



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The Culp Brothers Gettysburg Memorial revealed

By VANESSA PELLECHIO, Hanover
Evening Sun, July 6, 2013

The Culp Brothers memorial dedication brought in crowds including Gettysburg Mayor Bill Troxell and relatives of the brothers to watch the unveiling of the \$13,000 monument Saturday night.

The dedication was next to the Civil War Wax Museum on Steinwehr Avenue where the monument sits by the sidewalk.

"We wanted something very simple," said Gary Casteel, who designed the memorial.

The monument was made at an angle pointing toward the street, so that William and Wesley Culp would be facing the north or south side they represented, Casteel said.

Wesley and William Culp were divided brothers during the Civil War, and fought in two battles against one another, said Robert O'Connor, a historical novelist. Wesley represented Company B, the 2nd Virginia infantry, and William Culp enlisted in Company E, the 87th Pennsylvania infantry to help save the Union, he said. William and Wesley separated in spring of 1856 when a business they both worked for moved to West Virginia, he continued. Wesley chose to go, but William stayed in Pennsylvania.

The memorial location was chosen on Steinwehr Avenue to give more exposure to the brothers' story, Casteel continued.

During the dedication, Tammy Myers of the Civil War Wax Museum mentioned that Steinwehr Avenue has been going through a revitalization process, she said.

"I think this monument will help create a new destination point in the avenue," Myers said. "It will also add to the beautification."



Audience members take pictures of the new memorial after Saturday's ceremony off Steinwehr Avenue. (THE EVENING SUN--CLARE BECKER)

The memorial was made to reunite the brothers, preserve their story and remind future generations of the sacrifices made by soldiers and families, Troxell said.

"The Culp brothers never had the opportunity to meet or resolve their issues," Troxell added.

When the dedication ended, relatives of the Culp brothers were asked to stand.

One man, who stood with the help of his cane, was Richard Mower of Maryland.

William Culp was his great grandfather, the 85-year-old said.

Mower found out about the memorial because he is actively involved in the Adams County Historical Society.

The memorial was planned to be revealed at the Gettysburg 150th Anniversary two and a half years ago, Casteel said.

Clarifications about the Culp brothers

When Robert O'Connor gave his speech, the historical author didn't hold back from sharing the misconceptions with the Culp brothers' story.

One misunderstanding during the Civil War was that it was common for

brothers to fight against each other, he said. The war was fought from the Atlantic Ocean to the far west, but for brothers to fight against each other was rare, he said.

Many people wonder why Wesley Culp fought for the Confederacy, O'Connor said.

He explained that Wesley was employed along with William Culp by a local carriage-maker, but the business moved to Shepherdstown, W.Va., in 1856. The owner asked his employees to move to West Virginia. Wesley chose to move there at age 16, but William stayed behind, O'Connor said. When the war began five years later, Wesley chose to protect West Virginia in Company B, the 2nd Virginia infantry, while William enlisted in Company E, the 87th Pennsylvania infantry to help save the Union, he continued.

The point that O'Connor emphasized as the biggest misconception was the death of Wesley Culp. Many people believe that Wesley died on July 3 on Culp's Hill, but it was on the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg on July 2, he said.

Wesley was shot in the forehead, and died instantly at Rock Creek, O'Connor said. O'Connor found this information from reading a report by Capt. Benjamin Pendleton, who was there when Wesley was shot.

Virginia man's claim about Civil War photo meets resistance

Clate Dolinger says three men in an 1863 picture are ancestors, but not everyone agrees.

By Tonia Moxley, The Roanoke Times, June 21, 2013

A U.S. Postal Service dedication ceremony set for Saturday to celebrate a new series of Civil War stamps will feature a Pembroke man,



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

who claims his family has ties to a famous photo from the 1863 Battle of Gettysburg.

Clate Dolinger, 73, a Pembroke barber, claims that according to his family's oral tradition and his own research, three unnamed Confederate prisoners of war photographed after the battle of Gettysburg are his family members. He is scheduled to tell his story at 8:30 a.m. at the Pembroke Post Office.

The Pembroke ceremony follows a much larger celebration of the new stamp series celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Civil War that was held May 23 at Gettysburg. Dolinger was set to tell his story there, but at the last minute was taken off the speaker list, he said.

According to a spokeswoman for the Gettysburg Foundation, a nonprofit organization that works with the National Park Service to preserve the Gettysburg battlefield and its history, the Dolinger family story may be nothing more than a family legend.

The photo, thought to have been taken by famous Civil War photographer Mathew Brady on July 15, 1863, has become an iconic image often used to illustrate histories, stories and films about the conflict that threatened to tear America apart. The photo of the Confederate POWs appears on the back of the Postal Service's Civil War 1863 Battle of Gettysburg and Battle of Vicksburg Forever stamp sheet.

No official identification of the men in the photo has been found. But since he was a little boy in the late 1940s, Dolinger said, his grandmother, Molly Baldwin Dolinger, told him stories about the men, who posed for the camera on Seminary Ridge.

According to her, they were little Clate's ancestors Andrew Zeke

Blevins, who served with the North Carolina 30th Infantry Regiment; John Baldwin, who served with the Virginia 50th Infantry Regiment; and Ephraim Blevins, who served with North Carolina's 37th Infantry Regiment.

Using what Clate Dolinger described as a postcard copy of the photo, his grandmother told him stories about each man: his service, his injuries, his time as a POW and his long walk home from Richmond after Lee's surrender. According to the stories, all three men were captured together after the battle, and likely helped bury the dead.

Dolinger also points to what looks like a necklace or brooch worn by the third man in the photo, and shows a similar looking necklace or brooch worn in a 1907 photo of Andrew Blevins' daughter, Nancy. Dolinger said according to his grandmother, it's the same piece of jewelry.

Records that would back up the claim, including the postcard photo Molly Dolinger used to narrate the stories, were lost in a house fire in 1951, Clate Dolinger said.

A stamp collector and Civil War history buff, Dolinger told his story about the Mathew Brady photo to the Pembroke postmaster, who passed it on to the main postal service office in Washington, D.C.

Dolinger said his son, Michael Dolinger, faxed some of the family's documentation to the postal service, which then invited them to Gettysburg in May for the unveiling of the Civil War stamp series.

On a souvenir program he produced, Dolinger is listed as a speaker at that event, which is called a "first day of issue ceremony." But Dolinger said that at the last minute he was told he wouldn't be allowed to give his remarks.

After the ceremony, Dolinger said, Mark Saunders of the postal service corporate relations office directed him to media outlets covering the event.

He told them his story, and it was picked up by several newspapers and blogs devoted to Civil War history. The postal service also issued a press release that detailed Dolinger's claims and promoted the upcoming ceremony in Pembroke.

Saunders said in a phone interview this week that he looked over Dolinger's information and found the story compelling.

"I trust him," Saunders said.

But according to Gettysburg Foundation spokeswoman Cindy Small, a National Park Service historian who looked into Dolinger's claims found no reason to believe the family's ancestors were the prisoners of war depicted in the photograph.

According to an email from Small, "Andrew Blevins, 30th NC, died of wounds received at Chancellorsville and was not present at Gettysburg.

"Ephraim Blevins, 37th NC, was captured on July 3 at Gettysburg and is reported as a POW at Fort Delaware that same day, which is of course impossible, but it does indicate that Ephraim was quickly moved from Gettysburg to Fort Delaware and was not still in the Gettysburg area around July 15 when Brady took this image.

"John Baldwin, 50th Virginia, was also captured on July 3 and was reported at Fort McHenry prison on July 6," she wrote.

Furthermore, Small wrote that Saunders, not the Gettysburg Foundation, invited Dolinger to the event and "made him a central focus of the media."

Saunders could not be reached Thursday to comment on the



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

information provided by the Gettysburg Foundation.

The Dolinger family claim — like countless other oral histories — raises the question of what can be known for certain about the Civil War, given sometimes inaccurate or incomplete records.

Retired Virginia Tech history professor and Civil War expert James "Bud" Robertson has labored for decades sorting through those stories to find both facts and meaning. He has also examined the Dolinger family's claim.

Robertson said that a few years before retiring from Tech in 2011, he remembers reviewing a set of photographs and service records to confirm a similar claim; that the famous photo of three captured Confederates came from a local family.

Clate Dolinger said it was his brother who presented the information to Robertson.

Robertson said the documentation he reviewed made a good case, but as with many claims of this sort, it could be hard to prove definitively.

A family's oral history combined with "faded photos can cause descendants to jump to desired conclusions," Robertson said.

As an example, Robertson related a story about the publication of his most recent book, "The Untold Civil War."

"We used as a dust jacket an obscure, never-used photo of six soldiers. The idea was to complement untold war stories with unidentifiable soldiers," Robertson said. "A month after the book appeared, I received an email from a Colorado lady who was excited at seeing her great-uncle on the cover. He was a member of the 53rd Tennessee.

"A week later came an email from a man equally happy that his great-grandfather was in the photo. Said ancestor was a member of the 86th Pennsylvania," Robertson said. "If both writers are correct, the illustration marks the only time in the war when the men stopped fighting to have a group photograph made."

For Clate Dolinger's part, the debate about his ancestors and the photo are "no big deal," he said.

"I believe what my grandma told me," Dolinger said. "She had no reason to lie."

Spy buried in Cincinnati influenced Civil War history

Tip from Harrison led to Battle of Gettysburg

By jseuss, Cincinnati.com, July 01, 2013

For nearly a century no one knew an unmarked grave in Northern Kentucky entombed the spy whose tip led to the bloodiest battle of the Civil War and forever changed the course of history.

Henry Thomas Harrison's life was filled with espionage and intrigue before he died nearly destitute, being laid to rest at Highland Cemetery in Fort Mitchell. The pivotal role he played in the Battle of Gettysburg — what is commonly regarded as the turning point of the Civil War — became the stuff of movies and literature, as Harrison was portrayed in Ted Turner's "Gettysburg" and its prequel, "Gods and Generals," as well as Michael Shaara's historical novel "The Killer Angels."

Two years after joining the Confederacy as a private in Mississippi, 31-year-old Harrison became a scout for Gen. James Longstreet, a key commander in the Civil War under Gen. Robert E. Lee.

As a trusted informant for Longstreet, Harrison set out on a mission to locate Union forces. On June 28, 1863, he reported to Longstreet that not only were troops positioned near Frederick, Md., but Union Gen. George Meade had replaced Joseph Hooker as commanding officer of the Army of the Potomac.

"Every good account of the campaign will mention Henry Harrison," said Dr. James A. Ramage, a renowned Civil War scholar and and Regents Professor of History at Northern Kentucky University. "He definitely had a role in the coming of the battle."

After Harrison delivered the news of the whereabouts of enemy forces, Lee commanded his troops, which were spread out across parts of Pennsylvania, to regroup near Cashtown and Gettysburg.

It was clear a battle was imminent, but the location had yet to be determined. Lee was pushing toward Harrisburg, the state's capital, not Gettysburg. Based solely on Harrison's information, Gen. Lee changed his course of action and, beginning July 1, Confederate forces were thrust into one of the gravest three days in American history.

A cloak and dagger existence

Not much was known about his life until a photo of Harrison in his Confederate uniform was found. Family members were put in contact with Civil War historian James O. Hall, who discovered Harrison's true identity in 1986. Hall traced Harrison to Cincinnati around the turn of the century. That's when Bernie Becker, Harrison's great-grandson, took over the hunt.

"We were all unaware," said Becker, 80, of of Monrovia, Md., who has devoted years to researching his great-grandfather. "Even my



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

grandmother never knew of his role in the Civil War."

Months after the Battle of Gettysburg, Harrison wed Laura Broders in Washington, D.C., then honeymooned in New York, all the while continuing his spy missions for the Confederacy.



Henry Harrison was discovered to be the spy whose tip ultimately led to the Battle of Gettysburg.

Provided

In 1865, Harrison, his wife and daughter moved to Mexico. The next year he departed to prospect for gold in Montana, leaving behind his family. His wife was pregnant with her second child, Becker's grandmother, Rena.

The family lost contact while Harrison was in Montana, and he was presumed dead. His wife remarried, ultimately bearing 10 children.

Harrison wouldn't turn up until 25 years later in Cincinnati.

"You can only speculate what he was doing because he's a continuous roamer," Becker said. "... He was a scoundrel since he left his family."

In 1900, Harrison attempted unsuccessfully to reconnect with his family in Annandale, Va. Becker said he might have been financially motivated and inquired about his

daughter. However, they never met, though they did exchange letters.

Harrison returned to Cincinnati and worked as a detective. In 1912, he moved to Covington. At age 87, Harrison married his 61-year-old caretaker. He died four years later, in 1923.

Harrison was thought to have gone to a pauper's grave until Becker's investigation led him to the unmarked plot at Highland Cemetery. Becker applied for and was granted a grave marker through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. On May 18, 2003, a crowd gathered for a dedication ceremony. An 80-year-old mystery had been solved, as the headstone was put in place identifying the spy with a crucial role in the Civil War.

CSS Neuse Museum to Open July 18

Cwi, July 15th, 2013

After years of exposure to hurricanes, heat, and pests, the CSS Neuse has a new home and is ready to greet visitors. A new highway marker will be dedicated for the Civil War-era ironclad at 10:30 a.m. at 130 S.

Queen St., followed

by behind-the-scenes public tours of the new CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center at 100 N. Queen St. in Kinston.

The CSS Neuse was a one-of-a-kind ironclad that was constructed by the Confederacy to help counter the superior numbers of the Union Navy. With all its advances in technology, the Neuse saw little action, though it did participate in at least one skirmish in 1865.

A dramatic move last June from its Vernon Avenue home to the new Queen Street location was cheered by onlookers as it made its way through downtown Kinston. After a short walk from the marker to the new CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive

Center, these and other interested citizens will be given tours by interpreters in Civil War attire. After opening day, tours of the facility will be given at 10 a.m., noon and 2 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Even now the CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center is a work in progress. Visitors on July 18 will get the rare opportunity to see a museum project under construction. The fully completed center is expected to open in mid-2014, and is a key component in the Division of State Historic Sites and Properties' commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War.

N. C. Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Susan Kluttz, Deputy Secretary Kevin Cherry and Highway Marker Program director Michael Hill will make remarks. Also assisting in the marker unveiling are Bill Rowland, who witnessed the recovery of the sunken vessel from the Neuse River in the 1960s, and John Marston, CSS Neuse Gunboat Association president. Site Manager Sarah Risty-Davis will be the master of ceremonies.

The CSS Neuse Civil War Interpretive Center, within the Division of State Historic Sites, is part of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

Gettysburg anniversary increases demand for stolen Civil War relics

By Jeffry Roth, Reuters, July 4, 2013
GETTYSBURG — With 250,000 visitors expected to converge on the Gettysburg battlefields this week, historians and antiquarians say the 150th anniversary of the clash that defined the U.S. Civil War has prompted an increased interest in Civil War relics - and an apparent uptick in the thefts and faking of conflict memorabilia.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

While there are no national statistics about thefts of war mementos, museums and law enforcement officers around the nation have reported a range of incidents involving the plundering of Civil War artifacts.

The thievery even extended to the current Gettysburg re-enactment, where criminals made off with a trailer containing war items valued at \$10,000 in Frederick County, Maryland, last month.

Cheri Gainor, owner of the missing goods, is portraying a camp laundress in the Gettysburg battle commemoration on July 4-7. Among the rare items taken, she said, were a 150-year-old washing dolly - a wooden device used to agitate water in a washing barrel - as well as a number of mini-irons for cuffs and collars.

In Burke County, Georgia, thieves plundered the graves of Confederate soldiers in the Old Church Cemetery, prying open caskets - presumably, according to cemetery overseer Leroy Matthew Bell Jr., in the hope of finding relics to sell. Burke County police have arrested two men in connection with the April incident. In downtown Lexington, Kentucky, determined thieves went to even greater extremes by stealing an iron prison gate from the Hunt-Morgan House, a museum that houses an extensive collection of civil war relics, in May. Sheila O. Ferrell, executive director of the Blue Grass Trust, which runs the museum, said the 400-pound gate, a remnant from the Ohio State Penitentiary, which once held Confederate General John Hunt-Morgan, was almost immovable. It was the museum's third theft this year. A \$1,500 reward has been offered for recovery of the gate. Stephen W. Sylvia, a military

historian, author and antique store owner in Orange, Virginia, attributed the rising popularity of relics to the anniversary of the war and the popularity of movies such as "Lincoln."

Prices for Civil War relics vary widely, Sylvia said. An authentic minie-ball, a cylindrical bullet named for its French army officer inventor, Claude-Etienne Minie, starts at around \$3, while a Confederate uniform button can go for \$150. A uniform can sell for thousands, and a sword may fetch more than \$20,000.

Fakes are a problem, he said, especially when it comes to Civil War dog tags and slave tags. Authentic slave tags are especially rare unless they originate from the Charleston, South Carolina, area.

Civil War bullets can also be less than they seem. According to Sylvia, the minie-balls can sell for \$10 or more if they come from a famous battlefield. Visitors to Gettysburg this week need to exercise caution, though, as not all bullets sold in Gettysburg were actually fired there. "Not very many are being found at Gettysburg any longer," Sylvia said.

Civil War historian makes Gettysburg his focus and his home

By **Michael E. Ruane**, Washington Post, **June 29**

GETTYSBURG, Pa. — The wheat had been flattened in the somber field where the dead Confederates were lined up for burial in 1863.

Forty-four bodies, some with their legs tied together to make them easier to carry, had been gathered by their comrades. But there was no time to dig the graves, and this was how the photographers found them, laid out on the trampled ground.

The tide of war begins to turn in favor of the Union

William A. Frassanito, the reclusive historian of Civil War photography, is standing in the woods just outside the field at sunset, explaining how he located this spot after it had been lost for more than a century.

It's quiet now, except for the cooing of mourning doves and the lowing of cattle that graze in the knee-high grass.

Frassanito, 66, rarely ventures out in public at this hour. He's a night owl who rises at 4 p.m. and goes to bed at 6 a.m. He seldom answers his phone. He has no answering machine, no e-mail and no cellphone. But this week marks the 150th anniversary of the colossal battle, the photography and geography of which he has studied most of his life.

Thousands of visitors, dignitaries and historians are expected here to mark the three-day struggle that began July 1, 1863 — a victory for the Union cause and the turning point in the war.

And Frassanito would like his pioneering scholarship, and its impact on history and the battlefield, to be more widely recognized.

Key parts of the hallowed battlefield have been restored because of his work. Battlefield plaques have been added or corrected. And his research has created the new specialty of examining an old picture for the information it contains.

"I've actually created a hybrid field of study," he said. "Academic historians traditionally view photos as Christmas tree ornaments, just something that [helps] you spruce the book up. . . . They've never really had the interest in the photo as a document."

Frassanito's investigation of the battle's historic photos — which he began as a child — has resulted in



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

some of the biggest revelations in the past 50 years about the battle and its aftermath.

His discoveries of the spots where the pictures were taken have helped the National Park Service restore important parts of the battlefield to their original appearance.

"As far as having a really solid impact on the historical thinking and understanding of the battlefield, very few other people have contributed to it like Bill Frassanito," said Gettysburg historian John Heiser of the National Park Service.

Devoted fans call him 'Frazz'

Frassanito is a student of Gettysburg with meticulous habits.

He already has his name and birth year on the family tombstone in the town's Evergreen Cemetery.

He notes that his last name has 10 letters, just like Gettysburg, and that he has files on almost all 2,400 persons who lived in the town in 1863.

He keeps a regular, if unusual, schedule, meeting friends, relatives and admirers at precisely 10:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays in the Reliance Mine Saloon.

Then he goes to his third-floor office in an old house in town. There he answers correspondence, prepares material for friends who run his Facebook page and listens to country rock on the radio.

"He's the most eccentric person I've ever met," said his friend Garry Adelman, vice president of the Center for Civil War Photography. "He's the most careful historian I've ever met."

The grandson of Italian immigrants and the son of a jeweler, Frassanito was born in Queens and raised in a two-bedroom house on Long Island.

The tide of war begins to turn in favor of the Union

He is a diminutive, amiable, somewhat shy figure with gray hair, glasses and a gray beard. He loves to talk and tell stories, and devoted followers call him "Frazz." He has never married.

He has lived in Gettysburg for 38 years. His first visit to the town was in 1956 at age 9. He attended Gettysburg College, worked as a battlefield guide and settled here permanently after serving in Vietnam. His parents are buried here.

Nowadays he never leaves Adams County, home to the historic town. He was recently aghast at the prospect of having to see an eye doctor in Frederick, about 35 miles away. He found someone local.

"I don't like to travel," he said during an interview in the saloon, which he said he likes because it has a fire in the winter.

"The only socializing I do is here, three nights a week," he said. "When I'm not here I'm kind of reclusive. I like to be left alone."

But he loves to talk to his fans in the saloon, where his books are above the bar. "And then I disappear into my office," he said.

"There's nothing else that I need in life."

The 'sharpshooter' revelation

Frassanito is best known for revealing that one of the most iconic images of the war — a picture of a dead Confederate "sharpshooter" in his lair — had been staged by the famous Civil War photographer Alexander Gardner.

Gardner and his crew had found the well-preserved body a few days after the battle and carried it across a swath of rocky terrain to a more photogenic spot at a stone barricade.

They laid the young soldier's body down, added a rifle as a prop and

took the famous picture. They also cooked up a bogus caption.

An earlier writer had noticed that the body had been moved, because the same soldier appeared in another photo at a different place.

But it was Frassanito who first provided the details, in his popular 1975 book, "Gettysburg: A Journey in Time," and in a subsequent work, "Early Photography at Gettysburg," in 1995.

He found the spot where the other photo had been taken and calculated that Gardner and his crew had carried the body about half the length of a football field to set up the famous picture.

As a result, the Park Service changed the erroneous explanation of the photograph on the wayside plaque that had been at the spot for years.

Frassanito also figured out that a dozen famous Gardner photographs, containing vague or erroneous captions, were all images of the same group of dead soldiers taken from different angles.

By scouring the battlefield for a distinctive split rock in one of the pictures, he found the place where all the shots had been taken.

The spot was the field on the Rose Farm, south of town. It was then overgrown with forest and a locale that few students of the battle had even heard of — "one of the most obscure places at Gettysburg," Frassanito said.

Heiser, the historian, said that because of Frassanito's work, the spot has been cleared of woods and restored to its 1863 appearance. A plaque marks the site.

When it was filled with the gruesome ranks of the dead, it must have riveted Gardner, who took more pictures there than at any other place on the battlefield, Frassanito said.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

The tide of war begins to turn in favor of the Union

The black-and-white photos — “death studies,” he calls them — seem to have an eternal fascination for people, he said.

“The death studies are one of the biggest magnets that drew me in here,” he said. “Because it’s as close as you could actually come to the blood and guts of a battle.”

The viewer can use the photo as a map, find the rocks that appear in the background and go to the exact spot, separated from the moment in the picture only by time.

As for the 44 dead Confederate soldiers, Frassanito said he has been studying them for so long that “they’re like my buddies.”

Images of devastation

On July 4, 1863, the day after the battle ended, many of the fields and woods around Gettysburg presented scenes of horror.

“No pen can paint the awful picture of desolation, devastation, and death that was presented here to the shuddering beholders,” wrote local farmer John Howard Wert. “Death in its ghastliest and most abhorrent forms everywhere. . . . It was a hideous and revolting sight.”

Sheets of musket fire had peeled the bark from the trees. Rocks were scarred by thousands of bullets. Artillery shells and rifle balls had burrowed into trunks and branches, some to stay hidden for more than a century.

Residents carried bottles of peppermint oil to mask the stench from dead horses and men, according to a study of the aftermath by the historian Gregory A. Coco.

Roughly 6,600 soldiers, Union and Confederate, had been killed. The toll of those killed, wounded, missing or captured topped 50,000.

The battle was the midpoint of the war — a disastrous defeat for the South and the start of the long, bloody collapse of the Confederacy. It was here that Gardner and his men, and, later, famed photographer Mathew B. Brady, among others, hurried in the days after the battle.

And a century later it was their photographs — and puzzling captions — that mesmerized the young Frassanito and started him on the research that would take up much of his life.

The split rock

On a recent evening, Frassanito stood on a remote lane on the battlefield in blue jeans, black shoes and a tan shirt. The Rose Farm killing field was just through the underbrush on the other side of a zigzag rail fence.

There was a historical marker noting that Confederate Brig. Gen. Paul J. Semmes was mortally wounded nearby. Across the lane stood a statue honoring the 53rd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment, 74 of whose 135 men were killed or wounded.

The sun was just setting behind Warfield Ridge to the west. It was roughly the time of day that the fighting raged here on July 2, 1863.

Frassanito didn’t want to venture into the field. But he explained how he found the crucial split rock, which was the key to where all 12 of the famous pictures were taken.

He had eliminated four other likely places on the battlefield. He then narrowed his search to this area and began walking with a sketch of the rock he had made from a photograph. That photo depicts several slain soldiers, probably men from the 53rd Georgia or 15th South Carolina regiments who were killed nearby, Frassanito wrote in 1975.

The men, and their comrades in the other photos, had been dead for several days. Their bodies had been exposed to the sun and the rain that drenched the area after the battle.

They had nothing with them — no rifles, no equipment and, in some cases, no shoes. A few hats were strewn about.

“My God,” wrote a Union soldier who saw a similar scene nearby. “I cannot say I ever wish to see another sight like that I saw on the battle-field of Gettysburg.”

Department of Veterans

Affairs blocks

Brooklyn’s historic Green-Wood cemetery from giving Civil

War vets tombstones

By Simone Weichselbaum, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, July 9, 2013
More than a thousand Civil War veterans are condemned to eternity in an unmarked Brooklyn grave due to bizarre federal rules — but now New York’s top senator and cemetery advocates are fighting for change.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has blocked Green-Wood Cemetery from placing gravestones on the empty plots, which are currently marked by yellow flags, ruling that only soldiers’ relatives could request a tombstone.

As a result, 1,200 vets of the War Between the States remain in unmarked plots.

“We have to reverse this injustice,” said Green-Wood historian Jeff Richman, who has an petition on marktheirgraves.org demanding the feds return to the old rules.

Sen. Chuck Schumer has joined the campaign, reaching out to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

Shinseki Tuesday asking the agency to back down.

"All veterans deserve to have their final resting spot marked and honored with a headstone," Schumer said.

Richman estimated there are around 8,000 former Civil War soldiers buried among the roughly 560,000 bodies resting beneath the grass at the city's largest boneyard.

Richman personally tracks down death certificates, obituaries, pension records and other paperwork confirming which of Green-Wood's dead fought in battle during the so-called War of Northern Aggression.

His work once enabled vets to get tombstones — until the rule change.

"What difference does it make if you find someone five generations removed from the soldier (to make the request)? The answer is — nothing," Richman said. "Many Civil War veterans didn't have children. So now they can't get a gravestone."

Veterans such as lawyer James Remington, shot in the jaw in the Battle of Fredericksburg and later one of the first members of the New York Bar Association, is stuck in a nameless grave.

But Remington is not entirely forgotten in Brooklyn: neighbors near his brownstone at 838 Carroll St. in Park Slope still refer to it as the James H. Remington House.

Schumer said he was shocked to learn that the VA has blocked Brooklyn from getting its Civil War markers.

"To require the permission of a direct descendant of men who died well over one hundred years ago is a nonsensical policy and it must be reversed," Schumer said.

A spokeswoman from the VA said the agency is aware of Schumer's ire and will respond later this summer.

After Gettysburg, is there a future for Civil War re-enacting?

By Donald Gilliland, The Patriot-News, July 11, 2013

As Civil War re-enactors gathered by the thousands in Gettysburg last week for the commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the battle, the focus was not only on the past. Discussions also focused on the future, and what it would hold for the re-enacting hobby.

Everyone knew someone, it seemed, for whom Gettysburg would be the last re-enactment.

The generation who brought Civil War re-enacting out of the JCPenney catalogue in a quest for authenticity and shepherded it to its height of popularity in the 1980s have become grannies and graybeards.

The wave of young people who joined in the 1980s are now focused on financial stability, family and pharmaceuticals for a variety of midlife ailments.

And the new brood of 20-somethings who are willing to forego video games to indulge a hankering for the past are increasingly tempted to other eras, particularly the re-enactment of World War II.

And then, there are rifts within the re-enacting community itself, as the two separate re-enactments for the 150th Gettysburg demonstrated.

Most seemed to agree that Gettysburg would likely be the last BIG re-enactment for a long time to come, but that neither bothered nor worried some.

Michael Mescher, of Burke, Va., participated in the first weekend re-enactment at Gettysburg and ran a sutler's tent at the second. His re-enactment experience, he said, was both good and bad.

The good: Mescher was among the Confederate re-enactors who restaged the nighttime storming of breastworks on Culp's Hill. There were fleeting moments of fear and awe, and after he "took a hit" and fell, wounded, between the lines, an eerie peacefulness with fireflies flickering in the trees above him. Mescher said he gained a greater appreciation of the battle. It was a truly magical moment for him.

The bad: Mescher also participated in the large-scale re-enactment for the public, and said it was like so many other large-scale re-enactments for the public. There was nothing particularly special nor personally enlightening in it for him, and it would likely be his last.

But Mescher, who is in his 60s, said he loves doing Living History and will definitely continue doing that, and will probably participate in smaller re-enactments that afford him opportunities like the one he had at "Culp's Hill."

Can the hobby draw young people?

The end of large-scale re-enactments isn't necessarily a bad thing, especially if the smaller ones offer participants a richer experience.

Many of those who plan to retire their woollens likely would have anyway and were holding out - or returning after a period of inactivity - just to experience the 150th Gettysburg.

Many others plan to stay active.

The real question is will the hobby continue to attract young people? And will the re-enactors of tomorrow be donning Confederate and Union uniforms?

One of the greatest threats to Civil War re-enacting is other re-enacting, specifically WWII. "The greatest generation" is less remote, equally romantic and mechanized.



THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

"It touches us, because it's more recent," acknowledged 21-year-old Civil War re-enactor Dustin Cody Horrell of Wilmington, N.C. "We can relate to it more."

Adding to the WWII allure is the ease of acquiring actual artifacts from the time period.

Whereas Civil War re-enactors are operating with reproduction uniforms and equipment, it's possible for WWII re-enactors to show up with the real McCoy.

John Hooper, of Newville, thinks that is a powerful draw for the WWII era.

The 75-year-old has been re-enacting the Civil War for 50 years and remembers a time when actual relics from the Civil War could be seen on the field, having been salvaged from family attics, found cheap at flea markets or purchased more dearly from the few sutlers catering to the hobby.

That phase is now over for the Civil War, but Hooper said he suspects the ability to resurrect great-grandpa's stuff - or purchase someone else's at reasonable prices - is fueling the burgeoning interest in WWII re-enacting.

There's a talismanic value to the real thing, which Civil War re-enacting no longer really has.

What's more, re-enacting isn't cheap. The cost of the basic kit of reproduction Civil War re-enacting gear, purchased new, runs something like this:

Trousers - \$90

Shirt - \$40

Sack Coat - \$90

Forage Cap - \$40

Brogans - \$110

Wool Socks - \$11

Musket - \$800

Bayonet & Scabbard - \$60

Belt, Cartridge & Cap Boxes - \$95

Canteen - \$50

Haversack - \$30

Plate & Utensils - \$30

Tin Cup - \$20

Knapsack - \$65

Wool Blanket - \$75

Gum Blanket - \$85

That's nearly \$1,700 just to get started, but many groups loan prospective recruits the basic gear until they decide if they want to stay in the hobby or not, and those same groups can often hook the new recruit up with an older re-enactor who's getting out and selling his used equipment at a bargain.

Allure of the Civil War

Even with the cost and the competition, the Civil War still retains its charm for some of the 20-somethings, who are still fascinated by the 19th century way of military life.

The remoteness inherent in Civil War re-enacting - the rough camping, the discomfort of woolen uniforms, the slower pace - is an attractive antidote, for some, to the bustle of modern society

"It does let you step back and have a breather," said John Browne, a 22-year-old Civil War re-enactor originally from Seattle but who has lived in Brevard, N.C., since he was 12.

Browne said in his Civil War re-enactment camp he doesn't have to worry about people pulling out their cell phones, getting connected to the outside world and ignoring everyone else around them.

Sitting in his Confederate camp at Gettysburg with only a lantern and the stars for light, Browne said, "It's a good thing that we're not supposed to have technology out here because (the technology) inhibits us from being able to develop relations with the humans right next to us, instead

of being very deep into our phone at the moment."

"Everybody should go camping," he said. "Things move very, very fast today with our communications... It's almost unnatural the speed we're going."

It's more than just a camping adventure, though. For some, there is also the tug of ancestry, particularly in the South.

"A lot of these guys are talking about 'My [great] granddaddy fought at this battle and he died here.' That's really important to them, and then they were like - they'll get out emotions I ain't never seen before when they come to certain fields," Browne said.

For Horrell, who acknowledges the lure of WWII, he had ancestors on both sides of the Civil War. One of them had fought in Gettysburg and even breached the wall. He planned to follow those same footsteps at the reenactment the next day. For him, it was a moment to connect with those who had come before.

That connection to history and heritage is one thing that will never fade from Civil War re-enacting. The ranks of Civil War re-enactors may contract a bit, and the days of large-scale battles may be past for a while, but the interest will remain.

Nick Grimm, head of the 7th Pennsylvania Reserves based in Mechanicsburg, said he thinks different groups will be impacted differently, depending on the membership.

Case in point is Hooper, who is a member of Grimm's unit, and, at 75, has no plans to quit.

What's more, a boy just graduating from high school with an avid interest in the Civil War approached the group to join last month.

"I think we'll be fine," said Grimm.



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