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Philadelphia Civil War Museum transfers collection to Gettysburg with Constitution Center exhibit planned

by Stephan Salisbury, Philadelphia Enquirer, MAY 4, 2016

The homeless Civil War Museum of Philadelphia, steward of what scholars regard as one of the finest collections of Civil War materials anywhere but possessing no place to display them, reached an agreement Monday to transfer ownership of its roughly 3,000 artifacts to the Gettysburg Foundation, the private, nonprofit partner of the National Park Service.

At the same time, the National Constitution Center on Independence Mall has agreed to mount a permanent exhibition exploring the constitutional impact of the Civil War, using artifacts drawn from what is now the foundation's Gettysburg collection.

It is believed it will be the first museum exhibit exploring the war's constitutional legacy.

Like the Flying Dutchman, the Civil War Museum has traveled for years, rich in its memories of the dead, but invisible and portless in the land of the living.

"Our goal is to preserve the collection with integrity and to ensure the collection will be available to the citizens of Philadelphia," said Oliver St. Clair Franklin, board chairman of the Civil War Museum. "And we're very pleased the National Constitution Center is going to preserve space for an exhibition to explore what was our greatest constitutional crisis."

Joanne M. Hanley, president of the Gettysburg Foundation, which owns

and operates the visitor center and 22,000-square-foot museum at Gettysburg National Military Park, called the collection "priceless."

"The significance of these pieces, you can't put into words," she said. "There's no hyperbole that can describe them."

Jeffrey Rosen, chief executive and president of the Constitution Center, said the future constitutional exhibition, focusing on passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, would be a few years in the making.

For one thing, he said, all money for the exhibition, which he estimated might cost up to \$2 million, would have to be in hand before proceeding.

"Our exhibition is contingent on securing funding in advance," he said. "As soon as the funds are secured, we'll have a better sense of the timeline."

The postwar constitutional amendments, among other things, abolished slavery, addressed equal protection under the law, defined citizenship, and guaranteed the right to vote.

Sharon Smith, president and chief executive of the Civil War Museum, said the collection was currently in storage at Gettysburg, where it played a central role in the Gettysburg Foundation's commemorative exhibition related to the sesquicentennial of the Battle of Gettysburg.

That exhibition closed last year, but Hanley said the collection would be deeply mined for a long-term exhibition scheduled to open at the end of June on the art of the Civil War. "We will always have major pieces on view," Hanley said.

Smith said she believed the agreement with the foundation and the NCC would conclude the Civil War Museum's odyssey, which began

in earnest about a decade ago and has included lawsuits, virtual closure, failed partnership efforts, an aborted relocation to Richmond, Va., a failed state bailout, a failed deal with Independence National Historical Park, and seemingly endless searches for a home.

"It's been like a soap opera," Smith said. "It's been going on for years and years."

The roots of the museum go back to the end of the Civil War, when Union officers formed the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS). In 1888 they founded a museum in Philadelphia, and over the years, Union officers and their descendants donated a rich array of artifacts, including plaster casts of Lincoln's hands and face, battle photos, Jefferson Davis' smoking jacket, battle flags, the first John Wilkes Booth wanted poster, bullet-riddled tree trunks, photos of black soldiers and regiments, diaries, letters, drawings, swords, and firearms - a seemingly endless stream of personal, quirky, evocative objects.

For years, the collection was housed in a stately Pine Street mansion. But internal squabbles broke out in 2000, sparked by dwindling finances, declining visitation, a failed affiliation with the Union League, and an incendiary proposal to move everything to a new museum in Richmond, former capital of the Confederacy.

The Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office stepped in and blocked the Richmond move. In the next several years, the Pine Street building was sold. An effort to move into the historic First Bank of the United States, located in Independence Park, fell through. The artifacts found homes in boxes, and the museum



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searched in vain for a home in Philadelphia, city of its birth.

On the plus side, however, a strong affiliation grew with the Gettysburg Foundation, which has conserved and stored much of the museum's collection and now stores it, officials said.

(The famous preserved head of Gen. George G. Meade's horse, Old Baldy, which was displayed by the Civil War Museum for many years, was returned to its owner, the Grand Army of the Republic Museum and Library in Frankford, in 2010.)

The framework of the agreement just announced - the transfer of ownership of artifacts to Gettysburg, with a subsequent long-term loan to the NCC - emerged in the last two years as the best alternative to a stand-alone Philadelphia museum housing the collection.

In an April 25 letter to museum chair Franklin, the head of MOLLUS in Pennsylvania said his organization was "saddened" to learn that despite "a decade of work," the museum would not have a new museum home in Philadelphia.

That said, commander-in-chief James Alan Simmons wrote that the museum's plan of transferring the artifacts to the Gettysburg Foundation is "prudent and appropriate" and "the best alternative."

The Civil War Museum, while giving its artifacts to Gettysburg, remains owner of an archive of more than 10,000 documents - journals, diaries, papers, photographs, books. Those materials are housed at the Union League, under a separate stewardship agreement, and are available for research.

"We're running on fumes," Smith said, regarding the museum's finances. "There's virtually no money. We're down to a very small amount. That's

why it's important to make sure all this is taken care of."

USS Monitor gun turret: Ramping up to save a landmark artifact

By Mark St John Erickson, DailyNews.com, May 14, 2016

Conservators drained the historic USS Monitor gun turret for the first time in more than a year this week as they prepared the giant Civil War artifact for its first major conservation and archaeological campaign since 2011.

Buoyed by ramped-up fundraising efforts, the recently expanded conservation team at the USS Monitor Center is embarking on a two-month-long regimen aimed at removing the layers of marine concretion loosened from the turret's surface after five years of treatment in a mammoth 90,000-gallon tank.



Photo - USS Monitor turret, which is being preserved at the Mariners' Museum in Newport News. (Daily Press photo)

They also will lift off a series of 20-inch-wide metal shields lining the turret's interior, then probe the sand and concretion lodged behind them for any small artifacts that might have been trapped when the pioneering ironclad warship sank during a Dec. 31, 1862, gale off Cape Hatteras, N.C. "With most of them there's nothing left," says Senior Conservator William N. Hoffman, describing the shields that protected the crew from any

metal fasteners blown off the turret's interior wall by the impact of enemy ordnance.

"But there are still four or five of them that are mostly intact — all on the starboard side of the turret where most of the artifacts have been found. So we believe there's a pretty good chance there are more of them waiting to be exposed."

Evocative finds

Among the objects conservators discovered behind the shields during the 2011 cleaning campaign were a bone-handled knife, a monkey wrench, a glass tube for a steam engine gauge and a cartridge for a naval carbine.

They also turned up a silver table spoon engraved with the initials "SAL," marking the long-lost utensil as the property of the Monitor's hapless Third Assistant Engineer Samuel Augee Lewis, who went down with the ship after being stricken with sea sickness so badly during the storm that he could not rise from his bunk to escape.

"These are the kinds of artifacts that connect you to the stories of the Monitor's crew," Hoffman says, describing more than 760 objects found since the turret recovery and conservation project started in 2002.

"And when you think about how all these things were swirling around inside as the ship went down, it gives you a great indication of what it must have been like for them during the sinking. It was just chaos."

Wielding chisels, hammers and small pneumatic tools, the five-person conservation team will spend weeks removing the scalelike layers of concretion, with each day's work being interrupted several times to keep the vulnerable surface wet with purified water pumped through a sprinkler system.



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Each Friday the treatment tank will be refilled in order to protect the turret over the weekend, Hoffman says, after which it will be drained again for the following week's work on Monday morning.

Once the cleaning and archaeological work have been completed, the turret's newly exposed interior and exterior walls will be scanned through a 3-D photogrammetry process in order to record the progress of the electrolytic reduction and descaling treatments.

The sensitive images also may enable the conservators to uncover hidden clues imprinted on the turret's exterior during the Monitor's milestone clash with the CSS Virginia in Hampton Roads in March 1862, as well as its confrontation with Confederate shore batteries at Drewry's Bluff on the James River two months later.

So discerning is the data gathered by the technique that it could provide the exact depth and circumference of both seen and unseen indentations made by enemy shot, bolts and shells, Hoffman says.

Those numbers, in turn, could lead to new insights about how and when each indentation took place during the Monitor's short career, including identifying the type of gun, amount of powder and kind of projectile that made them.

"Understanding these dents is crucial to understanding the Monitor's historic time in battle and the innovative ways that the Confederates tried to adjust to this brand-new kind of naval weapon," says Monitor Center Director John V. Quarstein, author of two books on the landmark vessels that met in the Battle of Hampton Roads.

"And once that concretion is removed, we'll be able to find out more about them than ever before."

Raising funds

The new conservation campaign is being funded by a yearlong effort that raised more than \$1 million through grants, pledges, partnership agreements and cash contributions, including a \$500,000 gift from descendants of Monitor Capt. John L. Worden and an annual \$250,000 curatorial stipend from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which operates the Monitor National Marine Sanctuary. Additional support is being sought through a series of private guided tours, which will bring donors into the center's sprawling conservation lab as well as the historic turret during times when the conservators are not working.

"Three years ago, we could not have made such a dramatic advance in the conservation of the turret. We didn't have the staff we have now. We didn't have the funding we needed," Quarstein says.

"But we've still raised only \$1 million of the \$20 million we need to complete the work."

American Civil War Museum announces new fund-raising organization, site development plans

ACWM press release, May 13, 2016 (Richmond) The American Civil War Museum announced key developments designed to further its mission and ensure long-term financial sustainability. These changes include the creation of a foundation devoted to fund-raising for the organization and new plans for the historic Tredegar Iron Works site in downtown Richmond.

A new organization, The American Civil War Museum Foundation, has been created to raise remaining funds needed for Museum projects and establish an endowment for Museum programs and operations. Waite Rawls will be President of the Foundation. Christy Coleman will serve as CEO of The American Civil War Museum, responsible for operations, while overseeing the creation of an engaging, innovative museum experience, thus encouraging continued exploration of the American Civil War and its legacies.



This architectural rendering illustrates the redesigned plan for the new Museum at Historic Tredegar in downtown Richmond – Photo ACWM

Plans have been approved for a redesigned museum building and other site enhancements at Historic Tredegar. The 28,500 square-foot structure, to be located between the historic Pattern and Administration Buildings, will be set into the hillside and will incorporate ruins from the historic Tredegar Iron Works. The new plan offers expanded gallery spaces, an experience theater, and greatly improved storage and preservation areas for the Museum's renowned collections of Civil War artifacts.

Other planned enhancements include installation of "Tredegar Works," a self-guided tour of the historic iron works site, "Building Steam," an



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interactive water exhibit designed for young visitors, and conversion of the historic Foundry Building into multiple-use space for meetings, weddings and other events.

"These enhancements will provide better, more appealing experiences for Museum visitors and will capitalize on Historic Tredegar's growing popularity as a destination for weddings, corporate receptions and other special events in our community," notes Edward L. Ayers, Museum board chairman.

The American Civil War Museum was announced in November 2013 with the mission of creating the pre-eminent center for exploring American Civil War history and its legacies from multiple perspectives: Union and Confederate, enslaved and free African Americans, soldiers and civilians. Current events continue to show the relevance of our mission and its importance in understanding the war and its impacts in American society.

Newly Discovered Portraits of Jefferson and Varina Davis

By John O'Brien, May 17, 2016, Military Images magazine

In Washington, D.C. on Jan. 21, 1861, Jefferson Davis stood on the floor of the U.S. Senate and bid farewell to his colleagues. Two weeks earlier, his homeland of Mississippi had dissolved its ties with the Union, a move that effectively ended his senatorial career. In this final speech before leaving for the South, Davis defended the doctrine of secession and the sovereignty of the states. He also offered sincere apologies for the pain and suffering he might have caused his fellow senators in the heated and impassioned debates leading up to this grim moment.

The day proved the saddest of his life. Worn down by attempts to find a compromise to avert the current crisis and weighted down with stress and anxiety, Davis would soon leave the capital bound for an uncertain fate. His wife, Varina, would accompany him, equally distraught to leave their much-loved Washington.

These emotions are perhaps reflected in these unique and previously unpublished portraits of Jefferson and Varina Howell Davis, believed to have been taken during this tumultuous time. The images are quarter-plate tintypes, or melainotypes, attributed to Jesse Harrison Whitehurst, a veteran Washington photographer and a native of Virginia. His gallery on Pennsylvania Avenue was an easy walk from the Capitol.

Physical characteristics indicate the portraits were made at the same time. The brass mats and frames are similar, as is the texture of the back of the iron plates. Though the Davises may have visited Whitehurst's gallery together, their different poses suggests the portraits were not thought of as a pair—Jefferson stares straight ahead and Varina in profile.

The facial characteristics of Jefferson Davis are comparable to three other images made about 1859.

One might be tempted to date the tintype and the paper print from roughly the same period. But a closer study of his facial characteristics, factoring in the differences in lighting, suggest the tintype was taken at a later date. There is also the question of expression. The McClees and Vannerson print captures a Davis who is intensely proud of his beloved Senate, and yet defiant as years of compromise and debate have tested, but not broken, the bonds of Union. In the tintype, by contrast, Davis

appears in the grip of emotional strain. His expression may convey a fatigued leader struggling with the realities of his imminent departure from the Senate, desperately trying to make sense of the dissolution of the Union, and coming to terms with his role in precipitating the fracture of the country. Moreover, his belief that the impending war would be, in his words, "a long and severe struggle" is perhaps also reflected here.

All things considered, it is reasonable to hypothesize that Davis sat for this tintype during the stressful final months in Washington, in late 1860 or early January 1861. If the dating is accurate, this tintype of Jefferson Davis comes the closest in showing us how he looked on the eve of a conflict, which he had hoped to avoid.

The tintypes have an extraordinary provenance that traces to an unexpected source—U.S. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles.

After the fall of Richmond on April 2, 1865, the venerable secretary hoped to obtain a relic to mark the historic event. Specifically, he wanted a chair from the Confederate White House. But, he never mentioned the fact in his diary.

Welles was not alone in his desire for a piece of history, as evidenced by the wholesale removal of furniture and other items from the Wilmer McLean residence at Appomattox Court House after Gen. Robert E. Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia to Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. One officer present at Appomattox was Maj. Gen. Edward O.C. Ord, who left with the marble-topped table used by Gen. Lee during the surrender. He paid McLean \$40 for the souvenir, which eventually made its way to the Chicago Historical Society.



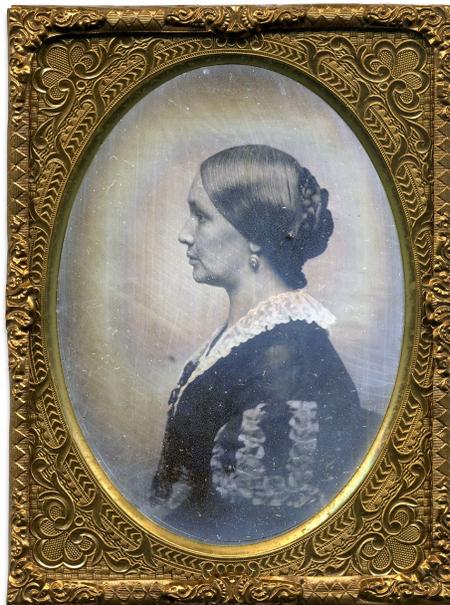
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Afterwards, Ord reported to Richmond to take command of the army of occupation headquartered in the city. Ord's staff included Capt. Thomas Gideon Welles. The second of three sons of the secretary, Thomas was formally announced as a member of the staff of the Military Department of Virginia in general orders published on April 24, 1865.

Three days later, Thomas received a letter from his younger brother, Edgar, with his father's request. Thomas replied the same day. "I received a letter from Edgar this a.m. requesting me to send you a chair from Jeff Davis House and am sorry to say that it is I am afraid out of my power to do so." He had a good reason for his reluctance. Gen. Ord had turned over the house to Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, who had been given command of the Military Division of the James. Thomas added that he was planning to leave the next day.

Despite his misgivings, Thomas managed to procure a pair of side chairs from the house. How he secured the chairs is not known. He may have approached Maj. Gen. Halleck or a member of his staff with a request. Or, perhaps, he talked his way past the guards and came away with them. Whatever the sequence of events, the chairs remained in the family well into the 20th century. They were acquired by the Museum of the Confederacy in 1985.

Thomas may have picked up the Davis tintypes at the same time he came into possession of the chairs. In 1980, five years before the chairs returned to Richmond, I acquired the images from a dealer acting as an agent for descendants of the Welles family.



Quarter-plate tintypes attributed to Jesse H. Whitehurst of Washington, D.C. John O'Brien collection.

The tintype of Jefferson Davis marks a unique moment in the history of our nation. North and South were perched on the precipice of an ordeal

that cost dearly in blood and treasury. Davis succeeded in holding his people together long after they had become too weak to continue the struggle. His energy and determination did much to enable a country with inadequate manpower and materials to fight an epic war against a powerful foe. Though final defeat diminished his reputation for leadership, many regarded him as a hero. A few years after the war, Gen. Lee observed, "If my opinion is worth anything, you can always say that few people could have done better than Mr. Davis. I know of none that could have done as well."

Davis would later admit that though secession had been impractical, it was not wrong constitutionally. During his final years (he lived to 1889), he urged the South to accept the restoration of the Union and look ahead to a bright future.

John O'Brien of Charles Town, W. Va., is a retired journalist and historian from the University of Connecticut, and a contributor to *MI*.

Alabama flag among state banners removed from U.S. Capitol over Confederate issue

By Laeda Gore, Alabama.com, April 22, 2016

The Alabama state flag, along with other banners from across the country, has been removed from the U.S. Capitol due to concerns that some include Confederate imagery.

The banners, which hang in the tunnel to the Capitol, will be replaced with images of the state quarters.

Rep. Candice Miller, R-Michigan, chairman of the Committee on House Administration, said the flags were removed prior to renovations on the tunnel between the Rayburn House Office Building and the U.S. Capitol.



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Once complete, a print of each state's commemorative coin will be displayed in place of the flags.

The tunnel is used by lawmakers and staffers traveling between the two buildings.

Miller said the change was prompted by concerns that some of the flags – most notably Mississippi's – contained Confederate imagery.

"Given the controversy surrounding Confederate imagery, I decided to install a new display," Miller said. "I am well aware of how many Americans negatively view the Confederate flag, and, personally, I am very sympathetic to these views. However, I also believe that it is not the business of the federal government to dictate what flag each state flies."

The state flags will remain in other areas, she said.

"It is common practice for each member of Congress to display their state flag, alongside of the American flag, outside their individual offices and in this way all state flags are displayed on Capitol Hill," she added. Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., had called on Congress to remove all items with Confederate flag imagery, including his own state's flag. Thompson issued a statement praising the committee's decision.

"I am pleased that the Architect of the Capitol will no longer display symbols of hatred and bigotry in the esteemed halls of the United States House of Representatives," he said. "As I said last summer, this is the People's House and we should ensure that we, as an institution, refuse to condone symbols that seek to divide us."

Controversy over the Confederate flag erupted last year when a white gunman allegedly shot nine people in a historically black church in Charleston, S.C. Images released

after the incident showed the shooter, Dylann Roof, posing with the Confederate flag. Several states, including Alabama, removed the Confederate flag from state properties after the shootings.

Thompson said he hopes Mississippi will follow the federal government's lead.

"I can only hope that this understanding will somehow reach the hearts and minds of the elected officials in the State of Mississippi and they will follow suit and rid our state of this ultimate vestige of slavery and bigotry," he said.

Kentucky Confederate monument to be removed after 120 years

By DYLAN LOVAN, Associated Press, April 30, 2016

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — A Confederate monument will be removed from a spot near the University of Louisville campus where it has stood since 1895.

The stone monument honoring Kentuckians who died for the Confederacy in the Civil War will be moved to another location, University President James Ramsey and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer said during a surprise announcement Friday. The monument is capped with a statue of a Confederate soldier.

"It's time for us to move this monument to a more appropriate place," Ramsey said while standing in front of the stone memorial, which sits next to the university's gleaming Speed Art museum that just completed a \$60 million renovation. Governments and universities across the country have re-evaluated displays of Confederate symbols following the racially motivated slayings last summer of

nine black parishioners at the Emanuel AME church in Charleston, South Carolina.

The tall, obelisk-style monument will be disassembled and cleaned while it is in storage awaiting a new location, which has not been determined. It was given to the city by the Kentucky Woman's Monument Association.

Ricky Jones, a professor of Pan-African studies at the university, said he has been pushing for removal of the statue since he arrived at the university in the late 1990s.

"I can't tell you how happy I am," Jones said after the announcement Friday. "I think this statue being on the campus is somewhat akin to flying the Confederate flag over the (university's) administration building."

Jones wrote in a newspaper opinion piece last week that the statue is a "towering granite and bronze eyesore glorifying the nadir of America's past."

Jones and Mayor Fischer noted that the university was much smaller when the statue was put up at the turn of the century, and the campus has developed around it.

University and city officials have been working on the removal for several weeks and there was even construction equipment parked alongside the base of the monument on Friday during the announcement. Kentucky is the birthplace of both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, the only president of the Confederacy. Both are honored in the state's Capitol rotunda with large statues. Following the Charleston church shootings, leaders from both political parties called for the removal of the Davis statue. But a state commission voted 7-2 not to remove it.



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“Unwearied in Their Attentions”: Secessionist Women and the 1866 Southern Relief Fair

by Rob Schoeberlein, Baltimore City Archives, February 9, 2016

The Civil War deeply divided Baltimoreans along philosophical and sectional lines. The Secessionist women of Baltimore, those whose sympathies lay with the South, were often singled out for their devotion to the Confederacy. They supported their husbands and brothers in gray throughout the war, often risking arrest, imprisonment, or banishment. During the post-war era, the 1866 Southern Relief Fair provided the large-scale opportunity for them to demonstrate both their patriotic and benevolent dedication to the people of the South.

Fundraising fairs in Baltimore had been organized and held for decades previously. Most Baltimore fairs, but not all, appear to have been orchestrated by women to benefit their own church congregations. The largest such effort came in 1864, with the Maryland State Fair for U.S. Soldier Relief or, as it is more commonly known, the Baltimore Sanitary Fair.

The prospect of holding a fair to raise funds for impoverished Southerners first arose in Baltimore during the fall of 1865. The sixty-six year old Jane Gilmore Howard, wife of General Benjamin Chew Howard, was elected to serve as the President of the Relief Fair. All six of Mrs. Howard's sons had worn the Confederate gray. Annie Thomas, 46, a Virginian by birth, and Elizabeth Key Howard, 62, the daughter of Francis Scott Key, served as vice presidents. These

latter two women were distinguished from the other Fair executive committee members in that their spouses had been arrested in 1861 and detained by US military authorities for disloyalty.

By early March 1866, 316 women had banded together to shape and promote the relief fair. A handful of well-to-do German immigrant women were also included. It does not appear that any woman officer connected with Baltimore's 1864 US Sanitary Fair served as a manager in this endeavor. Speaking of the Relief Fair committee, the *Baltimore American* newspaper stated “[w]e do not find the name of a single loyal lady, nor among its gentleman managers and... we find... that the great mass... have been, and still are, active and persistent in the sentiment of disloyalty.”

In contrast to the 1864 Sanitary Fair, the April 2, 1866 opening day of the Relief Fair did not bring a holiday-like atmosphere throughout the city. No parades; businesses and schools remained open. Held at the Maryland Institute hall (when it was located near today's Inner Harbor), the Relief Fair hosted no high ranking Washington officials on the opening night or any night. Also noticeably absent was any official delegation from Baltimore City or the Maryland State government.

The city newspapers reported immense crowds present throughout the entire length of the fair's run. As the *Baltimore Gazette* reported, “[s]tretched across the centre of the hall is the star-spangled banner [a US flag], and at the end of the hall, the same emblems are [draped].” This overt nod to national patriotism and to a restored Union, however, was tempered by what no city newspaper described explicitly. Upon many of

the 57 display tables, either for sale or for raffle, could be found portraits of the military heroes of the Confederacy. Paintings, prints and photographs of Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Joseph E. Johnston, to name a few, could be found throughout the hall. No likenesses of Jefferson Davis appear to have been present. Less than one year before, Baltimore's Secessionists could have been arrested by the US Provost Marshall for displaying or even possessing such images.

The Southern Relief Fair could be termed a great success when compared to similar efforts. The 1864 Sanitary Fair managers raised a final amount of just over \$86,000. The Relief Fair women, in comparison, grossed approximately \$160,000 for their efforts, about 2.3 million dollars in 2011 currency. The *Baltimore Gazette* opined “[the ladies] have been constant in their attendance and unwearied in their attentions...[t]he Fair women of Baltimore have crowned themselves with laurels, well deserved in many ways. The Fair also revealed that the split in Baltimore society still remained chasm-like within the breasts of many. The *Baltimore American*, a moderate Unionist paper during the conflict, simply refused to report on the Relief Fair. It gave the following reason: “If there had been any attempt made, or any desire evinced, to secure the participation of the Union people of the city or State in this Fair, it would have been promptly responded to by them and heartily seconded by the *American*. On the contrary, there has been a persistent effort to make [the fair] a grand disloyal demonstration.”