



## THE "OLD LINER" NEWSLETTER

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### Two Richmond Civil War Museums Team up for new Center

By STEVE SZKOTAK, (AP)

RICHMOND, Virginia — One museum has among its vast Confederate-centric collection Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's sword and the flag that flew at Robert E. Lee's headquarters. The other museum strives to tell the story of the American Civil War through the eyes of Northerners and Southerners, freed and enslaved blacks, soldiers and civilians.

Now the Museum of the Confederacy and the American Civil War Center are joining forces to build a \$30 million museum in Richmond with the goal of creating the top Civil War museum in the nation 150 years after the deadliest conflict fought on U.S. soil from 1861-65 between the Northern states and the secessionist, pro-slavery Southern states.

The marriage of museums, announced to The Associated Press, will meld the collection of Confederate battle flags, uniforms, weapons and other historic relics with a narrative-based museum that uses bold, interactive exhibits and living history events to relate its 360-degree telling of the war.

What some might view as an unlikely partnership "makes so much sense" to Christy Coleman, president of the American Civil War Center, which opened in 2000 at a site where the new museum will rise.

"That's part of the point," Coleman said in an interview with The Associated Press. "They have an incredible collection that is absolutely Confederate strong, but there are a lot of artifacts that have not been able to be fully explored or used to relate

to the African-American experience or immigrants or the role of Jews."

Coleman said the Confederacy museum's collection will complement her museum's mission of looking at the social and political stories of the Civil War.

"The combination of that is what makes this so exciting to us," she said.

In a joint announcement, the museums said the new historic attraction in the former capital of the secessionist Confederacy has yet to be named, but \$20 million has been committed to its construction. Ground will be broken in 2014, with an expected opening the following year.

The new museum will be located along the James River, at the Tredegar Ironworks, where much of the South's cannons were forged during the war. It's also the home of the Civil War Center. The museums said bringing together both institutions will "further establish Richmond as the foremost Civil War destination in the United States."

At the new attraction, Coleman will share the title of CEO with Waite Rawls, president of the Confederacy museum. It dates to 1890 and traces the origins of much of its collections to the men who fought for the South and their descendants, in particular Lee and other Southern military leaders.

The Museum of the Confederacy claims the world's largest and most comprehensive collection of Confederate artifacts:

thousands of carefully preserved battle flags, dolls used to smuggle medicine to troops, Jackson's sword. Only a fraction of the collection is on display at the museum's downtown Richmond site, next to the former White House of the Confederacy.

While the Civil War Sesquicentennial has drawn visitors to the museum, overall it has seen a sharp decline in attendance through the years as the Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center and related facilities have grown around it, enveloping both buildings. Finding the museum can be a challenge even for city residents.

The James River location for the new attraction, a little more than one mile (1.6 kilometers) from Museum of the Confederacy, offers a more expansive and accessible site. It's also home to the National Park Service's Richmond Visitor Center, and already is a popular destination for Civil War buffs. Concerts and other events also draw city-dwellers and tourists to the grassy grounds along the river.

### The Last Civil War Veterans... Or Were They?

Smithsonian Magazine, November 6, 2013

Albert Woolson loved the parades. For Memorial Day in Duluth, Minnesota, he rode in the biggest car down the widest streets of his hometown. The city etched his name in the Duluth Honor Roll, and he was celebrated at conventions and banquets across the North. Even the president wrote him letters on his birthday. Because everyone said he was the last surviving member of the Grand Army of the Republic, a fraternal organization of Union veterans once nearly half a million strong, they erected a life-size statue of him on the most hallowed ground of that entire horrible conflict—Gettysburg.

Though deaf and often ill, he was still spry enough that, even at 109 years



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of age, he could be polite and mannerly, always a gentleman. He was especially fond of children and enjoyed visiting schools and exciting the boys with stories of cannon and steel and unbelievable courage on the fields around Chattanooga. The boys called him "Grandpa Al."

But Woolson could be fussy. His breakfast eggs had to be scrambled and his bacon crisp. He continued to smoke; he had probably lit up more than a thousand cigars just since he had hit the century mark. And no one kept him from his half-ounce of brandy before dinner.



*Albert Woolson, the last in blue in the twilight of his old age, still could hit the drums like a boy sounding the march to war. (Courtesy of Whitman College and Northwest Archives, Walla Walla, Washington)*

His grandfather had served in the War of 1812, and when guns were fired on Fort Sumter in 1861, his father went off to fight for Lincoln. He lost a leg and died. So, as the story

goes, young Albert, blue-eyed and blonde-haired, a mere five and a half feet tall, took his father's place. With just a year left in the war, he enlisted as a drummer boy with the 1st Minnesota Heavy Artillery Regiment, rolling his snare as they marched south to Tennessee.

But that had been long ago, more than 90 years past. Now Albert Woolson's days were fading, the muffled drum of his youth a softening memory. At St. Luke's Hospital in Duluth, his health deteriorating, he would sometimes feel his old self, quoting Civil War verse or the Gettysburg Address. But then on a Saturday in late July, 1956, he slipped into a coma. Just before he drifted off, he asked a nurse's aide for a dish of lemon sherbet. She gave him some soft candy too. As she shut the door she glanced back at her patient. "I thought he was looking very old," she recalled. For a week he lay quietly in his hospital bed, awaiting death.

Down in Houston, old Walter Washington Williams had sent Woolson a telegram congratulating him on turning 109. "Happy birthday greetings from Colonel Walter Williams," the wire said.

Williams was blind, nearly deaf, rail-thin, and confined to a bed in his daughter's house. He had served as a Confederate forage master for Hood's Brigade, they said, and now he was bound and determined to be the last on either side still alive when America's great Civil War Centennial commemoration began in 1961. "I'm going to wait around until the others are gone," he said, "to see what happens."

Williams had ridden in a parade too. He was named in presidential proclamations and tributes in the press. *Life* magazine devoted a three-

page spread to the old Rebel, including a photograph of Williams propped up on his pillows, a large Stars and Bars flag hanging on the wall. An American Legion band serenaded at his window, and he tapped his long, spindly fingers in time with "Old Soldiers Never Die."

Like Woolson, Williams could be cantankerous. On his last birthday, when he said he was 117, they served him his favorite barbecued pork, though his daughter and a nurse had to feed him. His bed was piled high with cards and telegrams, but he could not read them. He could hardly pick them up. "I'm tired of staying here," he complained in his son's ear. The son smiled and told visitors how they had hunted deer together when his father was 101. "He rode a horse until he was 103," the son said.



*Death approaching, soon to usher out the last of the Civil War era, Walter Williams lies near comatose in the back room of his daughter's Houston home in December 1958. Dr. Heyl G. Tebo, commander of the Houston chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, presents him with a citation proclaiming him an honorary lifetime member of the organization. (Courtesy of the Houston Chronicle)*



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Williams' last public outing was in an Armed Forces Day parade in Houston in May 1959, when he rode in an air-conditioned ambulance. As he passed the reviewing stand, he struggled to raise his arm in salute. Then they took him home and put him back to bed.

And so the clock ticked down, not just on Albert Woolson and Walter Williams, but for a whole generation, an entire era, the closing of a searing chapter in American history: four years of brutal civil war. Like the old soldiers, memories of the North and South and how they had splintered and then remade America were slowly dying out too. The Grand Army of the Republic closed its last local chapter. The Rebel yell fell silent.

By the start of the 1950s, about 65 of the blue and gray veterans were left; by 1955, just a half dozen. As their numbers dwindled they became artifacts of a shuttered era, curiosities of an ancient time, sepia-toned figures still inhabiting a modern world from their rocking chairs and oxygen tents. They had gone to war with rifles and sabers and in horse-mounted patrols. Now they seemed lost in a new American century that had endured two devastating world wars fought with armored tank divisions, deadly mustard gas, and atomic bombs that fell from the sky.

By the close of the 1950s, as the nation was preparing for the 100th anniversary of the Civil War, much of the public watched transfixed, marking the passing of each of the final veterans, wondering who might be the last, wondering if any would make it to the centennial, curious how anyone could live so long. Could anyone be so old?

Because it turns out that many of the men were not so old after all.

Many who claimed to be well over 100 and survivors of that great war were really imposters, some flat-out frauds. In truth they had been mere children and too young to march off to war in the early 1860s. Or they had not even been born. Yet as they grew old, they fabricated stories about past heroic adventures and brazenly applied for Civil War pensions during the long, lean years of the Great Depression. Some backdated their birth dates. Some made up the names of comrades and commanding officers. Some lied to their friends and neighbors and to newspapers and government officials. Over the years, some accepted so many accolades as Civil War veterans that they never could muster the courage or the humility to own up to the truth, even as they lay near death. Many ended up believing their own fabrications. Driven by money, ego, or a craving to belong to something grand and glorious, these men defrauded a nation. They especially dishonored those who had served, those who had been wounded, and above all those who had died. Many of them fooled their own families. One fooled the White House.

When Walter Williams died December 19, 1959, according to his *New York Times* obituary, "a newspaper story said a check had failed to find evidence to support the claim.

Based on the 1860 Census, he would have been eight years old at the time he said he had joined the Confederate Army, eleven months before the war ended in 1865. It also was reported that the National Archives listed no Walter G. Williams as having served in the Confederate Army from either his home state of Mississippi or from Texas, where his family later settled.

The last veteran who said he fought for the Union was Albert Woolson; Walter Williams said he was the last Confederate. One of them indeed was a soldier, but one, according to the best evidence, was a fake.

### **New York State Man charged in firing of Civil War cannon replica at neighbor's property**

The Buffalo News, November 14, 2013

They were the shots heard 'round the world.

Even newspapers in Britain are picking up the story of the Chautauqua County man accused of dealing with a neighborly dispute by rattling nearby houses with blasts from his Civil War replica cannon.

The barrage, heard miles away, eventually led to an arrest and confiscation of the cannon, which apparently was firing charges but no cannon balls. Powder charges are held in place by wads of paper or foil. "We had reports from people that had heard the cannon go off," explained County Sheriff Joseph A. Gerace.

Wednesday, after several days of the racket, sheriff's deputies went to Brian J. Malta's home on Prosser Hill Road in Kiantone, south of Jamestown.

Accused of firing a replica Civil War cannon toward a neighbor's property, the 52-year-old Malta was charged with three misdemeanor counts of menacing and three violation counts of harassment. He is free on \$2,500 bail.

The arrest also prompted a headline in Daily Mail of London: "Man fired Civil War cannon at his neighbors for EIGHT DAYS during dispute."



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As for the dispute that prompted the blasts?

"It's a civil matter," Gerace said, declining to comment further on its nature.

It is not illegal to own a cannon in New York State, but this one is now being held as evidence by the Sheriff's Office, a first for Gerace in terms of confiscated weapons.

"I don't recall, during my 34-year career, taking a cannon," he said.

### How tech preserves the Gettysburg Address

by Becca Mitchell, WKTR.com, November 19, 2013

On November 19, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln commemorated a Civil War battlefield in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, by vowing that "government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

One hundred and fifty years later, document experts are going to great lengths to make sure that copies of his famous speech, handwritten by Lincoln himself, hold up as well as the words themselves.

Five original versions of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address remain, and they are still used for research and study. But warm temperatures, light, humidity and even oxygen are enemies of old paper manuscripts.

"There's nothing that compares to the original," said Michele Hamill, a paper and photograph conservator at Cornell University, which has one of the five copies of the speech. "We need to find a balance between having these national treasures and wanting to make them widely available."

To make both possible, researchers have developed advanced preservation and replication

techniques that include environmental sensors, high-quality scanners and specially built cases.

Each of the five versions of the Gettysburg Address manuscript are slightly different. Called the Bancroft copy, Cornell's version has been through a lot. It was written out by Lincoln months after he gave his original speech and given to historian George Bancroft. It stayed in the Bancroft family for years before bouncing around between dealers and eventually ending up at Cornell.

For a time, it had a cellophane cover. But the dealer who made the cover didn't realize that cellophane was actually damaging the prized document. Cellophane is very unstable, and within 10 to 15 years, the front of the document had experienced severe darkening.

Luckily, other factors have helped the manuscript survive.

"We're really fortunate that President Lincoln used a great quality writing paper and his formulation of ink was good," said Hamill.

To keep the paper from deteriorating any further, Cornell carefully controlling its environment and limits its exposure to light. (Those "No Flash Photography" signs are not just a suggestion.)

Since the university's copy is written on both sides of a single sheet of paper, they had to develop a special case that would allow people to view the whole text. Cornell created a custom case made out of UV-ray filtering plexiglass.

Most of the time, the document is kept in a secure storage vault that's been specially designed for rare materials. There's almost no light in the vault, and it has a steady temperature of 65 degrees Fahrenheit and 40% relative humidity. Sensors constantly monitor the vault

to keep the humidity and temperature steady.

To mark the 150th anniversary of Lincoln's speech, Cornell is putting the original on display as part of a special exhibit. But even when shown to the public, the document is kept in low light — just enough for visitors to read Lincoln's neat cursive handwriting without doing additional damage to the paper.

Advanced imaging technology also has made it possible for libraries to make extremely high-resolution digital copies of historical documents. The Cornell scan is so good that they've printed out a near replica of their Gettysburg address to occasionally keep on display in place of the original (with full disclosure, of course).

A digital copy means that people who wouldn't normally be able to make it to Cornell or the Library of Congress to see the originals in person can examine them up close online from anywhere. Researchers around the globe can do work from the digital scans without worrying about damaging a priceless artifact.

The preservation technology is even more elaborate at the Library of Congress.

To protect their two copies of the Gettysburg Address, preservationists there fabricated custom cases with gaskets that purge all of the oxygen around the document and replace it with inert argon gas. When you take away the oxygen, you take away the potential of oxidation, which can erode the delicate original material.

The argon encasements are also used for many of the older documents chronicling the founding of the United States, which are written on delicate parchment paper.

It's likely that as students continue to study "Four score and seven years



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ago," the technology used to preserve Lincoln's original documents will become even more advanced.

### Civil War painting going up for auction in NYC

The Associated Press, Nov. 19, 2013  
NEW YORK -- A painting by Sanford Robinson Gifford made while he served in the Union Army could bring as much as \$5 million at auction.

"Sunday Morning in the Camp of the Seventh Regiment near Washington, D.C., in May 1861" could set a new auction record for the Hudson River School artist on Dec. 5, Christie's auction house said. The presale estimate is \$3 million to \$5 million.

The seller is The Union League Club in New York City, which acquired it directly from the artist in 1871. It is one of four major paintings Gifford made of the Civil War as a Union soldier.

The current auction record for a Gifford work is \$2.1 million, set at Christie's in 2005 for his "Fire Island Beach."

"Sunday Morning in the Camp of the Seventh Regiment" hung in the Oval Office of the White House when it was on loan there from 1976 to 1989. The oil painting, measuring 16 inches by 30 inches, has been exhibited at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Corcoran Gallery and the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Gifford served three tours of duty in the Union Army as a member of the 8th Company of the 7th Regiment, the New York State National Guard. The regiment was among the first President Abraham Lincoln called to defend the Capitol.

The painting depicts soldiers gathered on a grassy field on the outskirts of Washington as a clergyman preaches from a podium draped with the American flag. The



Photo: Christie's Images Ltd 2013.

Capitol, the Potomac River and the unfinished Washington Monument are visible in the background.

The Union League Club is selling the work to raise funds for improvements to its landmark Park Avenue clubhouse. It was founded in 1863 to help preserve the Union. The club's contributions include helping erect the Statue of Liberty and the Lincoln Monument in Union Square. Members have included prominent civic, state and national leaders. Today it is a social club that focuses on public affairs.

### The Other Gettysburg Address

By TED WIDMER, New York Times, November 19, 2013

Even before the address was given, Americans knew that a great speech was coming, and that it would come at Gettysburg. The battle had been so comprehensive, and its result so profound, that a lasting statement

was needed to mark the burial of the dead. That the final resting place of the soldiers was in the North, conveniently close to media outlets, only added to the logic of a solemn utterance for the ages. Accordingly, an invitation went out to the person most likely to give it.

Edward Everett had spent his life preparing for this moment. If anyone could put the battle into a broad historical context, it was he. His immense erudition and his reputation as a speaker set expectations very high for the address to come. As it turned out, Americans were correct to assume that history would forever remember the words spoken on that day. But they were not to be his. As we all know, another speaker stole the limelight, and what we now call the Gettysburg Address was close to the opposite of what Everett prepared. It was barely an Address at all; simply the musings of a speaker with no command of Greek history, no polish on the stage, and barely a



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speech at all – a mere exhalation of around 270 words. Everett's first sentence, just clearing his throat, was 19 percent of that – 52 words. By the time he was finished, about 2 hours later, he had spoken more than 13,000.

The remembrance of the dead was an essential theme for Everett, already regarded as one of the great orators in American history. In Massachusetts, where he grew up, memories of the Revolutionary heroes were vivid, and the Puritan ancestors had never quite left the stage. Everett remembered them all. He remembered the Pilgrims at Plymouth, he remembered the founders of Boston, he remembered the veterans of Lexington, Concord and Bunker Hill. In a memorable triumph, he remembered Lafayette while Lafayette was still present and accounted for, in 1825, during his triumphal return visit to the States. And he journeyed South, to remember Jefferson and Madison (whom he dined with), and in particular, to remember Washington. He remembered Washington many, many times – in the late 1850s he gave his Washington speech 136 times, and in the process, helped raise nearly \$100,000 to save Mount Vernon. The very fact that we can today remember Washington so viscerally, by going to his home, owes a lot to this son of the North.

Despite the competing claims of a busy career, he obliged requests as often as possible. He lived deeply in the present, as governor of Massachusetts, congressman, president of Harvard, minister to the Court of St. James's, secretary of state and senator. But he never stopped acting as America's Oracle, channeling the spirits of the dead as Americans raced headlong into the

future. His speeches were extraordinarily popular – on one occasion in New York, he spoke in an auditorium that seated thousands, and nevertheless, a mob stormed the barricades, desperate to be admitted. But for all his achievement, Everett had never had what Pericles had: a chance to memorialize the dead, slain in a recent battle. That was the greatest opportunity it was possible to imagine for a Greek orator, especially if the battle in question had changed the course of the war, and removed a lethal threat to democracy. Suddenly, the Civil War presented such a chance.

Unsurprisingly, Everett was approached to speak at Gettysburg. He consented, and the date was set for November, to give him enough time to prepare something of an epic nature. The programs were printed, and he set to work writing a speech that would be memorized, first by him, so he could give it without notes, and then by America's schoolchildren. He immersed himself in the Greeks. He consulted deeply with local historians and military experts who told him the details of the battle. He read Lee's own account of the battle, printed in a Virginia newspaper.

Inevitably, he wrote something very long that displayed these prodigious efforts. Dutifully, he submitted it to Lincoln ahead of time. Lincoln laughed, according to a witness, Noah Brooks, and said, "Solid men of Boston, make no long orations" – a line attributed to Daniel Webster.

Of course, Lincoln would be on the bill as well. That was altogether fitting and proper, as Lincoln would say. But no one expected a major utterance from the president. That was not his role. He was not a historian. He could not read Greek, or even Latin.

Remembering his youth, so distant from the universities of the East, he wrote, "If a straggler supposed to understand Latin, happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard."

Lincoln and Everett had other differences as well. Everett ran against Lincoln in 1860, as the vice-presidential nominee on the Constitutional Union ticket, and as Lincoln came east to assume the presidency, Everett made acidulous comments in his diary about his orations: "These speeches thus far have been of the most ordinary kind, destitute of everything, not merely of felicity and grace, but of common pertinence. He is evidently a person of very inferior cast of character, wholly unequal to the crisis."

But over 1862 and 1863, they warmed to each other, and Everett gave many speeches in defense of the beleaguered president and the war effort. It only made sense, then, that Everett would get top billing. Lincoln understood, and promised that his own remarks would be "short, short, short."

When it came time to deliver the Gettysburg Address, Everett gave a brilliant performance, as all knew he would. That he was able to speak for two hours, without notes, was all the more impressive for a kidney ailment that often required him to urinate (a small tent had been placed discreetly nearby, and what he called a "pot-de-chambre" placed inside).

A diarist, Benjamin French, wrote, "Mr. Everett was listened to with breathless silence by all that immense crowd, and he had his audience in tears many times during his masterly effort." He described the battle in detail, leaving listeners rapt, and in effect telling its history for the first time. Near the end of his



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remarks, he spoke movingly of reconciliation between North and South, a thought that the victory at Gettysburg made more palatable.

Greece was in the air from the moment he started, and his opening paragraphs went into numbing detail of funerary rites in Athens. A reporter, John Russell Young, wrote, of his "antique courtly ways, fine keen eyes, the voice of singular charm." But he added, ominously, "I felt as I looked at the orator, as if he was some antique Greek statue, so ... beautiful ... but so cold!"

Still, Everett's triumph seemed complete. In his diary, Everett recorded, "After I had done the President pressed my hand with great fervor, and said "I am more than gratified. I am grateful to you."

Then Lincoln stood up, spoke his 272 words, and sat down.

The rest, as they say, is history. Some prescient observers sensed the power of Lincoln's achievement immediately. Everett was among them. The next day, he wrote to Lincoln: "I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours, as you did in two minutes." Lincoln replied gracefully.

With time, and frequent reprintings, it became obvious that Lincoln had created a lapidary masterpiece, whose brevity was not the least of its merits. He had succeeded in giving meaning to the terrible sacrifice, and repurposing the United States. He had elevated democracy, and equality, as fundamental aims of the government. And he had changed the way we talk. His 272 words were short – mostly one and two-syllables, derived from Anglo-Saxon and Norman roots, the way that Americans actually spoke. Not a lot of Greek and Latin in there.

Everett's speech was soon forgotten. He would join the ranks of the dead only a year and a half later, on Jan. 15, 1865. (In his final speech, on Jan. 9, 1865, he once again reached out to the South, urging Bostonians to send food and supplies to the people of Savannah.) Fittingly, Lincoln ordered that national obsequies be observed for a fellow traveler who had grown closer to him through their shared experience at Gettysburg. Salutes were fired from government buildings, and the White House was draped in mourning. And then Everett entered a long night of oblivion.

But perhaps it is not entirely right to remember Everett's epic address as an epic failure. To be sure, Lincoln was triumphant at Gettysburg – over the anti-democratic cause that had nearly prevailed with Lee's army, and in a way, over death itself. But not over Everett. They had worked from different points of origin toward a common goal – a point that was itself democratic. And Everett's lengthy speech was necessary for Lincoln to have the freedom to write "short, short short." Like an old vaudeville act, featuring performers of different size and shape, the long and the short of it needed to go together.