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These same local museums, however, face major issues with funding as financially strapped governments from low-tax states provide fewer financial resources to small-scale history, science, and art museums. The budget recommended by then-



Governor Mark Warner of the Commonwealth of Virginia, facing a massive budget deficit in 2002, included a 15% reduction from the already sharply reduced funding provided by the state to local and state museums. As a result of the recessionary economy some eight years later, the state funding set aside for museums is miniscule. This rather short-sighted tourist policy forced some local state-funded museums to close an additional day of the week in an effort to reduce their operational costs. The need to attract additional paying visitors to museums has become even more important, as museums seek to make up for the budget shortfalls in order to remain in operation.

In this paper, I examine the development of a heritage industry in the northern Shenandoah Valley and the recent attempts by the New Market-based Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) to promote the area as a heritage corridor. My critique is rooted post-structural and Frankfurt School theory. In addition to the writings of Michel Foucault, my reading of the heritage industry in the Valley is heavily influenced by the work of German critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno. Adorno and Horkheimer famously detailed the emergence of a “culture industry” within advanced capitalist society. Within the spaces of mass culture, the “mass deception” of the culture industry drives out spontaneous, creative, and dissenting practices in favor of a homogenous culture of conformity supportive of monetary interests and liberal capitalism (2002). To Adorno and Horkheimer, the meanings embedded within cultural practices are now provided to us and the consumer is no longer required to think critically due to the fact that “the whole world is made to pass through the filter of the



culture industry” (2002). Additionally, mass culture serves as amusement for the people, boring them into a stupor and silencing independent thought. Culture was no longer a product of the people and, like everything with advanced capitalism, is simply a commodity.

Building on the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, Hewison argues that “heritage industries” commodify the past, creating marketing spectacles and attractions instead of honoring the complexities and heterogeneity of history (1987). To operate within a crowded market for Civil War heritage, operators of heritage attractions are forced into considering the “bottom line” above all else (Walsh 1992, 64). To be involved in the heritage therefore requires sacrificing critical individuality in favor of marketing and uniformity. The first section of this chapter examines the marketing and interpretative plans recently established by the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) and the Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT). My reading of these plans analyzes the disciplinary role played by the SVBF as they attempt to enlist local heritage sites into following their pre-approved Civil War heritage rubrics. In doing so, the aim is to create a unified heritage industry designed to maximize tourist interest and visitation.

The paper also contains my critical reading of the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum in Front Royal, VA. The majority of the fieldwork for this chapter took place in 2005 and very little has changed at these museums since my initial visit to this sanctuary to all things Confederate. As argued by Crang, museums strategic hegemonic sites whereby a particular group in society sustains its powerful position by



persuading others to consent to it, by making it appear natural, inevitable, or justifiable (2003, 256). My critical reading of these particular museums is three-fold. First, I examine each of these history museums as nationalist sites of what Foucault termed governmentality, pedagogical spaces where Americans go to learn about their glorious past and where American (or Confederate) values become circulated to the citizenry (Bennett 1995). As Luke reminds us, museum displays “orient Americans toward their future by way of certain widely approved rubrics” (2002, 14). Though this portrayal of the Civil War past might be expected in a local museum operated by a Confederate heritage museum, it is important to note that local museums are open to the public and do not provide a “neo-Confederate warning” to museum goers regarding their exhibits. The local elementary and middle school kids who visit the Warren Rifles Museum on a class trip do so believing this museum to be every bit as legitimate and authoritative as any other museum.

My reading of the Warren Rifles Museum argues that the space is a blatant endorsement of white supremacy and a shrine to neo-Confederate remembrances of the Civil War past. Unlike other Southern museums, the curators of the Warren Rifles Museum do not practice what Brundage calls the “new museumology,” a set of didactic and discursive practices challenging presupposed notions of historical truth to more openly present “historical warts” such as African slavery or gender and working class oppression (2005, 297). Beginning in 1978, even the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia has attempted to present a more inclusive set of exhibitions as part



of its collection, adding permanent exhibitions focused on the horrors of slavery and the role that women played in the war to a museum that was once the exclusive domain of the Lost Cause (Brundage 2005, 298-99). The Lost Cause myth is a series of discursive Confederate legends that began to shape in the decades following the end of the Civil War. Ex-Confederates and Rebel apologists turned to metanarrative mythology as a way of glorifying their past and justifying secession and African American slavery. The Lost Cause myth supports an ideology of militarism, homeland defense, common sense values, aggressive masculinity, feminine docility and grace, and African American obedience to authority. Gallagher further describes the Lost Cause as “an American legend, an American version of great sagas like Beowulf and Song of Roland...the legend tells us that the war was a mawkish and essentially romantic and heroic melodrama” (2000, 12).

The Alabama SCV attempted to get the “revisionist” curator of the Museum of Mobile, Alabama, dismissed from his position after he published a negative review of the Lost Cause tinged film *Gods and Generals*. Though he eventually retained his position after a protracted and highly public political battle, the curator George Ewert cautioned other history museums that:

Until public officials, educators, and others in authority realize that effort to hurt people for criticizing the myth of the Lost Cause are wrong, and that the myth does not represent mainstream scholarly history or broad public opinion, others will likely repeat the kind of episode I experienced.

If Ewert’s comment that the Lost Cause myth “does not represent mainstream scholarly history or broad public opinion,” then the UDC-sponsored Warren Rifles Museum goes



against the trends of museumology (2004). It is a virtual shrine to Old South memory and the glorification of the heroes of the Confederacy present in the original post-war version of the Lost Cause. As such, I argue it occupies a rather uncomfortable position within the emerging heritage tourist corridor of the Shenandoah Valley. On the one hand, Civil War heritage tourists largely come from the American South and tend to be sympathetic to Confederacy. As such, an openly pro-Confederate museum such as the Warren Rifles Museum is not likely to offend a large percentage of Civil War tourists to the region. The “inclusive” mission of the non-partisan Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation, however, is in conflict with the explicit pro-Confederate ideological goals of the Warren Rifles Museum.

Developing a New Market in New Market

Though interest in preserving historical sites for tourism is hardly a new phenomenon, there has been a significant rise in heritage tourism over the past 30 years, particularly within Western Europe and the United States. According to Urry, over half of the nearly 1,800 heritage museums in Great Britain have opened since 1971 (2002, 94). Urban areas throughout the United States have also been major sites of heritage development, including gentrifying neighborhoods where developers utilize the designation of historical districts as a tool to evict the working class. Heritage tourism development offers the alluring promise of large profits and the revenue generated can be of significant economic importance at both a macro and micro spatial

As with any form of tourism, heritage tourism requires mass visitation in order to generate the “big bucks” often promised by tourist boosters. According to a 2003 survey from the Virginia Tourist Bureau, nearly 12% of Virginia tourists come to the state interested in visiting Civil War sites. These heritage tourists generate over \$200 million dollars annually at Civil War battlefield sites (Sampson 2004). According to Jim Campi of the CWPT, the typical Civil War heritage tourist is a retired baby boomer with money and time to burn (Sampson 2004). They are predominantly white males traveling with families and are geographically most likely to be from the American South (SBHF 2008, 2-9). In order to attract these Civil War heritage seekers, the regional tourist infrastructure (hotels, restaurants, transportation, amenities) must remain competitive with other areas and be constantly updated, requiring continual capital (re) investment from both private and government sources. Not doing so risks losing its Civil War obsessed “cash cows” to another developed heritage region such as Richmond, Atlanta, Vicksburg, Gettysburg/Antietam, and central Tennessee.

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places and timeless, unchanged spaces located outside modernity (1976). In evaluating the prospective audience for Shenandoah Valley Civil War heritage sites, the SVBF notes that, “Authenticity is a key attraction to heritage travelers (2008, 2-9). They want to see, experience, and appreciate the actual places where things happened.” Many heritage tourist sites attempt to provide an “authentic experience” to their visitors, including requiring tourist interpreters to wear costumes made to be as authentic to the period as possible and that they speak to the visitors in accents reflecting the way that people talked “back then.” Though heritage sites all over the world engage in this quest for historical authenticity, it is ultimately an impossible goal. As Handler and Gable argue in their critical work on heritage authenticity at Colonial Williamsburg, “The dream of authenticity is a present-day myth (1997, 223). We cannot recreate, reconstruct, or recapture the past. We can only tell stories about it in present day language, based on our present day concerns.”

The reliance on “living history” at heritage sites suggests heritage tourists are no different than other postmodern travelers. They crave fantasy and entertainment and are willing to “play along” with actors pretending to be in the past who amuse while they educate (Urry 2002). Civil War heritage events, including reenactments and living history displays, are now ubiquitous at Civil War themed tourist sites. These living history displays encourage the audience to “step back in time” and to imagine they are watching history unfold before their eyes. I attended a “Meet the Generals” session at a Virginia heritage festival in 2005, for example, where reenactors spoke to the crowd in

Finally, heritage tourists are often obsessed with historical subject matter and their trips to heritage sites are a sort of pilgrimage to what they consider to be “holy sites” of memory. The heritage traveler arrives to the region with a strong foundation of knowledge on the subject and they often consider themselves to be amateur historians on topics of history and heritage. Their visits to Civil War battlefields become quasi-religious experiences that (re)affirm one’s sense of heritage and identity (Lowenthal 1996). These visits may be somber and reflective ones, as heritage tourists imagine the sacrifices made by past mythical heroes on the ground where they now stand. Battlefield heritage sites become sacred spaces, landscapes for future generations to visit in an effort to remember the regional or national past. They are themselves monuments of a type, entire geographic areas that serve to honor the fallen dead and providing salient warnings of the catastrophic consequences of war. Foote contends that battlefields become sacred spaces when they are clearly set apart from the local area, bounded and preserved as something unique and significant within a particular geographic area (1997, 9-10). Heritage travelers seek memory sites to learn about the



past at the place where it happened, giving the “sacred soil” of a particular memory site a normative authority to its visitors.

The preservation of these battlefield sites has become a particular contentious issue within parts of the United States, as local developers and heritage groups clash when these sacred battlefield landscapes of the past become threatened by modern development plans. The Washington, D.C. based CWPT has been active in the northern and central Shenandoah Valley, having already campaigned to preserve tens of thousands of acres of battlefield space throughout the region. Preserving threatened historical sites is of paramount importance for heritage boosters who increasingly rely upon economic arguments in their fight for battlefield preservation. Boosters argue that battlefield sites are more than just a historical or environmental resource worthy of preservation; they are also valuable geographic commodities necessary for rural communities to “develop” a heritage industry. According to Henry Connors, a heritage booster and former deputy administrator of the Virginia county of Spotsylvania (home to three major battlefields), “We are trying to show people that preservation and heritage tourism make for good economic development. We don’t need to pave over battlefields to put big-box stores on them” (Sampson 2004). This type of booster logic highlights how Civil War heritage culture is an industry of its own, presumed to be capable of providing an economic base equal to or surpassing that of mass retail.

As part of their media-driven preservation campaign, the CWPT commissioned a study entitled *Blue, Gray, and Green: A Battlefield Benefits Guide for Community*



Leaders. As part of a contracted study conducted by an independent agency, the CWPT proudly conclude that the preservation of battlefield sites “can reap economic benefits for local communities” (2006). The rather exhaustive and comprehensive 200-page study was compiled by an independent research firm and has become a data repository for preservations across the country seeking to protect battlefield sites from developers. The CWPT report claims that on average it only takes 702 visitors a year to a battlefield in order to pay for one full time local job (2006, 5). According to this study (2006, 113; 186), the Civil War heritage tourists visiting battlefields located in the Valley towns of New Market and Winchester supported 34 and 51 full time job equivalents respectively. The study claims such job creation is actually indirect, meaning they are not jobs created at the battlefields themselves, and are therefore presumed to be evidence of a “trickle down” form of heritage economics. The CWPT further highlights the tax and retail revenue generated by battlefield visitors, noting that tourists “do not need the services provided to permanent residents of the community,” making them a sort of “cheap date” for localities seeking an economic boost (2006, 7).

Though the expansion of the heritage tourist economy would certainly bring some additional jobs to a region, the study fails to clearly define the types of full time jobs created. According to Marcouieller, the majority of jobs created by tourism are seasonal, comprised mainly of temporary service work targeted at young people out of school during the summer months (2007, 29). These service jobs, primarily food, retail, or lodging related, rarely include benefits such as health care and insurance and often



require workers take on a second job in order to piece together a living wage. According to the definition of full time in the CWPT study, a “full-time equivalent job” comprised forty hours of weekly paid labor (2006). As they footnote in the study, this means that a 20-hour service job (waitress, hotel maid, etc) counted in the study towards half of a full time job.

The study does not break labor down into any further job categories such as professional, clerical, or service, nor does it clarify exactly how many “half-time” jobs figured into their job creation data. As such, the 34 full-time jobs supposedly created by heritage tourism in New Market could include a significant percentage of part time labor. Additionally, as a 1998 study from the New Jersey Heritage Trust reveals, workers in “direct” heritage jobs, including jobs in museums, battlefields, and visitor centers, were actually paid even less than most service workers earn (NJHT 1998). Given the massive contemporary budgetary problems in Virginia and near continual reduction of funding to history and art museums, it is safe to assume these “direct” jobs at heritage sites are either underpaid or rely heavily upon volunteer labor. It is significant to note, however, that within the primarily rural and working-class areas of the Shenandoah Valley, any promise of any job creation during a time of economic hardship and recession is likely to be well received.

In order to maximize the regional potential for the Shenandoah Valley to become a must-see destination for Civil War heritage tourists, local heritage tourist boosters argued for a unifying historical and geographic designation from the Federal



Government. Until 1996, the only visible form of heritage marketing and service for heritage tourists came from the Virginia Civil War Trails Program. The Civil War Trails is a state funded non-profit based in Richmond whose main goal is the establishment of heritage trails. These are Civil War tour routes marked by interpretative signs and markers for visitors to follow. Though there are some 75 Civil War Trails locations in the Shenandoah Valley, all of the touring is self-guided and the interpretations at the locations is entirely site-specific with no coherent unifying themes (SVBF 2008a, 2-7). As a result, the Civil War Trails program serves as little more than a clustering of regional heritage signage and was considered by heritage boosters to be relatively insignificant and ineffective.

After years of political lobbying, the United States Congress established the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District in 1996. The district comprises ten battlefield sites in the central and northern section of the Valley and the legislation further established the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation (SVBF) as the non-profit “management entity” for the district. Based in New Market, the SVBF immediately became the largest and most important heritage tourist organization in the region when they finally opened in 2000. The district geographically encompasses the counties and independent cities of Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Page, Warren, Rockingham, Augusta, Highland, Staunton, Harrisonburg, and Winchester. Its board consists of four officers and 20 additional board members including prominent local and national preservationists, historians, tourist and park operators, and business people. Like their



partners at the CWPT, a major mission of the foundation is regional battlefield protection, or as referred to in the economically-tinged official discourse used on their main website, engaging in acts of resource preservation.

Their second mission is that of “interpretation and education,” with the goal of “assisting its partners in the Valley to expand their interpretive and educational programs, offering visitors a coordinated interpretive experience throughout the National Historic District” (SVBF 2006). Lastly, the SVBF mission involves aggressive marketing, providing service to visitors, and serving as unabashed boosters for regional Civil War heritage tourism. The foundation also developed a comprehensive marketing plan for the region and the group publicizes local heritage events on the web through their Facebook page and on their own website. The group has now worked with local officials to open two heritage tourist visitor centers in Winchester and Rockingham County and plans to open additional ones for each of the three additional geographic clusters (New Market, Cedar Creek/Fisher’s Hill, McDowell) developed by the SVBF. Interestingly, the SVBF does not seem to partner with any heritage attractions in nearby Lexington. Given the stature of the town as the Confederate Mecca, this seems a rather odd omission.

A close reading of the most recent SVBF Interpretative and Marketing Plans reveals a great deal about the long-range goals of the foundation, their metanarrative interpretations of Civil War history, and their ideas for creating and sustaining a unified regional heritage industry (2008-2011). The overall goal of the plans (and for the entire foundation) is to make the Shenandoah Valley the “go-to” destination for Civil War



heritage tourism in Virginia and the United States. The intended audience for the plans is quite clearly the heritage tourist operators of the northern and central Valley. One of the most important recommendations made in both of the studies is that local heritage industry attractions adopt and display a unified set of interpretative themes and “marketing messages” (SVBF 2008a, xv). The SVBF believes that a unified set of themes will help create a niche for the region as a thematically focused heritage region comprised of many cooperative partners within the highly competitive Civil War heritage landscape.

Though the SVBF positions itself as the regional coordinator for all Civil War heritage tourism in the area, the various heritage tourist operators are under no obligation to follow the interpretative directives suggested in these master plans. Not being a heritage “team player,” however, would seem to be rather foolish given the power of the SVBF in regional heritage issues. In a Foucaultian sense, the SVBF possesses great deal of disciplinary power within the regional heritage industry. This disciplinary power is institutional, as the foundation serves as a scholarly hub for Civil War knowledge and a repository for much needed grant funding. As previously mentioned, the board of the SVBF consists of prominent academics, business members, and tourist operators of the community. A manager of a local heritage attraction would be foolish not to align him/herself with such prominent, knowledgeable, and well-connected individuals. Most importantly, the foundation both applies for and then distributes grant money. The foundation, rather adept at fundraising, has raised



over \$2 million for its battlefield preservation efforts alone since 2000. The SVBF Implementation Grants Program, funded in large part by grant money from the Federal Government, distributes tens of thousands of dollars on an annual basis to “support strong management programs” and “partners [who] play a critical role in accomplishing the goals of the National Historic District” (SVBF 2009). The 2009 grants totaled \$46,490, an amount that is hardly ‘chump change’ for cash strapped tourist operators forced to scrounge for every last dime due to state and local recessionary budget cuts. When factoring in matching grant funding, the organization distributed over \$105,000 in 2009 and over \$2.6 million since it began operations in 2000 (SVBF 2009).

The group is also skilled at public relations and it promotes specific regional heritage events to the general public through targeted mailings, mass emailing, and web postings. The SVBF has become a true information gateway for tourists visiting the area with a great deal of power to promote some events and sites more aggressively than others. The foundation recently recommending the creation of a “Civil War Signature” program, an award designation for heritage tourist sites/events/programs that best reflect the missions of the foundation, the Sesquicentennial commemoration, and illustrates a clear ability to attract large amounts of tourists from outside the region (SVBF 2008b, 99-100). In becoming a signature designee, the listed benefits would include highlighted listings on the regional website and their official Civil War guide, additional press release and media events, valuable inclusion in the promotion plans for the upcoming Sesquicentennial, and the privilege of displaying a signature logo at their



site and on their promotional literature (SVBF 2008b, 99). Such economic carrots are clear and enticing incentives for local heritage operators seeking to attract the expected rise in tourist visitation during the Sesquicentennial.

The SVBF thematic and marketing plans reflect its position as an organization with strong Federal connections. Stressing the diversity of the Civil War experience in the region, the foundation developed an overall marketing theme for its partners of “Experience Shenandoah at War: One Story, A Thousand Voices.” The theme is meant to provide an inclusive framework for Civil War heritage in the region, allowing the Shenandoah Valley to tell the eyewitness stories of regional struggle from both a military and a civilian “voices of the past” (SVBF 2008b, xv). The Civil War experience in the Valley is understood by the SVBF unified interpretive scripts to have been a struggle on the homefront, as well as on the battlefield. This interpretive approach emphasizes the struggles and hardships facing the entire population of Valley residents during this period, Federal and Confederate, “in order to understand the true human scope of the War” (2008a, 1-3). According to this thematic scripting, nature itself was victimized by war. As explained on the SVBF website (2006), “From homefront to warfront... the enchanting and fertile Shenandoah Valley became a valued pawn in this most uncivil war.” In order to further discipline this unified set of interpretive rubrics, the plan states that specific theme for individual towns “should be based upon the National Historic District’s themes and should be closely linked and coordinated with other interpretations within the vicinity” (SVBF 2008a, 5-5).

The SVBF plan requests that its heritage partners dedicate significant portions of their interpretative material to the exploration of these themes. Many of the older Civil War heritage sites of the region still present the war through a primarily military narrative. One such aging heritage site remains of the major Civil War heritage attractions in the district: the New Market State Battlefield Park, located in the same town as the headquarters of the SVBF. As mentioned previously, VMI manages the battlefield park and the Hall of Valor museum at New Market, utilizing the space for the memorialization and glorification of the military role played by VMI cadets in achieving a comprehensive Confederate victory there in 1864. As claimed on the VMI website



(NMSHP 2010), New Market is “where 257 Cadets from the Virginia Military Institute made the difference between victory and defeat.” The military reenactment held at New Market is the oldest annual staging of a Civil War engagement in the country, 146 years in a row as of 2010. New Market Battlefield Park also recently began running annual summer camps for children, including a Civil War day camp for children 7-12 where children engage in “military and artillery games” and the recently developed “Colonel Shipp’s Leadership Institute for Young Men” for ages 13-17. In order to be gender inclusive, the museum offers a camp for women called “Aunt Betsy’s Sewing Circle.” These camps sponsored by VMI fall back on classic 19th century gender stereotypes, with a major emphasis on the military honor, duty, and sacrifice for the young men and homemaking skills for the young ladies.

As holy ground for “The Institute,” VMI cadets make an annual ritualized pilgrimage to the battlefield to celebrate the beginning and the end of their tumultuous first academic year. Cadets take an oath of honor at the site and ritualistically “pin their hats” after crossing the so-called “Field of Lost Shoes” where many VMI men lost their lives in “defense of the Institute.” The New Market Battlefield Park is mentioned specifically in the SVPF interpretive report, stating that “Aside from [some new] programming and the newly created [Bushong farm] tours, interpretation at the museum traditionally focused upon the Civil War in Virginia and the role of the cadets at the battle” (2008a, A-5). The report recommends that the battlefield expand its programming to include the prescribed regional themes supported by the foundation. In essence, the

As evident from their choices of interpretative themes, the foundation clearly does not support an abject and virulent Lost Cause interpretation the Civil War. As has been tradition with Civil War era heritage, they do not actively oppose it either. Pitcaithley (2006) documents the large number of angry letters submitted to federally managed Civil War heritage sites yearly from neo-Confederate activists who believe their exhibits are anti-Confederate. Heritage attractions with clear pro-Confederate slants, such as the Stonewall Jackson Museum at Hupp Hill and the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, are safe from such scrutiny. As noted previously, the data on Civil War heritage tourists suggests that a majority of the visitors come from the American South. It is therefore reasonable to assume that many of these visitors are pro-Confederate to a large degree. My research experience as a heritage tourist on the Burning Tour, at reenactments and museums, and touring battlefields very strongly supports this assertion. I noted while on the Burning Tour, for example, that almost every one of the twenty or so attendees was from the South. A few of them wore t-shirts with Confederate flags on them and they asked questions primarily dealing with Confederate heritage issues. Given this geographic breakdown of visitors, the economic reality for the Civil War heritage industry dictates that the Lost Cause must not be overly critiqued or opposed.

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for the northern and central Shenandoah Valley is both positive and negative. Though I generally do not support any attempts to provide unified thematic rubrics out of a concern that doing so ultimately marginalizes other ways of remembering outside of the master script, I must admit that creating a unified heritage theme for the Shenandoah Valley based on more progressive Federal Civil War heritage interpretations could force the more Confederate leaning heritage sites to diversify their perspectives. The disciplinary effectiveness of the interpretive plan is somewhat lessened, however, by the messages embedded in their own marketing plan. The marketing plan stresses the economic realities and future possibilities for heritage tourism in the area if the region can begin to attract larger numbers of tourists and become a major Civil War themed destination for travelers. As both CWPT and SVBF data suggests, to do so would more than likely involve a large increase in tourists from the American South where interest in Civil War heritage tourism is the highest. Though the South contains a diverse population with a whole range of opinions regarding Civil War memory, my own research experiences as a heritage tourist on the Burning Tour, visitor to countless museums and battlefields, and ethnographer of reenactors reveals a large percentage of these Southern heritage tourists are indeed pro-Confederate. The economic reality for heritage tourist operators is that the Confederacy is what sells. Aggressively confronting Lost Cause orthodoxy within their museums or battlefield displays is therefore an incredibly risky endeavor for heritage tourist operators to consider.



A Confederate Shrine

“May the work of the UDC be a blessing to the nation as a whole and may peace, harmony and love abound in the hearts of all Confederate daughters.”

-- Mrs. Frank Harrold, President, Georgia Division, UDC 1920-21.¹

The town of Front Royal is a gateway community along Interstate 66 to the massive sprawl of northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. Like Winchester and Frederick County, Front Royal and surrounding Warren County lie within a region experienced unprecedented growth as a result of being unfortunately located in relatively underdeveloped and scenic rural landscapes still close to northern Virginia. The population of nearby Warren County grew 20.8% from 1990-2000, with a nearly 8% projected growth rate from 2000-10 (United States Census Bureau 2000). The town is located at the northern edge of Shenandoah National Park and Skyline Drive, placing it in a particularly advantageous position for tourist development and visitation. As a result, Front Royal is now home to a substantial number of bed and breakfast cottages, country inns, and gourmet restaurants that cater to weekend visitors and the nouveau riche suburbanites now living in the area. The downtown area, while still containing some outdated vestiges of an earlier Andy Griffith era, is in the process of gentrifying and historicizing, as illustrated by the area wide historic area designation and large amount of restored 19th century housing stock.

¹ Quoted from United Daughters of the Confederacy: Past and Present. Information brochure, back cover. Distributed at Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, October 2004.



The Warren Rifles Confederate Museum and the Belle Boyd Cottage lie within the town's main historic district just off the downtown business strip. Like all Civil War museums in the region, Warren Rifles is featured prominently on the SVBF website and is given an institutional stamp of legitimacy by the organization. The small museum is owned and operated by the local Warren Rifles Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. This seems to be quite a lively chapter, with over fifty current active members and monthly meetings held in a large meeting room located above the museum. The chapter also allows the SCV to hold their local meetings here as well, making the building a true regional center of Confederate memorial activity and heritage education. The museum is only open to the public from April 15th to November 1st, though they are open by appointment during the winter and early spring months. On our visit to the museum accompanied by my wife, we were required to make a personal appointment with the head of the local chapter in order to visit the space. After briefly discussing my book topic at a very general level, mentioning only that I was working on a doctorate at Virginia Tech centered on Civil War memory in the Valley, the curator agreed to open the museum up to us on a Saturday afternoon.

On our first visit to the museum, my wife and I we were both met at the museum by a sweet-natured older woman and member of the Warren Rifles Chapter, who serves as one of the museum's de facto curators. We were the only people visiting the museum and found ourselves accompanied the majority of the time by our UDC tour guide. Though this did make critical note taking difficult, it did provide us with access to the



museum's inner sanctum that I did not have at either Harpers Ferry or the Old Court House. We ended up getting us what amounted to a guided tour of the museum collections and the guide spoke to us at length about both the museum and her beliefs on heritage and the greater purpose of the UDC. She seemed to warm up to us after my wife informed her that her grandmother is a kindred soul, a member of the Savannah Chapter of the UDC that she informs us was the first ever chapter of the organization. This makes my wife eligible for UDC membership, something our guide was quick to point out as soon as she was informed of my wife's Confederate lineage.

Once inside the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, the visitor passes through a small gift shop and enters a small room displaying a whole range of Confederate artefacts and memorabilia.² The space is literally an archive for the Lost Cause, fitting given the organization's long service as the cultural custodians of the Confederacy (Brundage 2005, 125). The glass-cased exhibition of artefacts at the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum is of a highly amateur quality, with relics and documents piled next to each other by the dozens in the display cases in a haphazard manner. It is absent of the degree of precision and museum professionalism present at Harpers Ferry or at the Old Court House space. The accompanying text for each artefact is printed on small index cards located next to the items, though in some cases the curators actually overlap these cards, making them somewhat unreadable to the visitor. Despite this striking amateurism and its obvious pro-Confederate bias, the museum is featured on

² As part of our tour, our guide took us to two storage rooms filled with Confederate memorabilia that has either not yet been catalogued by the chapter or space has not been found to display them.



many Civil War related tourist websites and brochures for the region and does manage to receive thousands of visitors each year.³ The sign-in book at the front of the museum is full of visitors from around the country and the world, including large numbers of visitors from the United Kingdom, a country noted by Jackson and others on my travels as having a particular affinity for Civil War related tourism.

This educational component of the Warren Rifles chapter is consistent with the organizational history of the UDC and serves as one of the main motivations for the chapter to operate a public museum. As noted in their informational brochure presented to visitors at the museum:

The United Daughters of the Confederacy was incorporated under the laws of the District of Colombia on July 18, 1919. The objectives of the Society are historical, benevolent, educational, memorial and patriotic to collect and preserve the material for a truthful history of the War Between the States, to record the part taken by Southern Women in patient endurance of hardship and patriotic devotion during the struggle...[and] to assist descendents of worthy Confederates in securing proper education (my emphasis).⁴

As well as illustrating its continued usage of sectionalist and divisive language in their official documents, the italicized text above states the long-standing educational

³ This information is anecdotal, provided by the guide on our tour of the museum. I was able to look at the sign in book and did note that, though the museum certainly received far fewer visitors than Harpers Ferry, it still received enough yearly visitors to remain financially healthy.

⁴ Quoted from United Daughters of the Confederacy: Past and Present information brochure, inside cover. Distributed at Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, October 2004.



objectives of the UDC. As part of this educational component, the organization operates a public library and Confederate archive within the national headquarters of the UDC in Richmond, Virginia for scholars pursuing work in Confederate history. The national headquarters of the UDC also provides funding and logistical support for “Children of the Confederacy” (COC) chapters throughout the South. These local COC groups serve as indoctrination sites for the young people into neo-Confederate versions of history and provide useful recruitment pools for entry into either the UDC or SCV as adults. Like the UDC, the COC holds an annual national convention featuring a variety of speakers on Confederate heritage topics delivered to middle and high school aged children. The June 2004 national COC convention took place in the Shenandoah Valley at nearby Winchester, further illustrating the centrality of the Valley for Confederate heritage activists.

In addition to its support of the COC, the UDC fulfills its educational goals by awarding a number of university scholarships and merit awards named after Confederate military and political heroes to students at universities throughout the country. The majority of the UDC scholarships are presented to students at military schools, including The Citadel and all of the United States Service Academies. Within the Shenandoah Valley, the UDC honors the student with the highest academic average in physics at VMI with its annual Stonewall Jackson Award. Somewhat bizarrely, the UDC also offers a Jefferson Davis Award at Maine’s Bowdoin College to a student excelling in Constitutional Law. The UDC also supports post-graduate thesis work in

By operating a public museum, the Warren Rifles chapter fulfills its educational mandate in a rather unique fashion. It is the only public museum operated by the UDC in Virginia and one of only two currently operated throughout the southern United States.⁵ Like all public history museums, it is a disciplinary site where particular versions of the past are disseminated to visitors. It receives random visits from curious adults visiting the Front Royal area, many of whom no doubt arrive unaware of the museum's association with the UDC's and its subsequent pro-Confederate version of Civil War memory. For her part, our guide reflected little concern over her organization operating such a public museum space, noting that "Yankee groups" could do the same thing (Warren Rifles Guide 2005). The pro-Confederate bias of the museum, however, may actually attract alike-minded visitors to a space deemed to present an alternative to the "pro-Yankee" museums operated by the NPS. The museum continues to entertain local Warren County school children on field trips, a tradition at the museum for well over 70 years. Though our guide admitted that the museum does not have as many school groups visiting Warren Rifles as in the past, they make it a point to invite local schools to the museum every year. The school children who come to the museum learn about the

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In addition to its pro-Confederate educational component, the museum is a house of ancestor worship of the type described famously by Gaines Forster in *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, a fanatic civil orthodoxy obsessed with the myths and stories of the past as a way of affirming their pro-Confederate beliefs (Forster 1987; Goldfield 2002). The collection and display of these artifactual heirlooms is a type of ritualized civil ceremony allowing UDC members to participate in acts of reverence and connection towards their idealized ancestors of the past (Wilson, 1980). Though civil in nature, this form of ancestor worship was almost always combined with Christian imagery and symbolism, particularly as purveyors of the Lost Cause attempted to link the Confederacy and its various heroes with evangelical Christianity. It is not surprisingly then that the Warren Rifles Confederate museum features a number of Christian items as part of its collection, including a variety of Christian Bibles and prayer books carried by Confederate soldiers and spies during the war, all exhibited as proof of the Christian values of the South.

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When visiting this dark mnemonic space, reminiscent of a grandmother's musty basement, one finds hundreds of browning documents and decaying artefacts. Twenty or so glass cases hold the museum's most hallowed artefacts, ranging from letters written by Confederate officers to the standard military items present in most Civil War museum collections. The artefacts range from the stereotypical to the macabre, a strange assortment of Confederate bric-a-brac collected and donated since the museum first began operating in 1936. Among the hundreds of items on display is a framed Confederate battle flag used by the local Pegram's Battalion lies across the back wall of the museum, noted on our tour one of their most prized possessions. The flag display includes a document with the list of battles the unit engaged in during the war, noting their participation in actions from 1861 to one of the last battles of the war at Five Forks, Virginia. In another display case at the front of the museum and listed under the topic "History," the remains of a hip bone embedded with a bullet that may have killed the soldier lies next to a pair of riding gloves and a riding stirrup. According to the



accompanying text, it was found at the Seven Pines battlefield and loaned to the Warren Rifles chapter by the Virginia Chapter of the UDC.

The strangest and most disturbing piece at the museums found in the same display case as the preserved hipbone. On a decaying piece of paper with burned edges reads the text: “Part of the Rope Used to Hang John Brown.” There is no mention on the card of who found this piece of rope and when it was donated to the Warren Rifles chapter, details noted on nearly every other relic on display. The authenticity of this piece might be open to debate, as it seems to be item with a great deal of mystery and oral history surrounding it.⁶ The artefact itself is a small, frayed piece of rope, its edges somewhat ominously stained red as if to remind the viewer of Brown’s blood. Having just visited the John Brown Museum at Harpers Ferry on the same trip to the northern Shenandoah Valley, I was struck by the incredible difference in the representation of John Brown at Warren Rifles. Though I would hardly have expected a glorious memorialization of Brown at a Confederate heritage museum, the callous banality of the Brown rope exhibit dramatically illustrates the still-simmering hatred held by the UDC towards a historical figure from the 19th century. This piece of rope is displayed at a museum as a particularly treasured item, one held in veneration and nostalgia towards the act of hanging of a man considered by any good neo-Confederate to be, next to Lincoln, the ultimate traitor and villain of the South.

⁶ When asked about the piece, we got very little information about it from our tour guide. Rather, she simply seemed proud that her small museum had acquired a piece of rope used in the death of John Brown.



Not surprisingly, the museum offers a far different degree of reverence towards Confederate soldiers than afforded the “villainous” John Brown. There are a large number of memorial plaques located throughout the museum, taking up nearly all of the available wall space in an already crowded space. The majority of these plaques read “In Memory Of,” donated by the local descendants to their Confederate ancestor(s). Members of various Warren County families purchased these plaques as a way of honoring their familial links to the Confederacy and noting their own families past and present dedication to the cause. Some of these plaques include pictures of their Confederate ancestors while others are far more elaborate and extensive. The local Buck family purchased a series of these memorial plaques at the museum, including one at the back wall of the museum listing the names and ranks of over twenty members of the Buck clan that honorably served in the Confederate military.

As well as affording space to the memorialization of local soldiers, the Warren Rifles museum also includes the prerequisite Lost Cause exhibits honoring its most famous heroes. One of the most celebrated figures at the museum is Belle Boyd, the hometown Confederate spy who seduced Union officials in nearby Washington D.C. in order to gain information for the Confederate command. Like her male counterparts, Boyd receives her own display case at the museum full of treasured relics related to each Confederate idol. Boyd’s case features three of her elaborate period dresses, restored by local UDC members and prominently displayed on female mannequins that look amazingly like Scarlet O’Hara. Robert E. Lee’s case is a bit more crowded,

Like his iconic counterparts, relics related to Colonel John Mosby have their own featured display case. The Mosby display case includes a framed copy of a Confederate medal of honor awarded to him postmortem by the Sons of Confederate Veterans in 1979 for “uncommon valor and bravery involving risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in defense of his homeland and its noble ideals.” The “Gray Ghost” of the Confederacy is a local legend in this part of Virginia, a region sometimes referred to as Mosby’s Confederacy. Prior to the onset of the war, Mosby received a “gentleman’s education” at the University of Virginia before becoming commander of the 43rd Virginia Cavalry (Blight 2002, 297). His cavalry unit proved to be a major problem for Union forces in the region throughout the entire war, capturing supply wagons, trains, and even Union officers. Mosby and his Rangers supposedly went so far as to hang some of the men he captured, something neo-Confederate historians and heritage groups vehemently deny. As a result of his wartime activities, he became a romantic and

Front Royal is located at the southern edge of Mosby's Confederacy and was the scene of many of his military exploits. Not surprisingly, the Warren Rifles Chapter reveres him as their native son and Lost Cause kinsman. Our tour guide claimed herself to be a relative of the "Gray Ghost," a detail she imparted to us with no small amount of pride in her voice. When discussing Mosby with her, I tried to explain to my wife who he was and why he is so adored in this part of Virginia. I made the mistake of calling him an "irregular," a term that clearly offended our host to the point that she stopped the tour to inform us in a fervent tone just how regular a soldier he actually was. The outward anger expressed by this previously gracious woman towards what she considered to be a slight against her beloved ancestor threatened the continuation of our tour. I attempted to repair the damage to our relationship by noting, "That's what the Yankees thought about him anyway." She then told us a story about a "damn Yankee" teacher who had once visited the museum and dared to challenge her version of Mosby's Confederacy. As part of this tale, she said:

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(Warren Rifles Guide 2005).

There is more than a little irony associated with the vigilant defense of Mosby's character and the general reverence afforded to his Civil War legacy by a contemporary neo-Confederate. Following the end of the war, Mosby actually became one of the most reviled of all ex-Confederate heroes as a result of his Reconstruction era political stances. Unlike Jubal Early and many of the other Virginia ex-Confederates, Mosby refused to participate in most of the early and more divisive Lost Cause celebrations that both covered the Confederate cause in glory and encouraged continued antagonism towards the federal government. In an act considered by many original Lost Causers to be tantamount to treason, Mosby actually became a vocal member of the hated Republican Party and publicly campaigned for former Union generals for president—Ulysses S. Grant in 1872 and Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876. Mosby was one of the first ex-Confederates to espouse the new reconciliatory version of the Lost Cause, a narrative favoring reunion instead of confrontation with the North for the sake of New South economic development and new American military unity on the Western frontier. He later worked for the Grant Administration, accepting a position in the Justice Department and Foreign Service Office as reward for his support in the campaign (Seipel 1983).

Going against the claims of more divisive strains of Lost Cause orthodoxy still argued by contemporary neo-Confederate groups, Mosby publicly admitted that slavery was the cause of the war. He contended proudly that he and other Confederates



committed unlawful acts of treason against the United States by seceding and fighting against it (Blight 2002, 297). He was also one of the few ex-Confederates that dared to take on the post-war myth regarding Robert E. Lee's supposed invincibility as a military man and gentleman of the highest order (Blight 2002, 298). Following all of his controversial statements and activities, Mosby's legendary status as a Confederate hero became tarnished and he never achieved the sort of mythological status assigned to Jackson and Lee. The open and honest appraisals of both his military career and the Confederacy violated the tenets of Lost Cause orthodoxy. After Hayes' election as a result of the Compromise of 1877, Mosby moved out of Virginia to escape rising criticism of him as a "Federal Turncoat." He lived the majority of the rest of his life outside of the Jim Crow era American South.

CONCLUSION

On April 6, 2010, the newly elected Republican governor of Virginia Bob McDonnell issued a formal state decree declaring April to be Confederate History Month. He did so following requests from the state chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), a neo-Confederate heritage organization with active chapters located throughout the state. This decision was no doubt in part an attempt to curry favor with his conservative base of Tea Party activists, anti-Federals, and unreconstructed Confederates. McDonnell, a far-right Republican with a graduate degree from Pat Robertson's Regent University, strongly echoed long-standing



themes of Confederate memory in his proclamation. He stated that:

All Virginians can appreciate the fact that when ultimately overwhelmed by the insurmountable numbers and resources of the Union Army, the surviving, imprisoned and injured Confederate soldiers gave their word and allegiance to the United States of America, and returned to their homes and families to rebuild their communities in peace, following the instruction of General Robert E. Lee of Virginia, who wrote that, "...all should unite in honest efforts to obliterate the effects of war and to restore the blessings of peace (McDonnell 2010a).

Following extensive public criticism of this statement, McDonnell was forced to retract his statement and backed away from his openly pro-Confederate stance. This controversy mirrors the difficulty facing Civil War heritage promoters in the Shenandoah Valley. In developing a viable Civil War heritage industry in the Northern Shenandoah Valley, the SVBF promotes the area and its mission through the classic Civil War metanarrative tropes of "brother against brother" and "the war that brought our country together." The foundation faces the difficult task of promoting a non-partisan scripting of the Civil War, while attending to the reality that a majority of Civil War heritage tourists are pro-Confederate. In promoting area attractions to Civil War tourists, the SVBF has chosen a "laundry list" approach as part of their effort to inform heritage tourists. Visitors to SVBF run visitor centers encounter a huge list of sites that may be of interest to Civil War travelers, with special promotion given to battlefields and local museum sites. The Warren Rifles Museum, is recommended to visitors on the SVBF website as a "museum [with] an extensive collection of relics and records of the War Between the States." In doing so, the SVBF more than tacitly promotes openly neo-Confederate sites such as the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum, whose



missions are anathema to the SVBF mission of a non-partisan heritage region.

As I note throughout this paper, the Warren Rifles Confederate Museum does not attempt any balance in its representation of the Civil War past. It is a space dedicated to the dissemination of Lost Cause mythology. The reverence shown by the UDC towards this contentious and traitorous man suggests a resuscitation of his glorious military legacy among some neo-Confederate groups. It is only Mosby's glorious military activities that are of interest to the UDC's Lost Cause version of the past, not his post-war career involving outright dismissals of Confederate mythology. It illustrates the need for context within history museums in order for historical figures to be placed within a broader narrative of the past that provide the visitor with a more thorough and holistic representation of our national history and the figures who shaped it. The Warren Rifles Confederate Museum provides only a partial perspective of John Mosby, portraying him only as an uncompromising Confederate soldier and not as a complex man with a somewhat radical post-war political career. The representation of Mosby at Warren Rifles suggests that the UDC engages in a selective memory of the past where contentious or controversial issues are forgotten or ignored. The 19th century French historian Renan once stated that, "The essence of a nation is that its members have many things in common, but that they also have forgotten some things" (1996). At the Warren Rifles Museum, the Confederate Mosby is remembered while the Federalist Mosby is forgotten.



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