.

Budell said Wilson's discovery suggests that many more may be in the national Archives' 2 million Civil War pension files, most of which have never been thoroughly examined.

On Dec. 19, 1866, 11 months after Whitman sat at Jabo's bedside, the soldier died alone and penniless in Washington's Providence Hospital, where he had been moved as a "charity case."

Seven years after his wife first applied in 1867, she got her war widow's pension.

It was about \$12 a month.

Remembering a Vile Civil War Act, on New York's Fifth Avenue

By DAVID W. DUNLAP, New York Times, February 17, 2016

Were more hateful words ever howled by a mob in New York history? "Burn the niggers' nest."

This was one of the cries taken up by a crowd that descended on the Colored Orphan Asylum during the first night of the draft riots in July 1863. The sentiments left no doubt about the attackers' goal: to kill African-American children.

Providence and quick thinking spared the 233 youths from death or injury, though the riots would claim more than 100 lives. But the asylum, a Greek Revival building that sat prettily atop a hillock off Fifth Avenue, between West 43rd and 44th Streets, was destroyed by the mob.

"Some 500 of them entered the house," the asylum managers reported on July 25, 1863, in a record book now kept at the New-York Historical Society. "After despoiling it of Furniture, Bedding, Clothing, &c. &c. — they deliberately sat fire to it, in

different parts — simply because it was the home of unoffending colored Orphan Children."



"Infant School, Colored Orphan Asylum," circa 1860. Credit The Jeffrey Kraus Collection

It has always been painful to contemplate the sack of the orphanage. It is difficult even to picture it, at what is now a busy intersection in Midtown Manhattan, next to the Century Association clubhouse and across West 43rd Street from a Joe Fresh store and an Elie Tahari showroom in the former Manufacturers Hanover bank, a landmark of the International style.

For now, however, the south half of the asylum site is vacant, nothing more than a 10,625-square-foot lot strewn with rubble, including brick fragments. Many brick fragments. So many brick fragments that you begin to wonder: Could any of these have been used to build the asylum?

If so, could there be artifacts strewn among them, plowed under the charred rubble long ago?

A broken hair comb?

An inky pen nib?

A small shoe buckle?

The moment has come to ask such questions because the developer Louis Ceruzzi plans to redevelop the site with a tower more

than 70 stories tall that will certainly have retail space at the base and is likely to include a mix of hotel rooms and apartments above.

An opportunity is at hand to examine the site closely in the hope of finding some tangible remnant of the asylum. Even if there are no archaeological finds, there is certainly a chance to commemorate the asylum and memorialize its pillage in some form at the new building.

The New-York Historical Society has a trove of documents from the Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans, founded in 1836, including admissions records that would make it possible to create a roster of the children who were living in the asylum at the time of the draft riots.

There was, for instance, Lucinda Ann Brown, 7, who had been brought to New York from New Orleans by one Catherine Flint. Lucinda's father was dead at the time. Her mother, though alive, had remained in Louisiana. Lucinda was admitted on May 16, 1863.

Sarah Jones was admitted to the asylum 13 days later, on her seventh birthday. Because her adopted mother was working as a stewardess aboard the steamship Ocean Queen, which traveled to Colón, Panama, Sarah was institutionalized by the Commissioners of Public Charities.

Nine-year-old Irving R. White; his younger sister, Martha Ann White; and their younger brother, Robert Cooper White, were all admitted on June 2. Their mother was dead and their father was in a temperance house in Albany run by Edward C. Delavan.

Then, on July 6, just a week before the riot, came William H. Judson, age and circumstances unrecorded.

Lucinda, Sarah, Irving, Martha, Robert and William were all



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presumably there when mobs protesting the inequitable military draft began to vent their fury on any African-American unlucky enough to be in their way. Soon enough, the rioters chose a target where they must have known resistance would be unlikely: an orphanage.

"The destruction of this Asylum, supported, as it was, solely by charity, is certainly one of the worst and wickedest of crimes that were perpetrated during this memorable day," The New York Times said two days later, "and clearly shows that resistance to the draft is but a cry raised to cover the most atrocious crimes that human nature is capable of committing."

All that is believed to have survived intact is a Bible that an 8-year-old girl rescued by returning to the burning building. It, too, is in the hands of the New-York Historical Society.

Having been sheltered in a police precinct house, the children were removed safely to Blackwell's Island (now Roosevelt Island). Though the institution's mission, name and location have changed since the Civil War, its work is continued today by the Harlem Dowling-West Side Center for Children and Family Services.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission said through a spokeswoman that it had reviewed the site in 2008 and determined that it was "unlikely to contain intact archaeological resources."

These Eerie Civil War Photos Changed How the U.S. Saw Veterans

By Erin Blakemore, smithsonian.com, March 11, 2016

The Civil War changed everything Americans thought about war—and itself. It ushered in a new kind of war,

one that put America's industrial innovation to the test and made killing easier than ever. But those who did not die ended up with wounds the likes of which had never been seen (or treated) by doctors. Modern technology had created a whole new group of modern veterans.

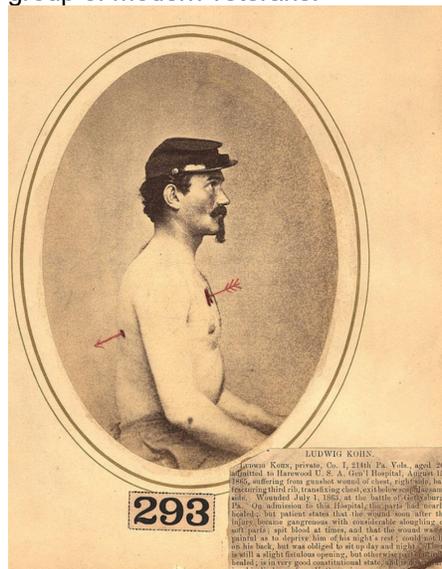


Photo Smithsonian Magazine

But modern technology was also on hand to help those wounded warriors. As *Public Domain Review* notes, a doctor named Reed Bontecou used the new innovation of photography to document casualties of the Civil War. The photos above were all taken by Bontecou and marked with red pencil to show the trajectory of the bullets that caused each wound. The haunting photos he took were used not just to document the conflict's physical effects but to teach field surgeons and help veterans get compensation once the war was over.

Bontecou practiced medicine for the army in New York when war broke out. He became surgeon to the Civil War's first volunteer regiment and soon found himself performing first

aid, surgeries and even amputations on active battlefields under intense conditions. He eventually became Surgeon-in-Chief of the war's biggest federal general hospital.

And that's where photography comes in. Inside the hospital, Bontecou began to document soldiers' wounds using cartes de visite. The palm-sized photos were cheap and easy to make, and Bontecou's team used them not just to document the ways in which soldiers were being wounded, but as tools to teach surgeons in the field new ways of performing surgeries. Bontecou contributed heavily to *The Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion*, which was commissioned by the U.S. Surgeon General, and summarized the medical findings of the war.

Following the, Bontecou's photographs became important for a different reason: They were used by soldiers who needed to prove the severity of their wounds to pension boards to receive compensation for their service. Today, Bontecou is sometimes called "the Napoleon of Surgeons" for his bravery. But the soldiers whose wounds he photographed—men infected with gangrene, riddled with bullets and robbed of the lives they once knew through shell blasts—were just as brave when they sustained their wounds, then bared them for the camera.