Civil War Case Statements

Sesquicentennial Working Group Case Statement
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Perhaps the central question that should be asked about the Sesquicentennial is "why should we do this at all, why remember the Civil War?" There are some obvious answers to that question. The Civil War was the bloodiest conflict in American history, and it took place almost entirely within the continental United States. That alone would make it worthy of remembrance. But perhaps the most important reason we remember the Civil War is because, more than almost any other event other than the Revolution itself, the Civil War was a conflict over how the United States saw itself. The war dealt with issues fundamental to the American experience, including issues of race, class and opportunity that are still relevant today.

As an Historical Interpreter, my primary experience in dealing with the remembrance of the Civil War comes with my direct contact with the general public, most of whom visit President Lincoln's Cottage as tourists. The experience of leading tours and answering questions from visitors has allowed me to appreciate the widespread interest people have to learn about the Civil War and, in my particular case, President Lincoln, and at the same time has led me to understand what areas of knowledge that the public appears unaware of or in need of better information.

One of the hardest things for visitors to the Cottage to understand about the Civil War is the sheer magnitude of the conflict. In today's America, the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in spite of our means of instant communication, seems much more distant to average Americans than the Civil War did to their ancestors 150 years ago. This can be easily seen in basic statistics: the casualties from the Civil War, when taken as a percentage of the population, account for about 2% of the total population of the United States, whereas the American casualties from the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan account for .002% of today's population. But the magnitude of the Civil War goes beyond numbers. One way of

exploring the personal side of the war is by asking the public to help in that exploration. We could encourage the descendants of Civil War veterans to gather as much information as possible about their relatives and to enter this material into a website that would fill out the bare bones information already available with stories of a more personal nature. The Civil War affected every part of American society and life, even changing the way Americans viewed their own country, and hearing from individuals themselves who experienced that change can make it come alive for people today.

The Civil War is an event in our history that can be used to explain both the fundamental ideals and the complexity of the American nation. This is particularly true when looking at the issue of slavery and emancipation. When talking with visitors at President Lincoln's Cottage about the issue of slavery and, in particular, the Emancipation Proclamation, I have heard various preconceived notions about the proclamation. On the one hand, there are those who believe that the Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves and therefore that's all they need know; on the other hand, there are those who argue the Emancipation Proclamation did very little to free the slaves, since Lincoln's act affected only those areas outside of federal control. What we try to express at the Cottage is an interpretation of the Proclamation as a crucial first step on the road to emancipation, while at the same time acknowledging that it was also a product of its moment, carefully crafted to meet the political, military, and constitutional issues that lay before President Lincoln in 1862. It is that kind of complexity that should be a part of the Sesquicentennial commemoration.

In order to understand the many complexities involved in remembering the Civil War, it is useful to look back at past commemorations. When the Centennial of the Civil War began to be commemorated in 1961, it almost immediately became influenced by the social and political issues of the era. Both the Civil Rights struggle and the southern push-back against it threatened to disrupt the remembrance of the Civil War. But the question of civil rights was not the only way politics came to complicate the commemoration. There were many who wanted

to use the Centennial celebration as a way of reaffirming American patriotism in the context of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. Consequently, the complex and often divisive issues that are a part of our Civil War history were ignored or downplayed in favor of the themes of unity and patriotism. The combination of controversies over civil rights and a simplifying of Civil War issues led to a Centennial celebration that quickly became an afterthought for most Americans.

The history of the Centennial celebration itself should help us in planning the Sesquicentennial as it will remind us to address the current political issues and competing cultural narratives. In America today, the controversy over the sweeping changes brought about Civil Rights movement is not as central to a commemoration of the Civil War as it was in the 1960s, but there areas of controversy that could impact the remembrance of the Civil War. A good example of this is the issue of immigration. There are those who could see the Civil War as a example of a culture and history shared only by those whose time in this country has been much longer than that of more recent immigrants, particularly those from Central and South America, and they might be tempted to use the Civil War as a dividing line in American society. This would provide a good opportunity for Sesquicentennial participants to stress the importance of immigration in the Civil War, which includes a consideration of such matters as the New York draft riots and the foreign-born enlistment in the Union armies.

The Sesquicentennial of the Civil War could provide Americans an opportunity to discuss the various cultural and social issues that are still central to life in the United States. While it is true that the divisiveness of the civil rights era has, to an extent, passed, there still remains issues of race and inequality that could be discussed as part of our commemoration of the Civil War. For example, the Smithsonian's American History Museum celebrated the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth by holding a series of discussions that looked at issues from Lincoln's presidency and compared them to modern issues and debates. Discussions or lectures such as these could be beneficial both in allowing Americans a new opportunity to

debate issues of the day but also to raise public interest in the commemoration of the Civil War.

The opportunity that the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War provides us from a public history standpoint is one of great challenge and complexity. The events and activities that we decide to connect to the Sesquicentennial should both exhibit awareness of the historical context of the Civil War and its aftermath and at the same time create a link between the Civil War and the political and social issues of today's America.

“Our War:” Civil War Commemoration and American Identity in Upstate New York.

Peter A. Bunten
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A study I conducted recently examines questions of Civil War memory from a local and personal perspective. It used established themes of Civil War commemoration to investigate to what extent they remain operative in Civil War commemoration. The investigation was conducted using oral interviews with residents of Ulster and Greene counties in New York State; all the participants are engaged in Civil War commemoration.

The two counties chosen for this study were selected for a variety of reasons. New York State was the leader in the Union effort during the war. The two counties (situated about 90 miles north of New York City) have a long and rich history, and promote it through historical societies, genealogical societies, and various museums. The counties boast a wide variety of Civil War commemorative activities and organizations, from reenacting groups to living historians, a Civil War Round Table to multi-day community heritage events. The people chosen as interviewees have been active in various Civil War commemorative activities within and/or emanating from Ulster County and Greene County, New York. Most have ancestors who fought for either North or South, some with ancestors on both sides, and one whose ancestors were slaves. Importantly, there is only African-American participant at most of the Ulster-Greene activities.

The interview responses reflect many of the commemorative themes that developed in the post-war decades of the nineteenth century. Themes of battlefield valor, nationalism, patriotism, the Lost Cause, the unfinished promise of emancipation – all emerge. There are other themes, as well, including a strong anti-war sentiment. By interacting with the public, they also become teachers, both bringing history to the public and drawing people to history.

Commemorations in Ulster-Greene reveal a strong link between the war and identity. Identity is evinced in one of two ways. It can be communal. There is a community of reenactors

and living historians, learning from each other and appearing together, reinforcing their avocation. A reinforcement of civic values is at play here. The link between the war and identity is also strongly evident on a personal level. Commemorators use artifacts from the war – guns, swords, letters – as a kind of personal talisman, revealing some mystery of the Civil War and connecting the commemorator with (what he/she sees as) the war's deepest meaning. The commemorators also promote their identity as worthy historians, who do their own research and who are not beholden to what they (somewhat disparagingly) describe as "experts". These individual and collective engagements with the war coalesce into a concept called 'our war,' a perfect mix of identity and history.

While the concept of "our war" rings of unity, it in fact has multiple meanings. Several commemorators are content to focus on the battlefields and soldier valor. For them, the issues of the war take second place, and both Confederate and Union soldiers deserve equal glory and honor. Others emphasize the broader cultural aspects of society surrounding the Civil War period, seeking, for example, to promote understanding of the impact of the war on the home front, and the role of women. A third trend counters these with an emancipationist view of the war. Rather than looking back at the cost of the war and soldier valor, this view looks forward from the war, and promotes the gains African-Americans have made since emancipation. The racial divide in Ulster-Greene commemorations is stark: there are no whites participating in the emancipationist activities, and normally only one African American participating in the overall commemorative programs.

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The Ulster-Greene community sees challenges confronting their commemoration, and many worry about the future of their activities. None of the participants sees audience interest or participation growing. Overall, commemorators say, reenacting and living history "is in trouble big time." What is causing these concerns? Ulster-Greene participants identified several factors,

perhaps no one of which by itself could undermine the community. Two reasons are common to any commemorative activity. The Civil War, big as it is, is only one part of the history of the United States, so at best there is only a (more or less) small pool of people who would ever be interested in the war. Coupled with that is the passage of time. The war is now one hundred and fifty years in the past and “the solvent of time” causes a natural erosion of interest. Others suggest that a wider concern with global issues may be draining interest from national history.

Most immediately there is the demographic of the Ulster-Greene group. Most commemorators are baby-boomers, approaching or at retirement age and therefore less inclined to continue their activities far into the future. Several Ulster-Greene commemorators suggested that their own participation would wind down with the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary. Some identify growing government restrictions on who can participate in military reenactments, and on how those reenactments must be carried out. For example, age restrictions may limit participation by younger people who might be interested. One commemorator noted that his children can handle a gun for hunting at age eleven, but they must wait till age sixteen before being allowed to handle a gun in a reenactment. State restrictions on the waiting time between firing successive cannon shots can discourage some artillery reenactment units from traveling to events.

Though a few young people seem to be drawn to these types of activities, none of the Ulster-Greene commemorators see a significant interest from them. Another hurdle to involvement is cost, as reenactment and living history events are expensive. And there is a cost in time – preparation, travel, and duration of stay. Lastly, according to some, the reenacting and living history community shares some of the blame for the poor outlook. The community has not done enough to reach out to either adults or children. It is also overwhelmingly white, and little or no effort has been made to appeal to African Americans.

All these changes seem to reflect the desire for a different memory of the war, which in turn will call for a different commemoration. It may be that many of the existing commemorations (both within and outside Ulster-Greene) have shaped a sense of the war's meaning that is no longer meaningful. An evolving America creates a new identity and will seek commemorations to sustain it. 'Our war' will have a different meaning in tomorrow's America.

If the sesquicentennial of the war is to be successful, it must grapple with the variety of memories of the war, and especially how to address the racial divide in the understanding of the war and how it is commemorated. Many of the Ulster-Greene commemorators do acknowledge that the traditional emphasis on battles and soldiers has been overdone, and needs to be supplemented with programs which educate the public about the bigger issues of the war – pre-war causes, slavery, etc., and post-war societal advances as well as the continued deferring of the promise of emancipation for African-Americans.

[Notes supporting this essay are available on request.]

Civil War Working Group NCPH Pensacola, Florida, 2011 Case Statements
Rachael Finch
Middle Tennessee State University

The American Civil War was arguably our county's darkest hour. It redefined our history, pitted brother against brother, turned families into foes, Americans against Americans and consumed the landscape of the nation for four years and extinguished over 600,000 lives. The time has come for our shared histories during this pivotal time in our past to fully be recognized, preserved, and interpreted to the public.

The Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War has arrived with unparalleled opportunities. Public historians have the unique ability to invest themselves within their local civil war preservation communities, and form solid state, federal, and private partnerships to incorporate the whole story of our American Civil War, whether it is a national military park, a private historic house museum, or a threatened battlefield landscape. The Sesquicentennial is not a celebration, but rather, a humble remembrance commemorating the death and hardships of men and women of both sides, freed and enslaved, from our history. As such, it is imperative to remember the Civil War story extended beyond the battlefields and struck a chord at the very fabric of our nation; its people.

The planned events for the next four years, I imagine, will vary state to state. The state of Tennessee is the only state in the nation designated as a National Heritage Area and is administered through Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Historic Preservation. As a graduate research assistan, I have worked on multiple Civil War projects in Middle Tennessee and recognize the impact the Heritage Area has on the state. The Tennessee Civil War National Heritage Area serves the Sesquicentennial Commission and planned the recent Signature Kickoff Event November 12-13, 2010. The event incorporated multiple facets of public speakers, reenactments on the Bicentennial Mall, educational seminars for teachers, and a lecture/symposium that consisted of several academic scholars of the Civil War. The event

served as the launching pad for the next four years of the Civil War commemoration throughout the state of Tennessee. By covering different aspects of the Civil War in Tennessee, its causes and effects, this will allow Signature Events to be held all over the state, and will give the opportunity for our shared histories to reach a broader audience. But, these events would not be possible if the Tennessee Civil War communities did not have strong partnerships formed from years of hard work between academia, the state, and local communities. I believe public historians, during the Sesquicentennial, should continue to encourage strong leadership, economic development, preservation and ongoing interpretation of historic sites at all levels throughout their states.

Public programming should not consist of just the reenactments of battles. The state of Tennessee plans to educate the public on the occupation of Tennessee by Confederate and Federal troops, emancipation and slavery, the fall of Middle Tennessee and desolation of the landscape, and Reconstruction. Provoking thought and critical thinking to our audience must be the challenge for not just the state of Tennessee but all public historians working to communicate our Civil War story to the public. We will be judged not by what we did but by how we did it and why. Looking back at the Centennial, the United States was marred by segregation in the Deep South, had fought in two World Wars, Korea, and the beginnings of Vietnam. The focus at that time, I believe, was a continued celebration of the Lost Cause, and lacked a true 'American' national identity. The Centennial failed to provide any type of educational programming that incorporated shared histories of the common soldiers, women, and the African American experience. What was shared and displayed was a narrowed sectionalized vision of the 'top down' approach of viewing history, rather than a critical examination from the 'bottom up'. In doing so, those that partook in the Centennial experienced what they 'thought' was a remembrance of their ancestors, and if anything, it was a far cry from it because it failed to tell the whole story of our *shared histories*.

Today, public historians have the ability to reconcile the memories of the 'top down' approach by encouraging and including the entire public to partake in the Sesquicentennial events throughout each state, and bring to bear issues historians and the public have yet to fully convey: slavery, death, destruction, and reconstruction of our nation. I believe public historians must encourage open and candid dialogue on tough subject matters in an educational setting, put aside the Lost Cause mentality, and provide new interactive technology, such as GIS or GPS phone applications for battlefields and make technological interactive improvements within museums.

The theme of "Civil War to Civil Rights" does not allow for a continuation of shared histories. Why a theme that ends with Civil Rights? If anything, it may hinder educational programming and lessen public historians' abilities to foster a lasting legacy on the causes and effects of the war. As the 21st century has opened, I believe there has been a re-examination of military parks and their interpretive direction. This has had a distinct impact on historic sites and house museums with new scholarship brought to bear since the Centennial of the Civil War; particularly with slavery, home front, Emancipation, and Reconstruction. Interpretation does not revolve simply around military transactions and memorialization, but rather, the interaction of local men, women, and enslaved or freed African Americans with the events of the battle, prior to, during and after. Implementing best practices will enhance the authenticity, accessibility and attractiveness of Civil War historic sites and will cultivate an appreciation for ongoing preservation efforts, fostering a desire for the public to (hopefully) become a part of preserving their past.

The histories to be told, I believe are not ours to pick and choose, but to share, in their entirety with the public. The public historians' job is to not fear or shy away from what history was but to make it part of our everyday lives and to preserve, interpret and communicate the past to the public. Interest in the Civil War, I believe is not lacking, it's just not reaching the

broader audience: the next generation. Over the past year public historians have realized younger generations are computer savvy and possess the ability to critically analyze multiple points of view. Technology has exposed younger generations to the ever expanding world. Public historians must meet the demands of an ever changing-fast paced society by digitizing images, providing new research and accessible information on the internet, and encouraging historic sites to expand and incorporate new interpretations of shared histories into their stories for the 21st century.

With the goal of engaging the public, a transformation of Civil War preservation and interpretation strategies must occur. How public historians and preservationists handle topics such as slavery and reconstruction are critical and may change public attitudes toward the importance and significance of ongoing preservation activities, lending credibility and viability to current and future legacies.

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During the 150th anniversary historians have been asked to include a broader audience in the commemoration. We often think of this in terms of race and gender, but it is also important to think of this in terms of age. While schools can be a tough nut to crack, it is imperative that we make our best efforts to reach teachers and students. It is also necessary to develop family programs that will educate and engage all members of the family. Students are currently receiving a weak or non-existent education on the Civil War; with the anniversary we have the opportunity to establish an interest in this period of history.

Having received my grade school education in New York and Massachusetts, I use myself as an example of how the Civil War is taught in the US at the grade school level.

While reading *Confederates in the Attic* in one of my graduate classes I chuckled at the characters Horwitz found and thought that he must have had to look hard for these individuals, literally searching the attics and basements of rural Southern homes. Being an upstate New Yorker, a descendent of immigrants, and now a resident of Northern Virginia (which everyone will tell you isn't Virginia) I thought that the war was long over. The North had won, slaves had been freed, Lincoln was great, so forth and so on. That's what we were taught in school.

Having no interest in Civil War history, I did not take undergraduate or graduate course on the topic even though I studied American history. As fate would have it, I found a job where my lone purpose would be to educate people on the American Civil War.

How does this happen? How does a historian in American history have no background in the American Civil War? Given my early experience with the topic; unfortunately, this is quite possible.

Often the first time students encounter history, as opposed to social studies, is through state history, which is focused on the study of local and state history. While almost all states

had some involvement in the Civil War if a state decides that the Civil War was not an important part of its history, then it will be left out of the curriculum.

The next opportunity for students to encounter Civil War history occurs in middle school with an early American history course focused on everything up to the end of the Civil War. Since the Civil War is last, behind the explorers, the Declaration of Independence, the Revolution, and the Constitution, it is often covered in 50 minutes or less. Finally, the students may have one more chance to learn about the Civil War in high school, but it is often taught in the same pattern as middle school, with the Civil War being the last topic of the course.

In states where battles did not take place; there are no battlefields, re-enactments, or Civil War sites to visit through which students can learn from living or public historians. While there were plenty of trips to the colonial village in town, we never took a trip to a Civil War site; they were just too far away.

New York did fight in the war and of course, was very involved. A regiment from my area, the Onondagas, even fought at Gettysburg. However, we never learned about our connection to the war either because it did not fit into the curriculum or because my teachers lacked the resources necessary to access this information.

As we approach the commemoration, it is necessary to think about how we can bring the history of the Civil War to k12 students. From my personal and teaching experience, I know that there is limited opportunity for students outside of “battle” states and only slightly better opportunities for students in “battle” states.

Many states are currently funding their Sesquicentennial Commissions through their tourism budget leaving out the k12 sphere, which is unfortunate, considering that the states are the entities controlling the k12 curriculum. Programs tend to take place during the work day or later in the evening and rather than being family oriented, they are developed for adults. In

addition, many Civil War sites and organizations are apprehensive about k12 or family programming, lacking the staff or expertise to put together programs for this audience.

To bring the Civil War into the k12 classroom Civil War sites and organizations need to acquaint themselves with their state learning standards. One group I am working with is holding a free course for all the local Civil War sites on how to develop programs around the state standards. By aligning programs and resources, such as lesson plans and field trips, with the standards teachers can easily identify the materials or programs that will fit into their curriculum.

Sites and organizations should also consider ways to bring themselves into the classroom either through online resources, traveling exhibitions, or classroom visitor programs. Providing an easy way for teachers to bring the Civil War into the classroom means they will be more likely to teach it. I think more of my teachers would have taught the Civil War if they had known about the area regiment, but unfortunately, the online databases they we have today just weren't available.

During the weekends and over the summer family programs should be offered. These can be advertised through school flyers, local parenting websites, or newspapers. The programs should provide items of interest to the whole family including living history, kid-friendly tours, 'please' touch artifact activities, connections to local Civil War history, and creative opportunities. Kids and families should be encouraged to interact with the history, making personal connections with objects, people, and places from the Civil War.

When we think about this commemoration, our goal should be to engage all Americans in the history of the war, especially children since they will be the shapers of our future commemorations and shared memory. In order to do this Americans need to learn and discuss the basics (when, where, why, who), develop a personal interest in the history, and develop an

understanding of how the war affects us today. It is our task as public historians to foster this interest and make the Civil War relevant and relatable.

In Horwitz's research, we can see that the Civil War is still relevant and alive and the reason for this is because individuals like his grandfather and those he meets in his travels have made personal connection to the war, its history, and its legacy. While only having studied the war for a short time, I am a firm believer in the importance of knowing the war's history, I have found ancestors who fought, traveled to many battlefields, held some amazing objects, and engaged in invigorating debates. I have a true passion to learn more about the war and while I avoided this topic in my earlier years, at this point in my life I find the war to be the most interesting time in American history. Once I made the connections and started to learn, I just wanted to learn more and I believe that this will be true for almost anyone.

Living History, Reenactments, and the Sesquicentennial at Manassas

Joseph M. Rizzo, West Virginia University

There was much excitement for the battle reenactment of Manassas on the eve of the Civil War centennial. The event was held on Henry Hill, where the Visitor Center is located, and thousands attended to celebrate the anniversary of the battle. During the much-anticipated event, some of the participants were injured due to improper safety precautions, and the landscape was heavily damaged. Because of the many problems, reenactments were thereafter banned on National Park Service ground. With the sesquicentennial approaching, many assume that the failures would not be repeated. Examining the plans for the upcoming summer highlights that many similar challenges will need to dealt with by the NPS. By using Manassas and the upcoming summer events as a case study, we can observe that there are still many problems in planning for such a large commemoration.

While working at Manassas National Battlefield Park for the past two summers, I have noticed considerable interest from visitors curious about what Manassas intends to do for the battle reenactment. Inquisitive visitors are often surprised that the National Park Service does not organize the reenactments. This misconception is one of the first problems that the NPS will have to face during the sesquicentennial – that common visitors will associate reenactments of battles with the NPS battlefield. With Manassas being the first major battle of the war, other NPS battlefields will look to this summer to see how the NPS handles this reenactment. The NCPH working group should consider whether there needs to be an NPS policy that all parks follow, or if each park should determine individually how to handle reenactments. Since reenactments often are popular with visitors, situations similar to Manassas will likely arise around anniversaries during the next four years.

Though the NPS does not host reenactments, it will not be possible for Manassas to be uninvolved in the planning. Currently, the planned location for the reenactment is on 178 acres

of private property on Pageland Lane directly across from the Brawner Farm entrance roadway (the interpretive center for Second Manassas). The Prince William County CVB is in charge of the reenactment and expects roughly 15,000 reenactors and 50,000 spectators. While these numbers are likely too high, the amount of people who will be in some way participating raises serious concerns. The tentative plan is to have those attending and participating park elsewhere and be shuttled in. The county will also likely ask Manassas NBP for some of its property to park cars. One could argue that lending park property for the reenactment in any way is more of a celebration than commemoration of the battle, and could lead to serious harm being done to the landscape. Regardless of the park's position regarding how actively they cooperate with the reenactment planning, the traffic and congestion will severely impact the park's ability to hold its daily operations and special events. Finding another location for the reenactment would possibly be the best solution for the park, however this seems unlikely. How the park cooperates and deals with this issue will have a large impact on its own plans for commemorating the battle.

While the NPS does not hold reenactments on their property, it does use living history as an alternative. It is believed that living history is a way to educate rather than just entertain and still provide something that will attract visitors. Having the opportunity to work at several NPS battlefields has shown me that living history events are often the most popular activities among visitors and attract the largest crowds. Living history provides a tremendous avenue to reach visitors and encourages interest in history; however, living history on a large scale presents issues that the NPS will have to deal with during the sesquicentennial.

One of the largest issues about living history is how to oversee the living historians and to present accurate information. One example I have witnessed is participants providing inaccurate information to visitors. During the Manassas NBP 149th anniversary, there were some troubling instances. One instance was an African American representing a Confederate

soldier. The man depicted a freed slave from Louisiana, claiming he was fighting for the property he owned. This instance raises larger issues about memory and the war. Recently, in Virginia, there has been controversy regarding African Americans who fought for the Confederacy. Some school textbooks have suggested that thousands fought for the South. There is no proof behind such claims, and there is no documentation to support that any African Americans fought during the battle of Manassas for either army. Does allowing such a depiction at an NPS event harm or advance what living history is intended to do? How should the NPS deal with situations like this? Another similar situation is regarding women who want to depict soldiers. The obvious answer to these concerns is that volunteers should only be able to depict a persona that is historically accurate. Doing so may raise issues for the NPS. People who have not been allowed to participate in an event have filed lawsuits against the NPS in the past. The policy now is that you must provide documentation that your persona is accurate. For example, a woman who wants to depict a soldier would need to show documentation that there was a female soldier at the battle. Is such a policy enforced at living history events? Should there be a new policy? The apparent answer would be that NPS employees should supervise the living history in order to make sure that it remains historically accurate. Doing so would prove difficult however. The staffing at the park is too small to properly oversee large living history events – more staff is needed. It is also difficult to get people to volunteer for such events. If the NPS begins to place more rules and regulations on them, it may decrease the amount of volunteers for special events. Another concern is over where the line is drawn in terms of historical accuracy. What should the rule then be in regards to uniforms, regimental units, historical dress of civilians, and weapons?

While Manassas is only one of many anniversaries taking place over the next four years, other parks and the media will look upon it closely because it was the first major engagement of the war. How the events over the summer unfold will possibly set the tone for the

sesquicentennial as a whole. How issues such as the nearby reenactment and the park's living history are dealt with will shed light on how much or how little has changed since the policies of the centennial. My hope is that working groups like at the NCPH will be able to identify problems before they arise and offer possible solutions in order to commemorate the war in an entertaining and accurate way.

Case Statement – NCPH Working Group WG150

Pam Sanfilippo, Site Historian at Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site

Having been involved in plans to commemorate the sesquicentennial of America's Civil War for quite a few years, it is both exciting and frustrating to think that the 150th anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter (considered to be the official start of the war) is almost upon us. It is exciting because some of the events and activities being planned will encourage interest in and dialogue about these important events in our nation's history, and their relevance to individuals today. It is also frustrating because in other ways we don't seem to have moved much past the "celebration" that was held at the 100th anniversary of the war.

When the theme of "Civil War to Civil Rights" was first proposed, those of us in on the discussion embraced the theme as a way to directly link the past and the present; something that would be readily understood by the public. Since then, charges of being "politically correct" and/or "historically inaccurate," and fear of upsetting or offending various groups have caused organizations, including the National Park Service, to reconsider how the commemoration would be handled. After numerous discussions, National Park Service leaders agreed on a vision statement that reads,

> "As steward of significant Civil War era battlefields and related sites, the National Park Service must be the leader in commemorating one of America's most defining national struggles and the impact of that struggle on present day America.
>
> The National Park Service is highly regarded for skillfully telling the story of the war itself; the battles and tactics; who succeeded and who failed. In keeping with the principles of *Holding the High Ground,* NPS stories must also address the war's causes and consequences.

> In particular, the NPS will address the institution of slavery as the principal cause of the Civil War, as well as the transition from slavery to freedom—after the war—for the 4 million previously enslaved African Americans. The Service must introduce the people of the battlefront and homefront, who they were, and how they lived.
>
> Through the commemoration, the National Park Service will provide the nation an opportunity to reflect upon this momentous event within an environment that is inclusive and contemplative. Collaborating with partners and communities, the NPS has a great opportunity to touch millions of Americans including those who, with a little help, can find meaning where they thought there was none." (NPS Vision Statement, 2010)

The statement captures the essence of the issue that divided the nation 150 years ago, slavery, and encourages parks and their partners to engage the public in a way that recognizes the diversity of our audiences and the need for thoughtful dialogue. What follows next, planning and implementation of events that will do so, will be even more difficult than arriving at a consensus for the statement. Issues of funding and appropriate training, along with expectations from segments of the public to "maintain the status quo," may lead to an emphasis on battle reenactments over the important discussions regarding the causes and consequences of the war—discussions that have been avoided for far too long.

If that happens, we will have lost the opportunity to truly reconcile—not in the sense that occurred after the war between Northern and Southern whites only, but between all Americans. Our country can be seen as divided on so many fronts—region, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, social status, and economic status, to name a few. The commemoration of the war that literally split the nation and forged a new, indivisible country seeking to fulfill the ideals of

equality and justice set forth in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution is an opportunity to decrease the barriers that have divided us for decades.

Our role, as public historians, is to engage a broader audience through various programs using multiple methods and technologies to encourage this dialogue. Collaboration amongst partners may be the best way to achieve our goals, recognizing the diversity within our own organizations and the strengths and enthusiasm we each bring to the effort. It is also important to have the support of professional organizations such as NCPH, who can provide the collective expertise and experience of its members to assist in these partnerships. Much has already happened in this regard as I've worked with several groups on projects that would not have occurred without NCPH, and I'm sure there are many others that I haven't been involved in.

As we move forward through the sesquicentennial, it will be important to continue the dialogue amongst ourselves, so that we may do the same with all of our audiences.

The Choices We Make: Public Historians' Role in the Commemorations of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War

Elizabethada A. Wright
Rivier College

I come to this working group, not as a historian but, as a rhetorician, an academic who considers both the ways in which human beings communicate meaning to each other and the ways in which differing audiences interpret different meaning from a single text. My focus for the past decade has been on collective memory, understanding the ways in which humans persuade groups of people to remember particular pieces of the past, pieces that are often true and often not. In particular, I have been considering the memorialization of the Civil War prison camps in Andersonville, Georgia and Elmira, New York—examining the evolutions of these memorializations as well as the implicit and explicit arguments made for these memorializations. My work concludes that people often perceive physical place as being the rhetor of a space, and these people read meanings directly from the material place whether or not the place has human constructed memorializations on it. People who want to celebrate what happened in the place work to make the place's materiality visible; people who want to silence events of a place work to hide and/or repress the place.

Given my work, I would address the question regarding the distinction between "celebration" and "commemoration" by suggesting celebration is memorialization that audiences want remembered for some particular ideological purpose; commemoration may also be something an audience wants remembered for that ideological purpose—or it may be a reluctant memorialization, one an audience is forced to remember but would much rather forget. For example, the postbellum white residents of the Andersonville area would much rather have forgotten what happened in the prison camp as well as the thousands of Union soldiers buried there. Residents of Andersonville might commemorate events, but they would not celebrate them. Union families, however, despite their mourning, wanted to celebrate the men and the

valor in the place where they had suffered and died. My work considering these very different audiences of the same commemorated place suggests there are no "appropriate" activities for any memorialization: appropriateness varies for audiences.

Having stated that, I would suggest a commonality of audiences of the sesquicentennial is that we are residents of the twenty-first century, a time with very different mores and values from those held one hundred and fifty years ago. No longer existing is the collective acceptance of the racism that permitted race-based, American slavery. That is not to say that racism does not exist; it has morphed.

To explain the legacy of the Civil War to a modern audience, I would argue we focus on the role of race in the Civil War and its legacy. In a sense, we should consider the memorialization of the Civil War that Frederick Douglass argued for but was forgotten with efforts to reconstruct the Union and with both the North and South's ideas of race. My suggestions are guided by Kirk Savage's statement that the tragic irony of the Civil War is that

> the North, which did not go to war to abolish slavery, ended up using abolition to disguise its own racial contradictions and ornament its self image; while the South, which did go to war to preserve slavery, renounced its proslavery ideology without tearing down the fundamental structure of white supremacy. ("Politics" 131)

Therefore, I would support a theme of "Civil War to Civil Rights," so long as the theme considers that journey critically. I would suggest we try to tell both the histories that are so often celebrated, and those that are marginalized—have almost been forgotten. One way to do so would be to consider the Civil War monuments located throughout the nation. In particular, it would be interesting to commemorate the memorials in the North, and the absence of representation in these memorials of slavery or African Americans. Another way to do so would

be to represent the Union's rationales for engaging in the War. While the abolition of slavery may have been the motive for some Northern citizens, it was certainly not for all. Understanding these passionate rationales can help audiences better understand the bloody battles, the cruelty of war, and the indifference of prison camps: what motivated two sections of the nation to continue on despite such losses?

I would suggest the theme "Civil War to Civil Rights" is particularly appropriate for the sesquicentennial because the collective racism that permitted race-based, American slavery is a repressed memory, a memory that this country continually covers over with evasion of the subject or with celebrations of subjects such as the Underground Railroad. The Civil War severed the nation, but in many ways the nation cannot heal with this festering sore of our repressed memory.

As a rhetorician, I know all audiences do not want to discuss this theme. Themes of various battles are what many audiences want. For example, the glory of Gettysburg is far more enticing with its stories of sacrifice and heroism; however, we need to hear stories about the freemen and women who ran from the Gettysburg area because they knew what the approaching Confederates would do to them; we need to hear stories about the Abraham Lincoln Cemetery in Gettysburg that gave rest to all the Union Colored Troops who were forbidden from The Gettysburg National Cemetery's segregated graves.

If the American Civil War Sesquicentennial's purpose is to entertain, perhaps we do not want the theme "Civil War to Civil Right"; if our purpose is to educate, provoke thought, and even work toward a more perfect Union, the theme seems right.

Savage, Kirk. "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument.' *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity.* Ed. John R. Gillis. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1984. 127-49.

Case Statement for National Council on Public History Working Group
The Choices We Make: Public Historians' Role in the Commemorations of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War NCPH Annual Meeting, Pensacola, Fla., April 9, 2011

Broken Bodies, Suffering Spirits: Transforming Perceptions of Civil War Medicine

Erin McLeary and Jane E. Boyd (Co-Curators), with Robert D. Hicks (Project Director) Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia

Introduction

Traditional museum exhibits have tended to portray the Civil War largely as a military and political event. Military technologies, troop movements, and the decisions of those in power have often framed curatorial constructions of exhibition narratives about the war. At the Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia (CPP), a leading medical history museum, we are commemorating the anniversary of the Civil War using a different interpretive lens. Starting from the position that medical care is not just a professional activity, but one of the most universal of all human experiences, we are exploring the conflict and its legacy as visceral, bodily experiences that dramatically changed how Americans understood and experienced disability, healing, and death. This case study describes the ongoing development of our planned exhibition, titled *Broken Bodies, Suffering Spirits: Injury, Death, and Healing in Civil War Philadelphia*. Scheduled to open in July of 2013, this will be an 820-square-foot long-term exhibition with approximately 150–175 artifacts, the majority from CPP collections.

Background

Founded in 1787, the CPP is the oldest medical professional organization in the country. Its current mission is to advance the cause of health while upholding the ideals and heritage of medicine. The CPP houses both museum collections (more than 25,000 objects, including specimens and models of normal and pathological anatomy, medical instruments, and memorabilia of physicians and scientists), and an important library (12,000 rare books;

extensive 19th-and 20th-century book and periodical collections; manuscripts and archives, including physicians' papers; and drawings, prints, and photographs). The Mütter, which welcomes 120,000 visitors annually, is currently transitioning from exhibits that focus exclusively on pathological anatomy to a broader medical humanities approach that examines human health within cultural perspectives over time. *Broken Bodies, Suffering Spirits* will be the first long-term exhibition within this new framework.

The CPP is an active member of the Philadelphia-area Civil War History Consortium (CWHC), 23 institutions that have been working since 2001 to coordinate regional plans for observation of the war's Sesquicentennial and to promote 19th-century history in a city strongly identified with the colonial and revolutionary periods. Studies sponsored by the CWHC have shown that the region's little-known but pivotal role in the Civil War appeals to potential visitors because it can reveal less-told stories.

Exhibition Development

In 2009, with these goals in mind, CPP staff and board members worked with an outside consultant to prepare a planning grant application. The proposal, developed with very little lead time, had a dual focus: medical innovations during the Civil War (centered on the pioneering physicians associated with the CPP), along with the important roles that Philadelphia, a long-standing center of medical education, played in medical care during the conflict (more than 157,000 wounded were tended in dozens of hospitals here). Though the proposal received high scores, it was not funded. Reviewers acknowledged that the CPP had the expertise and collections to present this important subject, but questioned the appeal of the proposed exhibition for the general public. As one reviewer put it, "the themes that are currently described are really topics—very neutral descriptions of historical occurrences. Give us some compelling themes, continuous threads that run across time, that present real perspective and point of view." Another criticized the proposal for not fully taking account of "the ways in which Civil War

medicine opened new debates about military and political bodies."

In early 2010, historian of medicine Erin McLeary and art historian Jane E. Boyd joined the exhibition development team as co-curators, working on a consulting basis. With the grant review in hand, the team reconsidered how best to tell the story of Civil War medicine in a gripping and compelling way. Even prior to receiving the grant feedback, we had become interested in using recent scholarship on the body as an interpretative focal point. We then asked ourselves a breakthrough question: What if this exhibition *did not* attempt to convey facts about medicine or medical care? What would result?

We soon discovered that exploring soldiers' and civilians' experiences of injury, death, and healing, rather than medical treatments as such, opened up a wide range of possibilities for our exhibition narrative. We developed two central themes: how the war forced soldiers, healers, and family members to manage injury, recovery, and death in dramatically new ways; and how the lasting effects of the devastating conflict forever changed soldiers' relationships with their own bodies and minds. These themes will be woven throughout the exhibition's six parts: an introduction using the words of Walt Whitman; four core sections, each focused on a different bodily experience— fighting, hurting, dying, and healing; and a conclusion about the war's legacies. Throughout, we will use participants' own words as much as possible, while endeavoring to incorporate insights from recent scholarship on the Civil War and 19th-century American culture.

Ongoing Challenges

The CPP's collection of medical instruments and human specimens lends itself easily to discussions of medical technique. Using these same artifacts in service of a different kind of story raises new questions: How can we bring stories derived from medical care into the mainstream of narratives about the Civil War and its legacies? What are the best ways to dispel persistent myths of Civil War medicine as primitive and brutal, while still presenting a realistic picture of medical knowledge at the time? Given the nature of our collections and the

historiography of Civil War medicine, how can we give appropriate weight to the different experiences of African Americans and women? What are the most effective methods of bringing life to historical artifacts, texts, and images in a 19th-century exhibit space on a modest budget, without immersive design or high-tech displays? Further discussion of some of these challenges follows.

Preconceptions & Myths The CPP already has a large audience for its exhibits and programming, but many attendees are attracted to the black humor aspect of the collections. Although the museum is implicitly about disease and death, the outlandish nature of many of the specimens allows visitors to cultivate protective distance from the people from whose bodies these specimens came. We could easily focus on the gruesome and gory aspects of Civil War medicine, depicting wounds, amputations, infections, and diseases divorced from their human context. This approach, however, would only bolster deeply entrenched myths about medical care during the era, notably the perception of army surgeons as ignorant butchers who never used anesthesia. In this case, we do need to present corrective facts, while acknowledging that the myths have some basis in reality. We feel that using the stories of individuals will help to correct these misperceptions, since we will be able to talk about amputation (for instance) from the very different vantage points of both patient and physician. This approach will also help to humanize the specimens and instruments on display, enabling visitors to imagine themselves in the same difficult situations.

Commemoration vs. Celebration Civil War medicine occupies a peculiar place on the commemoration-celebration spectrum. Depending on the context, surgeons are either reviled for their supposed brutality and ignorance, or venerated for their heroic interventions and innovations in treatment. Wounded soldiers are often portrayed as continuing to fight against their injuries, with battlefield metaphors carried over into the hospital setting. Alternatively, the wounded can be shown as passive or even pathetic victims, damaged beyond repair. Balancing these perspectives without falling into old clichés poses a particular challenge for the CPP, as

its collections, created by physicians, are heavily skewed towards the heroic surgeon's point of view. Furthermore, too close a focus on the actions of either physicians or patients neglects the wider historical context of the 19th century, with its different attitudes towards dying, death, and healing.

Inclusive Histories Like many other present-day public historians, we are seeking to include previously untold or underexplored stories in our exhibition. Besides physicians and white Union soldiers, we will also be discussing the experiences of African American soldiers and women volunteer workers. Though there has been significant recent scholarship on African Americans and women during the Civil War, translating this research into an exhibition format poses difficulties. We are currently working to locate individuals from the period with Philadelphia connections who also have documented, exhibitable artifacts associated with them. In a traditional presentation of wartime medicine, such people would probably appear as tokens. However, by expanding the scope of the exhibition to include a range of bodily experience, not just medical practice, we can naturally include a wider array of people. This will help us to reinsert the stories of medicine, broadly understood to encompass healing and dying, into larger, more complex narratives of mid-19th-century life. Also, by centering the exhibition on Philadelphia, we will touch on themes of urban life and industrialization. The overarching goal is to show people from the era, of any occupation, social status, race, or gender, as fully rounded human beings, rather than as stiffly posed figures in old photographs.

Legacies The conclusion of our exhibition will discuss the many legacies of the war's medical care. The conflict fostered many innovations in medicine and medical culture, including the development of hospitals as modern institutions, along with improvements in training, nursing care, record-keeping, and so forth. Nonetheless, the legacies were not all positive. Large numbers of injured and disabled veterans, many suffering mentally as well as physically, put considerable strains on households and communities for decades to come.

Conclusion

As we venture into this new territory for CPP, we welcome comments and critiques from those who have long grappled with issues related to the Civil War. We wish to establish firmly the medical history of the war as part of the historical conversation, not a minor, specialized side topic. Bodily experience, which shapes both individual and collective experience, deserves a central place in history.

Civil War Working Group Case Statement

Bob Beatty
Vice President for Programs
American Association for State and Local History

Think about the differences between commemoration and celebration.

The key question to ask up front, and the one that helps determine which way the event should go, is "What is the purpose?" I believe celebrations are just that, birthday parties if you will. While commemorations are inherently educational or at least thought-provoking. Anniversaries are a major way to engage folks in history to be sure, and my experience has been that attaching to a larger event helps spur the public's interest in history in a way that random programs or initiatives don't necessarily do (or don't do as easily). But if the goals aren't educational, I don't believe the event can be called a commemoration.

And while I would never go so far as to call celebrations ahistorical, commemorations, appropriately done and grounded in scholarship, are much more historically minded than celebrations. There is also a "rah-rah" quality to celebrations in my experience while commemorations look more at the memory aspect.

My big experience with a community commemoration was with a 50th anniversary of the *Brown* decision in Orlando, Florida. While the *Brown* case didn't have a strong connection to the city (or state), it certainly impacted the residents—though schools weren't fully desegregated until 1970. I was working at the local history museum in conjunction with the university. The group figured out goals ahead of time through a combination of advisory committee work and our own work in subcommittee.

That community advisory committee told us to use the word "commemoration" instead of "celebration." This was a new concept to me, but one I have carried on throughout my career since. Celebration implies something different than commemoration, and many in the Orlando black community were concerned about the unintended consequences of the *Brown* decision (decline of the black business sector, neighborhoods suffering, white flight from schools, shutting down of neighborhood schools, etc.). The felt the term "commemoration" more accurately reflected the celebratory nature of remembrance of an important historical event, without overlooking any ancillary difficulties surrounding it. This is a lesson I've carried with me ever since.

What kinds of activities (exhibitions, symposium, living history, reenactments, etc.) are appropriate for the sesquicentennial and how should they be managed?

The bigger question is what's inappropriate? Secession balls, in my opinion, are inappropriate. Reenactments of secession commissions or Jefferson Davis's inauguration can also be, although they are actual events that occurred so they are less inappropriate than South Carolina's secession ball last December. And to carry over my own definition from above, both the secession ball and the reenactments of Davis's inauguration are celebrations, despite the host groups' best attempts to make them educational.

The activities you list are good and each has its own merits and negatives. Symposia are great, and you can bring in scholars and very articulate, thoughtful people. But because they are inherently more intellectual, they often draw a smaller audience. Exhibitions are fantastic, longer term commemorative activities and because of the lure of artifacts, have the potential to draw in a larger audience over a longer period of time. But certainly institutions can't get into as much depth as they can in a symposium. I would put living history events and reenactments into the same category. They offer high-profile, tactile events that the public often gravitates towards.

The problem is that with the wrong groups, you end up with ahistorical events. But I would say that they have the potential, in combination with some of the other activities (symposia, exhibitions) to truly make an educational impact on the audience.

Other ideas worth mentioning are digitization projects—which I believe is going to be one of the real legacies of this commemoration, and social media. Look at how the *New York Times* is managing their CW150 blog, Disunion.

But in keeping with how these events should be managed, we believe it's important that events/activities stick to the four recommendations that AASLH has adopted for the field:

1. Activities should emphasize 150 years of history, and not solely the 150th anniversary of hostilities.

2. Local museums and historical organizations should make themselves available as centers for open discourse about the war and its legacy.

3. The field should make stronger efforts to provide evidence about the causes and effects of the Civil War by sharing primary sources with the public.

4. It is important to respect, hear, and engage all groups.

What histories do we want to tell? How can we encourage public interest in the era and its legacy, not just the war?

The biggest thing is point one: emphasize 150 years of history, not just the 150th anniversary of the war. Too often war-related commemorations devolve into celebrations of a single moment in history, in this case battles (Antietam, Gettysburg) and/or events (Secession, Emancipation), etc. But for historians, the importance is what impact that event or the war had on history, what has changed over time.

We could easily argue that there is no single event in American history with a more contested memory. Perhaps that's why interest in the Civil War has rarely waned over the

generations. And in addition to the importance of a commemoration that covers a wider period of history (1861-2015 instead of 1861-1865), is sharing the primary sources about the war and its origins.

Obviously one of the big arguments public historians hear, particularly those in museums and historic sites, is visitors saying the War wasn't about slavery because, "My ancestors fought in the war and weren't slaveowners." But as John Hennessey of the National Park Service pointed out in a blog post on Fredericksburg Remembered The tangled web of personal motivation and national purpose–a challenge for public historians, "in no other era of American history have we as a nation permitted the personal motivations of soldiers (often imperfectly remembered or revised over time) to define in the public's mind the cause and purpose of war." This is a very important consideration for us to consider and speaks to the importance of our role in the commemoration.

How has the memory of the Civil War Centennial influenced our planning? What can we learn from our own decisions in the past year?

By all accounts, the field as a whole missed a major opportunity with the Centennial. And just as historians and history professionals are today holding our peers of fifty years ago accountable for their actions during the Centennial, we too will be called into account for how we handled the sesquicentennial. A look at the profession's own history with regard to Civil War commemoration, most notably centennial celebrations of the 1960s, glaringly points out the fallacy of a commemoration (and commemorative events) that focuses primarily on battlefield valor and glory and sectional reconciliation yet ignores the underlying issues that caused the hostilities between the North and South as well as the war's legacy in American society today.

Is it our role to help reframe and reshape the discussion about the War, its origins, and its effects? I'd argue yes, it is. It is our responsibility to see that what happened in the 1960s regarding the War's Centennial is not repeated in the coming years.

Is the theme of "Civil War to Civil Rights" appropriate for this commemoration?

The War and its legacy continue to exercise a tight hold on the imaginations of millions of Americans and 2011-15 provides a truly unique opportunity for Americans to explore the legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction and in the process better understand how the events of that era affect contemporary issues such as federalism, contested regional heritage, race, and civil rights. These last two are especially salient topics for consideration because of the Civil Rights Movement anniversaries.

It's my belief that tying the work of public history to larger themes, helps more easily attract and interest and an audience for our work. And in this case, having commemoration of the Civil War's Sesquicentennial and many semi-centennial Civil Rights anniversaries certainly fits that bill. It's also not a mere coincidence that many significant Civil Rights Movement events occurred during the Centennial, including the March on Washington and the passage of the Civil Rights Act nor that we have America's first African American president serving at least through the early years of the commemoration. And I think the field should take advantage of that.

That being said, the Civil War itself, as a commemorative event, has beginning and ending dates, the Civil Rights Movement does not. And in terms of current events, I'd argue that the ongoing Civil Rights struggle is a much more pressing concern than reshaping the memory of the Civil War.

Are we making the choice to reconcile again? What will that mean for how we will be judged by future historians?

Future generations will judge our action/inaction in the decades (century) to come. The media will continue to seek conflict over the war and its origins, drawing out sectional conflict by always seeking quotes from heritage groups to counter statements from historians. Fortunately I don't see the historical profession making that same mistake.

How do we engage a broader audience in this commemoration?

I strongly believe that following the four recommendations AASLH has issued will help tremendously here. Primary sources bring history to life, as they have for many of us in the profession. And I don't want to overlook the recommendation about looking at 150 years of history. This allows us to not only focus on battles and generals (dead white guys) but to look at change over time. Audiences are more open to that interpretation, I think, than just the military aspects of the war. Another important consideration is how to engage the West, much of which had a much smaller role in the events of 1861-65 but in many ways was the prize the North and South were fighting over. (Lorraine McConaghy of the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle, WA, has done some great work in this regard of late.)

How can we best explain the legacy of this war to a modern audience?

Not to hammer the same theme repeatedly but the best way to do this is to stick to the recommendations:

1. Activities should emphasize 150 years of history, and not solely the 150th anniversary of hostilities.

2. Local museums and historical organizations should make themselves available as centers for open discourse about the war and its legacy.

3. The field should make stronger efforts to provide evidence about the causes and effects of the Civil War by sharing primary sources with the public.

4. It is important to respect, hear, and engage all groups.

National Council on Public History

Civil War Sesquicentennial Working Group

Case Statement

Phillip S. Marsh

National Park Service – Boston Harbor Islands

University of Massachusetts Boston – Public History MA Program

As a Park Ranger for the National Park Service at the Boston Harbor Islands, I have been working to develop a plan for how our park will participate in the observance of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. Through the work I have done to prepare our park for this anniversary, I have encountered many of the questions and issues raised by the leaders of this working group that are commonly associated with commemorating an event as complex and significant as the Civil War. My experience preparing for the sesquicentennial has forced me to carefully consider the following: the distinctions between celebration and commemoration, what kinds of activities are appropriate for the sesquicentennial and how they should be managed, who's histories will be told, how to encourage interest and participation from the general public, and whether or not the thematic approach of "Civil War to Civil Rights" is appropriate.

Despite never witnessing a single battle, the Boston Harbor Islands have deep ties to the Civil War. Almost all of the over 150,000 men that Massachusetts sent to fight in the conflict, including the "Minutemen of '61", the first soldiers to respond to President Lincoln's call for troops, the famous MA 54th Volunteer Infantry Regiment of predominantly African-Americans, and the MA "Fighting" 9th Regiment of predominantly Irish-Americans, either mustered into service, trained, or mustered out of service on one of the harbor islands. Additionally, Fort Warren on Georges Island served as a major Union prison camp for Confederate soldiers and

political prisoners. Consequently, the Boston Harbor Islands are an appropriate venue to explore a variety of important components of both the legacy and history of the Civil War, including political, racial and martial themes.

The numerous and varied connections between the Boston Harbor Islands and the Civil War has forced me to look long and hard at whose story should be told through sesquicentennial programming. It is our duty as historians and educators to identify and develop our understanding of the experiences of individuals and groups who have been historically underrepresented in both Civil War commemorations and historical memory throughout the past one hundred and fifty years. However, that is not to say that these underrepresented groups should be given preference over other better-known groups when it comes to representation in sesquicentennial programming. Instead, we must strive to incorporate the histories of all groups relevant to our park and present them as completely as we can, given time and budget constraints, over the next five years.

The legacy of the Civil War holds several different and often opposing meanings for different groups of American citizens. Whether these different meanings are rooted in racial, class, gender, or political differences, we must make a concerted effort to anticipate the many ways that these various perspectives shape both how we present and how the general public will interpret these commemorative activities. A careful meditation on these differences can yield successful sesquicentennial programming that is able to present the complex history of the Civil War from many different perspectives.

A wide variety of activities are appropriate for commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. Whether they are reenactments, living history programs, exhibitions, or lectures, any type of commemorative activity must be designed and managed with a focus on engaging and educating the general public. Without an emphasis on direct engagement with the public

our programming will become hollow and ineffective. We must be mindful when we hold events, particularly reenactments and living history programming, that these events do not become self-serving exercises. It is not enough to simply provide a venue for reenactors to practice their hobby with the public passively observing. Our programming can accomplish much more if we insist upon active engagement with the public and evaluate the events in these terms.

When developing and managing sesquicentennial programming it is important to note the fine line between commemoration and celebration. While it is essential to acknowledge the courage and heroism of the American soldiers on both sides of the conflict, it must be a paramount concern of ours to resist falling into the trap of romanticizing the soldiers' experiences. Presenting a romanticized interpretation of the Civil War soldiers' combat experience on any level does a disservice to our audience. We must strive to depict the reality of soldiers' combat experience accurately no matter how uncomfortable, and at times gruesome, it may be. The Civil War's widespread destruction and slaughter of both soldiers and civilians is an essential component of the war's history. Therefore, we must opt to commemorate the fallen soldiers by doing our best to present the reality of their experiences and forego a romanticized view of their service that celebrates individual valor while ignoring the harsh realities of the war. By presenting the soldiers' service accurately in commemorative programming we are honoring their sacrifice in a far more meaningful way than if we were to celebrate only what is comfortable. The public stands to gain the most from this approach, as they will be informed of the brutish reality of Civil War military service.

The overarching theme of sesquicentennial commemorations, "Civil War to Civil Rights," is indeed an appropriate framework for this anniversary. Adhering to this thematic guideline will ensure that the histories and contributions of ethnic minority groups relevant to the Civil War, such as Native Americans, Irish-American and African-Americans, are represented in sesquicentennial programming. When reflecting on the shortcomings of Civil War Centennial

commemorations it is clear that incorporating the histories of these groups needs to be at the forefront of sesquicentennial programming. Failing to do so will result in a historically incomplete depiction of the Civil War. However, we must be careful not to neglect the long struggle that these groups faced following the Civil War and throughout the twentieth century. Therefore, the connections between the Civil War and Reconstruction, desegregation, and the Civil Rights Movement must be made explicit in sesquicentennial programming. Otherwise, we run the risk of overstating the role that the Civil War played in the long and complex history of the struggle for civil rights in America.

To best explain the legacy of the Civil War to a modern audience we must use sesquicentennial programming to highlight the many ways that the war connects to our society today. Fortunately, there are many connections we can utilize to show the general public that although this event ended over a century ago we are still dealing with many of the same problems that caused the war and are still affected by the war's outcome. We must communicate to the general public the importance of reflecting upon and learning from significant events in our nation's history. This will better prepare the public to make sense of how we, as a society, arrived at where we are today and where we are heading in the future. Perhaps the best way to achieve this is direct and active participation from the public in commemorative activities. It is important to present the programming as something the general public can "do" as opposed to something they can "watch." With the widespread access to historical media available on the Internet and television, the general public must be offered more than just something to watch. Instead, we need to find creative ways that incorporate the public into the programming, making them actively involved in the commemoration and not just passive witnesses.