

THE FUGELMAN

**THE NEWSLETTER OF THE SECOND
WISCONSIN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY
ASSOCIATION**

THE BLACK HAT BRIGADE---THE IRON BRIGADE

1861-1865

VOLUME XXIV

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FU-GEL-MAN: A well-drilled soldier placed in front of a military company as a model or guide for others.

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PASS IN REVIEW

From the quill of Lt. Colonel Pete Seielstad



It's as if the campaign year for the 2nd Wisconsin came in like an express train, flying into town and sped by the loading platform. In its wake the train leaves an airstream that has left emptiness soon filled with a trail of dust, paper and memories.

Many hours go into preparing for an event at any level, national, regional or local. Organizers & volunteers are often forgotten as we tramp on the field of an event and make our camp. Our officers and NCOs keep the men drilled and informed about the event that we will participate in and spend time preparing for any unanticipated circumstance. Together, everyone collaborates to create a unique experience for the participant & spectator and in so doing, honor the memory of our country's history with reverence and pride. Thanks to all who have made this an exceptional year for the members of the 2nd Wisconsin and its friends on and off the field.

November brings the beginning of the winter as we prepare our winter quarters for a long-deserved rest from the rigors of our schedules. The month also is filled with two National holidays that we will observe. Thanksgiving is one that we hold dear to our hearts because it is a holiday we share with our family and friends and is uniquely American. Celebrating the harvest with a feast surrounded by family is a tradition I truly enjoy.

Another observance will be Veterans Day. Be sure to offer a "Thank you" to our veterans who we owe so much. We certainly need to show our gratitude by recognizing our freedoms, which have been protected, by our soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen over the course of this nation's existence. Beyond recognizing our freedoms, let us thank the veterans by not abusing these freedoms or denying them from our fellow countrymen.

On the eve of Veterans Day is the observance of the Marine Corps birthday held on the November 10th. This year marks the 240th year of the USMC. To my son and the men and women of the Marine Corps: Congratulations and Semper Fidelis!

Your obedient servant,

Lt. Col. Pete Seielstad

THANKSGIVING MESSAGE TO THE TROOPS



The year 2015 is rapidly drawing to a close. Fall festivities are now the focus of our activities. By the time this message falls under your eyes the fall colors will nearly be gone. Trees will stand bare and forlorn. The grass will have turned from a lush green to a dismal brown. As reenactors we will be hunkering down for a long break from the strenuous labors of the spring, summer and early fall. Gear and accouterments will be cleaned and stored away until the spring campaigning begins anew. And we will turn our thoughts and efforts to our families and the holidays.

One of the chief festivities we all look forward to is the arrival of Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is one of the major yearly holidays and the one that everyone seems to appoint a great deal of significance. It is a special time for families as we gather to count our many blessings during the last year. It is a time of feasting and sharing with those we love (and some we struggle to hold dear). The meal reflects the bounty of the harvest of American farmers and the benefits of our labors in all fields of endeavor.

There is much for us to be thankful for this year. In our region of the country the crops have been extraordinary. We have enjoyed a summer of

moderate temperatures for the most part. As a nation we see much hope on the horizon. Overtures for peace promise to bear fruit, the economy is growing, albeit not as fast as we would like, and despite bumps in the road things show promise of future happiness for the country. There are problems such as poverty, homelessness, illnesses, and cultural divisiveness; but we are making progress on all these fronts and the recognition of the problems brings to light the challenges, as well as the accomplishments, in facing these problems. And as we address the God of our fathers in grateful prayer we ask for guidance in tackling these issues and offering our thanks for all the good in our lives.

While the macro view suggests much to be thankful for, on the micro level the same is true. This was a good year for us as reenactors. Our events were well attended and an honor to yourselves and to the men we portray at events! As always, the men in the ranks were incredible. Your performance on the field does honor to Association and its member companies. Our success was, in large part, due to the corporate officers and the field commanders. We have been blessed with good men who know their stuff. These men who take the time to learn and pass on that information to the men in the ranks are true leaders. We can be truly grateful for the good fortune to have dedicated leaders at all levels of our reenacting community.

Finally, it was another year of safe results from our events. As a result of the effective leadership of our officers and our hours of training there were no significant injuries to our men. And that is a great thing to be thankful for by the Association members!

So as we prepare for the Thanksgiving holiday let us give thanks to our leaders, a safe reenacting season, the support of our wonderful families, and our tremendous men in the ranks. Let us remember all the good things in our lives, outside of reenacting as well.

Your officers and *The Fugelman* extend to you and your families our wish that you have a blessed Thanksgiving full of good food, family joys, and peaceful contemplation! You are at the top of the list of things your officers are grateful for and we will think of you on this day, not just as part of our family, but as our good friends and colleagues whom we appreciate above all others! Happy Thanksgiving men! And extend our wish to your family members too!

In 1775, citizen soldiers from throughout the colonies responded to the call to overthrow British domination of the affairs of the colonialists and to gain national independence. In 1812, again Americans took up arms to fight the British on American soil. By 1846, we had a regular standing army, but it was small and so volunteers flooded to the call for men to join the fight against Mexico. Southern rebels fired on Fort Sumter in April, 1861. Again the standing army was small and spread across the vast expanse of our country. Volunteers by the thousands put aside their civilian pursuits and donned the blue uniform of the Union army and for the next 4 years struggled mightily to down the forces of the rebellion. When America went to war in 1917 and 1941 civilians again answered the call to take up arms to defeat the forces of imperialism and fascism.

Today we have a professional army with no actual civilian soldiers bearing arms. But just as their forbearers did, they stand in harm's way to preserve and protect American policy and the safety of our nation. These men and women are part of a long tradition of service to their nation as noted above. On November 11th, 2015, we will honor those who have served this nation as members of our various branches of the military. So on behalf of all the members of the Second Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Association we extend to our members, and all veterans everywhere, our thanks for your service and our admiration for those who put on the uniform of their nation and served the people of this nation with honor and distinction!

CAMPAIGN SCHEDULES OF THE COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER

7th	Veterans Day Parade (Co.K)	Milwaukee,WI.
21st	Gettysburg Remembrance Day (Co.K)	Gettysburg,PA.

REGIMENTAL DISPATCHES

NOTE OF GRATITUDE

The members of Company B would like to extend to their comrades from the other Companies in the Association who attended their event at Norskedalen in October their sincerest gratitude. They want to thank everyone who attended for their participation in the event and their contributions to make it a successful weekend.



General Grant at Old Wade House event

DRESS PARADE

John Dudkiewicz sent this along and the editor has included it in the newsletter. It was a common practice in the army and the men of the Second Wisconsin no doubt experienced this same phenomenon during their service.

January 12, 1863, Danville Kentucky

Dress Parade is one of those red-tape affairs in the army that has no genuine utility in it. It is all show. The men put on their best clothes, the officers their best clothes and wrap their bodies around their waists and over the shoulders with fancy colored belts, red-tape, or red sashes. Each takes a flimsy sword in his hand and stands up very straight and stiff. The regiment is put into line of battle with the captains and lieutenants all in their proper places in their respective companies. The colonel takes his place directly in front of the regiment, facing the men. The adjutant is a sort of a clerk, waiter or lackey, a fellow that does lots of everything, and not much of anything. When the adjutant gets the regiment into line with all the officers standing correctly, he then makes a sign to the leader of the band and they begin to toot their horns and march down the whole length of the regiment, passing between the colonel and adjutant on the one side, and the officers and men on the other. The adjutant then orders the men to "shoulder arms, present arms!" and when the men are all holding the guns in that position he waves his sword about his head and tells the colonel that the regiment is ready. The colonel then in a tone that might be expected from the statuary of the Tennessee state house commands, "shoulder arms, order arms," and we put our guns with butts on the ground, standing by our side. The line officers of the ten companies, captains and lieutenants, thirty in number are all brought to the front and forward to the colonel. When they get there the colonel gives them orders. The Adjutant steps out and dismisses the men. This dress parade always takes place just before sunset.

**Pvt. John M King, Co B, 92nd Illinois Volunteer Infantry
From "Three Years with the 92nd Illinois, the Civil War Diary of John M. King, 1999, Stackpole Books**

BAY DE NOC BROGAN BUSTER

Below you will find two photos from Laurie Rassmussen of the Bay de Noc Brogan Buster Charity march. Those intrepid members of Company E marched 40 miles and slept in their dog tents on the march. A 40 miles march under any circumstances is a trial of man's endurance. To do so in the snow and cold would deter many a man, but not the men of Company E.

And they did this for charity. Well done boys! Your dedication and endurance are to be admired by your colleagues!!



HARDEE HAT LOOKING FOR A HOME

The editor received a phone call from Tom Trimble regarding a Hardee hat that is available for a reenactor with the Second Wisconsin. Mr. Tribble has a friend whose husband passed away and she has asked him to take care of the matter. The gentleman had this hat that they would like to find a suitable home for it. From my conversation the hat is available for very little cost (or none) to a member of our Association. If you are interested you can contact Mr. Trimble by e-mail at ashleyyu@charter.net or you can call him at (608) 206-7226.



ATTENTION TO ORDERS

NOTICE OF DUES DEADLINE

Gentlemen:

It is that itme of the year once more. It is time to pay your annual Company dues. The deadline for the Association secretary and treasurer to receive these dues is January 1st, 2016. Certainly the dues must be paid prior to the Association annual meeting the end of January. It is important to get this done so the Company secretaries can submit a roster of active members to the Association secretary prior to the annual meeting.

As a reminder the Company secretaries must send the Association secretary their roster of members as well as their scheduled events prior to the Association annual meeting. See to it, gentlemen! The date, time and location of the annual meeting will be published in the December *Fugelman*.

**FROM THE CAMPS OF THE
COMPANIES OF THE SECOND
WISCONSIN**

INFANTRY



Union encampment at Norskedalen—photo by Lyle Laufenberg



Lyle Laufenberg photo of the infantry as they engage the rebels in battle



Firing drill by Union troops—photo by Lyle Laufenberg

COMPANY K

COMPANY K ANNUAL MEETING

Company K will hold its annual business meeting on November 14th, 2015. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. The location of the meeting will be the same as the last few year; the Lake Mills EMS Center.

Company annual meetings are a very important aspect of our hobby. While not as exciting as doing battle, drills, and interacting with the public; it is the setting of structure, leadership and events that will consume our efforts in the coming year. Company K treats this event as a maximum effort event, and for good reason. There will be elections of Company officers, both military and corporate. There is no need to point out the importance of good leadership at the company level. Come ready to vote and to serve if called upon to do so!

Finally, the Company will be setting its calendar for 2016. This is an important aspect of the meeting as it will determine what events will be attended during 2016. If you have an event you want to support this is the time to bring it forward for consideration.

The civilian members of the Company are encouraged to attend this meeting as well. Your participation and input into our decision making process are invaluable.

**Place: Lake Mills EMS Station, 306 E. Lake Street, Lake Mills, WI
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/603+E+Lake+St,+Lake+Mills,+WI+53551/@43.079034,-88.903841,17z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m2!3m1!1s0x88067b763bada177:0xb047caa8c869671a>**

MILWAUKEE VETERANS DAY PARADE

There will be a Veterans Day Parade held on Saturday, November 7th, 2015. Company K has registered to participate in this event. This is a nice way to commemorate the veterans of this nation. The members of Company K would like to invite reenactors from all eras to join them for this event. You don't have to be a member of Company K to participate. This invitation also includes civilians and folks dressed in modern patriotic clothing.

Parking for participants will be in the Harley-Davidson Museum parking lot located at No. 6th Street and West Canal Street. (For anyone coming in from the west, I recommend coming in on Canal Street, from Miller Park. Carpooling is also recommended. --John Thielmann) The first unit will step off at 11:00 a.m. and the Company K unit should step off between 11:30 and 11:45 a.m. A shuttle will carry marchers from the museum to the staging area. Below is a link for directions to the site of the parade parking.

<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Southeast+Wisconsin+Professional+Baseball+Park+District,+1+Brewers+Way,+Milwaukee,+WI+53214/Harley-Davidson+Museum%C2%AE,+400+W+Canal+St.+Milwaukee,+WI+53201,+United+States/@43.0296843,-87.9304411,15.54z/data=!4m13!4m12!1m5!1m1!1s0x88051a586529bbdf:0x40d2860a5bc1a9fc!2m2!1d-87.9711288!2d43.0281375!1m5!1m1!1s0x88051999bd9a061f:0xd7d05eb27f5f327f!2m2!1d-87.916519!2d43.031665>

COMPANY E

Peggy Rowley from Company E has submitted the following communication for the civilian reenactors from Company E (or anyone else who would like to join in):

Ladies of Company E, or any other ladies interested. Several of us have talked about getting stuck on a pattern and not knowing what to do. Carla and I were talking and have come up with an idea. We would love for you to join us November 14 to have a pot luck and sewing day. We will meet in the fellowship hall of Faith Baptist Church, 709 S. Oneida Street, Green Bay from 10:00-2:00 or later if needed. I will bring meat and buns and we will have coffee and lemonade available, please bring a dish to pass and any sewing projects you may have. There will be plenty of table space to spread out and outlets for sewing machines. Please reply to me either here or via fb message so we know how many will be coming. I look forward to seeing you in period appropriate clothing for 2015. :)

ARTILLERY



LYLE LAUFENBERG PHOTO ESSAY FROM NORSKEDALEN EVENT

The following photos come from Lyle Laufenberg and were taken at the recent Norskedalen event. Thank you to Lyle for sharing these photos (and the ones above) with the readers of *The Fugelman*.

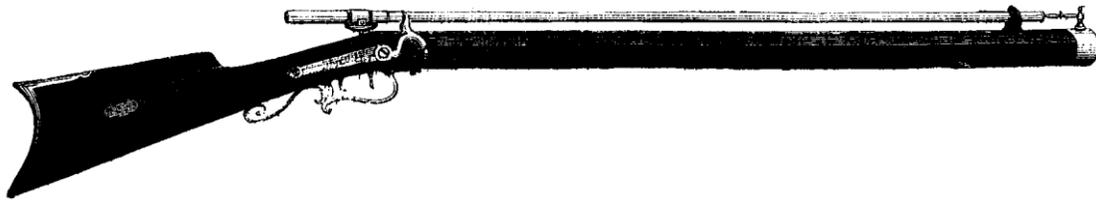








SKIRMISHERS



CIVIL WAR MILESTONES

NOVEMBER

Nov. 1, 1861

Gen. George McClellan replaces Gen. Scott as commander in chief of U. S. forces

Nov. 3, 1813

Gen. Jubal A. Early, CSA, born

- Nov. 4, 1862** **Mid-term election in which the Republican party lost dozens of House seats and two governorships, but did gain seats in the Senate**
- Nov. 5, 1862** **Gen. Geo. McClellan removed from command after he failed to pursue Lee's army after the Battle of Antietam**
- Nov. 6, 1861** **Jefferson Davis elected as president of the CSA. This was the second election for the post as he was elected to serve as provisional president when the CSA was being formed in Montgomery, Alabama**
- Nov. 6, 1862** **Direct telegraphic communication is established between New York and San Francisco**
- Nov. 6, 1862** **Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall) and James Longstreet are promoted to Lieutenant General rank**
- Nov. 7, 1861** **Union forces capture Port Royal**
- Nov. 7, 1862** **Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside assumes command of the Army of the Potomac**
- Nov. 7, 1864** **Confederate Congress convenes in Richmond for what turned out to be its last session**
- Nov. 8, 1861** **Capt. Wilkes seizes Confederate Commissioners aboard a British ship**

- Nov. 8, 1864** **Voting day, 1864. Lincoln wins Presidential election over George McClellan**
- Nov. 9, 1825** **Gen Ambrose P. Hill, CSA, born**
- Nov. 9, 1864** **Lincoln re-elected for a second term; the death knell for the CSA**
- Nov. 9, 1864** **In Kingston, Georgia, Gen. Sherman issues orders for a long march with minimal supplies**
- Nov. 11, 2015** **Veterans' Day**
- Nov. 13, 1814** **Gen. Joseph Hooker, USA, born**
- Nov. 14, 1864** **Lincoln accepts resignation of McClellan from the army . . . also appoints Phil Sheridan as a Major General of the regular Army**
- Nov. 16, 1864** **Sherman's army leaves Atlanta cutting off all communications**
- Nov. 15, 1864** **Gen. Sherman begins his "March To The Sea"**
- Nov. 19, 1863** **PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN DELIVERS THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS**
- Nov. 21, 1864** **Gen. John Bell Hood moves his army from Alabama towards Tennessee, hoping to lure Sherman to follow**

Nov. 23, 1863

The Battle of Chattanooga

Nov. 24, 1863

The Battle of Chattanooga

Nov. 25, 1863

The Battle of Chattanooga

Nov. 26, 2015

Thanksgiving Day

Nov. 28, 1861

Missouri formally admitted to the Confederacy

Nov. 29, 1815

Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut, USA, born in Charleston, S. C.

Nov. 30, 1864

The Battle of Franklin, Maj. Gen Patrick Cleburne one of a number of generals is killed during the battle

WINNING PHOTOS FROM CIVIL WAR TRUST CONTEST

Below are three of the winning photos from the Civil War Trust Annual Photo Contest. These photographs were clearly outstanding and demonstrate why they were chosen for the prizes.

**GRAND
PRIZE**
2015 Photo Contest



Early morning at Chancellorsville

**FIRST
PLACE**
1865 Battlefields



150th Appomattox Courthouse event



Lookout Mountain Then and Now

**LAMON'S REMARKABLE
REQUEST**

Probably one reason why Mr. Lincoln did not particularly care to go to the theatre that night was a sort of half promise he had made to his friend and bodyguard, Marshal Lamon. Two days previous he had sent Lamon to Richmond on business connected with a call of a convention for reconstruction. Before leaving, Mr. Lamon saw Mr. Usher, the Secretary of the Interior, and asked him to persuade Mr. Lincoln to use more caution about his personal safety, and to go out as little as possible while Lamon was absent. Together they went to see Mr. Lincoln, and Lamon asked the President if he would make him a promise.

"I think I can venture to say I will," said Mr. Lincoln. "What is it?"

"Promise me that you will not go out after night while I am gone," said Mr. Lamon, "particularly to the theatre."

Mr. Lincoln turned to Mr. Usher and said: "Usher, this boy is a monomaniac on the subject of my safety. I can hear him or hear of his being around at all times in the night, to prevent somebody from murdering me. He thinks I shall be killed, and we think he is going crazy. What does any one want to assassinate me for? If any one wants to do so, he can do it any day or night if he is ready to give his life for mine. It is nonsense."

Mr. Usher said to Mr. Lincoln that it was well to heed Lamon's warning, as he was thrown among people from whom he had better opportunities to know about such matters than almost any one.

"Well," said Mr. Lincoln to Lamon, "I promise to do the best I can toward it."

**REAL CONFEDERATES NEVER KNEW ANY
BLACK CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS**



Sergeant A.M. Chandler of the 44th Mississippi Infantry Regiment, Co. F., and Silas Chandler, family slave, with Bowie knives, revolvers, pepper-box, shotgun, and canteen - Library of Congress

On June 1, 1864 the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reprinted an item that originally appeared in the *Houston Telegraph* concerning reports in Northern newspapers that black men were serving as soldiers and officers in the Confederate army. The publication of the story was clearly an attempt on the part of the editors to add a little humor for their readers and to deny that the rumors had any merit. As the Civil War entered its fourth summer and as the sounds of guns grew louder, Richmonders were desperate for a little light-hearted humor.

The previous month witnessed some of the most intense fighting of the entire Civil War as the Army of the Potomac, now under the command of Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant, engaged Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia in continuous combat from the Rappahannock River in central Virginia to the James River near the Confederate capital of Richmond. Both armies suffered horrendous casualties, but unlike previous Union offensives, Grant remained poised and focused on destroying Lee's army. By the first of June some of Lee's men likely observed and even skirmished with the first United States Colored Troops assigned to the Union army in the East. It would be a few weeks before the first major battle would occur just outside of Petersburg, but their mere presence signaled a sharp shift in Union policy that helped to solidify for every Confederate just what was at stake in this war. Emancipation and service in the Union army threatened the very foundation of a society committed to establishing an independent slaveholding republic.

The author of the article attempted to explain away rumors of black soldiers and officers with the story of a Confederate Brigadier General in the Army of Tennessee, whose camp servant, Cuffee, was known to wear his master's "old uniform coat." "In time of battle, mounted on a spare horse of the General's, and with excitement," continued the author, "he would charge up and down the field beyond the reach of the shells." During one particular

battle a sergeant approached the "sable General" with fifteen Union prisoners, "as he was careering at headlong speed over the plain." After asking where they should be taken, Cuffee replied, "Double quick the d — d rascals to the rear." Apparently, the Union prisoners "never could be convinced afterwards that Cuffee was not in the military employ of Cousin Sally Ann."

Readers could afford a brief chuckle after finishing the story owing to their shared understanding of how black men, both free and enslaved, had already been utilized by the Confederate government. Tens of thousands of slaves had been impressed by the government to work on various war-related projects such as the building of earthworks or working in foundries producing weapons as well as maintaining rail lines. The story above points to the presence of thousands of camp servants that were brought into the army by Confederate officers. These men served their masters in various capacities from cleaning to cooking and foraging for food and other supplies. On occasion, camp servants witnessed and even took part in battle, but as the account of Cuffee shows, masters were never completely comfortable with their slaves' attempt at displays of martial manhood.

Cuffee is described as riding across the field, but he does so "with excitement, which suggests that he is not completely in control and "beyond reach of the shells." Other accounts by officers suggest that white Southerners from the slaveholding class held tightly to a racialized understanding of the battlefield. White men behaved bravely on the battlefield while black men served as an extension of their master's character, but they were not expected to supersede it. To do so threatened the racial hierarchy between master and slave.

Within a few months Southerners in the army, on the home front, and in the halls of the Confederate Congress debated whether to enlist slaves as soldiers as a last ditch effort to salvage their bid for independence. For slaveowner and non-slaveowner alike, the question of whether to enlist slaves as soldiers as well as whether they could make good soldiers cut to the core of why the war was being waged.

What is important about this debate is that at no point did soldiers in the field report that blacks were already serving as soldiers. No tales of heroic acts by camp servants on the march or even on the battlefield surfaced demonstrating that slaves could make good soldiers or that they executed tactical orders within the command structure of an assault. Regardless of whether camp servants fired a weapon in the heat of battle or manned a Napoleon or assisted fallen Confederates on the battlefield this was seen by everyone engaged as a step in an entirely new direction that was fraught with danger. The Richmond *Examiner* spoke for many when it declared in November 1864 that, "If a negro is fit to be a soldier he is not fit to be a slave...." "The employment of negroes as soldiers in our armies, either with or without prospective emancipation," continued the editor, "would be the first step, but a step which would involve all the rest, to universal abolition."

Following a very divisive debate and with the help of Lee's endorsement, legislation was passed in March 1865 that allowed for the recruitment of slaves that had been freed by their masters. A few weeks later Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House. Apart from a small number of men raised and briefly trained in Richmond, no black men stepped foot on a battlefield as a bona fide soldier.

One hundred and fifty years later and stories of hundreds and even tens of thousands of black Confederate soldiers can be found across the Internet on thousands of websites. In their initial statement following the violent murder of nine black Charlestonians while attending Bible study at Emmanuel AME Church in June 2015 and the publication of photographs of Dylann Roof holding the Confederate flag, the South Carolina Division, SCV offered the following reminder: "Historical fact shows there were Black Confederate soldiers. These brave men fought in the trenches beside their White brothers, all under the Confederate Battle Flag."

The SCV offered this argument not only to stem the tide of calls to lower the Confederate flag in Columbia, but to suggest that the flag has nothing at all to do with racial divisions in South Carolina. Since black men fought willingly for the Confederacy, the argument runs, the preservation of slavery

and white supremacy could not have been its goal. The Confederate flag—properly understood—ought to unite black and white South Carolinians.

Such an argument would have been unrecognizable to readers of the *Richmond Daily Dispatch* in 1864, who enjoyed a little laugh at Cuffeey's expense. Cuffeey's story reinforced what many white Southerners understood as a natural racial hierarchy that was worth going to war to protect. The debate about whether slaves could or even should be soldiers cut to the core of how white Southerners understood themselves in relationship to their black neighbors. We would do well to remember that real Confederates never knew any black Confederate soldiers and why.

- SEE MORE AT: [HTTP://HISTORYNEWSNETWORK.ORG/ARTICLE/160915#STHASH.13HXZKBG.DPUF](http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/160915#sthash.13HXZKBG.DPUF)

SLAVERY DID NOT DIE HONESTLY

A CENTURY AND A HALF AFTER THE CIVIL WAR, THE PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION REMAINS
CONTESTED—AND INCOMPLETE.

DAVID W. BLIGHT

Although we have completed the sesquicentennial of the American Civil War, it is fitting that as we move on it is salutary to consider what followed the war and how it was shaped and defined by what occurred in the years after the fighting ended. Davis Blight, a noted author on the Civil War era has written the following piece for your consideration. It has always been a period where feelings ran high over the future status of the freedmen. This editor agrees with Dr. Blight that in some respects the wounds created by the war have not healed. It was a shame that Lincoln was taken from us just as these issues had come to the forefront. Lincoln believed in the law and thus it is unlikely that Lincoln would have stood by, as Andrew Johnson did, and allowed the South to run roughshod over the laws to protect the newly freed ex-slaves. Nor would he have been quite so willing to sacrifice all that was won by the courage and determination of men in blue uniforms.

The Reconstruction era was both the cause and the product of revolutions, some of which have never ended, and likely never will. Lest this seem a

despairing view of U.S. history, Americans need to remember that remaking, revival, and regeneration have almost always characterized the U.S., its society, and its political culture. But no set of problems has ever challenged the American political and moral imagination—even the Great Depression and the World Wars—quite like that of the end of the Civil War and the process of Reconstruction.

Americans love second acts in human stories, with the exception of the second founding of the American republic. It's never been easy to comprehend or embrace that second founding, which was born of the blood of the Civil War, the emancipation of 4 million African American slaves, and the recrafting of the Constitution in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments.

Reconstruction, traditionally defined as spanning the years 1863-1877, was one long referendum on the meaning and memory of the war and the verdict at Appomattox. The great challenge of Reconstruction was to determine how a national blood feud (approximately 750,000 deaths) could be reconciled at the same time a new nation emerged out of war and social revolution. The survivors on both sides—winners and losers in the fullest sense—would still inhabit the same land and eventually the same government. The task was harrowing: how to make sectional reconciliation compatible with emancipation, and how to square black freedom and the stirrings of racial equality with a cause (the South's) that had lost almost everything except its unbroken belief in white supremacy. This would be a “testing” of even more magnitude than the one Abraham Lincoln described in his Gettysburg Address.

In Lincoln's last public speech, delivered on a balcony at The White House, on April 11, 1865, and just after news of Robert E. Lee's surrender to Ulysses S. Grant, he expressed the challenge the broken nation faced: “Reconstruction ... is pressed much more closely upon our attention ... It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike the case of a war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with ... We simply must begin with, and mould from, disorganized and discordant elements.”

The president's careful words show his sense of the daunting tasks that lay ahead. “So new and unprecedented is the whole case,” Lincoln said, “that no exclusive, and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed ... [but] important principles ... must be inflexible.” How could Reconstruction policy take the form of flexible plans and inflexible principles? Whose plan, and what principles would prevail? Could American *politics* ever strike such a balance?

All approaches to Reconstruction had to provide answers to at least three huge questions: One, who would rule in the defeated South (ex-Confederates,

white Unionists, black former slaves, Yankees who moved south)? Two, would Congress or the president rule in Washington? Three, what were the dimensions and definitions of black freedom and equality—under law and in human hearts? And on a broad scale, another question encompassed all the others: Would Reconstruction be a preservation of the old, or a remaking of the new? A restoration of the former Confederates to the Union as rapidly as possible, or a second revolution with a constitutional refounding and a remaking of Southern society?

The architects of Reconstruction policies, from the middle of the war down to 1876, included three presidents—Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Grant—as well as major Republican politicians such as John Bingham, John Trumbull, William Pitt Fessenden, Thaddeus Stevens, Charles Sumner, and many others. After replacing the murdered Lincoln, Johnson became until 1868, the embodiment of a rapid, lenient vision of Reconstruction, rooted in states’ rights doctrine, white supremacy, and a decidedly non-revolutionary approach to the remaking of the federal Union. The slogan most often associated with Johnson’s vision of Reconstruction, which most white Southerners came to embrace, was “the Union as it was, the Constitution as it is,” which meant a swift reentry to full statehood in the United States, renunciation of secession resolutions, and acceptance of the end of slavery—but no advancement in the civil and political rights of the freedmen.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/10/slavery-did-not-die-honestly/411487/>