

**The Civil War Sesquicentennial in the National Parks: A New Story?**  
**Catherine A. Moore, Cultural Resources Program Manager, National Parks  
Conservation Association**

As Cultural Resources Program Manager for the National Parks Conservation Association, I am involved in my organization's efforts to protect and advocate for the National Park system. NPCA's Center for State of the Parks has conducted resource condition assessments at a number of park units that interpret the Civil War. These assessments show a trend toward a more expansive definition of the historic battlefield landscape and the Civil War story than has traditionally been adopted in park units, as park managers work to restore and protect historic vegetation, viewsheds, and soundscapes; and to interpret the stories of local residents, and of Native American, African-American, and immigrant participants. I am interested in engaging with other members of the working group and session participants to understand how this broader interpretation may intersect with changing perceptions of the Civil War, and how such connections might help to make commemoration of the Civil War relevant to a greater segment of the American public.

Tasked with the responsibility of protecting and preserving some of the most important sites related to the war, the importance of place is at the heart of the National Park Service's interpretation of the Civil War. Place has defined the story told in many park units, yet place is often narrowly construed, either by the geographic boundaries of the park or the enabling legislation that designated the reason for the park's establishment. Many of these parks were established decades ago, and in recent years, new scholarship and new pressures have combined to encourage a more expansive definition of place. Advances in technology have enabled archaeological survey and geospatial imaging that have produced more accurate maps of battlefield features. Social history has encouraged consideration of local residents whose lives were affected by a battle, and of the ordinary soldiers who fought on either side. Development encroaching on park borders has affected the visitor's experience, making it difficult to imagine the battlefield's historic sights and sounds, and bringing the concepts of viewshed and soundscape into the definition of place. The processes of commemoration and preservation themselves have also affected the definition of place. The monuments and memorials at Shiloh National Military Park have profoundly altered the sense of place from one of a battlefield to one of commemoration. Numerous battles took place on agricultural landscapes, but when those battlefields were preserved as parks, the usual decision was to exclude the historic context of working farmland and focus solely on the moment of the battle. Today that means park staff struggle to maintain the historic vegetation and appearance of the landscape without the livestock, crops, and plows that created it.

How should the National Park Service respond to these changing influences on our sense of place at parks that commemorate the Civil War? Should boundaries and interpretations be expanded to better incorporate current understandings of place? Such expansions are no simple matter; boundary changes require the approval of Congress and the cooperation of neighbors and the surrounding community, and new interpretations can be difficult for visitors to accept, especially at parks that have such a strong commemorative aspect.

How does a broader interpretation of the landscape and of the stories to be told affect the commemorative aspect of these parks? Does the inclusion of the stories of the local residents and their lives before and after the battle somehow take something away from the memory of the men who died on the battlefield? As the National Park Service works to incorporate new scholarship and new understandings into the concept of place in Civil War parks, they must contend with the impact of such changes on the commemorative aspect of the parks.

The commemorative nature of the Civil War parks illustrates one of the greatest challenges facing the National Park Service as it approaches its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. These parks were established, mostly in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to preserve a defining moment in the American story. That story has continued, however, and in the first part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, many Americans look to other defining moments to tell their version of the American story. Commemorating the Civil War as the struggle to hold a young nation together or as a “lost cause” holds little relevance for an ever-growing segment of the American people. If these parks are to maintain their importance to Americans, and thereby garner the support needed to continue to preserve them, the National Park Service must find ways to make them relevant to a broader audience. Can this be done within the context of commemoration, or must the interpretation of these parks change to include new meanings, such as the war’s role in the genesis of the Civil Rights movement?

As a historian in an organization that works to protect the national parks and ensure their preservation for future generations, I see the Civil War Sesquicentennial as a tremendous opportunity for public historians to facilitate a dialog among the American people. The Civil War parks are protected spaces that belong to all Americans, and are meant to tell the story of who we are and what matters to us: what do we want that story to be?

## **Sue Hall**

My name is Sue Hall and I am a PhD candidate in the field of Public History at the University of California, Riverside. My graduate school career has been based on three particularly important themes in the field of public history: race, collective memory, and the transformation of landscapes. My professional/practical skills as a public historian have focused on historic preservation of both built and natural landscapes such as suburban neighborhoods and Civil War battlefields. My interest in the Civil War Sesquicentennial working group stems from my dissertation research, tentatively titled “ ‘Something Terrible Happened Here:’ Battlefield Preservation and Interpretation in the Construction of Race, Place, and Nation.” In my dissertation, I examine Indian War and Civil War battlefields, efforts to preserve them over the course of the long twentieth century (1860s-present), and the changing role of race, space, and power in their commemoration, interpretation, and continued use. This past summer, I spent time conducting reports for the Historic American Buildings Survey at Antietam National Battlefield. My research of the battlefield and cemetery focused on issues of Civil War commemoration and remembrance. Since then, I have expanded my examination to include the Fredericksburg/Spotsylvania National Military Park. Along with contributing to the working

group dialogue, I hope to gain much from the discussion. Planning for the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War comes at an opportune time in my dissertation process. Participating in the working group will introduce me to topics and issues that I might not have considered otherwise.

## **NEH and the Civil War Sesquicentennial**

### **Patti Van Tuyl**

The National Endowment for the Humanities is a small independent grant-making agency of the federal government. “Our work” is done almost exclusively by individual scholars and organizations such as historical societies, universities, museums, humanities councils, libraries, and other non-profits—including state sesquicentennial commissions and National Parks’ friends groups. We rely on these organizations to come up with ideas and submit proposals for funding.

On some occasions, NEH initiates or promotes project development through special grant opportunities (requests for proposals), partnerships with other organizations, or grant supplements to extend or reissue an existing program such as a film or exhibition. Although NEH has not yet announced any intention to take special steps of these kinds to generate create programming for the Civil War sesquicentennial, the most recent NEH budget before Congress expresses the agency’s interest in funding projects related to the Civil War through fiscal year 2011. If you have an idea for a project, please contact us about submitting a proposal.

Since settling into office in September, NEH Chairman Jim Leach has launched a ***Bridging Cultures*** initiative “to help Americans understand our own rich cultural heritage, while fostering mutual respect for others both here and abroad.” Under the ***Bridging Cultures*** rubric, NEH would encourage projects that “explore the influences on American society of cultures from around the globe as well as from the myriad subcultures within its borders.” Founded on the premise that “cross-cultural understanding fosters mutual respect and civility,” ***Bridging Cultures*** projects might also “illuminate ways in which Americans have in the past approached and surmounted seemingly unbridgeable cultural divides.”

At a time when the American public is deeply polarized on so many issues, one might argue that the sesquicentennial of the Civil War presents an unparalleled opportunity to see in our own history the awful consequences of burning cultural bridges and achieving the ultimate breach in civility. In January, Chairman Leach embarked on a nationwide “civility tour,” to call attention to the dangers of hate speech and rancorous partisan attacks that echo through public discourse today. Guidelines in all NEH program areas will soon contain language encouraging applications on ***Bridging Cultures*** themes.

At this juncture, NEH’s strategy for the sesquicentennial is fairly consistent with the approach it has taken in other partnership projects pursued in our past, such as (e.g.) the American Heritage Rivers Initiative (AHRI) and the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. Joint

enterprises such as these bring together around one table people, organizations, political jurisdictions, and economic sectors with divergent interests, agendas, cultures, and values.

What does NEH bring to the table? Its financial support, its peer review process, its “good housekeeping seal of approval,” and its capacity to convene humanities scholars and practitioners. What does NEH seek to accomplish with its funds and its powers of persuasion (such as they are)?

- 1) NEH’s primary objective is to ensure the inclusion of humanities content, resources, perspectives and methodological approaches, as well as participation by humanities scholars, practitioners and organizations, in promoting and carrying out the enterprise.
- 2) NEH’s authorizing legislation declares, “The humanities belong to all the people of the United States.” From this arises our second objective, to foster nationwide access to programs by broad and diverse audiences, as well as for content and themes that are nationally significant and which reflect the diversity of the nation’s people and cultures.
- 3) Third, NEH encourages programs that have an impact on individual lives, communities, and the nation as a whole. The humanities have the capacity to “change lives,” “build community,” “bridge cultures,” and foster the kind of “wisdom and vision” required of citizens in a democracy. We need at least to aim for these outcomes.

We recognize that not all CW150 programs, events, and products will have strong humanistic content, but we want to make sure that at least some do. Ideally, at least some of these will be available across the nation in every state and region, even outside the battleground states.

We recognize the need to expand the subject-matter for the CW150 beyond battlefields, largely because there are more stories to be told—stories that involve more people and places than men on battlefields, stories that extend back in time before 1861 and forward beyond 1865, stories that still have meaning and resonance for us today. We also expect that the broader story will help attract new and larger audiences to CW150 programs.

As always, we are committed to bridging the cultures between the academy and the public, encouraging programs in which the knowledge of scholars and concerns of ordinary people encounter one another and yield deeper understanding on both sides. We also hope to foster creation of a variety of program formats that engage audiences at different levels.

We have inventoried NEH supported projects on the Civil War and identified those that are still available to the public. Between 1980 and 2009, NEH invested some \$40 million in projects related to the Civil War, its context, causes and legacy. We are now considering how to publicize the availability of these resources, and how we might re-circulate some products such as films and exhibitions that are no longer available.

One NEH-supported project currently in circulation is a panel exhibition called ***Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War***. Created by the National Constitution Center, this

exhibition examines three main constitutional challenges Abraham Lincoln faced during his presidency—the secession of the southern states, slavery, and civil liberties in a time of war. Exhibition visitors are invited to re-visit the dilemmas Lincoln faced and to consider the same issues in the context of the present day.

This program engages audiences in revisiting the issues that split the country in two in 1861, tracing the roots of those issues back to the Constitution, and seeing how, despite the Union victory and the intervening century and a half, the tensions inherent in the Constitution still do (and perhaps always will) pervade public life. Does the Sesquicentennial provide an opportunity to engage the public in reacquainting itself with the principles and history of the U.S. Constitution in order to shed light on issues that divide America today? And, in turn, might the polarization of the American public today be a “hook” for engaging a national audience in CW150 commemoration programs and activities?

As a member of this working group, I look forward to learning about the CW150 plans afoot at your organizations and sites, and hearing what you think NEH might do to help the cause.

### **“Discovering the Civil War:” Expanding the Cast of Characters**

**Bruce I. Bustard, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC**

Traditional Civil War exhibitions often focus on a narrow set of actors. Generals, political leaders, diplomats, and military heroes take up most of the space on the wall. Men—usually white men—dominate the narrative. Women—Clara Barton, Rose Greenhow, and Dorothea Dix— sometimes “spice up” the story, but are, for the most part, peripheral. The experiences of ordinary people supplement military accounts largely to illustrate the suffering of “the common soldier” or the destructiveness of war. The revolution in Civil War scholarship over the last 50 years has rendered this approach, at best quaint, and at worst, boring, confining, and inaccurate. Books, articles, films, and even Civil War reenactments reflect these new directions, but museum and archives have only recently started to incorporate them into their displays and interactive experiences. This case study focuses on how the National Archives’ upcoming “Discovering the Civil War” exhibit will include a wider “cast of characters.” It examines issues pertaining to telling the stories of groups not traditionally included in traditional chronological approaches. It asks: What techniques have the National Archives developed that allow its visitors to discover the records of men and women who were workers, slaves, deserters, guerilla fighters, and substitutes? How do these stories fit into a more contemporary synthesis of the war? Are there risks in telling such unexpected stories to visitors who may expect and desire a more traditional telling of the war?

Discovering the Civil War

The National Archives exhibit “Discovering the Civil War,” will open on April 30, 2010 in the Lawrence F. O’Brien Gallery in Washington, DC. It will be shown in two parts in Washington, DC. Part 2 will open in November 2010. After “Discovering” closes in Washington, the two parts will be combined and travel to up to eight venues around the country starting in May 2011. It will be the most extensive display ever assembled from the National Archives enormous Civil War holdings. The exhibit is organized around 12 theme areas: Breaking Apart, Raising Armies, Finding Leaders, We Were There, A Local Fight, A Global War, Spies and Conspiracies, Invention and Enterprise, Prisoners and Casualties, Emancipations, Endings and Beginnings, and Remembering. We hope that the exhibit will allow visitors to take a fresh look at the war through little-known stories, seldom-seen documents, and unusual perspectives. We also suggest visitors consider and ask questions of the evidence, and “listen to a wide variety of voices, and make up their own minds.” Each of the exhibit’s theme areas will include a display of an original document, displays of facsimile documents often enlarged, and some sort of interactive or audio/visual experience.

#### Dramatis Personae

While representing ethnic, racial, gender, geographic, and other types of diversity was only one goal of Discovering the Civil War, the exhibit team believes we have significantly enlarged upon the “cast of characters” and the types of stories told when compared to more traditional Civil War narratives. In the initial Prologue video experience, for example, visitors will meet, not a Civil War soldier, general or politician, but a modern day archivist who will suggest that this exhibit is more about examining evidence and discovering unexpected twists and turns than about chronology or facts. Once inside, visitors will be encouraged to read and ask questions about documents including a petition from women arsenal workers asking the U.S. Secretary of War to intervene with a government contractor who has cut their wages, an application for an exemption from the Confederate draft from a Georgia slave owner under the “15 slave law,” a photograph of a racially mixed U.S. navy crew, and an Interior Department report on the condition of Native Americans who were pursued by Confederate forces across Indian Territory and who were starving in Kansas.

“Discovering the Civil War’s” interactive experiences and audio components offer other examples of the teams efforts at inclusivity. The “Breaking Apart” theme area interactive explores the sectional conflict around slavery through the 1851 Christiana (Pennsylvania) Resistance, where a slave owner was killed trying to recover his “property” under the Fugitive Slave Act. Another computer interactive that focuses on an exploration of an 1863 list of substitutes, asks, “Who Were these Substitutes?” and allows visitors to discover the military careers of some of the soldiers listed. A third interactive, this one in the “Endings and Beginnings” area, investigates the lives of the newly freed men and women who lived in the Freedmen’s Village contraband settlement in Arlington, Virginia. And in “Freedom Stories” an audio station in “Emancipations” visitors can hear from African American who acted in many ways including hiding escaped Union prisoners, fleeing across Union lines, and joining the U.S. Army to secure their freedom.

Starring and Supporting Roles

These components and others make our team confident that we have included stories and experiences that museum audiences will not find other Civil War exhibits. But how well have we done at making previously unheard actors central to the story of the war? In most ways, I would argue, we have accomplished what we set out to do. "Discovering the Civil War," does not dwell on charges, flanking movements, or battlefield turning points. Instead, it brings ordinary people's experiences to the forefront, and challenges visitors to think about how these men and women experienced the war and how the choices they made are part of the larger story. In terms of exhibit space and time devoted to interactives, slavery, emancipation, and the African American experience of the war receive star status. The same is true for the space and time devoted to a variety of "ordinary" Americans ranging from an immigrant German regiment to an "alien" from New York applying for Confederate citizenship, to petitioners from Maine asking for the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Act, still on the books after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Indulging in hindsight, I think we could have told more stories from women, Native Americans, and Hispanics. These groups are certainly represented in "Discovering the Civil War," but their experiences are not explored in as much depth and there are fewer documents about them in the exhibit. This is especially true of women. While we do include a number of documents that relate to the female experience, we chose not to develop an interactive around, for example, Civil War nurses or women on the Confederate home front—topics for which there is ample documentation in the National Archives. I worry that visitors will leave our exhibit still seeing women as bit players in the larger drama of the war. This may have been a missed opportunity.

Since the exhibit won't open until April 30 it is too early to tell how visitors will respond to our approach. Will they opt for questioning and evidence over narrative and facts? Will they expect and be disappointed that we have chosen not to emphasize major military engagements? Will they connect with our larger cast of characters or wonder where the big name actors have gone? While I will admit to a sleepless night or two pondering these questions, more often than not, I think we are on the right track. Telling the same old stories with the same old actors, would have been safer, but we are betting that our visitors expect more than this. I remain convinced they want to ask questions, be surprised by new stories, and connect personally to the past.

### **Civil War to Civil Rights in California** **Benjamin Cawthra, California State University, Fullerton**

*Civil War to Civil Rights in California* (working title) is a museum exhibition that will open in 2011 at the Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum at the Fullerton Arboretum. Although I function as curator and project director, two graduate students are serving as assistant curators in order to fulfill their master's project requirements. A team of students will also fill various roles on the exhibition team.

The project will 1) emphasize the significance of California in the coming of the Civil War and in the conflict itself and 2) make a link between the unsettled issues of American

freedom and equality raised by the Civil War era with the civil rights campaigns of the mid-twentieth century, focusing on southern California.

The most important conceptual element in the exhibition will be juxtaposition. Understanding that the decades between the Civil War era and the post-World War II civil rights era contain rich and significant historical developments in the history of American freedom that deserve and have received close analysis, this project plans to make its point by boldly asking visitors to make a dramatic leap in time from one century to another (with, in all likelihood, a concise text panel to bridge the two sections). Doing justice to both sections is one major challenge the curatorial team faces. Another is to design the juxtaposition in a way that it enriches the visitor experience of both sections by putting them in creative tension with each other while keeping the comparison from appearing shallow or facile.

We are only beginning to identify the stories and the images and artifacts we might use to tell them, but one of the ways of dealing with the challenge of doing justice to these large stories is to make an appropriate use of our exhibition space, which is only about 1000 square feet. We want to make curatorial choices that will clarify the exhibition theme rather than clutter the visitor experience. We hope to make use primarily of flat items, such as reproductions of letters, posters, handbills, and photographs, allowing for a clean design, with a few objects if we are able to obtain them via loan. A second element we hope to use in both sections is audio via MP3 player or other technology. In the Civil War section, we hope to record actors reading primary documents to help tell the story of California, the Gold Rush, the controversy over statehood and slavery, and the Civil War and Reconstruction. In the second section, we hope to use oral histories collected for the CSUF Center for Oral and Public History's *A Different Shade of Orange: Voices of Orange County, California, Black Pioneers* and other oral history projects based on Mexican American and Japanese American experiences in the mid-twentieth century to describe the quest for equality in housing, education, and public accommodations in southern California. Our hope is that the combination of carefully chosen exhibition elements, oral testimony, and dramatic exhibition design will create a powerful visitor experience.

There is no question that such a concept for a Civil War commemorative public history project reflects our desire to upset traditional modes of presenting the subject. We take inspiration for rethinking the Civil War from the National Park Service and its decade-long engagement with reinterpreting the war to include the perspectives of social, economic, political, and cultural history, boldly integrating these with military history. This effort is resulting in such projects as the new visitor center exhibition at Gettysburg National Military Park. The efforts by Civil War and civil rights Park Service sites to join in commemorating the conflict has obviously inspired our working title as well. Another important inspiration is James Oliver and Lois E. Horton's collection *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory*, a volume that describes in fascinating detail the ways that slavery has been and is presented in public history forums. It is our conviction that slavery precipitated—either directly or indirectly—the major political crises of the antebellum period and remained central to the Civil War itself. It formed the basis of Confederate identity until long after victory was out of reach, and white supremacy

remained a cornerstone of Southern white identity after the war. Our belief that the deepest understanding of the Civil War's meaning is found in the African American experience of the conflict also informs our interpretation.

A question worth pondering is what all this has to do with California. The state seems remote not only from the Civil War (no actual battles were fought here, though Californians fought in the war) but from the Civil Rights movement. This is a major challenge for the project: to demonstrate the centrality of California to the national confrontations over these issues and to show how these issues animated California itself. Leonard Richards's recent *The California Gold Rush and the Coming of the Civil War* eloquently places the state in the center of the national political crisis over slavery that led to war. Excellent recent studies on southern California, including Eric Avila's *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* and Lisa McGirr's *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* describe postwar southern California as a refuge for whiteness, with prosperous Orange County in particular functioning as a kind of right-wing fantasyland. Our oral histories on the fight for fair housing in the county and other civil rights efforts in the region will, we hope, show how significant the freedom movement has been in defining a part of the country that is among the nation's most diverse.

The project, we think, gets to some of the key issues in public history. How such an exhibition will be financially developed in a challenging economic climate is something about which we are concerned. Appropriate promotion for such an exhibition is also under consideration. Trying to find ways for visitors to "make their own meaning" at the exhibition or on-line is also something we wish to discuss further. The working group's feedback on the project concept, ways of making it work for visitors, and suggestions for exhibition techniques that will enhance the idea of the show are especially welcome.

### **"Civil War to Civil Rights": Mapping History with the National Park Service** **Kati Singel, West Virginia University**

In an age when more people are navigating through the use of satellite feedback, it is important to encourage cultural heritage tourism by improving the means by which tourists identify and, more importantly, find the sites related to the history or events in which they have interest. The National Park Service Office of the Chief Information Officer currently maintains two sites dedicated to this war and its legacy: the thematic website ([www.nps.gov/civilwar](http://www.nps.gov/civilwar)) and the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System ([www.civilwar.nps.gov/](http://www.civilwar.nps.gov/)). In 2010, the NPS will launch the second version of its current Civil War thematic website in honor of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the American Civil War. The primary feature of the website will include an interactive GIS (Geographic Information Systems) tool that visitors will be able to use to plan a visit or conduct research related to the American Civil War. Through this system of "connecting the dots," this site will act as more than a road map, it will serve as a map for Civil War history on the web. Through this use of spatial data, this website will organize and link cultural resource data in a variety of formats, including data from the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, the NPS Focus Civil War Monument database, the American Battlefield Protection Program battle summaries,

the National Register nominations, among others. Through the utilization of web services, this site will allow easy searching and a better way of learning for users.

This project started with the selection of Kansas and later, Missouri as a geographic study of the border war as the anniversary of these events approached. Since 2007, the project team has completed a survey of thirty-six states through a cooperative agreement with West Virginia University. All relevant National Park Service sites, including Underground Rail Road (UGRR) sites, National Historic Trails sites and National Heritage Areas, and all Civil War Site Advisory Commission battlefields will be included on this map from each state. All other sites will be included based on the following criteria: (1) Must fall within the general theme and/or time period: 1854-1877, (2) Must be extant, (3) Must be interpreted, (4) Must be publicly accessible, (5) Must be approved for inclusion by owner, and (6) Must have verified GPS location. These criteria are implicit, but they are not fixed. This process does have the potential to serve as encouragement for communities interested in increasing heritage tourism to interpret lesser-known sites that may not initially match these criteria.

The challenge is that the majority of the sites that can be included are associated with the traditional white supremacist narrative of this war. How do you challenge the public to think critically about these lesser-known sites or the sites that no longer exist? Former slaves often lived in special camps set up by the government, or unofficial settlements near the Union armies. With the assistance of Dr. Amy Murrell Taylor (SUNY-Albany), we are working on developing a map that shows the distribution of these camps in the Eastern and Western theaters. However, these sites were temporary; therefore, few have been preserved, much less made accessible to the public. The map will be accompanied by a section that will detail the story of slavery to freedom in an effort to broaden interpretation. This is particularly important because of the centrality of the African Americans experience in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the current trend in the historiography of the American Civil War. Since 1965, historians have made an effort to revitalize the emancipationist legacy of this conflict. This shift reveals that public perception does influence historical interpretation.

In 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared “that all persons held as slaves,” within the states in rebellion, “are, and henceforward shall be free.” In 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment finally abolished slavery in the United States, and, four million African Americans were free. In the aftermath of the American Civil War, African Americans soon found that freedom remained elusive. One hundred years later, the United States Commission on Civil Rights issued a report to the President, entitled “Freedom to the Free: Century of Emancipation, 1863-1963.” They declared that “a gap between our recorded aspirations and actual practices still remains.” In the midst of their struggle for civil rights, the goal of the centennial was unity, but African Americans were excluded from this reconciliation. This year, the NPS will launch the second version of their thematic website under the title, “Civil War to Civil Rights.” This theme may serve to direct the public toward a more holistic understanding this war and its legacy beyond the battlefield.

On the anniversary of the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Civil War Centennial Commission held a ceremony at the Lincoln Memorial. They did not invite any African-American speaker to be part of the program. In contrast, the American Negro Emancipation Centennial Authority of Chicago held a separate ceremony at Lincoln's Tomb in Springfield, Illinois. The centennial was a different experience for African Americans as they fought for the freedom that Lincoln had promised them. After the centennial, the Confederate Stars and Bars endured as a symbol of white defiance in the South. Only ten years ago, the Stars and Bars flew over the South Carolina state capitol building. This commemoration did have an important legacy as it changed how scholars approached the history of the Civil War. The Civil Rights movement brought topics concerning race to the forefront of how we interpret the Civil War. Fifty years later, the challenge is to not make the same mistake twice.

A historian can say with certainty that the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on January 1, 1863, but why it was signed or its effect on the nation is more ambiguous. The legacy of the Civil War can often seem more like an opinion than a subject for historical interpretation. The interpretive scope laid out by the National Park Service for this commemoration is to interpret the war from many perspectives, military, social, economic and political, emphasizing the transition from slavery to freedom and the role of men and women, military and civilian. The theme of "Civil War to Civil Rights" is not meant to exclude the importance of the military experience or overemphasize the story of slavery to freedom. It conveys the importance of the struggle for equality for all Americans to the legacy of this conflict. The challenge for this commemoration should be to encourage the public to ask themselves the question: how does the past shape the present?

Engraved within the walls of the Lincoln Memorial are the words, "In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever." Since its dedication on May 30, 1922, the memorial has changed. Inscribed just eighteen steps down from the chamber are the words, "I have a dream. Martin Luther King, Jr., The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 28, 1963." The National Park Service added these words to the memorial in July 2003 to mark the spot where King stood when he delivered his famous speech. In the shadow of the "Great Emancipator," King was thankful to join with the crowd in the "greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation." As he spoke, King invoked the full meaning of the past and the power of the place in which he stood. In 2008, approximately 500,000 visited the Lincoln Memorial. Whether their only reason was to take a photograph or say they had been there. They wanted to stand at Lincoln's feet or stand where King stood. Heritage tourism is a ritualistic search for authenticity. Commemoration has the potential to add another dimension to their experience. Every place that honors the history of the American Civil War has the potential to invoke an understanding of its legacy.

### **Pam Sanfilippo, Historian, Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site**

The centennial of America's Civil War (1861-1865) occurred during the tumultuous years of the Civil Rights Movement. By refusing to acknowledge that this movement was a direct

consequence of the Civil War and its aftermath, the centennial celebration (as it was called) failed in several ways. First, the role of African Americans during the war and afterwards was ignored. Second, the “celebration” focused only on battlefield events and the causes and consequences of the war were disregarded. Third, the term “celebration” rather than “commemoration” highlighted the emphasis on battle reenactments, parades, ceremonies, and white reunion, rather than the issues and ideals that divided the nation. The National Park Service (NPS) was complicit in some of these failures, by focusing on battlefield preservation and acquisition, and maintaining interpretation that supported Lost Cause ideology.

Work began in the late 1990s in the NPS to expand interpretation at battlefield sites, and to include Civil War-related sites in the commemoration. Superintendents met and the “Holding the High Ground” plan was developed that was comprehensive in its recommendations for commemorating the Civil War. Unfortunately, that plan has received little attention since then, and the broad sweep that the plan painted left some parks confused as to what they should be doing.

In March 2008, a meeting was held in St. Louis, Missouri for staff in the Midwest Region of the NPS to formulate a plan as to how parks in a region not necessarily considered “important” in the Civil War might commemorate events. This meeting was followed by a larger planning group that convened in October 2008 in St. Louis. This group included not only NPS personnel, but individuals from state and local government agencies, private institutions including historical societies and universities, and members of reenactment groups. From this meeting an action plan was developed, entitled “Civil War to Civil Rights” that highlighted the important role played by the Midwest region in the antebellum years, through the Civil War and Reconstruction, and including the Civil Rights Movement. This plan included specific recommendations for collaborative efforts in commemorating the Civil War and its aftermath and for facilitating learning amongst the public to understand how the past is relevant in their lives today.

Initially the plan received wide support and the theme “Civil War to Civil Rights” was adopted by the NPS at the national level. However, recent developments have dropped the words “civil rights” from the title, and also suggested revising references to the word “slavery” in the national plan, fearing that these words might offend certain audiences and incite more disagreement than opportunities for learning.

It is incomprehensible to me, in 2010, that this type of discussion is even taking place. While I recognize the complexity of discussing these issues, and the emotional reactions individuals might have, I think we have an obligation to bring these issues to the forefront. We should spend more time on how we might approach these difficult discussions through civic engagement rather than trying to avoid them which only perpetuates the problems. One has only to read Robert Cook’s *Troubled Commemoration* to know that avoidance during the centennial of the Civil War makes it imperative to not repeat the mistakes made during that pivotal time in our nation’s history.

One of the advantages that we have today is that many of the sites that commemorate the struggles of African Americans are now historic sites and museums both within the NPS and outside. Sites such as Central High School in Little Rock, AR, Brown v. Board in Topeka, KS, Nicodemus in Kansas, Frederick Douglass, etc., are anxious and willing to share with wider audiences the connection between the Civil War and their sites that they have known all along. These sites can help steer the commemoration so that a richer story is told but they need the support of other sites, including battlefields, as well.

One noteworthy change has occurred since the Centennial of the Civil War that has impacted many commemorations since. That is the use of the word commemoration rather than celebration. While it may seem subtle, it has been especially important in events such as the Lewis & Clark Bicentennial, and enriched the story by including the encounters between the Corps of Discovery and the native peoples. Had the focus remained on a celebration of whites and what they “discovered,” the events would not have been as good, and American Indians would have raised a justifiable outcry.

The challenge does not seem to be in the willingness of many individuals and organizations to expand the story of the importance of the Civil War and its aftermath, but in how to implement such a commemoration at a time when the economy is so weak. Historical societies, museums, and the NPS are all facing cuts in funding regardless of whether they are government or privately run. The goal of any type of commemoration should be to facilitate learning, encourage people to be engaged, and to develop a sense of how the event being commemorated relates to them. Perhaps we should take a lesson from the education field, which has seemingly always struggled for funding, yet managed to provide services to all.

While we in the Midwest Region of the NPS have not received funding to implement many of the projects planned for the commemoration, we are moving forward and working in partnership with many other organizations and individuals to bring these ideas to fruition and achieve our goals.

### **William Stoutamire**

Although I am relatively new to the study of Civil War memory, having only one year’s experience as a doctoral student in public history at Arizona State University, I feel that my unique position as a scholar on Civil War memory in the American Southwest has the potential to broaden the perspective and challenge the assumptions of this important working group. Much of what I will bring to this group will be derived from my research in Arizona, primarily my article “From North to South, out West: Civil War Memory in Arizona,” which is due to be published by the *Journal of Arizona History* in Autumn, 2010.

For one, I would like to present a brief case study of the Civil War Centennial in the Southwest, which I believe raises a number of important issues regarding memory and identity, and challenges to the same. Like in the Southeast, Arizona’s commemoration of the conflict’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary was dominated by a pro-Confederate, Lost Cause interpretation. Considering that

more than half of the members of the centennial planning committee were also members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, including the committee's chair, this is not at all surprising. Among the commemorative activities held between 1961 and 1965 were the following:

- A reenactment of an 1859 bloodless duel between two citizens of Tubac, AZ, which local papers claimed to be the first shots of the Civil War.
- The flying of the Confederate battle flag (which never flew in Arizona) in place of the Arizona state flag on top of the state capitol for one day.
- The dedication of a monument to Arizona's "Confederate veterans" in the state's monument park.
- A reenactment of the "Battle of Picacho Pass," which historically had 24 participants, and three casualties.
- The dedication of a marker at Picacho Pass State Park to the 150 Confederate troops who invaded Arizona in late 1861.

This case study, I believe, reveals the transplanted and expanded nature of Civil War memory in the present United States. We, as historians involved in planning for the sesquicentennial of the conflict, must always remain aware of the fact that veterans and their decedents spread throughout the country in the last 150 years. The South is not the only bastion of Lost Cause mythology.

This raises an important point: as we move towards 2011, we must not constrain our focus to the traditional Confederate and Union states. Annual reenactments, led by members of Union and Confederate heritage organizations, occur throughout the West - notably in California, Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. If historians do not engage in sesquicentennial planning in these regions, I fear that the Lost Cause interpretation of the conflict will again be allowed to prevail. We need scholars to provide a tempered and historically grounded interpretation of the Civil War in the West, so as to avoid the mistakes made nearly fifty years ago.

A Western perspective on the Civil War and its memorialization might also challenge historians to consider the ethnic diversity of the conflict, moving beyond a simple white/black dichotomy. In Arizona, for instance, African Americans were the territory's fourth largest demographic in the 1860 census, trailing far behind the region's Anglo, Mexican, and American Indian populations. Although Arizona's current SCV is reluctant to admit it, many of the state's "Confederate" troops and sympathizers were either of Mexican or mixed descent. These groups remain absent from the whitewashed narrative of the Civil War in Arizona and should be incorporated in future commemorative activities. The same might be said for immigrant and African-American troops and their descendents in the Eastern United States.

Lastly, I hope that this working group will allow us to consider the difficulties inherent in attempts to work amidst the memories of Union and Confederate heritage organizations, as well as the ever-present Civil War buff. As our primary audience, we cannot leave these individuals out of commemorative activities altogether, so we must remain constantly aware of the fact that we may be treading on long-held memories and personal identities. I do not know the solution to this conundrum, but I hope that this working group will encourage us all to proceed carefully as we plan our commemorations for 2011 and beyond.

## **Continuing Conversations/Bearing the Standard: Public Historians Role in the Commemorations of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War; The Importance of Place in Commemoration.**

**January M. Ruck**

The sesquicentennial of the American Civil War offers public historians and their audiences a singular opportunity to commemorate an event that forever changed the United States and its citizens. In addition, and maybe more relevantly, it also offers an opportunity for communities throughout the country to discuss why and how the places where this history happened should be protected.

Two years ago, when I started working as a Historic Preservation Specialist for the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), it actually wasn't the landscapes that impressed me most – it was how people *felt* about them. Preservation professionals from a variety of disciplines, scholars from universities and research foundations, the members of non-profit preservation groups, planners from state, tribal, and county governments, and concerned citizens all expressed intense commitment to protecting the battlefields in their communities from the sprawl of modern development. This is why, when I consider what role public historians should have in commemorating the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, I think it must have something to do with identifying and preserving battlefield landscapes.

Certainly, the term “commemoration” applies to erecting monuments or gathering for memorial ceremonies, but a much wider variety of activities can serve to honor significant events in our nation's history. Activities that help communities discover the historic significance of the places where they live, and protect them, may be the most meaningful of all. Historic research, cultural resource inventories, archeological surveys, GIS mapping, National Register nominations, preservation planning, and site interpretation – all of these activities can be funded through ABPP's battlefield preservation project grants, and all are worth considering as part of Civil War sesquicentennial commemoration efforts.<sup>1</sup>

In some communities, the topic of landscape preservation is threatening. Concern about property rights infringement mixed with the daunting scope of many battlefields (the historic boundaries of some span thousands of acres) can deter efforts to undertake inventory, survey, mapping, documentation, planning, and interpretation projects. However, these challenging issues also offer great opportunities for public historians! Preservation – especially when it applies to large landscapes – depends on the establishment of buy-in from community stakeholders. Building this support can sometimes be difficult, but when historians share their passion for the history of these places and thereby give meaning to them, they inspire neighbors and business owners to

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<sup>1</sup> For additional details about the ABPP battlefield preservation planning project grants, eligibility, and application guidelines please visit <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/grants/battlefieldgrants/2010grants.htm>

become stewards. An event such as the Civil War Sesquicentennial provides a perfect reason to hold the public meetings that give venue to these productive conversations.

In the past, ABPP has encouraged its grantees to adopt an interdisciplinary approach to completing their projects. When historians connect their research with the field investigations of archeologists and geographers, and the theory of preservation planners, the whole is far greater than the sum of parts. Efforts by public historians to articulate the meaning and significance of historic events, and to connect those events to real places, provide an essential first step toward identifying the boundaries of a battlefield, and garnering the public interest required to defend those boundaries from development pressures. This approach may challenge historians to expand beyond their traditional job descriptions, and it may require a greater degree of cooperation among professionals than some individuals find comfortable, but giving history a physical context – whether it be agricultural fields, forest, swamp or town streets – provides an opportunity to discuss history in a more complete way. While Civil War Sesquicentennial commemoration efforts will likely appeal to those who are interested in military history, there is potential for wider appeal when a preserved landscape is the illustrative artifact. Audiences will want to know about the strategy of generals, but they may also wonder about the civilian activities that took place on the land before and after battle. With terrain upon which to anchor history, even the topic of how the landscape itself was preserved becomes a theme for interpretation.

The importance of place in commemoration becomes especially obvious when comparing the preserved to the destroyed. Imagine the difference between learning about a critical troop position from an interpretive sign posted in front of a gas station and mini-mart, once the site of six blazing artillery pieces, and a sign posted next to a farm field, still covered with nothing more than crop rows similar to those seen on the day of battle. Still more dramatic is the thought of signage that includes a historic photograph illustrating the viewshed as it was seen, or made, by the combatants. How much more evocative is a device that asks the rhetorical questions – How has this place changed? Can you see what those who fought and died here also saw? How does that make you feel?

**Civil War Commemoration in a Hoped-for National Maritime Heritage Area  
Lorraine McConaghy, Historian at the Museum of History & Industry, in Seattle  
Lecturer in Museum Studies at the University of Washington**

In preparing this case statement, I interviewed two consultants who developed the draft feasibility study and the proposal soon to be filed for consideration to create a National Maritime Heritage District in Washington State on Puget Sound, the Strait of Juan de Fuca, and the coastline south to Gray's Harbor. I also interviewed one of the regional National Park Service historians, the director of the Center for Wooden Boats in Seattle and the director of the Washington Trust, which would become the District management lead.

No one really *discouraged* my pursuit of this case statement in our working group. The most encouraging was the NPS historian, who was kind enough to call the linkage of the Civil War sesquicentennial with the new Maritime Heritage Area a “brilliant connection.” However, her emphasis, like mine, was more on the exciting stories and the education and interpretation they make possible than on the feet-on-the-ground practicalities – however, even she pointed out that there actually might be very few practical advantages in pursuing the linkage. Others were more reserved about this proposal, citing the realities of a startup Heritage Area. And that is the heart of my question, in this case statement.

Let me first turn to three stories that weave together Civil War history in Washington Territory with maritime history in the Pacific Northwest.

First, there is a maritime heritage story about the territory’s ordinary, everyday life during the Civil War, and its dependence on waterborne transportation. Although Washington Territory’s first military road was surveyed between Forts Steilacoom and Bellingham in 1860, its construction was not completed until well after the war. During the period 1860-1865, the principal pathways for people and cargo in western Washington, and between Washington Territory and other ports, criss-crossed and originated on Puget Sound, the Strait and the coast. Native canoes, small schooners and steamers, and larger brigs, sloops and steamships created an intricate waterborne network of communication and transportation, but also linked Washington Territory to Victoria, the Sandwich Islands, Canton, Melbourne, Panama and San Francisco. The irregular arrival of the San Francisco steamer at Olympia, WT, brought mail and two-weeks-old newspapers from the eastern states via Panama but also carried *everything* else, from candles to calico, rifles to rum, *Great Expectations* to abolitionist hymnals. Then, from Olympia, the fleet of smaller vessels and overland freight companies distributed all this to dozens of logging camps, lumber mills, Native reservations, coal ports, mining sites, and so on, throughout the western territory.

Second, there is a maritime heritage story about a fugitive slave in Washington Territory. The slave Charles Mitchell fled the Tilton family in Olympia, capital of the territory, on September 24, 1860, stowing away on board the international mail steamer *Eliza Anderson*. Mitchell had been recruited by Black men from Victoria, conductors of a Puget Sound underground railroad, who planned an elaborate scheme to spirit him to the free soil of the Crown Colony. The *Eliza Anderson’s* cook was one of the conductors, who risked his freedom and livelihood to help the fugitive hide on the steamer for the two-day trip north. Discovered en route by the steamer’s captain, Mitchell was imprisoned on board, to be returned to his master in the spirit of the Dred Scott decision and the Fugitive Slave Act. But Mitchell was seized from the ship by Victoria authorities despite the captain’s heated protests, provoking a minor international incident. After a court hearing in Victoria, Mitchell walked into freedom. Back in Washington Territory, the editor of the Steilacoom *Puget Sound Herald* remarked thoughtfully, “Our proximity to the British Possessions on this Coast afford the same facilities to an underground railroad that the Canadas do on the Atlantic.” We know about Charles Mitchell; what other slaves followed a maritime underground railroad from or through the territory, to Victoria?

Third, there is a maritime heritage story about the Civil War at sea and in Puget Sound. The Confederate States Navy steam warships Alabama and Shenandoah cruised in the Pacific Ocean, and territorial newspapers reported (erroneous) local sightings of each, as well as scenarios of the destruction each would unleash in Washington Territory. Confederate agents and Knights of the Golden Circle tried to purchase steamers in Portland, Oregon, as well as Victoria, to arm for use as coastwise cruisers in a variety of schemes. The most famous is the effort of KGC Asbury Harpending to purchase a ship in the Pacific Northwest to capture a San Francisco steamer bound for Panama with a large shipment of gold dust and transport the treasure to the Confederacy. However, the efforts of the pro-Confederate officers of the Puget Sound revenue steamer *Shubrick* to seize the ship comprise a less well-known, local story that highlights the deep divisions among Americans living in this far northwestern colony of the United States. Finally, the Civil War visits of the overworked warships of the U.S. Pacific Squadron to the waters of Washington Territory have received little attention. On the heels of naval involvement in the “Pig War” against Great Britain on San Juan Island, the first warship to be built at San Francisco’s Mare Island Naval Shipyard was the *Saginaw* which along with the *Narragansett* and others cruised the Pacific Northwest to discourage Confederate incursions, as well as the seaborne raids of northern Indians from the Inside Passage and the much-feared British invasion of Puget Sound in Royal Navy ships, taking advantage of the weakened ability of the United States to protect Washington Territory, during the Civil War.

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I can make a strong case for the stories that fold a National Maritime Heritage Area together with the sesquicentennial of the Civil War in Washington Territory. However that is only one partial leg of the three-legged stool of Heritage Area success. The full resources leg includes stories, ships, sites and structures. As things stand, the partners in the potential National Maritime Heritage Area maintain no vessels that date to the Civil War, except for Native canoes. Additionally, there are few places that invite site-specific interpretation for the 1860s – one is Percival Landing, in Olympia, where fugitive slave Charles Mitchell stowed away on board the international mail steamer. In sum, there are very few sites, no structures, no ships and few artifacts.

So my first question for our working group addresses the Resources leg: how can we engage residents and visitors to the National Maritime Heritage Area in the rich and invisible stories of the territorial Civil War on the water, that cannot be objectified? Can the means be effective, inexpensive, imaginative, engaging, and advance the success of the Area?

My second question for our working group addresses the other two legs of a successful and sustainable National Maritime Heritage Area: strong public local and regional support and the capacity for ongoing management, including funding and cooperation among maritime heritage organizations across the region. Does the sesquicentennial commemoration offer opportunities to improve these basic practicalities, essential to Area success?

In the end, might the Civil War commemoration be a distraction from the real resources and real challenges of the brand new National Maritime Heritage Area? Should I abandon the effort to force a synergy?