

KINDLING THE FIRES OF PATRIOTISM:
THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC, DEPARTMENT OF INDIANA, 1866-1949

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Acknowledgements

First-time visitors to Indianapolis are often struck by the city's myriad variety of monuments, statues, and war memorials. When I moved to the city in August 2012, I noticed that several of these landmarks bore the signature of a Civil War veterans' organization called the "Grand Army of the Republic," including the Oliver P. Morton statue at the Indiana State House and the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Monument Circle, the geographical heart of the city. These observations ignited a desire to learn more about the ways Union veterans' remembered their role in the Civil War.

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Introduction

On May 23, 1865, upwards of 150,000 victorious Union soldiers marched in a grand review of Washington, D.C. The American Civil War was coming to a rapid conclusion, with Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee, Joseph E. Johnston, and Richard Taylor all surrendering their forces to the United States military within the past sixty days. President Andrew Johnson, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, and Union General William T. Sherman all stood at the review stand, watching as each soldier passed by. For two days, the grand review captured the attention of Washington, D.C. So much, in fact, that the trial for the alleged masterminds behind the Abraham Lincoln assassination conspiracy was delayed in order to celebrate the return of those who had preserved the Union.¹

As the soldiers made their way past the Capitol, they would have seen an emotionally powerful banner hanging from the building. Its message captured the feelings of gratitude and relief that supporters of the United States felt in the war's immediate aftermath: "The only national debt we can never pay is the debt we owe the victorious Union soldiers."² Many Union supporters on the home-front knew a friend or family member who had donned the Union blue during the war, and perhaps some parade-goers who attended the festivities that May thought about those who died in the conflict as its survivors proceeded in a twenty-five mile column. All who saw the banner understood these newly-minted veterans and their fallen comrades had accrued a debt that could never be fully compensated. But what was the nature of that debt? Even if this

¹ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 2.

² McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 10.

payment could never be met, didn't society have *some* sort of obligation to its veterans?
If so, what, exactly, was owed to the men who put their lives in danger for the state?

As the postwar negotiation over this "national debt" continued into the 1866 midterm elections, Union veterans organized into what would become the first veterans' fraternal organization open to all United States soldiers, regardless of rank: the Grand Army of the Republic. Amid a serious job shortage for returning veterans and President Johnson's insistence on returning full political privileges to former Confederates as soon as possible, GAR members believed that collective action in a veterans' interest group was necessary to preserve the fruits of military victory and convince society that financial aid to veterans was not an act of "misplaced pity," but one of national justice to the soldiers.³ Although some politicians and newspaper editors expressed reservations about an active veterans' organization operating in peace time, the GAR's influence spread to all parts of the country, eventually topping 400,000 members nationally by 1890.⁴

Several historians studying the GAR have interpreted the Capitol building's "national debt" banner at the 1865 grand review as a message to veterans about an

³ James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 171.

⁴ For example, A.J. Beckett, an member of the Indiana General Assembly during the Civil War, remarked after the passage of a state relief act for soldiers in 1865 that "we should be careful how we trifle with the people's money," suggesting that aid to soldiers would cripple the state's finances. Charles O'Bierne, an aide to President Johnson, traveled to Indiana in 1866 and reported to the President in an alarming tone that "the G.A.R. are drilled to the sound of the bugle and summoned by the call . . . Indiana needs reconstruction." An Ohio newspaper echoed O'Bierne's concerns and argued that the GAR was "a secret political organization . . . it is *armed* and organized to *vote and fight!*," while a Tennessee newspaper commented that "we have a right . . . to inquire what is *this* 'Grand Army of the Republic?' of whom it is composed? what its numbers? how organized? how supported? and what its purposes and designs?" Beckett quoted in Justin E. Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, 1816-1978* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly & Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987), 254; O'Bierne quoted in Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 105-106; "The Grand Army of the Republic!," *The Daily Empire* (Dayton, Ohio), September 26, 1866; "Grand Army of the Republic," *Daily Union and American* (Nashville, Tennessee), November 14, 1866.

unfilled *financial* debt. Mary R. Dearing, one of the first scholars to study the GAR in the 1950s, argued that the GAR was first and foremost a political organization intent on advocating for financially beneficial legislation in the form of equalized bounty payouts and monthly pensions.⁵ Forty years later, historian Stuart McConnell argued that feelings of postwar friendship and fraternity among Union veterans were just as crucial to the GAR's formation as its political concerns. Nevertheless, he suggested that the GAR's claim to society's "national debt" took place solely "in the form of pension demands."⁶

The unpaid "national debt" the Capitol banner spoke of, however, went beyond financial concerns like monthly pension payments by also conveying deeper questions about the nature of remembrance and commemoration in American society. What "debts" did Americans owe to the veterans when it came to remembering the Civil War? What obligations did society have to remember the soldiers who never made it home? How would the war be interpreted in popular memory, and who would be entitled to speak on behalf of the past? What kinds of public Civil War commemorations would best convey the values of democracy, patriotism, and American nationalism, and who would be the arbiter of what constituted an "appropriate" ceremony? What would children in history classrooms learn about the Civil War years after the conflict ended?

This thesis aims to address these important questions of memory, remembrance, and commemoration by analyzing the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana. While questions related to soldier aid are certainly important in assessing the challenges veterans faced in their transition back into postwar American, a truly holistic

⁵ Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952).

⁶ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 10. See also Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).

understanding of the GAR demands that one analyze how veterans remembered their role in the Civil War and how those memories functioned in a reciprocal relationship between past and present. The memories of war were used as political tools by the GAR to advocate for pensions, funding for national and state veterans' meetings, and the building of monuments, but those very memories of war were also shaped by postwar events such as the Pullman Car Strike of 1894, the Indianapolis 500 automobile race, and a wave of Southern and Eastern European immigrants who arrived in the United States after the war.

This thesis argues that members of the Indiana GAR met in fraternity in order to share and construct memories of the Civil War that helped to make sense of the past. In constructing these memories, Indiana GAR members took it upon themselves to act as gatekeepers of Civil War memory in the Hoosier state. GAR veterans publically celebrated their time in the military and consistently argued that the values acquired through armed conflict—obedience, duty, selflessness, honor, love of country—were necessary for an increasingly industrialized society that many veterans believed was becoming increasingly selfish, materialistic, and politically radical. When individuals and organizations challenged the GAR's understanding of the past or violated one of its "unwritten rules" of memory, its members were quick to use their memories of war to assert their vision of society through newspaper editorials, public speeches, parades, and public monuments.

The Indiana GAR is a particularly appropriate topic of study because its members played a unique and integral role in both the Hoosier state and the national GAR in shaping the debates over Civil War memories that would take place in America well into

the 1920s. Even though the GAR was first created in 1866 by Illinois veterans Benjamin F. Stephenson, John A. Logan, and Richard Oglesby, it was Indiana Governor Oliver P. Morton and Hoosier veterans Oliver Morris Wilson and Robert S. Foster who were largely responsible for the organization's national growth that year. On September 25, Wilson, Foster, and a large delegation of Indiana veterans attended a Soldiers' and Sailors' Republican Convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to promote the "work" of the GAR; these efforts were so successful that the GAR's first national veterans' meeting, or "Encampment," was held in Indianapolis, Indiana, in November.⁷ Indianapolis would go on to host six more national GAR Encampments, the most of any city in the United States during the organization's existence.⁸

Each chapter in this thesis explores a method by which Indiana GAR veterans used their memories of the Civil War to act as gatekeepers of the past and authoritative social leaders in the present. Chapter one begins with a re-creation of the GAR's initiation ritual for new recruits and uses Hoosier veteran William J. Donelson's 1890 initiation into the organization as a case study. Donelson's life story and his initiation ceremony provide a useful example for analyzing how veterans continued to maintain their identity as Civil War soldiers while raising families and working their occupations. The chapter then explores the nature of the Indiana GAR's civil war memories and argues that its members generally remembered the war as a fight for the preservation of the Union and the abolition of slavery. The chapter then concludes with an assessment of the Indiana GAR's

⁷ Robert Burns Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1888), 33-67; Oliver Morris Wilson, *The Grand Army of the Republic Under its First Constitution and Ritual: Its Birth and Organization* (Kansas City, MO: Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1905), 27-30.

⁸ The national GAR Encampments hosted in Indianapolis took place in 1866, 1881, 1893, 1920, 1921, 1942, and the last Encampment in 1949. For a full list of GAR meetings, see Library of Congress, "The Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies National Encampments: Bibliography." Accessed June 2, 2013. <http://www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/national/natlist.html>.

state Encampments and how its veterans chose to represent themselves to the rest of society.

Chapter two presents an example of the complex ways the past entangles itself with the present. In 1868, national GAR leaders established May 30 as "Decoration Day" (now commonly referred to as "Memorial Day"), a day for remembering the Union dead and reflection on the meaning of the Civil War. Decoration Day ceremonies typically involved solemn marches to local cemeteries, where the graves of the Union dead were decorated with flowers. Veterans, political figures, and religious leaders made public speeches at these ceremonies in which they frequently invoked memories of the dead to justify their interpretation of the Civil War and their ideological worldviews of the present. In 1911, however, the owners of a new automobile raceway in Indianapolis—the Indianapolis Motor Speedway—began hosting their annual race on May 30. As more Hoosiers began spending their day at the raceway instead of the cemetery, members of the Indiana GAR protested the race's alleged violation of their "sacred" holiday. After years of petitioning the Indiana General Assembly to ban the race on May 30, a bill was finally approved by the House and Senate in 1923. Governor Warren McCray, however, vetoed the bill, citing its potential to harm the commercial operations of local businesses on Decoration Day. This chapter analyzes the intense conflict over the meaning of Memorial Day in Indiana and raises questions about the nature of historical memories. It will argue that public commemorations and "traditions" often become fungible entities over time, adopting new meanings within society as younger generations develop their own understandings of the past.

Chapter three argues that the conflict over Civil War memories between the Indiana GAR and the rest of Hoosier society saw some of its fiercest battles play out in the history classrooms of public schools throughout the state. "Patriotic instruction"—defined in this study as the implementation of history textbooks that incorporated a "correct" interpretation of the Civil War by placing Union veterans front and center as "saviors" of the nation, the installation of American flags at every schoolhouse, and formal training in military tactics for all young boys—was embraced by GAR members around the country, but some of its loudest advocates were in Indiana.

The movement itself started in 1884 when Indiana GAR members complained at that year's national Encampment that teachers in Indianapolis were avoiding the Civil War in their history lessons. In the 1890s, Hoosier veteran Wallace Foster—"the flag man"—promoted the idea of placing flags at all public schools and traveled the country arguing that the flag would inspire patriotism in young students.⁹ Finally, the Indiana GAR's most prominent member, President Benjamin Harrison (1889-1893), spoke frequently on the need for military instruction for young boys who he believed needed a sense of direction, order, and obedience to authority in their lives. After briefly exploring the history of public education in Indiana, chapter three examines how the call for "patriotic instruction" in the Hoosier state coincided with a late century immigration wave and a newfound dedication to the ideals of American nationalism.

Over the past twenty-five years, scholars have benefitted from a profusion of scholarship on memory studies, Civil War memory, voluntary fraternal associations in the United States from 1870-1930, and the teaching of history in public schools at the

⁹ See, for example, "The Relief Corps," *The National Tribune* [Washington, D.C.], January 7, 1897.

turn of the twentieth century. Each of these topics offer insights for not only the Grand Army of the Republic but also the social context in which members of the GAR constructed their own realities of postwar America. A brief discussion of notable resources utilized in this study is necessary for explaining the arguments and conclusions that will follow in the main text.

Before assessing the historical arguments of *how* Civil War veterans remembered the Civil War, one must first analyze theories of *why* people desire to remember in the first place. Historian John Bodnar argues that memory functions as a method for maintaining "the social order and existing institutions" of society. Symbols of patriotism and national growth such as monuments, statues, soldier reunions, and commemorative holidays are used by people to affirm their loyalty to a nation and assert their own place within their local communities.¹⁰ According to Bodnar, two different expressions emerge through the process of remembering: "official" memories and "vernacular" memories. "Official" memories originate with cultural and political leaders seeking consensus and the preservation of a society's status quo in order to affirm their own political and social goals. "Vernacular" memories are crafted by smaller communities (such as a veterans' group) that restate reality from lived, firsthand experiences that "convey what social reality feels like rather than what it should be like," according to Bodnar. The convergence of these two forms of memory lead to the creation of "public memory."¹¹

Historians James Fentress and Chris Wickham argue that memories are a fundamental part of our identity and provide a roadmap of our past experiences.

¹⁰ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19.

¹¹ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 13-14. Groups like the GAR, of course, may convey both "official" and "vernacular" memories at the same time.

Memories are structured through "language, teaching and observing, by collectively held ideas, and by experiences shared with others." They also argue that memories can be split into two varieties: "objective" and "subjective." "Objective" memories passively hold knowledge that exists outside the minds of those who remember (such as the dates of an important Civil War battle), while "subjective" memories include information, emotions, and feelings that are unique to individuals.¹²

Although historian Richard Slotkin's *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* does not analyze the actions of the GAR, his discussion on the process of mythmaking is useful for understanding how myths emerge as a way of telling stories about the past. Slotkin suggests that myths are "drawn from a society's history [and are] . . . acquired through persistent usage" and are "deliberate acts" of human intention specifically deployed to explain a subjective understanding of how groups and societies are created.¹³ Books, theatrical performances, television, and film, according to Slotkin, have emerged as powerful tools for creating myths about the history of the United States since the end of the Civil War.¹⁴

The first work to analyze and interpret the words and memories of Civil War veterans was historian Paul Buck's *The Road To Reunion, 1865-1900*, which won a Pulitzer Prize for history in 1937. In it, Buck argues that Northerners and Southerners

¹² James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 5-7.

¹³ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1992), 5, 25.

¹⁴ For other relevant works on myths, memories, and history, see Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992); Anne Holden Rønning, "Some Reflections on Myth, History and Memory as Determinants of Narrative," *Coolabah* 3 [University of Barcelona], no. 3 (2009), 143-151; Paul A. Shackel, ed., *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2001).

were able to create a renewed "national life" in the years after the war because veterans on both sides expressed a "spirit of good will" as the nation approached the end of the nineteenth century. Reflecting the prejudices of his time, Buck celebrated the reconciliation of the war's white veterans with the end of Reconstruction in 1877, which determined that "the black man [would no longer] figure as 'a ward of the nation' to be singled out for special guardianship or peculiar treatment."¹⁵ More recent scholarly works on Civil War veterans have questioned Buck's conclusions.

Whereas Paul Buck celebrated the magnanimous feelings between veterans in the war's aftermath, historian David W. Blight criticizes these attitudes for helping to create memories of the Civil War in popular remembrance from 1865 to 1915 that ignored the legacy of emancipation in explaining the causes, context, and consequences of the conflict. Blight provides a framework for understanding Civil War memories and identifies three "visions" or interpretations of the Civil War that emerged during this period. The "reconciliationist" vision sought reconciliation between Union and Confederate veterans and their supporters as a method of healing and understanding the war's massive bloodshed, while the "white supremacist" vision used terror and violence against blacks to maintain white hegemony in the South and a national reconciliation on southern terms. These two visions overthrew the "emancipationist" vision, which interpreted the Civil War as a war to end slavery and establish a "new birth of freedom" based upon universal suffrage and political equality. Equally important, Blight

¹⁵ Paul H. Buck, *The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 1937), 256-257, 283-284. For other studies on Civil War veterans prior to 1960, see the previously mentioned *Veterans in Politics* by Mary R. Dearing, which remains the standard work on the GAR's efforts at pension benefits, and Thomas J. Pressly, *Americans Interpret Their Civil War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).

demonstrates that what is "forgotten" or ignored in popular memory is just as important as a society's understanding of its past as the content that is remembered.¹⁶

In the only study of the Indiana GAR prior to this thesis, James H. Madison embraces Blight's "three vision" framework and asserts that "Hoosiers displayed a powerful desire for sectional reconciliation" after the Civil War, "creating silences that denied the central essence of the war."¹⁷ Madison, however, goes too far in his claims about Indiana GAR members and their memories of the war by suggesting that they forgot about the savagery of war and believed "there were no bad guys in the South" by the fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1913.¹⁸ As chapter one of this study will demonstrate, the emotional and physical scars of the war would haunt many Hoosier veterans for the rest of their lives, and they had no qualms about blaming former Confederates for starting the war in the first place. In actuality, membership in the GAR was one way Hoosier veterans came to terms with the lifelong memories of war.

More recent historical scholarship questions the extent to which GAR veterans were willing to reconcile with their former adversaries in the Confederacy. Historian John Neff argues that the creation of National Cemeteries and Memorial Day observances after the war reflected distinctly "Northern" acts of commemoration that intentionally

¹⁶ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1-5. For other studies that embraced the "reconciliationist" interpretation of Civil War memory, see Cecilia O'Leary, "American All: Reforging a National Brotherhood, 1874-1917," *History Today* 43 (October 1994), 20-27; Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 1-14; Matthew Dennis, *Red, White, and Blue Letter Days: An American Calendar* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 221-234.

¹⁷ Madison also speculates that "Indianans may have been even more inclined than most northerners to forget that the war had been about slavery." James H. Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Partnership Forgittin', 1865-1913," *Indiana Magazine of History* 99, no. 3 (September 2003), 201-202.

¹⁸ Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Partnership Forgittin'," 220.

removed the Confederate dead from the collective memory of the United States.¹⁹

Barbara A. Gannon expands Neff's thesis to argue that white GAR veterans remembered their role in ending slavery during the war and openly welcomed their black comrades into the organization during a time when most fraternal organizations were racially segregated. Black veterans participated in both integrated and all-black posts within the GAR and at times even held leadership positions within the organization, although no evidence exists to suggest that African American veterans were elected to any leadership positions in Indiana.²⁰

The GAR's establishment in 1866 coincided with a rise in fraternal associations in the United States that lasted into the 1920s. During the "golden age of fraternity," Americans (especially white males) joined Freemason societies, religious clubs, temperance societies, the Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Labor as a way to extend friendships and associations beyond the industrial workplace. Stuart McConnell's previously mentioned study of the GAR remains the most comprehensive analysis of GAR fraternalism, arguing that the GAR's initiation ritual, private post halls, and strong Christian symbolism created an idealized "camp as sanctuary" remembrance of life in the military.²¹ McConnell's study regrettably concludes in 1900, however, leaving out a considerable amount of GAR fraternal history in the twentieth century.

Historian Mark Carnes takes a broader perspective and compares the GAR with other voluntary associations during the golden age of fraternity. Carnes argues that

¹⁹ John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 136-141.

²⁰ 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), 23. See also Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

²¹ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 93.

fraternalism was first and foremost a response to concerns over gender. As Victorian notions of manhood pushed men into a world in which they were expected to achieve a high level of material success, fraternal rituals provided men with opportunities to "make contacts and acquire status" within local communities. Protestantism also became "feminized" during this period, and fraternal associations (including the GAR) represented private spaces away from women in which to assert their religious values within a distinctly male community.²²

Sociologist Jason Kaufman's 2002 analysis of American fraternalism makes a strikingly negative assessment of voluntary associations during this period. Kaufman asserts that fraternal associations played a large role in the differentiation of society from 1880-1920, leading to increased "racial prejudice and interethnic hostility" between Americans, a political structure dominated by special interest groups, and a weak social safety net for the impoverished. He also laments the increasingly militarized social landscape that accompanied Gilded Age America in the form of gun clubs, private militias, and later the National Rifle Association.²³ The GAR's role in this militarization of society will be briefly addressed in chapter three of this study.

The GAR's interest in "patriotic instruction" led to a concerted effort by veterans to change the nature of public education in Indiana. Several works provide historical context for understanding these changes in Indiana schools. Education historian William Reese's edited volume on Hoosier schools outlines the evolution of public education in

²² Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 12-14. For an older study on GAR fraternalism, Wallace E. Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

²³ Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good?: American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 10, 141.

Indiana in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, arguing that popular support for public education and the teaching of United States history did not occur until the immediate postwar period from 1865 to 1869.²⁴ Indiana historian Clifton J. Phillips supports these assertions and argues that education reform in Indiana was akin to a "great awakening" during the Progressive Era. He points out that education moved from a decentralized system largely in the hands of local township trustees to a more regulated infrastructure based on graded schools and uniform curriculum standards established by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education.²⁵

In assessing the "textbook controversy" that emerged in history classrooms throughout the country, Civil War historian James McPherson argues that "Confederate veterans felt an even greater need [than Union veterans] to . . . inspire future generations with the nobility of their cause," suggesting Confederate veterans overwhelmed their Union adversaries in the battle for memory in the classroom.²⁶ McPherson's analysis, however, is problematic because it focuses on the efforts of UCV veterans and the Daughters of the Confederacy while completely omitting any comparisons with the GAR and its auxiliary groups. As chapter three will demonstrate, Indiana GAR veterans never worried about the use of pro-Confederate textbooks in the classroom. The challenge, as many GAR members saw it, was moving beyond allegedly "objective" textbooks that attempted to be fair to the memories of both Union and Confederate veterans.

²⁴ William J. Reese, ed., *Hoosier Schools: Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), 1-28, 53-77.

²⁵ Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 386-387; see also Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly*, 248, 393-394; Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1929).

²⁶ James M. McPherson, "Long-Legged Yankee Lies: The Southern Textbook Crusade," in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 64.

Historian Joseph Moreau—analyzing more than one hundred textbooks used in schools throughout the country—provides a more nuanced interpretation of textbook history, arguing that history books "purporting to explain the country's past" have always played an integral role in America's efforts at "national soul-searching." Moreau gives the GAR agency in the contested debate on Civil War history textbooks and asserts that GAR veterans sought to incorporate textbook interpretations that reflected northern nationalist values of "universal membership, political equality, and the supremacy of the federal government." In promoting this effort, GAR members criticized textbooks that failed to take clear stances against slavery, secession, and state sovereignty. By using the GAR's efforts as an example of contested history in the classroom, Moreau challenges his readers to question the idea of public education history instruction as a static delivery of a single interpretation of national identity.²⁷

Historian Richard Ellis goes beyond textbook instruction to incorporate the history of the Pledge of Allegiance and the hanging of school flags at schools within the patriotic instruction movement. Examining the efforts of Colonel George Balch—a Union veteran from New York who was a member of the GAR and an advocate for patriotic instruction—Ellis suggests that GAR members believed that the Civil War was a period of "tremendous patriotism, self-sacrifice, and national unity." These veterans, according to Ellis, initiated the patriotic instruction movement in America because they believed patriotic symbols, songs, and poetry would inspire children to devote themselves to obeying and supporting America's political and religious leaders. Additionally, such

²⁷ Joseph Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts Over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 16, 61, 72.

efforts would help recent immigrants and their children remove their native allegiances and incorporate themselves into America's national community.²⁸

Finally, it is important to briefly mention who *is* being studied in this thesis and who *is not* being studied. The Indiana GAR—as was the case with all state departments—had "auxiliary" groups that were considered allied orders of the GAR. These allied orders included the Women's Relief Corps (open to mothers, sisters, and daughters of GAR members), the Ladies of the GAR (the wives of GAR members), the Sons of Veterans (SV), and the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Sons of Veterans. These allied orders were intimately associated with the GAR, and much of the work in promoting Memorial Day commemorations and encouraging patriotic instruction in public schools fell on the shoulders of these allied orders. Regretfully, there is not enough space in this master's thesis to analyze the actions of the Indiana GAR's auxiliary groups. The history of these allied orders has been largely ignored by scholars, and it is hoped that future studies in Civil War remembrance will work to undertake an investigation into how the GAR interacted with its auxiliaries.

It should also be pointed out that the term "GAR member" is not synonymous with "Union Civil War veteran." The GAR was a fraternal organization created

²⁸ Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 4-5. For relevant studies on immigration and nationalism during this period, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983); Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (2nd Edition) (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002); Susan-Mary Grant, "The Charter of its Birthright: The Civil War and American Nationalism," in Susan-Mary Grant and Peter J. Parish, eds., *The Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2003); Susan-Mary Grant, "Reimagined Communities: Union Veterans and the Reconstruction of American Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 3 (2008), 498-519; Joel M. Roitman, *The Immigrants, The Progressives, and The Schools: 1890-1920* (Stark, KS: De Young Press, 1996); Alexander Uribel, "The Making of Citizens: A History of Civic Education in Indianapolis, 1900-1950," PhD diss., Indiana University, 1996. Proquest (AAT 9637577).

exclusively for Union Civil War veterans, but not all veterans chose to join the GAR in the years after the war. Indiana GAR members were still trying to recruit Union Civil War veterans who had not joined the GAR even fifty years after the organization's creation. In 1917, Department Commander V.V. Williams remarked that "why any old soldier should choose to remain outside of the Grand Army of the Republic is a mystery to me."²⁹ Seeing that the number of living Union Civil War veterans was rapidly declining by the start of World War I, Williams lamented the fact that not all veterans shared his enthusiasm for fraternity and memories of the Civil War.

While Williams was mystified by the decision of some veterans to not join the GAR, several reasons explain why the GAR was not universally embraced by all Union veterans. For one, local GAR posts were highly politicized spaces within themselves. In order to join a local post, new recruits had to be voted in by their fellow comrades. Occasionally new recruits were "blackballed" and prevented from joining for a range of reasons, including "personal grudges, racial prejudice, or local political animosities," according to Stuart McConnell. While instances of "blackballing" were relatively rare, rejected recruits may have held long grudges against the organization in many instances.³⁰ Additionally, since the GAR was a dues-paying organization, some veterans simply could not afford the organization's annual membership fees.

Other veterans had no interest in remembering the past, or at least remembering it in a way that glorified the martial qualities of war. Perhaps no better example of this line

²⁹ Grand Army of the Republic, *Journal of the Thirty-Eighth Annual Session of the Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic*. Indiana State Library. (Indianapolis: Sentinel Printing Co., Printers and Binders, 1917), 61-62. The GAR Encampment Records—which will be discussed further in chapter one—are a vital resource for analyzing how GAR members remembered the Civil War. Hereafter I will use Barbara A. Gannon's format for citing GAR National and State Encampment records: "When GAR Encampments are cited, the entry will include the state, the meeting number, and the year the meeting took place." Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 223.

³⁰ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 111-115.

of thought lies in the story of Ambrose Bierce. Born in Ohio but a resident of Elkhart County, Indiana, at the start of the war, Bierce enlisted in the 9th Indiana Infantry Regiment days after the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861. At the Battle of Laurel Hill on July 10, 1861, Bierce bravely picked up a mortally wounded comrade, Dyson Boothroyd, and carried him 100 yards away from a hail of Confederate gunfire, a story that was later picked up in the *Indianapolis Journal*.³¹ Bierce's reputation for brave soldiering eventually led to him being promoted to First Lieutenant in 1863, but his war came to an end after being shot in the head at Kennesaw Mountain on June 23, 1864.³²

Bierce survived the battle and eventually moved to California after the war, where he became a journalist, literary critic, and author. In the years after the war, Bierce had no use for fraternity or the pomp and circumstance of GAR parades and celebrations. Through publications like his critically acclaimed *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* in 1891, Bierce conveyed a distinctly negative memory of the war that attacked the nostalgia and romanticism of postwar commemorations. In his satirical *Devil's Dictionary*, Bierce defined "patriotism" as "combustible rubbish ready to the torch of any one ambitious to illuminate his name." Continuing, Bierce remarked that "in Dr. [Samuel] Johnson's famous dictionary patriotism is defined as the last resort of a scoundrel. With all due respect to an enlightened but inferior lexicographer I beg to submit that it is the first."³³ Yale historian David W. Blight remarks that of all the veteran reminiscences that began to

³¹ "Good Boy," *Indianapolis Journal*, July 27, 1861.

³² Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 244.

³³ Ambrose Bierce, *Tales of Soldiers and Civilians* (New York: Lovell, Coryell & Company, 1891); Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1911), 248.

fill the literary market after the war, "no writer sustained more lurid clarity about the hold of the war on his or her imagination" than Bierce.³⁴

As readers navigate their way through this thesis, they should keep in mind that the Indiana GAR did not necessarily speak for all Hoosier veterans. For veterans like Bierce, no amount of fraternity could ever help them escape memories of the war's horrors, no matter how hard they tried. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that this terrible four-year Civil War created a complex array of memories that continue to penetrate our own understanding of America's deadliest conflict today. Indeed, this study is not an analysis of Civil War *memory*, but an analysis of Civil War *memories*.

³⁴ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 244-251.

Chapter One: Civil War Memories and Veteran Identity

William J. Donelson arrived at George H. Thomas Post 17 in Indianapolis on a mid-summer's evening. Donelson had recently made an important commitment to join a fraternal organization. As he made his way to the post, a range of emotions and questions may have run through his mind as he contemplated what was about to happen: Is it worth my time to be in a fraternal organization? What will happen at the initiation? What will the other members think of me? It was the year 1890 and Donelson had decided to join the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest Union veterans' fraternal organization in the United States. He had served with the 9th Indiana Cavalry, 121st Regiment during the Civil War and had been honorably discharged after the war's conclusion, making him eligible for membership.³⁵ The GAR had existed since 1866, but in 1890 membership peaked, with 409,489 paying members across the country. Of these members, 25,173 (6.1 percent) met in 529 local posts throughout the state of Indiana.³⁶

Donelson had friends in the organization who told him about "the work" of the GAR, but it took Donelson twenty-five years to make the choice to join. During the Civil War he had endured sickness, the pain of separation from friends and loved ones, and the loss of comrades in battle. In the initial postwar years of the Reconstruction Era (1865-

³⁵ C.H. Metcalf, *Grand Army of the Republic Almanac for 1880* (Worcester, Massachusetts: Henry Evans Publishing, 1879), 26. See also Grand Army of the Republic, *The Grand Army Blue-Book: Containing the Rules and Regulations of the Grand Army of the Republic and Official Decisions and Opinion Thereon*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1891). Donelson enlisted in the Union Army at the age of eighteen on February 6, 1864. He served until August 8, 1865, when he was mustered out at Vicksburg, Mississippi. See Indiana State Digital Archives, "William J. Donelson - Civil War." Accessed May 30, 2013.

<http://www.indianadigitalarchives.org/ViewRecord.aspx?RID=DA3E9F6FC406537F181394ED7918F280>

³⁶ Dennis Northcott, *Indiana Civil War Veterans: Transcription of the Death Rolls of the Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic, 1882-1948* (St. Louis: NG Publications, 2005), 379-380. The Records from the 1890 National Encampment list Indiana's membership at 25,043, which was the fifth largest total of all listed states (Wisconsin and Florida's numbers were omitted). The four highest states were Pennsylvania (44,711), New York (38,898), Ohio (36,187), and Illinois (32,397). See Indiana, *Twenty-Fourth* (1890) 70-78.

1877), Donelson may have avoided the GAR and the unsettling memories of the war by choice. The memories of battle were never far from the minds of veterans, however, and during this time some of them wrote regimental histories, met in reunions, and participated in monument dedications.³⁷ Donelson probably took note of these efforts, but it appears that for him postwar fraternity took a back seat to other concerns. Marriage, raising a family, and finding work amid the economic Panic of 1873 kept him plenty occupied. After the war the Brown County native found work in Indianapolis with the Indianapolis and Vincennes Railroad.³⁸ He knew that other veterans had not had as much luck finding employment.³⁹

By 1890, Donelson's career success in the business world provided him with financial stability and leisure time that could be spent with the GAR, both important factors for someone considering the possibility of joining a dues-paying organization. The rhetoric of some GAR speakers also suggests that Victorian notions of gender played a role in deciding to join the organization.⁴⁰ The war, many veterans believed, had

³⁷ The GAR was not the only Union veteran's organization in the country. Groups like the Society of the Army of the Tennessee and the Society of the Army of the Potomac provided burial insurance to former military officers. See Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 100-108. Even though the Department of Indiana was integral to the GAR's creation and early success, it had disbanded by 1871. Membership for the entire country had sunk to 26,899 by 1876. See Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 85; Indiana, *Twenty-Second*, 1901, 164, 158-177.

³⁸ "William J. Donelson [obituary]," *Indianapolis Star*, September 15, 1928.

³⁹ For more on postwar adjustment issues of Union veterans, see James Marten, "Exempt from the Ordinary Rules of Life: Researching Postwar Adjustment Problems of Union Veterans," *Civil War History* 47 no. 1 (March 2001), 57-70; Susan-Mary Grant, "Reimagined Communities: Union Veterans and the Reconstruction of the American Nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 14 no. 3 (2008), 498-519.

⁴⁰ Historian James Marten defines Victorian manhood as the social expectations hoisted upon men by the rest of society, most notably an expectation that they would demonstrate "strength, intelligence, ability, [and] prudence" in their personal and business affairs. According to Marten, "all veterans who were observed begging on the street, lurking in a saloon, scheming for a bigger pension, or lounging idly in a soldiers' home exemplified failure." Additionally, antebellum activities such as drinking, gambling, and fighting were no longer acceptable in Victorian society, forcing veterans to demonstrate their "strength" as men through personal restraint. See James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 23-28, 104-105.

provided a transition from youth to manhood, "the highest type of manhood and citizenship," in the words of comrade John D. Alexander. "My comrades, then boys," explained Alexander, "fought on every great battle field of the war, and when peace came [they] furled their battle flags, stacked their guns and . . . have been as full of patriotic fire as when they left the battle live." Due in large part to the war, "the citizen soldiers in the Department [of Indiana] are the salt of the earth and as good men and citizens as can be found in any country or in any clime," argued Alexander.⁴¹ For those who developed strong male relationships on the battlefields of their youth, the local GAR post provided these aging men a private space to socialize away from the women and children of the family.

For men like Donelson in the 1880s and 1890s the GAR's increasing popularity can also be attributed to new stipulations regarding which veterans could receive financial aid from the federal government. The GAR pushed the federal government to enact a generous pension bill that gave all disabled Union veterans who had served at least ninety days during the war a monthly pension, and in 1890 the organization's efforts proved successful after the passage of the Dependent Pension Bill by Congress. Many GAR posts went a step further by creating "benefit funds" that sometimes awarded three or four dollars a week to carefully screened veterans in need.⁴²

Equally important in Donelson's decision to join the groups was the GAR's local meetings, civic events, and annual "Encampments," which provided exclusive meeting

⁴¹ Indiana, *Thirtieth*, 1909, 5-6.

⁴² The Dependent Pension Bill was signed into law by Indiana GAR member and U.S. President Benjamin Harrison. During his run for the Presidency in 1888, Harrison remarked that it was "no time to be weighing the claims of old soldiers with apothecary's scales." The law stipulated that veterans could apply for a pension regardless of whether or not their disability came from the war. Quoted in McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 152-153; Wallace E. Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 142-143.

spaces in which to reunite and fraternize with "the boys," discuss politics, and network with other veterans for business opportunities.⁴³ As the case with all wars, some Union veterans chose to keep their memories of the Civil War private, ignoring the GAR's calls for fraternity. For the members of the GAR, however, the organization may have played a role in helping veterans make sense of their past. In choosing to unite in fraternity, GAR veterans created a collective identity that established what it meant to be a Union Civil War veteran in America. They used the memories of the war to not only reflect on the past, but to also establish themselves as authorities in defining the political boundaries of American citizenship and determining the future course of the nation, as this study will demonstrate.

Donelson had spoken with a friend who was a GAR member about joining a local post in Indianapolis. Donelson was instructed to apply for admission to the George H. Thomas Post and verify his military service through his discharge papers. Having done these tasks, the members of the Post voted to accept him into the GAR at their regular meeting on May 27, 1890.⁴⁴ Donelson, however, still had to be initiated into the organization through its secret ritual, described as a "muster-in" by the GAR's ritual book.⁴⁵ Historian Stuart McConnell describes this ritual as "a series of allegories designed to illustrate the meaning of what might be called 'veteranhood': the character that a veteran was to take on and the obligations he was to assume in civilian life as a

⁴³ These events helped to create collective memories of the Civil War among GAR veterans. According to Paul A. Shackel, "As a group, people decide which experiences to collectively remember and which ones to forget, as well as how to interpret these experiences. People develop a collective memory by molding, shaping, and agreeing upon what to remember." Paul A. Shackel, ed., *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2001), 1-2.

⁴⁴ Grand Army of the Republic, "Minute Books of the George H. Thomas Post, No. 17, Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, 1887-1893," 201. MSS V127. Housed in Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, Indiana State Library. Indianapolis, IN.

⁴⁵ The following discussion on the GAR's ritual is taken from Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic* (Rutland, VT: Grand Army of the Republic Headquarters, 1891).

result of his Union Army service."⁴⁶ Through the ritual, GAR veterans agreed to promote the organization's values as embodied in its motto, "fraternity, charity, loyalty."

Donelson arrived at the Thomas Post headquarters on July 1, but was not yet allowed to enter the main post room.⁴⁷ Prior to his arrival, the room had been arranged as described in the ritual book, a required text for the Post Commanders in charge of each local post throughout the country. In the center of the room lay an altar. An American flag was draped over this altar, with two crossed swords on top of the flag and a Bible resting over the swords.⁴⁸ The members of the post—"comrades"—soon began to file into the room in complete silence. All officers of the post except for the Sergeant Major and Quartermaster Sergeant made their way to the ante-room to wait for the Sergeant Major's signal to enter the post room. Later, they would seat themselves at specific locations around the altar; the Chaplain to the east, the Senior Vice Commander to the south, the Junior Vice Commander to the west, and the Post Commander to the north.⁴⁹

Once the officers were ready to enter the post room, the "inside sentinel" guarding the door shouted, "Sergeant-Major, the officers of the post!" The Sergeant-Major responded, "post, attention!" All of the comrades stood. The sentinel announced "carry!" and the officers marched in two ranks into the room. Once the Post Commander reached his seat, the Sergeant-Major announced the presenting of arms. All officers and comrades

⁴⁶ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 93.

⁴⁷ The Minute Books of the George H. Thomas Post verify that Donelson was accepted into the post on this date. See Grand Army of the Republic, "Minute Books of the George H. Thomas Post, No. 17," 205.

⁴⁸ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 4. The ritual book explains that "the rituals and cards will be under sole charge of the Post Commander, and he shall be held responsible for their safekeeping."

⁴⁹ An outline of the post room can be found in *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic* on page 3. Other officers not already mentioned with specific seats included the Adjutant, the Quartermaster, and the Officer of Guard.

saluted the Commander. Once he acknowledged the salute, he ordered all officers to their "posts."⁵⁰

The Post Commander began the proceedings by announcing, "this is a regular meeting of George H. Thomas Post, number 17, Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic. Officer of the Day, are the approaches to this Post properly guarded?" "Commander, they are." "Are the officers of the Post present in their proper stations?" "Commander, they are." After checking to ensure secrecy by asking if all members of the meeting were in the GAR, the Post Commander announced, "we meet in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty; and may our hearts unite as one in sustaining the great objects of our association."

The Chaplain then offered a short prayer that asked for God's blessing upon the American nation and the GAR: "Bless our country; grant that the noble memory of our dead, who freely gave their lives for the land they loved, may dwell ever in our hearts. Bless our Order; make it an instrument of great good; keep our names on the roll of thy servants, and at last receive us into that Grand Army above, where thou, O God, art the Supreme Commander."⁵¹ Through this prayer, GAR veterans attempted to align America's future destiny— a destiny that was shaped and enhanced by those who had given their lives for the nation in combat—with God's master plan. By asking for the "noble" memories of the dead to stay in their hearts, the Chaplain asked God to bless the nation and its Union veterans, but not at the sacrifice of forgetting about the past.

The Post Commander asked the assembly if anyone was in need of the GAR's charity. "Is any comrade of this Post sick or in distress? Has any comrade died since our

⁵⁰ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 8-9.

⁵¹ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 10-11.

last meeting? Has any comrade knowledge of deserving soldiers or sailors, or the families of those deceased, living within our limits, who need our assistance?" Not hearing any responses, the meeting proceeded. Meanwhile, Donelson waited outside the post room, surrounded by seven GAR members: four sentinels formed in a square around him in addition to the Officer of the Guard on his left, the Officer of the Day to his right, and the friend who had helped him apply for the GAR by his side.⁵²

The Officer of the Day stepped into the post room. He announced that a recruit had been found at the "outpost" and that he desired to join the Grand Army of the Republic. After it was determined that the recruit had paid his dues, the Officer of the Day returned to the outpost. He calmly questioned the recruit. "Your request for admission into the Grand Army of the Republic, having been duly received . . . and your application favorably considered by this post, we are now prepared to muster you into our ranks. Are you ready to take upon yourself a solemn obligation, which will not interfere with your duty to your God, your country, your neighbor or yourself?" "I am," the recruit responded. The Officer of the Day then returned to the post room to notify the Post Commander of Donelson's decision. The Commander announced, "the recruit will be admitted and received in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty." The group outside the post room began to march into the post room.⁵³

The recruit was then instructed on the values of fraternity, charity, and loyalty, as defined by the GAR. The Officer of the Day announced to the post that the recruit was a good man who had "served faithfully in the Army of the Union during the dark days of

⁵² Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 11-12.

⁵³ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 13-14. Recruits were initiated individually and in groups, depending on how many were accepted. The ritual books make no distinction for different initiation rituals for individuals and groups.

the rebellion" who now sought "to unite with us, his late comrades in arms, in preserving the memory of those hours of trial and danger." The Junior Vice Commander responded, stating that "his object is a noble one. The Grand Army seeks to unite in a full fraternity of interest and feeling all good and true defenders of the Republic." The post then broke out into the song *Auld Lang Syne*. "For auld lang syne, my boys/For auld lang syne/We'll ne'er forget when we first met/In days of auld lang syne."⁵⁴

The Senior Vice Commander stared at Donelson. He proclaimed that in this "noble association," GAR veterans had sought "to manifest their work by the relief of their suffering comrades, and the widows and orphans of those who died that the nation might live. Listen to the words of wisdom!" Following a prayer from the Chaplain, the post sang once again, this time a tune entitled *Charity*: "Claiming all mankind as brothers/Thou dost all alike befriend/Meek and Lowly, pure and holy/Chief among the 'Blessed Three'/Turning sadness into gladness/Heaven-born art thou, Charity!" The Senior Vice Commander then directed the recruit's attention to the Post Commander.

"Recruit of the Grand Army," stated the Post Commander, "to the noble virtues of Fraternity and Charity our great association adds yet another, to which we owe our present existence as a nation, and by the practice of which *we can alone* maintain the integrity and unity of the Republic—the crowning of Loyalty!" A third song erupted from the post. "My country, 'tis of thee/Sweet land of liberty/Of thee I sing: Land where my fathers died/Land of the Pilgrims pride/From every mountainside/Let freedom ring!"⁵⁵ At some point during the ritual, Donelson may have recalled the march back to Indianapolis

⁵⁴ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 14-15.

⁵⁵ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 16-19. Emphasis is mine. Both *Auld Lang Syne* (1788) and *America (My Country Tis' of Thee)* (1831) were written before the Civil War and most likely sung by soldiers during the war.

at war's end and the waving embrace of General John L. Mansfield, who addressed the 9th Indiana Cavalry upon their return home.⁵⁶

The ritual continued. Donelson moved to the front of the altar and the Chaplain prayed for the blessings of Jesus Christ. The Commander again stared at the recruit and announced, "as you stand at this altar . . . I beg you to reflect that this is no unmeaning ceremony but that the obligation you now assume is a pledge which one comrade gives to another, solemnly calling upon God to witness the sincerity of this vow. You will raise your right hand, pronounce your name, and repeat after me the obligation of the order." The recruit promised to keep the ritual secret, that he would help fellow soldiers in need, and that he would defend the Union and its constitution. Later, the recruit was given the official GAR badge, a badge that gave "fraternity, charity, loyalty" a symbolic and tangible meaning. Regarding this badge, the Commander told the recruit, "as the emblem of those principles . . . it is more honorable than any shield. It is emblazoned with a heroism that was patriotic and with a patriotism that was heroic."⁵⁷ For many veterans, receiving this badge was a mark of distinction and achievement the symbolized GAR members as patriotic defenders of the United States. Throughout the GAR's existence, pictures of veterans wearing their badges were commonplace in newspapers, songbooks, and "who's who" lists in county histories throughout the country.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ "On, on, the Boys Come Marching!," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 7, 1865. Indiana Civil War Governor Oliver Morton was also known for greeting many Indiana regiments upon their return from battle. Veteran Theodore Upson recalled that "when we reached Indianapolis the women of the city had a good breakfast ready for us. Govermer [sic] [Oliver] Morton made us a grand good speech of welcome and gave us some excellent advice which I hope we shall all take to heart." See Osborn Winther, ed. *With Sherman to the Sea: The Civil War Diaries and Reminiscences of Theodore F. Upson* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), 180-181; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 11.

⁵⁷ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 20-22, 29.

⁵⁸ For example, see Nelson Monroe, *The Grand Army Button: A Souvenir* (Boston: Rockwell and Church Press, 1893); John V. Hadley, *History of Hendricks County, Indiana: Her People, Industries and Institutions* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowden & Co. Inc., 1914).

As the meeting neared its completion, the Post Commander asked a series of questions. To the Senior Vice Commander he asked, "On what rests the hope of our Republic?"

"One country and one flag!"

"Junior Vice Commander, how may our country be kept undivided and our flag maintained and unsullied?"

"By eternal vigilance, which is the price of liberty."

"Officer of the Day, what should be the doom of all traitors?"

"The Penalty of Treason is death!"

All of the post members, including Donelson, repeated in a loud shout, *"the Penalty of Treason is death!"*

The Post Commander replied, "such be the doom of all traitors, and may God keep you in Fraternity, Charity, and Loyalty. I declare George Thomas Post, Number 17, Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic, closed."⁵⁹

Donelson was now a comrade.

The ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic was a powerful ceremony for those who desired to be initiated into the order, one that perpetuated a sense of identity, kinship, belonging, and solidarity among Union veterans. These sentiments were first established through their military service during the Civil War. Prospective recruits frequently joined the United States military for political and ideological reasons, including beliefs about the illegality of secession, the need to preserve a democratic form

⁵⁹ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 31-32.

of government in America, and the occasional call for the abolition of slavery.⁶⁰ But the "glue" that kept soldiers in a united bond amid four years of terrible war was also based on a foundation that revolved around military ritual and symbolism. As Gerald Prokopowicz argues, soldiers formed "self-aware communities" within their regiments (typically composed of roughly 500-1000 soldiers) that shaped their personal identities. The ritualistic process of mustering into military service—along with the shared experience of training, marching, and campaigning—bound soldiers together, and this sense of solidarity was often expressed in symbols such as regimental or company flags that men were often ready to die to protect.⁶¹

During the war, soldiers would have identified themselves as members of a specific company, regiment, and Army division (such as the Army of the Cumberland or the Army of the Potomac). Those associations would have remained at the very heart of a GAR member's identity after the fighting stopped, and the desire to maintain those personal associations in peacetime inspired the GAR's creation. Yet the GAR also created new associations that identified members as Union military veterans. William Donelson always identified as a member of the 9th Indiana Cavalry following the war's end, but after 1890 his identity would have also been shaped by his association with his local post, the Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic, and his GAR badge.

Equally importantly, the ritual established a heightened sense of awareness within GAR veterans about the importance of remembering an interpretation of the past that

⁶⁰ James McPherson argues that many soldiers for both the Union and Confederate armies enlisted because of their ideological and "patriotic" sentiments. James McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994). For more on why Union soldiers enlisted, see Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011); Chandra Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers, Slavery and The Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Publishing, 2007).

⁶¹ Gerald J. Prokopowicz, *All For the Regiment: The Army of the Ohio, 1861-1862* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 4-5.

portrayed Union soldiers as heroic, Christian defenders of the United States against treason. Without remembering those defenders who died in the Civil War, the fruits of victory would go unrecognized by the rest of society and the nation would fail to meet the promises of God's destiny. For GAR members, forgetting about their dead comrades may have also implied forgetting about the values for which those comrades had died. If such memories were ignored by other civilians who lived through the Civil War and younger generations who learned about the war from their relatives and history books, GAR veterans faced the possibility of having their voices left out of the larger national discourse over America's present and future standing.⁶²

Some historians suggest that the GAR was not particularly interested in remembering the past, or at least those who had died in combat. Most vocal in this regard is James H. Madison, who argues that by 1890 the general feeling among GAR members—especially those in Indiana—could be summarized as such: "Let's talk about the weather, not the war. Let's agree to be silent. Let's forget, together."⁶³ Viewed through the GAR's own ritual books, however, we can conclude that one of the "great objects" of the GAR was actually its collective effort to *remember* the war, including the death and

⁶² Despite Stuart McConnell's claim that the "return of Union veterans to civil life was smooth," the New York *Soldier's Friend* was already complaining by April 1865 that veterans "now throng our streets, cars, boats, hospitals. . . they soon become familiar sights, and we pass them, almost unheeded." The paper later argued that civilians wanted nothing to do with veterans because "they are afraid of us." In 1886, John Logan, one of the founders of the GAR, continued to express fears that Union veterans would be left out of the nation's political discourse as the Confederacy's "old leaders and their successors" rebuilt the "ruined foundations. . . of the Lost Cause" and Democratic party policies. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 4; *Soldier's Friend* and Logan quoted in Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana University Press, 1952), 52-53, 323; see also Marten, "Exempt from the Ordinary Rules of Life," 57-70.

⁶³ James H. Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Pardnership Forgittin'," 1865-1913." *Indiana Magazine of History* 99, No. 3 (September 2003), 202. Madison cites a poem by James Whitcomb Riley entitled "Thoughts on the Late War" to argue that GAR veterans were eager to forget about the horrors of the Civil War. However, such a citation is problematic because Riley was too young to serve during the Civil War, thus making him ineligible for membership in the GAR. If Riley's poem has any value in helping us to understand how people remembered the Civil War, we should remember that it reflects the views of a younger generation of non-combatants, not how the Union veterans themselves remembered the conflict.

suffering associated with it. From the Chaplain's prayer to God for help in preserving the "noble" memories of the dead, to the Officer of the Day's announcement that new recruits had desired "to unite with us . . . in preserving the memory of those hours of trial and danger," remembrance was a central goal of the GAR's mission as an organization.

The ritual also helped to create and establish the GAR's ideology and myths. Ideology, according to Richard Slotkin, refers to "the basic system of concepts, beliefs, and values that [define] a society's way of interpreting its place . . . and the meaning of its history."⁶⁴ Myths refer to stories—composed of language, "keywords," symbols, and icons—that a group and/or society uses to explain and define its origins and ideology.⁶⁵ To be sure, myths should not be equated with falsehoods; certain elements of mythic narratives can in fact contain an element of truth. But those myths are full of contradictions and complex meanings that are often hard to factually verify.

The GAR ritual conveyed a powerful mythic ideology to new recruits in several ways. By invoking the blessings of God, the GAR defined the Union war effort as the one favored by God and Union soldiers as God's messengers.⁶⁶ Such beliefs were reinforced by the symbolic placement of the altar, an American flag, two swords, and a Bible in the

⁶⁴ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century America* (New York: Athenum Publishing, 1992), 5.

⁶⁵ Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 5.

⁶⁶ GAR veterans repeatedly invoked the will of God in explaining their victory. According to George C. Rable, "civil religion in America developed [during and after the war] as a set of beliefs about the relationship between God and the nation that emphasized national virtue, national purpose, and national destiny." However, this national civil religion was contested by advocates of the former Confederacy. One speaker at a United Confederate Veterans (UCV) meeting in 1906 remarked that with the end of the war, "there was born in the South a new religion. They did not think it wrong to worship those ragged [Confederate] idols, and with almost religious zeal they have given from their scanty stores to raise monuments to their defenders." George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 3; Lawrence M. Griffith quoted in Lloyd A. Hunter, "The Immortal Confederacy: Another Look at Lost Cause Religion," in Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 185. See also Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96, no. 1 (Winter 1967), 1-21.

middle of each post room. By singing songs like "America" and arguing that loyalty alone could preserve the integrity of the nation, the GAR gave new recruits the impression that it was their imperative duty to promote and defend the U.S. Constitution and flag after the war. By giving the new recruits badges, the GAR created a tangible boundary between veteran and civilian, man and woman. The badge, according to the ritual book, was inspired by men "in the days of ancient chivalry" who received knighthoods for military service. Such a distinction at that time allegedly showed the rest of society that these knights demonstrated "a brave and gracious manliness before God." Following this believed tradition, GAR veterans wore their badges to demonstrate that they had earned "the best qualities of genuine knighthood" through their wartime efforts.⁶⁷ They had fought and defeated fear, dishonor, and above all, traitors. The GAR badge acted as a symbol to notify the rest of society of these distinctions and accomplishments.⁶⁸

Although the GAR's ritual of 1890 was the one with which most veterans in Indiana were initiated into the organization—it continued to be used verbatim into the 1920s—it was not the first ritual used by the GAR. The ritual as originally intended "bristled with images of secrecy, conspiracy, and mystery," according to Stuart McConnell.⁶⁹ New recruits were placed into the post's anteroom, blindfolded or "hoodwinked," and had a tarnished blanket thrown over their shoulders to mimic "the

⁶⁷ Grand Army of the Republic, *Ritual of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 29.

⁶⁸ In 1891, a law was passed by the Indiana General Assembly that made it illegal for non-members to wear the GAR's uniform or badge. Assistant Adjutant General Richard M. Smock wrote to a Senior Vice Commander in Bently, Indiana, ordering him to "go before some Justice of the Peace file an affidavit against those who are violating its provisions and have them fined." See Richard M. Smock, letter to Lewis B. Schartz, April 12, 1897, in GAR Assistant Adjutant Letter Books, volume 3, MSS Records. Housed at the Indiana State Archives. Indianapolis, IN.

⁶⁹ I found ritual books from 1903, 1907, and 1921 that appear to be verbatim copies of the rituals used in the 1890s. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 95.

condition of a prisoner of war." Towards the end of the ritual, an officer would prepare to fire at the "straggler" before the Officer of the Guard removed the blindfolds and shouted, "Hold! This is a soldier and a brother!"

The original 1866 ritual intended to teach new recruits a lesson in comradeship: without aid and support from fellow soldiers, the veteran's well-being was imperiled. Rather than focusing on the glory of victory, the GAR's original ritual and constitution instead emphasized uncertainty. Without the GAR, the nation would forget about its veterans and their sacrifices.⁷⁰ Even worse, the nation could possibly enter into a second Civil War. Ritual items like blindfolds and blankets were intended to reinforce these thoughts and provoke memories within the veteran of "the dark, gloomy days, months and years of the rebellion."⁷¹ Indiana GAR member Oliver Morris Wilson was a vocal advocate of the first ritual and constitution and believed its blending of fear, uncertainty, and political advocacy for Republican politicians inspired GAR members and saved the country. In a history of the GAR's origins, Wilson stated, "I say with pride and a satisfied conscience—not boastingly—that the organization of the Grand Army of the Republic in Indiana in 1866 and 1868 did more for the security of peace and good government throughout the Nation than has ever since been done by it."⁷² While certainly an overstatement, Wilson's words nonetheless convey the power and influence the GAR had on the thinking of early members from Indiana.

⁷⁰ GAR members in the late 1860s demonstrated great concern about the reluctance of the federal and state governments to provide financial aid to soldiers and their families. Six resolutions were passed by the GAR at their first national "Encampment" in Indianapolis in 1866. Three of these resolutions concerned veteran benefits. See also "Grand Army of the Republic: National Convention at Indianapolis, Ind.," *New York Times*, November 22, 1866.

⁷¹ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 93-103; Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 91-93.

⁷² Oliver Morris Wilson, *The Grand Army of the Republic Under its First Constitution and Ritual: Its Birth and Organization*. (Kansas City, Missouri: Franklin Hudson Publishing Co., 1905), 68.

The partisanship of the GAR was particularly acute during the initial postwar period. Six resolutions outlining the political initiatives of the organization were passed at the first national meeting of GAR veterans in Indianapolis in 1866. Included in these resolutions were calls for federal jobs for Union veterans, a pledge to use "all power and influence" to protect African Americans—especially those who served for the United States during the war—from "persecutions by force and persecutions under color of law," and a declaration of the GAR's purposes. This declaration stated that the fraternal organization "stands pledged to crush active treason, to advance and support actively loyalty . . . and vindicate at all times the full and complete rights of every loyal American citizen."⁷³ The meaning of "active treason," in the eyes of many GAR members, was best defined by the actions of President Andrew Johnson and his mostly Democratic supporters, who advocated for the quick return of the former Confederate states to their prewar political status.⁷⁴ By letting former Confederates return to power, Johnson's lenient policies put the whole nation in danger of collapse and civil war, according to the GAR.

Not all Union veterans shared these sentiments in 1866. That year, a separate convention of the Soldiers and Sailors Union was held in Cleveland. Attended by conservative Democrats such as Generals George Custer and John McClelland, these

⁷³ "Grand Army of the Republic," *New York Times*.

⁷⁴ Radical Republicans in Congress rejected President Andrew Johnson's Reconstruction plan, which called for a quick readmission of former Confederate states into the Union. This--combined with a belief that suffrage rights for newly emancipated African Americans should be decided by the states and not the federal government--alarmed Radical Republicans who feared that the nation's future would be largely shaped by the "tender mercies of the rebels" who would vote themselves back into political power. The Indiana GAR was formed by Governor Oliver Morton, Major General R.S. Foster, and Major Oliver Morris Wilson, all prominent Republicans. Furthermore, General Foster managed to secure the Indiana State Capitol's Senate Chambers for GAR initiation ceremonies in 1866. See Hans L. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, 1989), 214-254; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1988), 176-227; Bruce E. Baker and Brian Kelly, eds., *After Slavery: Race, Labor, and Citizenship in the Reconstruction South* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2013).

veterans preached reconciliation with former Confederates. General John E. Wool argued that no further protection of African Americans was necessary since the "slaves had been declared free by an amendment of the Constitution." In Wool's opinion, the threat of another civil war lay with "abolition Radicals" who "with a thirst for blood and plunder, are again ready to invade the Southern State [sic] and lay waste." Democratic Indiana General James R. Slack warned veterans not to join the GAR, which had organized for allegedly "disloyal purposes," while another speaker argued that he had not fought for political equality between whites and blacks.⁷⁵ Major revisions were later made to the ritual in 1869, suggesting the GAR sought reconciliation with conservative Union veterans who rejected the initial call to join the fraternity.

Interest in the GAR declined following the elections of 1866. According to historian Mary R. Dearing, "Thousands of veterans, unable to find employment and unsettled about their future, had regarded the organization as a means of obtaining jobs," while those who were able to secure a living for themselves, "allowed their names to be dropped from the rolls."⁷⁶ In both instances, the GAR was viewed as a means for achieving political and economic ends. GAR leadership used the organization to promote their political aspirations, while rank-and-file members hoped to receive financial aid and jobs. Whether or not veterans were able to find employment in 1866, it appears as if some viewed the GAR as a organization temporarily established for the elections that year and nothing else.

⁷⁵ "The Cleveland Convention," *New York Times*, September 18, 1866; "The Cleveland Convention: General Gordan Granger Elected President," *New York Times*, September 19, 1866. "General Heath's" comments about blacks were apparently "frowned down" by the rest of the convention, other convention speeches in the *New York Times* suggest that extending political equality to African Americans was not a top priority for the leadership of the Soldiers and Sailors Union.

⁷⁶ Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 128.

To spur interest and boost membership in the GAR after 1869, a grade system more akin to a fraternal organization like the Masons or Odd Fellows was implemented, with members being placed in three separate levels of membership: "Recruit," "Soldier," and "Veteran." The ritual ceremony doubled in length and only "Veterans" were allowed to attend state and national meetings, which they called Encampments.⁷⁷ These changes proved to be disastrous for the GAR, especially in Indiana. Many members criticized the implementation of graded ranks that had nothing to do with the actual ranks of soldiers during the Civil War. Oliver Morris Wilson considered this "ritual business" a trivialization of the veteran and his memories of the war. For Wilson, the organization relegated its members to "play soldiers" whose authentic memories of the war and identity as soldiers were now corrupted by silly fraternal rituals that had nothing to do with the experience of war.⁷⁸

Wilson also criticized the loss of political partisanship that had marked the GAR's beginnings. As a Radical Republican, "I stood close to [Governor Oliver P.] Morton and the national leaders in 1866 and 1868," Wilson proclaimed. For him, the Union military had "liberated [the nation] from a slave oligarchy, and united . . . a gigantic nationality[.] What is the soldier's life? Shall he pose for and pretend to be what he is not--a hypocrite?"⁷⁹ Wilson was not alone in these sentiments. In 1871 the grade system was

⁷⁷ Grand Army of the Republic, *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Grand Army of the Republic as Revised and Adopted in National Convention, Cincinnati, Ohio, May 12 and 13, 1869* (Washington, DC: Gibson Brothers Publishing, 1869), 2-4; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 97-99.

⁷⁸ Wilson, *The Grand Army of the Republic Under Its First Constitution and Ritual*, 182.

⁷⁹ Grand Army of the Republic, *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 29; Wilson, *The Grand Army of the Republic Under Its First Constitution and Ritual*, 68. Wilson may have been particularly offended by these changes because he had helped oversee the order's initial growth by recruiting veterans at the Pittsburg Soldiers' and Sailors' Convention on September 25, 1866. See Wilson, *The Grand Army of the Republic Under Its First Constitution and Ritual*, 27-37.

abandoned by the GAR, but it was too late for the Department of Indiana. The organization ceased to function within the Hoosier state, not reorganizing until 1879.⁸⁰

Robert Beath, a GAR member from Pennsylvania who became the self-appointed historian of the organization, had been an ardent supporter of the grade system. "Some change seemed absolutely necessary to maintain the membership and stimulate recruiting," he believed. To Beath, it seemed logical to adopt more fraternal ceremonies in the ritual because "other societies had different systems of Degrees, and it was believed that the introduction of some such system was essential to the Grand Army."⁸¹ While these beliefs turned out to be mistaken, Beath's observations of other fraternal societies are perceptive. Despite the GAR's initial struggles in the 1860s and 1870s, fraternalism throughout the United States was rapidly increasing. From roughly 1870-1910, almost half of the American male population participated in some sort of fraternal activity in lodges, service clubs, and/or leisure organizations. Around the time of the GAR's peak membership in 1890, three orders—the Masons, the Odd Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias—reported their national membership at around 500,000 members.⁸²

Sociologist Jason Kaufman and historian Mark C. Carnes suggest that several factors were responsible for this "golden age of fraternity," including "fancy uniforms," male camaraderie, health and life insurance benefits, and clubhouses where members

⁸⁰ In 1900, Indiana GAR leadership appointed a committee to write a short history of the Indiana GAR. While acknowledging its demise in 1871, the committee refused to clarify on the causes of its fall. "It is not our purpose to enter into the history or into a discussion of the causes of its death in this report." See Indiana, *Twenty-Second* (1901), 174. For more info on the evolving nature of the GAR's ritual, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 102-103.

⁸¹ Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1888), 100.

⁸² Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good? American Civic Life and the Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 21; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 85. Some GAR members were in multiple fraternal associations. John P. Hart--just like William J. Donelson--was initiated into the George Thomas Post of the GAR in 1890, but he was also a member of the Mystic Tie Lodge and the Scottish Rite. See "Civil War Veteran Dies at Home Here," *Indianapolis Star*, May 11, 1931.

could indulge in copious amounts of alcohol away from the eyes of local temperance societies.⁸³ Each of these factors applies with regards to the Indiana GAR. As already mentioned, the pageantry of GAR uniforms—especially their badges—and the benefits of fraternity, charity, and loyalty played crucial roles in the creation of the GAR member's identity as a veteran. So did insurance benefits and drinking.

The George H. Thomas Post frequently gave monetary donations to members who were in distress, while the Nelson Trusler Post in Winchester stipulated in their rulebook that "all cases of sickness or distress" would lead to a visit from one or more members of the post within twelve hours of the reported problem. If deemed necessary, financial aid was sometimes awarded to those in need.⁸⁴ It is also important to remember that in an age before modern health insurance benefits, GAR gatherings were often the only opportunities for veterans to receive medical care. Members like Dr. Warren King of Greenfield were highly valued within the order for their willingness to examine sick veterans. In 1905, King announced at the Indiana Encampment that he had attended the state and national Encampments the year before "prepared to administer to those who might need my services as physician and surgeon," and that he "gave to all who needed the same, without charge."⁸⁵

While the drinking culture of the GAR is hard to clearly define, we know that alcohol consumption did take place at post gatherings, and that the leadership within the Department of Indiana had many concerns about the consequences of excessive drinking.

⁸³ Jason Kaufman, *For the Common Good?*, 21-22; Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 32-36. Kaufman and Carnes both point out, however, that some fraternal organizations were formed specifically to promote temperance.

⁸⁴ Grand Army of the Republic, "Minute Books of the George H. Thomas Post, No. 17," 30, 215; Grand Army of the Republic, *By-Laws and Rules of Order of Nelson Trusler Post, No. 60, Department of Indiana, G.A.R.* (Winchester, Indiana: Journal Natural Gas [sic], 1892), 9. Found at Indiana State Library.

⁸⁵ Indiana, *Twenty-Sixth* (1905), 80.

The Assistant Adjutant General's letter books contain many letters to post commanders warning them of disciplinary action for failing to control the drinking habits of members. One letter to James M. Leatherman, Commander of Robert Sage Post 581 in New Albany, reminded him that "the G.A.R. is not organized for the purpose of drunkenness and debauchery or for conduct unbecoming that of gentlemen on any occasion." Such behavior had given the impression to members and non-members in the area that the post was becoming "a disgrace to the G.A.R.," and that a visit to the post by the Assistant Adjutant General may be in order.⁸⁶

The topic of drinking was also discussed at state Encampment meetings, albeit rarely. For instance, in 1893, Department Commander Joseph P. Cheadle remarked that "we can do no less than to see to it that every habitual drunkard pensioned comrade in this department *has a guardian appointed*, so that his pension can go to the purpose for which it is granted."⁸⁷ The health and well being of alcoholic members in the GAR was a serious worry to many, but Cheadle's comments suggest that leadership also had an acute concern for the organization's public image. The GAR had fought hard for the Dependent Pension Bill of 1890; if veterans were seen drinking to excess, begging on street corners,

⁸⁶ Richard M. Smock, letter to James M. Leatherman, February 24, 1896, GAR AAG letter books, volume 1, MSS Records, Indiana State Archives. Efforts to correct the drinking problems at Post 581 may have failed, as the post disbanded two years later in 1898. The Assistant Adjutant General acted as a press secretary and assistant to the Department Commander. He traveled the state inspecting posts and was in charge of circulating all "General Orders" issued by the Department Commander. If post members wanted to contact Department headquarters (which were housed at the Indiana State House) with their grievances, they would have addressed them to the Assistant Adjutant General.

⁸⁷ Indiana, *Fourteenth* (1893), 107. Emphasis mine. Beer consumption rose to 20.2 gallons per person in 1915, a rise from 3.4 gallons per person in 1865; Kaufman, *For the Common Good?*, 22. Also see Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, 23-29, for liquor consumption by Freemasons and Odd Fellows in the early nineteenth century.

and engaging in violence, pension benefits would be seen as unnecessary benefits that gave irresponsible veterans drinking money on the public dime.⁸⁸

Although the GAR shared many activities with other fraternal orders during the "golden age of fraternity," it differed from these organizations in two distinct ways. In many fraternal orders, membership requirements were fairly broad and normally open to all men of good repute who sought fraternity. For GAR members, however, membership was strictly limited to those who had fought for the Union and had shared in the experience of Civil War combat. In later years the GAR would even segregate itself from veterans of other American wars, including the Spanish-American War and World War I. A GAR almanac from 1880 explained that the organization was founded to "[bind] together in a bond of union those who responded to the call of the nation, for defenders of her ancient faith." They had saved the Union "from the attacks of rebels and traitors . . . whose purpose it was to found an effete despotism, based on the perpetual slavery of millions of their fellow men."⁸⁹ While GAR members would lend their support to the veterans of later wars, saving the country and freeing the slaves were distinctions strictly limited to and jealously protected by the GAR.

The GAR ritual also played a different function than the ritual of other fraternal associations. Many of these groups spent almost all of their time and money on their exacting, elaborate rituals, rarely engaging in any events beyond the lodge. According to historian Mark C. Carnes, "the founders of fraternal groups emphasized ritual from the outset and added other activities almost by chance." Sociologist Emile Durkheim

⁸⁸ For example, James Marten notes that in the initial aftermath of the Civil War, "prison officials in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin reported that between 50 and 90 percent of all inmates were discharged soldiers." See Marten, *Sing Not War*, 57.

⁸⁹ Kaufman, *For the Common Good*, 19-20; Metcalf, *Grand Army of the Republic Almanac for 1880*, 24.

attributed this emphasis on ritual practices to prevailing theories and concerns about class, urbanization, and industrialization during the Gilded Age, but historian Lynn Dumenil and Carnes argue that the secret ritual separated men from the outside world while strengthening the bonds between the "brothers" of the lodge.⁹⁰ While the ritual was important in educating new recruits about the GAR's values and defining who was allowed to be a member, it was merely one activity in a complex web of events that sought to give meaning to the Unionist memories of the Civil War. Large public displays were also integral to the GAR, whose members were concerned with presenting themselves as "patriotic" leaders who represented ideals of "manhood" and "the highest type of citizenship" in their local communities.

Our memories of the past are subjective. They are constructs that we structure through language, myths, ideas, observations, hindsight, shared experiences, and symbols.⁹¹ Since the ability to remember key events in our life is limited, we create memory "maps" that attempt to help us better preserve our memories. As James Fentress and Chris Wickham explain, "all societies, even the most primitive, possess ways and techniques of preserving their 'memory of things': the variety is extraordinary." These memory techniques are devised to generate "a constructed or projected image, referring to and bearing information about something outside itself."⁹² Through a wide range of public events, the GAR attempted to construct an image of the past not only for themselves, but for society as a whole. From 1880 to 1949, children in Indiana grew up in

⁹⁰ Carnes' interpretation is indebted, by his account, to Durkheim's work on class, urbanization, and fraternalism. See Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, 3-13.

⁹¹ James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 7.

⁹² Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 17.

a culture that was marked by the presence of GAR veterans at many civic celebrations, commemorations, and dedications.

The most popular event on the calendars of many Hoosier GAR members was the annual Encampment. Every year GAR members met in both national and state Encampments, which normally lasted two or three days.⁹³ Most of the Indiana state Encampments occurred in May, while the national Encampments usually occurred in either August or September. Encampments were split into three distinct activities: a closed meeting for the veterans, the parade, and the "camp fire."⁹⁴

The closed, members-only meeting at the beginning of the Encampment served several purposes. At state Encampments, these meetings provided an opportunity for veterans from all parts of Indiana to reunite and be formally introduced to the host city.⁹⁵ These gatherings also provided a space for Indiana GAR leadership to report on the state of the organization, advocate for politically beneficial legislation, and construct a mythic narrative of the Civil War establishing Union victory as a giant step forward for American civilization. Historian Barbara A. Gannon describes this interpretation of the Civil War as the "Won Cause." According to Gannon, GAR veterans "remembered that

⁹³ For a list of Encampment dates for the Department of Indiana, see Northcott, *Indiana Civil War Veterans*, 377. For the national Encampment dates, see Library of Congress, "The Grand Army of the Republic and Kindred Societies." Accessed June 2, 2013.

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/main/gar/national/natlist.html>

⁹⁴ I will spend the majority of this following discussion analyzing the state Encampments for the Department of Indiana.

⁹⁵ Twenty-eight different cities in Indiana hosted a state Encampment from 1880-1948. Indianapolis hosted the most (sixteen). Fort Wayne (five), Elkhart (four), and Muncie (four) were next in total. Spreading the annual Encampment to various cities allowed veterans from different parts of the state to have an Encampment close to where they lived. It also helped to promote the business interests of these cities, which stood to profit handsomely from the thousands of people who traveled to see the GAR veterans. A list of Encampment cities is in Northcott, *Indiana Civil War Veterans*, 377.

the war had ultimately both freed the slaves and preserved the Union" arguing as much to public audiences in the years after the war.⁹⁶

The department meeting records of the GAR—both state and national—provide significant insights for scholars wanting to better understand the ways GAR members remembered the Civil War. Several examples from various state Encampment records suggest that the Won Cause captivated the minds of Indiana GAR members. In 1889, National Commander-in-Chief William Warner argued, "your comrades have [allowed] what was in the recent past the great American desert . . . to bud and blossom as the rose . . . the Indian, the buffalo, and the great American desert have disappeared, and in their places have sprung up villages, cities, school homes, and church spires."⁹⁷ Similarly, Marmaduke B. Bowen, President of the Commercial Club of Louisville, Kentucky, gave thanks to the Indiana GAR and God for preserving an undivided country "whose children are advancing in contentment . . . to the peaceful solution of all governmental problems and to the upbuilding of a perfect Republic."⁹⁸ If asked to return to American society before 1861, Past Department Commander James S. Dodge responded that he would not bring back one ounce of pain or a dead soldier's life to abandon "this present ideal of civilization and freedom."⁹⁹ In each of these statements, speakers placed the responsibility for national advancement on the shoulders of the Union soldier.

Indiana GAR veterans were also vocal about what they had fought for: union *and* emancipation. In 1892, Comrade Charles A. Zollinger, the Mayor of Fort Wayne, asserted that the "self-sacrifice" of Union soldiers had "built the Republic anew and on

⁹⁶ 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), 7, 146-154.

⁹⁷ Indiana, *Tenth* (1889), 116-117.

⁹⁸ Indiana, *Fifteenth*, (1894), 111-114.

⁹⁹ Indiana, *Twenty-Fifth* (1904), 12.

the foundation of liberty and equality. The Declaration of Independence, through their efforts, *ceased to be theoretical and became practical*. The Constitution itself was amended and reformed, and became in fact a guarantee of human rights." Additionally, Zollinger asserted that "the home of the black man [is] as secure from molestation as that of the white man."¹⁰⁰

Most white GAR members, contrary to what several historians have asserted, did not "forget" about emancipation in the years after the war.¹⁰¹ Rather, emancipation represented a landmark towards fulfilling America's destiny. Barbara Gannon argues that for many veterans, "only a united nation of free men could be a model of freedom to the rest of the world, in a way that a nation that had slavery could not."¹⁰² Other speakers in the Indiana GAR invoked memories of national unification and emancipation, proving that Zollinger's claims were not isolated to himself. For example, James S. Dodge argued that GAR veterans had helped to "carry forward the great claim of individual liberty and national freedom," while former Indiana State Attorney General and 1921 GAR national Commander William A. Ketcham proclaimed that his comrades had "restored a nation and wiped out the stain of slavery." Orlando Somers, another Indiana veteran who served as the GAR's national Commander in 1918, announced at that year's state Encampment meeting that "the book of the Grand Army of the Republic will be eloquent in the story of 'A REPUBLIC SAVED AND A RACE REDEEMED FROM BONDAGE.' This will be

¹⁰⁰ Indiana, *Thirteenth* (1892), 6. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰¹ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 1-12, 194-195; Cecilia O'Leary, "'American All': Reforging a National Brotherhood, 1874-1917." *History Today* 43 (October 1994), 23-24; Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Partnership Forgittin'," 199-203, 211-212, 223.

¹⁰² Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 164-165.

our history and our glory."¹⁰³ While the process of remembering the Civil War involved a range of memories, emancipation was strongly linked to national unification in the minds of many GAR members, although memories of the latter may have been vocalized by members more frequently than the former.¹⁰⁴

Although many Indiana GAR members remembered their role in emancipation, we should remember that white GAR members were not civil rights crusaders. Indiana members rarely expressed outrage over Jim Crow laws that disenfranchised blacks in the South following the end of Reconstruction in 1877, nor did they speak out against the segregation of hotels, restaurants, and transportation facilities in Indiana.¹⁰⁵ In fact, white Hoosier veterans sometimes took measures against African Americans, as did soldiers returning to Warrick County in 1865 who led a movement to expel all blacks from the county. Furthermore, a history of Washington County written in 1916 celebrated the contributions of its white soldiery during the war while boasting that "for several decades . . . no colored man or woman [has] lived within her borders," suggesting that they might

¹⁰³ Indiana, *Twenty-Fifth* (1904), 12; Indiana, *Twenty-Ninth* (1908), 95-96; Indiana, *Thirty-Ninth* (1918), 138. Ketcham served as Attorney General from 1894-1898. All of these statements challenge Stuart McConnell's argument that GAR veterans embraced a "rhetoric of preservation." For the GAR, according to McConnell, "the grand achievement of the Northern armies had been to rescue the indivisible nation as it had existed before 'the late unpleasantness'...The war was a mission accomplished; the nation, something maintained intact rather than something greatly changed." The Department of Indiana Encampment records, however, suggest that GAR veteran understood and embraced at least some of the changes wrought by the war. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 181-182.

¹⁰⁴ Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2011), 202-208. Etcheson argues that African American veterans in Greencastle like Wyatt James "would find that the postwar commemorations of the Civil War—though not entirely excluding black veterans—gave less precedence to the emancipationist memory of the conflict than to other aspects of its legacy."

¹⁰⁵ The *American Tribune*, a GAR organ published in Indianapolis, did speak out against disenfranchisement and lynchings in the South, but not Indiana. See "Too Much Liberty," *American Tribune*, June 13, 1890; [untitled editorial], *American Tribune*, August 1, 1890; [untitled editorial], *American Tribune*, December 5, 1890.

have been purged from the area by white residents.¹⁰⁶ It appears that for some Indiana veterans, emancipation represented an end goal that required no further political action from themselves or the state and federal governments after the war. Zollinger's claim at the 1892 meeting that African Americans were "safe from molestation" two years after the Lodge Bill failed to pass Congress—a bill that would have allowed for federal oversight in congressional elections to ensure that the voting rights of all males was protected, regardless of color—suggests that some leaders in the Indiana GAR accepted Congress's negligence in ensuring fair elections in the South and perhaps even saw the measure as unnecessary.¹⁰⁷

The GAR's closed meetings that expounded these Won Cause views were normally split into two sessions, one in the morning and the other in the late afternoon following the parade. Throughout the day, some GAR members also met in regimental reunions.¹⁰⁸ For example, the *Indianapolis Journal* reported ten different reunions at the 1900 Encampment in Indianapolis. These included a meeting of the 84th Indiana at the Indiana State House, the 3rd Indiana Cavalry at the Marion County Courthouse, and the Ohio Veteran's Association (composed of Ohio veterans who moved to Indiana after the war) at the George H. Thomas Post Hall on East Market Street.¹⁰⁹ For many veterans, such reunions were one of the few opportunities in which to visit with men who had

¹⁰⁶ Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900*. 2nd Edition. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1985), 208, 225; Warder W. Stevens, *Centennial History of Washington County, Indiana: Its People, Industries and Institutions* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, Inc., 1916), 282, 286-331. See also Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 179.

¹⁰⁷ For more information on the Lodge Bill, see Charles W. Calhoun, *From Bloody Shirt to Full Dinner Pail: The Transformation of Politics and Governance in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2010), 129-142.

¹⁰⁸ To be sure, some regimental reunions took place outside the purview of the GAR. Nevertheless, the Encampment provided an occasion in which to hold many of these gatherings.

¹⁰⁹ "To-Day's Events," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 16, 1900.

shared similar experiences of pain, suffering, and death during the war. Perhaps these reunions acted as a support group that helped make sense of those memories.

In the afternoon, GAR members participated in the annual parade, an event that was marked on the calendars of tens of thousands of Hoosiers. While attendance records of Encampments do not exist, newspaper accounts suggest that these parades were extremely popular well into the twentieth century. Roughly 20,000 people attended the 1899 Encampment in Terre Haute, while 10,000 people attended the 1914 Encampment in Indianapolis. Even after World War I, 3,000 people attended the 1921 State Encampment in New Castle.¹¹⁰ For GAR members, the parade represented a moment in which to receive recognition from the broader public for their military service.

Veterans and local leaders believed that the experience of seeing Civil War veterans in uniform would inspire younger generations. As the Mayor of Terre Haute described it in 1910, "your presence here will sow the seed of patriotism for a future harvest."¹¹¹ At the 1900 Encampment, children from two high schools and grade schools numbers 2-10 from Indianapolis marched in the parade to the nearly-completed Soldiers' and Sailors' monument, while another 3,000 students watched the parade from the monument plaza. That year, Comrade George W. Sloan, a member of the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners, used "forcible language" to convince the Board to cancel classes for the day. The board later ordered that "any pupil failing to be present at the monument this afternoon be counted as absent from school."¹¹² In reality, school was

¹¹⁰ "Sham Battle," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 24, 1899; "Gives Welcome to the G.A.R. Today," *Indianapolis Star*, May 6, 1914; "Veterans of '61 Open Meeting," *Indianapolis Star*, May 11, 1921.

¹¹¹ Indiana, *Thirty-First* (1910), 4; Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 109.

¹¹² "School Children," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 16, 1900; After the Civil War, Sloan became a prominent pharmacist in Indianapolis who was also involved in Freemasonry. See *Biographical and Historical Souvenir for the counties of Clark, Crawford, Harrison, Floyd, Jefferson, Jennings, Scott and Washington*,

still in session for Indianapolis students that day. The "classroom" became the parade line, while the lessons of the day included the remembrance of Indiana Civil War soldiers and the promotion of civic pride, patriotism, and the Won Cause.

Throughout the GAR's history, accounts of the "grand parade" shifted between depictions of GAR members as "pathetic" figures who struggled to keep up with the march, and strong, honorable veterans who showed great attention to army tactics even as they continued to age. Regarding the former, the Indianapolis-based veterans' paper *American Tribune* made a call to end the grand parade after only one-third of the veterans who attended the 1893 national Encampment could complete the march, while the *Indianapolis Journal* in 1900 made note of "two crippled veterans, one hobbling along as best he could, with his left leg encased in a steel framework, the other making wonderful progress with a pair of crutches."¹¹³ Historian David W. Blight has even suggested that the grand parade was a lackluster affair compared to the civic events arranged by former Confederates: "When it came to commemorating the war, Southerners seemed to have more passion and more fun."¹¹⁴ More often, however, contemporary depictions of the grand parade focused on the GAR's dignified presence.

Several descriptions of the Grand Parade, however, portray the event as a festive experience. In 1890, the parade made its way to the Indiana State House, where "bands and drum corps" were stationed around the rotunda as the public greeted GAR national Commander Russell Alger. In 1897, Governor James A. Mount and General Lew

Indiana. (Chicago: John M. Gresham & Company, 1889), 62-63; *The Indianapolis Sentinel Almanac for 1900* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Sentinel Company, 1900), 20, 54.

¹¹³ *American Tribune*, September 14, 1893; "A Big Parade," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1900.

¹¹⁴ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 275. Blight relied on the accounts of Albert Morton, a Southerner who attended both GAR and UCV (United Confederate Veterans) ceremonies, to make this interpretation. Having not consulted any accounts of the GAR parade from Northerners or GAR members, Blight's conclusion is questionable.

Wallace reviewed the veterans in Richmond in what was described as "one of the finest parades the Department of Indiana has ever made." In 1900, veterans "marched proudly" through the streets of Indianapolis as "every window in every building along the line of march was filled with people" who were eager to witness every detail of the "magnificent spectacle." That same year there was a drum corps of children organized by the local African American GAR post—Martin Delany Post 70—that "drew to itself considerable attention." The Delany post was particularly popular at GAR parades, and they continued to be featured at Encampments well into the World War I era.¹¹⁵

The grand parade conveyed a visual and auditory expression of military grandeur that placed Indiana's veterans on public display, perhaps in a manner similar to that of a museum artifact. A specific image of GAR members was created through the parade ritual, one that acted as a representation of a "higher truth" of the past and a reminder of the righteousness of the Won Cause.¹¹⁶ Kokomo politician Warren Vorhees put it best when he explained that the GAR was not composed of "survivors of the Civil War only," but "survivors and the descendants of every heroic host which ever gathered around an uplifted standard . . . survivors of all wars and of all marching armies."¹¹⁷ The sight of GAR veterans, their uniforms, and Civil War weaponry, along with the sounds of cheers and martial music, was designed to evoke strong emotions from audience members anxious to see the men who had saved the Union. Some were even moved to tears, as were parents of young children upon "the greeting between the passing [GAR veterans]

¹¹⁵ "Coming Together of Veterans," *Indianapolis Journal*, March 10, 1890; "On the March Again," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 13, 1897; "A Big Parade," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1900; "Notes on Parade," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1900; Indiana, *Thirty-Eighth* (1917), 4-5.

¹¹⁶ Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 50.

¹¹⁷ Indiana, *Twenty-Ninth* (1908), 4.

and the incoming generation" in 1914.¹¹⁸ Through the grand parade, GAR members attempted to present themselves as the standard-bearers of honor, bravery, and manhood. After the parade the most important event of the Encampment took place: the evening "campfire."

The GAR campfire offered an opportunity for audience members to see Civil War veterans in person and hear them speak about their war experiences. Despite its name, these events rarely took place outside, instead taking place inside halls or theaters packed with thousands of people. Speeches, poems, and songs dominated these events, "embracing the tragedy, romance, comedy, humor, and pathos in the varied experiences of army life," according to one author.¹¹⁹ Such activities sought to convey stories of life as a Union soldier during the Civil War to an audience of young people, adult civilians, and veterans of later wars whose experiences in the military were shaped by the "voluntary sacrifice" of those who had fought to preserve the United States.¹²⁰

By opening these campfires to the public, the GAR attempted to establish itself as the curator and gatekeeper of the authentic memories of the Civil War. As Richard Slotkin explains, "[every] culture has its heritage of lore." Myths, according to Slotkin, are spread and "preserved for use by designated lore-masters, story-tellers, or historians and [are] transmitted by them to the 'public'" through oral or literary prose.¹²¹ By combining these narratives with the symbolic imagery of GAR badges and uniforms, portraits of Union military and political leaders, and American flags throughout the

¹¹⁸ "Many Emotions Stir Crowds as Veterans March," *Indianapolis Star*, May 8, 1914.

¹¹⁹ Washington Davis, *Camp-Fire Chats of the Civil War; Being the Incident, Adventure and Wayside Exploit of the Bivouac and Battle Field, as Related by Veteran Soldiers Themselves* (Lansing, MI: P.A. Stone & Co., 1889).

¹²⁰ Davis, *Camp-Fire Chats of the Civil War*, viii.

¹²¹ Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 7.

performance hall, GAR members created campfire stories to present images of the past that would connect, clarify, and interpret events from the past. These stories attempted to provide audience members clear explanations for the Civil War's place in American history and its influence on contemporary society. As historians James Fentress and Chris Wickham argue, all mythic stories of the past provide us with "explanations which underlie our predispositions to interpret reality in the ways we do."¹²² Seen in this light, we can conclude that the GAR campfire presented itself as a place to create mythic narratives of the Civil War that gave meaning and order to the past not only for audience members, but GAR members as well.

GAR campfires took place year round, not just at Encampments. When not at the Encampment, these campfires typically consisted of one local post inviting another to visit its post headquarters. According to Stuart McConnell, "visitors participated in a program that might include such activities as 'an old-time army meal' (coffee, hardtack, beans), clay-pipe smoking, drinking, war stories, the blowing of army calls on a bugle, and the singing of war songs."¹²³ In 1881, a campfire in Lafayette, Indiana, included "drills, dress parades, camp-fire chats, songs, etc.," and offered "rations and tents furnished free to soldiers and sailors who will go into camp and comply with the discipline of the same." These outdoor elements were included in many campfires during the 1880s, but as GAR members continued to age, the number of instances in which members "lived in camp" during the event decreased.¹²⁴

During the Indiana GAR's existence, sixteen state Encampments were held in Indianapolis, with Tomlinson Hall frequently chosen as the site for the evening campfire.

¹²² Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, 50-51.

¹²³ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 175.

¹²⁴ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 177.

In 1890, the hall, according to the *Indianapolis Journal*, was decorated with "flags and banners bearing appropriate mottos and inscriptions," GAR badges, and sheets of bunting. "Thousands of handkerchiefs were waved" to salute Indiana Republican Governor and Comrade Alvin P. Hovey, while National Commander-in-Chief Russell Alger made a speech calling for more Union veterans to join the GAR, arguing that "they should join us" so that they could stand united in "unbroken ranks."¹²⁵ Music was provided by the Indiana Sailors' and Soldiers' Childrens' home (located in Knightstown) and the Meridian Street Church choir.¹²⁶ Popular wartime songs such as "Battle Cry of Freedom," "Battle Hymn of the Republic," and "Marching Through Georgia" would have undoubtedly been played at these campfires. In 1900, the campfire was again held in Indianapolis at Roberts Park Church as the famous poet James Whitcomb Riley (whose father had fought in the Civil War) recited "Old Glory." Deputy State Auditor Frank Martin, a former commander of the Sons of (Union) Veterans, remarked that "in 1861 these soldiers of the Grand Army of the Republic found the colored man a slave, but the veterans of 1865 found those slaves free men. These men fulfilled the destiny of the hour."¹²⁷ Reminding audiences of the Won Cause—the fight to unify the nation and end slavery—was a major theme of the GAR campfire.

Yet the campfires also downplayed the horrors of war and perhaps even trivialized the experience of military service. While speeches advocating for the Won Cause were prevalent at campfires, the amount of bloodshed, suffering, and death that were required to achieve the goals implicit in the Won Cause were rarely mentioned. At

¹²⁵ This comment may be reflective of the fact that the GAR hewed closely to the Republican party throughout its history. Veterans who aligned themselves with the Democrat party may have avoided joining the GAR.

¹²⁶ "The Camp-Fire," *Indianapolis Journal*, March 12, 1890.

¹²⁷ "The Campfires," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1900.

that same 1900 campfire, the *Indianapolis Journal* remarked that Samuel Merrill, a Hoosier native and veteran now visiting from California, "related a number of humorous anecdotes of his experiences in war which convulsed the audience with laughter." At another campfire, a veteran of the 100th Indiana reflected on an incident at New Hope Church, Georgia. He remarked that the 100th wanted to "give the Johnnies a little surprise," and when several regiments opened fire on their enemies, the Confederates "quickly turned and sought cover, enraged beyond expression, each cursing and wearing to the full extent of his blasphemous vocabulary." The Indiana veteran then recalled one Confederate shouting, "you think you're mighty smart, but it's only another one of your darned Yankee nutmeg tricks."¹²⁸ Many anecdotal tales like these were told at campfires around the country. While in most instances such stories cannot be verified by historians, they gave the impression at the time that the Civil War was innocent rabble rousing between brothers in a temporary disagreement with few consequences for either side.¹²⁹

Union veterans were adamant that their side had been right and made sure to reinforce that belief upon the audiences of the campfire. Yet campfire stories like the one told by the veteran of the 100th Indiana downplayed the fact that "giving the Johnnies a surprise" meant killing men who were friends, sons, husbands, and fathers to loved ones at home. Likewise, cries of "Yankee nutmeg tricks" would have been drowned out by bloodcurdling screams, vicious gunfire, and booming cannonade. According to Stuart McConnell, as the experiences of the Civil War receded further into the depths of time,

¹²⁸ "The Campfires," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 17, 1900; Davis, *Camp-fire Chats of the Civil War*, 56-57.

¹²⁹ Thomas A. Desjardin correctly points out that "one of the most prevalent themes among soldiers who did record their thoughts in diaries and letters around [the time of the Civil War] is confusion. Men were stupefied by the experience of battle . . . even the more sober and clear-headed would only have seen and remembered what occurred within a few feet of them." Thomas A. Desjardin, *These Honored Dead: How the Story of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 14.

the memories of the military camp created an imagined place of "singing [and] backslapping," and a "sentimental bivouac rather than a messy war." Through the veneration of artifacts like tents and uniforms and the spreading of mythic anecdotes about humorous wartime incidents, "performances left out . . . a sense of tragedy, or even of history."¹³⁰

In a culture marked by Victorian Era notions of manhood and honor, the telling of humorous stories by GAR members may have been an attempt to convince audiences that they had withstood the doubts, confusions, concerns, and questions the war had provoked with manly bravery.¹³¹ For many GAR members, such doubts would have remained private, away from the pomp and circumstance of the campfire. Children who attended GAR campfires may have listened to the memories of their heroic fathers and grandfathers with great interest and admiration, but it would require personal experiences in future wars during their adult lives—the Spanish-American War, World War I and World War II—to truly understand the traumatic experience of war.

Remembering the past often involves a complex intersection between history, myth, and memory. Each of these pathways is continually shaped and modified by human agency (the power to choose or determine a course of action), personal experiences, and hindsight provided by new memories and experiences. For the GAR, the "foundation blocks" of the Won Cause rested on a narrative that interpreted the Civil War as a necessary war that facilitated the political reunification of the United States and the

¹³⁰ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 177-178.

¹³¹ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 178-179; James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); McConnell and Mark Carnes also point out that the first ritual of the GAR established a much stronger notion of a "messy war" narrative within new recruits than the later ritual that members like William J. Donelson would have experienced in 1890. The early campfire stories told during the Reconstruction Era would have undoubtedly been more negative in nature. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 93-103; Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America*, 143.

nationwide abolishment of slavery. However, the Won Cause myth that purported to be an accurate historical account of the Civil War (as did the Confederates' Lost Cause) rested on the "deeply flawed memories of the participants and other eyewitnesses" that were "expanded through decades of social and political debates." The memories of GAR members as reflected in its rituals and Encampment events therefore constituted a "flexible, dynamic mythology, reflecting nearly anything" that its members saw as positive consequences of the war.¹³²

History—just like memory—is created. As historian Thomas A. Desjardin explains, history "is a construction borne of people's desire to make sense of the past. The heart of the issue is that history is not necessarily a record of the facts but rather a reckoning of the stories of past events arranged so that they make sense to those who do the reckoning."¹³³ The results of the Civil War did lead to political reunification and the end of slavery, but interpreting and explaining the consequences of those results for American history continues to evolve as new questions of the past are influenced by our questions of the present.

In the initial aftermath of the Civil War, the GAR's ritual and Encampment evoked memories of "the dark, gloomy days, months and years of the rebellion." These memories were shaped by the political concerns of members like Oliver Morris Wilson, who feared a possible second Civil War and supported Radical Republican measures to give African American males suffrage rights (especially those who had fought for the Union) and keep the South under military rule. Due to the GAR's partisan nature, an economic panic in 1873, and the relative youth of Civil War veterans who were also

¹³² Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, 25; Desjardins, *These Honored Dead*, 8-9.

¹³³ Desjardin, *These Honored Dead*, 13.

concerned with finding employment and raising families, national membership in the GAR dwindled around 27,000 members in the 1870s. The Indiana GAR itself temporarily disbanded in 1871.

During the Gilded Age, the Department of Indiana and the National GAR rebounded as stunning industrial economic development, Victorian notions of manhood, and the blessings of hindsight led to new memories that played down the suffering and tragedy of war (at least in public). While the fruits of Union victory were never forgotten by GAR members, the meaning of that victory changed over time as the United States forged a new national identity based on capitalist industrial development. Rather than viewing the memories of GAR veterans as reflections on "what actually happened" during the Civil War, we should view those reflections as attempts to construct a sense of reality and order in a rapidly changing American society. In making sense of their past, the Grand Army of the Republic used their own invented holiday, Decoration Day (now called Memorial Day), to remember the dead and perpetuate the Won Cause interpretation of the war. As we will see in the next chapter, however, not all Hoosiers interpreted the meaning of Memorial Day in the same way as the GAR members who helped to establish the holiday in 1868.

Chapter Two: Memorial Day in Indiana, 1868-1923

On May 21, 1913, thousands of Civil War veterans descended upon Indianapolis for the thirty-fourth annual Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana. Over the next three days, the veterans marched on parade and told stories about the war to civilians in "campfires" throughout the city. Before the public festivities began, however, the GAR held its annual members-only meeting to discuss the state of the organization and propose resolutions for future activities. Following speeches by the Department Commander, the Assistant Adjutant General, and current Indiana Governor Samuel Ralston, seventy-year-old veteran George Scarce rose to address his fellow comrades. A Kentucky native who moved to Danville, Indiana, at a young age, Scarce was barely eighteen years old when he enlisted in the 51st Indiana Regiment at the beginning of the Civil War. In 1863 he was captured by the forces of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest and served time at the prisoner-of-war camp at Belle Isle, Virginia. Upon his release from prison, Scarce returned to the battlefield and was later shot in the left hip at the Battle of Nashville on December 16, 1864.¹³⁴

After the war, Scarce ran a farm in Hendricks County and assisted in forming the Farmers Cooperative Insurance Company in the 1880s. Having acted as the company's President since 1894, Scarce was now living comfortably in the city of Danville, and in 1912 his fellow comrades elected him as the Department of Indiana's "Patriotic

¹³⁴ John V. Hadley, *History of Hendricks County, Indiana: Her People, Industries and Institutions* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowden & Co. Inc., 1914), 200-202; William. R. Hartpence, *History of the Fifty-First Indiana Veteran Volunteer Infantry* (Cincinnati: The Robert Clarke Company, Printers and Binders, 1904), 140-149. The National Park Service's Soldiers' and Sailors' database also has info on Scarce and the 51st Indiana. See National Park Service, "Soldier Details: George W. Scarce." Accessed August 14, 2013. http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldier_id=235c4fcd-dc7a-df11-bf36-b8ac6f5d926a.

Instructor."¹³⁵ His speech at the Indianapolis Encampment marked the end of his term in office, and Scarce came with a warning: Memorial Day—the holiday first promoted by the GAR in 1868 as a way to commemorate the lives of Union soldiers who had died in combat—was losing its original meaning and being ignored by an ungrateful younger generation of Hoosiers born after 1865.

"A barrier of years lies between the young men of today and the battle fields of the Civil War," warned Scarce. "They never experienced the bitter pangs of separation from home and loved ones to go to war, nor do they realize what war means, for no pen can describe it, neither can its likeness be printed on canvas or marble. They never heard the groans of dying soldiers, nor saw them lying unattended upon the field of battle under a burning sun." Rather than spending Memorial Day decorating the graves of fallen soldiers and reflecting on the meaning of the nation's deadliest conflict, younger people had demonstrated "[a] tendency . . . to forget the purpose of Memorial Day and make it a day for games, races and revelry, instead of a day of 'memory and tears'." To correct younger Hoosiers' misperceptions and put an end to all frivolous activities, Scarce implored his comrades to "make an effort to awaken them from the lethargy into which they have fallen."¹³⁶ By visiting local communities and speaking to residents about the meaning of Memorial Day, perhaps the holiday's original purpose could be restored.

What were these "games, races and revelry" that Scarce complained about, and why were they such a concern to the Indiana GAR? Part of the issue rested with those who used the legal holiday to gamble on sports, consume copious amounts of alcohol, or

¹³⁵ Hadley, *History of Hendricks County*, 201. Patriotic Instructors were in charge of encouraging patriotic sentiments among GAR veterans and young school children. The role of Patriotic Instruction in the GAR will be the central focus of Chapter Three.

¹³⁶ Indiana, *Thirty-Fourth* (1913), 102-103.

run a business that stayed open during the holiday. Yet there was one event unique to Indiana that troubled the organization more than any other: the Indianapolis 500. Starting in 1911, the founders of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway held their annual race on May 30, the same day as the GAR's Memorial Day holiday.¹³⁷ This schedule conflict motivated the GAR to lead a state-wide movement against the Indianapolis 500, and in 1923 a bill was formally introduced before the Indiana General Assembly that would have banned the race from taking place on Memorial Day.

As self-proclaimed saviors of the Union, the Indiana GAR believed they had the authority to control the meaning of Memorial Day for all of society. In the years after the Civil War, Memorial Day proved to be a contested holiday whose meaning was debated among various political, business, and military groups. The scheduling of the Indianapolis 500 on Memorial Day intensified these debates and provoked larger questions regarding the meaning of patriotism and the "proper" methods for remembering the past. This chapter explores the historical origins of Memorial Day in Indiana and analyze the debates surrounding the controversial 1923 Moorehead Memorial Day Bill. It also argues that GAR members used Memorial Day to not only reflect on the past, but to also make political statements about the present.

Upwards of perhaps 750,000 soldiers died in the American Civil War. This staggering amount of death in such a short period of time demanded interpretation, remembrance, and understanding on the part of all Americans.¹³⁸ The Grand Army of the

¹³⁷ Readers should note that the holiday was often referred to as "Decoration Day" in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. In this study I will use the term "Memorial Day," which is the common term for the holiday in the United States today.

¹³⁸ David Blight, "Decoration Days: The Origins of Memorial Day in North and South," in Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 94. Although traditional estimates have placed the number of Civil War Deaths at 620,000, recent analysis of nineteenth century census data by demographic historian David Hacker

Republic observed Memorial Day as a way of reserving time to look at the past and meet the new demands of memory brought on by the war. As one GAR handbook explained in 1884, Memorial Day was "the day of all days in the G.A.R. Calendar." "Comrades," according to the author, "should exercise great care" in ensuring that civilians understood that "the old soldier is capable of sober thoughts and earnest acts."¹³⁹ Making the GAR "calendar" a part of every American citizen's calendar, the Indiana GAR believed, would perpetuate a proper remembrance of the Union dead and a stronger love of country.

Although the GAR popularized Memorial Day throughout the United States, they were not the only group to do so, and the holiday's origins are highly disputed by historians. Michael Kammen argues that Waterloo, New York, and Columbus, Georgia, were the birthplaces of the holiday in the North and South, respectively. David Blight asserts that the holiday originated in Charleston, South Carolina—where local African Americans held a parade and decorated the graves of the Union dead with flowers on May 1, 1865—shortly before Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to General William T. Sherman, effectively ending the Civil War. Historian Caroline E. Janney points out that some Northern newspapers like the *New York Times* believed Memorial Day's observation would "keep alive the rancors of hate" because the GAR had supposedly stolen the holiday from Confederate veterans who had claimed it as their own.¹⁴⁰

suggests that the number of deaths may have increased by as much twenty percent. See J. David Hacker, "A Census-Based Count of the Civil War Dead," *Civil War History* 57, no. 4 (December 2011), 306-347.

¹³⁹ A.C. Leonard, *Grand Army of the Republic Hand Book* (Lancaster, PA: A.C. Leonard Publishing, 1884), 16.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991)102-103; Blight, "Decoration Days," 94-129; Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 98-99. John Neff has also pointed out that an 1898 history of "Southern Memorial Day" argued that the North had adopted Memorial Day from former Confederates. See Neff, *Honoring the*

There may be a degree of truth to the *New York Times* claim. In the immediate aftermath of the war, new "national" cemeteries designated exclusively for Union soldiers who had died in former Confederate territories were established by the U.S. government and protected by United States troops. According to Janney, former Confederates and their supporters, "humiliated by the continued presence of Union troops, infuriated by the end of slavery, [and] angered by the neglect of Confederate graves," made efforts to protect their Confederate dead as early as the spring of 1866. In response to the establishment of National Cemeteries, Confederate women throughout the South formed Ladies' Memorial Associations and created their own commemorative spaces for remembering the Confederate dead.¹⁴¹

After the GAR allegedly "stole" the holiday from Confederate veterans, most white Southerners wholly ignored Memorial Day on May 30 and instead observed June 3 (the birth date of former Confederate President Jefferson Davis) as Confederate Memorial Day. By 1916, the United Daughters of the Confederacy successfully pushed to have June 3—not May 30—declared as a legal holiday in ten Southern states.¹⁴² Confederate Memorial Days were similar to "Union Memorial Days" in that graves were decorated, poems were recited, songs were sung, and speeches were made, but the rhetoric behind these activities differed greatly from those of the May 30 commemorations held in many Northern cities. Most focused on the efforts of Confederate soldiers to create a new nation and emphasized the "Lost Cause"

Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004), 153-154.

¹⁴¹ Janney also cites a white Southerner who proclaimed after the war, "The South is now united by a band of graves—a tie that can never be surrendered." Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 73-75, 92-93.

¹⁴² Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 103; Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 153. Although June 3 was the most commonly observed day for Confederate Memorial Day, other days were sometimes selected instead. For example, Confederate General Stonewall Jackson's birthday (May 10) was also a popular day to hold services.

interpretation of the Civil War, which argued that Northern anti-slavery abolitionists were responsible for starting the war, that slavery had been a "benevolent institution" beneficial to the well-being of African Americans, and that secession was constitutionally legal.¹⁴³

Regardless of its origins, the Grand Army of the Republic officially acknowledged Memorial Day in 1868 after National Commander and staunch Republican John A. Logan issued General Orders Number 11 on May 5, 1868. Logan defined the GAR's purpose in the order as one of "preserving and strengthening those kind and fraternal feelings which have bound together the soldiers, sailors and marines who united to suppress the late rebellion." To enhance those feelings among veterans and the rest of society, GAR members would have to cherish "the memory of our heroic dead" by "guard[ing] their graves with eternal vigilance." By taking the time to observe Memorial Day and by remembering those who had died to save the Union, the "solemn trust" between living GAR veterans and the dead would be maintained and their memories perpetuated.¹⁴⁴ As sociologist Robert Bellah explains, the Civil War infused America's civil religion (the blending of religious themes with nationalist sentiments) with "a new theme of death, sacrifice, and rebirth."¹⁴⁵ Memorial Day ritualized these themes and attempted to foster an imagined community of citizens whose shared sufferings during the Civil War brought local communities across the nation together. Through the

¹⁴³ For more on the Lost Cause, see Alan T. Nolan, "The Anatomy of a Myth," in Alan T. Nolan and Gary W. Gallagher, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 11-34; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 255-299.

¹⁴⁴ The full text of General Logan's General Orders No. 11 are printed in Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Willis McDonald & Co., 1888), 90-91.

¹⁴⁵ Robert Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96 no. 1 (Winter 1967), 1-21. See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

commemoration of the Union dead, Americans would forge a national identity that emphasized a reborn nation strengthened by the destruction of Confederate secession.

Memorial Day services at first took on a wide variety of incarnations thanks to Logan's instructions to GAR posts to observe the day "in their own way." A 1,000 page compilation of Memorial Day activities across the nation in 1869 shows that while the general message of remembrance was almost universally embraced, different types of ritual services emerged. Indiana was no exception. That year, the Indiana GAR in South Bend enlisted the help of Republican Vice President and Mishawaka, Indiana, resident Schuyler Colfax to boost awareness of Memorial Day in the area. Colfax argued in his speech that by honoring the dead, Memorial Day would "teach us to love our country more, to value its dearly-purchased institutions more, to prize its manifold blessings more, and to advance its greatness and true glory more." Such a commentary was significant because prior to the Civil War, many Americans viewed themselves as "present-minded people" who rejected "Old World" European notions of tradition and remembrance in favor of focusing on America's future. Through his speech, however, Colfax and the Indiana GAR attempted to instill the importance of making Memorial Day a "tradition" in American society, one that emphasized the importance of looking back at the past for inspiration and examples of true patriotism.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ Colfax quoted in Ernest F.M. Faehtz, *The National Memorial Day: A Record of Ceremonies Over the Graves of the Union Soldiers, May 29 and 30, 1869* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Grand Army of the Republic, 1870), 167-168; Michael Kammen has argued that antebellum Americans had an "indifference" about the past and believed that "government ought to bear little responsibility for the maintenance of collective memories." Denise D. Meringolo has seconded this notion, arguing that "none of the amateur historians among the founding fathers or their successors argued that the study of history should be a function of government," and that Americans were ambivalent about "the notion of a national culture sponsored by the federal government." See Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 40-61; Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Towards a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 5-7. See also Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 27-28;

While Colfax's speech in South Bend reflected a more somber reflection of the Union dead and their patriotic influence, another Memorial Day service in Indianapolis involved a lavish parade that included Republican Governor Conrad Baker, the Indianapolis police, Masonic orders, and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Services in Fort Wayne, meanwhile, started with soldiers' grave decorations followed by an afternoon march from the city to Lindenwood Cemetery. During the ceremonies GAR member R.S. Robertson reflected on the "appropriate and pleasant duty" of decorating soldiers' graves. Such obligations were ideal to Robertson because Union soldiers had helped to defend "our free institutions." Robertson believed the rule of European kings had a foundation based on "conquered provinces, of the millions who owe them the homage of serfs," but Union victory in the Civil War restored a republican form of government in America.¹⁴⁷

Memorial Day services became more unified by the mid 1870s and early 1880s. The GAR began to provide "handbooks" that offered specific procedures, poems, and Bible verses for local post Commanders to follow during the proceedings. According to Stuart McConnell, "on the day itself, the post assembled and marched to the local cemetery to decorate the graves of the fallen, an enterprise meticulously organized months in advance to assure that none were missed. Finally came a simple and subdued graveyard service involving prayers, short patriotic speeches, and music . . . and at the end perhaps a rifle salute."¹⁴⁸ As the ritual of Memorial Day gained importance within

Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-16.

¹⁴⁷ Robertson quoted in Faehz, *The National Memorial Day*, 160-173; Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 90.

¹⁴⁸ Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 184. New York was the first state to designate May 30 as a legal holiday for Memorial Day commemorations in 1873, and by 1890 all Northern States had made the day a

America's commemorative landscape, powerful individuals attempted to use those patriotic speeches to affirm their fealty to the dead. "The Decoration Day speech," David Blight asserts, "became an *American genre* that ministers, politicians, and countless former soldiers tried to master." Orators used Memorial Day to remind audiences that "their soldiers had died necessary deaths, they had saved the republic, and their blood had given the nation new life."¹⁴⁹ For many aging GAR veterans, in fact, Memorial Day became a commemorative centerpiece for instilling memories of the Civil War that embraced the Won Cause of Union and emancipation. These speeches were addressed to all of society—not just former Confederates—in an effort to curb what these veterans believed were serious violations of the spirit of Memorial Day through social apathy, frivolity, and rampant business interests and greed. At least one hundred published newspaper accounts of Memorial Day speeches in Indiana were recorded from 1868-1925, but a few select examples can provide a general outline of the basic ideas and themes of Indiana GAR members on the importance of remembering the Civil War and the Won Cause.¹⁵⁰

In 1880, comrade Henry H. Mathias addressed an audience in Greencastle on the importance of virtue. Most wars, according to Mathias, stemmed from issues that "grew out of either lust, ambition or greed . . . the worst traits of man's nature." The Union war

legal holiday. David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 71. See also Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 103. For an example of a Memorial Day services handbook used in the twentieth century, see Grand Army of the Republic, *Services For the Use of the Grand Army of the Republic* (No city listed: Headquarters, Grand Army of the Republic, 1923).

¹⁴⁹ Blight, "Decoration Days," 100. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵⁰ For example, see "The Union Dead," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 1, 1868; "Decoration Day," *Greencastle Banner*, June 3, 1880; "Memorial Day Parade," *Indianapolis News*, May 30, 1901; "Pays Tribute to Colored Race," *Indianapolis Star*, May 31, 1907. Indianapolis newspapers regularly published Memorial Day speeches in their papers between May 30 and June 3 on annual basis. The *Indianapolis Journal* (1868-1903), the *Indianapolis Star* (starting in 1904), and the *Indianapolis News* are the best sources for analyzing Memorial Day speeches.

effort, however, was an exercise in national virtue and sacrifice. "When the resources of diplomacy are exhausted, when national existence is at stake, when the freedom of the citizen is imperiled," armed conflict could be justified, argued Mathias. "Among nations as among men, there is a well defined rule of right," and those who had died defending the United States "fell in a righteous cause, in defense of those great principles set forth in that immortal instrument, the Declaration of Independence . . . they died that a Nation might live."¹⁵¹ For Mathias, the Union dead had not perished in a vain, pointless conflict.

Similarly, former Republican congressman John Coburn addressed an audience in Martinsville in 1886 on the purpose of protecting the "sacred graves" of the fallen. "These men whose memories we honor to-day," asserted Coburn, "fell in no war of invasion or conquest; not in the strife for power, not to cramp and bind and tax their fellow men, but to give more rights, to uplift the downtrodden . . . And humanity shall sit down to an endless feast, generation after generation, prepared by these dying hands." While Coburn told his audience that GAR veterans did not "glory in war or take pride in its fearful consequences," the thought of disunion and "national death" had horrified them more than war. National unification and the end of slavery established an "obedience to war" that recreated America as a "free, progressive, intelligent Nation in her own race of improvement, and in the uplifting of all men from the bonds of their oppressors." By the end of the war, Coburn argued, the entire human race emerged with an "enlargement of personal liberty."¹⁵² These advances in human freedom were central to the meaning of Memorial Day, according to Coburn.

¹⁵¹ "Decoration Day," *Greencastle Banner*, June 3, 1880.

¹⁵² "The Union's Dead Soldiers," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 2, 1886.

For S.R. Hornbrook—a clergyman who was appointed by wartime governor Oliver P. Morton as an agent of the Indiana Sanitary Commission during the war—the lesson of Memorial Day was peace. Who were "the men of 1861," he asked, and what did they represent? "They were men who loved peace and long strove to secure it," proclaimed Hornbrook. "This is the great lesson which Memorial days must teach the young," for the terrors of war should be feared by all. Hornbrook approved of "happy children bearing flowers for the dead heroes," and the opening of the "book of remembrance" by those who attended Memorial Day commemorations, and he invoked Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address in wishing for future peace: "most fondly do we hope, most fervently do we pray . . . that the scourge of war may never come to this rising generation." But if war came, Hornbrook argued, "let them think upon the firmness of their fathers and shrink not from the trial." Indiana GAR veterans had passed the trial of war and transitioned into "active manhood."¹⁵³ Memorial Day would challenge younger generations to face future conflicts with an eye towards peace, but with another eye towards honor, bravery, and personal sacrifice if the nation were to face armed conflict again in the future.

It is clear that the Grand Army of the Republic intended to set aside Memorial Day as a day to reflect upon the memories of the Union dead, and many veterans argued that the day was created "for the dead." But Memorial Day was just as much about assuaging the concerns of the living as it was a remembrance of the dead. As Drew Gilpin Faust aptly described it, "without agendas, without politics, the Dead became what

¹⁵³ "The Lessons of Memorial Day," *American Tribune*, May 30, 1890.

their survivors chose to make them."¹⁵⁴ Memorial Day services gained their cultural significance in American society not because of the dead, but because the GAR veterans who were still living ascribed a particular meaning to the day. Decorating graves with flowers, reciting poems, singing patriotic songs, and making impassioned speeches all signified attempts by the living to mold the Union dead (and later the dead of other American wars) into their own vision of what it meant to be an American. By arguing that the Union dead had perished in what the living defined as a righteous and patriotic cause, the dead were incorporated into the mythology of the Won Cause and promoted by the living as embodiments of honor, manliness, and American heroism.

Although the activities that composed Memorial Day services were largely intended to be historic and patriotic in meaning, they also took on other meanings that reflected the holiday's function as a cultural artifact of human construction.¹⁵⁵ As Michael Kammen explains, the purposes of veterans' groups like the GAR went beyond mere patriotic sentiments and into the realm of "social, militaristic, [and] political" functions.¹⁵⁶ Remembering the dead included the act of interpreting the cause, context, and consequences of the Civil War by Union veterans and their supporters.

Historians generally agree with Kammen's outline of the purposes and functions of veterans' groups, including the GAR. Since the massive death tolls of the Civil War required an explanation, "remembering the dead, and what they died for, developed partisan fault lines," according to David Blight.¹⁵⁷ As mentioned in chapter one, the GAR

¹⁵⁴ Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Random House, 2008), 269.

¹⁵⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

¹⁵⁶ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 103.

¹⁵⁷ Blight, "Decoration Days," 94.

did not reach its peak membership level until 1890—25 years after the end of the Civil War—for various reasons. Nevertheless, the memories of war were never far from the minds of veterans. Memorial Day services, Caroline Janney argues, were used by both Union and Confederate veterans to "cultivate, advance, and protect their interpretations of the war," which were "replete with political . . . meaning."¹⁵⁸ Similarly, John Neff suggests that the oratory of "both North and South expressly interpreted the meaning of the dead and their sacrifices for the living."¹⁵⁹ While Indiana GAR members helped to establish Memorial Day as a way for all Hoosiers to remember their Civil War dead, they did not hesitate to also share their political views with that audience.

At the first Memorial Day service at Crown Hill Cemetery in Indianapolis in 1868, Governor Conrad Baker argued to an estimated ten thousand audience members that an appreciation of the Union's "honored dead" would help to "keep alive in our own hearts . . . the highest duties of citizenship, but also national unity, social virtue and human progress." Promoting patriotism and national unification was a "labor of love and duty" for all loyal Americans, and remembering those who had defeated Confederate attempts at secession would allow for a clearer understanding of American citizenship and perhaps even a quicker political reunification between North and South.¹⁶⁰

The 1886 speech by Comrade John Coburn in Martinsville outlined the importance of remembering the Union dead, but it also reflected on the meaning of the Civil War as viewed by the Republican party. Confederates in 1861, argued Coburn, had

¹⁵⁸ Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 100-104;

¹⁵⁹ Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 279 (n. 66). Neff disagrees with Stuart McConnell, who argued that Memorial Day represented a dialogue between living and dead veterans, a "festival of our dead." Neff asserts that Memorial Day instead functioned as a day to teach the lessons of the Civil War to audiences. I tend to agree with Neff. See McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 183-185. For more on the political nature of Confederate Memorial Days, see Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 94-104, Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, ch. 4, "'Death in a Far-Off, Stranger's Land': Southern Creation and Commemoration," 142-178.

¹⁶⁰ "The Union Dead," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 1, 1868.

attempted to secede because of their desire to maintain slavery. After war broke out, supporters of the United States refused to comply with Confederate attempts to build "an empire of slavery, thus cutting us off from our great highways to the South by water and land." The thought of war was terrible, but "the doctrine that a dissatisfied State might, at any time, upon her own will, secede, [thus making] disunion legal" was worse, in the mind of Coburn. The results of the war proved that "the Nation is greater than the State and can compel obedience [to] war to hold together this vast, free, progressive, intelligent Nation."¹⁶¹ Coburn asserted that the Won Cause of Union and Emancipation was right, and the use of military force to enact those goals was justified.

For Comrade George W. Spahr, the Civil War had finally created a unified nation. In his 1893 Memorial Day oration in Cambridge City, Spahr remarked that the death and destruction of war were "consoled by the fact that we are no longer a doubtful confederation of States; that we are no long a compact of colonies existing at the will and pleasure of the parties to the combine." The Civil War ostensibly ensured that Americans would be governed by laws in a perpetual union, not on the whims of politically powerful men. Former supporters of the Confederacy, argued Spahr, were "more prosperous people than they would have been had they been successful in the establishment of human slavery and a slave oligarchy."¹⁶² Spahr's claim about postwar economic success in the former Confederate states led him to believe that former secessionists should also embrace the Won Cause interpretation of the war.

¹⁶¹ "The Union's Dead Soldiers," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 2, 1886. For a similar speech on nationalism given by the Rev. A.B. Storms in 1914 at Crown Hill Cemetery, see "Tribute Paid to the Nation's Dead," *Indianapolis Star*, May 30, 1914.

¹⁶² "Memorial Oration," *American Tribune*, June 15, 1893.

Spahr also used his Memorial Day speech to chastise the "class of ungrateful and unworthy citizens" who had opposed the expansion of pension benefits to Union veterans in 1890. These "unworthy citizens" were unpatriotic and had been "too cowardly to fight when the war was on." The soldiers of the U.S. military had demonstrated "unswerving patriotic devotion and self-sacrificing love of country" during the nation's greatest need for help; paying a small monthly pension to disabled veterans through public funds after the conflict ended was but a small credit paid to the debt that could never be repaid to the nation's defenders.¹⁶³ For GAR members like George W. Spahr Memorial Day was an appropriate space in which to use the memories of the Union dead to advocate for political and financial concerns that benefitted the soldiers who were still alive.

Public education was the thrust of the Reverend Conrad Hassel's Memorial Day oration in Lafayette in 1906. The Salem Reformed Church minister argued that children should learn about the Won Cause and the heroes who helped forge a reborn, stronger nation through their actions in the Civil War. "Arouse yourself to action with your tens of thousands of co-patriots who would rather die ten times over than see the hope of southern traitors and foreign despots realized. What a disgraceful spectacle our country would present," proclaimed Hassel, "had they not freed the slave and saved the union." "Let us stand by our public schools. They are essential to the progress and freedom of our country. They constitute one of the chief pillars upon which our body politic rests. Destroy them and ere long our freedom will fall to the ground."¹⁶⁴ In the eyes of Hassel, history provided both moral and political lessons. Children would become better people

¹⁶³ "Memorial Oration." One critic of government pensions considered them acts of corrupt socialism. See William M. Sloane, "Pensions and Socialism," *Century* 42 (June 1891), 179-188. See also Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992).

¹⁶⁴ "Honoring the Dead," *Lafayette Journal*, May 31, 1906.

and better citizens through a "proper" study of the past, and public education would ensure that law and order was maintained and that the union would remain perpetual, free of the threats of a second Civil War.¹⁶⁵

Historian Nicole Etcheson demonstrates, however, that Memorial Day speeches varied in content based on the political affiliation of the GAR veteran doing the oration. Some Indiana GAR members were Democrats, and they sometimes complained when speakers like Republican Thomas Hanna (who was also Lieutenant Governor at the time of his speech in 1881) focused too much on emancipation.¹⁶⁶ To combat these Memorial Day orations, Democratic political leaders chose speakers who left out any mentions of slavery as a cause of the war or emancipation as a positive consequences of its results.

Comrade Cortland C. Matson was one Indiana GAR member who was often selected by Democrats to make Memorial Day speeches. A lawyer from Greencastle, Matson at first rejected the GAR and formed a local political organization in 1868 called the "White Boys in Blue" that opposed the election of Republican Ulysses S. Grant for

¹⁶⁵ As Martha Howells and Walter Prevenier explain, the practice of history for many centuries (dating back to advent of history writing during the Ancient Greek period around 400 BCE) focused on "practical morality." These writers "compiled massive biographical sketches to illustrate good and bad behavior, to display men honored for their integrity, bravery, probity or wisdom--or dishonored for their dishonesty, cowardice, vulgarity, or stupidity. The genre is still with us; as schoolchildren, all of us read the lives of men such as George Washington, Winston Churchill or Charles de Gaulle." Martha Howells and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 4-15. The Indiana GAR's relationship with public education will be explored further in chapter three.

¹⁶⁶ While an exact number of Democrats in the Indiana GAR is impossible to ascertain, Larry M. Logue estimates that roughly one-third of its members (31 percent) voted for Democrat Grover Cleveland in the 1888 Presidential election. Following the Indiana GAR's reorganization in 1879, the political allegiances of its membership may have remained consistent in a two-to-one ratio in support of the Republicans. See Larry M. Logue, "Union Veterans and Their Government: The Effects of Public Policies on Private Lives," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22, no. 3 (Winter 1992), 411-434; Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2011), 195. The tactic of reviving negative memories of the war (and promoting memories of emancipation) was often referred to as "waving the bloody shirt," which Charles W. Calhoun defines as "inflaming the emotions of the war and Reconstruction for partisan purposes." Republicans attacked both former Confederates and Northern Democrats who they believed had engaged in treasonous wartime behavior through their calls to end the war peacefully. See Charles W. Calhoun, *From Bloody Shirt to Full Dinner Pail: The Transformation of Politics and Governance in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2010), 5.

President that year. Membership in the organization numbered as high as 120 veterans at one point. These veterans believed Radical Republicans were to blame for strained relations between the sections due in large part to their excessive protection of "hordes of unthrifty and indolent negroes" through their support of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.¹⁶⁷

Matson addressed an 1875 soldiers' Memorial Day convention in Indianapolis and went so far as to call for the equal commemoration of the Union and Confederate dead during Memorial Day services. In 1880, he gave speeches on both Memorial Day and the Fourth of July. While the Memorial Day speech was not published, his Fourth of July speech is telling. In it, he praised the Union war effort and the desire for political reunification between North and South. He mentioned how proud he was of his service as a Union soldier, but complained that he had been "[conscripted] by the strong arm of military power, dragged from his home, and deprived of liberty without writ, warrant, hearing, or trial, and [I feel] that such an outrage yet calls for the most indignant expression of all just people."¹⁶⁸ By focusing on sectional reconciliation and the alleged abuses of the federal government in conscripting young men from their homes, Matson challenged the interpretations of Republican speakers like George Spahr who focused on the "self-sacrifice" of Union soldiers during the war and questioned John Coburn's belief that the results of the war established the federal government as the superior and more qualified arbiter of the people's freedoms than the various state governments.

Additionally, Matson's association with the "White Boys in Blue" and his avoidance of any mentions about emancipation or black rights in his speeches demonstrates the blatant

¹⁶⁷ Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 174.

¹⁶⁸ "An Address Delivered by Col. C.C. Matson, at Bloomington, July 4," *Greencastle Dollar Press*, July 23, 1879; Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 193-194.

racism and whitewashing of emancipationist war memories that accompanied the views of some white Indiana veterans in and out of the GAR.

By 1900, Indiana GAR members and their supporters vocalized their desires to reconcile with former Confederates with more frequency in Memorial Day speeches.¹⁶⁹ The *Indianapolis Journal* proclaimed in 1899 that Memorial Day had become a "permanent institution . . . recognized throughout the country by all thoughtful people as a day set apart for the recalling of patriotic examples and the consideration of patriotic duties," and some of these reconciliationist sentiments were driven by the belief that the Won Cause was being accepted in the South.¹⁷⁰

The Indiana GAR, however, was not as positive about the status of their holiday in Indiana. Too many Hoosiers were allegedly using the holiday to engage in frivolous activities while ignoring the legacy of the heroic Union dead on the one day of the calendar reserved for reflection on that legacy.¹⁷¹ When the Indianapolis 500 was held for

¹⁶⁹ In 1892, Indiana GAR member Lew Wallace captured the sentiments of many members at that time when he warned that "the Solid South is but another name for the Confederacy. It needs watching." However, National GAR Commander-in-Chief Leo Rassieur at Memorial Day ceremonies at Crown Hill Cemetery in 1901 remarked that he "fully appreciated that the service involved a bloody conflict *with his fellow-citizens of the South*" (emphasis mine). Another speech that year from the Reverend Frederick Matson proclaimed that the "issues" that had caused the Civil War "died on the day of Appomattox, and they are dead forever." In 1914, Indiana GAR member Newton M. Taylor shook hands with a former Confederate soldier at Greenlawn Cemetery in Franklin, although he "stood by his premise that southern politicians brought on the Civil War." See "General Lew Wallace at the Annual Banquet of the Loyal Legion," *American Tribune*, June 2, 1892; "In Memory of the Dead," *Indianapolis News*, May 30, 1901; "Over Confederate Graves," *Indianapolis News*, May 30, 1901; "Blue and Gray Clasp Hands," *Indianapolis News*, May 30, 1914.

¹⁷⁰ "A Grand Army Institution," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 30, 1899.

¹⁷¹ For example, veteran Ivan N. Walker warned in 1892 that Memorial Day was not "made a day of feasting, festivals and fairs," nor should it be "given over to base ball and other sports" because it was "set apart as a day sacred to the memory of our heroic dead . . . no day in the year is so important to us as a nation." In 1904, Indiana GAR Commander George W. Grubbs asserted that "the increasing perversion of Memorial Day in many places to mere pleasure, amusement, and frivolity, is a national shame. The apathy which countenances it is a sign of the decline of national gratitude and conscience," while William Ketcham proclaimed in 1908 that Memorial Day was a "Holy day, on which we meet and pay tribute to our dead . . . For us this day is set apart and sacred to this and no other purpose whatsoever." See Indiana, *Thirteenth* (1982), 100; Indiana, *Twenty-Fifth* (1904), 102, 159; Indiana, *Twenty-Ninth* (1908), 94. Additionally, in 1907, some members of the GAR opposed the dedication of a statue to Indiana Civil War

the first time on Memorial Day in 1911, a new firestorm of controversy emerged over the meaning of the holiday in Indiana.

The leading figure behind the creation of the Indianapolis 500 was Carl Graham Fisher, a native of Greensburg, Indiana, who had a fascination with new vehicular technologies.¹⁷² In 1891, at the age of seventeen, Fisher invested \$600 into a bicycle repair shop in downtown Indianapolis, where his quirky publicity stunts gained him attention throughout the state. Within ten years he was selling motorcycles and appearing in automobile races around the Midwest.¹⁷³ What first appeared to be a risky investment in a gas headlight company with business partner James Allison in 1904 proved to be immediately profitable, and the two became multimillionaires when they sold their company in 1913. Thanks to the success of the Prest-O-Lite headlight company in the 1900s, Fisher and three business partners were able to invest in a tract of land five miles west of downtown Indianapolis to build a two and a half mile racing track in 1908.¹⁷⁴

Fisher's success in the automotive industry reflected larger economic changes in Indiana. The Hoosier State (and Indianapolis in particular) experienced a considerable increase in its industrial capacities after the Civil War, and by 1880 Indianapolis had a larger percentage of workers in manufacturing occupations than did several Northeastern cities such as Philadelphia. State investment in an extensive system of railroads and the

and Spanish American War Veteran Henry Ware Lawton on Memorial Day, claiming it was an encroachment on the holiday. See Alexander Uribel, "The Making of Citizens: A History of Civic Education in Indianapolis, 1900-1950" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Indiana, 1996), 135-139. ProQuest (AAT 9637577).

¹⁷² Later in life Fisher moved to Florida, where his personal papers are housed at HistoryMiami Archives & Research Center. The other three founders of Indianapolis Motor Speedway—James A. Allison, Frank H. Wheeler, and Arthur C. Newbury—have no known manuscript records. See HistoryMiami Archives & Research Center, "Carl Fisher Papers, 1896-1958." Accessed December 1, 2013. <http://historymiamiarchives.org/guides/?p=collections/findingaid&id=14&q=&rootcontentid=600>.

¹⁷³ Mark S. Foster, *Castles in the Sand: The Life and Times of Carl Graham Fisher* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 21-33.

¹⁷⁴ Foster, *Castles in the Sand*, 45-59; D. Bruce Scott, *Indy: Racing Before the 500* (Batesville, Indiana: Indiana Reflections LLC, 2005), 6-11.

discovery of a natural gas field in East-Central Indiana (Grant County) in 1887 both helped to attract new industries to the state. The first automobiles came to Indiana in 1894, and by 1909 there were at least 67 automobile manufacturing companies employing 6,800 workers who produced \$24 million worth of goods.¹⁷⁵

Fisher held the inaugural race at Indianapolis Motor Speedway that same year on June 5, a balloon race that attracted a crowd of roughly 40,000 spectators. A three-day series of motorcycle and automobile races were held later that year during Labor Day weekend. Although serious issues with the racing surface led to several crashes and the deaths of three spectators, one mechanic, and one driver, the *Indianapolis Star* nevertheless extolled the benefits of the race and the entire automobile industry in 1910, arguing that "the country is indebted [to the automobile industry] for a material share of its unprecedented prosperity during the last five years." Crowds were sparse for that year's race, however, prompting Fisher to change plans for the 1911 race.¹⁷⁶

To generate interest and boost attendance at the track, Fisher made the race a one-day event, lengthened it to 500 miles, and offered the winner a prize of \$27,550, an unprecedented sum at the time. The date of the race was also switched to Memorial Day. Why May 30 was picked as the race date remains a mystery. Newspaper accounts of Fisher's announcement of the changes fail to explain why the date change took place, while historian Mark S. Foster, Fisher's biographer, could only speculate that "Carl Fisher was very likely the inspiration for establishing the date."¹⁷⁷ Perhaps Fisher's sense of

¹⁷⁵ Robert V. Robinson and Carl M. Briggs, "The Rise of Factories in Nineteenth-Century Indianapolis," *American Journal of Sociology* 97 no. 3 (Nov. 1991), 627-628; Scott, *Indy*, 3; Foster, *Castles of Sand*, 43.

¹⁷⁶ Foster, *Castles of Sand*, 76-80; "Auto's Aid to Prosperity," *Indianapolis Star*, September 4, 1910.

¹⁷⁷ A former Indiana state legislator, Robert L. Moorehead, remarked in 1967 (at the age of 92) that the date was switched due to objections from labor unions who didn't want the race on "their day," but there is no evidence from newspapers at the time to support this claim, and no known manuscript records for Moorehead exist. "May 30 Race Ban Fight Recalled," *Indianapolis News*, May 30, 1967; "World's

"patriotism" and personal business interests inspired the date change. At the inaugural balloon race in 1909, Fisher himself got into a balloon and unfurled six American flags, exemplifying later instances in which the symbolism of Memorial Day would be commercialized by businesses in Indianapolis. Additionally, during the race's early years, Fisher frequently expressed his desire to have popular European drivers come to Indianapolis to race Americans. Perhaps Memorial Day would be an appropriate time to demonstrate the alleged superiority of American drivers and the Indianapolis automobile industry to rest of the world.¹⁷⁸

Whatever the reasoning for the date change, Fisher's gamble paid off handsomely as the Indianapolis 500 became wildly popular in Indianapolis and the entire state. "Undoubtedly a boon for city businesses of all types," argues historian Alexander Uribel, "the race was promoted as a unique event and the pride of the city." By 1913, at least 100,000 people were paying admittance fees on an annual basis to see the race on Memorial Day.¹⁷⁹ Rather than spending the day decorating the graves of Union Civil War veterans and quietly remembering those who had died in combat, many Hoosiers chose to spend their leisure time at the racetrack watching automobiles go upwards of 100 miles per hour.

Protests from veterans and religious groups against the Memorial Day race were immediate. The day before the 1911 race, the *Indianapolis Star* reported that many churches in Indiana had argued for the "proper celebration in tribute to war heroes." The

Greatest Auto Race Planned," *Indianapolis News*, September 6, 1910; Foster, *Castles of Sand*, 80; See also Terry Reed, *The Race and Ritual of the Indianapolis 500* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2005), 5-13.

¹⁷⁸ Regarding the commercialization of Memorial Day in Indianapolis, Alexander Uribel argues that "the commercialization of Memorial Day in the years before the Great War became rampant. Advertisements by local merchants, perhaps fearing less the wrath of aging soldiers, blatantly coopted [sic] the images of Memorial Day to sell flags, shoes, suits, and other goods. L.S. Ayres . . . advertised a wide assortment of flags for sale, for all budgets." Uribel, "The Making of Citizens," 146; Foster, *Castles of Sand*, 76, 80.

¹⁷⁹ Uribel, "The Making of Citizens," 141.

GAR members of George Thomas Post 17 in Indianapolis worshipped at Central Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, where the Reverend A.B. Storms proclaimed that "a nation must have conscience and memory" in order to meet its "destiny."¹⁸⁰ A member of the Sons of Veterans began circulating a petition days after the event calling for a law against races on Memorial Day that was signed by many GAR members. Fisher and other track leaders acknowledged these protests and a public announcement was made that the 1912 race would be held on July 4 so as to not "overshadow the Memorial day tribute paid to the soldier dead." Nothing came of these plans, however, and the race continued to be held on Memorial Day.¹⁸¹

The protests continued throughout the 1910s. At the 1914 state GAR Encampment, Senior Vice Commander John H. Hoffman reinforced his belief that it was "the duty of the Grand Army everywhere to use its influence in every legitimate way to discourage all sports and amusements that in any way detract from the interest in Memorial Day." In 1915, suggestions were made by Spanish-American war veterans' to switch Memorial Day to the first Sunday in June so the race could continue to be held on May 30. GAR members refused to cede any ground, perhaps sensing a battle not all that different from the ones fought fifty years earlier. Former Indiana GAR Commander Gil R. Stormont wrote to the *Indianapolis News* complaining about the Spanish-American veterans efforts at petitioning the Indiana General Assembly to change the date. May 30, asserted Stormont, was "the one day of the 365 that the Grand Army has set apart as a memorial to the patriotic dead, *and they claim to have earned the right to this one day of*

¹⁸⁰ "Deplores Sports on Memorial Day," *Indianapolis Star*, May 29, 1911.

¹⁸¹ "To Bar Sports on May 30," *Indianapolis News*, June 1, 1911; "Would Bar Sports on Memorial Day," *Indianapolis Star*, June 1, 1911; "Speedway Picks July 4 Date," *Indianapolis Star*, June 3, 1911. Uribel, "The Making of Citizens," 143.

the year for the observance of this sacred day." In the minds of GAR members, "the Speedway has become a national desecration and an offense to all who have a true regard for the sentiments of Memorial day."¹⁸² If any event needed to be moved, argued Stormont, it was the Indianapolis 500, not the observance of Memorial Day.

Despite the Indiana GAR's loud complaints, the meaning of Memorial Day was changing in the minds of Hoosiers. Memorial Day was becoming a celebration of forward "progress," not a commemoration of past virtue. As Alexander Uribel asserts, Memorial Day celebrations in Indiana evolved to be "based on leisure, auto-races, and a fascination with spectacle, speed, and technology that was loosely rationalized as a new form of patriotic commemoration."¹⁸³ The 1899 *Indianapolis Journal* editorial that had applauded Memorial Day as a "permanent institution" for recalling "patriotic examples and the consideration of patriotic duties" was now replaced with editorials in Indianapolis papers cautioning against undue protests against the Indianapolis 500. The *Indianapolis News*, for example, complained that the 1911 petition to ban races on Memorial Day was "another example of the frenzy we have for regulating everything and everybody by law." While the values of "honor and good citizenship" were heartily endorsed by the *News*, education—not compulsory law—was the best method for promoting these values.¹⁸⁴

A 1913 editorial in the *Indianapolis Star* took a similar stance by suggesting that the GAR was acting "perhaps a little unreasonable" in their protests against the race. Remembering the soldiers of the Civil War and decorating their graves was important, but those who attended the race "are of the twentieth century; they are looking forward,

¹⁸² Indiana, *Thirty-Fifth* (1914), 71; "To Maintain Memorial Day," *Indianapolis News*, January 29, 1915, emphasis mine.

¹⁸³ Uribel, "The Making of Citizens," 146.

¹⁸⁴ "A Better Memorial Day," *Indianapolis News*, June 1, 1911.

not back as it is the nature of each generation to do." By attending the race, spectators actually "celebrate the triumph of invention and industry that of itself was made possible by the services of the veterans."¹⁸⁵ By spending money at the race and supporting Indianapolis businesses, the *Star* argued that race spectators actually honored the sacrifices of the Union dead by contributing to the economic success of the city.

After years of failed attempts to remove the race from the Memorial Day calendar, the Indiana GAR's state Encampment in 1922 sponsored a resolution protesting the "desecration of Memorial Day by automobile races heretofore held on our holy day." The GAR made a call to other military organizations such as the veterans of the Spanish American War (even though some members like Stormont distrusted them) and the recently created American Legion to protest the race. Realizing that "women [now] have equal rights with men" following the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote in 1920, the GAR also asked the Women's Relief Corps (an auxiliary organization of the GAR) to use their political voice to fight for a state law banning the running of the Indianapolis 500 race on Memorial Day.¹⁸⁶

The GAR's ongoing effort at petitioning the Indiana General Assembly to take action against the race finally led to the writing of a new bill for the 1923 legislative session. Authored by Indianapolis Senator Robert L. Moorehead—himself a veteran of the Spanish American War and World War I—the Moorehead Memorial Day bill aimed to ban all "commercialized sporting events," including the Indianapolis 500, on Memorial Day. If racetrack owners Carl G. Fischer and James A. Allison refused to switch the date of their race, legislators like Moorehead believed they had the constitutional power to

¹⁸⁵ [Untitled Editorial], *Indianapolis Star*, May 31, 1913.

¹⁸⁶ Indiana, *Forty-Third* (1922), 75.

control the types of events that took place on legal holidays and ban the race themselves.¹⁸⁷

Opinions on the measure were strongly divided and the bill was arguably the most contested piece of legislation during the 1923 session. The *Indianapolis News* followed the proceedings closely and reported that "the Statehouse was packed with lobbyists[,] and every means known to legislative procedure was used in efforts to advance or kill the measure." Religious groups like the Logansport Methodist Episcopal church passed resolutions in support of the bill, while Indianapolis Mayor and Republican Samuel Shank believed that "the time has come when the American People can well afford to take one day off to worship at the Shrine of Patriotism." By reflecting on the memories of "our soldier heroes of all wars," argued Shank, Hoosiers would "help checkmate radicals and anarchy in this country, and reestablish Memorial Day as it was originally intended."¹⁸⁸

Shank's concerns about "radicals and anarchy" were particularly acute because of the rampant labor disputes that took place during his time in office; the two-term mayor actually resigned from office during his first term in 1913 after continued labor strikes by streetcar and teamster workers in the city threatened to lead to his impeachment. Strikes were common in Indiana at the turn of the twentieth century, and as late as 1920 there

¹⁸⁷ "Way Sought to Save the Speedway Races," *Indianapolis News*, February 19, 1923. If the Moorehead bill passed, Representative Asa Smith was prepared to submit a bill that would give the Mayor of Indianapolis the right to declare any day of the year a legal holiday in Indianapolis. Smith explained that by allowing the Mayor to declare another day as a holiday for the purpose of holding the Indianapolis 500, "the bill is designed to protect the speedway in event the Moorehead bill passes."

¹⁸⁸ "Memorial Day Bill," *Indianapolis News*, March 6, 1923; "Praise Race Bill Vote," *Indianapolis News*, March 1, 1923; "Shank on Record for Race Bill," *Indianapolis News*, March 5, 1923; "Mayor Shank Quits," *New York Times*, November 29, 1913; David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., "Shank, Samuel Lewis (Lew)" in *The Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1254-1255.

were 99 strikes throughout the state, many in Indianapolis.¹⁸⁹ Given the high number of strikes in Indianapolis and a strong wave of anti-union sentiment from many of the city's most prominent businessmen, Shank's call to "restore" Memorial Day's purpose to that of honoring the dead may have reflected his desire to quiet labor unions or completely destroy them.¹⁹⁰ Remembering the soldiers who had fought to preserve "law and order" against Confederate secession in the Civil War and German aggression in World War I would inspire Hoosiers—especially those in labor unions who may have embraced "radical" political beliefs—to eschew ideologies like communism, socialism, and anarchism.

Throughout its history, many Indiana GAR members—reflecting their allegiances to the Republican party—vocalized their distrust of labor unions and socialism, and Shank's comments about the usefulness of Memorial Day as a "checkmate" against radicalism were undoubtedly supported by GAR leadership. In 1887, the Knights of Labor and the GAR in Terre Haute planned a series of Independence Day festivities, but a last minute change led to Robert Schilling of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, serving as the keynote speaker. Although himself a member of the Knights of Labor, Schilling's oratory was angrily boycotted by the GAR once it was discovered that he was a socialist. For the Indiana GAR, "socialism was not merely un-American, but apparently antithetical to the principles for which battles on behalf of the Union had been fought," argues Michael Kammen.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ In 1881, there were eleven strikes in Indiana. By 1903, that number jumped to 172, with 22,678 employees going on strike. Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 346-360.

¹⁹⁰ Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 346-350.

¹⁹¹ "Couldn't Stand Schilling," *New York Times*, July 5, 1887; Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 104.

Likewise, news of a national railroad strike (the Pullman Strike) in 1894 brought strong condemnation from Hoosier veterans. Department Commander Albert O. Marsh remarked that year that "dangerous and un-American doctrines" had nearly left "the entire country in disorder and bloodshed." Marsh stood in favor of "law and order," and he proudly proclaimed that the example of the Grand Army of the Republic had compelled Americans to "take a stand in favor of the enforcement of law, and the prevention by force of lawlessness and crime against life and property."¹⁹² Finally, just a few weeks before Memorial Day in 1919, GAR National Commander Clarendon E. Adams proclaimed in Elkhart that "the ideal of the Grand Army of the Republic is 'America—one country, one language, one flag,' and you must agree in this hour of unrest that we can not allow the red flag to prevail on American soil."¹⁹³ Apparently quiet reflection on Memorial Day would also ensure that America stayed free of socialism, communism, and labor strife.

Indiana GAR members continued to advocate for passage of the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill in 1923. GAR veteran Lewis King understood that there were two sides to the issue, "on the one side money, on the other sentiment." Thanks to the Indianapolis 500, "steam cars, interurban cars, and street cars will be filled to overflowing. Hotels, cafes and other eating places will handle many a dollar as a result." Making money was appropriate in its "proper place," but Memorial Day was not the place to do it, argued King. When Memorial Day was established by the GAR in 1868,

¹⁹² To be sure, some Indiana GAR members did support labor unions and perhaps even the tenets of socialism. The *American Tribune* remarked in 1890 that "we believe in labor federations. Since labor began to organize, the intelligence and prosperity of those concerned in the movement has improved fifty per cent, and it has not disturbed the prosperity and happiness of the rich either." [untitled editorial], *American Tribune*, September 5, 1890; Indiana, *Sixteenth* (1895), 110-111.

¹⁹³ Indiana, *Fortieth* (1919), 6-7; "G.A.R. Leader Scores Bolshevik Propaganda," *Indianapolis News*, May 7, 1919.

"we expected the American people would use their [leisure time] joining with us in its observance . . . we never expected to see our own state disgraced by the spectacle of a mighty sport enterprise laying hands on the day. If money wins this game, it will be a deep sorrow to at least some of us *who have not forgotten*. If sentiment wins it will indicate that patriotism and affection survive."¹⁹⁴ For King, no less than the fate of American patriotism and a proper love of country hung in the balance with the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill.¹⁹⁵

Despite vocal support from the Indiana GAR, there was much criticism of the bill from other organizations and politicians. Powerful interest groups like the Indianapolis Federation of Community Civil Clubs voiced opposition to the bill and resented the legislature's attempts to shut down the 500, which was arguably one of the largest money-making operations for the city of Indianapolis. Of the eleven members of the House of Representatives from Indianapolis, ten of them opposed the bill, including Russell B. Harrison, son of former U.S. President and Indiana GAR member Benjamin Harrison.¹⁹⁶

In Harrison's opinion, the bill did not go far enough. "This bill is so grossly unfair," announced Harrison at one legislative session, "that it is unconstitutional. It should include all amusements or none." For many veterans in Indianapolis, it seemed like the Indy 500 was nothing to be concerned about. Himself a veteran of the Spanish

¹⁹⁴ In his letter to the editor, King explained that he was in Florida, "Away Down South in Dixie." It is not clear if King had moved to Florida or was merely visiting the state at that time, but his use of the phrase "our own state disgraced" suggests that this may have been the Reverend Lewis King, who was a former state commander of the Indiana GAR and a member of the Isham Keith Post number 13, Columbus, Indiana. "Memorial Day Thoughts," *Indianapolis News*, February 20, 1923. Emphasis mine. Dennis Northcott, *Indiana Civil War Veterans: Transcription of the Death Rolls of the Department of Indiana, Grand Army of the Republic, 1882-1948* (St. Louis: NG Publications, 2005), 388.

¹⁹⁵ The remainder of this chapter will rely heavily upon primary sources. Secondary sources on the Indianapolis 500 and its relation to the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill are lacking. To my knowledge, this is the first analysis of the bill and its impact on the Grand Army of the Republic.

¹⁹⁶ "Race Bill Wends Way to Governor," *Indianapolis News*, February 28, 1923; "Way Sought to Save the Speedway Races."

American War, Harrison and his fellow comrades observed Memorial Day at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, roughly five miles east of the racetrack. He informed the legislature that "we are not bothered by the speedway races. No! We are bothered by two theaters, one on each side of the Monument. Bands are out playing in front of theaters while our services are in progress." Harrison challenged his fellow legislators by asking them, "how many of you who are going to vote for this bill can truthfully say you go to Memorial Day exercises every Memorial Day?"¹⁹⁷ Those who planned to vote in support of the Moorehead bill needed to understand that the owners of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway were not the only offenders of the unwritten rules of Memorial Day. Any legislative action would need to prohibit more activities if it was to be effective in educating people about the importance of properly observing the day in remembrance of the dead. Perhaps the legislators themselves would also benefit from an education about the nature of Memorial Day.

As already mentioned, enlisting the help of the American Legion was particularly important to the Indiana GAR in gaining support for a ban against the race. Following the end of World War I in 1918, Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.,—son of the former U.S. President—and a group of World War I military officers formed what would become the American Legion, a new fraternal organization for the veterans of that war. The American Legion was similar in some respect to the GAR; Lt. Col. George White, a leader during the organization's formative years, even referred to the Legion as "the new GAR." Much like the experience of combat during the Civil War, "World War I had given American soldiers a common experience and a sense of fraternity toward one

¹⁹⁷ "Memorial Bill is Passed by House," *Indianapolis News*, February 27, 1923.

another," helping to inspire the organization's formation, according to historian Dean J. Kotlowski.¹⁹⁸

Sharing similar concerns with the GAR about the rise of communism in Russia, Legion leaders feared that "left-wing doctrines might infect the restless troops" once they arrived home. To combat these threats, Legion leaders promoted "Americanism," the idea of "continued service to the nation," and pension benefits for World War I veterans. Furthermore, delegates from southern and western states at the Legion's inaugural convention in 1919 banded together with Hoosiers to have the Legion's national headquarters placed in Indianapolis, not Washington, D.C., so that the "poorest man in the country can come to the headquarters."¹⁹⁹ Despite the Indiana GAR's wish to enlist the help of the American Legion, a war of words emerged between members of both organizations.

Upon hearing that the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill was passed by both chambers of the General Assembly, a letter was published in the *Indianapolis News* that was signed by members of sixteen posts of the American Legion in Indianapolis and the surrounding area in Marion County. The letter was addressed to Governor Warren McCray and asked him to veto the bill. According to these Legion members, Hoosiers "do not require legislative direction in their private observance of Memorial Day . . . We ex-soldiers of Indiana bitterly resent the imputation that we have no respect for our comrades killed in action, and [we] deny any man and any force the right to use this

¹⁹⁸ Thomas R. Rumer, *The American Legion: An Official History, 1919-1989* (New York: M. Evans & Company, Inc., 1990), 33; Dean J. Kotlowski, "Launching a Political Career: Paul V. McNutt and the American Legion, 1919-1932," *Indiana Magazine of History* 106 (June 2010), 124-125.

¹⁹⁹ Kotlowski, "Launching a Political Career," 129; John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) 86.

sacred sentiment for political bombast." How one observed Memorial Day was a private affair, according to the letter writers. Defining the terms of patriotism and imposing those values upon the entire population through legislative fiat was decidedly un-American, something a despotic monarchy or authoritarian government in the "Old World" would do, but not "freedom-loving" America.²⁰⁰

An anonymous Civil War veteran sarcastically responded that he was surprised to see that the American Legion "now assume[d] to tell the Governor of the state what to do and to dictate to him as to where his duty lies" (the GAR had not done this through their support of the bill, apparently). According to the veteran, "honoring the memory of the men who made the American Legion possible" was now apparently considered "un-American and unpatriotic" by Legion members. The "egotism, arrogance and assumption[s]" of World War I veterans had led to a failed understanding of the "terms" of Memorial Day, according to the Civil War veteran, who signed his letter to the editor by describing himself as "A VETERAN OF THE (FROM THEIR STANDPOINT, OBSOLETE, FORGOTTEN AND NOT TO BE CONSIDERED) WAR FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REBELLION."²⁰¹

Another ex-soldier named "G.L.M." responded with a biting attack on the supporters of the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill. Correctly noting that the members of the House of Representatives from Indianapolis opposed the bill, "G.L.M." decried the bill as "class legislation," that unfairly targeted business interests that sought to earn a part of their living on Memorial Day. "I do not like the idea of the state legislature to point out to me what to do on Memorial day or any other day," the veteran complained.

²⁰⁰ "McCray's Action on Race Bill Awaited," *Indianapolis News*, February 27, 1923.

²⁰¹ "A Civil War Veteran's View," *Indianapolis News*, March 1, 1923. The author's name is capitalized in the original newspaper article.

In plain language directed towards supporters of the bill in the General Assembly (and the GAR, ostensibly), "G.L.M." asserted that "[the] bill was passed by a bunch of hicks, who were born and reared in some little jerk-water town, older than Indianapolis . . . these fellows are not accustomed to progress as we are." Supporters of the bill from rural areas in the state, argued the veteran, were ultimately "jealous of Indianapolis, our growing and prosperous city."²⁰² To have rural residents who lived far away from Indianapolis dictate the business activities of Indiana's most economically viable city was wrong, in the opinion of "G.L.M." In actuality, the Indianapolis 500 provided jobs, profits, and national attention to a growing city.

The term "class legislation" was used as a sort of code word by people like "G.L.M." in the nineteenth and early twentieth century to convey messages about legislation that was perceived as unfairly targeting certain groups in society, and the term was frequently used in discussions regarding the legality of legislation that favored tariff increases or labor regulations.²⁰³ Some newspaper editors in cities outside of Indianapolis used similar cries of unfairness to criticize the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill. The *Evansville Courier* remarked that "if the only form of recreation to be penalized was the Memorial Day race at Indianapolis, then it would appear, from a commonsense viewpoint and without any appeal to legal technicality, that the bill was class legislation." Meanwhile, the *Lafayette Journal* stated that "the danger point is reached when attempts

²⁰² "Disgust With Memorial Day Bill," *Indianapolis News*, March 2, 1923.

²⁰³ For example, in 1892 Democratic Indiana Governor Issac P. Gray criticized the McKinley Tariff, a piece of legislation passed in 1890 which raised tariff duties on imported goods to the United States such as tin-plate and wool. In criticizing the bill, Gray argued that this "extravagant . . . class legislation" would "enrich special private interests" and "protect special industries from competition." Likewise, former Indiana Governor and Vice President Thomas Marshall—also a Democrat—asserted in 1919 that "I believe that every inequality which exists in the social and economic condition of the American people is traceable to the successful demands of interested classes for class legislation." "Gov. Gray's Speech," *Jasper [Indiana] Weekly Courier*, July 8, 1892; "Vice President Marshall's Creed of Americanism," *Washington Times*, February 8, 1919.

are made to legislate against the plain constitutional rights of the citizen and to set up rules by laws restricting this or that class."²⁰⁴

In March 1923, Governor Warren McCray vetoed the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill, citing the same "class legislation" argument that opponents of the bill had vocalized in the legislature and the press. When the bill was returned to the General Assembly, the Senate voted to uphold the Governor's veto by a 35-5 vote. In a move to punish opponents of the bill within the American Legion, Indiana State Commander Perry Faulkner suspended the charter of the Skidmore-Dean Post in Indianapolis, suggesting the possibility that Legion members were divided in their support of the bill.²⁰⁵

This vocal division in the American Legion most likely played a role in shaping the opinions of Hoosiers in regards to the bill. As George Scarce remarked in 1913, a barrier existed between those who experienced the Civil War first hand and those who had only learned about the war in history books or ignored it completely. For these people, World War I became the conflict in which shared memories of the United States in combat were created and, as Barbara A. Gannon explains, "contemporary Americans understood that World War I soldiers and their tales of valor were displacing Civil War veterans."²⁰⁶ As the few remaining Civil War veterans still alive continued to age, American Legion members redefined what it meant to be a veteran in the United States, and a large part of this redefinition came in the form of new civic commemorations that were established by Legion members.

²⁰⁴ "Veto of the Memorial Day Bill," *Evansville Courier*, March 6, 1923; "The Speedway Bill," *Lafayette Journal*, March 6, 1923.

²⁰⁵ "Governor Vetoes Memorial Day Bill," *Indianapolis News*, March 6, 1923.

²⁰⁶ Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 188.

John Bodnar reminds us that the veterans of World War I, especially those who joined the American Legion, worked to create their own holiday on November 11, the day of Germany's surrender from the war. In the years after World War I, Armistice Day (now called Veterans' Day) overtook Memorial Day as the major celebration of the American veteran in the nation's commemorative landscape. "People did not normally parade on the Fourth of July or Memorial Day," argues Bodnar, "but they always did so, between the [world] wars in Indianapolis, on November 11th."²⁰⁷ Memorial Day was ultimately contested not only between veterans and non-veterans in Indiana, but between different veterans' groups as well. While veterans of the Civil War and World War I experienced a wide range of emotions about their memories of war, the contrasting nature of Memorial Day and Armistice Day is a topic not frequently analyzed by scholars today. GAR veterans desired to remember the past and reflect on the efforts of Union soldiers to save an imperiled nation from traitorous rebels. American Legion veterans sought a holiday that was more celebratory, one that reflected the nation's collective joy in defeating a German enemy that was viewed by many Americans as despotic and undemocratic. While GAR and American Legion members certainly supported each other's war efforts, how they chose to remember those wars were quite different from each other.

Two months after McCray's veto of the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill, the Indiana GAR held their annual state Encampment in Muncie. With a heavy heart, Comrade F.M. Van Pelt announced that "I believe that I reflect the sentiment of the entire department when I say the greatest disappointment of the year was the lack of consideration given to Memorial Day . . . a protection which we think it deserves."

²⁰⁷ Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 85.

Memorial Day was the "most sacred day of the entire year" and there was supposedly "universal appeal that came from the loyal law abiding people of the state" in support of the bill. Yet the "unfinished work" of ensuring that "sufficient safeguards are thrown around [Memorial Day]" would soon have to be left to the next generation. One could only hope that in the future, "the cry of class legislation will be consigned to the oblivion to which it belongs," argued Van Pelt.²⁰⁸

Seeking an opportunity to defend his patriotic reputation and explain his actions, Governor McCray traveled to Muncie to address the GAR at their Encampment. "I have a sacred reverence for the day designated as Memorial Day," announced McCray. "I always observe the proprieties of the occasion faithfully and reverently. To me the day revives certain distinct memories of my early boyhood."²⁰⁹ The type of patriotism demonstrated by Civil War soldiers—"devotion to duty and not personal choice"—was needed "today in public service," argued the governor. "The patriotism of peace," according to McCray, required "courage to do what you believe to be right and not inclination to follow the lines of least resistance."²¹⁰ What constituted "right," argued McCray, was a devotion to the nation, the state of Indiana, and their respective constitutions.

What had been right in the eyes of Governor McCray was a veto of the Memorial Day bill. Despite a strong sympathy for the views of the Indiana GAR, he was opposed to "placing an act in direct violation of that oath" into law. According to McCray and his

²⁰⁸ Indiana, *Forty-Forth* (1923), 48-49.

²⁰⁹ What sorts of memories McCray specifically refers to goes unstated, but it should be noted that McCray was born on February 4, 1865, three months before the official end of the American Civil War. Perhaps he is referring to the observation of Memorial Day services during his youth.

²¹⁰ In this quote, McCray is referring to concerns about political radicalism. Indiana, *Forty-Fourth* (1923), 78-79.

legal team, it was their "duty" to veto this unconstitutional legislation. The governor then concluded with several questions for his audience: "laws to be respected and observed must also be reasonable and fair. Is it right to single out a certain amusement and deny its right of existence, and at the same time permit other forms of amusement to operate without prejudice? Is there any reason why a circus, a theater, or a moving picture show should be permitted to give exhibitions without violating any law, and yet make it prohibitive under the law to hold a race of any kind? Is it justice for two to play golf in a tournament for a prize and the other for amusement only and yet one be guilty of law violation under the act and the other not?"²¹¹ Echoing the concerns of Russell B. Harrison, McCray believed the Moorehead Memorial Day Bill needed to ban all events or none at all. To ban the Indianapolis 500 while permitting other events on Memorial Day was discriminatory and illegal.

Following McCray's speech, Comrade Robert W. McBride rose to speak. An attorney and former Indiana Supreme Court Justice, McBride argued that "the explanation by the Governor is wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate." The Justice explained that there was a difference between "the consciousnessless [sic] profiteer who would rob us of the one day for the gratification of greed and a legitimate business with a theater or a motion picture show that operates day after day throughout the year." Such a difference, McBride believed, was akin to "piracy and honest business." To punish other "honest businesses" because of the Indianapolis 500's "desecration" of Memorial Day was not the intention of the Indiana GAR, and "the reason given by the Governor furnishes no excuse for denying the protection we ask." The proper observation of Memorial Day "testifies to the world that we as a people *have not forgotten nor have we forgotten the*

²¹¹ Indiana, *Forty-Fourth* (1923), 78-79.

men who offered their lives that the Republic might be."²¹² To the Indiana GAR, the Indianapolis 500 violated the sacred relationship between the Union dead and those who lived to reap the benefits of their victory over disunion and treason. Relegating Memorial Day to a day of trivial amusements would lead to a society unpatriotically forgetting about its past.

The story of the Indiana GAR, Memorial Day, and the Indianapolis 500 raises questions about the nature of patriotism, commemoration, and who defines and regulates these practices. This story also demonstrates how historical memory constantly evolves and alters over time. In an analysis of World War I commemorations in Europe, historian Jay Winter outlines a three-phase process by which commemorative practices evolve as new generations replace old ones: the "creative" phase, the "institutional" phase, and the "transformational" phase.²¹³ This process helps to explain the Indiana GAR's attempt to control Memorial Day and the historical memories of the Union dead after the war. During the initial postwar period, memories of the dead triggered a "creative" phase in which the GAR 's collective desire for public commemoration led to the establishment of Memorial Day and the unveiling of its inaugural rituals in 1868. By 1900, repeated rituals "institutionalized" Memorial Day practices and solidified the holiday's place in America's commemorative landscape. Finally, the establishment of the Indianapolis 500 ushered in

²¹² Indiana, *Forty-Fourth* (1923), 81; "Voices Criticisms of Governor's Veto of the Memorial Day Bill," *Indianapolis Star*, April 23, 1923. Emphasis mine. For more info on McBride, see Linda C. Gugin and James E. St. Clair, eds., *Justices of the Indiana Supreme Court* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 2011); Indiana Supreme Court, "Justice Biographies: Justice Robert Wesley McBride." <http://www.in.gov/judiciary/citc/2768.htm>. Accessed July 12, 2013. McBride also wrote an account of his time as a personal bodyguard for President Abraham Lincoln for six months while serving in an Ohio Cavalry Regiment. See Robert W. McBride, *Lincoln's Body Guard: The Union Light Guard of Ohio, With Some Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln* (Indianapolis: Edward J. Hecker, Printer, 1911).

²¹³ Jay Winter, "Remembrance and Redemption: A Social Interpretation of War Memorials," *Harvard Design Magazine* (Fall 1999), 71-77.

the "transformational" phase, a phase in which later generations inherited Memorial Day and used the holiday to convey their own interpretations, memories, and rituals into society's collective past.²¹⁴

During this transformation, the memories of Indiana GAR veterans still alive in the 1910s and 1920s were directly challenged by younger generations seeking to find their own methods for coming to terms with the past. The Indiana GAR's efforts to turn back the clock and remove all "distractions" from Memorial Day failed partly because many of its creators had died, but also because those GAR members still living were seen as less significant to society's memories of its Civil War dead.²¹⁵ Indeed, the Indiana GAR's failure alerts us to just how fragile and temporary our memories of the past really are.

²¹⁴ For extended discussions on history and memory, see Karen E. Till, "Memory Studies," *History Workshop Journal*, Issue 62 (Autumn 2006), 325-341; Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²¹⁵ It is significant to note Governor McCray's comments focus on remembering the veterans during his boyhood, which suggests the possibility that GAR veterans represented a remote past detached from the present in McCray's mind.

Chapter Three: Patriotic Instruction in Indiana Public Schools

The Indiana General Assembly during the 1890s passed a series of laws aimed at raising education standards in the state's public schools. By 1897 all children between eight and fourteen years old were required to attend school at least twelve weeks a year, while another law in 1907 set the minimum annual salary of \$450 for all public school teachers.²¹⁶ The Indiana Department of Public Instruction also revised its qualifications for teachers and began to regularly distribute curriculum guides for public school teachers.²¹⁷ Whether or not public school teachers utilized these curriculum-guides or if the guides were effective in educating students is nearly impossible to determine. Historians, however, can examine these documents to gain insights into the values and beliefs of educational leaders at the time. As the Department of Public Instruction took a more active role in overseeing public education initiatives in Indiana, questions emerged about the shape of the state's curricula standards. What subjects were deemed most important for teaching students? What preferred learning theories and methods were used to convey educational content? What do these curriculum guides say about society as a whole?

One notably revealing curriculum guide was written by Linnaeus N. Hayes, the Superintendent of Public Instruction for Indiana in 1921. This particular "manual" was

²¹⁶ Justin E. Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, 1816-1978* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987), 393-394. Out of all forty-eight states in the Union in 1918 (when Mississippi became the last state to mandate compulsory education), Indiana was the thirtieth state to pass a compulsory education law. Iowa (1902) was the only other Northern state besides Indiana to not have an attendance law until 1897. See John G. Richardson, "Variation in Date of Enactment of Compulsory School Attendance Laws: An Empirical Inquiry," *Sociology of Education* 53, no. 3 (July 1980), 157.

²¹⁷ For example, see Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Uniform Course of Study for the High Schools of Indiana* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1915). Indiana State Library; Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Uniform Course of Study for the Elementary Schools of Indiana* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1916). Indiana State Library.

written for elementary teachers throughout the state, and it included instructions for raising the American flag, saying the Pledge of Allegiance, and a list of recommended textbooks for subjects like math, science, and history. Most significantly, the manual included a section for teachers about "Americanization." Hayes explained to his readers that Americanization required all Americans to demonstrate "an increased devotion to our nation and a desire to grasp more firmly its fundamental principles." The country's leaders needed the support of the American people to spread democracy at home and abroad in the wake of World War I. Schools could play a pivotal role in ensuring that younger students—especially those born to immigrants—could understand America's "fundamental principles" and democratic values. "Americanization," argued Hayes, "is an effort to understand, to appreciate, and partake of the best in American life and thought. It is an effort. . . [to] enable [immigrants] to become an integral part of America and its life."²¹⁸

Hayes also included in the manual a 1919 speech given by former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Franklin Knight Lane as part of a national Americanization movement. In the speech, Lane used his understanding of American history to argue that "the right of revolution does not exist in America. We had a revolution 140 years ago which made it unnecessary to have any other revolution in this country . . . one of the many meanings of democracy is that it is a form of government in which the right of revolution has been lost by giving the government wholly to the people." Americans, according to Lane, had defeated British autocratic rule in the Revolutionary War, Confederate attempts at secession in the Civil War, and the German Kaiser in World War I. Through these efforts,

²¹⁸ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Manual with Courses of Study for the Elementary Schools of Indiana* (Fort Wayne, IN: Fort Wayne Printing Company, 1921), 266-267. Indiana State Library.

Lane believed America's leaders had established the foundations of American citizenship on a horizontal plane of popular sovereignty and gradual universal suffrage—not a vertical hierarchy based on autocratic or religious political dominance.²¹⁹

American democracy was in the process of perfecting itself, argued Lane, and any radical political movement that disturbed the social order and "the popular will" was akin to a revolt against America. "Americanism [means] . . . that we have repudiated old European methods of settling domestic questions, and have evolved for ourselves machinery by which revolution as a method of changing our life is out-grown, abandoned, outlawed."²²⁰ Through this speech and the entire "Americanization" section of the manual, Haynes called for Indiana's elementary educators to teach their students a form of American nationalism—"one nation, one flag, one language"—that portrayed the nation's leaders as dedicated to democratic principles.

Lessons on United States history, citizenship, and patriotism are commonplace in American public schools today. Such lessons, however, were not an integral component of public education until the late 1800s and early 1900s. Charles W. Moores Jr., an Indianapolis lawyer and devoted Republican, spoke frequently at public school dedication ceremonies in the city, justifying his support for public education by suggesting that schools paved the way to good citizenship and patriotism. In an undated speech most likely given between 1901 and 1916, Moores argued that "many a school boy gets his only possible ideals of conduct from contact with the greatest of democracies. The public school is his home, his church, his state. It molds him and it

²¹⁹ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Manual with Courses of Study for the Elementary Schools of Indiana*, 268. For more on nationalism and citizenship in a "horizontal" structure, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 7.

²²⁰ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Manual with Courses of Study for the Elementary Schools of Indiana*, 269.

makes him."²²¹ What accounted for this newfound emphasis on "patriotic instruction" in public schools during this period? Among Indiana's political and educational leaders, two parallel desires—"Americanizing" new immigrants and promoting patriotic sentiments in young children—drove many of these changes. The original impetus for patriotic instruction in Indiana, however, was due in large part to the efforts of the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana.

As Department Commander Daniel R. Lucas announced in 1905, the GAR was "an organization that never had in its ranks a man who was a traitor to his country, never had a man who deserted the flag in a time of peril."²²² Starting in 1884, Indiana GAR members took an acute interest in promoting patriotic instruction in public schools amid a wave of foreign-born immigrants coming to the state and the emergence of a new generation of students who had not experienced the Civil War firsthand. As saviors of the Union, GAR veterans used their patriotic credentials during the Gilded Age and Progressive Eras to position themselves as leaders in what one historian describes as "the making of citizens."²²³ This chapter will briefly summarize the history of education in Indiana, analyze the emergence of patriotic instruction in Indiana public schools from 1880 to 1925, and describe the origins of the GAR's interest in this movement. GAR efforts to promote patriotic instruction during this time took on three distinct visions: first, to promote the use of school textbooks with a "correct" and "truthful" account of the American Civil War; second, advocacy for displaying the American flag and hosting

²²¹ Charles W. Moores, Jr. "[untitled speech]," 3. Charles W. Moores, Jr. Papers, 1901-1916. MSS Collection 5982. Records housed in Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, Indiana State Library. Indianapolis, IN.

²²² Indiana, *Twenty-Sixth* (1905), 76.

²²³ Alexander Uribe, "The Making of Citizens: A History of Civic Education in Indianapolis, 1900-1950" (PhD Diss., Indiana University, 1996), 111. ProQuest (AAT 9637577).

lavish patriotic rituals at every public school; third, the collective desire to implement "military instruction" for young boys during the school day.

When Indiana achieved statehood in 1816, Article IX, Section 2, of its original constitution stipulated that the General Assembly would provide for a system of common schools throughout the state "as soon as circumstances permit."²²⁴ Some public schools were established in the state during the period of its first constitution (1816-1851), however, a common school system was never created, and the teaching of history or patriotic instruction rarely occurred. Describing the quality of education in Indiana during this period, future president Abraham Lincoln remarked that "there was absolutely nothing to excite ambition for education[;] somehow, I could read, write, and cipher to the rule of three; but that was all."²²⁵ A school law was passed in 1852 making public schools mandatory in every township following the creation of a revised state constitution the previous year, but the Democrat-leaning Indiana Supreme Court ruled in 1854 that a provision transferring tax funds from a Congressional Township Fund to the newly created "general school fund" was unconstitutional. The state Supreme Court also took a

²²⁴ Indiana Historical Bureau, "Article IX." Accessed October 12, 2013, <http://www.in.gov/history/2874.htm>.

²²⁵ Lincoln quoted in Scott Walter, "'Awakening the Public Mind': The Dissemination of the Common School Idea in Indiana," William J. Reese, ed., *Hoosier Schools: Past and Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 4. See also Roy P. Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Volume 3* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 511-512. David Van Tassel points out that prior to 1820, American students studied Greek and Roman history (if they studied history at all). "The patriotic clamor for a national literature, a national history, and a national character" led to the writing of popular American histories from authors such as Jared Sparks, George Bancroft, and Francis Parkman in the 1830s, and the Indiana Historical Society was formed in 1830. However, the impact of these histories in Indiana public schools was undoubtedly limited; American history did not become a required course of instruction in the state's public schools until 1869. David Van Tassel, *Recording America's Past: An Interpretation of the Development of Historical Studies in America, 1607-1884* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 88, 96, 111.

similar action in 1860 when it found that the collection of taxes for public education was also unconstitutional.²²⁶

Popular support for public education was also tenuous during this period. Fassett A. Cotton, Indiana's Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1903 to 1909, acknowledged that "illiteracy grew apace" during the antebellum years and attributed this educational apathy to his belief that "the people were busy felling forests and draining swamps, and making for themselves homes."²²⁷ In actuality, the fear of taxation and the loss of local control to a state-run educational system drove much of the opposition to public education in the Hoosier state. One Democratic member of the General Assembly expressed these fears in 1837 when he shouted, "when I die I want my epitaph written, 'Here lies an enemy to free schools'." Such critics rejected the notion of a uniform course of study beyond reading, writing, and arithmetic, and any study of a national history of America was most likely very limited.²²⁸

²²⁶ The office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction was established through the revised constitution of 1851. The Superintendent was tasked with overseeing the funds in the "general school fund" and making recommendations to the Governor and Indiana General Assembly on educational matters. An 1873 law gave the Superintendent the power to recommend textbooks for classroom use, but the final decision ultimately rested with local county Boards of Education throughout the state. Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly*, 248; Alexander Uribe, "The Making of Citizens," 28-29; Indiana Legislative Bureau, "What has been done in Indiana for public education, 1912," 18-19. MSS Records I385. Records housed in Rare Books & Manuscripts, Indiana State Library. Indianapolis, IN.

²²⁷ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1905), 17. Indiana State Library.

²²⁸ Walter, "Awakening the Public Mind," 6; Richard G. Boone, *A History of Education in Indiana* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 87, 362-364. In 1917, the Indiana Department of Public Instruction included a brief history of education in each county of the state in their biennial report. During the antebellum period in Marion county, "the teacher was some farm man who taught some six or eight weeks in the winter time when the weather was too bad to do anything out doors. He taught the subjects that he thought he knew most about or those that he liked the best." Meanwhile, voters in Orange County rejected public funding for public schools on three separate occasions in 1848 due to fears of increased taxation, while voters in Monroe county rejected a motion to fund public schools within the county in 1849. Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Eighth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1917), 399, 412, 425. Indiana State Library.

Republicans gained control of the Indiana General Assembly and the Indiana Supreme Court in 1865. That year a state school law establishing a common school system was finally passed and deemed constitutional by the Supreme Court. Superintendent George Washington Hoss (1865-1868), although himself a Democrat, advocated for the inclusion of U.S. history as a required course of study for all Hoosier students because of its "practical" nature. U.S. history was added to the curriculum in 1869, although there were still school districts that had not embraced teaching the subject by the end of the nineteenth century.²²⁹ By 1900, years of curriculum reform, enhanced standards for teacher education, school consolidation, comprehensive tax legislation, and the aforementioned 1897 compulsory attendance law made Indiana public schools an integral part of the lives of many Hoosier children and their parents.²³⁰

Why did public schooling gain such widespread acceptance in the years after the Civil War? Part of the reason lay with the economic changes brought on by industrialization. Superintendent Cotton explained in 1906 that public schools were essential to society because "the demand of the twentieth century is for an education that is really practical. It is for an education that will prepare for complete living." Most children before the war (including future Civil War soldiers who later became GAR members) grew up working on farms; sometimes these children received some sort of

²²⁹ For example, Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd's study of "Middletown, U.S.A." (which was actually Muncie, Indiana) includes a curriculum guide for Delaware County schools. History is not included in the course of study for the year 1890, but "Civic Training" and "History and Civics" were included by the year 1924. Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Modern American Culture* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1929), 189; Hubert M. Skinner, "George Washington Hoss," *Indiana School Journal* 29, no.6 (June 1884), 295-300. Ted Stahly, "Curricular Reform in an Industrial Age," in William J. Reese, ed., *Hoosier Schools: Past and Present* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 57.

²³⁰ Stahly, "Curricular Reform in an Industrial Age," 57; Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly*, 248, 393-394; Clifton J. Phillips, *Indiana in Transition: The Emergence of an Industrial Commonwealth, 1880-1920* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau & Indiana Historical Society, 1968), 386, 389.

education from their parents or a traveling teacher, while at other times they received no education. Industrialization, however, saw more Hoosiers employed in manufacturing, mechanical trades, transportation, and mining industries. In 1890, 44.5 percent of the working population was employed on farms; by 1920 this number dropped to 26.3 percent.²³¹ Many new industrial jobs required skills and training that could not be taught at home. Education leaders like Cotton successfully argued that public schools could provide training to students planning to enter the workforce upon reaching adulthood.

Public education and more specifically the teaching of U.S. history also gained importance because of the rising tide of immigration to the United States that emerged in the wake of industrialization. Prior to 1880 most foreign born immigrants to America came from Western or Northern European countries such as England, France, Ireland, and Germany. From 1880 to 1920, however, most of the 23 million immigrants to America came from countries in Southern or Eastern Europe such as Italy, Greece, Poland, Romania, and Austria-Hungary. Many of these immigrants were practicing Catholics, not Protestants like the majority of native-born citizens. Lacking many of the government agencies and social safety nets that would emerge during the Great Depression of the 1930s, public schools in the first quarter of the twentieth century were viewed as social incubators that would promote democracy and good citizenship.²³² Through public education, according to one writer for an Indiana education journal in 1896, children—especially those of immigrant parents and/or residents of urban cities

²³¹ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1906), 7. Indiana State Library; Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 323.

²³² Joel M. Roitman, *The Immigrants, the Progressives, and the Schools: Americanization and the Impact of the New Immigration Upon Public Schools in the United States, 1890-1920* (Stark, KS: De Young Press, 1996), 1-2, 16; Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*. 2nd Edition. (New York: Perennial Publishing, 2002), 124-125, 185-237.

like Indianapolis—would be taken out of the industrial factory and off the streets, where crime, vice, and political radicalism "tempted" young people who were "devoid of every sense of right."²³³

Teaching United States history, it was believed, would instill pride in the United States and obedience to its leaders. In her analysis of the Civil War and the rise of postwar American nationalism, historian Susan-Mary Grant argues that "Americans . . . sought to discover their past and reinterpret it in such a way as to give meaning to their present and direction to their future." Through this process Americans "turned to their history in order to support their national claims and support their national ambitions."²³⁴ Although the foreign born population of Indiana from 1880 to 1920 never exceeded ten percent of the total population, educational leaders in the Hoosier state nevertheless advocated for the teaching of history as a means for "bolstering community solidarity against sundry divisive tendencies" brought on by the perceived threats of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration.²³⁵ A. R. Charman argued in 1896 that

²³³ McHenry Rhoads, the Superintendent of Public Schools in Frankfort, Kentucky, broke society into three classes: "those who commit no crime," "those who are not stable in right doing, [with an] imperfect education and low sense of morality," and "those . . . engaged merely in the animal struggle for existence, inherit from their parents and transmit to their children a morally diseased organism, which in itself is the parent of increased degradation." Arthur W. Dunn, a history and civics educator in Indianapolis, echoed these ideas and argued that "it is a mistake to think that the school is merely a place to prepare for life. It is life. School children are doing just what the community expects them to be doing during their time of life." See McHenry Rhoads, "Education and Crime," *The Inland Educator* 3, no. 5 (December 1896), 235-238; Arthur W. Dunn, *The Community and the Citizen* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., Publishers, 1907), 125.

²³⁴ Susan-Mary Grant, "The Charter of its Birthright: The Civil War and American Nationalism" in Susan-Mary Grant and Peter J. Parish, eds., *The Legacy of Disunion: The Enduring Significance of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 2003), 193.

²³⁵ In 1880, 7.3 percent of the population was foreign-born in Indiana as compared to Ohio (12.3), Illinois, (18.9), and Michigan (23.7). By 1920, the percentage of foreign-born population in Indiana dropped to 5.1 percent, while Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan continued to have foreign-born populations above ten percent (see appendix for more details). Alexander Uribe has argued that the low percentage of foreign-born residents in Indiana is partly due to the hostility of businesses towards immigrants. For example, "Indianapolis business leaders were proud of the fact that there was 'almost a total absence of the foreign floating element, and of the disturbances frequently found in the various seaboard and interior parts.'" Many industrial jobs in Indianapolis were filled by African Americans who had either migrated from rural farms in southern Indiana or southern states such as Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina. See Department of

U.S. history would "stimulate in the pupil an interest in the life of the race and his own nation" and a "proper conception of the nation and his participation and responsibility to it." That same year State Education Superintendent David Geeting asserted that history would strengthen the relationship between students and what he believed to be "institutions" integral to American democracy such as "the family, business, the church, the State and the School." Additionally, the study of "heroic" individuals would "furnish to the children a stimulating ideal of manhood and womanhood."²³⁶ Finally, teaching U.S. history would educate students about the "struggles and triumphs" of those who fought to establish American democracy.

Amid this educational context, Indiana GAR members used their past experiences and membership badges to wedge themselves into a larger discussion about the use of history as a means for teaching "patriotic instruction," which one out-of-state member defined as "a concentration of effort to promote the teaching of patriotism to the children in the schools."²³⁷ Historians have argued that the impetus for the GAR's interest in patriotic instruction stemmed from an ongoing feud with the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) over the teaching of the "correct" history of the American Civil War in public schools.²³⁸ This interpretation is largely correct. During the Gilded Age and

Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920, Volume III* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1922), 244,261,297, 303,474,488,768,784; Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Report on Population of the United States at the Eleventh Census: 1890.Part One* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office 1895), 2; Uribel, "The Making of Citizens," 19-26; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana Before 1900*. 2nd Edition. (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1985), 229; quotation from Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown*, 196.

²³⁶ A.R. Charman, "Methods in History," *The Inland Educator* 3, no. 4 (November 1896), 211-214; Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Forty-Second Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Being the Eighteenth Biennial Report* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1896), 54-62. Indiana State Library.

²³⁷ *Forty-Sixth National* (1912), 173.

²³⁸ Susan-Mary Grant aptly describes this feud by explaining that "the G.A.R. wished both to promulgate a 'correct' version of the war as one between good (Union) and bad (Confederate) forces and at the same time to create a consensus view of the Civil War and the American nation that could function in a genuinely

Progressive Era, GAR and UCV members debated with each other over whose war memories were more "authentic" and who was entitled to speak on behalf of the past. However, the roles of industrialization and immigration in shaping the memories of Civil War veterans has not frequently entered the secondary literature on Civil War memory.

The push for teaching patriotic instruction in Indiana coincided with a vocal distrust of new immigrants from GAR members. This concern was just as pressing to members as the need to teach students about the Won Cause interpretation of the Civil War. An 1890 speech from GAR National Commander Russell B. Alger to Indiana GAR members captured the heart of the matter for many veterans. In the speech Alger complained that since the end of the war in 1865, "the country has been flooded with people from other nations who care nothing for our wants." According to Alger, these new immigrants had failed to understand America's democratic values by supposedly retaining their allegiances to the Catholic Pope and the European kings of their native countries instead of transferring their loyalty to the United States government.²³⁹

That same year, the *American Tribune*—a veterans newspaper published in Indianapolis and staffed by Indiana GAR members—complained that the nation's immigration laws allowed for "filthy scums of other nations to be dumped upon our

national way." The UCV engaged in the same actions. Grant, "The Charter of its Birthright," 202. See also James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union & Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 277; 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), 147; James McPherson, "Long-Legged Yankee Lies,': The Southern Textbook Crusade" in Alice Fahs & Joan Waugh, *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 64-78; Wallace Evan Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans' and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 234.²³⁹ Indiana, *Eleventh* (1890), 84-87. Indiana GAR member and former President Benjamin Harrison addressed immigration, human rights, and American nationalism in a speech entitled "Hail, Columbia" at the turn of the century. Harrison argued that "what kings and parliaments had given, they could take away. And so our fathers were driven to claim a divine endowment, and to allow it to all men, since God had made all of one blood . . . The grand conclusion—no king or parliament can rightfully take God's gift of liberty from any man—was thus riveted to the eternal throne itself." Harrison quoted in Hans Kohn, *American Nationalism: An Interpretive Essay* (New York: Collier Books, 1957), 21.

shores to feed and fester upon our healthy prosperity!" Foreign born "rotten banana sellers, thieving rag dealers, Italian organ grinders, Chinese washmen and Bohemian coal miners" had pitiful aspirations that would "make an American dog vomit" and, according to the *Tribune*, they were allegedly responsible for "over one-half of all the criminals of this country." A few months later the *Tribune* accused the city's Italian population of being dirty, unintelligent, and greedy. "[They] hoard their savings until they amass a few thousand dollars when they immediately return to Italy[,] adopt a title of some sort and marry their eldest sons to our Mary Andersons . . . how long, Oh! Lord! how long will a patient Christian community put up with these Italian street-peddlers of bananas?"²⁴⁰

GAR members also expressed their concerns about immigration at state and national Encampment meetings. Indiana GAR members in 1892 joined their comrades around the country in supporting a committee report at that year's national meeting that questioned "whether some restriction [should] be placed upon that portion of the tide of immigration . . . which represents only the poverty and the crime of other lands." At the 1918 state Encampment—held months before the end of World War I—Comrade William F. Medsker of Cambridge City Post 179 proclaimed that if he found any German who openly supported the Kaiser lurking in the state, he would challenge him to a duel, "lead him off to some secluded spot, and I would kill him. That is the way I would do every German sympathizer."²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ [Untitled Editorial], *American Tribune*, July 11, 1890; [Untitled Editorial], *American Tribune*, October 25, 1890. For an analysis of ethnic identity, assimilation, and popular media depictions of immigrants during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era, see Kerry Soper, "From Swarthy Ape to Sympathetic Everyman and Subversive Trickster: The Development of Irish Caricature in American Comic Strips between 1890 and 1920," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 2 (August 2005), 257-296.

²⁴¹ *Twenty-Sixth National* (1892), 82; Indiana, *Thirty-Ninth* (1918), 131.

Medsker's outright hostility to Germans (regardless of whether they were native or foreign-born) continued in the years after World War I. The 1921 state Encampment in Newcastle was essentially a popularity contest in which speakers competed to see who was most dedicated to promoting Americanization. Methodist minister and Comrade Daniel Ryan announced that if any Irish or German immigrant "comes to this country with his stomach and leaves his heart back in his native country, then I tell him to take his stomach back where his heart is." The ironically-named "Mrs. Irish" of the Women's Relief Corps followed by commenting that "when a foreigner comes to this country he should become a true American." Meanwhile, Department Commander Robert W. McBride declared his exasperation with what he called "hyphenated Americanism." "I [don't] want an Irish-American, a German-American, a Russian-American, or any kind of American except an American . . . I don't want anybody to sing 'Erin go Bragh' or 'Deutschland Über Alles.' When there is singing to be done in this country I want all the people to stand up and sing 'My Country 'tis of Thee' . . . [and] 'The Star Spangled Banner'. . . I want the hyphen done away with." America, according to McBride, was composed of one nation, one flag, and one language.²⁴²

Foreign-born immigrants—especially those from the British Isles and Germany—had fought in the Union military and joined the GAR in the war's aftermath. There was "little rancor over nationality" in the GAR before the post-1880 wave of immigrants, according to Stuart McConnell. In fact, members like Bavarian-born Henry Sponsell

²⁴² *Forty-Second* (1921), 18-23. Such comments raise questions about the possible involvement of Indiana GAR members in the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana during the 1920s. Leonard J. Moore points out that Joseph M. Huffington, an early Klan leader in Indiana, started his recruiting efforts in Evansville and Vanderburgh County. Huffington "circulated among groups of Evansville veterans" who were "a natural target for Klan recruiters," according to Moore. Whether these veterans were members of the GAR or the American Legion is unknown. Moore also fails to explain why veterans were "a natural target" for Klan recruiting efforts. See Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansman: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 14.

were charter members of local posts throughout the country. Sponsell, a veteran of the 21st Indiana Infantry and a member of George H. Chapman Post 209 in Indianapolis, remarked in 1883 that the most important event of his military service was "doing my duty as a True Soldier in defense of my Adopted County and its Flag." Foreign-born GAR members were respected within the organization and perhaps even shared the same distrust of newer immigrants that native members had. The fury of rage directed towards Germans during and after World War I, however, signaled a new target for GAR Americanization efforts. How foreign-born GAR members like Sponsell (who died in 1911) responded to these efforts is unknown, but questions of allegiance, identity, and patriotism may have emerged within the larger discourse on Americanization.²⁴³ Did these foreign-born members completely disavow their allegiances to their native homelands, or did they continue to embrace a degree of patriotism towards the Old World after the war? Did the GAR make a distinction between German immigrants of the antebellum era and the immigrants of the post-1880 movement?

In an effort to blot out the "hyphenated Americanism" that McBride complained of, the GAR resorted to advocacy for patriotic instruction as a means to instill order and obedience in society, especially children. Stuart McConnell argues that GAR members sought to "hold fast to an older image" of the United States that romanticized the country's past, but the unprecedented nature of this movement demonstrates that patriotic instruction was equally focused on the creation of new patriotic rituals and teachings for

²⁴³ Sponsell's reminiscences were captured in a hand-written book given to the George H. Chapman Post as a gift in 1883. This book is a valuable resource for scholars of Civil War memories, as all members were asked to reflect on their most significant memory of the war. See Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, "Personal War Sketches of the Members of Geo. H. Chapman Post No. 209 of Indianapolis, 1883-1903." MSS BV 3055. Indiana Historical Society. Indianapolis, IN., 16; Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 208-209.

present-day classrooms as much as it was about focusing on the past.²⁴⁴ The editors of the *American Tribune* expressed their hope in 1893 that "the lessons taught by the salute [and pledge] to the flag will remain indelibly fixed in [childrens'] minds . . . as sacredly remembered as 'Now I lay me down to sleep' and 'Our Father who art in Heaven'." Comrade Wallace Foster, one of the most vocal advocates of patriotic instruction in Indiana, wrote in his own "patriotic primer" that teachers had to "introduce American citizenship, patriotic history, inspiring literature and music . . . if we desire to make our boys and girls good citizens." Only then would students learn that "the first step in learning to govern ourselves is to learn how to obey—to be OBEDIENT TO GOVERNMENT."²⁴⁵ GAR veterans' memories may have reflected an older image of the nation before the Gilded Age, but that image accompanied the belief that teaching U.S. history and good citizenship would ensure that America's *future* was based on a firm, patriotic foundation.

The GAR's efforts at patriotic instruction demonstrate that Union veterans were just as concerned as Confederate veterans about questions of truth and representation in historical memory. Historian James McPherson argues that "Confederate veterans felt an even greater need [than Union veterans] to . . . inspire future generations with the nobility of their cause," but he makes this assertion without citing any documentation related to the efforts of the GAR in promoting its own version of patriotism and memory.²⁴⁶ In actuality, Indiana GAR members never publicly expressed any fears about the possibility of public school teachers educating their students about the Lost Cause. These Hoosier

²⁴⁴ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, xv.

²⁴⁵ "Patriotic Teaching," *American Tribune*, December 21, 1893; Wallace Foster, *A Patriotic Primer for the Little Citizen* (Indianapolis: Levey Brothers & Co., 1898), 10-12.

²⁴⁶ McPherson, "Long-Legged Yankee Lies," 64.

veterans, however, understood that new memories of the war were being actively created in the minds of a younger generation that had not experienced the war firsthand.²⁴⁷ As the Civil War receded into the depths of time, Indiana GAR members expressed concerns about the Civil War material (or lack thereof) presented in Hoosier students' history textbooks. These concerns included the lack of space dedicated to Civil War history, "incorrect" interpretations of Confederate secession and battlefield successes, unfair representations of Northerners during the war, and books that failed to distinguish between "right and wrong" through their bland, fact-based delivery of history.

The issue of questionable interpretations of Civil War history in classroom textbooks made its debut in the national order of the Grand Army of the Republic in 1884. Members of the Department of Indiana that year complained that teachers in Indianapolis public schools were neglecting the history of the Civil War in their lessons.²⁴⁸ The Washington, D.C.-based Union veterans' paper *National Tribune* griped that such an oversight was "a direct insult to the memory of the dead." Indianapolis teachers, argued the *Tribune*, "seem to be averse to making the story of the slaveholders' rebellion a subject of serious study" because they feared the political repercussions of bringing up memories of the war in class. The teachers were "afraid of wounding somebody's feelings, and the result is that thousands of our youth are growing up with only the vaguest ideas as to the origin and character of the great struggle in which the perpetuity of the Republic was at stake." A generation "devoid of any sincere attachment

²⁴⁷ On memory as an active, ongoing process, see Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, "Introduction: Contested Paths," in Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone, eds., *Contested Paths: The Politics of Memory* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1-22.

²⁴⁸ Mary R. Dearing points out that concerns over Civil War classroom instruction stemmed from a larger effort in the GAR to "keep veterans before the public as the nation's saviors in order to win popular assent to pension legislation." I argue in the introduction of this thesis that a more complete understanding of the GAR requires an exploration into how the GAR made sense of its past. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 402-403.

for the Republic or republican institutions," it was believed, would emerge if the war's causes, context, and consequences were ignored by history teachers.²⁴⁹

Perhaps in response to these GAR complaints, Civil War history became a more prominent unit of study in the 1890s for eighth grade history in Indiana. Superintendent of Public Instruction David Geeting remarked in 1896 that the Civil War could "furnish material for valuable study" in the classroom, including "the reconstruction of the states, the Ku Klux Klan, the race problem . . . [and] temperance reform."²⁵⁰ GAR veterans nevertheless still complained about too little time dedicated to the war's history. Comrade F.M. Van Pelt recommended in 1910 that schools and "literary clubs" give "less time in hunting among the dusty cobwebs of the old world, and more time in studying the history of our own country." Too many students, Van Pelt complained, could "tell you about Cromwell, William the Conqueror and Charlemagne," but were silent if asked "who commanded the Union or Confederate forces at Gettysburg or Chickamauga."²⁵¹ Only "true" Americans like Ulysses S. Grant and Abraham Lincoln—not Oliver Cromwell—argued Van Pelt, would bring an increasingly diverse American community together in national union.

²⁴⁹ [Untitled Editorial], *National Tribune*, March 13, 1884. The political concerns of Indianapolis teachers may reflect larger disagreements between Indiana Republicans and Democrats more so than disagreements between Union and Confederate veterans. During the Civil War, a large contingent of Hoosier Democrats opposed the Union military's conscription policies and Republican support for protective tariffs and the emancipation of former slaves. These conservative Democrats were referred to as "Copperheads," and Republicans continued to brand Democrats as disloyal traitors after the war. In 1876 one state Republican pamphlet argued that wartime governor Oliver P. Morton had fought "two rebellions": one in the South and one in Indiana. See Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau and Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 180-224; Stephen E. Towne, "The Persistent Nullifier: The Life of Civil War Conspirator Lambdin P. Milligan," *Indiana Magazine of History* 109, no. 4 (December 2013), 303-354.

²⁵⁰ Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Forty-Second Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 61-62, 88-89.

²⁵¹ Indiana, *Thirty-First* (1910), 115-116.

The Indiana GAR's concerns about Civil War education were the first to elicit interest from the national organization, but the topic of history education does not appear in any GAR records again until 1888. This silence was most likely due to the GAR's nationwide effort to petition Congress to pass pension legislation that would award all disabled veterans—regardless if they were disabled during or after the war—a monthly pension.²⁵² The Wisconsin GAR, however, released a pamphlet to all GAR state departments criticizing school textbooks being used in the South. Citing a text written by two southern school principals who declared that Confederate secession was justified because a state's sovereignty "had never been for a moment surrendered to the federal government," these Wisconsin veterans declared that it was "time to cease toying with treason for policy, and to cease illustrating rebels as heroes." Northern schools that had been "comparatively silent" about Civil War history needed to set an example for the rest of the country and teach a "comprehensive, constitutional, Union-loving patriotism" in the classroom.²⁵³ This pamphlet inspired other GAR state departments to take further action in their home states.²⁵⁴

²⁵² Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 403.

²⁵³ The pamphlet also criticized a textbook written by former Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens, who declared that Confederate veterans "will be honored as self-sacrificing patriots, and their heroes and martyrs in history will take places by the sides of Washington, Hampden, and Sydney." Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Wisconsin, *School Histories: Report and Resolutions adopted by the Department Encampment of Wisconsin, G.A.R. at its Twenty-Second Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, February 15th and 16th, 1888* (Milwaukee: Swain & Tate, Printers, 1888), 4-6, 8.

²⁵⁴ Not every state embraced these calls to adapt textbooks acknowledging that the Union was right. By the turn of the twentieth century, nine states of the former Confederacy and Kentucky passed laws forbidding the use of textbooks that were "partisan" or "sectional." Caroline E. Janney remarks that during this period the UCV and Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) placed Confederate flags, portraits of Confederate military leaders, and pro-Confederate textbooks in almost every Southern classroom. See Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 275; Bessie Louise Pierce, *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1926), 36-42; Jonathan Zimmerman, *Whose America?: Culture Wars in the Public Schools* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 35-42.

GAR members in Indiana began inspecting textbooks in local school districts throughout the state. They criticized several books for their bland, fact-based delivery of content, which historian Joseph Moreau describes as a "telegraphic style [that] avoided taking clear moral or political stands on the issues of slavery, state sovereignty, and the legitimacy of secession."²⁵⁵ Joel and Esther Steele's *Brief History of the United States* used passive language and analyzed the Civil War through chronological and factual accounts of important battles without providing any interpretation of the war's significance. Some GAR members believed that students who read the Steeles' book were left confused as to who was right and who was wrong.²⁵⁶ In 1894, the Indiana GAR joined the national order in deriding Edward Ellis's *Complete School History of the United States* for omitting the words "treason" and "rebellion" from the text. For violating this imaginary boundary line, Ellis's book was criticized as having a tone "biased in favor of treason and the cause of the South."²⁵⁷ Meanwhile, Mary Elise Thalheimer's *Eclectic History of the United States*—recommended in an 1891 Indiana pamphlet on school book laws for Hoosier classrooms because of its avoidance of "anything of a partisan or sectarian character"—was decried by veterans on both sides. One Confederate veteran, having read Thalheimer's telegraphic rendition of the war and her argument that "all reasonable men were ready to join in repairing its wastes and forgetting its enmities," remarked that her book was essentially fake, "manufactured like oleo-margarine . . . all

²⁵⁵ Joseph Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation: Conflicts Over American History Textbooks from the Civil War to the Present* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 72.

²⁵⁶ Joel Dorman Steele and Esther Baker Steele, *A Brief History of the United States* (New York: American Book Company, 1885), 215-280; James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 277-278.

²⁵⁷ Edward Sylvester Ellis, *Complete School History of the United States* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1892); *Twenty-Ninth National* (1895), 422; Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 184.

gotten up with the aim of pleasing everybody and offending no one."²⁵⁸ When it came to interpreting the Civil War, few veterans on either side were satisfied with the efforts of textbook writers, especially authors who failed to make interpretive arguments or place the war in historical context.

During the Indiana GAR Encampments of 1895 and 1896 the textbook controversy reached its zenith. Department leadership at the 1895 Encampment announced their dissatisfaction with existing school histories "so far as they relate to the rebellion" and called for "a special committee of seven [GAR] members" to closely inspect Indiana's history textbooks and deliver a report to the State Board of Education. If the books failed to meet the standards of the committee, they were instructed to "request and insist upon [the] withdrawal or substitution of text books giving a true and honest account of that important period in the Nation's history." Three books were chosen for inspection by the Indiana GAR: Ellis' *Complete School History of the United States*, the Steeles' *Brief History of the United States*, and David H. Montgomery's *The Leading Facts of American History*.²⁵⁹

Department Commander H.B. Shively—a member of James H. Emmett Post 6 and later named the President of Farmers and Merchants National Bank of Wabash in 1902—reflected in 1896 on the results of the Indiana GAR's investigation of school textbooks. Shively lamented that "the story of that mighty struggle . . . is told in a tame, apologetic and half-hearted manner, so far as the Union is concerned, from beginning to end." He asserted that the history of the Civil War should be written "truthfully and

²⁵⁸ Mary Elise Thalheimer, *The Eclectic History of the United States* (New York: Van Antwerp, Bragg, & Co., Publishers, 1880), 316; Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *The School Book Laws of Indiana, including Acts of 1891 and 1889* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1891), 1; William Allen, quoted in Moreau, *Schoolbook Nation*, 72.

²⁵⁹ Indiana, *Sixteenth* (1895), 115.

patriotically" so that there was "no confusion in [the children's] minds respecting the right and the wrong of that struggle." Reflecting the popular belief that public education should educate students in good citizenship, Shively also argued that "our common school system is the citadel of our liberties, and it should be the nursery in which the purest, fiercest, and highest, patriotism is taught."²⁶⁰ Shively then presented the committee's evidence for supporting these arguments.

The textbooks written by Ellis and the Steeles were deemed to have enough errors to be "sufficiently numerous and important in the judgment of the Committee," yet little else was said about these books. David Montgomery's *Leading Facts of History*, however, was thoroughly criticized. In the minds of Indiana GAR leaders, Montgomery's study exemplified all that was wrong with history textbooks in the Hoosier state: a telegraphic delivery of content, inaccurate "facts" that exaggerated Confederate battlefield success, statements that made Union soldiers look weak, and even interpretations of Reconstruction that angered Hoosier veterans.²⁶¹

The committee's report began by criticizing Montgomery's treatment of secession. South Carolina's efforts to leave the Union in 1860, argued Montgomery, had led to "the state of South Carolina [becoming] a free and independent nation." Additionally, the secession of Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas had left the federal government "a corpse lying in state in Washington."²⁶² The committee argued in response that "if any fact was made clear as a result of the war, it was that the Union was *not* broken up and that South Carolina *never* became a free and independent nation."

²⁶⁰ Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 115-116.

²⁶¹ The Indiana GAR also submitted a list of seven objections regarding Montgomery's book to the State Board of Education. See Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 162-163.

²⁶² David H. Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History* (Boston: Ginn & Company, Publishers, 1891), 281.

Such interpretations, the committee complained, were "calculated to convey the idea that no wrong was committed by those who engaged in rebellion against National authority." Try as they might, South Carolina had never successfully seceded according to the Indiana GAR; to teach students that the Palmetto state was at one point a "free nation" would only leave "false impressions" in the minds of young students.²⁶³

The report continued by criticizing Montgomery's interpretation of several Civil War battles. For the Battle of Gettysburg the committee grumbled that even though the Union army fought nobly on the battlefield, "the only fighting deemed worthy of mention by this author is that of the Confederate General [George] Pickett." Pickett's Charge received so much attention that other important battles such as Missionary Ridge, Lookout Mountain and Vicksburg received "meager account[s]" that downplayed the strategic success of Union military initiatives. Regarding the latter, "the only thing to hold a place in the memory of a child, is the endurance of the Confederates, who surrendered only 'because human nature could endure no more'. There is no word . . . of the most brilliant skillful [Union] campaigns of the entire war."²⁶⁴ Hoosier veterans—most of whom had fought in the Western Theater of war during the conflict—interpreted these arguments as ahistorical and as personal insults against their manhood and valor on the battlefield.²⁶⁵

The committee also took offense at Montgomery's treatment of Union soldiers and those on the Northern home front. In one anecdote about the coming of war, Montgomery recalled a New England woman who gave her enlisted son an umbrella as a

²⁶³ Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 163-164.

²⁶⁴ Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History*, 292-307; Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 164-165.

²⁶⁵ For more on the Western Theater, see Earl J. Hess, *The Civil War in the West: Victory and Defeat from the Appalachians to the Mississippi* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

parting gift. "If her 'John' must go to battle," recalled Montgomery, "she wanted to feel that he could fight comfortably under shelter in wet weather." The committee took umbrage to the depiction of Union soldiers as weak and unprepared for military service, suggesting that the story "could have been left out of the text" and replaced with "a more extended account of the achievements of the Union armies."²⁶⁶ Later in the textbook Montgomery argued that "the privations and sufferings of the war fell almost wholly upon the South." For families in the north, according to Montgomery, "the progress of the war was only known by newspaper reports, the hardships, the horrors of the struggles touched none of them directly." The committee—perhaps remembering the terror of Morgan's Raid through Indiana in 1863 and the nearly 25,000 Hoosiers who died during the war—asked rhetorically, "where were the quiet homes of many millions of people in which such a condition of things existed as given in the text by this author? To say that the northern people were exempt from the anxieties, hardships and horrors of the terrible struggle is simply falsifying history."²⁶⁷ The lived reality of families forever broken by soldier death during the war was not lost on these veterans.

The committee concluded by taking their criticisms of Montgomery's text beyond the Civil War years and into the Reconstruction Era. Montgomery's interpretation of Reconstruction was so "improper and vicious," argued the committee, that the Indiana GAR had sufficient cause to "condemn the entire book." For one, Montgomery asserted

²⁶⁶ Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History*, 289; Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 164.

²⁶⁷ Interestingly, the Indiana GAR refrained from any critiques of Montgomery's treatment of the end of slavery. Although limiting his discussion about emancipation to two short paragraphs, Montgomery went so far as to argue that the Emancipation Proclamation gave slaves "that most precious, yet most perilous of all rights—the ownership of themselves. No greater event is recorded in the pages of American history. After the expiration of nearly a hundred years the nation at last made good, without exception, the words of the Declaration of Independence, which declare that 'all men are created equal.'" Perhaps Indiana GAR members were satisfied with this interpretation. Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History*, 304-305, 322; Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 166.

that the Reconstruction South was ruled by "Carpet-Baggers" who had hoped "to get political office or to make their fortunes" with the help of African Americans who "were so ignorant that they did not even know the letters of the alphabet." Southern states had the "misfortune" of suffering under this rule until 1877, but "partly by peaceable and partly by violent means they (meaning white Southerners) succeeded in getting the political power into their own hands," a fact Montgomery seemed to celebrate. The committee asserted that Montgomery's "Carpet-Baggers" claim was "not accepted as a truthful statement of a historical fact by a very large number of the people of the North" and that his tacit support for political violence "renders this work totally unfit to be placed in the hands of the children, who are the future hope of the Republic." Equally significant, the committee criticized Montgomery for analyzing the legacy of antebellum slavery through the economic benefits it provided for Southern slaveholders "without any reference to the rights of the slave."²⁶⁸

While the committee did not clarify what rights they were referring to or make any mention of contemporary racial issues (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, which legalized racial segregation under the doctrine of "separate but equal," was decided by the United States Supreme Court around the time of the 1896 Encampment), it is nonetheless significant to observe that the Indiana GAR took issue with historical accounts of the war and Reconstruction that attempted to downplay slavery and emancipation or portray African Americans as totally ignorant people. While it is clear that white Hoosier veterans were more concerned with correct textbook accounts of secession, battlefield exploits, and the valor of Union soldiers and those on the home front, Barbara A. Gannon's definition of the Won Cause interpretation of the Civil War rings true within the realm of school

²⁶⁸ Montgomery, *The Leading Facts of American History*, 305, 326-329; Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 164.

textbooks. These veterans remembered that the war was caused by slavery, that they had played a role in the process of emancipation, and that popular understandings of Reconstruction portraying postwar Southern governments as run by corrupt Northerners and African American freedmen were largely false.²⁶⁹

Over the next several years the Indiana GAR, the State Board of Education, and the publishers of Montgomery's texts (Ginn and Company of Boston, Massachusetts) tussled over textbook revisions. Ginn and Company issued a seventeen-page defense of the book to the State Board and the Indiana GAR, but the Board demanded substantial revisions on two separate occasions. The Indiana GAR's committee on textbooks met with the Board on seven separate occasions, and at the 1898 Encampment the GAR reported that an agreement with the Board on a set of revisions to be made for the continued usage of Montgomery's text in Indiana schools had been reached.²⁷⁰ Following the committee's dissolution in 1899, conversations at the annual Encampment on history textbooks decreased; Department Commander Milton Garrigus' 1902 call to "teach our children to love and honor our Government and to know that we were right and rebellion wrong" is the last mention of history textbooks in the Department of Indiana's official reports.²⁷¹ The Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1911 recommended three new history textbooks to replace Montgomery's—Wilbur F. Gordy's *A History of the United States for Schools*, William H. Mace's *A Primary History: Stories of Heroism* and Eva

²⁶⁹ Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 147-148.

²⁷⁰ The complete list of revisions is in Indiana, *Nineteenth* (1898), 181-193. The Department of Indiana's concerns also played a role in the national organization's condemnation of all history textbooks used in North, none of which "merits the unqualified endorsement of this organization." See *Thirty-First National* (1897), 160, 183-184. For the committee's final report, see Indiana, *Twentieth* (1899), 171-172. See also Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 237-241.

²⁷¹ Indiana, *Twenty-Fourth* (1902), 132. In 1904, the national GAR, expressing its satisfaction with the nature of history textbooks in classrooms around the country, disbanded its textbook committee at the 1904 meeting. See *Thirty-Eight National* (1904), 245-246; Zimmerman, *Whose America?*, 35.

March Tappan's *American Hero Stories*—that ostensibly met the approval of the Indiana GAR.²⁷² Perhaps the emphasis of these books on "American heroism" struck a pleasant chord with Hoosier veterans. Regardless, another issue continued to dominate the Indiana GAR's advocacy for patriotic instruction.

The Indiana GAR in the 1900s called for the raising of American flags in front of every school house and occasional ritual ceremonies intended to replicate the symbolism of a military procession. As the prominent Warsaw, Indiana, journalist, Republican, and GAR member Reuben Williams argued in 1892, both activities would reinforce each other to promote patriotism in young students. A formal ceremony "after the style of 'Guard Mounting' or 'Dress-Parade' of the army," argued Williams, would teach a "heartly, sincere, and proper love for the flag of the land," promote good behavior in school, and stimulate obedience to authority.²⁷³ "Obedience" in this context referred to a surrendering of personal ambitions or desires to the will of educational and political leaders. As one *Indiana School Journal* essay argued, obedience "requires that the pupil shall form a correct judgment of what the right is."²⁷⁴ Implicit in this statement, of course, was that what constituted "the right" would be determined by Indiana's cultural elites.

United States flags prior to the Civil War were primarily used to identify American vessels at sea or military forts on land. Following the attack on Fort Sumter in April 1861, however, supporters of the United States used the symbolism of the flag being lowered at the fort to build enthusiasm for the Union war effort. Union supporters

²⁷² That year, Superintendent Robert J. Aley recommended Wilbur F. Gordy, *A History of the United States for Schools* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911); William H. Mace, *A Primary History: Stories of Heroism* (New York: Rand McNally & Company, 1909); Eva March Tappan, *American Hero Stories* (Cambridge, MA: The Riverside Press, 1906). See Indiana Department of Public Instruction, *Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the School Years Ending July 31, 1909, and July 31, 1910* (Indianapolis: William B. Buford Publishing, 1911), 170-171.

²⁷³ Reuben Williams, "Honor 'Old Glory'," *American Tribune*, May 12, 1892.

²⁷⁴ George P. Brown, "School Discipline," *Indiana School Journal* 30, no. 7 (1885), 387-389.

during the war adorned the flag at countless stores, hotels, schools, and other buildings, but the symbolism of flag-raising largely died out after the war.²⁷⁵ George T. Balch, a GAR member from New York City, witnessed an April 1888 school assembly in which the American flag was displayed to students. This event moved Balch so much that he began advocating for the installation of flags at all public schools. Writing his own book on the "methods of teaching patriotism" in 1890, Balch lamented that the recent wave of immigration "transferred to these shores . . . millions of aliens, speaking more than forty languages other than the English [sic]; a vast number of whom bear in their physical and mental features the indelible impress of centuries of monarchial or aristocratic rule." Additionally, these immigrants "have been trained to an implicit belief in and reverence for ecclesiastical institutions [i.e., the Catholic Church] which find no place in our form of government." The American flag, according to Balch, would not only invoke a love of country but also motivate students to acquire "desirable qualities and habits," including "punctuality . . . personal neatness and cleanliness . . . [and] ready obedience to rules and instruction."²⁷⁶

Balch's advocacy for school flags spread to the 1889 national Encampment, where National Commander William Warner called for veterans to purchase flags with their own money for schools that lacked one. Charles M. Travis, Indiana's Department Commander in 1890, echoed Warner's remarks and asserted that the sight of the American flag "will be a kindling of the fire of patriotism that will cause the dying

²⁷⁵ Richard J. Ellis, *To the Flag: The Unlikely History of the Pledge of Allegiance* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2005), 2-3.

²⁷⁶ George T. Balch, *Methods of Teaching Patriotism in the Public Schools* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1890), viii, 25; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 4-5; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 228; Leisa A. Martin, "Examining the Pledge of Allegiance," *The Social Studies* 99 (May/June 2008), 127-131. For an educator's perspective on immigration and patriotic instruction, see W.H. Caulkins, "Another Way to Teach Patriotism," *Indiana School Journal* 34, no. 2 (1889), 166-167.

embers of treason to go out in an eternal darkness. It will be adding an additional guaranty that our fallen heroes shall not have died in vain."²⁷⁷ By invoking the memories of those who died on the battlefield, Travis equated flag raising to an act of remembrance of the Union dead, a public indication to other members of the community that one had not forgotten about the past. Given the social context in which Travis passively refers to the "dying embers of treason," however, questions emerge about the type of "treason" Travis attempts to refer to in his speech. "Treason" by former Confederates? Politically radical immigrants? Labor unions? A different group in society?

Perhaps the answer is "all of the above." While the flag contained patriotic connotations during the Civil War, its gradual disuse in postwar America presented an opportunity for the GAR to shape and mold the symbolism of the flag for its own purposes. Whether displayed at Encampments during keynote speeches and political commentaries, annual parades, campfires, or presented to students at public schools, the flag was displayed by GAR members as a hallmark to notify society of their position as authentic, loyal Americans. As defenders and self-appointed preservers of the flag, GAR veterans believed they had the authority to regulate its use and speak for all that was good in the nation. "Treason" became an elastic word, one whose meaning went beyond the overthrow of the government to also encompass the GAR's perceived enemies.²⁷⁸

GAR veterans also embedded religious themes into the meaning of the flag. Stuart McConnell refers to this incorporation of civil religion into the American flag from 1890 to 1900 as a process of creating a "symbol of abstract nationalism" with "semisacred

²⁷⁷ Indiana, *Eleventh* (1890), 80; Ellis, *To the Flag*, 4-5; Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 219.

²⁷⁸ When Republicans "waved the bloody shirt" in their political speeches during Reconstruction, they specifically aimed to invoke memories of the Democrat party—including former Confederate "traitors" and Northern Democrats who had called for a peaceful end to the war with slavery intact—to gain votes and create distrust in the Democratic party.

trappings."²⁷⁹ One out-of-state veteran remarked that "the flag is to us what the cross was to the Christian apostles, what the cross on the sword was to the knightly crusader." The true test of patriotism and love of God, according to this veteran, lay in "loyalty to the colors, whether to victory or defeat, whether to life or unto death—these are the marks of the true believer." In Indianapolis, Comrade Wallace Foster led the effort to install flags at all local public schools, and in an 1891 speech he remarked that the flag represented and protected "good homes . . . [in] the Christian home of America." That same year a large portrait of Foster posted inside the school assembly hall of Public School Number 32 at Illinois and 21st Streets in Indianapolis described him as a "patron saint" following a flag dedication ceremony at the school.²⁸⁰

To reinforce the religious symbolism of the flag, George T. Balch undertook an effort to create a pledge of allegiance to the flag. Most Americans today remember reciting Francis Bellamy's 1892 Pledge of Allegiance in school: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for the which it stands—one nation indivisible—with Liberty and Justice for all" (the phrase "under God" was not inserted into the Pledge until 1954). At the turn of the twentieth century, however, Balch's pledge was also embraced by many school leaders and the GAR, which approved of its nationalist and religious symbolism: "We give our heads and our hearts to God and our country: one country, one language, one Flag." The national GAR in 1899 recommended a flag salute program in which elementary aged students recited the Balch pledge, while older students recited the Bellamy pledge.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 230.

²⁸⁰ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 228; "Teaching Patriotism," *American Tribune*, March 6, 1891; Uriel, "The Making of Citizens," 116-117.

²⁸¹ Ellis, *To the Flag*, 18-19, 55-56.

The process of installing flags at public schools in Indiana took hold in the 1890s. *Indiana School Journal* editor William Bell approved of these efforts, remarking that through the flag, students "must be led to see that any person who by his words or by his life makes war upon any one of these institutions of society is in so far an enemy to his country." Teachers held essay contests on the importance of displaying the American flag at public schools, while local GAR posts throughout the state spent money to install flags and sometimes gave presentations to students about the flag.²⁸² The Indiana GAR reported in 1896 that 1,711 public schools—roughly half the total amount of public schools in the state—were supplied with flags, many of which were funded by the GAR.²⁸³

Although the Indiana General Assembly at first refused to pass any legislation mandating the installation of flags in public schools (a 1891 bill requiring township trustees to purchase flags for all local school districts was soundly rejected), the persistency of the GAR eventually paid off. A subsequent 1907 bill was passed requiring that all public schools fly an American flag or face a fine between \$25 and \$100 and the possibility of thirty days imprisonment for the school principal. Two years later the General Assembly mandated the singing of the Star Spangled Banner "upon all patriotic

²⁸² For example, Patriotic Instructor Irwin B. Arnold reported in 1914 that he had created an elaborate school program in which he brought "a large collection of flags" to the school auditorium and lectured on the history of the American flag. "Boys and girls are hungry for this information and these true stories," Arnold believed. "At every home in America there should be at least one good American flag." See Indiana, *Thirty-Fifth* (1914), 96-97. See also William Bell, "Teaching Patriotism," *Indiana School Journal* 35, no. 12 (December 1890), 664-665; "The Stars and Stripes," *American Tribune*, May 16, 1890; "Schoolhouse Flag Installations," *American Tribune*, June 19, 1891, "President Harrison to the Teachers," *American Tribune*, August 4, 1892; "Mrs. W.B. Wilson Speech," *American Tribune*, January 25, 1894. Indiana, *Twentieth* (1899), 169-170.

²⁸³ Indiana, *Seventeenth* (1896), 143-144.

occasions" and ordered the State Board of Education to supply the song's lyrics to all school administrators.²⁸⁴

Military instruction for young boys constituted the third and final element of the GAR's patriotic instruction movement in public schools at the turn of the twentieth century. Several factors were responsible for these efforts. For one, many GAR veterans believed that the discipline of military life during the Civil War taught them specific values that should be passed on to younger generations. As Stuart McConnell argues, the GAR was "interested in the discipline that they thought drill would impart to unruly youths, especially the urban poor. Military instruction, they said, would teach 'executive ability,' 'self-confidence,' 'subordination,' 'obedience' [,] and a proper respect for authority."²⁸⁵

Such values, the GAR argued, were essential to maintaining the American "citizen-soldier" tradition that they believed they had continued through their service in the war. Amid two major economic panics in 1873 and 1893 and two nationally-reported strikes (the railroad strike of 1877 and the Pullman Car strike of 1894, not to mention the frequency of strikes in Indiana during this period, as mentioned in chapter two), military instruction would provide training to mobilize citizens in preparation for any perceived conflict, whether at home or abroad. "Lacking either a sizeable standing army or an effective state militia," argues sociologist Jason Kaufman, "nineteenth-century American

²⁸⁴ "Flags in Schools," *American Tribune*, February 6, 1891; Uribe, "The Making of Citizens," 119; Bessie Louise Pierce, *Public Opinion and the Teaching of History in the United States*, 57. Ironically, Irwin B. Arnold argued to his comrades in 1914 that "the pupils of each school will see that there is a flag and that it is displayed—not because of the law, but because they revere, love and respect it, and because it is the emblem of a model government which they are soon to control." Indiana, *Thirty-Fifth* (1914), 97.

²⁸⁵ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 230.

national defense policy relied on the military preparedness of ordinary citizens in time of need."²⁸⁶

Department Commander Albert O. Marsh expressed these concerns in 1895 when he announced that "the safety of the Republic depends upon the virtue, intelligence and patriotism of the people, together with the power and ability to enforce the law, suppress disorder and to command respect at home and abroad, by force when necessary." Due to the relative weakness of the various state militias and the U.S. military during the postwar years, volunteer/fraternal militia companies, shooting clubs, and paramilitary organizations independent of state authority emerged in defense of civil society.²⁸⁷ Training future generations for membership in these organizations, argued Marsh, was an essential duty of American citizenship, going so far as to say that it was imperative for the Indiana GAR to "unitedly [sic] press this subject upon the attention of the public, until every able-bodied young man who goes out from our public schools shall be capable of performing efficiently the duties of a soldier."²⁸⁸ No less than the fate of the Republic rested on the laurels of American's future "citizen-soldiers."

The most vocal advocate in the Indiana GAR for military instruction in public schools was its most famous member, former U.S. President (1889-1893) Benjamin Harrison. Having been asked to write an essay for *Century Magazine* on the matter, Harrison cited physical exercise, social order, and his own understanding of history to argue that military instruction was "good for the boys, good for the schools, and good for

²⁸⁶ Jason Kaufman, *To the Common Good?: American Civic Life and The Golden Age of Fraternity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 120, 132-133.

²⁸⁷ Kaufman, *To the Common Good?*, 120.

²⁸⁸ Indiana, *Sixteenth* (1895), 112-113.

the country."²⁸⁹ "The sluggish need to be quickened, the quick to taught to stand, and the willful to have no will," argued Harrison, connecting physical strength to a stronger deference to masculine authority. "A military drill develops the whole man, head, chest, arms and legs, proportionately; and so promotes symmetry . . . It teaches quickness of eye and ear, hand and foot; qualifies men to step and act in unison; teaches subordination; and, best of all, qualifies a man to serve his country."²⁹⁰ Discipline, duty, honor, subordination: these were the values Harrison believed the nation's youth lacked.

Harrison concluded by arguing that the Civil War was prolonged unnecessarily because of the Union military's lack of soldiers versed in martial methods and arms training. "If all the school boys of the North had, from 1830 on, been instructed in the schools of the soldier and of the company, and in the manual of arms, how much precious time would have been saved in organizing the Union army in 1861. We were in a very low state, as a people, in military knowledge and training when the great civil war broke out." Only "American adaptability and quickness," argued Harrison, had saved the nation from complete destruction.²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Benjamin Harrison, *Views of An Ex-President: Being His Addresses and Writings on Subjects of Public Interest Since the Close of His Administration as President of the United States* (Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1901), 367.

²⁹⁰ Harrison, *Views of An Ex-President*, 368. Historian John Pettegrew's analysis of Civil War veteran memoirs and speeches in the 1890s and 1900s demonstrates how the coming of the Spanish-American War reinforced notions of patriotism and "martial heroism." According to Pettegrew, "Fighting the Spanish, for many American men, was not an obligation but an opportunity . . . the Spanish-American War became a national expression of masculinity - a material example of martial heroism in action." Harrison's comments may have reflected a desire to train future generations for their own moments of patriotic "martial heroism." John Pettegrew, "The Soldier's Faith: Turn-of-the-Century Memory of the Civil War and the Emergence of Modern American Nationalism," *Journal of Contemporary History* 31, no. 1 (January 1996), 49-73.

²⁹¹ Readers should note how Harrison conflates the terms "Northern" and "American" to represent the same values. Harrison, *Views of An Ex-President*, 369-370. It should also be noted that the National Rifle Association (NRA) was organized in 1871 in New York by Union veterans and GAR members who believed the marksmanship skills of European armies' surpassed that of the United States. That same year former Union General Ambrose Burnside was named the first President of the organization. See Kaufman, *For the Common Good?*, 121.

An important part of military instruction was the public display of military dress and drill during school activities, which included flag raising ceremonies at assemblies to commemorate the birthdays of military and political figures such as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ulysses S. Grant.²⁹² While such ceremonies undoubtedly varied from school district to school district, a manual of instruction for "Patriotic Service" proceedings for the public schools in Evansville, Indiana, provides a glimpse into the pageantry of military ritual for such events. For each service in the district, a designated "Color Bearer" (typically a student who demonstrated "exemplary conduct") would enter the assembly room carrying the American flag, followed by a color guard of students who sometimes played music as the group entered. All students would then stand, salute the flag, and say (Francis Bellamy's) Pledge of Allegiance. The entire group then sang the "Star Spangled Banner" and concluded with a solemn exit by the Color Guard and Color Bearer.²⁹³

These assemblies also incorporated a question-and-answer ritual designed to affirm the American flag's symbolic representation as a protector of law and order, national assimilation, and martial glory. "Why do we honor [the flag]," the manual asks. "Because it stands for liberty, justice, and equal opportunities in life for all those who live under its folds." "Who are the enemies of the flag?" "All persons who strike at our flag by

²⁹² For example, the GAR circulated a program of activities for public schools to utilize on the 100th anniversary of Ulysses S. Grant's birthday in 1922. See Levi Longfellow, "Program of Exercises for use in the Schools of the United States Upon the One Hundredth Birthday of General Ulysses S. Grant, April 27, 1922" [No Publisher].

²⁹³ Evansville Public Schools, "Evansville, Indiana, Flag Ritual for Teaching Civic Patriotism in Elementary and High School Grades" [No Publisher or publication date]. The document can be found at the Indiana State Library. The flag salute that many students used at the turn of the twentieth century differed from the modern salute often used today. According to Richard Ellis, the "Balch salute" frequently used in public schools required students to raise "the extended right hand to the forehead (palm down), in unison . . . [and] salute the flag in military fashion." However, this salute fell out of favor during World War II because of its uncanny similarities to the Nazi flag salute in Germany. See Ellis, *To the Flag*, 41.

force of arms or by breaking the laws that have been made to preserve our liberties."

Finally, "what are our duties as citizens?" "Always to defend the honor of the flag at the ballot box . . . always to remember that first of all we are American citizens whose duty it is to place the welfare of our country above selfish greed or personal ambition."²⁹⁴

Through these compulsory responses, Evansville school leaders believed they were imparting "desirable" values of altruism, obedience, and nationalism—their definition of American citizenship—to their students.²⁹⁵

Two private academies in Indiana were also established as military schools in the 1890s. The Howe Military Academy in Northeastern Indiana—first established in 1884 as the Howe Grammar School—became a military school in 1895, while the Culver Military Academy in Northern Indiana was established in 1894. By 1903, Culver was the second largest military academy in the United States behind West Point, and both academies remain open today.²⁹⁶

The Indiana GAR's advocacy for patriotic instruction in all public schools throughout the state consisted of three interconnected objectives: an increased emphasis

²⁹⁴ Evansville Public Schools, "Evansville, Indiana, Flag Ritual for Teaching Civic Patriotism in Elementary and High School Grades."

²⁹⁵ The GAR continued to engage in a larger discussion with society about military training well into World War I. At the onset of American involvement in Europe in 1917, Indiana Department Commander V.V. Williams remarked that "the old soldiers and the Grand Army of the Republic during the past fifty years have represented *the military spirit* to the growing generation," suggesting that America's preparation for war could be partly attributed to the GAR's advocacy for military training in public schools. Nevertheless, Williams remarked, "the mission of the Grand Army of the Republic is not ended . . . we need [to advocate for] a strong government with a strong, well equipped army and navy to protect the rights of Americans wherever they choose to travel or our flag may float . . . I am sure whatever the Grand Army of the Republic can do to inspire younger men to activity and patriotism will be gladly and cheerfully done." Emphasis mine. Indiana, *Thirty-Eighth* (1917), 61-62. For a collection of essays for and against military instruction published during World War I, see Agnes Van Valkenburgh, ed., *Selected Articles on Military Training in Schools and Colleges, Including Military Camps* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1917).

²⁹⁶ Phillips, *Indiana in Transition*, 411-412.

on the teaching of history with "correct" textbooks approved by the GAR; the installation and raising of American flags in front of every schoolhouse; and military instruction for young boys in need of "order" and a stronger sense of "obedience" to authority figures in their lives. Historians interpreting the GAR on a national scale during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era have reached different conclusions about the organization's motivations for participating in this movement. In the 1950s, Mary Dearing argued that GAR veterans became interested in patriotic instruction because they sought a "cause" with which to keep themselves before the public eye and remind the rest of their nation of their role as the nation's saviors. Wallace Davies suggested at the same time that efforts by textbook publishers to publish neutral histories that "offend[ed] no one" North or South incensed GAR veterans, who demanded that publishers write histories that clearly defined the Won Cause interpretation of the Civil War as the correct version to be taught to students.²⁹⁷

More recent works on the GAR agree with Davies by arguing that competing memories between GAR and UCV veterans provided the impetus for patriotic instruction. Susan-Mary Grant, James Marten, Barbara A. Gannon, and Caroline E. Janney all portray the movement as reflective of ongoing disagreements about the causes, context, and consequences of the Civil War.²⁹⁸ As this chapter demonstrates, however, competing memories between the GAR and UCV explain these motivations only partly. A younger generation that did not live during the war and who the GAR believed valued individual profit rather than national success, combined with a wave of mostly Catholic immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe descending upon the nation starting in the 1880s, created an atmosphere of political, social, and economic change that startled many GAR

²⁹⁷ Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 402; Davies, *Patriotism on Parade*, 234.

²⁹⁸ See footnote 23.

members. A nation of Protestant-worshipping yeoman farmers living in mostly rural spaces slowly evolved into a more pluralist society that experienced intense conflicts over religion, civil rights, immigration policy, capitol and labor, and even the very definition of citizenship itself after 1865.

While many of these disagreements existed before the Civil War, this emerging nation based on industrial capitalism, many Indiana GAR members believed, was not the same nation they had fought to defend in the 1860s. Patriotic instruction was a reaction not so much to recalcitrant rebels and their memories of the Civil War as much as it was a reaction to the perceived threats of industrialization, urbanization, and immigration to the social order of the Hoosier state. Getting the "correct" history into the hands of young students certainly reflected a chance to offer a "truthful" interpretation of the past, but Hoosier GAR members also engaged in such efforts because of their strong desire to be seen as authoritative leaders in the shaping of America's future in the eyes of younger generations.

Almost all Americans in public schools today are taught to respect the American flag and to learn the words to Francis Bellamy's (amended) Pledge of Allegiance. While these activities promote civic pride and encourage patriotism in students, the historical context for explaining the origins of these activities and why they were created in the first place is rarely discussed in the classroom.²⁹⁹ Indeed, the notion of flag waving, pledges of patriotism, and military rituals in public schools as products of late nineteenth and

²⁹⁹ For example, Indiana's current Social Studies education standards fail to mention the Pledge of Allegiance beyond the second grade, and none refer to the historical context of its creation. Standard SS.1.2.6 2007 states that first graders should "know the Pledge of Allegiance and understand that it is a promise to be loyal to the United States," while standard SS.2.2.6 2007 calls for teachers to "discuss and explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance." See Indiana Department of Education, "Indiana Standards." Accessed December 18, 2013. <https://learningconnection.doe.in.gov/Standards/Standards.aspx?st=Pledge+of+Allegiance&sub=-1&gl=-1&c=0&stid=0>.

early twentieth century America—as opposed to being created at the time of the American Revolution—may come as a shock to many. These activities, however, constitute what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as "invented traditions." These "traditions," argues Hobsbawm, "appear or claim to be old [but] are quite often recent in origin and . . . [are] taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past."³⁰⁰ Seen in this interpretive light, patriotic instruction represented an effort by the GAR to legitimize their soldiers' legacy in preserving the nation during the Civil War so as to promote national cohesion in the future.

The GAR during this period attempted to portray the United States as a "natural" human community united by the will of God and its mythic, exceptional past. As Susan-Mary Grant argues, "the American response to [sustaining the country through the military] has been to elevate warfare to mystical proportions, to downplay . . . the implications of violence within the nation, and to concentrate instead on its mythical and symbolic elements." Political scientist Patrick M. Regan concurs, arguing that popular media and social leaders (such as the GAR) since 1900 have utilized "entertainment outlets that emphasize issues of patriotism [and] glorify the military [to] shape cognitive patterns regarding the role of force in foreign policy" and society as a whole, helping to influence what anthropologist Catherine Lutz describes as "the shaping of other institutions [such as public schools] in synchrony with military goals."³⁰¹

³⁰⁰ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

³⁰¹ Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," 14; Grant, "The Charter of its Birthright," 190-191; Patrick M. Regan, "War Toys, War Movies, and the Militarization of the United States, 1900-1985,"

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War—as discussed in chapter one—GAR veterans expressed their memories of war through active political campaigning for the Republican party. This campaigning utilized "bloody shirt" tactics that invoked memories of the Civil War to arouse distrust in former Confederates and the entire Democrat party. After the end of Reconstruction in 1877, GAR "bloody shirt" tactics evolved into several new forms. Whereas the immediate and vocal memories of warfare were relied upon as political ammunition by GAR members in the 1860s to advance their objectives, post-Reconstruction "bloody shirt" tactics from GAR members took the form of history textbooks and even the American flag itself. The Indiana GAR used these objects to invoke a connection between the Won Cause interpretation of war, the teaching of patriotic instruction, and the advancement of public education in the Hoosier state. The "bloody shirt" became a "bloody flag," and that flag was used as a weapon to arouse distrust in the GAR's numerous enemies in Indiana while also promoting a mythic understanding of the Civil War during the Gilded Age and Progressive Era.

Journal of Peace Research 31, no. 1 (February 1994), 46; Catherine Lutz, "Making War at Home in the United States: Militarization and the Current Crisis," *American Anthropologist* 104 no. 3 (September 2002), 723.

Conclusion

On July 26, 1945, the *Indianapolis Star* reported a remarkable change taking place at the Indiana State House in Indianapolis. After years of housing their Department Headquarters in Room 25 of the State House, the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana, relinquished their office to the Veterans' Affairs Commission, an organization created by the Indiana General Assembly that year in response to the impending conclusion of World War II. William C. Stalkner, the Director of the Commission, remarked that he was already swamped by requests from Hoosier servicemen and women looking to receive benefits and job opportunities upon their return home.³⁰² The requests of veterans for aid and job opportunities in 1945 was embraced by society in a way that differed greatly from the reception Civil War veterans received in 1865. At the end of the Civil War, some state legislators—especially fiscally conservative Democrats—expressed fears over the possibility of veteran benefits crippling the state's budget.³⁰³ By 1945, however, the question of giving aid to veterans was settled. Those who had fought fascism, dictatorship, and tyranny abroad would receive financial aid from both the state and federal government and—equally important—the nation's recognition and gratitude for bringing about peace, albeit temporarily.

Four years later, two members of the GAR arrived in Indianapolis on airplanes in anticipation for the final national GAR Encampment, which would be held at the

³⁰² By this point the war in Europe had already concluded, but on August 6—a week and half after the transfer of office at the State House—U.S. forces dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Japan, eventually leading to Japan's surrender to the United States on August 14. "Vets' Affairs Commission Gets New Office in Capitol," *Indianapolis Star*, July 26, 1945.

³⁰³ Justin E. Walsh, *The Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly, 1816-1978* (Indianapolis: Select Committee on the Centennial History of the Indiana General Assembly & Indiana Historical Bureau, 1987), 254.

Claypool hotel in downtown Indianapolis.³⁰⁴ Of the sixteen GAR members still alive around the United States, six would eventually make it to Indianapolis for the final Encampment. None of these living veterans was a part of the Indiana GAR (the last member died in February 1949), but Department Commander Theodore A. Penland, age 100, was a native of Goshen, Indiana, and had fought with the 152nd Indiana Infantry, Company A, during the Civil War before later moving to Portland, Oregon.³⁰⁵

The six veterans were treated to four days of concerts, banquets, receptions, speeches, a parade, and a final "camp fire" to "draw the curtain of time across a hallowed era of American history." During the Encampment, *Indianapolis News* reporter Fremont Power recalled his astonishment at listening to the veterans reflect on their memories of war, "as if nearly a century of time had never passed." Given the fact that these veterans would not be alive for much longer, many of the stories recalled in local newspapers were positive in nature, reflecting what the *Indianapolis Star* described as the "heroic deeds" of GAR members during the Civil War.³⁰⁶

New memories and interpretations of the GAR were created during the Encampment in an effort to portray the United States as a strong, unified country that cared for its veterans. Writing a history of the GAR for *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, Joseph K. Shepard argued that Union Civil War veterans banded together in 1866 to "protect the interests of the veterans during reconstruction and to make sure that he was not forgotten, [and] to memorialize the dead."³⁰⁷ While true to a certain degree, Shepard's

³⁰⁴ "2 Centenarian Vets to Fly Here for Final GAR Parley," *Indianapolis News*, July 21, 1949.

³⁰⁵ "GAR Plods to Last Roundup," *Indianapolis News*, August 27, 1949.

³⁰⁶ "GAR Plods to Last Roundup"; Fremont Power, "Six Grand Old Men Marching the Last Mile," *Indianapolis News*, August 29, 1949; "Heroic Deeds 88 Years Ago Live Anew at GAR's Final Assembly," *Indianapolis Star*, August 28, 1949.

³⁰⁷ Joseph K. Shepard, "The Last Biouvac," *Indianapolis Star Magazine*, August 28, 1949.

interpretation stripped the GAR of its politics and removed from his narrative all traces of the bitter disputes between the GAR and the rest of society at the turn of the twentieth century. Gone were the intense debates about how exactly the "interests" of veterans would be protected after the war or how Hoosiers would commemorate their Civil War dead following the establishment of the Indianapolis 500 on Memorial Day in 1911. Also gone was any mention of the GAR's hostility to immigrants, labor unions, and history textbook authors who wrote books that failed (in the GAR's eyes) to teach school children about which side was "right" and which side was "wrong" during the war.

Shepard's interpretation also downplayed the GAR's own initiation ritual. According to Shepard, the organization's first ritual in 1866 was "flowery and impressive, at times approaching the theatrical. There were secret handclasps, passwords, [and] countersigns." This interpretation of the GAR ritual continues to live within the historical memories of the GAR today. One recent essay on a popular website dedicated to Indianapolis history argued that the GAR started out "largely as a fraternal organization with flowery rituals and secret handshakes."³⁰⁸ These interpretations, however, minimize the significance of the 1866 ritual and later GAR rituals in helping to teach veterans lessons about comradeship and memory. By focusing on the *process* of ritualistic handshakes, countersigns, and theatrical performances rather than the *intended messages* the ritual conveyed to its members, these histories downplay the ways fraternal rituals helped Union veterans' come to terms with the past, establish a sense of order in their lives, and shape their identity as soldiers who defended the United States from disunion.

³⁰⁸ "The Last Biouvac,"; Libby Cierzniak, "Indianapolis Collected: The Last of the Civil War Soldiers." *Historic Indianapolis*. Accessed February 15, 2014. <http://historicindianapolis.com/aindianapolis-collected-the-last-of-the-civil-war-soldiers/>.

The Indianapolis press attempted to preach reconciliation between Union and Confederate veterans in its reporting of the last Encampment in 1949, but the six GAR veterans who attended that Encampment were not receptive to these calls. When a reporter suggested to Theodore Penland that the GAR host a joint national Encampment with the United Confederate Veterans in 1950—something that had never occurred in the history of the GAR and the UCV—Penland gave the reporter a cold, hard stare and proclaimed that no such Encampment would ever take place: "they tried to destroy our country," proclaimed Penland.³⁰⁹ Charles L. Chappel, age 102, remembered his time fighting secession while in the Union military and called for all Americans to "keep the flag going." Even though World War II had ended only four years ago, Chappel asked society to remember its Union Civil War veterans and expressed the fears of many Americans heading into the Cold War of the 1950s: "I believe that inside 10 years . . . we'll have a war with Russia . . . do all you can to keep this country as a country." And Joseph Clovese, age 105, a former Louisiana slave who served in the United States Colored Infantry, 9th Regiment, attended his first GAR Encampment that year. Clovese represented himself to the Encampment audience as a living embodiment of the fight to end slavery more than eighty years ago, and he himself lived to see President Harry S. Truman's Executive Order 9981 of July 26, 1948, that ended legal segregation in the U.S. military and acted as a precursor to the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s.³¹⁰

³⁰⁹ "Six Grand Old Men Marching the Last Mile."

³¹⁰ "Six Grand Old Men Marching the Last Mile,"; For a detailed analysis of African Americans and the military throughout the 1940s, see Phillip McGuire, "Desegregation of the Armed Forces: Black Leadership, Protest and World War II," *The Journal of Negro History* 68, no. 2, (1983): 147-158.

Scholars have generally framed their discussions about the Grand Army of the Republic over the past ten years around questions regarding the willingness of Union and Confederate veterans to reconcile with each other, and to what degree the legacy of emancipation was remembered by these veterans. Historians such as David Blight and James H. Madison have overestimated veterans' capacity to reconcile with each other and their willingness to "forget" about emancipation and even the horrors of war. More recent scholars such as Barbara A. Gannon and Caroline Janney argue that GAR members were willing to reconcile with former Confederates only if it meant reconciling on their own terms, which required an acknowledgement that Union soldiers were right and that the Civil War was started over disagreements about slavery.

This thesis largely agrees with the arguments of Gannon and Janney, but it also asserts that scholars need to expand their analysis of Civil War memories beyond discussions between Civil War veterans and their memories of Union and emancipation. GAR and UCV veterans argued about the causes, context, and consequences of the Civil War not just for their own consciences, but because the rest of society was watching these discussions and constructing their own memories of the Civil War. Historian Brian Matthew Jordan argues that future Civil War veteran studies' should focus on how the war's memories became sanitized over time, and such a focus would bring to light the complex ways myths, memories, and history created tensions between the Civil War generation and later generations.³¹¹ As these later generations came to age and participated in their own making of history, GAR veterans grappled with the challenge of reminding the rest of society of their efforts to save the Union and end slavery.

³¹¹ Brian Matthew Jordan, "Remembering Race and Reunion: Ten Years Later." *Civil War Monitor*. Accessed February 16, 2014. <http://civilwarmonitor.com/book-shelf/remembering-race-and-reunion-ten-years-later>.

Indianapolis lawyer Charles W. Moores, Jr.'s undated Memorial Day speech to the Indiana GAR highlights the discord between young and old. Moores (1862-1923) initially complained to his audience that "a new generation has grown up who do not know the awful meaning of war and who can not understand the feelings that this day inspires. To them it is only a springtime festival, a day for races and for picnics." Moores went so far as to argue that when it came to historical memory, "Americans are like greedy children, seizing the fruits of heroism and ignoring the benefactor." Later in the speech, however, Moores concluded that "the memories of the war are fading . . . time has softened and beautified the picture that this day brings."³¹² Moores' believed his generation could not grasp the emotions of Memorial Day in the same way GAR members did, but he seems to have missed the contradiction in complaining about society's forgetfulness while engaging in his own form of forgetting. While Moores' happily celebrated Memorial Day's beauty, one wonders what the veterans who listened to him that day may have felt about the idea of "beauty" in a day dedicated to death.

The Indiana GAR's promotion of the Won Cause to the rest of the society weaved myth, memory, and history into a paradoxical relationship. On the one hand, Indiana GAR veterans advocated for a Memorial Day untouched by business interests or games, history textbooks in public schools that portrayed them in the best possible light, and America flags raised at every public school. These efforts were undertaken by the Indiana GAR partly because they believed that the unwritten rules of memory were being violated by a society that had not properly remembered its Civil War veterans. Hosting

³¹² Charles W. Moores, "Decoration Day," 1-2, 15. Charles W. Moores Papers, 1901-1916. MSS Records 5982. Records housed in Manuscripts and Rare Books Division, Indiana State Library. Indianapolis, IN.

racism on a "sacred holiday" and ignoring Civil War history in the classroom, for example, constituted serious violations of these unwritten rules.

On the other hand, these same veterans contributed their own part to the creation of a remote, nostalgic past detached from present-day concerns. GAR members weaved their own narratives of national "progress" at countless Encampment campfires, telling mythic stories of the past that stripped the Civil War of its messiness, bloodshed, and death. The positive values of military service—honor, duty, loyalty, selflessness, and patriotism—were promoted constantly by the Indiana GAR, but the negative consequences of militarization and warfare were often lost in translation at public speeches. When these veterans marched on parade, they could have been viewed by audience members as exemplars of virtuous citizenship, but they could have also been viewed as aged museum-like artifacts from another time whose voices meant little to contemporary society. Finally, while many Indiana GAR veterans were quick to assert their agency in ending slavery, they were not ready to connect the legacy of emancipation to postwar racial tensions brought on by the creation of Jim Crow laws and legal segregation, demonstrating the limits of the Won Cause interpretation of the Civil War. Through these conflicted remembrances we see a group of aging men struggling to understand what exactly the war accomplished and, more specifically, define what it meant to preserve the Union and end slavery through armed, deadly conflict.

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Poster: "Digital Sandbox: Playing with Public Humanities." National Council on Public History Annual Meeting. Monterey Conference Center, Monterey, California, March 20, 2014.

Paper: "'This Will Be Our History and Our Glory': Civil War Memories and the Grand Army of the Republic, Department of Indiana." Indiana Association of Historians Conference. Anderson University, Anderson, Indiana, March 8, 2014.

Invited Talk: "Public History: Putting History to Work in the World." Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, February 13, 2014.

Moderator: "Putting Yourself Out There Digitally: Student Uses of Social Media and Promoting Humanities Scholarship." IUPUI Digital Sandbox. Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana, August 15, 2013.

Poster: "Service Learning: Teaching History Outside the Classroom." Robert G. Bringle Civic Engagement Showcase and Symposium. Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana, April 23, 2013.

Panel: "Teaching the Civil War: Challenges, Opportunities, and New Strategies for the Classroom." The Future of Civil War History: Looking Beyond the 150th. Gettysburg College, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, March 14-16, 2013.

Paper: "An Army of Liberation: The U.S. Military as an Agent of Social Reform in American History." Indiana Association of Historians Conference. University of Indianapolis, Indianapolis, Indiana, March 2, 2013.

Paper: "'In Justice and Not in Charity': The Grand Army of the Republic and the First National Encampment of 1866." Ohio University Graduate Student History Conference. Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, February 16, 2013.

Panel: "National Security's New Paradigm: Confronting the Post-9/11 Past." Guantánamo Public Memory Project National Conference. Columbia University and New York University, New York, New York, December 13-14, 2012.

Paper: "The case of *State vs. Thomas Woods, Martin Kronk, Joseph McCalebs, and Henry Grill*: a Study of Mob Violence in Antebellum America." Lindenwood Sibley Day History Conference. Lindenwood University, St. Charles, Missouri, February 23, 2011.

Publications and Public History Portfolio

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"Guantánamo Hits Home: How Has GTMO Affected America's Laws and Values?" Traveling Exhibit, *Guantánamo Public Memory Project*, 2012-Present.

"Interrogation and Torture at Guantánamo," *Guantánamo Public Memory Project*, October 19, 2012. Available at <bit.ly/1lk59MS>

Book Reviews

Review of *Who Owns America's Past?: The Smithsonian and the Problem of History*, by Robert C. Post, *Museums and Social Issues* (issue forthcoming, Spring 2014).

Review of *After Slavery: Race, Labor, and Citizenship in the Reconstruction South*, edited by Bruce E. Baker and Brian Kelly, *Southern Historian* (issue forthcoming, Spring 2014).

Awards and Honors

2013: Elected President of Graduate Student History Association at IUPUI for 2013-2014 academic year.

2010: Elected President of Lindenwood University History Club.

2009: Elected Secretary of Lindenwood University History Club.

2006: Award for Positive Peer Influence, Essence of PPI.

Other Notable Accomplishments

2014: Coordinator for Speed Networking, Mentoring, and Volunteer Programs at National Council on Public History Annual Meeting, Monterey, California, March 19-22.

2014: Judge for Indiana History Day, Central District, March 15.

2013: Student Representative, IUPUI History Department Search Committee for Assistant Professor of Digital History/Digital Humanities, Fall semester.

2013: Co-Creator of IUPUI Digital Sandbox Workshop: <http://iupuidh.wordpress.com/>.

2013: Tour Guide for "INtoxicating History," a historical bar crawl of Indianapolis organized by Indiana Humanities, June 6.

2013: Judge for Indiana History Day, Central District, March 9.

2012: Wrote revised marker text for Indiana Historical Bureau "Ambrose G. Bierce" Historic Marker, Elkhart, Indiana. Replacement date for current marker text TBD.

2009: Organized trivia-night fundraiser that raised more than \$500 for Lindenwood University History Club.

2008-2009: Timekeeper and assistant to Lindenwood History Department for production of locally televised "Lindenwood History Bowl," St. Charles, Missouri.

Professional Affiliations

Southern Historical Association, 2013 - Present

National Council on Public History, 2012 - Present

Pi Gamma Mu, 2011 - Present

St. Charles County [Missouri] Historical Society, 2010 - 2011

Alpha Lambda Delta, 2010 - Present

Phi Alpha Theta, 2007 - Present