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## Civil War Memory and the Preservation of the Olustee Battlefield

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CIVIL WAR MEMORY AND THE PRESERVATION OF THE OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 2012

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the absence of a Union monument at the Olustee Battlefield one hundred and fifty-five years after the battle concluded though this field has a number of Confederate monuments. Moreover, after the Battle of Olustee in February 1864, the largest battle of the Civil War fought on Florida soil, the victorious Confederates killed wounded African American soldiers left behind after the Union retreat. This thesis examines why Olustee battlefield became a place of Confederate memory, enshrining the Lost Cause within its monuments for well over a half of a century that consciously excluded any commemoration of the Union dead. The lack of proper commemoration to the costly Union sacrifices at Olustee comes as a surprise, since some of the Union dead still rest in a mass grave on the battlefield. They remain on this field because after the war, federal soldiers reburied the Olustee dead in a mass grave and erected a temporary memorial that marked their final resting place. This neglect contradicted War department policy that mandated that the reinterred Union dead be in separate graves and marked by individual permanent headstones.

When the temporary monument marking their presence disappeared, this also erased the memory of their presence and their sacrifice from the Olustee landscape. This left room for champions of the Confederate Lost Cause - Southern, Confederate Civil War memory - like the United Daughters of Confederacy (UDC) to build monuments to the Confederate cause. In fact, these women worked actively to ensure that the Union dead were not memorialized, particularly the African American casualties. The UDC managed the site until 1949, when the State of Florida assumed control of those grounds.

Seventy years of direct control by the state of Florida failed to make a difference in the landscape of memory at Olustee: the Union dead have no monument to commemorate their sacrifice. This thesis explores why the markers, monuments, and policies still honor the Lost Cause memory of the battle, even as the park services in charge of the site promote a reconciliationist narrative and the resurgence of Union memory, including the sacrifice of black US soldiers. Sources used include *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, meeting minutes of the UDC, newspaper articles, official documents from the Florida Division of Parks and Recreation, documents from the National Park Service, private correspondences, and state legislature bills.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION .....	1
CHAPTER 1 BATTLE AND RECONSTRUCTION (1864-1897): “MAY THE LIVING PROFIT BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE DEAD” .....	11
1.1 Battle of Olustee Overview .....	11
1.2 The Bloody Aftermath .....	15
1.3 Burying Memories .....	20
1.4 A Grand Army .....	27
1.5 The End of an Era .....	31
CHAPTER 2 EARLY MANAGEMENT (1897-1949): LOST CAUSE VICTORIOUS, BEAUTIFICATION AND REFORESTATION .....	33
2.1 The United Daughters of the Confederacy’s Quest for Vindication .....	34
2.2 Establishing Order and Beautification at Olustee .....	43
2.3 The Struggle to Maintain Order .....	49
2.4 Regime Change: The National and Florida Park Services at Olustee .....	51
CHAPTER 3 FEDERAL AND STATE MANAGEMENT (1949 – PRESENT): SHARED AUTHORITY, CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY, ANNUAL REENACTMENT, AND MEMORY WARS .....	60
3.1 The Road to the Centennial Anniversary of Olustee .....	60
3.2 Civil War Centennial and Olustee .....	63
3.3 The Rise of Reenactors and Their Impact on the Memory of Olustee .....	67
3.4 The Culture Wars and Revisions at Olustee .....	75
3.5 Monument Wars .....	83
CONCLUSION: PRESENTING AND INHERITING ENSHRINED MEMORIES AT OLUSTEE .....	89
LIST OF REFERENCES .....	93

## INTRODUCTION

In 1912, the site of the 1864 American Civil War Battle of Olustee in Baker County, Florida, became one of the first Florida state parks. Since then, the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park memorialized the battle through the monuments dedicated to the Confederate dead, a visitor center that shared the events of the battle to the public, hosted reenacted battles on its anniversary, and protected and preserved the battlefield landscape. In 2013, a controversy erupted regarding a proposal to erect a monument dedicated to the Union soldiers and officers who fought in the battle since the battlefield lacked one. Protests came from groups formed from the descendants of Confederate soldiers – the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) – who denounced the proposal as “disturbing hallowed ground.”<sup>1</sup> This latest controversy represents another chapter in the battle between history and memory on the battlefield and over Civil War memory.

Why does the Florida State Park at the Olustee battlefield still enshrine the memory of the Confederate Lost Cause? The failure to commemorate Union sacrifice is surprising given the horrific nature of this struggle. Following the six-hour battle at Olustee in 1864, after Union forces, comprised of white and black soldiers, retreated from the field, African American Union soldiers were murdered. As a final insult, the Confederates left the Union dead exposed in the open or in shallow graves. After the war, a detachment of federal soldiers returned to the site to

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<sup>1</sup> Margie Menzel, “Civil War passions still run deep as Union supporters propose monument on Confederate site,” *Miami Herald*, December 3, 2013, <https://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2013/12/civil-war-passions-still-run-deep-as-union-supporters-propose-monument-on-confederate-site.html>



rebury the Union dead and erected a temporary wooden memorial that marked their mass grave that eventually disappeared without a trace.

The failure to properly reinter the dead and mark their individual graves led to a persisting amnesia about the sacrifice of the Union soldiers in this battle. Furthermore, the men and women who supported the Union cause, including veterans, failed to commemorate either this battle or its casualties. As a result, the champions of Confederate Civil War memory, specifically the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), shaped the memory of the battle through monuments to Confederate dead at the site. Eventually, this battlefield passed from the hands of this women's group to Florida State Parks. Eventually, this new management changed the narrative in the visitors' center highlighting the service of black soldiers; however, officials failed to create a more inclusive memorial landscape on the battlefield. This failure partly reflects the contemporary politics of Civil War memory and the continued amnesia about the presence of the Union dead in this park.

To understand the conflict between history and memory seen in the present interpretation of sites like Olustee, it is necessary to define "history" and "memory" as well as their relationship to one another. For example, historians use documents that contain the written memories of those who experienced a historical event first-hand to help formulate their case studies, relying solely on these documents does not always ensure accurate information. Historians David Lowenthal and Pierre Nora studied the relationship between history and memory and explained why the relationship is dynamic.

David Lowenthal noted the limited nature of memory as it only extends "back to childhood." He understood that this not only applies to individuals, it also applied to groups of

people and accumulates through the recollections of previous generations. However, this meant that if a group did not want to carry a memory, then that group possesses the ability to subdue those memories through a form of amnesia. In contrast, Lowenthal also noted that history is empirical data extended “back to or beyond the earliest records of civilization” and had to “be open to public scrutiny.”<sup>2</sup> Through this constant scrutiny, the revisions that occur in light of new evidence shifts historical narratives and clashes with society’s memories of historical events.

Based on this conflict, Pierre Nora, credited as a founding father of the historical study of memory, stated the “true mission” of history is to “suppress and destroy” memory.<sup>3</sup> He believed a society that operated under “the sign of history” would produce little to no “sites of memory,” the places “where memory crystallizes and secretes itself has occurred at a particular historical moment.”<sup>4</sup> Lowenthal disagreed with this notion; noting history’s dependency on memory and memory’s use of history; both are “distorted by selective perception, intervening circumstance, and hindsight.”<sup>5</sup> Lowenthal’s describes the nature of memory and history’s dependency on one another as “antagonistically symbiotic,” a phenomenon that can be observed at Olustee. Nora’s description of sites of memory as places where the memory of a moment in history “crystallizes and secretes itself” aptly describes American Civil War battlefields.<sup>6</sup>

In comparison to battlefield preservation, historians studied American Civil War memory to a greater degree. Certainly, the works of Gaines M. Foster, Karen L. Cox, and W. Fitzhugh Brundage add seminal contributions to the study of the Lost Cause and Confederate memorial

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<sup>2</sup> David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), xxii.

<sup>3</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations*, No. 26 Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 9.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 7-9.

<sup>5</sup> Lowenthal, xxii.

<sup>6</sup> Nora, 7.

efforts and remain required readings for those interested in Civil War memory. Foster argued that later “nonchalance” from subsequent generations of Americans regarding the outcome of the war came from an interpretation steeped in “excessive romanticism” perpetuated by the writings and activities of “postwar Confederate organizations.”<sup>7</sup> This romanticized interpretation defines the Lost Cause.

In reference to the title of Edward A. Pollard’s 1866 book, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, the tenets of the Lost Cause narrative centralized on a romanticized view of the Confederate cause.<sup>8</sup> The tenets included ideas such as States’ Rights as the primary cause of the Civil War and not the institution of slavery, the Confederate soldier as the honorable vanguard of Southern white society, and the superior military leadership under the likes of Robert E. Lee as opposed to their Union counterparts. Advocates reasoned the Confederacy’s defeat came due to the Union’s superior numbers and means of production, not from the justification or resolve of the Union cause. Advocates embedded these ideas into every aspect of white Southern society: the aesthetic in the architecture of its buildings and monuments, the policies enacted by state governments, the education of students, and the beliefs of the populace.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987),

<sup>8</sup> Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E.B. Treat & Co., 1866).

<sup>9</sup> For additional information regarding the Lost Cause see, Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Rollin G. Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1973); Thomas Connelly and Barbara L. Bellows, *God and General Longstreet: The Lost Cause in the Southern Mind* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost: Myth and Realities of the Confederacy* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996).

Karen L. Cox focused her study on one of the chief Lost Cause advocacy groups, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). Cox argued the UDC “raised the stakes of the Lost Cause” by taking the memorialization of the Confederate dead and transforming into a movement that focused on an “idyllic Old South,” “where states’ rights and white supremacy remained intact.” Thus, Cox argued, the UDC sought vindication for the Confederacy’s loss into “a political and cultural victory” through the perpetuation of the ideals of the Lost Cause for future generations of white Southerners.<sup>10</sup>

W. Fitzhugh Brundage argued that white and black Southerners molded “their deepest sense of self” and spoke of their desires for “the region they call home.” He added that the exotic, romanticized version of the South highlighted by the tourist industry and portrayed in various media did not occur by “happenstance.” Rather, this idea resulted from the “labor, investment, and design” by those who identified as “Southerners” influenced by the Lost Cause. He noted “custodians of southern heritage,” such as the UDC and other Confederate groups, held a “seemingly universal human impulse” in continuing to nurture Southern memory and keeping it fresh for posterity.<sup>11</sup> In doing so, Brundage argued, white Southerners conscious of black Southern memory effort as “a form of cultural resistance” excluded these efforts from public spaces, thus ignoring them.<sup>12</sup>

David Blight’s *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (2001) broadened the study of Civil War memory beyond the Lost Cause and remains the most influential study of

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<sup>10</sup> Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 1.

<sup>11</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

this subject. Blight identified three recognized narratives “collided and combined” through the decades after the war to form American Civil War Memory.<sup>13</sup> First, he identified an emancipationist narrative, centered on “the reinvention of the republic and the liberation of blacks to citizenship and Constitutional equality,” supported by various Northern citizens and Union commanders.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, “white supremacist” narrative, sponsored by the UDC and other Confederate heritage groups, centered on the Lost Cause rhetoric: “a righteous cause political cause defeated by superior industrial might, a heritage community awaiting its exodus, and a people forming a collective identity as victims and survivors.”<sup>15</sup> Finally, a reconciliationist narrative, born from the “process of dealing with dead,” that influenced its proponents to forge a cause to reunify the country through “aspirations, ideas, and the positive bonds of nationalism.”<sup>16</sup> Blight argued the proponents of the Lost Cause “locked arms” with reconciliationists and “overwhelmed” the emancipationist narrative in the national culture, bonding through emphasizing white supremacy and amnesia over slavery.<sup>17</sup>

Much of this reassessment of the Lost Cause occurred because of the Civil Rights movement. During the Civil War’s centennial anniversary, resurgence in interest and promotion of the emancipationist memory of the war by African Americans challenged the Lost Cause’s hold on Civil War memory. Historian Robert J. Cook argued that while changes in America’s laws came from “protests and government fear of social disorder,” the “black counter-narrative”

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<sup>13</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 2.

only possessed “limited” influence in popular culture.<sup>18</sup> He later clarified that the former gave blacks “genuine political power” and “imparted a degree of legitimacy” to the latter to the point that any Lost Cause holdovers found “progressively more difficult” to oppose.<sup>19</sup>

In comparison to the study of Civil War memory, the historical study of the battlefield preservation movement on a national scale only emerged in the last twenty years in the works of Timothy Smith and Jennifer M. Murray. Smith argued that the process of battlefield preservation refined itself from a “one sided, divisive, and state-based” initiative into an inclusive, “drastically different federal effort” that Civil War veterans founded with the intent to “reunite the sections” of a divided postwar America. He disagreed with Blight’s criticism of the lack of emphasis on “racial, cultural, or social battlegrounds” and the focus on reconciliation at the sites preserved by veterans. Smith argued that the “modern context” did not exist in the “embryonic” stage of battlefield preservation. Furthermore, Smith claimed that this fledgling movement benefitted from the veterans’ emphasis on the “militaristic honor and glory” as they founded the “firm groundwork” that present preservationists and scholars “build” upon.<sup>20</sup>

Jennifer M. Murray cited Smith’s works as “pioneering,” but disagreed with him concerning the intentions behind the preservation of battlefields like Gettysburg.<sup>21</sup> She agreed with Blight’s thesis and provided the example of the Gettysburg Cyclorama’s depiction of the “valor and courage” of the Confederate soldiers in Pickett’s Charge as evidence of subliminal yet

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<sup>18</sup> Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 271.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America’s First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), xvii-xviii.

<sup>21</sup> Jennifer M. Murray, *On a Great Battlefield: The Making, Management, and Memory of Gettysburg National Military Park, 1933–2013* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 4.

“strong Confederate focus” at Gettysburg.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, she argued that the U.S. National Park Service’s “haphazard landscape practices, promotion of tourism to the national parks, encouragement of recreational pursuits, and ill-defined policies of preserving cultural resources” contributed to “differing management and interpretation theories” at parks like Gettysburg.<sup>23</sup>

While these historians assessed battlefields controlled by the federal government and the National Park Service, very little to no studies exist that specifically examines the history of battlefields and monuments controlled by the state governments including Olustee.<sup>24</sup> This study identifies how historians can contribute to a better understanding of the history of such a site.

When put under the lens of Blight’s thesis, the story of Olustee’s preservation remains an outlier. While Civil War battle sites throughout the South such as Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Chickamauga contain elements of reconciliation woven into the history of those sites, Olustee does not. Contrary to these federally controlled sites, Olustee does not include Union monuments. The monuments present at the battlefield echo a pro-Confederate view that continues into the twenty-first century despite the efforts by officials to include the Union dead in the official interpretation of the site. The struggles over the Union monument proposal trace back to the failure of certain institutions and entities to provide a suitable place for the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>24</sup> Other Civil War state-controlled battlefield parks include Arkansas Post National Memorial (the museum and some of the grounds are controlled by the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism), Marks’s Mills Battleground State Park, Poison Springs Battleground State Park, Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park, Jenkins’ Ferry Battleground State Park, Pickett’s Mill Battlefield Site, Point Lookout State Park, South Mountain State Battlefield, Battle of Lexington State Historic Site, Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site, Battle of Carthage State Historic Site, Battle of Athens State Historic Site, Fort Macon State Park, Columbus-Belmont State Park, Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site, Natural Bridge Battlefield State Historic Site, Yellow Bluff Fort Historic State Park, Rivers Bridge State Historic Site, Fort Pillow State Historic Park, Staunton River Battlefield State Park, Sailor’s Creek Battlefield Historical State Park, Droop Mountain Battlefield State Park, and Carnifex Ferry Battlefield State Park.

emancipationist narrative to, as Nora termed, “crystallize”- to make concepts tangible and solid for new learners to remember and understand the meanings behind the symbolism<sup>25</sup>

This thesis explains why the Union Cause is absent at Olustee. The first chapter provides the background to place the battle in context of the Civil War and its memory. While historians such as William H. Nulty provide excellent analysis of the battle itself, this thesis focuses on the battle’s aftermath. Subjects and events within that period include the racially motivated killings of African American Union soldiers by Confederates after the battle; the disrespectful method of burying Union soldiers (white and black) by the Confederacy and; the erection of a memorial in 1866 by U. S. Soldiers. In addition to the government’s failure of the proper internment of the dead, Union veterans in Florida and elsewhere failed to advance an emancipationist, or even a reconciliationist memory at the site. The absence of positive action to memorialize the Union Cause allowed the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) to step in and crystallize the Confederate memory of the battle as the dominant narrative.

The second chapter explores how the UDC successfully raised funds for monuments and lobbied the Florida state legislature to become the caretakers of the memorial site. Because of these efforts, this site became a site of memory for the Lost Cause or Confederate Civil War memory. This discussion documents the group’s choice of beautification, as opposed to restoration, as the means of presenting the site to the public. In addition, the second section explores the activities of the Osceola National Forest Service (ONFS) at Olustee – from its creation, to its reforestation projects, and early preservation efforts.

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<sup>25</sup> Nora, 7.



The third chapter discusses the events after the transfer of the battlefield from the UDC to the Florida Park Service (later the Division of Recreation and Parks, part of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection) in 1949. The era saw Olustee's centennial anniversary and the birth of the annual reenactment, an activity in which participants portrayed the roles of combatants from both sides. These efforts reflect a more reconciliationist memory of the battle not reflected by the battlefield's monuments. In 1991, this reconciliationist narrative, prompted some reenactors to erect a Union monument beside the battlefield, but not on it. In 2013, reconciliation seemed out of fashion. In reaction to the Civil War memory wars, Confederate groups strongly opposed a Union monument on the battlefield.

The goal of this paper is to explain why in 2019 the Olustee Battlefield does not feature a monument to Union soldiers, despite the presence of the Union dead at that site. One hundred and fifty five years after their death, they remain forgotten. In order to understand the reasoning behind this ironic condition of the battlefield, placing social, racial, and economic context behind the historical evidence left by Olustee's combatants, the federal government, the Florida legislature, the UDC, the various park agencies, and reenactment groups reveals the intent behind the decisions that shaped the battlefield's current state. Perhaps by understanding Olustee's history, future decisions include remembering the forgotten men who died for freedom and the reunion of the country.

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **BATTLE AND RECONSTRUCTION (1864-1897):**

### **“MAY THE LIVING PROFIT BY THE EXAMPLE OF THE DEAD”<sup>1</sup>**

The fluctuations of Civil War remembrance and amnesia embodied in Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park began long before the formal establishment of any managerial institution in over the site. This chapter explores these juxtapositions from their source, starting with a brief summary of the origins of the battle. The rest of the chapter examines the post-battle murders of black Union soldiers by Confederates, the postmortem disrespect the Confederates bestowed on their fallen foes, and the official negligence that left these men in a mass grave. The failure to provide proper burial for the Union dead allowed Confederate memory advocates no contest in establishing their narrative at the site.

#### 1.1 Battle of Olustee Overview<sup>2</sup>

In the grand narrative of the American Civil War, the Battle of Olustee’s repercussions seem less consequential compared to events later in 1864 such as the capture of Atlanta or Union General William Tecumseh Sherman’s “March to the Sea.” To be sure, similarities between Olustee and those two campaigns reflected the overall aims of the Union Army in the latter stages of the war: deprive the Confederacy of its means to continue the conflict. The battle of Olustee occurred due to Union Brigadier General Truman Seymour’s campaign to sever

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Loomis L. Langdon, William L. Haskin, ed., *The History of the First Regiment of Artillery, from Its Organization in 1821, to January 1st, 1876* (Portland: B. Thurston and Company, 1879), 462.

<sup>2</sup> The overview represents a brief summary of the battle. For a more in-depth examination of the precipitating causes, the 1864 campaign, and movements by Confederate and Union forces during the battle, refer to William H. Nulty’s *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990; reprint, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994).

Florida's "commissary supplies" (mostly beef) from the rest of the Confederacy and recruit for all-black United States Colored Troop (USCT) regiments.<sup>3</sup> While this campaign certainly had potential for success, historian William H. Nulty believed "limited vision, abilities, and aggressiveness" plagued the Union campaign in Florida and contributed to its failure.<sup>4</sup>

Seymour's ill-fated campaign began as he made his amphibious landing in Jacksonville on February 7, 1864.<sup>5</sup> He hoped that this insertion went unnoticed and initially it did. Unfortunately, Floridians reported this foothold to Confederate authorities not too long after the landing. When Confederate General Pierre-Gustave Toutant Beauregard, the commander of the Department of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, learned of the landing, he mustered units to reinforce Florida's defenses. Eventually, General Jeremy F. Gilmer sent Colonel Alfred H. Colquitt's brigade to reinforce General Joseph Finegan's Confederate troops in Florida.

Meanwhile, General Seymour marched his Union troops west and encountered resistance from Confederate skirmishers and pickets. General Finegan's command concentrated in Lake City, Florida, in opposition to Seymour. Nulty argued that while the Union command merely saw Seymour's actions as little more than a political stunt, their Confederate counterparts saw it as "a very serious threat" to their economic, political, and military stability.<sup>6</sup> After Confederates deflected Union troops under General Alexander Schimmelfennig at John's Island on February 11, 1864, Colonel Colquitt's brigade joined Finegan at Lake City in time for the Battle of Olustee.

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<sup>3</sup> William H. Nulty, *Confederate Florida: The Road to Olustee* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1990; reprint, Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1994), 75.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 104-105.

Finegan prepared for Seymour's arrival by creating a defensive entrenchment between the South Fork of St. Mary's River and Lake City on February 13, 1864, relying on the natural environment of the region to restrict the flow of Seymour's troop movement. Seymour, acting on his experience with Confederate skirmishers, advanced on the eventual site of the battle at a quick pace. Seven days later, the two forces made contact near the railroad tracks close to Ocean Pond, forcing some of Colonel Colquitt's troops into action to save the Confederate line of battle.

With both sides equal in numbers, the initial "meeting engagement" escalated quickly as the Seventh New Hampshire and the Eighth USCT regiments were repulsed as the Confederate right flank "overlapped" the Union left flank, leaving the Union artillery exposed.<sup>7</sup> Confederate reinforcements put more pressure on the Union left flank and Union Colonel William B. Barton's New York brigade relieved the Seventh New Hampshire.<sup>8</sup> The Confederates attempted to advance while the Union troops resisted "stubbornly."<sup>9</sup> The climax of the battle occurred when Colonel Colquitt assumed command of the Confederate front line and all reserves were committed.<sup>10</sup>

The Confederates turned the tide of battle by seizing the Union artillery pieces and using them against the Union line.<sup>11</sup> The Union line collapsed just as reinforcements in the form of the Forty-Seventh and Forty-Eighth New York Regiments attempted to relieve their beleaguered comrades. Together with the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Infantry Regiment (Colored), these

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 153-154.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 156.

units covered the Union retreat as the Confederates ousted Federal control of their positions.<sup>12</sup>

As the Confederates seized the rest of the battlefield, the remaining Union troops retreated all the way back to Jacksonville. Despite the desire to chase the fleeing Federals, Finegan's troops did not have the ammunition to follow-up on their victory.<sup>13</sup>

Seymour's command returned to Jacksonville and prepared for a Confederate counterattack. This failure affected Union operations for the remainder of the war. Union forces in Florida never mounted a campaign on the scale of Seymour's and never captured Tallahassee, Florida during the war. For the Confederates, their victory only affected Florida and did not spare the rest of the Confederacy from Sherman's "March to Sea" later in the year, which effectively cut Florida from the rest of the Confederacy. Union troops finally raised the Star and Stripes on the capitol on May 20, 1865, over a month after Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia.

The battle served as one of the bloodiest Union defeats in the war. Out of 5,115 Union soldiers under General Seymour's command, 1,355 either died in battle or suffered severe wounds as a result.<sup>14</sup> Likewise, the Confederates suffered 934 casualties, killed or wounded.<sup>15</sup> While battle casualties represent a battle's tragic aftermath, Olustee bore witness to even more violence after the battle ended.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 167-168.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (hereafter *OR*), 128 vols. (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880–1901), Series I, Vol. 15, 333.

## 1.2 The Bloody Aftermath

After the battle, the landscape encompassing Ocean Pond and the surrounding region evinced the trauma of war - artillery shells pocked the field where they struck and severely damaged the surrounding foliage, the battlefield debris and bodies of the combatants lay scattered. Among the Union dead, lay African American soldiers murdered in the battle's aftermath by victorious Confederates. The bloody carnage helped shaped the battle's memory in the sense that the memory of such a travesty remains largely forgotten.

The Confederates zealously scavenged the battlefield for provisions left by friend and foe alike. Captain Luis F. Emilio of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts later recounted that Union forces discarded extraneous provisions in the battle's final moments, provisions such as "unused ammunition of the wrong calibre."<sup>16</sup> In addition, the muskets and knapsacks of the dead and dying littered the field as well. Senator William Learned Marcy's famous quote, "to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy," best described General Finegan's Confederate control of the field in the aftermath of the Battle of Olustee.<sup>17</sup>

This equipment was a welcome addition to Confederate forces. As the war progressed, the Confederacy's ability to provide its military with adequate supplies diminished as Union military forces cut and dismantled Confederate infrastructure. Supplies like shoes remained in high demand for Confederate commanders. Under these circumstances, it is not at all surprising that the Confederate soldiers under Finegan's command scavenged the dead by taking their shoes, ammunition, food, etc. While better equipment remained a high priority, Confederates

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<sup>16</sup> Luis F. Emilio, *A Brave Black Regiment: History of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1863-1865*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: The Boston Book Company, 1894), 169.

<sup>17</sup> 8 Reg. Deb. 1325 (1833).

also cannibalized weapons found on the battlefield for parts to replace broken rifles. The remains of this vulture-like activity left husks of guns scattered throughout the battlefield.<sup>18</sup>

While Confederates scavenged the battlefield, some of their comrades engaged in acts that were more gruesome: killing African American Union troops left behind in the wake of Seymour's retreat. Evidence of such an atrocity appears in Finegan's report. He recorded that out of the one hundred fifty unwounded prisoners captured after the battle, only three of them were African American. He stated "many" of the wounded prisoners were African Americans and asked his commanding officer, Brigadier General Thomas Jordan, for advice regarding what to do with them.<sup>19</sup> Finegan's more in-depth report stated four hundred Union soldiers died in the battle and the Confederates captured two hundred Union troops.<sup>20</sup>

In comparison, General Seymour reported the following casualties among the USCT soldiers under his command: the Thirty-Fifth United States Colored Infantry (listed as the First North Carolina Volunteers, the original unit that became the USCT unit after reorganization) suffered twenty-two deaths, one hundred thirty-one wounded, and seventy-seven missing. The Eighth United States Colored Infantry suffered forty-nine deaths, one hundred eighty-eight wounded, and seventy-three missing. The Fifty-Fourth Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry suffered thirteen deaths, sixty-five wounded, and eight missing.<sup>21</sup> With one hundred fifty-five USCT missing in Seymour's report, how did Finegan's men only capture three

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<sup>18</sup> The Osceola National Forest Service possesses one such rifle that the Brown family kept following the war. I personally held it.

<sup>19</sup> *OR*, Series I, Vol. 15, 328.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

unwounded black soldiers out of two hundred? These discrepancies lead to some disturbing conclusions.

Historian David J. Coles explained that the best primary sources that provide evidence of post-battle killings came from the Confederate soldiers present at the battle or afterwards.<sup>22</sup> Before the battle, Confederate Lieutenant Colonel Abner H. McCormick addressed Lawrence Jackson and his fellow troops of the Second Florida Cavalry. Jackson later wrote that McCormick declared that the African American soldiers under Seymour had come to “steal, pillage, run over the state, and murder, kill, and rape our wives, daughters, and sweethearts.” McCormick vowed he would “not take any negro prisoners.”<sup>23</sup>

Other Confederates recalled more than rhetoric. James Jordan from the Twenty-Seventh Georgia Infantry wrote that the African American troops left on the field fell prey to the victorious Confederates, who “badly cut up and killed” them.<sup>24</sup> Edwin Tuttle arrived with the Twenty-Sixth Virginia after the battle and admitted Confederate troops killed African American troops. He added that “if it had not been for the officers,” the Confederates prepared to kill all of them. Tuttle believed that both Union black soldiers and Confederate white soldiers showed no mercy to each other.<sup>25</sup> Another soldier, Jacob Roach, wrote that after the battle, Confederate

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<sup>22</sup> David J. Coles, “‘Shooting Niggers Sir’: Confederate Mistreatment of Union Black Soldiers at the Battle of Olustee,” in *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*, ed. Gregory J. W. Urwin (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 73.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Jackson, “As I Saw and Remember the Battle of Olustee, Which was Fought February 20, 186[4],” Lawrence Jackson Papers, P. K. Younge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

<sup>24</sup> James M. Jordan to wife, Feb. 21, 1864, typescript, in “Letters from Confederate Soldiers, 1861-1865,” 2:481, Georgia Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

<sup>25</sup> Edmund Tuttle to parents, Mar. 7, 1864, Edwin Tuttle Papers, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Ga.



soldiers killed wounded African American Union soldiers through blunt force trauma by using “lightwood knots” - pieces of wood normally used for kindling.<sup>26</sup>

Union sources also reported the atrocities. Sergeant Henry Lang of the Forty-Eighth New York later wrote as he suffered from his wounds after the battle and lay on the ground at night that he heard the “blasphemous language” used by the scavenging Confederates while “ill-treating wounded negroes.”<sup>27</sup> Union Brigadier General John P. Hatch wrote to the Commissioner for Prisoner of War Exchange, Major General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, that he did not trust Finegan’s report and believed that “most wounded colored men were murdered on the field.” Hatch also believed the perpetrators came from Colonel Colquitt’s Georgia brigade.<sup>28</sup> With both Confederate and Union sources providing evidence, these killings very likely occurred.

These brutal slayings occurred because Confederate soldiers believed that the Confederate government gave them permission to carry out these executions. Confederate Secretary of War James A. Seddon wrote to General Beauregard on November 30, 1862, regarding “slaves taken in Federal uniform and with arms in their hands” that those in “flagrant rebellion are subject to death.” Arguably, Seddon intended to curtail outright massacres by instructing the order of execution be at the discretion of “the general commanding the special locality of the capture,” his orders seemed to encourage the opposite.<sup>29</sup> In addition to this policy, historian Kevin M. Levin contended that the presence of African American soldiers on the

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<sup>26</sup> Jacob Roach to Miss Fannie, Mar. 5, 186[4], Jacob Roach Papers, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by Arnold J. Palmer, *History of the Forty-Eighth Regiment New York Volunteers in the War for the Union, 1861-1865* (Brooklyn: Veteran Association of the Regiment, 1885), 136.

<sup>28</sup> *OR*, Series II, Vol. 7, 876.

<sup>29</sup> *OR*, Series II, Vol. 4, 954.

battlefield realized white Southern racist fears of “miscegenation, the raping of white Southern women, and black political control.”<sup>30</sup>

The post battle butchery by Confederate troops at Olustee did not represent an exclusive incident, but rather a larger pattern. In April of the same year, Confederate soldiers under Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest massacred 231 Union troops out of a garrison of 560 at Fort Pillow under Major William F. Bradford, half of which were African American.<sup>31</sup> Historian Albert Castel, agreeing with Levin’s statements, argued Forrest’s men held a “bitter animosity” toward men they thought as inferior to them.<sup>32</sup>

This pattern continued in July, at the Battle of the Crater during the Siege of Petersburg, Virginia. When Union soldiers failed to breach Confederate defenses, they trapped themselves in their own crater, leaving them vulnerable to Confederate retaliation. The battle resulted in 3,826 Union casualties, forty-one percent of which came from Brigadier General Edward Ferrero’s Fourth Division of USCT regiments.<sup>33</sup> Levin argued the Confederates at Petersburg did not view Ferrero’s black troops as soldiers, rather as slaves and less than as humans. Thus, killing them “fell outside the boundary of ordinary rules of warfare.”<sup>34</sup>

While it appears that Confederate soldiers slaughtered black Union soldiers at Olustee and that this was part of a broader pattern, the exact number of African American soldiers killed in the aftermath remains a mystery. Though General Seymour reported one hundred fifty-five

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<sup>30</sup> Kevin M. Levin, *Remembering The Battle of the Crater: War as Murder* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2012; repr., Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2017), 7.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Castel, “The Fort Pillow Massacre: An Examination of the Evidence,” in *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*, ed. Gregory J. W. Urwin (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005), 97.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Levin, 18-19.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 25.

missing soldiers from his USCT regiments, historian David J. Coles believed that “not all of the missing black soldiers were killed by Confederate troops.” Coles estimated that perhaps twenty-five to fifty African American soldiers might count as killed in the aftermath of the battle.<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, the bodies of these men shared the same fate as the rest of the Union dead of Olustee. As Seymour’s men retreated from the battle, they left the field, discarded provisions, and, most importantly, the responsibility of burying the dead to the Confederates.

### 1.3 Burying Memories

The Confederates controlled the battlefield at the end of February 20, 1864 until the end of the war, thus they bore the responsibility for the wounded and the dead. The Confederates transported their wounded to the hub of their operations, Lake City, and buried their dead in Oaklawn Cemetery. Days after the battle, soldiers who died from their wounds sustained in the battle joined those ranks. In total, Oaklawn Cemetery contains one hundred fifty-five Confederate soldiers who died during the Battle of Olustee or later from their wounds.<sup>36</sup>

The Union dead did not receive the same treatment. At Olustee, the Confederates made shallow graves for the Union dead and left them in that state. While race and racism certainly motivated Confederates’ actions, the level of disrespect displayed spoke volumes to the war’s bitterness.

Once the war ended, in July of 1865, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs ordered Union commanders to compile and submit a report regarding the internments of soldiers

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<sup>35</sup> Coles, 77.

<sup>36</sup> William B. Lees and Frederick P. Gaske, *Recalling Deeds Immortal: Florida Monuments to the Civil War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014), 202.

who died during the war in sites across the battle-scarred country.<sup>37</sup> Later in October, General Meigs ordered a survey to find suitable cemeteries for the Union dead.<sup>38</sup> Whether in compliance with Meigs' orders or of his own volition, Colonel John T. Sprague of the Seventh United States Infantry Regiment, a regular army unit stationed in Florida, sent Lieutenant Frederick E. Grossman with a detachment of men from Company B to the Olustee battlefield in 1866.<sup>39</sup>

When Grossman's detachment arrived at the battlefield, what he saw disgusted him. He surmised that wild hogs disturbed the shallow graves made in a "careless manner" by the Confederates. As a result, the remains of the Union dead lay strewn and scattered around the battlefield. He ordered his men to collect the remains using empty bags to do so in a two square mile area.<sup>40</sup>

After collecting over two wagons full of the bagged Union remains, Grossman ordered a grave with dimensions of eighteen feet by twelve feet dug as the final resting place for these soldiers. Before depositing the dead in their final resting place, they counted one hundred and twenty-five skulls among the bones. In contrast, he noted "carefully interred" Confederate graves south of the railway, indicating the Confederates did not bury all of their dead in Oaklawn Cemetery in Lake City.<sup>41</sup>

After burying the remains, Lieutenant Grossman followed Colonel Sprague's orders by erecting a twelve-foot high wooden monument over the grave. His troops painted the monument

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<sup>37</sup> Drew Gilpin Faust, "Battle over the Bodies: Burying and Reburying the Civil War Dead, 1865-1871," in *Wars within a War: Controversy and Conflict over the American Civil War*, eds. Joan Waugh and Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 185.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted by Loomis L. Langdon, *The History of the First Regiment of Artillery, from Its Organization in 1821, to January 1st, 1876*, ed. William L. Haskin (Portland: B. Thurston and Company, 1879), 462.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 462-463.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 463.

white, used black letters in inscriptions cut an inch long and a fourth of an inch deep into the wood, and erecting a whitewashed fence around the monument. Grossman described the inscriptions on each of the side of the monument:

South side. "To the Memory of the officers and soldiers of the United States army who fell in the battle of Olustee, February 20, 1864."

West side. "Our country."

North side. "May the living profit by the example of the dead."

East side. "Unity and peace."<sup>42</sup>

Grossman described the location of the monument as "shaded by eight large pine trees, which were the only ones in the immediate vicinity of the inclosure."<sup>43</sup>

In the same year, the former Union officers of the East Gulf Blockade Squadron in the Navy Club of Key West erected the first Union monument and Civil War monument in Florida after several months of fundraising.<sup>44</sup> The opportunity to establish Union memorials had a narrow window during Florida's Reconstruction period when US forces or Republican governments controlled the state. Unfortunately, that small window closed as the last of occupying Union soldiers left Florida in 1877.

Even before all US forces left, the Olustee Union monument became a forgotten memory. A visit from an Olustee veteran revealed the consequences of neglect and the deep bitterness left over from the war. Stationed in Fort Barrancas, Florida, Captain Loomis L. Langdon of the First

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 463.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> *United States Army and Navy Journal, and Gazette of the Regular and Volunteer Forces* 3, no. 5, September 23, 1865, 73.

United States Artillery Regiment took a trip to the battlefield in the fall of 1873.<sup>45</sup> Traveling by train, Langdon observed the shocking state of the memorial Grossman erected in 1866.

Disturbingly, Langdon noted that only parts of “a weather-stained and broken-down fence” remained of the twelve-foot memorial.<sup>46</sup> What happened to monument within a five-year period?

Langdon’s evidence of neglect contradicted the care shown by the War Department towards the graves of Union soldiers elsewhere. In accordance with General Meigs’ orders, Quartermaster Edmund Burke Whitman and his men swept through the Shiloh battlefield in seven days, noting the location of the Union remains as well as any headboard inscriptions, and he replicated this method as he toured through the South. Historian John R. Neff argued that Burke’s methodology ensured the reinternment of the remains of “virtually every” Union soldier into a national cemetery. Furthermore, Whitman felt the government held the responsibility to ensure “proper protection” for those that died in service to the country, especially for those who did not have relatives to care for them.<sup>47</sup> With the failure to memorialize the Olustee missing, the condition of the burial place of other Union dead also comes into question.

Captain Luis F. Emilio, formerly of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts, claimed the remains of Olustee’s Union dead transferred to the National Cemetery in Beaufort, South Carolina in 1867 or 1868.<sup>48</sup> Theoretically, the contractors needed to remove the monument to exhume the Union remains and simply discarded it. Indeed, approximately 4,600 Union remains did transfer

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<sup>45</sup> Loomis L. Langdon, “The Dead of Olustee,” *The History of the First Regiment of Artillery, from Its Organization in 1821, to January 1st, 1876*, ed. William L. Haskin (Portland: B. Thurston and Company, 1879), 463.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 126-130; E. B. Whitman, “Remarks on National Cemeteries – Original Military Division of the Tennessee,” in *The Army Reunion: Reports of the Meetings of the Societies of the Army of the Cumberland; the Army of the Tennessee; the Army of the Ohio; and the Army of Georgia. December 15 and 16, 1868* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1869), 230.

<sup>48</sup> Emilio, 173.

to the cemetery after the war, including those once buried in Florida. Twentieth-century historian Mark F. Boyd consulted Curtis W. Spence, the Beaufort National Cemetery's superintendent, who contradicted Emilio's claim by stating the cemetery records did not indicate any Union remains came from Olustee.<sup>49</sup> If the Union remains never left the battlefield, then a different fate likely befell the monument.

Perhaps vandals destroyed the monument. Instances of bitter, former Confederates desecrating Union graves occurred during Reconstruction. Drew Gilpin Faust argued that since bitter white Southerners failed to defeat "a live Union army," they turned their "southern rage" towards an "irresistible target" and "wage[d] war" against the Union dead.<sup>50</sup> John Neff also noted this trend stymied the efforts of Whitman's team, such as his experience with planters digging up Union graves to create a cotton field in Vicksburg, Mississippi.<sup>51</sup> Monuments to the Union war effort, especially ones like Olustee's, certainly counted as viable targets for vengeful Southerners.

The locations of monuments and graves also factored in their treatment. The Key West Union monument benefitted from sturdier construction material than wood and its proximity to US-held Fort Zachary Taylor. Olustee's isolation and its wooden monument certainly made it easy to vandalize without fear of consequences. In either case, Captain Loomis Langdon sought to rectify the situation.

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<sup>49</sup> Mark F. Boyd, "The Federal Campaign of 1864 in East Florida: A Study for the Florida State Board of Parks," *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (July 1950), 29. See the footnotes in the article.

<sup>50</sup> Faust, 188-189.

<sup>51</sup> Neff, 130.

In 1876, Langdon attempted to “get detailed by the war department to take charge of the collecting and reintering” of the remains of the Union soldiers who died in the Battle of Olustee or later from the wounds.<sup>52</sup> Like many veterans of the war, Langdon felt connected to those who he served with and desired to “perpetuate in that dreary region the memory of the brave men who fell there.”<sup>53</sup> In addition to honoring his fallen comrades in an appropriate cemetery, he intended to make this final resting to be a place of reflection:

Nor is it difficult to imagine what would be the emotions of the traveler, whose tired eyes were suddenly refreshed by the sight of a garden blooming amongst luxuriant foliage in such a desert, who would then and there be told the brief but glorious story of the devoted, whose blood would make those flowers to bloom, as it makes the grass grow greener there today than on any other spot of that God-forsaken land.<sup>54</sup>

Langdon’s commemorative ambitions ended when he received a message that declined his request with a copy of Lieutenant Grossman’s report, no less.<sup>55</sup> Whether out of sheer ignorance, budgetary concerns, bureaucratic incompetence, or veiled contempt, the use of outdated information to support the war department’s decision to decline Langdon’s request proved costly. To use war analogies, the war department unwittingly abandoned the high ground in the war of Olustee’s memory.

The war department’s actions (or inactions) in 1876 seem inexplicable given the combination of war department policy and legislative action that supported the removal and internment of the Union dead. In addition to Congress establishing National Cemeteries in 1862

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<sup>52</sup> Langdon, 461.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 462.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 463.



and General Meigs' General Orders in 1865, Congress appropriated approximately one million dollars in 1873 to replace wooden markers that marked soldiers' graves with headstones "of durable stone, and of such design and weight as shall keep them in place when set."<sup>56</sup> In 1879, Congress mandated the Secretary of War to establish graves for Union dead "in private village of city cemeteries," thus transferring or properly reintering the Union remains at Olustee fell under that category.<sup>57</sup> The Attorney General also held the authority in 1876 to purchase land for national cemeteries, which did not occur at Olustee either.<sup>58</sup> In short, government officials neglected their duties mandated by Congress in regards to Olustee's Union dead.

Nevertheless, the United States government had nothing to do with the Olustee battlefield for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Given the War Department's direction and the laws that existed in regard to national cemeteries and marking the grave of the Union dead, the remains at Olustee should have been recovered, identified to the extent possible, and their graves maintained, as they were at national cemeteries. Thus, the federal government, the same government the dead of Olustee fought for, forgot and left them.

While the battlefield itself remained forgotten, veterans like Langdon never forgot their participation in the battle. In addition, the funding of the Key West Union monument proved that veterans seemed capable of raising enough funds to erect memorials and monuments to their

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<sup>56</sup> George P. Sanger, ed., *The Statutes at Large, Treaties and Proclamations of the United States of America from March 1871 to March 1873* (Boston, Massachusetts: Little, Brown and Company, 1873), 202, 605.

<sup>57</sup> William M. McKinney, ed., *Federal Statutes Annotated: Containing All the Laws of the United States of a General, Permanent, and Public Nature in force on the first day of January 1916* (Long Island, NY: Edward Thompson Company, 1917). 24.

<sup>58</sup> "Rights of Territory in the National Characteristics - Opinion of Attorney-General Hoar," *New York Times* (1857-1922), January 10, 1870, <https://login.ezproxy.net.ucf.edu/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/92491453?accountid=10003>.

fallen brethren on their own. If the federal government failed in honoring Olustee's Union dead, then the Olustee survivors could have provided a memorial at the site.

Indeed, Union veterans cared deeply about the bonds they formed with each other during the war. The memory of the blood they shed, the friends they lost, and the cause they fought for spurred some of the veterans to act in other places. By rekindling the connections shared with their brothers-in-arms, the survivors of Olustee joined other Union veterans to form the largest Union Army veterans' organization, the Grand Army of the Republic.

#### 1.4 A Grand Army

Many of Olustee's surviving Union veterans joined a fraternal organization, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), comprised of their comrades and some even rose to leadership positions within the group. One of the key activities of this group included erecting monuments dedicated to the memory of their fallen brothers-in-arms. It seems in the realm of possibility that the GAR could erect a Union monument at Olustee. Yet, for reasons still unknown, the group did not mention the site or attempt to place a monument on the field. As such, the GAR failed to do what it had done at other Civil War battlefields – preserve the memory of the sacrifice of Union soldiers.

The GAR began the same year as the internment of the Union dead into the mass grave at Olustee. In 1866, Doctor Benjamin Franklin Stephenson, who served in the Union army as a surgeon, founded the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) with General John A. Logan and Illinois Governor Richard Oglesby. The group allowed Union veterans the opportunity to continue to preserve their bonds forged through fire and blood during the war. Throughout the

country, Union veterans, including those who fought at Olustee, quickly founded GAR posts (local organizations) to help continue the bonds shared with their comrades.

Many members participated in parades and erected monuments throughout the North and later the South. For black members, parades on Emancipation Day and Juneteenth Day (the date marked the freedom of the last slaves in Texas and the former Confederacy) reminded the black community of the “military acts of ordinary men with great deeds” that ensured slavery’s end and the hope for “political rights.”<sup>59</sup> In Maryland, five black GAR posts proposed the erection of a monument to African American soldiers in the Baltimore National Cemetery and the proposal faced “little to no opposition.”<sup>60</sup> On May 31, 1897, GAR members participated in the dedication of the Robert Gould Shaw and the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts Regiment Memorial at Boston Commons.<sup>61</sup> Integrated activities such as these, Barbara Gannon argued, gave evidence that white GAR members remembered the sacrifices and suffering experienced by black veterans and considered them comrades.<sup>62</sup>

The veterans that joined the GAR kept the memory of the battle alive by speaking of their own valor and the Union Army’s actions at Olustee. A Colonel in the GAR and aid-de-camp to the GAR’s commander in chief, Joseph T. Wilson of the Fifty-Forth Massachusetts recalled how Olustee “destroyed every vestige of distinction based on color” in his book, *The Black Phalanx; A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1775–1812*,

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<sup>59</sup> Brundage, 72.

<sup>60</sup> Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 69.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 80. See photograph featured.

<sup>62</sup> Gannon, *Americans Remember Their Civil War* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2017), 22.

1861–'65.<sup>63</sup> Wilson's book became a pioneering work in studying the black Civil War experience. Likewise, Seventh Connecticut veterans Louis Falley and Frederick White noted Olustee among the engagements they fought in for a GAR post's memory books.<sup>64</sup>

As these men and hundreds of thousands of veterans joined the ranks of the GAR, the organization gained considerable power and influence. As the organization grew, the GAR lobbied Congress for veterans' pensions as well as promoting and preserving the memory of the Union cause through memorials.<sup>65</sup> The GAR also helped establish Memorial Day when GAR Commander-in-Chief, General John A. Logan, declared on May 5, 1868 that May 30 be the day for "decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion."<sup>66</sup> The group remained a significant voting constituency for the Republican Party in the late nineteenth century and voted for many of their brothers-in-arms to serve as president, including Ulysses S. Grant, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison, and William McKinley.

Despite their political involvement, historians debated how much power the GAR actually wielded. David Blight noted that GAR suffered severe membership losses and only 26,899 nation-wide members remained in 1876. While Blight attributed the economic Panic of 1873 as a factor in the GAR's decline, he argued veterans worried "about their livelihoods more

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<sup>63</sup> Joseph T. Wilson, *The Black Phalanx: A History of the Negro Soldiers of the United States in the Wars of 1775–1812, 1861–'65* (Hartford: American Publishing Company, 1888), 273.

<sup>64</sup> Connecticut, Taylor Post, *Vitae*.

<sup>65</sup> Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xiv, 206; Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), vii.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted by Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor, & Company, 1889), 90.

than their war memories.”<sup>67</sup> In contrast, historian Timothy B. Smith provided evidence that despite these losses, the GAR remained a formidable force in promoting the Union memory of the war and battlefield preservation.<sup>68</sup>

Most notably, Smith cited how several Pennsylvania GAR posts moved to invigorate the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association in 1878. These posts raised enough funds to purchase the association’s stocks and replace the association’s leadership with officers of their own in 1880.<sup>69</sup> Clearly, the GAR seemed capable of accomplishing its goals even in its brief decline. If several GAR posts during this period of decline managed to usurp battlefield management at Gettysburg, then surely the GAR possessed the capability of shaping a battlefield that had no management – the Olustee Battlefield.

With many Olustee veterans within the GAR’s ranks, the baffling absence of the GAR at Olustee remains puzzling particularly when the GAR expanded into Florida. While veterans did establish GAR posts in Florida along with its auxiliary branches such as the Women’s Relief Corps in Jacksonville, St. Petersburg, Orlando, St. Cloud, Lynn Haven, Tampa, and Miami from 1891 to 1939, not one of these GAR posts replaced the Olustee monument.<sup>70</sup> With GAR affiliated groups active in Florida predating even some prominent Confederate groups like United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), the lack of Union memorialization efforts at Olustee seems even more baffling. Because of this inaction, the Union dead at Olustee did not receive their just due by the end of the nineteenth century or the end of the twentieth.

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<sup>67</sup> Blight, 157.

<sup>68</sup> Smith, 23

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Lees and Gaske, 170-187.

With no positive evidence one way or another, only speculation remains. It may have been that Olustee's status as a defeat may have shaped the GAR's response. The critical role in this battle played by black troops may have mattered to some racist Union soldiers. Ultimately, it may have been that individuals and private interests controlled the field and the remains of the Union dead.

### 1.5 The End of an Era

While Captain Loomis Langdon's request languished in bureaucratic purgatory, the Olustee battlefield did not remain in suspended animation. Locals moved into the area to start a new life in the last decades of the nineteenth century. Of course, these new tenants constantly faced reminders of the battle that occurred in this area.

George C. and Martha Dyess owned a home in the land that the Olustee battlefield encompassed. While the date they began their residence remains unknown, Florida Park Ranger Cynthia L. Cerrato suggested that if the family Dyess lived in their home prior to 1864, then the house most certainly remained a fixture during the battle.<sup>71</sup> In 1869, the Dyess family sold the house to John B. Brown, a Confederate veteran.<sup>72</sup> The Browns and their children lived their daily lives in the home whilst encountering relics from the battle such as cannon balls, muskets, and other equipment. To the chagrin of contemporary archaeologists, preservationists, and archivists, the Browns either removed these objects or collected them.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Cynthia L. Cerrato, *Olustee Battlefield Homestead: Family History, Property Ownership, and House Description*, original manuscript, April 15, 1997, Osceola National Forest Service, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Ferry, "After the Battle of Olustee: 1866 to 1949 – A Different Perspective," *Battle of Olustee*, accessed February 21, 2019, <http://battleofolustee.org/after.html>

Luis F. Emilio likely visited the battlefield prior to publishing his regimental history of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. In his valuable study, he remarked the Olustee battlefield now looked as it did in 1864 – “an open pine barren with many trees bearing scarifications of shot and shell.”<sup>74</sup> These pines attracted businesses profited from lumber sales. Lumber companies also harvested the cypress trees surrounding the battlefield. Companies like Columbia Farms Corporation from Virginia, the Ocean Pond Land Company, E.A. McColskey and J.C. Marsh arrived to and either turned portions of the vicinity into farmland or prepared them to sell to potential buyers.<sup>75</sup>

While people and companies arrived in the area for economic reasons, they occupied large portions of the battlefield, reinforcing the amnesia about the battle. The battlefield’s memory suffered through abandonment by the federal government, neglect by the Union veterans that fought there, and finally exploitation by loggers and land developers. Aristotle described these situations best explaining that nature abhors a vacuum and “bodies may simultaneously make room for another.”<sup>76</sup> Since the preservers of Union memory abandoned Olustee’s, then the preservers of Confederate memory eagerly seized it.

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<sup>74</sup> Emilio, 173.

<sup>75</sup> “History of the Osceola National Forest,” History & Culture, Osceola National Forest Service and United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service, accessed October 26, 2019, <https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/osceola/learning/history-culture>

<sup>76</sup> Aristotle, *Physics*, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gaye (London: Aeterna Press, 2015), 67.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **EARLY MANAGEMENT (1897-1949): LOST CAUSE VICTORIOUS, BEAUTIFICATION AND REFORESTATION**

The period between 1897 and 1949 represented the second era of the Olustee battlefield's history. The era consisted of reframing the land as a battlefield memorial that reflected the views of interested parties, particularly Confederate supporters. In contrast, Union supporters had no input into the battlefields landscape. Ultimately, these Confederate groups shaped the battlefield as a site of memory with approval of the Florida state agencies. While unofficial nongovernmental Confederate support groups controlled the memorial landscape through monument building and beautification, the official federal caretakers focused on reforestation.

Representatives of the Union cause failed to advocate for the men who remain for perpetuity on the Olustee Battlefield. In this war of memory, the GAR and other Union, emancipationist memory purveyors abandoned the field and left the interpretation of the Battle of Olustee at the hands of Confederate veterans, their surviving friends and relatives including the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), and those in positions of power in the Florida state government sympathetic to their rhetoric. The UDC's rejection of a Union memorial explicitly rejected it because it honored African Americans. As a result, these Confederate memory advocates enshrined the Olustee battleground as a site of memory that honored the Lost Cause.

To complicate matters, the US National Forest Service and the newly created Osceola National Forest Service reforested the land on and around the Olustee battlefield as close as possible to its 1864 state. The agencies started by replanting trees native region that lumber companies harvested in the late nineteenth century. Of course, this meant establishing boundary



lines concerning which government controlled what land. Thus, cooperation between the federal and state agencies remained critical to the success of these endeavors.

The actions between the various groups and agencies during this period continued to affect the perception of the battlefield. While the Osceola National Forest Service focused on restoring the site to similar conditions to those of 1864, the state of Florida manages a battlefield park that still reflects of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) interpretation of the landscape. Despite this federal control over the site, the US government left US soldiers' remains on this field—unmarked, and unrecognized.

How the UDC became a prominent force in shaping Civil War memory reflected the sentiments felt by white Southerners after the war. Much like their Union counterparts, white Southerners sought to ensure that the memory of their departed loved ones and comrades remained in the hearts and minds of the living. The desire to honor those who sacrificed their lives in the name of the fallen Confederacy provided a coping mechanism for their bereaved living family, comrades, and companions. As noted by W. Fitzhugh Brundage, white Southern men felt this task required a more genteel touch as “memorialization and mourning belonged to the realm of sentiment” befitting for women.<sup>1</sup> With this gendered cultural blessing, these Southern women soon found themselves with autonomy in the realm of sentiment.

### 2.1 The United Daughters of the Confederacy’s Quest for Vindication

The roots of organized women’s involvement in the preservation of the Confederate cause trace to women gathering in 1865 and 1866 to discuss plans to reintern Confederate dead

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<sup>1</sup> Brundage, 26.

and memorialize their sacrifice. Unlike the Union dead, the federal government played no role in the postwar reinternment of the Confederate dead. As these gatherings grew, many of these women's groups formed the Ladies' Memorial Association (LMA) and raised the funds to intern Confederate soldiers' remains and for the "erection of monuments, and celebration of memorial day" (Confederate memorial day).<sup>2</sup> Most notably, these women established Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, noted by historian Caroline E. Jenney as a place where the memory of the Confederacy "might live on indefinitely" through its ornate mausoleums and pristine graves adorned with Confederate symbols and flowers.<sup>3</sup>

The language used by the LMAs used when commemorating Confederate soldiers represented one of the first articulations of the Lost Cause narrative. The term originated in Edward A. Pollard's 1866 book, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, which advocated the romanticized view of the Confederate cause. Many Southerners echoed his views and expanded on them in the decades since the end of the war.<sup>4</sup> Pollard's successors advocated States' Rights as the primary cause of the Civil War and not the institution of slavery. They portrayed the Confederate soldier as the noble defender of Southern white society, which under the command of superb military leaders such as Robert E. Lee stood against the inferior Union horde. In relation to the latter, advocates believed the Union only won due to overwhelming numbers and industrial might, not from superiority of the Union cause or

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<sup>2</sup> Foster, 39.

<sup>3</sup> Caroline E. Jenney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 93.

<sup>4</sup> Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 85; Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates* (New York: E.B. Treat & Co., 1866).

its defenders. They infused this belief into every facet of postwar Southern white society: politically, socially, religiously, and artistically.<sup>5</sup>

Gaines Foster argued that these activities “aided the process of healing the wounds of defeat,” they offered a vague and distant “promise of vindication” and signs of “eventual triumph” etched into the monuments or in the speeches of the orators at the monuments’ dedication.<sup>6</sup> Women remained essential to this memory work. The LMAs laid the groundwork for the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), and their efforts to vindicate the Confederate cause by placing memorials to the Confederacy across the nation.

The UDC formed thirty years after the war, by that time the LMAs finished reburying the Confederate dead. On September 10, 1894, co-founders Caroline Meriwether Goodlett and Anna Davenport Raines invited groups of “elite white southern women” under the banner of “Daughters of the Confederacy” to Nashville, Tennessee. The groups consisted of the wives of Confederate officers or politicians or the daughters of such men. At the Frank Cheatham Bivouac, an association of Tennessee Confederate veterans, these groups formally established themselves as the National Association of the Daughters of the Confederacy (NDOC), later changed to United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>7</sup>

As these women established their constitution and set guidelines for the organization, Karen L. Cox noted the five primary objectives of the group. The objectives included continuing the memorial work of the LMAs, monitoring the historical studies written about the

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<sup>5</sup> See, Gallagher and Nolan, eds. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*; Osterweis, *The Myth of the Lost Cause, 1865-1900*; Connelly and Bellows, *God and General Longstreet*; Davis, *The Cause Lost*.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>7</sup> Cox, 2; 18.

Confederacy, providing care for aging Confederate veterans or their widows (medical, housing, etc.), and instructing the “true history” to future generations of white Southerners. The fifth objective allowed women to use “their education and leadership skills to take a public stand and, if needed, political stance.”<sup>8</sup> UDC operations between 1894 and 1915 reflected members’ desire to accomplish these objectives with the overall goal of vindicating Southerners in the eyes of American society by advocating the Lost Cause. By their tenth anniversary, this national organization grew to approximately 30,000.<sup>9</sup>

Because of their financial resources, the UDC shaped how future generations remembered the war. Their fundraising abilities surpassed those of the men they honored, the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), or their younger male relatives, the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). In 1899, when the UCV failed to raise enough money for a monument to Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia, they voted unanimously to hand the project to the UDC.<sup>10</sup> Eight years later, the UDC succeeded and raised enough money to complete the monument.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to their fundraising capabilities, the UDC maintained a tight grip on the education of white Southern children. For the UDC, the monuments they funded not only revered the fallen or saluted a bygone era, they served a purpose in educating “southern youth” about patriotism, “commitment to constitutional principle,” to remind the young people of “the cause for which their ancestors fought.”<sup>12</sup> Along with caretaking Confederate graves to establish a “ritual link” with previous generations, the UDC advocated the removal of “unsuitable”

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>11</sup> Brundage, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Cox, 68.

textbooks and the installation of books approved by their organization. Suitability reflected the extent to which the book reflected the Lost Cause view of the Civil War.<sup>13</sup> Because of their power and influence, education officials sought their approval regarding the way authors depicted the Civil War in textbooks.

As the organization grew, more chapters appeared throughout the South including Florida. In 1895, the Confederate Home Association (CHA) reconstituted itself as the nineteenth chapter of UDC and retained the CHA's leader, Susan Hartridge, as its head. The CHA acted as an auxiliary to the UCV that cared for Jacksonville's Confederate Soldier and Sailors Home that housed "aged and disabled" Confederate veterans. While they continued their previous CHA duties, the Jacksonville Chapter sought to "interest other cities in Florida in forming UDC Chapters."<sup>14</sup>

Their effort succeeded as four more chapters formed in Lake City, Ocala, Brooksville, and Palatka and obtained charters from the national organization. Once these chapters received their charters, Hartridge called for a meeting in Jacksonville, Florida that resulted in the formation of the Florida Division of the UDC.<sup>15</sup> Its members represented a connection to political and social circles in Florida; Mary Davis Bloxham (the wife of Governor William Dunning Bloxham), Florence Cooley (daughter of Miles Jones Murphy, who served in the state legislature and the Confederate Army), Floride Lydia Pearson Fleming (the wife of Governor

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 121.

<sup>14</sup> Nell Stevens Murfree, *History of Martha Reid Chapter, No. 19 United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Jacksonville: Nell Murfree, 1971), 3-9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

Francis Fleming) counted among prominent members. The delegates chose Julia Weed, the wife of Bishop Edwin G. Weed of the Episcopal Diocese in Florida, as the first division president.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, the Jacksonville Chapter renamed itself the Martha Reid Chapter, after the founder of the Florida Hospital in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>17</sup> The chapter engaged in various fundraising campaigns and social events such as the Confederate Ball in Jacksonville. It raised funds for a Jefferson Davis memorial window at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Richmond, Virginia.<sup>18</sup> Locally, on January 27, 1897, during the Second Florida Division Convention at Ocala, Florida, Martha Reid Chapter member Mrs. J. N. Whitner suggested that the Division raise funds to erect a monument to "mark the Battlefield of Olustee, Florida's most famous battle."<sup>19</sup> President Weed concurred and reported to the Fourth Annual Convention of the UDC of the Florida Division's intentions.<sup>20</sup>

Honoring Olustee's memory meant a great deal to the Florida Division. The battle ended in Confederate victory, a victory that stopped the Union advancement of large forces into Florida. The Florida Division did not waste time in lobbying the Florida legislature for funds to build a monument.

The timing of this effort was fortuitous. The UDC's call for a monument at Olustee came at a time when advocates of both Union and Confederate memory promoted battlefield preservation. Timothy B. Smith documented the 1890s preservation efforts at battlefields such as

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<sup>16</sup> Barrett Codieck, "Keepers of History, Shapers of Memory: The Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1895-1930" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 2012), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Murfree, 150.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>20</sup> Julia Weed, "Report of the Florida Division" *Minutes of the Fourth Annual Meeting, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Foster and Webb, 1897), 13.

Gettysburg, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, Shiloh, Antietam, and Vicksburg. He termed this a “Golden Era” of preservation, not “marred by social and economic factors beyond preservationists’ control.”<sup>21</sup> Critical to these efforts was the renewed interest in sectional reconciliation between North and South; many parks’ preservation boards included both Union and Confederate veterans. Likewise, the UDC funded and erected a monument at the Shiloh battlefield during this period.<sup>22</sup> The UDC lobbying for a monument at Olustee allowed Florida to take advantage of people’s willingness to preserve these battlefields.

On May 26, 1897, Florida Senator B. D. Wadsworth, Chairman of the Committee on Militia, introduced Senate Bill 279 to assist the UDC’s efforts. In his report to Senate President Charles J. Perrenot, he called for the appropriation of “fifteen hundred dollars to the erection of a monument to the Confederate soldiers on the battlefield of Olustee.”<sup>23</sup> On June 2, 1897, the Florida Senate voted on the bill and all but Senator Blitch voted in favor of the bill, then the bill was “ordered certified to the House of Representatives.”<sup>24</sup> Two days later, Secretary of the Senate T. J. Appleyard introduced the bill to the House of Representatives.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Smith, xviii.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 135-137.

<sup>23</sup> “Proceedings May 26, 1897,” *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on April 6, 1897*, Florida State Senate, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1897, 860. From Florida Senate Website Archive, [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1897/1897B/5\\_26\\_97.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1897/1897B/5_26_97.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> “Proceedings June 2, 1897,” *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on April 6, 1897*, Florida State Senate, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1897, 1250. From Florida Senate Website Archive, [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1897/1897C/6\\_02\\_97.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1897/1897C/6_02_97.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> “Proceedings June 4, 1897,” *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Regular Session, 1897. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on April 6, 1897*, Florida House of Representatives, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Office, 1897, 1383. From Advanced Legislative Search & Browse, [http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm\\$vid=House:all](http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm$vid=House:all)

The bill, designated as House Bill 84, lingered until April 4, 1899, when the House referred it to the Committee on Finance and Taxation with new language. The bill dropped the exclusive term “Confederate soldiers” and called for the “appropriation in aid of a monument commemorative of the Battlefield of Olustee, and to provide for a commission to expend said appropriation.”<sup>26</sup> Seven days later, the Committee on Finance and Taxation referred the bill to the Committee on Appropriation.<sup>27</sup> Not long after, the bill soon found its way back to the Senate.

On June 1, 1899, Florida State Senator E. N. Dimick, Chairman of the Committee of Enrolled Bills, reported and presented the bill back to the Senate.<sup>28</sup> The Senate conferred this act, along with several others, and its respective report to the Florida House of Representatives. There, the House’s Chairman of the Committee of Enrolled Bills, Representative F. J. Pons of Baker County, reported the bill to House Speaker Robert McNamee. McNamee signed the enrolled act with Chief Clerk William Forsyth Bynum.<sup>29</sup> President Adams and the Secretary of

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<sup>26</sup> “Proceedings April 4, 1899,” *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Regular Session, 1899. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida House of Representatives, 8<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Office, 1899, 87. From Advanced Legislative Search & Browse,

[http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm\\$vid=House:all](http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm$vid=House:all)

<sup>27</sup> “Proceedings April 11, 1899,” *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Regular Session, 1899. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida House of Representatives, 8<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Office, 1899, 118. From Advanced Legislative Search & Browse,

[http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm\\$vid=House:all](http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm$vid=House:all)

<sup>28</sup> “Proceedings June 1, 1899,” *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida State Senate, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1899, 1342. From Florida Senate Website Archive,

[http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1899/1899C/6\\_01\\_99.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1899/1899C/6_01_99.pdf)

<sup>29</sup> “Proceedings June 1, 1899,” *Journal of Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Regular Session, 1899. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida House of Representatives, 8<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Office, 1899, 1410. From Advanced Legislative Search & Browse,

[http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm\\$vid=House:all](http://sb.flleg.gov/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm$vid=House:all)



the Senate signed the acts and sent them to Governor William D. Bloxham for approval.<sup>30</sup>

Bloxham approved it on June 2, 1899.<sup>31</sup>

When the details of the bill reached the UDC, they discovered the that language change in the bill meant that the monument no longer exclusively honored Confederate soldiers who died at Olustee and suggested that it might also memorialize the Union dead, white and black..<sup>32</sup> After much “distress,” the Florida Division of the UDC opposed the law.<sup>33</sup> They also received support in their opposition from other Confederate groups such as the E. A. Perry Camp of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV).<sup>34</sup> Some UDC members made very clear that they made their decisions based on race:

If... the union dead had been white men it is possible that we would have remembered them in the bill, as they were negroes, and we ignored them in the bill, we consider the change by the legislature as worthy of our highest indignation.<sup>35</sup>

The politician responsible of earning the UDC’s ire, Democratic Congressman Frank Clark of Florida’s Second Congressional District, published a note in local newspapers in which

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<sup>30</sup> “Proceedings June 1, 1899,” *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida State Senate, 7<sup>th</sup> Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1899, 1347-1352. From Florida Senate Website Archive, [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1899/1899C/6\\_01\\_99.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1890s/1899/1899C/6_01_99.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> “Proceedings May 28, 1901,” *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on April 2, 1901*, Florida State Senate, 8th Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1901, 1305. From Florida Senate Website Archive, [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1900s/1901/1901C/5\\_28\\_01.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1900s/1901/1901C/5_28_01.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> “Chapter 4815—[NO. 154.]” in *Acts and Resolutions adopted by the Legislature of Florida at its Fifth Regular Session, Under the Constitution of A.D. 1885* (Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Office, 1899), 213-14.

<sup>33</sup> Cathryn Garth Lancaster, *Early Years of the Florida Division UDC: 1896-1921* (Jacksonville: Cathryn Garth Lancaster, 1983), 60.

<sup>34</sup> “Old Vets Protest,” *Bradford County Telegraph*, January 1, 1900.

<sup>35</sup> “Ladies Displeased at Clark; Daughters of the Confederacy Will Work against a Candidate,” *Atlanta Constitution*, January 28, 1900.

he explained that the black Union dead of Olustee deserved a monument just as their Confederate counterparts.<sup>36</sup> As a result, the UDC backed Clark's opponent, Robert W. Davis; Davis defeated Clark in the election.<sup>37</sup> Clark's ousting was a clear message to Florida politicians: the UDC rejected any monument that might honor black veterans. It was not just a matter of honoring their heritage but repudiating black military service.

The UDC's efforts paid dividends when sympathetic senators recommended an amendment to Section 1 of the law. On May 28, 1901, Senate Bill 297 addressed this amendment and, after a second reading, the Senate sent the bill to the Committee of Engrossed Bills.<sup>38</sup> The Committee's Chairman, Senator N. A. Blich, reported that committee "carefully examined" and "found the bill correctly engrossed."<sup>39</sup>

The bill entered a third reading before the Senate voted on it. Eighteen Senators voted for it and no one voted against it. As such, the bill passed unanimously.<sup>40</sup> This amendment's passage ensured the monument's identity as strictly as a Confederate memorial. The UDC then turned their attention to generating funds for the monument.

## 2.2 Establishing Order and Beautification at Olustee

After receiving approval from the Florida legislature, the UDC began raising funds and establishing infrastructure at the monument site. When they did so, it was less about "preserving"

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. The article did not quote Clark's card.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.; "Olustee in the Campaign," *Bradford County Telegraph*, February 16, 1900.

<sup>38</sup> "Proceedings May 28, 1901," *A Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the Regular Session of the Legislature of the State of Florida, Held under the Constitution Adopted by the Convention of 1885. Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Tuesday, April 4, 1899*, Florida State Senate, 8th Session, Tallahassee: Tallahassee Book and Job Print, 1901, 1305. From Florida Senate Website Archive, [http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1900s/1901/1901C/5\\_28\\_01.pdf](http://archive.flsenate.gov/data/Historical/Senate%20Journals/1900s/1901/1901C/5_28_01.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 1313.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 1317.

a battlefield and more about shaping the landscape through beautification into a shrine to the Lost Cause. In 1902, the Florida Senate appropriated two-thousand five hundred dollars to the building fund of the monument. Additionally, Florida Governor William Sherman Jennings appointed the Commander of the United Confederate Veterans of Florida, Evander McIver Law, as chairman of the commission in charge of the monument's construction. UDC members Mrs. R. C. Cooley and Mrs. W. H. Dial joined the commission as well.<sup>41</sup>

Despite the availability of state funding, the UDC encountered some difficulties. Florida Division President Belle Lamar Stockbridge reported at the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the National UDC that the Olustee monument remained incomplete and designated as such "for some time," despite funds and donations collected.<sup>42</sup> The Florida Division of the UDC believed that disagreements over the location of the monument (some Daughters supported the offer of Lake City to place the monument there rather than at the actual battlefield) and a decline of interest contributed to the lack of funding.<sup>43</sup> The disagreement over the location of the monument lasted two years until the 1908 Florida Division Annual Convention in Tallahassee. At this gathering, officials resolved disputes about the monuments location and the UDC received two-hundred seventy-six dollars in pledges. As a result, the UDC resolved to prioritize the effort to build the Olustee monument.<sup>44</sup>

Because of this meeting, Florida Division President Esther Carlotta reported at the Annual Meeting of the National UDC that the division contributed two hundred dollars toward

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<sup>41</sup> Lancaster, 61.

<sup>42</sup> Belle Lamar Stockbridge, "Report of the Florida Division", *Minutes of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Foster, Webb & Parker, 1906), 233.

<sup>43</sup> Lancaster, 61; Lees and Gaske, 197-198.

<sup>44</sup> Lancaster, 61.

the Olustee Monument fund.<sup>45</sup> Later, officials negotiated and convinced New Yorker Austin B. Fletcher to sell the acre of property he owned on battlefield grounds to the State of Florida for one dollar on August 6, 1909.<sup>46</sup> Considering Fletcher's background, the sale comes as a surprise.

Fletcher, an attorney, also taught as a Professor of Elocution and Oratory at Brown University and a Professor of Law at Boston University.<sup>47</sup> More prominently, he donated a million dollars to his alma mater, Tufts College, towards "establishing a school of law and diplomacy" as well as serving as a trustee and president of the board of the school.<sup>48</sup> Fletcher also belonged to the Union League Club of New York, which promoted loyalty to Union during the war and focused on clean government and city projects following Reconstruction.<sup>49</sup>

State officials did not stop acquiring land with only Fletcher's property. The Brown family also sold their land for the same price of one dollar on September 27, 1909.<sup>50</sup> With the land available for the monument space, workers started transforming the area for the monument.

For the next two years, workers cleared the designated area of the battlefield and constructed the monument. The UDC raised an additional thousand dollars towards the monument through fundraising.<sup>51</sup> By the 1911 Florida Division UDC Annual Convention, a

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<sup>45</sup> Esther Carlotta, "Report of the Florida Division," *Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Opelika: Foster, The Post Publishing Company, 1909), 299.

<sup>46</sup> State of Florida Quitclaim to land signed by Austin B. Fletcher, August 6, 1909, from the Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>47</sup> "Report on Olustee," Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of Florida, August 2014, [http://www.dofsuvcw.org/images/Report\\_on\\_Olustee\\_08-2014.pdf](http://www.dofsuvcw.org/images/Report_on_Olustee_08-2014.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> "A History of Excellence," About Fletcher, Tufts University, Fletcher School, accessed October 26, 2019, <https://fletcher.tufts.edu/about/history-excellence>.

<sup>49</sup> "Report on Olustee," Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Department of Florida, August 2014, [http://www.dofsuvcw.org/images/Report\\_on\\_Olustee\\_08-2014.pdf](http://www.dofsuvcw.org/images/Report_on_Olustee_08-2014.pdf); "History & Tradition," About the Club, Union League Club, accessed October 26, 2019, <https://www.unionleagueclub.org/about#history>.

<sup>50</sup> State of Florida Quitclaim to land signed by John Brown and Eliza Brown, September 27, 1909, from the Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>51</sup> Lancaster, 62.

report notified those present that the Olustee monument neared completion.<sup>52</sup> Originally scheduled for the forty-eighth anniversary of the battle, the monument commission moved the unveiling ceremony to October 23, 1912.<sup>53</sup> This coincided with the annual meeting of the Florida Division of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) in Lake City.<sup>54</sup>

On the date of the unveiling of the monument, approximately four thousand people attended the event and dignitaries made appearances—Florida Governor Albert W. Gilchrist, Senator Duncan U. Fletcher, and Olustee Monument Commission Chairman Evander Law.<sup>55</sup> J. N. Whitner, the woman who suggested building a monument at the battlefield, also attended with other members of Martha Reid Chapter No. 19 of the Florida Division of the UDC.<sup>56</sup>

Senator Duncan U. Fletcher made a speech that embodied the meaning of the monument. Fletcher exclaimed that the monument not only honored “true and rare heroism, extraordinary endurance and valor” of the Confederate soldiers who fought in the battle, the monument signaled to those present the dawn of a new era. He hailed his fellow Southerners who, though defeated, now wielded the chance to “take position at the head” of the country again.<sup>57</sup> After Fletcher’s speech, Whitner ceremonially presented the deeds to the monument and property to Governor Gilchrist.<sup>58</sup> While the State of Florida possessed ownership of the monument, the UDC continued to manage the site.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>53</sup> Lees and Gaske, 198.

<sup>54</sup> “Veterans Will Meet at Lake City Oct. 23,” *Tampa Morning Tribune*, September 26, 1912.

<sup>55</sup> “Handsome Olustee Monument Unveiled and Turned Over to State of Florida,” *The Florida Times-Union*, October 24, 1912.

<sup>56</sup> Murfree, 14.

<sup>57</sup> “Handsome Olustee Monument Unveiled and Turned Over to State of Florida,” *The Florida Times-Union*, October 24, 1912.

<sup>58</sup> Lancaster, 62.

Once the UDC controlled the site, they asked the state for funds. In 1914, the UDC petitioned the Florida State Legislature for an appropriation to maintain the Olustee Monument and the three acres surrounding it.<sup>59</sup> The following year, the legislature passed an act that appropriated a budget of “five hundred dollars in the first year” with one hundred dollars given annually for “maintaining in proper condition, the grounds belonging to Olustee Monument.”<sup>60</sup> The UDC wanted to do more than maintain the monument: they sought to expand the infrastructure of site, to build the support system for presenting and protecting the memory enshrined by the monument.

The UDC understood the importance of the three acres under their supervision. Historian Dolores Hayden described public spaces like the Olustee Monument as a place of identity, “intimately tied to memory: both our personal memories ... and the collective or social memories interconnected with the histories of our families, neighbors, fellow workers, and ethnic communities.”<sup>61</sup> Ironical, considering Hayden wrote with the voice of subaltern groups in mind and groups such as the UDC quelled voice of the African Americans attached to Olustee.<sup>62</sup> For the UDC, the memories of Olustee passed from their forbearers to their custody and the monument (and the land it stood on) symbolized the vindication of Confederate defiance.

The goals of the UDC regarding Olustee embedded a similar idea as Loomis Langdon’s idea for a national cemetery at the site: a place to reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Florida Legislature, “Act to Make an Appropriation for the Putting and Keeping in Order of the Grounds,” *Regular Sessions* 1915, 51.

<sup>61</sup> Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute Press, 1995; paperback ed. Cambridge: The Massachusetts Institute Press, 1997), 9. All citations refer to the paperback edition.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, xiv, 6-8.

fought the battle, only with the white Southern, pro-Confederate interpretation represented. In contrast to David Blight's thesis regarding a unification of the "white supremacist" (Confederate) memory, the Union narrative, the reconciliationist memory, or emancipationist narratives remained silent as long as the UDC maintained stewardship over the site.<sup>63</sup>

To aid their memory work, the UDC sought to beautify the grounds surrounding the monument. Beautification, an idea fostered by the City Beautiful Movement that "demanded a reorientation of public thought and action toward urban beauty," allowed the UDC to make their vision of Olustee take corporeal form.<sup>64</sup> William H. Wilson noted the City Beautiful Movement influenced many city planners from 1900 to 1910 and resulted in the construction of "emerald parks, sinuous parkways, graceful trees flanking parked boulevards, stately public buildings of surpassing workmanship and decoration, magnificent monuments, and even a few civic centers."<sup>65</sup> Such aesthetics found appeal to middle- and upper-middle-class Americans such as the UDC.<sup>66</sup>

The UDC held similar ideals to the City Beautiful Movement regarding the appearance of their monuments and believed that beauty facilitated their memory work. The UDC thought that future generations would be more receptive to their interpretations and meaning if they created a site of quiet reflection. In order to accomplish this vision, the UDC needed more funding.

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<sup>63</sup> Blight, 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement: Creating the North American Landscape* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 1.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

### 2.3 The Struggle to Maintain Order

During their supervision, the constant need for funds kept the Daughters from making their complete vision a reality; ultimately funding battles led to their complete loss of control over site. By 1918, the Florida Division of the UDC maintained the grounds of the Olustee monument and reported annually to the state legislature and the greater organization of the UDC of the money spent at the site. The Daughters did not remain content to act as groundskeepers for the state. Instead, they sought a greater purpose for the three acres under their stewardship through beautification.

After the State of Florida handed the stewardship of the monument and the grounds to the UDC, the Daughters began shaping the grounds based on their vision. They erected an entrance to the battlefield that consisted of a stone wall near the railroad tracks, iron gates, and a flagpole that cost four-hundred twenty-five dollars (some chapters in the division donated money to mitigate the cost). Chairman Whitner reported that these costs left one hundred twenty-eight dollars in the UDC's budget. Realizing that expenses might break the UDC's budget, Whitner requested the legislature to increase Olustee's appropriation amount.<sup>67</sup>

In 1921, the Florida State Legislature approved of Whitner's request and the appropriation increased from a hundred dollars annually to four hundred dollars annually. With additional funding, the UDC started their next project: construction of a park keeper's lodge.<sup>68</sup> The UDC lobbied the state legislature for five thousand dollars to help fund this endeavor. Surprisingly, the measure failed to pass despite Florida Governor Cary A. Hardee's approval.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Lancaster, 62.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> J.C. Trice quoted by Mrs. J.N. Whitner, "Report of the Olustee Committee" *Minutes of the Twenty Eighth Annual*



The UDC did not give up and continued to lobby for the lodge until the legislature approved two yearly payments of one-thousand eight hundred dollars for this building. Additionally, the UDC raised one-thousand five hundred dollars to fund the construction of the lodge and hire a caretaker.<sup>70</sup> With each new addition to the site, they increased their control over the battlefield's landscape; all of their efforts approved by the State of Florida

While the Florida Division of the UDC maintained their grip on Olustee, nationally, Lost Cause advocates faced challenges. Historian Gaines Foster believed that 1913 marked the climax of the influence of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and other Confederate heritage groups. He argued that these groups "did not always agree on how it should be interpreted, much less on how it should be employed." Foster suggested that Confederate tradition "lost much if not all of its cultural power" as a result.<sup>71</sup> The Florida Division of the UDC did not immediately feel the effects of this decline and they continued their beautification projects at Olustee.

In 1925, the UDC funded the installation of Italian rye grass in order to keep the Olustee grass "green all winter."<sup>72</sup> Additionally, the Daughters planted palm trees and Florida plants at the site and funded the construction of a "light and water system" that maintained this flora. Barrett Codieck noted the Daughters made major improvements at the site in 1928 when they funded the planting of tropical plants, a lily pond, and birdbaths. In spite of these developments,

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*Convention, Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Florida Division UDC, 1923), 125.

<sup>70</sup> Mrs. John C. Miller, "Report of the Olustee Committee" *Minutes of the Thirty First Annual Convention, Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Florida Division UDC, 1926), 93-7.

<sup>71</sup> Foster, 197.

<sup>72</sup> Miller, "Report of the Olustee Committee" *Minutes of the Thirty First Annual Convention* (Florida Division UDC, 1926), 98

the UDC did not implement a proposal of installing a beacon on top of the monument.<sup>73</sup> Codieck argued that despite the “significant time and money” dedicated to the “erection and maintenance of a large monument” the UDC did not plan to expand the parameters of the Olustee borders beyond the “5-acre plot” they supervised.<sup>74</sup>

Writer William S. Burroughs remarked that if a person does grow, that person starts to die.<sup>75</sup> This idea also applies to organizations like the UDC. Almost as precursor of future events, the Florida legislature denied the state appropriation for one thousand dollars to the Olustee Monument Committee in 1930. UDC member Julia H. Norris concluded the denial did not come from a lack of sympathy to “our cause, but was the result of the economic depression in our state, as well as in the nation.”<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, the Great Depression put into motion a series of events that created a new department in the federal government the course of Olustee’s development and ended the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s direct management of the Olustee Monument.

#### 2.4 Regime Change: The National and Florida Park Services at Olustee

The crisis of the Great Depression forced the United States government to act: unemployment numbers sat between approximately twelve million and nearly fifteen million.<sup>77</sup> In February of 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed fifteen bills in a hundred-day-period

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<sup>73</sup> Codieck, 52; Mrs. T.M. Dorman, “Report of Olustee Park and Monument” *Minutes of the Thirty Third Annual Convention* (Florida Division UDC, 1928), 74-5.

<sup>74</sup> Codieck, 53.

<sup>75</sup> William S. Burroughs, *Junky: The Definitive Text of “Junk”* (New York: Ace Books, 1953; New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 5. Citations refer to the Penguin Books edition.

<sup>76</sup> Julia H. Norris, “Report of Legislation Committee” *Minutes of the Thirty Fifth Annual Convention, Florida Division United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Florida Division UDC, 1930), 101.

<sup>77</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, *Age of Roosevelt: Coming of the New Deal* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1958), 337.

that became the New Deal.<sup>78</sup> Roosevelt also sought civilian projects to cut unemployment and created a corps of civilians that performed tasks restricted “to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control and similar projects.”<sup>79</sup> On March 31, 1933, Congress passed the Emergency Conservation Work Act that granted Roosevelt’s request and established the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) giving the Forestry Service oversight of projects on federal, state, or private land.<sup>80</sup> This oversight brought the authority of the United States Department of the Interior’s National Forest Service (NPS) to Florida and the Olustee battlefield itself.

When the National Park Service turned their attention to Florida, Director Horace Albright contacted state authorities regarding funding. His chief planner, Conrad Wirth, headed the CCC’s involved with state parks like Olustee. Noticing the work the CCC and the NPS accomplished across the country, Florida Forestry Board member and state forester Harry Lee Baker suggested that Florida “develop its own state park system using federal labor and dollars.” Furthermore, he emphasized the potential of linking state parks to the tourist market.<sup>81</sup> Supported by State Planning Board member Ed Ball and Governor David Sholtz, Senate Bill 558 passed both the Florida Senate and Florida House of Representatives and Governor Sholtz signed it into law on June 4, 1935 (after Baker assured Sholtz of the benefits of establishing a state park service). The law formally established the Florida Park Service (FPS), supervised by the Florida

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<sup>78</sup> Patrick Maney, *The Roosevelt Presence: The Life and Legacy of FDR* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 40.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted by Tom H. Watkins, *The Hungry Years: A Narrative History of the Great Depression in America* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1999), 158.

<sup>80</sup> John C. Paige, *The Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Park Service, 1933-1942: An Administrative History* (Washington: National Park Service, 1985), 15; John A. Salmond, *The Civilian Conservation Corps, 1933-1942: A New Deal Case Study* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1967), 27.

<sup>81</sup> David J. Nelson, *How the New Deal Built Florida Tourism: The Civilian Conservation Corps and State Park* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2019), 60-61; *Ibid.*, 53.

Forestry Board under Baker, and Governor Sholtz appointed C. H. Schaeffer as its first director.<sup>82</sup>

Under Shaeffer's administration, the FPS worked with the CCC and the NPS in creating state parks across Florida. Despite the cooperation, the agencies carried different agendas. David J. Nelson contented that the NPS focused on "master planning, compatible designs, and resource protection" to create state parks to their ideal standard. The FPS concentrated on creating and maintaining parks "marketable as tourist attractions" that did not cost much funding from the State of Florida.<sup>83</sup> The differences of goals also lead to different methodologies engaged by either agency concerning land development. Neither supported any effort to change Olustee's Confederate landscape.

In accordance with their goals, the NPS and the CCC engaged in a process called reforestation. As defined by the National Forest Service, reforestation involves "planning for natural regeneration or tree planting" in order to reestablish "forest cover, thus initiating the restoring of forest function."<sup>84</sup> The lumber and land development companies that emerged in the late nineteenth century at Olustee depleted many of trees and vegetation that bore witness to the battle. Through reforestation, the NPS inadvertently began the first step in restoring the battlefield to conditions similar to that of how the battle's veterans remembered them. This process did not carry the same symbolism as the beautification engaged by the UDC.

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 64-67.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>84</sup> "Reforestation," United States Forest Service, accessed May 18, 2019, <https://www.fs.fed.us/forestmanagement/vegetation-management/reforestation/index.shtml>.

The UDC's beautification efforts fell in line with the FPS' vision. The Daughters beautified the parks under their supervision both out of reverence to the Confederate dead and attracted the increasing number of Northern tourists that visited the state.<sup>85</sup> Southerners in groups such as UDC recognized a phenomenon identified by W. Fitzhugh Brundage. Southerners perpetuated the romanticism of the Old South as a "commercially oriented celebration" and a "commodity."<sup>86</sup> Hence, Brundage identified another motivation for the UDC's beautification of the sites they supervised. A monument to the Union dead failed to serve the needs of the UDC's efforts to memorialize the Confederacy and the FPS' desire to increase tourism.

Sometimes, these two visions of the park system led to clashes on other Civil War battlefield sites. For example, a controversy arose regarding the National Park Service and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) over the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park in Virginia. In 1923, the SCV (along with other Confederate heritage groups and sympathizers) successfully lobbied the Virginia state legislature to establish a park that surrounded Henry House Hill, a strategic point during both Battles of Bull Run (also known as Manassas).<sup>87</sup> Joan M. Zenzen noted that the Manassas Battlefield Corporation, the organization founded to manage the site, found financial difficulties in caretaking the park.<sup>88</sup> Like Florida, the NPS set its sights on Virginia's state parks, including Manassas, and Conrad Wirth sent CCC workers into the area for land development in accordance to the Bull Run Recreational Demonstration Area.

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<sup>85</sup> Nelson, 207.

<sup>86</sup> Brundage, 184.

<sup>87</sup> Joan M. Zenzen, *Battling for Manassas: The Fifty-Year Preservation Struggle at Manassas National Battlefield Park* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 15.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

In 1937, NPS' Acting Director Arthur E. Demaray included Henry House Hill as one of the sites crucial for preservation of the battlefield and Coordinating Superintendent Branch Spalding acted to secure the site for the federal government.<sup>89</sup> Commander-in-Chief William Lee Hopkins of the Sons of Confederate Veterans rallied his members to oppose the transfer, citing the Manassas Battlefield Corporation's failure to consult the general members regarding the issue. He did not appreciate idea of the federal government controlling a park built by "southern money and dedication."<sup>90</sup> A year later, Spalding addressed Hopkins' grievances and, despite some lingering protests, swayed a majority the SCV to vote to donate the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park to the NPS.<sup>91</sup>

Without question, the national body of the UDC monitored the situation in Manassas and the potential for another situation just like it loomed over Olustee. The NPS' actions through the CCC tested the delicate balance between federal and state authority concerning state parks. The presence of both at Olustee made cooperation a necessity that spelled the end of an era in Olustee's history.

As early as 1933, the federal government was involved in the battlefield. Olustee housed over 3,500 CCC workers and twenty-two camps (later rose to twenty-five camps).<sup>92</sup> After the establishment of the Florida Park Service, Director C.H. Schaeffer arrived and oversaw the Florida Forest Service's state nursery at Olustee.<sup>93</sup> While the FPS protected their interests, the CCC established a forestry camp at Olustee that distributed three hundred Australian pines

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>92</sup> Nelson, 30-31.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 79.

throughout the state in 1937.<sup>94</sup> These camps also brought workers of different ethnicity to the site, though the authorities segregated African Americans at Olustee.<sup>95</sup> As the camps grew because of these operations, so did the need for space.

To expand these camps, the FPS turned to the land owned or formerly owned by the lumber and land development companies in the region. On August 11, 1936, Governor David Sholtz proclaimed the dissolution the Ocean Pond Land Company after the latter failed to file taxes. B. J. Padgett, the last member of the company's board of directors, sold the land that the company owned at Olustee to the federal government on January 25, 1938.<sup>96</sup> As a result, the federal government continued to buy additional land in the Olustee region and established a larger footprint.

In 1942, the CCC programs ended due to the draft and the need for soldiers to fight the Second World War.<sup>97</sup> The legacy of this period includes the reforestation of the regions surrounding the battlefield, a task that the Osceola National Forest Service inherited. In doing so, members of a growing FPS realized that the Florida state government did not need third party caretakers: they now possessed the financial backing to take care of state parks themselves. Thus, the UDC's days supervising the site (and controlling the narrative told there) dwindled.

Though they did not receive appropriation from the state government in 1930 to take care of the Olustee monument and grounds, the UDC felt confident that the Florida legislature still supported them. The Great Depression and the New Deal unexpectedly changed this dynamic as

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 149.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>96</sup> Warranty Deed from B.J. Padgett & Wife to United States of America, signed by B.J. Padgett, January 25, 1938, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>97</sup> Conrad L. Wirth, *Parks, Politics, and the People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 105, 142-144.

the UDC experienced financial setbacks that ultimately proved they no longer possessed the ability to take care of the Olustee Monument. In final years of this era, the UDC continued to make plans in order to realize their vision for Olustee, even as the means to do so escaped them.

Despite the setback in 1930, the state legislature continued appropriate funds to the UDC. In turn, the UDC not only continued their caretaking responsibilities, they also continued their beautification efforts in face of the NPS, the CCC, and the FPS operating in the same area. In their seemingly secluded world, the UDC made plans to honor one of their heroes of Olustee.

On April 20, 1936, the Alfred Holt Colquitt Chapter of the Georgia Division of the UDC raised enough funds to erect a monument to their namesake. The dedication ceremony occurred on Colquitt's birthday and his numerous descendants attended as well.<sup>98</sup> The joy of occasion did not last as the UDC suffered a major setback.

While the UDC hoped to start the new decade with a robust showing, reports at the Forty-Fifth Convention told a different story. The Florida Division of the UDC reported they lost six chapters and approximately one thousand members by 1940.<sup>99</sup> The loss of membership meant their ability to raise funds also suffered. As a result, the Division relied more on government funds to support their projects.

Despite these major setbacks, the Florida Division remained optimistic and continued their beautification of Olustee. At the Fifty-Second Annual Convention of the national UDC, Florida Division President Marion D. Walker reported the Division hired a landscape architect

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<sup>98</sup> UDC, Florida Division, *Minutes of the Forty-First Annual Convention*, 39.

<sup>99</sup> Nelson, 207.



and made plans to build a new lodge during the winter of 1946.<sup>100</sup> Their optimism failed to acknowledge their decline in political power.

The Florida Division's report during the following year's convention highlighted just how much power they lost. The Division president announced that the Anna Jackson Chapter planned to give the sixty-acre UDC-managed Natural Bridge Battlefield Park and monument over to the Florida Park Service. The FPS wanted to control the park themselves rather than allowing the UDC to manage it. In spite of the loss of the Natural Bridge Battlefield, the Division reported their "more outstanding achievements" at the Olostee Park and monuments, which were "ready for visitors." The UDC held one thousand five hundred dollars in reserve for maintenance.<sup>101</sup>

Not content with these accomplishments, the Florida Division continued to beautify Olostee. At the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention, Florida Division President Othella J. Cunningham reported the Florida Daughters installed a fence around the monument perimeter that cost \$1,740 dollars.<sup>102</sup> The endeavor cost more than the funds on hand, which suggest that the Daughters spent money beyond their means. Perhaps these financial challenges, coupled with the growth of the Florida Park Service, signaled the end of the UDC's hold of the Olostee Park.

In 1949, Florida State Senator Edwin G. Fraser and Florida Representative John H. Crews negotiated the transfer of the park and monuments from the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials.<sup>103</sup> At the

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<sup>100</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Second Annual Convention*, 231.

<sup>101</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Third Annual Convention*, 224-225.

<sup>102</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Fourth Annual Convention*, 232.

<sup>103</sup> Florida Park Service, *Statement for Management: Olostee Battlefield State Historic Site* (Circa 1970), 2.

Annual Convention later that year, The Florida Division of the UDC omitted news the transfer in their report.<sup>104</sup> Likewise, the Florida Division made no mention of Olustee in their report the following year either.<sup>105</sup> The UDC's direct control over the park and narrative ended in silence.

From 1897 to 1949, the Florida Division of the United Daughters of Confederacy lobbied, funded, and managed the Olustee Battlefield Park and the monuments erected on its grounds. They controlled the narrative at the site through the words etched into the monuments and through the atmosphere of the site after years of beautification of the site. The Great Depression and the New Deal brought forth the Civilian Conservation Corps that gave the National Park Service an unprecedented amount of power over federal, state, and private land and their reforestation projects became the first steps in restoring and preserving the Olustee Battlefield. In response, the Florida legislature created the Florida Park Service, an organization that no longer needed third parties managing state parks. This fact, along with the UDC's own financial setbacks, convinced the FPS to transfer control from the UDC to the state, increasing the chance, however slim, of the resurrection of the Union narrative at the site.

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<sup>104</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Fifth Annual Convention*, 241-242.

<sup>105</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Sixth Annual Convention*, 249-250.

### **CHAPTER 3**

## **FEDERAL AND STATE MANAGEMENT (1949 – PRESENT): SHARED AUTHORITY, CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY, ANNUAL REENACTMENT, AND MEMORY WARS**

The transfer of management from the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials represented the end of one era and the beginning of another. Though the UDC's influence lingered at Olustee, the Daughters no longer held the same authority over its management and, ultimately, the narrative entrenched in the monuments erected on its soil. As the centennial anniversary of the Civil War approached, the turbulent changes occurring across the country caused many Americans to pause and remember the meaning behind the struggle that almost severed the country in two. In that remembrance, the Union narrative slowly rose from obscurity and resurfaced as new voices carried its message into the current phase of the memory wars.

### 3.1 The Road to the Centennial Anniversary of Olustee

In the wake of the Florida Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy's loss of direct management of Olustee, the Daughters continued their involvement for at least two years fighting to play a role in the decision-making for the site. The Daughters demonstrated that they retained their influence by erecting another monument.

On March 5, 1950, UDC members celebrated the dedication of a monument to Brigadier General Joseph E. Finegan, the commander of Confederate forces during the Battle of Olustee. UDC member, Mrs. Haggard, made a speech for the event and another member, Mrs. Davis (no

relation to the Confederate president), unveiled the monument.<sup>1</sup> The ceremony featured the attendance of Florida Representative B. Robert Burnsed and Park Committee Chair C. C. Fraiser, accompanied by music performed by a local high school band and chorus.<sup>2</sup> Undoubtedly, the spectacle also restored a level of confidence in the rest of the Florida UDC by demonstrating that they could still shape the landscape at Oluisee.

Additionally, the UDC's political and social influence and connections seemed to pay dividends. At the Sixtieth Annual Convention, Florida Division President Wittichen reported that the Florida Board of Parks and Memorials invited the Florida Division to appoint a member as a "representative for Confederate Historic sites." Additionally, the Daughters resumed petitioning for appropriation for these sites.<sup>3</sup> While not in direct control of the sites they formerly supervised, their position on Florida Board of Parks and Memorials ensured their voice in future decisions made regarding these sites. Simply put, the UDC sacrificed their holdings but not their influence.

The consequences of the UDC's decision favored the group in the short term. While the Daughters remained a voice in the future decisions made for Civil War related sites like Oluisee, their influence only mattered if the other members of the Florida Board of Parks and Memorials shared their views. The UDC never envisioned a time that included future members of the Board favoring a more pro-Union interpretation of Florida's Civil War sites.

Ten years later, as the centennial approached, people began challenging the UDC's narrative. Despite the UDC's monopoly over Oluisee's memory through their monuments, some

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<sup>1</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Fifty-Eighth Annual Convention*, 153.

<sup>2</sup> Lees and Gaske, 206.

<sup>3</sup> UDC, *Minutes of the Sixtieth Annual Convention*, 228.

public officials decided to pick up the banner that Union veteran Loomis Langdon left behind. The Union narrative and memory of Olustee found an ally in historian Mark F. Boyd. Boyd wrote a journal article in 1950 titled “The Federal Campaign of 1864 in East Florida: A Study for the Florida State Board of Parks” in *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, in which he spoke of the mystery surrounding the burial place of the Olustee’s Union dead. In 1956, Boyd decided to act on the information he gathered regarding the subject.<sup>4</sup>

Boyd spoke with Brigadier General Russell Creamer Langdon, the son of Loomis Langdon, and Charles H. Schaeffer, Florida Park Service Chief of Information and Education, regarding clues to the location of the-forgotten graves of Olustee’s Union dead. In response, Schaeffer spoke with Florida Park Service Supervisor Larry Newcomb and Director E. L. Hill and gained approval to investigate the battlefield on the matter. Boyd and Schaeffer also invited Florida State Museum Director Arnold B. Grobman and his staff to join them at the site on December 12, 1956.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, Boyd’s search failed to discover the Union dead’s final resting place. Fortunately, this did not end the speculation on the whereabouts of the mass grave on the battlefield.

Despite the disappointing results of Boyd’s search, his efforts represented one of the first times since Loomis Langdon’s request in 1873 that anyone actively searched for the Union graves. The search itself represented a footnote in a much larger, gradual shift in the national memory of the Civil War. As the Civil War Centennial approached, questions regarding how the nation should approach the observation of the war’s memory resurrected perspectives long since

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<sup>4</sup> Mark F. Boyd, “The Federal Campaign of 1864 in East Florida: A Study for the Florida State Board of Parks,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 29, no. 1 (July 1950).

<sup>5</sup> C. H. Schaeffer to Arnold B. Grobman, Dec. 10, 1956, Osceola National Forest Service.

lost in Civil War memory. The Civil Rights movement during the tumultuous period of the 1960s brought social and political change that altered how Americans viewed the war and, eventually, opened the door for change at Olustee.

### 3.2 Civil War Centennial and Olustee

To promote what Timothy B. Smith described as a “vast Cold War celebration of patriotism and sectional unity,” Congress created the Civil War Centennial Commission (CWCC) in 1957 to oversee celebrations and commemorations. Ulysses S. Grant III, grandson of the president and Union general, became the chair of the board and Karl S. Betts became the executive director.<sup>6</sup> The commission body consisted of “politicians, historians, marketers, and others invested in how the Civil War would be commemorated”- all wanted to use the occasion to unite Americans across the nation.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, these hopes and desires failed due to the social and political issues that arose during that era.

The social and political events of the centennial decade influenced its proceedings. Historian Robert J. Cook argued that since America embroiled itself in a Cold War against communists that threatened to undermine the country, the call for unity was urgent. This need for unity prompted some to embrace the “orthodox narrative of the Civil War era” at the expense of marginalizing the roles of the Emancipation Proclamation and the military service of black Union soldiers to avoid dissatisfying white Southerners.<sup>8</sup> Historian David Blight also argued that while Americans in the centennial decade “learned and accepted” the idea that slavery caused the

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<sup>6</sup> Timothy B. Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper: Civil War Battlefield Preservation in History, Memory, and Policy, 1861-2015* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2017), 148.

<sup>7</sup> Olivia Williams Black, “The 150-Year War: The Struggle to Create and Control Civil War Memory at Fort Sumter National Monument,” *The Public Historian* 38, no. 4 (November 2016): 153.

<sup>8</sup> Cook, 41.

Civil War and the war's results included sectional reunion and emancipation, to claim their "centrality" to the war evoked "an awkward kind of impoliteness at best and heresy at worst."<sup>9</sup> As the CWCC made their plans for the Centennial, their desire to keep the orthodox narrative unraveled right in front of them.

Executive Director of the CWCC, Karl S. Betts, addressed concerns over the observation of the war's centennial by notifying the commission the he intended to ensure a consistent message when managing multiple festivities, celebrations, and commemorations.<sup>10</sup> Despite Betts' assurance, the CWCC broiled itself into controversy as soon as the Civil War Centennial began. As Olivia Williams Black noted, the venue in Charleston, South Carolina, where the commission planned to meet, refused service to an African American delegate of the CWCC. In response, President John F. Kennedy changed the venue location to the nearest United States naval base.<sup>11</sup> Timothy B. Smith argued that this "disaster" only highlighted what eventually captured the attention of the American conscience during the centennial: "the civil rights movement, the Kennedy assassination, Vietnam, and the ever growing space program."<sup>12</sup> In a sad, ironic twist, the intended celebration of sectional unity became a further divided as the southern state delegates formed the Southern Conference of Centennial Commissions, described by Smith as a "forum for anti-integration and states' rights."<sup>13</sup>

The divide affected Florida's plans for the centennial for its Civil War sites, including Olustee. In preparation for the centennial anniversary of the Battle of Olustee, State of Florida

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<sup>9</sup> David W. Blight, *American Oracle: The Civil War in the Civil Rights Era* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 3.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>12</sup> Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper*, 149.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

Library and Historical Commission Chairman Adam G. Adams, in cooperation with the Olustee Battlefield Park Superintendent Tom E. Cravey, submitted an order for two twelve-pound Napoleon cannons at the cost of \$13,040 dollars.<sup>14</sup> Inmates at a Virginia correctional facility cast the cannons and prepared them for shipping. Chairman Adams sent directions to the battlefield to the Department of Corrections' Superintendent of the Industries Division, H. M. Lindsay, for the installation of the cannons before the centennial ceremony.<sup>15</sup> With the new asset to the battlefield ordered, Adams and the rest turned to the pageantry of the occasion.

The centennial celebration occurred on February 22, 1964. Unfortunately, the actual anniversary date of the battle, February 20, 1964, fell on a Thursday that year. Still, the organizers prepared two ceremonies: a memorial service in the morning at Oakland Cemetery in Lake City and a commemoration at the Olustee Battlefield Memorial in the afternoon.

At the Oakland Cemetery memorial service, Lake City Mayor J. R. Tison welcomed attendees to the memorial service and presented Chairman Adam G. Adams. The Columbia High School Chorus sang songs familiar to Southerners and Brett Wattles read a poem titled "The Blue and The Gray." David Pope read Robert E. Lee's final address to the Army of Northern of Virginia. Mrs. Thomas Lester recognized members of the Stonewall Chapter of the UDC, Congressman Donald Ray "Billy" Matthews made the Memorial Address, and Mrs. Ray Littlefield presented a memorial wreath. The ceremony closed with the audience singing "How

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<sup>14</sup> Florida Park Service, Work Project Application, signed by C. M. Maxwell, January 22, 1964, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>15</sup> Adam G. Adams to H. M. Lindsay, Jan. 10, 1964, Osceola National Forest Service.



Firm a Foundation,” a salute fired by the National Guard, Eddie Davis playing “TAPS” on his bugle, and Reverend E. F. Montgomery of Lake City making the benediction.<sup>16</sup>

The centennial ceremony at the Olustee battlefield began with the Palmetto Battery Skirmish Group from Orangeburg, South Carolina presenting the colors, Richard Lee Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States followed by James W. Knabb, Jr. directing the salute to the Confederate flag. After the Baker County High School Band sung the national anthem, Reverend J. D. Williams of Glen St. Mary, Florida, led the invocation, Chairman Adams made opening remarks and introduced Senate Secretary Edwin G. Fraser as the Master of Ceremonies, who in turn noted the distinguished guests present at commemoration. After the drill demonstration by the Palmetto Battery Skirmish Group and musical performances by both the Lake City High School Band and Richard A. Dickson, special guests participated in the unveiling of the newest addition to the battlefield’s artifacts. Mrs. Katherine Finegan Cook, Joseph Finegan’s great-granddaughter, and Mrs. Hattie Green Golphin, whose father also fought in the Battle of Olustee, unveiled the Napoleon guns. After United States Senator Spessard L. Holland made his address titled “The Battle of Olustee,” Mrs. Asa Coleman, Jr. presented the memorial wreath and Reverend Malcum Tompkins closed the ceremony with his benediction.<sup>17</sup>

The lack of Union memory advocates during the Olustee ceremony, though not surprising, refuted the notion that sectional reconciliation marked the Centennial. Aside from Congressman Matthews and Senator Holland, the notable absence of United States military personnel, members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW - the legal

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<sup>16</sup> Florida Library and Historical Commission and Centennial Advisory Committee, “Olustee Memorial Service,” *Centennial Battle of Olustee*, (1964), Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>17</sup> Florida Library and Historical Commission and Centennial Advisory Committee, “Centennial Battle of Olustee,” *Centennial Battle of Olustee*, (1964), Osceola National Forest Service.

successors of the Grand Army of the Republic) or its auxiliary organizations, unaffiliated descendants of Union veterans or any African Americans echoed the sectional divide demonstrated in the incident in South Carolina. While tensions in the CWCC brewed in the Southern states, the relationship between the Florida Park Service and federal government remained cordial suggesting that the US government refused to challenge Olustee's narrative.

Despite the breakdown of the reconciliationist cordiality originally intended for the Civil War's centennial anniversary, the Olustee Battlefield underwent some changes in 1964. For example, the Department of Agriculture rectified a mistake made by filing a quitclaim to land formerly owned by the Ocean Pond Land Company and selling the deed for the price of one dollar to the State of Florida. Apparently, the federal government acquired the land "through mistake, misunderstanding, error or inadvertence" as it belonged to the State of Florida at the time.<sup>18</sup> If visitors to the site did not notice this physical change at Olustee, another activity that gained popularity during the centennial certainly caught their attention: reenactments.

### 3.3 The Rise of Reenactors and Their Impact on the Memory of Olustee

Reenactments of Civil War battles originated while the war still raged on. As noted by Robert Lee Hadden, soldiers used demonstrations to relate "their actions during the war, in camp, in drill, and in battle" to their loved ones to help them understand their experiences. Likewise, organizations like the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) or the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) often "recreated camp life" to "reproduce the camaraderie of shared experience with their fellow veterans" as well as to give a glimpse to those who did not share this experience

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<sup>18</sup> Quitclaim Deed signed by M. M. Nelson, May 15, 1964, from the Osceola National Forest Service.

(such as their children).<sup>19</sup> Timothy B. Smith noted that by the centennial anniversary, that among the variety of “urban roundtables, war gamers, relic hunters, and collectors” attracted by the Civil War, reenactors “took the war’s remembrance to a higher level.”<sup>20</sup> During the centennial, “many sites” featured a form of reenactment, including Olustee.<sup>21</sup>

Unlike some of the more famous battlefield sites, Olustee did not experience any reenactments until the centennial anniversary of the battle. While the centennial ceremony occurred at the actual battlefield, the reenactment took place in the Gator Bowl football stadium in Jacksonville, Florida.<sup>22</sup> Hosted by The Battle of Olustee Centennial Observance, Inc., the reenactors participated in a parade through Jacksonville, enjoyed a barbeque at the Gator Bowl, and joined a period-themed ball at the George Washington Hotel.<sup>23</sup> After the centennial, another reenactment of the Battle of Olustee only occurred when Florida Park Service Chief Naturalist Jim Stevenson wanted to add it as a feature the nation’s bicentennial.<sup>24</sup>

By 1976, Civil War reenactment evolved into a subculture, complete with its own lexicon spoken by the enthusiasts engaged in it. Tony Horwitz recounted his experiences traveling with some reenactors in *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* and learning aspects of this niche interest. Horwitz noted the hierarchy of acceptability among reenactors (a term that the enthusiasts reprimanded Horwitz for and insisted he reference them as

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<sup>19</sup> Robert Lee Hadden, *Reliving the Civil War: A Reenactor's Handbook* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 1999), 4.

<sup>20</sup> Smith, *Altogether Fitting and Proper*, 149.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Ray Giron, “The History of the Reenactment,” *Olustee Battle Festival* (self-pub., 2010; Lake City: North Central Florida Advertiser, Inc., 2015), 54.

<sup>23</sup> “After The Battle of Olustee: 1866 to the Present,” *Battle of Olustee*, accessed June 4, 2019, <https://battleofolustee.org/after.html>

<sup>24</sup> David Nelson, “Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida,” in *A Forgotten Front: Florida During the Civil War Era*, ed. Seth A. Weitz and Jonathan C. Sheppard (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2018), 217.

“living historians”) with the “hardcore” members at the pinnacle because they used materials faithfully reproduced to match those that Civil War soldiers carried or wore. Those who came “wearing a wristwatch, smoking cigarettes, smearing oneself with sunblock or insect repellent,” and carried fake blood ended up labeled as “farbs” —the bottom of the hierarchy.<sup>25</sup> While the reenactment subculture may seem strange at first, these individuals believed that they engaged in a form of memory work that connected them to their ancestors that fought in the war or to their contemporaries who had no connection or knowledge of the Civil War.

The backgrounds of these individuals vary. As Horwitz discovered, the reenactors work unassuming professions like waiting tables, salespeople, forklift operators, construction workers, or paralegals.<sup>26</sup> Aspiring scholars also join the ranks, sometimes studying for a degree completely unrelated to the Civil War.<sup>27</sup> For many reenactors, reenacting gives them an escape from their everyday lives and a hobby to occupy themselves with, not unlike hobbies like golf.<sup>28</sup> However, academia generally frowns on this activity.

John Brewer questioned why “sane academics” occupied themselves with or interested in reenactments, comparing the activity to a “sexually transmitted disease,” and noted that scholars tend to dismiss reenactments as an “illusory and unimportant path to historical understanding.”<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Rory Turner, a Professor of Practice Sociology and Anthropology at Goucher

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<sup>25</sup> Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 10-11.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 12, 16.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 16.

<sup>29</sup> John Brewer, “Reenactment and Neo-Realism,” in *Historical Reenactment: From Realism to the Affective Turn*, ed. Iain McCalman and Paul A. Pickering (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2010), 70.

College's Center for People, Politics, and Markets, engaged in reenactments.<sup>30</sup> He stated the political statements and the affirmation of cultural identity shared by Confederate reenactors gave evidence of the Lost Cause's influence in Civil War reenactments. Turner suggested that the motivations behind why northerners, immigrants, leftist thinkers, and Europeans reenact did not reflect a "predetermined effect of some historical or social situation." Rather, he viewed reenactment as a voluntarily "pleasure structure," one that resonated reenactors' "personalities, personal histories, identities."<sup>31</sup>

When Stevenson reached out to this unorthodox group of memory workers, representatives of the First Regiment of Florida Volunteer Infantry answered with enthusiasm.<sup>32</sup> Ray Giron, a Philadelphian reenactor who recently came to Florida around that time, expressed his doubt that he could meet Stevenson's request in the two to three week span before the anniversary of the Battle of Olustee.<sup>33</sup> As such, all parties agreed that the following year seemed more logistically feasible.

In 1977, Giron noted about three hundred reenactors arrived to participate in the reenactment.<sup>34</sup> Nelson stated "poor visibility" that morning forced the reenactors to reposition themselves on land belonging to the Osceola National Forest Service.<sup>35</sup> Despite the relocation, Giron said the reenactment attracted "keen visitor interest." Far from perfect, Giron also noted a "limited" panorama of the battle because the Confederate reenactors far outnumbered Union

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<sup>30</sup> "Rory Turner," Goucher College, accessed November 11, 2019, <https://www.goucher.edu/learn/academic-centers/people-politics-and-markets/faculty/rory-turner>; Rory Turner, "Bloodless Battles: The Civil War Reenacted," *TDR [The Drama Review]* 34, no. 4 (Winter 1990): 124.

<sup>31</sup> Turner, 130.

<sup>32</sup> Giron, 54.

<sup>33</sup> Nelson, "Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida," 216; Giron, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Giron, 54.

<sup>35</sup> Nelson, "Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida," 217.

reenactors.<sup>36</sup> The visitors who witnessed the reenactment performance convinced officials to allow reenactments at other Civil War-related Florida state parks.<sup>37</sup>

Additionally, Giron and others founded Blue-Gray Army, Incorporated in 1978, which quickly became the chief organizing body for the Olustee reenactment.<sup>38</sup> By trial and error, Giron noted that the organizers moved the site of the mock battle to a field with “far better” visibility in subsequent reenactments and the park service cleared the vegetation surrounding the area for convenience.<sup>39</sup> Incidentally, this also brought more restoration of the battlefield. As a result, it appeared close to as it did in 1864.

As participation in the reenactment grew, so did the number of visitors who came to the park. Jim Stevenson seemed to accomplish his goal of more visitor interest in Olustee and raised more awareness of Olustee’s past among park rangers, journalists, and the reenactors; however, this prompted some new questions. The inquiries by these historical actors concerning the battlefield’s landscape led to the erection of a Union monument.

As years passed and the Olustee reenactment became a staple at the site, some of the first-time visitors who attended the reenactment undoubtedly found the lack of a monument honoring the Union dead odd. Even Olustee’s park rangers asked about the lack of a monument, and they wondered about the location of the Union graves. This fascination paid unexpected dividends as the decade closed with a memorial dedicated to the Union dead of Olustee.

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<sup>36</sup> Giron, 54.

<sup>37</sup> Nelson, “Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida,” 217.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Giron, 54.

While the exact cause remains unknown, an interest in the missing Union dead of Olustee piqued in the latter half of the 1980s. In 1984, Ed Stansel, Jr. of *The Florida Times-Union* wrote an article that covered the intrigue regarding the burial of the Union dead. Stansel interviewed Macclenny-native amateur historian Richard Ferry and Olustee park ranger Frank Loughran about a controversy surrounding retired Lieutenant Colonel James P. Low's attempt to gather the remains of Union soldiers in Florida for removal to the Beaufort National Cemetery. According to Stansel, Ferry believed that Low did not even go to Olustee after the mayor of Jacksonville placed an injunction that forbade him to remove more bodies from the city (Low removed ninety bodies from the city already). Both Ferry and Loughran believed a cemetery next to the battlefield used by the black community since the early twentieth century held the remains. A pair of dentures found on remains discovered by Baker County Correctional Institute workers supported their hypothesis.<sup>40</sup>

While park officials like Frank Loughran pondered the whereabouts of the final resting place of Olustee's Union dead, Richard Ferry decided to raise awareness about the battle. David E. and Robin P. Roth published a magazine called *Blue & Gray Magazine* in 1983, which examined Civil War battles and other topics related to the war. In the magazine's third year of publication (1986), the Roths dedicated the March issue to "the memory of the Olustee dead," stating the Union dead "still rest in a mass grave on the Olustee field, unmarked and lost to history."<sup>41</sup> Richard Ferry wrote the background text of "The General's Tour" – the article that examines the main subject of the issue, the origins of the Olustee campaign, the battle itself, the

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<sup>40</sup> Ed Stansel, Jr., "Union, Confederate soldiers may lie side by side at Olustee grave site," *The Florida Times-Union*, November 12, 1984, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>41</sup> David E. and Robin P. Roth, "Dedication," *Blue & Gray Magazine* 3, no. 4 (February-March 1986): 3

“allegations of mistreatment of black troops by their Confederate captors, and even the continuing mystery of the whereabouts of many of the battle dead.”<sup>42</sup>

Ferry concluded in the article that the “pine and palmetto woods of Olustee” hid the Union dead. Furthermore, he speculated that the nearby swamps also held the remains of “some of the battle’s walking wounded.” Within the article, Ferry prominently used a photograph of the black cemetery “believed to have grown up around a wartime burial place” in close proximity of the battlefield. He asserted the region’s vernacular memory supported the idea that this small black cemetery held the remains of the Union dead collected by Lieutenant Grossman.<sup>43</sup> According to a reenactor and member of the Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization, Jeff H. Grzelak, the issue served as the inspiration to motivate some readers to action, among them, a group of Union reenactors.<sup>44</sup>

The Union Army District of Florida (UADF), an organization of Civil War reenactors, started a fundraising campaign in 1989 to erect a monument dedicated to the Union dead of Olustee. After two years, the UADF raised at least four thousand dollars to pay for the monument. They hired a company in Starke, Florida, to construct the monument as close to the description mentioned by Lieutenant Grossman. The UADF did not make an exact replica of Grossman’s memorial—the monument makers used granite instead of wood and, under the UADF’s instructions, shaped the body into a cross. The UADF argued that due to “time

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<sup>42</sup> Table of Contents, *Blue & Gray Magazine* 3, no. 4 (February-March 1986): 3

<sup>43</sup> Richard Ferry, “The General’s Tour – The Battle of Olustee (or Ocean Pond),” *Blue & Gray Magazine* 3, no. 4 (February-March 1986): 56.

<sup>44</sup> Jeff H. Grzelak, email message to author, November 10, 2017; Jeff H. Grzelak, “At Colors,” *Olustee Observer*, January, 2001, <http://battleofolustee.org/newsletters/2001-january-olustee.pdf>.



restraints” and the tools Grossman’s detachment brought with them, Grossman likely chose the design of a cross over perhaps an obelisk, another popular monument choice at the time.<sup>45</sup>

The UADF erected the monument in May of 1991 on the grounds of the small cemetery next to the battlefield, in close approximation to the anniversary of the day Grossman erected the 1866 monument.<sup>46</sup> One hundred and fifteen years after Loomis Langdon reported the disappearance of Lieutenant Grossman’s monument, a monument dedicated to the memory of the fallen Union soldiers of Olustee stood near the battleground. In a sense, the monument stands as a monument to this unorthodox group of reenactors as well.

The United States Defense Department (the successor of the War Department) did not replace the 1866 monument. The Grand Army of the Republic’s successors, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), did not erect the monument. While members perhaps donated to the funding for the monument, the organization as a whole did not start the movement to erect this artifact. The SUVCW’s auxiliaries including the Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (ASUVCW), Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, the Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Women’s Relief Corps did not start the campaign for the monument. A motivated group of reenactors, those who descended from Civil War veterans along with those who did not, mustered the will to do so.

While the 1991 monument represented a victory for those wanting to honor the Union memory of the war, the moment came as harbinger of a tonal shift occurring across the nation. In the wake of the end of the Cold War, historians turned a more critical eye toward the nation’s

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<sup>45</sup> Lees and Gaske, 193-194.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

past. Monuments, battlefields, museums, and parks all fell under historical scrutiny. The public reaction to this scrutiny resulted in the phenomenon known as the Culture Wars, which, in turn, shaped Civil War memory.

### 3.4 The Culture Wars and Revisions at Olustee

While UADF gathered funds for the Union monument, how Americans remembered the Civil War changed. In academia, historians applied a critical analysis to exhibits involving Civil War memory examining these artifacts in light of scholarship on the war, race, and gender. Some Americans rejected this change.

What academics write matters less to most people than what is portrayed in popular culture. Arguably, the first instances of Olustee in American popular culture occurred when the Freddie Fields Productions film crew came to the site to film scenes for the movie *Glory*. The film starred actors Matthew Broderick, Denzel Washington, Cary Elwes and Morgan Freeman and told the story of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts (colored), one of the most important units during the Battle of Olustee. Ironically, the scenes filmed at Olustee did not involve the Battle of Olustee itself. The film only followed the regiment's story until their failed assault on Fort Wagner on July 18, 1863.<sup>47</sup>

Historian Paul Haspel argued that *Glory* “succeeded in awakening interest in the Civil War, and in the African American participation in that war, within the larger culture.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> “History,” Florida State Parks, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, accessed June 8, 2019, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/index.php/parks-and-trails/olustee-battlefield-historic-state-park/history>

<sup>48</sup> Paul Haspel, “The War in Film: The Depiction of Combat in *Glory*,” in *The Civil War in Popular Culture: Memory and Meaning*, eds. Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr. and Randal Allred (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 167.

Furthermore, Haspel suggested that subsequent Civil War films on the same subject did not achieve as much “long-term impact” because they did not engage “the issues of slavery and racism as directly or as artfully as *Glory* does.”<sup>49</sup> In a way, the Olustee battlefield made a small contribution to this resurgence of interest in black Civil War soldiers. In fact, current documents and publications related to Olustee make note of the site’s role in the film.<sup>50</sup>

In the midst *Glory*’s release and the erection of the Union monument, Americans view of their past became entangled in Culture Wars. Historians came under criticism from individuals ranging from media pundits to military veterans because they challenged a heroic and uncritical national narrative. Mike Wallace argued that “the only way Americans relate to the past” originated from a “heritage binge,” one that from Americans remained “thoroughly obsessed with the past.”<sup>51</sup> Paul Boyer wrote the reaction came from a “low-level irritation” experienced by average Americans regarding historians challenge to the national narrative “exasperated and amplified by a braying army of jingoistic politicians, editorial writers, and talk-show hosts who saw this as another emotion-laden ‘wedge’ issue.”<sup>52</sup>

Despite the heated exchanges between historians and the American public, American continued to visit Civil War battlefields. Two students from the universities of Oxford and Princeton at the time, mother and daughter duo, Georgie Boge and Margie Holder Boge, argued that visitors do not go to battlefield for the “flashy neon signs, bargain tourist shops, or

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>50</sup> “History,” Florida State Parks, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, accessed June 8, 2019, <https://www.floridastateparks.org/index.php/parks-and-trails/olustee-battlefield-historic-state-park/history>

<sup>51</sup> Mike Wallace, “Introduction: Battlefields of Memory,” in *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), ix-x.

<sup>52</sup> Paul Boyer, “Whose History is it Anyway? Memory, Politics, and Historical Scholarship” in *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for The American Past*, eds. Edward T. Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996), 133.

recreational opportunities.” Instead, the visitors go because of “curiosity and profound reverence” for the soldiers who fought in the war and the opportunity to “visualize conflicts that shrines cannot.” Thus, preserving these “solemn monuments to human tragedy” called for “an unprecedented level of cooperation among all levels of government and the private sector.”<sup>53</sup>

As the one hundred thirtieth anniversary of the Battle of Olustee approached amidst the Culture Wars in 1994, the federal and Florida state park services continued to work together in shaping and molding the battlefield to resemble its 1864 self (as recorded from the memories of the soldiers who fought there) with the continued reforestation projects. In short, the parties inherently subscribed to what the Boges argued.

As for the reenactment itself, the eighteenth reenactment represented a milestone. Ray Giron reported that two thousand reenactors gathered to Olustee, some hailing from outside the United States. He counted twenty-eight artillery pieces, fifty reenactors used horses in cavalry or artillery units, and more African American reenactors filled the ranks of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. Arguably, the movie *Glory* contributed to interest in this unit. More surprisingly, Giron stated one thousand more reenactors appeared the day before the battle’s anniversary to make the reenactment possibly one of the largest recorded gatherings at the site since the actual battle itself.<sup>54</sup>

The one-hundred-thirtieth anniversary of the Battle of Olustee (1994) also featured a special ceremony for the occasion. Perhaps as a statement in the midst of the Culture Wars, the 1912 Olustee monument received a rededication and additions to the monument’s structure. In

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<sup>53</sup> Georgie Boge and Margie Holder Boge. *Paving Over the Past: A History and Guide to Civil War Battlefield Preservation* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1993), 8, 13.

<sup>54</sup> Giron, 54.

cooperation with Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization, the Andrew Jackson Padgett Chapter of the Florida Division of the UDC raised funds to install a concrete pad around the monument with a granite band noting that the rededication honored and inscribed the names of the Confederate units that participated in the battle.<sup>55</sup> Though the reenactment festivals and the anniversary ceremonies came with reconciliationist overtones, this rededication of the 1912 monument solidified the Lost Cause or pro-Confederate memory enshrined within the monument landscape. In contrast, the Union cause, as memorialized by the 1991 monument, remained separate from the battlefield.

In spite of these rather controversial moves made during the anniversary of the Battle of Olustee by the UDC, they did not compare to incidents of looting that affected the site. Much like the scavenging Confederates following the Battle of Olustee in 1864, relic hunters continually disturbed the site long after federal and state officials forbade such activities. Unlike the desperate wartime Confederates, the band of scavengers threatened to poach the battlefield of important archaeological artifacts for personal gain. Park Ranger Jimmy Ellis found out the dangers of confronting artifact poachers.

Ellis, along with Baker County Sheriff's Department Investigator Joe Ward and Officer Don Pettijohn of the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission came under fire after they confronted Donald M. Heiden and Randy W. Edwards. Heiden almost shot Officer Pettijohn (the

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<sup>55</sup> Lees and Gaske, 202.

bullet struck the ground two feet in front of the officer) and the authorities demanded they surrender in return. The two men promptly did so before the situation escalated.<sup>56</sup>

Later, police arrested Edwards' brother-in-law, Ronald Allan Pearson, Jr., at his home and discovered that the group poached approximately two hundred fifty artifacts such as "lead bullets, bayonets, buttons, a rifle primer, two belt buckles ... a bayonet scabbard," eating utensils and a hat shield belonging to the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts.<sup>57</sup> Prior his capture, Pearson, known as the "Marlboro Man" by Park Ranger Frank Loughran, conducted an operation equivalent to sixty-eight thousand dollar archaeological dig and looted nearly three thousand one hundred dollars' worth of artifacts. Pearson's group thefts from the field caused a great archaeological and historical loss as the friction primers (the part of cannons that initiates the firing sequence) they stole silenced chances of discovering the artillery positions during the Battle of Olustee. For their actions, all of them faced the possibility of ten years in prison with an additional three years for firing at Officer Pettijohn.<sup>58</sup>

At the same time as the Marlboro Man incident, changes occurred at Olustee that allowed for larger reenactments. Florida's Division of Recreation and Parks (DRP) and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) signed and approved a Memorandum of Understanding, which expanded the DRP's special use permit from using two hundred sixty-seven acres of the Osceola National Forest Service for the annual reenactment to six hundred forty-five acres. With the memorandum set to expire in 2004, this left the DRP plenty of room to

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<sup>56</sup> "Pair held for firing at officer, unlawful digging at Olustee," *Baker County Press*, January 5, 1995, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>57</sup> Karen Voyles, "Man charged in theft, sale of artifacts," *Gainesville Sun*, January 12, 1995, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>58</sup> Michael Browning, "Battle's secrets destroyed; looters might still go free," *Miami Herald*, July 23, 1995, Osceola National Forest Service.

readjust its policies to accommodate the expanded perimeter of the battlefield.<sup>59</sup> Of course, this meant the DRP needed to decide the next of action for the park.

On February 23, 1998, the DRP published their unit management plan for Olustee. Among the key objectives for management included the establishment of a “patrol and protection program” designed to monitor the battlefield. The DRP sought cooperate with other divisions within Florida’s Department of Environmental Protection, the Florida State Department, and the USFS to develop and implement strategies to combat future looting incidents. Additionally, they made it clear that alongside “advice from the Bureau of Natural and Cultural Resources,” the responsibility of “cleaning, rehabilitation, and future maintenance” of the 1912 Olustee monument fell squarely onto the battlefield’s managers.<sup>60</sup> Finally, the plan proposed installing improved interpretive displays along the battlefield trail and, more importantly, relocating the visitor center to a more spacious position in the park to allow the center to hold “pertinent archives and artifacts, an auditorium with audio visual capabilities, an exhibit area, and public restrooms.”<sup>61</sup>

With their management plan in motion, the DPR and the USFS looked forward to the turn of the millennium. In the early half of its first decade, Olustee park officials, reenactors, and supporters of the battlefield’s preservation received positive feedback on how the public received the battlefield’s presentation. On September 26, 2003, the Congressional Black Caucus Veterans’ Braintrust Committee awarded the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park the Congressional

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<sup>59</sup> Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, *Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park Unit Management Plan* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Park, 1998), 1.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-41.

Black Caucus Veterans' Braintrust Award, which recognizes individuals and organizations for providing “exemplary national and community service on behalf of African American veterans.”<sup>62</sup>

Even with such support, historians scrutinized the narratives enshrined at battlefields and their presentations by (federal and state) park services across the country. Jim Weeks argued that battlefields like Gettysburg evolved into both sites of memory and sites of tourism. The public “consumed” the site as well as the site “consumed” the public that indulged in the battle’s memory (the landscape fed off from the people’s interest).<sup>63</sup> Weeks’ argument applies to Olustee; the United Daughters of the Confederacy solidified the narrative of the Lost Cause through installing their monuments and the beautification of the battlefield. The former idea of consumed seems more complicated: the Osceola National Forest Service or the DPR did not sell merchandise at the site’s visitor center, despite plans for such in the DPR’s unit management plan. Instead, the annual reenactment brings vendors who sell merchandise, handcrafted or mass-produced, to visitors attending the festivities.

While some historians observed and commented on the commercialism involved in the presentation of Civil War battlefields, others rejected the park service’s selective portrayal of the Civil War. Robert E. Weir criticized the collections of material culture – “moldering uniforms, rusty muskets, frayed regimental banners, and spent ammunitions” – displayed at Civil War battlefields that only highlighted “abstractions such as glory, honor, and union” and scarcely

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<sup>62</sup> “Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park receives Congressional Black Caucus Veterans' Braintrust Award,” *Olustee Battlefield Citizens Support Organization Newsletter*, 2003, accessed June 14, 2019, [https://battleofolustee.org/newsletters/caucus\\_award.htm](https://battleofolustee.org/newsletters/caucus_award.htm)

<sup>63</sup> Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 4-5.



mentioned the roles of slavery and emancipation as causes for which the opposing sides fought.<sup>64</sup> Weir's criticism mostly focused on the lack of "non-white representation" at Gettysburg National Military Park. While no black regiments fought in the course of the battle, Weir felt that the black citizens of Gettysburg needed recognition.<sup>65</sup> While officials at Olustee and reenactors recognized the significance of the black regiments that participated in the battle, especially the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts (mostly due to *Glory*), the lack of Union monuments on the grounds of the battlefield only support Weir's thesis.

In 2005, the Florida Park Service, in coordination with the USDA Forest Service, the Olustee Citizens Support Organization, and the Hughes Bowman Design Group, released a new interpretive plan. The plan included four themes: "regional perspectives" of the North and South regarding the Union and states' rights, Florida's role in the war, the motives of Union General Seymour, and the battle's aftermath.<sup>66</sup> Curiously, the plan failed to mention the post-battle killings of black Union troops and mislabeled the 1912 monument as a "DAR memorial" (Daughters of the American Revolution) rather than a UDC memorial.<sup>67</sup> The plan hoped to utilize the proposed visitor center that only existed in concept art.

In 2008, the DRP released another unit management plan. Much of the objectives in the 1998 unit management plan remained in place with a few modifications, such as updating the

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<sup>64</sup> Robert E. Weir, "The Graying of Gettysburg National Military Park: Race, Erasure, Ideology, and Iconography," in *The Civil War in Popular Culture: Memory and Meaning*, eds. Lawrence A. Kreiser, Jr. and Randal Allred (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2014), 61.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>66</sup> Florida Park Service, United States Forest Service, Olustee Citizens Support Organization, Inc., Hughes Bowman Design Group, Inc., *Interpretive Plan* (Tallahassee: Florida Forest Service, 2005), 13-17, Osceola National Forest Service.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

park brochures and adding a new brochure for self-guided tours.<sup>68</sup> Within the plan, the DRP still intended to build an upgraded museum on the site with “modern program of interpretive exhibits.”<sup>69</sup> The plan also called for an implementation of a new policy at the site, one just as ambitious and in need of close monitoring: prescribed burning. In cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Forestry (DOF), the USFS held the responsibility of conducting these prescribed burns in hopes of establishing “more effective control of hardwoods and to stimulate growth of native wildflowers and grasses.”<sup>70</sup> The prescribed burns also furthered official’s efforts to return the landscape to its appearance in 1864 by suppressing the growth patterns of palmettos.

With revised plans and procedures set into place, the Florida Forest Service and its federal equivalent planned to bring into fruition the kind of message they wanted future visitors to remember through the interpretative texts placed on the battlefield. With the new visitor center, they hoped to solidify the public memory of the Battle of Olustee. This confidence proved misplaced as they forgot the power of the memory enshrined in the monuments their policies protected when a controversy reputed over a proposed Union monument.

### 3.5 Monument Wars

The Florida Park Service and other organizations involved in the preservation of the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park seemed unaware of the meaning behind the monuments they protected. David Nelson argued that since some of those monuments erected by the UDC

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<sup>68</sup> Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Parks, *Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park Unit Management Plan* (Tallahassee: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Recreation and Park, 2008), 24.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 25

stood at the site for over a century, this amnesia led park officials to believe that a proposal for a Union monument in the very same space “seemed a rather innocuous yet completely appropriate gesture.”<sup>71</sup> In February of 2013, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) decided to involve themselves in the Olustee battlefield landscape by proposing a Union monument. Everyone involved soon received a reminder about the power of Confederate memory. It seemed that the Civil War Memory Wars rekindled with a new ferocity not yet seen in previous iterations.

When the SUVCW made their proposal to the FPS, park officials thought the monument came at an opportune moment as the one-hundred-fiftieth anniversary approached. As noted by Nelson, the proposed monument helped bring “historical reconciliation” to the site by “balancing the park’s representation” and “much needed” recognition of “the state’s African American heritage.”<sup>72</sup> The FPS set a public meeting at the Columbia County School District Auditorium in Lake City, hoping to discuss the necessary actions needed to make this proposal into a reality. What they did receive surprised the meeting's organizers.

As the auditorium filled with people on December 2, 2013, members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) joined Olustee Citizens Support Organization members and park staff to voice their opinions in the matter. With a hundred people in attendance, the meeting soon turned into a fracas. H. K. Edgerton, the black president of Southern *Heritage 411*, waved a Confederate banner while leading members of the audience into a chorus of “Dixie” and

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<sup>71</sup> Nelson, “Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida,” 196.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

denounced the Union soldiers who died at Olustee as “rapists.”<sup>73</sup> Likewise, wounded veteran Leon Duke compared the idea of the proposed Union monument to a monument to actress Jane Fonda in front the Vietnam Memorial in the nation’s capital.<sup>74</sup> He referenced the actress’ controversial visit to North Vietnam in 1972. The North Vietnamese photographed her sitting in an anti-aircraft gun sparking an outrage among Americans at the time.<sup>75</sup>

Disagreements even arose even among Union memory purveyors. Jeff Grezlak spoke and noted the existence of the 1991 Union monument in the cemetery near the battlefield. SUVCW member Mike Farrell responded by differentiating the 1991 monument as “a cemetery marker to the dead” and added that the proposed monument as a “battlefield monument.”<sup>76</sup>

The UDC did not stay silent either. Jamie Likins, President General of the UDC, stated the Olustee monument on the three acres formerly managed by the group honored both Confederate and Union soldiers.<sup>77</sup> This statement runs contrary to the actions of the previous generation of the UDC that erected the 1912 monument and ensured the monument only honored Confederate soldiers. Even the 1994 rededication of the same monument specifically stated that the monument honored Confederate soldiers and omitted any mention of honoring Union soldiers. Either Likins did not know this history of the UDC, or she lied.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 197; Margie Menzel, “Civil War passions still run deep as Union supporters propose monument on Confederate site,” *Miami Herald*, December 3, 2013, <https://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2013/12/civil-war-passions-still-run-deep-as-union-supporters-propose-monument-on-confederate-site.html>.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Laura Roberts, “Jane Fonda relives her protest days on the set of her new film,” *The Daily Telegraph*, July 26, 2010, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/7911158/Jane-Fonda-relives-her-protest-days-on-the-set-of-her-new-film.html>.

<sup>76</sup> Margie Menzel, “Civil War passions still run deep as Union supporters propose monument on Confederate site,” *Miami Herald*, December 3, 2013, <https://miamiherald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/2013/12/civil-war-passions-still-run-deep-as-union-supporters-propose-monument-on-confederate-site.html>.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Even Florida legislature members did not agree on the monument. Republican Florida House Representative Dennis Baxley of Ocala suggested proposing a bill to the state legislature with intent to “protect all monument sites.” Fellow Republican and House Representative Elizabeth Porter of Lake City suggested Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel Vinyard held over jurisdiction of the matter. She spoke with Secretary Vinyard and asked for a meeting for all the parties regarding the fate of the monument, citing the ineffectiveness of the state legislature in deciding such matters.<sup>78</sup>

With no clear answer, Chief of Park Planning Lew Scruggs of the DEP, the moderator of the hearing, ended the three-hour meeting by stating he planned to report to his superiors the comments made by the respective parties. He added that they did not need to “rush to judgement” regarding the matter.<sup>79</sup> The hundred-fiftieth-anniversary of the Battle of Olustee passed without a new monument installed at the site. In the face of inaction, some of those involved in the December 2013 meeting attempted to resolve the issue.

In March of 2014, Representative Baxley introduced House Bill 672, which advocated the approval of the state legislature for any marker or monument proposed on state land. The bill managed to pass the Florida House of Representatives and became Senate Bill 493. When the vote came, the measure failed. Despite this, Baxley thought about bringing up a similar legislation later. Department of Environmental Protection spokesperson Jason Mahon stated the

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

agency planned to address the Union Monument Proposal in the next Unit Management Plan slated for release in 2017.<sup>80</sup>

As the Union Monument Proposal lingered in a state of purgatory, a national tragedy forced Americans to confront and rethink the symbols and memory of the Civil War. On June 17, 2015, twenty-one year old Dylann Roof entered Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church during a prayer service in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, and shot nine African American parishioners. Roof's actions shocked the nation. An article in *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* cited pictures of Roof carrying a small Confederate flag that "left little doubt about the gunman's motivation." In the minds of many Americans, this settled any arguments about whether the Confederate flag represented a symbol of hate. Many Southern states and cities began taking down Confederate erected by the UDC in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that enshrined white supremacy.<sup>81</sup>

In a post Charleston-shooting America, some Americans like Bill Broun, associate professor at East Stroudsburg University, argued that even the Confederate monuments on battlefields need removal. He stated the monuments "valorize and sanitize the horrors of slavery and racism."<sup>82</sup> These sentiments could apply to the monuments at Olustee as well. Ironically,

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<sup>80</sup> Nelson, "Battle of Olustee: Civil War Memory in Florida," 218; Margie Menzel, "Conflict over Union monument at site of historic Olustee battle on 'back burner,'" *Jacksonville Daily Recorder*, July 24, 2015, <https://www.jaxdailyrecord.com/article/conflict-over-union-monument-site-historic-olustee-battle-back-burner>; "Florida Legislature 2014: What passed and what failed," *Tampa Bay Times*, May 3, 2014, <https://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/gubernatorial/florida-legislature-2014-what-passed-and-what-failed/2178190>.

<sup>81</sup> Rosalind Bentley, "After Dylann Roof, what's the fate of the Confederate flag?" *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, January 9, 2017, <https://www.ajc.com/news/crime-law/after-dylann-roof-what-the-fate-the-confederate-flag/HaCtiPvplkXOdQbn6jAhAN/>

<sup>82</sup> Bill Broun, "Bill Broun: Why Confederate monuments should be removed from Gettysburg," *The Morning Call*, August 30, 2017, <https://www.mcall.com/opinion/mc-confederate-monuments-gettysburg-broun-yv-0818-20170819-story.html>

while Americans debate on whether Confederate monuments need removal from public space, in Florida the debate is over the erection of a single Union monument.

As of June 18, 2019, Florida's Department of Environmental Protection had not released their next Unit Management Plan for Olustee; the plan remains in the draft stage.<sup>83</sup> The delay also postpones Division of Parks and Recreation plans for a Union monument and potentially the birth of a new era in the history of the site. It also represents a fitting capstone of the current era. While the UDC and other Confederate heritage groups maintain a watchful eye on the monuments erected at the site, an inspired group of reenactors started a grassroots movement that saw a resurrection of the Union memory of the war near the site. Outside forces like looters threatened the progress made in this resurgence, which forced the park services involved to reconsider their policies regarding the park and what they protected. The results remain mixed. Officials, reenactors, and historians want to restore the forgotten Union sacrifice at Olustee at odds with the same Confederate heritage organization that advocated the historical amnesia created by their monuments. As this debate continues, US soldiers still rest in unmarked graves in a state park that flies the flag of a nation for whom they gave "the last full measure of devotion."<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Holly Cramer, email message to author, September 14, 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols. (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), 7:23.

## **CONCLUSION: PRESENTING AND INHERITING ENSHRINED MEMORIES AT OLUSTEE**

From the aftermath of the Battle of Olustee to the recent debate over Civil War monuments, various events and organization contributed to how Americans remembered the largest Civil War engagement on Florida soil. Olustee's policies, markers, and monuments shaped its narrative. At the heart of the complex issue, the long forgotten Union memory of the battle only recently awakened after failed attempts to locate the remains of the Union dead because determined individuals wanted to see these fallen soldiers properly honored. Despite the reconciliationist narrative promoted by the park staff, the state of Florida preserves Confederate or Lost Cause memory enshrined by the battlefield monuments.

The struggles and tribulations experienced during the 2013 monument debate were unnecessary if certain entities had taken the initiative. If the United States War Department granted Loomis Langdon's request, perhaps an Olustee National Cemetery could be one of site's main features. If the Grand Army of the Republic and its successors took a more active approach toward the battlefield before 1897, then perhaps the public's knowledge and memory of the battle would be different. Unfortunately, for those wanting to see the Union memory of the battle properly honored at the site, the lack of involvement by their predecessors certainly handicapped their efforts.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) took advantage of the absence of Union memory workers at Olustee. These women (the daughters, wives, and sisters of Confederate veterans) used their social and political links to their advantage. Their members included female



relatives and friends to politicians, clergymen, business owners, law enforcement officers, and lawyers, thus allowing them access and influence on the decision making process of the local societies they lived in. The policies and procedures enacted by the Florida legislature that granted the UDC control over the landscape of the Olustee battlefield came not as a surprise, considering their standings in society. More importantly, the legacy of the UDC remains subtly embedded in the Florida Park Service's narrative of the Olustee battlefield, protected by its policies and procedures.

Nothing prevents Olustee park officials from changing their policies and procedures and changing this narrative. Despite the perceived permanence of the park's landscape and policies, Olustee remains in a state of constant review. It changes in response to historical events such as the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, the Civil War Centennial, and the Culture Wars. These events and incidents that occurred on the grounds of the battlefield prompted park officials to revise their policies.

Currently, officials are responding to a number of challenges. For example, Osceola National Forest Service District Archaeologist and Historian, Christopher M. Lydick, reported that "particularly high amounts and durations of precipitation" during the 2010 Olustee reenactment caused unforeseen and adverse effects on the battlefield grounds itself.<sup>1</sup> Lydick reported that the rain caused the ground to soften to a degree that the tires from the vehicles used by reenactors and guests caused heavy rutting and threatened the integrity of the site's grounds,

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<sup>1</sup> Christopher M. Lydick, *Follow-up Report of Undertaking: 2011 Olustee Battle Reenactment, Olustee Battlefield – 8Ba00015[USFS#78-11(B)]: Adverse Effects and Current Mitigation Efforts, Osceola National Forest Service, Baker County, Florida* (Sanderson: Osceola National Forest Service, 2011), Osceola National Forest Service, 1.

dislodging buried musket balls.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, some of the reenactors produced “cumulative adverse effects” through unauthorized fire pit digging, littering, and leaving debris after firewood deliveries.<sup>3</sup> The USFS, along with the Florida Park Service and other entities such as the Seminole Nation of Florida, reviewed prior mitigation efforts in order to strengthen existing policies or make additional recommendations.<sup>4</sup> These recommendations included redesigning traffic patterns, stabilizing roads and pathways with rock and lime rock, and enforcing inspections for firewood deliveries.<sup>5</sup>

Just as the park officials responded to physical threats to the battlefield, they also wield the ability to affect matters of the memory of the Battle of Olustee. Considering the debate regarding Union monuments on the battlefield, revising the 2005 Interpretative Plan seems advisable. Park officials could revise the interpretative plan to discuss the buried and forgotten Union dead and their cause including African Americans soldiers and emancipation. Additionally, erecting a Union monument on the site to mark those who remained on the battlefield seems at the very least an obligation to the honored dead. Recovering these soldiers’ remains and placing them in proper graves seems even more appropriate

Looking at the history of this site and the power of the defenders of Lost Cause memory, it is remarkable that the effort to erect a Union monument ever occurred. The Great Depression and the emergence of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) inspired and led to the growth of the Florida Park Service, which in turn ended the United Daughters of the Confederacy’s monopoly over Olustee. Meanwhile, historians like Mark Boyd searched for the remains of the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 2

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5, 7, 22-23.

missing Union soldiers, a feat that certainly faced intense opposition if the UDC had controlled the field. Despite state control, the Civil War Centennial service excluded Union memory advocates and extolled the Lost Cause version of the Civil War. It required a private group of reenactors – individuals with or without ancestral ties to the soldiers who fought in the war and come from various backgrounds who perform as Civil War-era Americans - to erect a Union monument near the site. By the one hundred and fifth anniversary of Olustee, the resurgent Union Cause proved crucial in allowing groups like the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War to engage in the monument debates despite the lack of a Union monument on the battlefield.

Nonetheless, with the 2015 Charleston shooting influencing decisions regarding Confederate monuments in public spaces, a debate on whether to erect a Union monument at a public space is rather ironic. The Florida government and park officials will ultimately decide the next step in this process. Until then, those with stakes in the preservation of the battle's memory on the battlefield, including the dead, wait patiently for the verdict.

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