

BLOODY MISSOURI AND THE BATTLE OF WILSON'S CREEK

CIVIL WAR

JAN / FEB 1992

\$3.50

TIMES

ILLUSTRATED

CONFEDERATES RALLY AGAIN

WHAT HAPPENED
WHEN THE VETS
GATHERED
ONE MORE TIME

SURVIVING HELL
AT ANTIETAM



THE GRAY REUNION

Spring 1911 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Firing on Fort Sumter, the shots that opened the American Civil War. That May, Confederate Veterans gathered in Little Rock, Arkansas to recall their war. But they showed up in such numbers, they made history all over again.

By RAY HANLEY

Nothing in America's history has had a greater impact on its people than its Civil War. Over four tumultuous years the country was split, American battling American on bloody fields at Gettysburg, Shiloh, Bull Run and countless other sites. But while the sieges and battles are well recorded in history, as is much of what happened during the reconstruction of the South following the war, there is a piece of that era's heritage that is quickly being lost or forgotten.

Remembered only by some older Americans, documented in some fading photographs and decaying newspaper accounts, are the veterans' reunions. And perhaps the most interesting of these were the annual reunions of the United Confederate Veterans.

The United Confederate Veterans (UCV) reunions began in 1889 when that organization was first chartered and its headquarters established in New Orleans, Louisiana. These events allowed the veterans a chance to enjoy the comradeship of other old soldiers. As the 20th Century got under way, they also allowed the veterans the opportunity to share with younger people memories of battles fought long ago and to share with each other speculations on all the "might have beens" had a battle or the war itself turned out differently.

The year 1911 marked the 50th anniversary of the firing on Fort Sumter and the start of the Civil War, a span of time equivalent to our era's distance from World War II. The thin gray line of veterans that assembled at UCV reunions was growing thinner each pass-

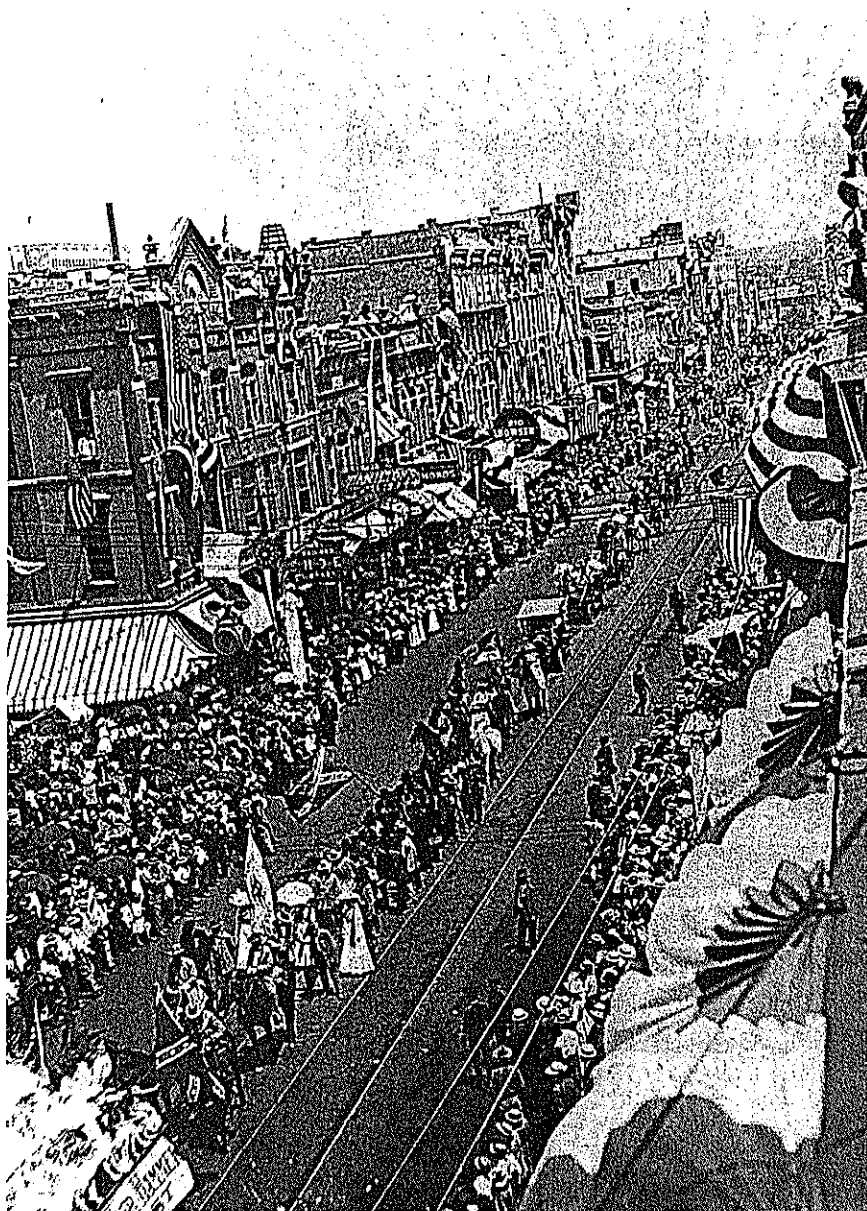
ing spring. It occurred to several people that of the more than 1 million men who had served the Confederacy, perhaps no more than 11,000 could attend another reunion and if some one or some group did not act quickly there would probably never be another chance to have so many of General Robert E. Lee's soldiers assembled in one location again. So, in May that year, for three days the Confederacy rose again in Little Rock, Arkansas. The capital city of the Razorback State hosted the 21st UCV

Opposite: The cover of the 1911 Confederate Veterans Reunion brochure. Reunion Committee members did everything they could to make it a successful get-together, realizing many elderly veterans would never make it to another.



SEND SUGGESTIONS AND ADDRESS ALL
COMMUNICATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS

W. M. KAVANAUGH	CHAIRMAN
H. C. RATHER	TREASURER
GEO. R. BROWN	SECRETARY



Little Rock's May 18, 1911, UCV parade. More than 150,000 spectators lined the city's streets to watch it. Amazing everyone, all the aged marchers survived the 20-block hike in tropical heat. High temperatures did, however, contribute to a few minor mishaps.

reunion and gave the South and all America a time to remember.

The city won the right to host the UCV meeting the year before in Mobile, Alabama, the 1910 reunion site. Then, as now, conventions were big business. A review of newspaper files and historical documents shows business and civic leaders planned to make the reunion both memorable and commercially profitable. To that end, in the months prior to the great event a number of local civic committees were set up, resolutions were passed and lodging, fund raising, and food logistics were endlessly debated. One of those resolutions even included a successful

motion for the telegraph and telephone companies to paint all their poles prior to the arrival of the old soldiers. Then just before the reunion convened an *Arkansas Gazette* editorial writer made the dry observation, "The chances are that a piece called Dixie will be heard in Little Rock this week."

The 1910 U.S. Census estimated Little Rock had 45,000 residents. As reunion week approached, with veterans, families and sightseers expected to flood the city, merchants anticipated a total city population increase of 100,000. One local news headline proclaimed "city stocked as for a siege." The news story that ran with it sug-

gested if Vicksburg had been so stocked during its siege by Union General Ulysses S. Grant, the war might have had a different outcome.

Every Little Rock merchant looked forward to an onslaught of business. Retailers took on all the stock their buildings could hold and hired extra help. Many added novelties and souvenirs to their inventories. Both city newspapers prepared collector editions for the historic event. The *Arkansas Gazette* proclaimed several months preparation for their reunion edition to "be in accord with the dignity and importance of the occasion." The edition was to contain hundreds of pictures of Confederate heroes, monuments, sponsors, maids of honor and reprints of Southern war songs.

For the newspapers, the point of publishing the special editions was to promote the city and state as a location for industry, new residents and of course to sell ads by appealing to Southern pride and patriotism. Toward that and all other ends, it seemed everyone took up unity between North and South as a publicity theme, especially when appealing for investment in Arkansas and Southern industry. Perhaps keeping in mind that, at the time, most of the nation's investment capital resided in the North, one appeal stated: "Nothing has so united the North and South as business, intermarriage, and the Spanish American war. The South today is more loyal to the government than any other section of the country, because she has more native-born American citizens in proportion to population, and to these the government must look for aid in the event of foreign wars. Her loyalty was demonstrated in the Spanish War beyond all question."

The war with Spain, won just 13 years before, was a popular ad theme. Another was the state's famed natural beauty. "Come to Arkansas," sang out one promotion, "and you will receive as warm a welcome as the hot waters that flow from her mountain sides, and can by industry soon place yourself on as firm a footing financially as the rock on which our beautiful capital stands."

One goal of the UCV reunion hosts was to house and feed the veterans at little or no cost. Little Rock's city fathers knew this would not be cheap. The closer the event got the more nervous the Reunion Committee became: the necessary funds were lacking. Businesses and citizens had been

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asked to pledge to a Reunion Fund and a call went out for an appropriation from the Arkansas legislature. The legislature voted down the request, contending the citizens of Little Rock themselves had not contributed enough for an event that would so benefit the city's economy.

There were problems and complaints about the poor spirit some businesses showed toward the pledge drive. Attorney General Hal Norwood, assisting the effort, had pointed words for city saloon owners. Their total contribution was a paltry \$600. He observed since saloons expected huge reunion week business, their owners should substantially boost their pledges. Then he declared himself in favor of returning the \$600 and urging the City Council to pass an ordinance closing saloons during the reunion. The barkeepers were unimpressed. No more funds were forthcoming from them.

Others gave all they could. In a story of the "widow's mite," Mrs. G.W. Hatch of Augusta, Arkansas, wrote the fund-raising committee saying she wanted to contribute but was only a poor widow of a veteran. Instead of money, she offered 3,000 lilies from her garden to pin on visiting veterans, the "noble heroes of the South."

Finally, financial salvation came through a Mr. Harry Ramey's unique plan to sell "dollar tribute buttons." According to the *Arkansas Democrat*, "It is the plan to sell the buttons all over the state, giving every man, woman and child in Arkansas an opportunity to contribute to the entertainment of the Confederate veterans." Ramey enlisted 250 local women and had them canvass the city in order to make it their personal business to see that every man and as many of the women as possible were decorated with the dollar tribute buttons. Ramey even went as far as to write officials in every Arkansas county and the superintendents of all schools in the state asking their aid in selling the buttons. The concept of getting a souvenir and contributing to the cause did the trick; ample funding seemed secured to host the reunion.

The effort to raise funds outside Little Rock yielded at least one impressive effort from Lonoke, a small farming community 20 miles east of Little Rock. The Lonoke Daughters of the Confederacy was awarded a silk Confederate flag in a ceremony after raising \$279. In making the presenta-



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This reunion attendee, a wartime musician, tried to ignore heat exhaustion and march the complete length of the UCV parade route. He didn't make it. But parade-goers admired his pluck and "The Drummer Boy of 61" became the subject of souvenir postcards.

tion, the fund-raising committee's Charles McKee said, "I am grateful for the honor and privilege to present you with a flag dear to every Southern heart. Many a Confederate flag during the dark days of '61 had been stained with the blood of the South and softened by the tears of weeping mothers and wives." In her speech of acceptance Miss Mattie Trimble said, "I assure you we will always regard this flag as the most precious of all our sacred possessions. I can't say more, for as you know when the heart speaks most the lips are dumb."

In this era before mechanical refrigeration and truck transport, gathering

and preparing food for the largest crowd to ever settle on Little Rock proved to be a major endeavor. Wholesale provision companies filled warehouses and had rail cars of extra supplies scheduled for delivery during reunion week. One meat house manager bragged he would do as much business in a week as normally done in a month.

To allay some expressed concerns, the city appointed G.B. Purdom food inspector for the week. Purdom's job was to make the rounds of eateries and butcher shops. In two places he declared meat unsafe for consumption and ordered it destroyed. This city

safety measure was radical for the times; there had never been government food inspection in Arkansas. Purdom was vested by the city with complete police powers — but only for reunion week.

The reunion guide published by the Missouri Pacific Iron Mountain Railroad reflected the hosts efforts to control not only the quality of food served to the old soldiers but also the cost. "EATING?—LOOK FOR THE YELLOW SIGN" proclaimed the illustrated 35-page railroad guide. "The Lodging and Eating Committee has obtained signed contracts with the re-

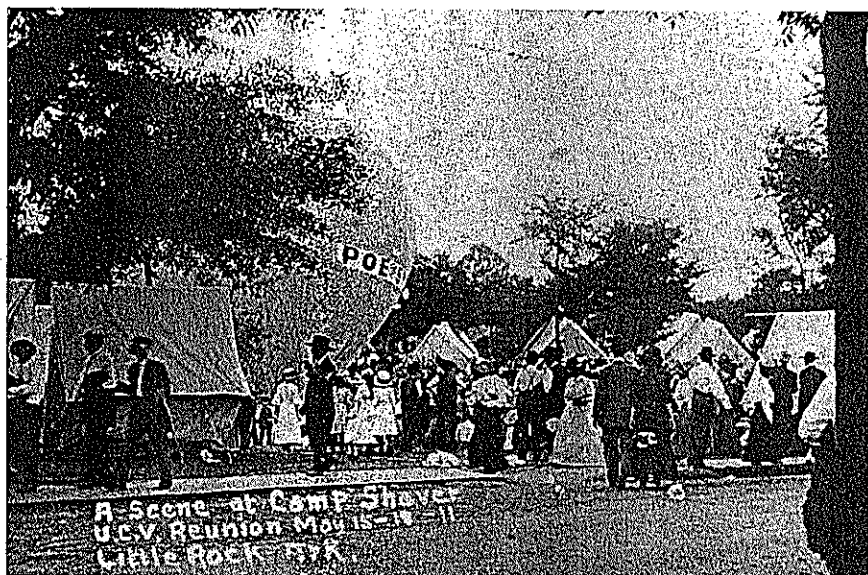
tee members were permitted to refer visitors to approved lodging and eating establishments.

Reported incidents where visitors were overcharged were few, possibly due to the example set by Durand Whipple, chairman of the Eating and Lodging Committee. Shortly after the reunion began, Whipple responded to the complaint of two visiting diners that they had been charged 40 cents for two eggs and coffee. Arriving at the restaurant Whipple admonished the proprietor, George Blatos, that his contract with the Eating Committee prohibited such "gouging." Blatos took

these booths for help. A reunion guide published by one railroad pointed out committee personnel would furnish each visitor with a card "calling for accommodation for one person, giving each person a bed to himself. In the event it is desirable for two people to occupy the same bed the visitor should so state to the attendant at the booth." Each of these cards carried a contract, signed by the boarding-house keeper, declaring prices during the reunion would be as stated on the card. There would be no overcharging for accommodations.

This may have seemed like a fine plan. But reunion organizers exceeded their goal of breaking the UCV reunion attendance record beyond all expectations. Veterans occupied every hotel and boarding house room in Little Rock ... and still more came, looking for places to stay. While at the outset there had been some hotel rooms available, their number came nowhere near approaching the 4,000 first-class accommodations claimed by reunion sponsors. One of the overflowing hostelries was the Hotel Marion. Site of reunion headquarters and probably the city's finest hotel, it offered rooms with a bath from \$2.00 to \$5.00; if the visitor passed on a private bath, rooms were \$1.00 to \$2.00. On the modest end, rooms were advertised at either the Arlington or Union hotels for 50 cents and meals available for another 25 cents, the same price of meals at the YMCA. Reunion guidebooks posted these and all lodging rates.

To fill the need for more accommodations the Lodging Committee let contracts for 15,000 single beds. Many of them were placed in public school buildings, while others were contracted for in private homes at pre-agreed upon prices of \$1.00. Using public schools was unprecedented, but nine of them were set up to house as many as 4,000 visitors. There, cots were available at \$1.00 a day. The high school was reserved for women only, with the Women Teacher's Association also serving meals there. Meanwhile, the Music Committee, headed by a Mr. Frank Gregg, made arrangements with the Merchants Association to feed the bands coming to town to play for various ceremonies and a final parade on Main Street. Lodging for the musicians was secured at the new Chamber of Commerce offices at 4th and Main Streets after equipping the building



Behind tents and trees, a tethered balloon brought in from Arizona. Confederate veterans were to ride it, free of charge. Sadly, it never left the ground. The Reunion Committee blamed the the local gas company's poor grade of fuel for grounding the craft.

sponsible restaurants under which they will charge certain fixed prices for regular meals and separate articles of food during the Reunion. These contracts require the restaurants to post conspicuously a price list corresponding with the contract prices, to be either on the walls or on the menus." All restaurateurs signing contracts were provided with "big yellow placards, to be posted in front of the place of business." Visitors were also told to look for the Reunion Committee's copyrighted emblem on the yellow placards, the promised sign they would not be overcharged for a meal.

In another effort to prevent veterans from being cheated, city officials promised all drummers or lodging agents soliciting business at or near the railway stations would be arrested and prosecuted. Only lodging commit-

tee members were permitted to refer visitors to approved lodging and eating establishments. Whipple reportedly defended himself with equal vigor, which prompted Blatos to attack the eating chairman with a ketchup bottle. Fortunately for Whipple police arrived and arrested Blatos and Reunion staff were posted outside the establishment to warn visitors of possible overcharging.

Reunion boosters knew housing visitors and veterans would be a formidable task; while they wanted to break all attendance records for UCV reunions, they also wanted to insure lodging for every veteran that showed up.

Housing duties fell to the Reunion Lodging Committee. It pledged only those veterans desiring to stay in a hotel would need advance reservations. To accommodate all others it set up booths at railroad stations. Visitors without reservations were to go to

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with cots.... And still more came. Much of the rest of this overflow was accommodated in the city park. With cots and tents provided by the U.S. Army's nearby Fort Roots post, it was converted into a massive encampment, sheltering 10,000 old soldiers.

Before the reunion began, local retail store advertisements took on a decided "stock up now" air. The Retail Grocers Ice Company proclaimed, "we think the time propitious to call your attention to the fact that an unusually large amount of ice will be required during the coming week. We have an abundant supply but we desire to impress on your minds that our wagons will make but one delivery each day during the reunion and whatever you do please don't turn down the first delivery as there will not be a second one. We have on hand 750 tons and are now making 175 tons daily to serve you during Reunion week. Don't treat the veterans cool, we beg of you, but try to keep them cool with ICE purchased from us."

Others looked to cash in. M.M. Cohn, a pioneer Little Rock department store, advertised it would pay railroad fare up to 100 miles on all cash purchases of \$25 and up to 200 miles for \$50 purchases. It also advertised, "We have in stock for immediate delivery Confederate gray uniforms for veterans and sons of veterans — Prices \$9.00, \$12.50, and \$15.00." Cohn's main competitor, the Gus Blass Dry Goods Company, made a pitch for the visiting ladies' business when they included with their clothing ads such messages as "Our rest room will be at the disposal of the ladies, at all hours of the day, where they can come when fatigued, and rest, gossip or shop, as they see fit," and "our checking room, a newly installed feature, will take care of their grips and packages."

Tobacco merchants planning on profits from visiting old soldiers got some unbeatable competition. The American Tobacco Company donated 50 dozen boxes of natural leaf tobacco and rolling papers for free distribution to the old soldiers.

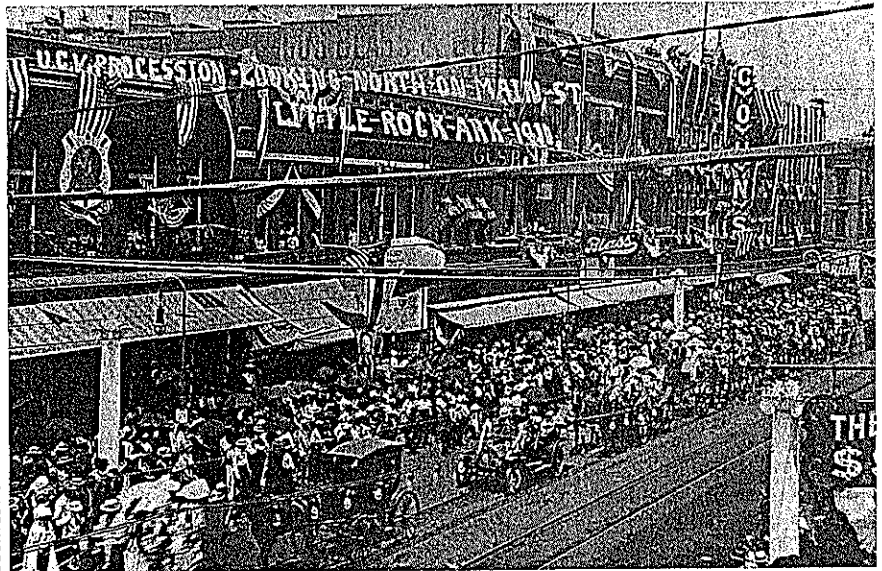
Area newspapers went to considerable lengths to prepare local citizens for the aging Rebels' arrival. An *Arkansas Gazette* editorial told readers: "Most of the men who camped with Lee and [Lieutenant General N.B.] Forrest and fought with them in the dark days of civil strife have already camped on the other side, and

the few who remain are but awaiting the bugle signal to come up higher. Comrades of the past, men who fought battles of the world, will clasp hands and march together in Little Rock for the last time. It is unlike any other reunion or convention ever entertained by Little Rock, because of the fact that many of those who come here will join the great reunion above before the muster roll is called for another reunion here.

"But there's a bright side to it. It is one more opportunity for these old comrades to meet and rehearse the sacred memories and traditions of the

dious journey to the undiscovered country."

The *Arkansas Democrat* was just as persuasive in its effort to impress upon readers the significance of the approaching reunion of the former Confederate army. As the first veterans arrived, it stated "From east and west, north and south, from every State in the Union and from beyond the seas are coming people who have not seen close relatives, former neighbors, childhood associates in years and years, and as they meet at the station, in the camps, or in the streets and recognize each other, the sight is worth seeing....



The Gus Blass Dry Goods Company (center) overlooks reunion activities. Enjoying an onslaught of business, Blass promised women shoppers, "our restrooms will be at the disposal of the ladies, at all hours...where they can come...[to] rest, gossip or shop...."

past. Once more this side of the Great Eternal Throne of God these old heroes in gray can clasp hands and march together ... this is to be one reunion where the old soldier is to have the cushioned seat in the front carriage, and where the best is to be prepared for him. The gay and festive, the young and happy throng will join the reunion and mingle with the veterans, but they must take care of themselves. Little Rock has set herself the task of entertaining the old soldiers better than they have ever been entertained before, and Little Rock makes no failures.

"Of course, there is a business side to it, too, and the people of Little Rock will benefit from a successful reunion. But first and foremost and above all else is the perfect entertainment of those old soldiers who are packing their knapsacks for the last, long, te-

"The reunion is worth all its cost. It demonstrates that the spirit of Southern Chivalry still lives, that King Arthur and his Knights of the Table Round were no whit more brave and tender than are these old heroes of a conflict the like of which has never before and will never again be seen. A lesson to the younger generation, a lesson in courtesy and patriotism. A lesson in patient endurance, a lesson in fidelity to a principle and a lesson in that higher affection, love for one's fellow man.

"The Confederate Reunion is an institution which will be maintained until the pitifully 'Thin Gray Line' dwindles into nothingness and there remains to us but a remembrance of their brave and loving hearts. Keep your temper — do not allow some old, childish veteran's question to vex you.

Answer him, show him what he wants to see, remembering that he is on the verge of the Great Beyond, and that he is perhaps no longer in body and mind as you. The 'Thin Gray Line' is thinner still. Ere we will no longer have the pleasure of honoring their prowess on the field of battle and their endurance and loyalty."

Sentimental musing on the reunion appeared in other prominent Southern papers. The *Memphis Commercial Appeal* editorialized.... "The skeleton of an army — old men — has rallied from all parts of the United States on Little Rock....

"The South owes much to the Confederate soldier for what he has done for the country from 1865 until 1911. The Confederate soldier in every community is strenuous for law, for order, for decency in living and for good citizenship, and from now until the last one of them passes away the Confederate soldiers will be a benediction to the young men of the South.... Fifty years ago these veterans, now gathering, in the buoyancy of youth, were marching throughout this land. Then they were boys; now the burden of the years is on them. Time, who is ever old, but never grows weak, may crush their bodies back into the earth from whence they came, but their knightly souls will never die and the record they made time will never efface from the scrolls of Fame Impermeable."

The *Atlanta Constitution's* story on the Little Rock gathering, made an interesting assessment of the state of the South and looked to the future. "They meet as living symbols of the new era in America — time's abyss bridged, ancient feuds and bitterness remembered, but as a fading dream.... For viewed on the practical side, the South is coming into its own with a sureness not witnessed since Appomattox. Today the nation looks to the South as the stronghold of racial sanity, the field upon which is to be worked out the next great drama in national development. The bigotry and the isolation that ruled, inevitably, during the aftermath of reconstruction, have given away to a breadth and a tolerance that are based upon those Southern ideals worthiest of surviving."

Messages to Little Rock citizens on the significance of the reunion were not confined to local newspapers. Many were issued from pulpits the Sunday before the event opened. The

Reverend J.N. Jessup of the Third Street Christian Church applied logic in his message to his flock: "The appeal of the morning is based on the presumption that we are all patriots. In Little Rock these are days of patriotic demonstrations. The ultra-unionist might say that a Confederate Reunion is not patriotic. On the contrary, I think it is one of the best demonstrations of patriotism. The stars and bars and stars and stripes will mingle in peace. The one will be honored in memory of the past; the other will be honored because it is the flag of a united country and to the glorious destiny it's pledged."

The Reverend William Du Hamel at St. Paul's Episcopal Church proclaimed, "while strong and wise men seek to promote peace in the name of Christ, there are things to be said in favor of war. War tests the mettle of men and produces heroes. If there had been no Civil War there would be no reunions nor remembrances of the deeds of heroism, and no precious history to teach our children that instills patriotic devotion without which our nation would die." The Reverend Du Hamel then seemed to lash out at the causes of the war and left the impression he might still be fighting it. "Moral reforms should not be attempted by fanatical appeals to passion, nor by deceit, nor force. Fire eating abolitionists, attempted raids and the underground Rail Road were responsible for all the horror and suffering of the Civil War.... Again though the Confederacy lost, yet it is victorious in this, that until the thrilling record is forgotten no section of the country will attempt to dominate another portion — the price paid by the North was too great.... Every man ought to thank God that we are united and cemented stronger together than could have been had without the War."

Railroads played a vital role in supplying and moving the great contending armies of the Civil War. They also proved to be the way most of General Lee's old soldiers got to Little Rock in 1911. This was true, in part, because the three railway companies serving Little Rock were competing for reunion business. Together, during reunion week they sold a whopping 118,000 tickets for travel into the city. The Rock Island and Iron Mountain Railroad alone added 100 extra trains carrying 1,500

cars to serve the reunion.

The Frisco Line proclaimed in an ad carried by the monthly *Confederate Veteran* magazine, "ON TO LITTLE ROCK.... Join the army of invasion — be one of the Veterans or Sons of Veterans who will occupy Little Rock during the Reunion.... The best way to reach Little Rock is via the Frisco Lines. Splendid steel trains, of steel coaches, steel chair-cars, steel dining cars and luxurious Pullman sleepers — all brilliantly electric lighted." The ad went on to promise low side trip fares and a free brochure about the reunion and other Frisco services. The Nashville, Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway advertised a "Battlefield Route" to Little Rock with stopovers at battle field sites in Tennessee and Georgia.

Upon alighting from a train in one of Little Rock's teeming train stations, the grizzled veterans were met by the hospitality committees and may have read welcoming editorials in the local newspapers that had spread so much ink preparing the local populace for the event.

"Little Rock went to Mobile last year intent upon securing the 1911 Reunion. There she made promises of entertainment. You accepted our invitation. We are glad you did. You are welcome, those of you who fought under the Stars and Bars, because of that fact, because you went to the call of your country and battled and suffered for the cause you deemed righteous — we welcome also the descendants of the Southern soldiers now here because in this manner we may do honor to the memory of those brave souls who have already answered the last roll call — we welcome the wives, widows and daughters of Southern chivalry and then because of the fact that you are the best representatives of true Southern womanhood embodying the best of the beauty and culture of the nation."

Prominently displayed in the newspapers, on White House letterhead, were greetings to the assembled veterans from President William Howard Taft, an Ohio native. "The men of the Confederate army fought for a principle which they believed to be right, and for which they were willing to sacrifice their lives, their homes — fact all those things which men hold dear. As we recognize their heroic services, so they and their descendants must honor the services rendered by the gallant sons of the North in the

struggle for the preservation of the Union. The contending forces of nearly half a century ago have given place to a united North and South, and to an enduring union, in whose responsibilities and glorious destiny we equally share....

The veterans sent a reply resolution to President Taft stating that while the South was intensely loyal to its Confederate veterans, it recognized with honor the courageous men who battled the South. Their message also commended Taft for the setting aside a portion of Arlington National Cemetery for the Confederate dead when he was President Theodore Roosevelt's secretary of war.

Having completed the formal exchange of messages, most veterans went off to be housed in the sea of tents erected in the Little Rock City Park, itself the former Federal arsenal ground — a spot held at different times by both the Blue and Gray armies during the Civil War. During the reunion the encampment was known as Camp Shaver, after "General" R.G. Shaver of Mena, Arkansas, a noted veteran who took charge of the massive tent city and the herculean task of feeding and housing some 10,000 elderly men.

The choice of 80-year-old Robert Glenn "Fighting Bob" Shaver as camp leader was a colorful one. During the war Shaver commanded the 27th Arkansas Regiment. In Tennessee at the April 1862 Battle of Shiloh four horses were reportedly shot from under him and he was himself wounded twice, once in the shoulder and once in the hand — the disfiguring hand wound caused him to wear a glove the rest of his life. He was serving at Marshall, Texas in Spring 1865 when he heard the war had ended. Upon arriving at Shreveport, Louisiana, he and his men discovered they were among the last organized Rebel units to surrender.

Fighting Bob's disinclination to quit may have been a family trait. Rather than deal with Federal authorities, Shaver's cousin, Confederate Brigadier General Joseph Shelby, led his old command into Mexico and tried to take up the life of a soldier of fortune. Equally allergic to Federal authority, Shaver ran afoul of Arkansas' Reconstruction government in 1868. Charged with being a member of the Ku Klux Klan and indicted for murder and treason, he fled the state, traveling

first to New Orleans then British Honduras. After four years there, his friend Elisha Baxter — elected governor of Arkansas — had the charges against him dropped. Shaver returned home, practiced law, served as sheriff of Howard County and ultimately settled in the mountain town of Mena.

The job of readying and operating the camp was as challenging as preparing for battle and Shaver and Joe Bateman — in charge of the camp commissary — oversaw everything. First, there were the enormous dining tents: erected like old circus tents and joined together, they gave the camp mess a table capacity of 2,000 people. In them 25 cooks, 60 waiters, and 20 dishwashers served the veterans. Seven huge ovens were set up and steam and water lines laid.

In reading over the listing of food consumed by the veterans in three days the senses are almost overwhelmed. Coffee provisions alone stagger the imagination — three 60 gallon coffee urns were erected along with a special 18x20-foot ice chest. Over the course of the reunion, the old soldiers consumed 16,000 loaves of bread, 8,000 pounds of steak, 3,000 pounds of roast beef, 110 cases of eggs and 1,700 pounds of coffee. The men helped themselves to 350 bushels of potatoes, 125 gallons each of canned corn, canned peaches, apples and apricots, 600 pounds of navy beans and topped it off with a reported 300 pounds of tapioca pudding. Not counting the sandwiches and coffee available around the clock, when the event ended it turned out 54,000 meals had been served. Bragging about the commissary job Joe Bateman did, many veterans said had General Lee had his service "in the 60s" the South would have defeated General Grant's troops.

All did not go perfectly in the camp, regardless of the remarkable job done by Commissary Bateman, and Shaver was quite vocal in his displeasure. He became angry with the way in which the veterans made a rush on the dining room at the first meal served. "This will not be done anymore," he said "because there is no necessity for it. We have made ample provisions for all veterans to be fed wholesome food and as quickly as ever done at any reunion. If there is anymore of this rushing and shoving I will place the State Guards at the entrance to enforce order."

At one point a fire began on the roof of a cook tent; it was apparently

caused by a hot stove pipe. A Commissary committeeman ordered two black men up to douse the fire; one of them promptly fell through a hole in the roof and, according to witnesses, landed in the middle of a crowded dining table then bounced three feet into the air. One newspaper reported "the negro that was still on the tent roof lost his head and emptied a bucket of water down the hole, which landed on two veterans. One of the men never even stopped eating and the other just put up an umbrella and remarked "that's the quickest cloud-burst I ever saw in my life."

One camp installation was a cause for a stern warning from Little Rock Superintendent of Public Works H. Levinson. A sanitary sewer line was put into the encampment to connect four lavatories to the city sewer system. Levinson warned, "I wish to caution all property owners to get after their cooks and instruct them not to allow slops, vegetable peelings, old bread and many things to get into the sanitary sewer next week; with the thousands of visitors in our city, our sewers will be greatly overtaxed even at the best." Then he announced he meant business: "The Sanitary Officers will be instructed to look after all persons throwing refuse into the sewers, and when they are discovered, they will be prosecuted. The sewer department has just finished clearing a sewer between Izard and Chester streets, and in this sewer were found tin cans, cabbage leaves, and many other things stopping up the system ... we must and will make every effort to eliminate this problem during the Reunion."

Camp Shaver was connected to Main Street several blocks away by a 5,000-volt trolley feeder line. Two lines of incandescent lights were strung on plaster columns specially erected between the park and the central business streets. Banners and portraits of Confederate President Jefferson Davis, General Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson draped these arteries leading from the encampment. One banner stretched over Main Street was of two uniformed, clasped hands, one with a gray sleeve, one of blue. It was provided by the local GAR or Grand Army of the Republic, the Union version of the UCV. And, adding a touch of the exotic was a tethered passenger balloon — report-

CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS 1992

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edly the largest in the world —
brought in from Arizona by the
Reunion Committee. Veterans were to
be given free rides on it. But to the
disappointment of all, the craft would
not rise. This failure was blamed on
the heaviness of the gas supplied by
the local gas company.

As large as Camp Shaver was it
proved inadequate to house the unex-
pectedly large number of veterans, and
was quickly filled to capacity. On the
first night many were found sleeping
on the ground, under bushes and on
park benches. In Union Station in the
early morning hours a grizzled old
veteran and his little grandson were
found asleep in one another's arms in
a darkened corner. Both were roused
and transferred to emergency accom-
modations.

To make amends for underestimat-
ing the required sleeping accommoda-
tions, the Lodging Committee
launched a fleet of automobiles, bug-
gies and street cars to pick up these
old soldiers and transport them to
hastily arranged lodging. Some 1,500
ended up at the Peabody Public
School on Capitol Avenue; another
300 were placed at a makeshift Camp
Kavanaugh erected at 25th and
Gaines. Helping as best it could, the
350-man National Guard unit on duty
gave up its tents and cots and bedded
down on hay in the park.

After this first night, city officials
pondered their plight. They had pre-
pared for little more than half the visi-
tors that were pouring into Little
Rock. Reunion Executive Chairman
Judge W.M. Kavanaugh proclaimed:
"We are confronted with a crisis....
The crowds exceed our wildest expec-
tations. I want to appeal to every pub-
lic spirited citizen to appoint himself a
committee of one to entertain veterans
and visitors. Let us show that Little
Rock can rise to a crisis.... We have
rented every cot we can find." Then he
urged citizens to hurry and list beds in
private homes with the lodging com-
mittee as available for rent. Mean-
while the committee would
renew its efforts to feed and house the
veterans free of charge.

A recognized thrill at reunions was
the frequent reuniting of long-lost
friends and relatives. At Little Rock,
Henry and Earl Cook met for the first
time in Camp Shaver — surprising in
that they were father and son. Henry
had separated from Earl's mother
shortly before his birth and was intro-

duced to him when the younger Cook visited the camp, perused the register and tracked down his Confederate veteran father.

Gus and Willis Thompson, brothers, were separated 50 years before; neither knew whether or not the other still lived. While Willis was at war, Gus, then only age 8, left Atlanta, Georgia with Texas-bound emigrants during Union Major General William T. Sherman's attacks on the city. Gus had returned to Atlanta after the Confederate surrender to find his parents dead and not a trace of little brother Willis. On a whim Willis came to Little Rock, found Gus Thompson in Camp Shaver's Georgia delegation register and reportedly had a thrilling reunion with his long lost brother.

People also were reunited with lost objects of devotion. The Cheneyville Rifles, a Louisiana regiment, lost its battle flag at the close of the war. Veterans recovered it at the Little Rock reunion when it was returned by Mrs. Frank Anthony Walker of Norfolk, Virginia. Mrs. Walker said she held onto the coveted cloth for almost 20 years, but never knew to which regiment it belonged. Made of the wedding dress of the wife of the commander of the regiment, the flag was described as white on one side, blue on the other with 11 white stars. It bore the inscription: "For God and Country." Mrs. Walker said it had been given to her late husband years before and she had long wanted it returned to its regiment.

There was another treasured relic on display in the Main Street window of Stiff's Jewelry Store. A cross made of mother-of-pearl had been crafted by Confederate prisoners held at Rock Island, Illinois. It was originally a gift from the imprisoned Rebels to a Kentucky woman, Mary Ellington. The late Miss Ellington had started a drive to raise \$4,000 for the purchase of supplies for the relief of Southern troops held in Union prisons.

J.A. Templeton, a Texas veteran, was in Little Rock, also seeking to return a war relic to the family of its owner. It was a Bible he picked up on the battlefield at Peach Tree Creek, Georgia in 1864. Written on the flyleaf of the Bible was, "The gift of a sister to her brother going to war. Read a portion of this holy book everyday. Don't forget the prayer our mother taught us. Fear and trust in God, obey your officers, be true to your country.

You have a Sister's prayer. Shelby County, Alabama, April 8, 1864." On another page was written by the soldier, "If I ever fall on the battlefield among the glorious dead I want my Bible to accompany me to my grave." Mr. Templeton sought any relatives of the soldier, E.E.V. Caldwell, to whom he might convey the book.

One of the unexpected surprises at the reunion was the presence of "an ancient Negro" who had cooked for famed Confederate Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson during the war. Jefferson Shields, age 88, came all the way from Lexington,

graph article the *Arkansas Gazette* reported on a meeting of "Negro body servants" occurring at Arkansas Baptist College, a black school in the city. "There are about 80 negroes of the good old kind who are proud to be called 'niggers.' They were the faithful slaves who stayed by their masters to the end.... Two of them were in the army of the famous cavalry general, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and another followed General [P.G.T.] Beauregard. They performed different menial tasks about the camp and battlefield such as digging trenches and carrying off the dead and wounded.



GROUP IN LITTLE ROCK DURING THE ARKANSAS STATE REUNION OF UNITED CONFEDERATE VETERANS.

The UCV Kansas delegation poses for the camera. For them and many Rebel veterans, the Little Rock reunion offered a last chance to renew old acquaintances and look for long-lost comrades and relatives. Younger men in the photo are Sons of Confederate Veterans.

Virginia. He reported he was 36 when the war broke out, and was captured and subsequently released by Union Major General Joe Hooker. Shields then attached himself to Jackson, for whom he worked until the famed Rebel leader was accidentally killed by his own troops in 1863. Newspapers reported even at age 88 the old man looked hale and hearty while he interested hordes of listeners with his war stories, some of them fabricated. He was quoted as saying, "I stood near General Lee and General Jackson when he [Jackson] reined up his horse to survey the field at Manassas. General Lee said, 'that man has not a scared bone in his body, he's just like a stone wall' and after that the General was called Stonewall by his whole army."

As unlikely as it seems, there was another reunion being held in Little Rock in conjunction with the UCV gathering. In a patronizing three para-

"One of them was in Georgia when Sherman made his march to the sea. He told of frightful scenes of bloodshed and carnage. Another told of one of Forrest's raids, when the army was forced to lay planks one foot wide on a railroad bridge to get the horses across. The boards that they used were laid on a trestle 100 feet above the river and served as a shaky transit for the cavalry horses.... According to all of them, their chief occupation was 'dodging bullets.' They were all right when the fighting was in the front but when the army was attacked on the rear they used their heels to good advantage.

"These old Negroes seem very glad to be at this reunion. They are satisfied with the accommodations they have and seem to expect good care in return for their service to their 'old masters' during the war. There are also some white people who are trying to make them comfortable."

At the close of the reunion the black

veterans and "servants" met on the lawn of City Hall to pass a resolution of thanks to the people of Little Rock for the manner in which they were treated: "We are gathered here today to give thanks to the good people of the City for their kind treatment toward the Negro veterans.... We have met with many reunions but we would like to say the Lord lives in Little Rock. For, according to God's word, we must say that where good is enacted God is in it. So for this cause we believe that the Lord lives near Little Rock. If I were permitted to do so I would change the name of Little Rock to 'Little Rock Paradise,' or I would call it the 'Paradisical City.' I have been almost persuaded to say, like old Peter of old, 'Let us build here three tabernacles in Little Rock and stay here.'" The resolution was signed by C.W. Perry, Chieftan of Colored Veterans. Indeed, remarkable words from a black man to the mostly white citizens of Little Rock in the midst of a Confederate reunion occurring because of a war fought 50 years before, largely over the enslavement of black Americans.

The involvement of blacks in reunion activities seems to have been especially appealing to newspaper reporters. They took note that 79-year-old Rueben Patterson, a black man from Florence, Alabama, wore a badge of honor said to have been given to him by Confederate Major General Joe Wheeler for faithful war service. Patterson, "crippled and unique in appearance," was a servant to both Generals Wheeler and Forrest who reportedly had been brought to the reunion as a "mascot" by a group of Alabama veterans. The old man was also in possession of a horseshoe he claimed to be from the mount of Confederate Major General Pat Cleburne, the noted Arkansas Confederate officer who, along with his horse, was killed in the 1864 Battle of Franklin, Tennessee. He said he saved the Cleburne horseshoe for almost 50 years, awaiting the chance to give it to someone who would appreciate it. He found such a group when he presented the prized relic to the Arkansas Historical Association.

Eighty-year-old Captain E.S. Bishop of Artesia, New Mexico, once a member of the 25th Virginia Cavalry, also interested many visitors. Bishop, a veteran of many of the hardest-fought battles, wounded five times, proudly

...He Was Hurled High In The Air By An Explosion...

told listeners he was never captured. Colonel W.H. Halliburton of DeWitt, Arkansas, at age 95, was probably the oldest veteran present. In 1861 he had been appointed Collector of War Taxes for Arkansas by Jefferson Davis. His had been a job he was quite proud of; he showed off his appointment certificate, signed by Davis, to everyone who would look.

C.B. Graham, a 75-year-old South Carolina veteran, reportedly impressed a group of young women who found him appealing. "I own a large plantation, have money in the bank, and am looking for a wife," he said, inviting any of them to join him in an automobile ride.

He is supposed to have promised would-be-brides "anything you want is yours." But the "girls were hesitant about accepting the old man's offer, when a comely widow who had been listening from a distance approached Graham to volunteer." The old gentleman reportedly looked her over and advised he preferred the younger girls, and was last seen taking them all toward a cafe.

Colonel W.O. Coleman of the 4th Missouri Cavalry brought startling but certainly false news to the reunion. He reported infamous Civil War guerilla leader Charles Quantrell had not really been killed at the close of the war but was alive and well and living as a wealthy rancher in Mexico. Coleman related details of how Quantrell allegedly made his escape and insisted he personally had seen and spoken with the soldier-turned-outlaw.

One of the more significant human interest stories, however, was the moving dedication ceremony for the monument to the "Little Rock Guards" regiment, a statue of a solitary Confederate soldier from the unit formally known as the 6th Arkansas Infantry. The monument (which still stands in Little Rock's City Park) was showered with 20,000 roses during the ceremony. Seventy-three men, the pick of Little Rock, joined the 6th and went off to the war: 67 failed to return.

Three survivors of the regiment were present at the ceremony; one, Ben Scull, spoke for national unity. He said, "the only trace of the Mason Dixon line now, thank God, is the difference of hot biscuits and cold bread."

There was one female veteran among the thousands of men; she was Miss Mary Hall of Augusta, Georgia, a woman who never took the vow of loyalty to the Union. Though getting feeble with age, Miss Hall still wore her Confederate gray uniform, with only a skirt distinguishing hers from the men's. Around her waist was a belt of gold buttons, one for each of the 11 Confederate states, clasped by the buckle worn by her brother, killed by Union troops at the 1863 Battle of Murfreesboro, Tennessee. It was said she never stood under a U.S. flag without being sure of having a small Confederate flag in her hair or hat.

This "UnReconstructed" Rebel was said to have served the South as both a scout and nurse during the war. She claimed to have closed the glazing eyes of many a dying young soldier and to have conducted funeral services over the graves of hundreds of others. In the UCV organization, Miss Hall was the historian of the Southern Confederate Memorial Association with the primary duty of looking after memorials and Confederate cemeteries.

Another interesting reunion attendee belonged to the West Virginia delegation. He was J. Ogden Murray, the inspector general of the UCV in that state and noted author of Civil War tales. His best-known work was *The Immortal 600*, the tragic story of what happened when 600 Confederate prisoners were confined on a sandy island in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor with little food or water for 40 days. Many were reported to have died of starvation.

Among the best battle tales at the reunion were some told by Colonel W.B. Freeman of Richmond, Virginia. He served throughout the conflict in the 34th Virginia Regiment. Newspapers reported he told one on Smith Lipscombe of Bonham, Texas, once a member of a South Carolina regiment. In July 1864 during the Siege of Petersburg, Lipscomb was standing in a shell crater when he was hurled high in the air by an explosion. After "taking a slanting route, [he] landed safely near an Alabama regiment. After gathering himself together and rubbing the dust and debris from his eyes, Lipscombe

accosted the Alabama commander with the query: 'Where am I?'

"With the Alabama troops," came the reply over the din of battle. 'May I finish the day fighting with your command?' asked Lipscomb. Consent was granted."

In case there was any doubt about the truth of the account, Lipscomb was in Little Rock to verify Colonel Freeman's yarn.

J.R. Gibbons, a veteran from Bauxite, Arkansas, relayed a battlefield tale of General Robert E. Lee to the *Arkansas Gazette*. Gibbons said, during the Battle of Gettysburg, General Lee and staff came to a nest of young birds, not able to fly. He stopped and dismounted from his horse, gathered up the nest with the birds in it and put it in a protected place so the men and horses rushing over the fields would not harm the birds.

Two North Carolina brothers were a topic of conversation because of their matching artificial cork legs. H.G. and L.J. Walker suffered similar wounds at the Battle of Gettysburg and both had their left legs amputated below the knee. Their artificial limbs were interchangeable because of almost identical wounds and amputations. In a tale of soldier's wartime hardship Benjamin Green, once a private in Company B of the 2d Arkansas, made listeners appreciate their shoes. Green said his regiment had only 14 pairs of shoes and not an overcoat in the entire group. The 14 men with shoes had to stand all guard duty, as well as march and fight during the day. Finally, when they could no longer stay awake on guard duty the unshod men stood guard on frozen ground. Green recalled he often saw bloody tracks in the snow.

Some current events turned out to be as noteworthy as the old soldiers' stories. The Arkansas State Legislature was in session at the Capitol while the reunion was going on. In what can only be called, to be kind, terrible political timing, a state senator named Christian tried to pass a bill setting aside space on the Capitol lawn for a monument to the 8,000 Arkansas men who fought for the Union during the Civil War. Christian only wanted the space; though the Confederate Monument standing before the new Capitol building had been erected partially with public funds, the Unionist monument would be erected with donations alone.

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Christian's bill was defeated because opponents claimed donations would pour in from Northern states to erect a Union monument that would dwarf the Confederate one, insulting men such as the Confederate veterans then meeting in the city. Christian argued for fairness: Illinois had recently erected a large memorial to Confederate prisoners of war who died in captivity. This failed to sway a majority of legislators. Arkansas' Confederate memorial still stands on the Arkansas Capitol grounds today, unchallenged by a Union one.

On a lighter note, during reunion week many noticed one particular Little Rock storefront. There was an interesting display in the window of the O.K. Houck Piano Store on Main Street. As a newspaper described it: "The window shows a superb player piano with an old Confederate on the stool playing songs sweet to the ear, with an attentive audience. The veteran shown in this window is, of course a make-believe veteran, as no old soldier would be strong enough to stand up under the strain of playing the large piano all day."

Photographers were much in evidence during the reunion, with the bulk of the photos still preserved today because they were printed as picture postcards by entrepreneurs. And, had early motion picture film not disintegrated, another real treasure might have survived from the reunion. The Reunion Concession Committee let a contract to the Industrial Moving Picture Company of Chicago to make a movie of key portions of the event, especially the final parade. Apparently, no copies of the movie survive.

One photographer had a rather startling experience attempting to ply his trade. One of the numerous vendors of "pictures while you wait" lined up a party of four veterans in front of the county courthouse and as he was about to press the shutter button a tire exploded on a passing automobile. The noise was mistaken for a gunshot. One of the old soldiers bolted, knocking over and breaking the camera in the process. The old gentleman was a block away before someone could catch him. He stated he thought the enemy was attacking him from the rear and he did not intend to take any chances for the benefit of his comrades "coming around tomorrow and saying, 'don't he look natural.'"

...Some Would Answer "The Final Roll Call...."

The mistaken gunshot may have made for a good joke, but security during the reunion did concern the people of Little Rock. A group of 300 citizens were deputized "Reunion Guards" supplementing city police and National Guard troops. The ununiformed Guards patrolled Camp Shaver wearing special badges.

Deputizing some of the citizenry was not necessarily a bad idea. At one point during the reunion, 40 persons were reported jailed, mostly for pick-pocket offenses. A Judge Tweed was quoted as being sure the criminals had come to town solely to fleece the old soldiers. Rather than attempt to try the suspects, he just kept them locked up until the veterans and visitors left town at reunion's end.

Three veterans were robbed of all their cash on a darkened Cotton Belt train pulling into Little Rock; a total of \$62.00 was taken from them. Apologetic, the Reunion Committee promised to see that all the victims' needs were met.

There was also a bizarre kidnap attempt reported during the reunion, but it was not against a veteran. In an advertised fund raising benefit to assist in entertaining the old soldiers, reunion officials had brought to town Nicholai, "The Famous Little Russian Prince," to be exhibited daily on Main Street.

Advertisements describing Nicholai claimed "All other midgets are giants in size compared to him.... He is not larger than a three, month old baby ... 22-years-old, weighing 16 pounds, and 27 inches in height. A full-grown, perfectly formed man who has been presented to Kings, Queens and Emperors."

The *Arkansas Democrat* gave an account of Nicholai's close call. "G.W. Jester Williard, Nicholai's manager, was startled to hear cries from the midget whom he had left standing on the platform after an arduous performance.... When Williard rushed out the Prince was not to be seen. A suspicious bulge under a fleeing man's coat proved to be

Prince Nicholai." When Williard and an assistant reached the kidnapper, "...he was in the act of springing into an auto. Mr. Williard caught hold of him and held him fast, while another man dived into the bulging pocket, and extracted the midget."

The kidnapper escaped in his 1911 vintage auto and was not apprehended. Prince Nicholai, when asked for comment, said: "My, of my, but that was a close shave. I was awfully scared when I was plunked down in that man's pocket. He got me in there head first and I nearly smothered before I was able to wiggle around and get on my feet.... The fellow kept running and I was bumped against his legs, but Mr. Williard was Johnny at the rat hole, and here I am. Say, have you got a Havana on you?" The last word on Nicholai was that he was smoking his cigar and sighing contentedly.

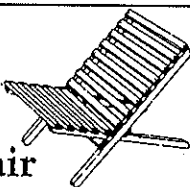
Crime, however, was not as much of a concern as personal support for the aged Confederate soldiers. Among volunteers assisting the veterans in and around Camp Shaver was Little Rock's Boy Scout Troop #1. The uniformed scouts were reported by the press to be "making themselves useful in general, rendering their services where ever needed. This assignment was founded for the betterment of the boys, physically and morally. They are to take all physical exercise possible and camp out" — which most did on the grounds of Peabody Public School.

During the course of the event, a gathering of thousands of elderly men, it was inevitable some would answer "the final roll call" while in Little Rock. W.E. Smith of Cooksville, Texas, collapsed and died in Union Station. W.L. Galloway of Paris, Texas, died of a broken neck when he fell from a second story window of the Peabody Public School. The body of T.B. Duckett, a veteran from Ashville, North Carolina, was found in the Arkansas River after he fell from a bridge; the same fate was met by 78-year-old J.M. Bailey of Gage, Texas.

Despite the occasional unfortunate incident, the veterans did enjoy themselves and took advantage of one of their last public opportunities to state their case, to explain the Confederate position and tell others why they had served. In various speeches and committees, reunion participants took issue with the commonly held belief that the Civil War was fought primar-

Continued on page 60

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Gray Reunion

Continued from page 56

ily over the slavery issue. In his welcome to the veterans, former Arkansas Governor Dan Jones, the last Confederate veteran to hold the post (1897-1901), proclaimed: "Some say that the war was fought for the retention in slavery of the African race. Not one in a hundred of those who marched under the stars and bars were slave owners or ever expected to be. Fight for slaves: We fought for the constitution and now we have a Union which I am proud of, but which I was not proud of when the war broke out."

Speakers urged reforms in punitive government policies that demonstrated a lack of understanding that the South had fought for a noble cause. Among the policies named was one maintained by the U.S. Navy; it prohibited a man from becoming an officer in that branch of the service if he was affiliated with the UCV.

During the course of his remarks to the UCV Association of Confederate Officers, Dr. W.J. Kerr of Corsicana, Texas, blasted the concept that Southern troops were responsible for hundreds of Union troops dying in the Rebel prison at Andersonville, Georgia. He stated the deaths were not caused by lack of food or bad treatment, but from pellagra, a vitamin deficiency disorder unrecognized in that day. The shocking number of deaths brought on the U.S. Government's hanging of Andersonville prison warden Captain Heinrich Wirtz as a war criminal. Dr. Kerr said Wirtz' execution was the most cruel murder ever perpetrated by the federal government.

Kerr, in the same speech, espoused a new and — from the modern perspective — fantastic theory on the assassination of President Lincoln. Kerr claimed he had information that Lincoln was killed because he refused to appoint a certain man to a prominent position, and that John Wilkes Booth was selected by a religious sect to kill the President. Kerr went on to say Booth was never captured; he allegedly escaped and went to Canada and from there to Paris, France, later returning to Dallas, Texas, where he operated a grocery store under an assumed name and educated his two daughters in a Dallas convent. Afterwards Booth allegedly moved to Oklahoma, where he died only a few years previously.

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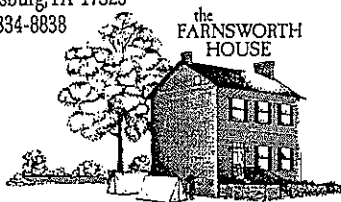
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Then-current Northern histories of the Civil War were attacked with venom. In one speech the commander-in-chief of the UCV, former Confederate Brigadier General George Washington Gordon, challenged the theory that the South lost because of God's divine will. "I subscribe to no such doctrine.... The South was defeated for lack of physical resources: that was all. It was not due to the direction of any supernatural power."

Then with the camping, hijinks and speech-making concluded, the highlight of the reunion came with the grand parade on the third and final day. One hundred and fifty thousand persons lined the route followed by marching and mounted veterans, old men accompanied by 14 bands, automobiles, wagons and a float bearing the queen of the UCV ball. Once the sidewalks and grandstands were filled, rooftops along Main Street began to spout spectators. People even climbed telegraph poles and hung from windows to view the spectacle. Accounts reported it took almost two hours for the parade to pass a given point on its 20-block route. Prime viewing spots were staked out hours in advance and "choice positions on curb and sidewalk were soon commanding as much energy to maintain as was once required to hold a fort against attacking bluecoats."

The parade began at the Old State House at Markham and Center Streets. A few fatigued veterans dropped out early at the gates. According to newspaper accounts, strains of "Dixie" rolled out from 390 musicians, generating cheers and Rebel Yells from the crowd.

It was hot in Little Rock that day. Weather conditions were described as "tropical." Frequent obstructions halted the procession; young ladies were seen rushing from curb side to furnish handkerchiefs to the old men, removing their gray caps to mop perspiring brows. Other ladies supplied fans, and helped those veterans whose steps faltered. Mixing in with the tune to "Dixie" were ambulance bells. Veterans fell from heat prostration and had to be removed for treatment. Some tough but over-heated old boys refused treatment and staggered back into the parade line.

To everyone's amazement, there were no fatalities in this straggling body of some 12,000 elderly men, an aging "thin gray line." But mishaps did occur along the route. On one

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The title of this publication is CIVIL WAR TIMES ILLUSTRATED (USPS 527-250; ISSN 0009-8094). It is published bimonthly. The offices of publication and the general business offices are located at 6405 Flank Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112. The editor is John Stanchak, P.O. Box 8200, Harrisburg, PA 17105. The owner is Cowles Magazines, Inc., 6405 Flank Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112. The sole stockholder owning 1% or more of the total amount of stock of Cowles Magazines, Inc. is Cowles Media Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Stockholders owning 1% or more of the total amount of stock of Cowles Media Co. are John Cowles, Jr.; Jane Sage Fuller Cowles; Margaret M. Bullitt-Jonas; Robert Jonas; Christine Jonas; John Terry Bullitt; John Cowles III; Page Knudsen Cowles; Jane Sage Cowles; Ann Stephens; Charles Fuller Cowles; Jennifer Keefe Cowles; Tessa Sage Flores; Russell Cowles Jr.; Marguerite A. Cowles; Melissa Ann Cowles; Amy Yolanda Cowles; Stephen Anthony Succo; James Succo, all in the care of Sherburne & Coughlin, Ltd., Minneapolis, Minnesota; Morley Cowles Ballantine; Richard Gale Ballantine, in care of Durango Herald, Durango, Colorado; Sarah Cow as Doering, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Elizabeth Ballantine; Paul W. Leavitt, McLean, Virginia; William Gay Ballantine, Seattle, Washington; Helen Ballantine Healy; Edward J. Healy, Wichita, Kansas; John Marie Bullitt, Alma, Michigan; Elizabeth Bullitt-Friedman; Allan H. Friedman; Durham, North Carolina; Lois Cowles Harrison; Homer Hooks, Lakeland, Florida; Gardner Mark Harrison, Winter Haven, Florida; John Patrick Harrison, Winter Park, Florida; Lois Eleanor Harrison, New York, New York; Gardner Cowles III, East Setauket, New York; Kate Cowles Nichols, Tierra Verde, Florida; Elizabeth Leis Strauss, Aventura, New York; Gwen Beatrix Strauss, Paris, France; Kate Anne Strauss, Albany, California; David Kruldenier; Luther L. H. Jr., Des Moines, Iowa; Lisa Kruldenier, Carbondale, Colorado; William A. Cordingley, Scottsdale, Arizona; Bruch & Co. in care of First Trust Company, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and The Washington Post Company, Washington, D.C. There are no bondholders, mortgagees or other security holders. The average number of copies printed per issue during the preceding 12 months was 194,091; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 204,038. The average sale of copies through dealers, carriers, street vendors, and counter sales for the preceding 12 months was 13,534; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 13,375. The average sale of copies through mail subscription for the preceding 12 months was 157,178; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 165,867. The average paid circulation per issue for the preceding 12 months was 170,710; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 179,242. The average number of sample, complimentary or free copies distributed for each issue during the preceding 12 months was 993; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 876. The average number of copies distributed for each issue during the preceding 12 months by a means was 171,702; for Sept./Oct. 1991, 180,118.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

John Stanchak
Editor

block viewers piled up boxes and chairs to see over those in the front. These homemade, precarious bleachers collapsed, but without injuries. At 5th and Main, the entire parade was halted when a buggy bearing six young ladies stopped because of a balky horse. All sorts of remedies failed to move the beast; one spectator shouted, "build a fire under him." Finally a powerful twist of the animal's ear by a policeman motivated the animal to resume his progress and that of the parade.

The Kentucky parade delegation was distinguished by its advertising of that state's main product. The lead veteran's hat was adorned with "a fine sample of thoroughbred tobacco leaf with shining leaves of rich brown."

The Texas delegation took a humorous jab at the fact the veterans group seemed "top heavy" with generals and colonels: the Ft. Worth contingent carried a banner reading, "We ate the few remaining privates in the Confederate Army." The Texas delegation also was noted for a "unique mascot," an "old plantation Negro" decked out as a forager. The man carried "a live, squawking chicken and an armful of corn, and other vegetables that might have been used for a Civil War mess camp."

Oklahoma's veterans marched under a banner reading "Baby State," recognizing their territory had just been granted statehood in 1907. The 4th Georgia regiment bore a flag described as little more than a staff and outline of the banner. Most of the stars had been cut away by bullets during the many battles through which it had been carried.

All along the route the soldiers displayed torn and shot-riddled flags, precious relics preserved for almost 50 years. They also displayed worn, torn and shot-riddled bodies. It was noted a number of veterans were missing legs or had empty coat sleeves pinned to their breasts. Everyone noticed the elderly black man pushing an equally elderly but infirm gray-clad veteran along the route in a high-backed wheelchair. Then there was the elderly drummer. He had entered the war a youth in 1861 and had come to Little Rock to play his old drum. He collapsed in the heat with his instrument, but made a valiant effort to continue. Falling into the arms of a policeman he cried: "Just fan me a little and help me along and I will finish this march or die in the attempt." Instead he was

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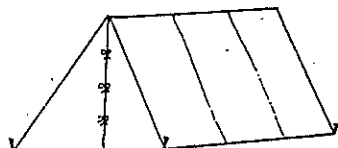
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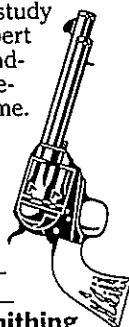
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removed to a hotel for treatment. There, he refused to give his name, but photos of him taken earlier at Camp Shaver became popular postcards. The spirit of this nameless old soldier struggling against the infirmities of time epitomized what the reunion was truly about.

A week later, in a retrospective view of the reunion, the *Lonoke Democrat* wrote: "Every reunion finds a greater number who have spread their tents on Fames eternal camping ground. They have long since turned over the crest of the hill of life and are fast approaching its foot. May their journey down it be amid the ministrations of friends, the peaceful shade of trees, the singing of birds, the perfume of flowers and may they at last sleep at the foot of the hill in that peace that passeth understanding."

Sadly, that seemed to be the outlook at most of these gatherings ... and there would be a few more over the next several years. But the conclusion of the Little Rock parade signaled the end of the 21st Annual United Confederate Veterans Reunion and perhaps a little something more.

At the end of the third and last day of the event, Camp Shaver was dismantled and decorations along the parade route came down. Thousands of old soldiers crowding onto railroad platforms began saying tearful good-byes. A bugler played "Taps" at Union Station over the crowds and trains, an unnecessary reminder that many of these men who had fought with Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson would never meet again, at least in this life. UCV commander Gordon, for one, would not live out the summer.

The Civil War had been part and parcel of all those veterans' lives. For many, it was the time they best remembered. For others, it was the time for which they were best remembered. Little Rock reunion manager "Fighting Bob" Shaver answered the final roll call in 1915. His obituary listed, at least as a contributing factor in his death, wounds suffered at the Battle of Shiloh, a struggle fought more than 50 years before in a place in history, far, far away. ■

Ray Hanley is a freelance writer from Little Rock, Arkansas. The photographs accompanying his article came from his personal collection of commemorative 1911 reunion postcards.

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