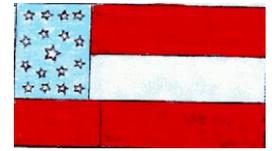




The Vidette

CALIFORNIA DIVISION

Sons of Confederate Veterans



The J. P. Gillis Flag



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Issue 14

Published by Division Adjutant Vernon R. Padgett

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BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Salute to Black Confederates

Did Black Confederates Serve in Combat?

Black Southern men served in the Confederate Army, and they served as soldiers. But did they fight in combat?

Yes they did. The evidence is varied, and comes from many sources: First, eyewitness testimony from Federal physician Louis Steiner; second, a report from Frederick Douglass; third, monuments reflecting black Confederate contributions, especially the unique work of Moses Ezekiel in Washington, D.C. Fourth, we see a sampling of combat reports of individual black Confederates, from a variety of sources, including the *Official Records*, and General Forrest's U.S. Congressional testimony regarding his 45 black slaves.



Black Confederate soldier depicted marching in rank with white Confederate soldiers, from Confederate monument at Arlington National Cemetery. Designed by Moses Ezekiel. (Photo by Bob Crowell)

And we review the Confederate Governmental recruitment and enlistment of black Southerners in the Confederate Army in March 1865-- and a few examples of their limited combat experience.

Eyewitness Testimony of Union Physician Louis Steiner

Dr. Lewis Steiner, Chief Inspector of the United States Sanitary Commission, observed General Stonewall Jackson's occupation of Frederick, Maryland, in 1862. He wrote:

More than 3,000 Negroes must be included in this number [of Confederate troops]. These were clad



Enlargement of frieze of Confederate Monument, Arlington National Cemetery. Note black soldier in center and black woman at right.

in all kinds of uniforms, not only in cast-off or captured United States uniforms, but in coats with Southern buttons, State buttons, etc. Most of the Negroes had arms, rifles, muskets, sabers, bowie knives, dirks, etc. ... and were manifestly an integral portion of the Southern Confederate Army (in Barrow, et al., 2001).

This description of men wearing shell jackets or coats and carrying weapons suggests soldiers. It does not appear indicative of cooks or musicians or body servants. Of course, we cannot know by the description, but it suggests 3,000 armed black Confederate soldiers.

Report of Frederick Douglass

"There are at the present moment many Colored men in the Confederate Army doing duty not only as cooks, servants and laborers, but real soldiers, having musket on their shoulders, and bullets in their pockets, ready to shoot down any loyal troops and do all that soldiers may do to destroy the Federal government and build up that of the rebels" (In Williams *"On Black Confederates"*). Douglass's report is clear: Black Southerners were fighting "as real soldiers."

Monuments to Black Confederates

The first military monument in the U.S. Capitol honoring an African-American soldier is the Confederate monument at Arlington National cemetery. The monument was designed in 1914 by Moses Ezekiel, a Jewish Confederate. He wanted to correctly portray the "racial makeup" in the Confederate Army.



Moses Jacob Ezekiel was the first Jewish cadet at the Virginia Military Institute. He was wounded in May 1864 at the Battle of New Market. As the first Jewish cadet at VMI, sculptor Ezekiel knew firsthand

the nature of ethnic prejudice, and was for that reason a unique observer, and recorder, of the ethnic composition of the Confederate Army, observations which he recorded in the first military monument to honor a black American soldier in Washington, D.C. He is now buried at the base of the famous monument he created.



The Confederate Monument at Arlington National Cemetery, Washington, D.C.

Ezekiel depicted the Confederate Army as he himself witnessed. As such, it is perhaps the first monument honoring a black American soldier.

In 1900, a Confederate Section was authorized in Arlington National Cemetery. Confederate casualties from around the cemetery were gathered and re-interred in that Section. A circular frieze of 32 life-sized figures shows Southern soldiers going off to war.

In his statue, a black Confederate soldier is shown marching in step with white Confederate soldiers. Engraved in the stone, also visible is a white soldier giving his child to a black woman-- for protection.

Individual Accounts of Black Confederate Soldiers in Combat

When we think of black Southerners who served in the armies of the Confederacy, we often think of them in the roles of teamsters, cooks, surgeon's assistants, nurses, shoemakers, blacksmiths, laborers, fortifications builders, and valets (most of these positions are now part of the modern military). But many blacks served in combat. Black Confederate **Nim Wilkes** said: "I was in every battle General Forrest fought after leaving Columbia ... I was

mustered out at Gainesville (May 1865)" (Rollins, 1994).



Confederate Monument at Arlington National Cemetery depicting a Confederate soldier entrusting his children to a slave. While Confederate soldiers were away from their homes, Union soldiers would victimize Southern blacks. Sometimes blacks experienced even worse treatment than whites, as Union officers often protected white women, but turned a blind eye when slave women were abused. Photo by Bob Crowell.

One federal cavalry officer related how he was held under guard by a **shotgun-wielding black** who kept the weapon trained on the Yankee's head with unwavering concentration. "Here I had come South and was fighting to free this man," the disgusted major wrote in his diary. "If I had made one false move on my horse, he would have shot my head off" (Barrow et al., 2001, p. 43).

Private Louis Napoleon Nelson served the Confederate States of America at Shiloh, Lookout Mountain, Brice's Crossroads and Vicksburg as soldier and chaplain in the 7th Tennessee Cavalry, under Lt. General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Nelson was sent by his master to take care of his (master's) son. When the young Confederate was wounded, **Nelson** picked up his rifle and continued fighting against Northern aggression throughout the war. After the war, Nelson and his former master were best friends; their farms bordered each other (Winbush, 1996).

Col. Parkhurst's (Northern) Account of Forrest's Black Confederates: "The forces attacking my camp were the First Regiment Texas Rangers, a

battalion of the First Georgia Rangers ... and quite a number of Negroes attached to the Texas and Georgia troops, who were armed and equipped, and took part in the several engagements with my forces during the day" (Lieutenant Colonel Parkhurst's Report (Ninth Michigan Infantry) on General Forrest's attack at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, July 13, 1862, in *Official Records*, Series I, Vol XVI, Part I, page 805).

The efforts of Jack, servant of an officer of the Thirteenth Arkansas Regiment, stands out as an act of heroism. Jack fought beside his master during the heat of battle. He fell seriously wounded but refused to be evacuated and continued to fire at the enemy. He later died in a hospital of his wounds sustained in the ranks of the Confederate army" (*Memphis Avalanche*, quoted in *Charlotte Western Democrat*, December 31, 1861).

At Brandy Station, Tom and Overton, two servants in the 12th Virginia Cavalry, picked up rifles discarded by Northerners and joined the 12th in a charge. They captured the black servant of a Union officer and marched him back to camp at gunpoint, where they held him prisoner. For two months, the Yankee servant waited upon the Southerners (Austerman, 1987, 47).

Levin Graham, a free colored man, was employed as a fifer, and attendant to Captain J. Welby Armstrong (2nd Tennessee). He refused to stay in camp when the regiment moved, an obtaining a musket and cartridges, went across the river with us. He fought manfully, and it is known that he killed four of the Yankees, from one of whom he took a Colt's revolver. He fought through the whole battle, and not a single man in our whole army fought better" (*New Orleans Daily Crescent*, 6 December 1861, cited in Rollins, 1994).

Black Confederate **Levi Miller**, born in Rockbridge County Virginia, was one of thousands of slaves who accompanied their owners to the war as a body servant. After nursing his master back to death from a near-fatal wounding in the Wilderness campaign, Miller was voted by the regiment to be a full-fledged soldier (Jordan, 1995).

Miller served the remainder of the war, exhibiting bravery in battles in Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. His former commander spoke highly of Miller's combat record, giving a riveting account of his performance at Spotsylvania Courthouse. "About 4 p.m., the enemy made a rushing charge," wrote Captain J. E. Anderson. "Levi Miller stood by my side-- and man never fought harder and better than he did-- and when the enemy tried to cross

our little breastworks and we clubbed and bayoneted them off, no one used his bayonet with more skill, and effect, than Levi Miller. Captain Anderson wrote: "During the fight, the shout of my men was 'Give 'em hell, Lee!'" (Jordan, 1995).

In his letter of recommendation, Anderson dispelled any doubts as to whether Miller had fought for the South of his own free will. "He was in the Pennsylvania campaign, and at New Castle and Chambersburg he met several Negroes whom he knew, and who had run away from Virginia," wrote Anderson. "They tried to get Levi to desert-- but he would not" (Jordan, 1995).

After the war, Miller received a full pension from Virginia as a Confederate veteran. According to the *Winchester Evening Star*, "The pension was granted without trouble, and he had the distinction of drawing one of the largest amounts of any person in the state." Upon his death in 1921, the *Evening Star* published a front-page obituary under the headline "Levi Miller, Colored War Veteran." It was the sort of stirring tribute fit for a local hero (Jordan, 1995).

Researcher Ervin Jordan (1995) cites another case of a **valiant black Confederate**, citing a diary that tells of an Afro-Confederate [who] became a local hero after being thrown into jail with nothing but bread and water for three days because of his support of the South and his refusal to work for the Union side ... The old man was made to chop wood with iron ball and chains attached to his arms and legs, but the curses of his jailers were unavailing: He stubbornly vowed to support the South until death.

The most telling account is from the most remarkable general officer of the War, Nathan B. Forrest.

General Forrest's Account of his 45 Black Confederates: "Better Confederates Did Not Live"

Both slaves and Free Men of Color served with Forrest's Escort, his Headquarters, and other units under his command (Rollins, 1994). Forrest took 45 slaves to war in 1861. He told a Congressional committee after the war:

I said to 45 colored fellows on my plantation that I was going into the army; and if they would go with me, if we got whipped they would be free anyhow, and that if we succeeded and slavery was perpetrated, if they would act faithfully with me to the end of the war, I would set them free. Eighteen months before the war closed I was satisfied that we were going to be defeated, and I gave those 45, or 44 of them, their free papers for fear I might be called.

In late August 1868, General Nathan Bedford Forrest gave an interview to a reporter. Forrest said of the black men who served with him: "... these boys stayed with me ... **and better Confederates did not live**" (Rollins, 1994).



The Confederate Government Enlists Black Soldiers, March 1865

In March 1865, the Confederate government began actively recruiting and enlisting black soldiers. One witness recorded the streets of Richmond were filled with 10,000 Negroes who had been gathered at Camp Lee on the outskirts of Richmond ... (Rollins, 1994, p. 26). Richmond's vast hospitals were a prime source of recruits. One writer observed "the battalion from Camps Winder and Jackson, under the command of Dr. Chambliss, will parade on the square on Wed. evening at 4 o'clock. This is the first company of Negro Troops raised in Virginia." Thus a few black Southerners finally saw combat in authorized Confederate units in 1865. Not only did Chambliss' regiment fight against Sheridan, but other units were noted at various points in the retreat to Appomattox.

On April 4, 1865 (Amelia County, VA), a Confederate supply train was exclusively manned and guarded by black Infantry. When attacked by Federal Cavalry, they stood their ground and fought off the charge, but on the second charge they were overwhelmed and captured (*Confederate Veteran*, 1915, 404; 411).

A courier reported that on April 4th he saw black Confederates ... "all wore good gray uniforms and I was informed that they belonged to the only company of colored troops in the Confederate service, having been enlisted by Major Turner in Richmond. Their muskets were stacked ... " (Rollins, 1994, p. 27).

In an action on 7 April the 108th NY Infantry captured an armed black Confederate by the name of Tom Brophy; he was made a servant by the New Yorkers, and later lived in New York until his death in 1888 (Rollins, 1994, p. 28).

A book-length treatment of the topic of official black service in the Confederate Army is the excellent *Gray and the Black: Confederate Debate on Emancipation* by Robert F. Durden, (1972).

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Florida Confederate Pension Application Files

<http://dlis.dos.state.fl.us/barm/pensionfiles.html>

Wednesday, February 19, 2003 - 12:00 a.m. Pacific Movies

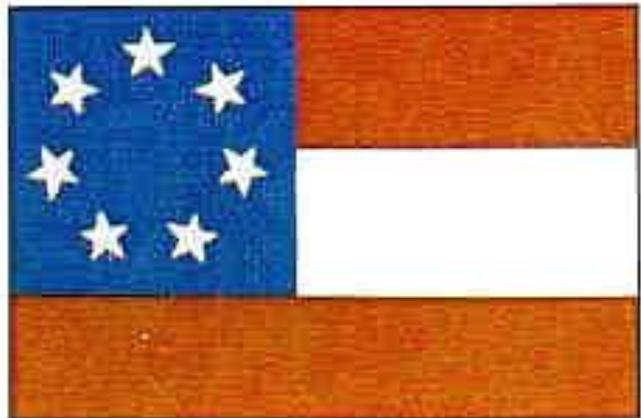
Robert Duvall takes on Role of Robert E. Lee

By Terry Lawson *Knight Ridder Newspapers*

WARNER BROS. Stephen Lang, left, is Stonewall Jackson and Robert Duvall is Robert E. Lee in "Gods and Generals," the prequel to 1993's "Gettysburg."

First things first: Robert Duvall may or may not be related to Robert E. Lee, chief of the Confederate armies, whom he portrays in "Gods and Generals," the prequel to the Civil War epic "Gettysburg."

"Our mama always contended we were part of the bloodline, but it may just have been wishful thinking," says Duvall, who mentioned the speculation long ago in an interview, only to see it reported as fact in various biographies.



"Hell, I think half the people in the South claim to be related to Lee. The only true relation I can claim is we both were soldiers and our shared love for the

great state of Virginia."

Duvall spent his Army stint in Korea before moving to New York to try his hand at acting in 1955. Though he was born in San Diego, he spent a lot of his formative years in Virginia, the home of his father, a rear admiral in the Navy.

Today, Duvall, 72, lives in Virginia on a 200-acre estate that was farmed before the Revolutionary War; he could go home at nights when he was working on "Gods and Generals," which was filmed on the battlefields of Fredericksburg and Antietam.

"Gods and Generals" begins in 1861, with Lee declining President Abraham Lincoln's offer to appoint him the head of the Union Army and accepting the command of the seceding Virginia's militia. It ends with the death of Lee's "right arm," Thomas (Stonewall) Jackson, after his victory at the battle of Chancellorsville.

Duvall has a long list of historical characters on his 45-year résumé, including Joseph Stalin and Adolf Eichmann, and he knows that history buffs argue details with even more passion than "Star Wars" fans. Already, the Internet posting boards are buzzing with debate over the movie and its depiction of Lee, who is seen as closer to god than general.

"These people love to pore over these things, and I understand that, but the only thing you can do when you take a role like this is read the script and do the research and take your best shot at it," Duvall says. "I actually took the accent from my daddy."

"I talked to a few military experts on the war, including the ex-naval captain who compiled Lee's letters, and after we finished talking, I said, 'So essentially you're telling me this man was the second coming, right?' And he said, 'Well, to a lot of people he was.'

"Well, you can't play that, you know? You have to find the human in there. I came at it from a much more emotional place."

Duvall says he was offered the role of Lee in "Gettysburg" in the early 1990s when the adaptation of Michael Shaara's Pulitzer-winning "The Killer Angels" was being produced as a miniseries for Ted Turner's TNT Network. Duvall turned the job down, and the part went to Martin Sheen.

When director Ron Maxwell completed the film in 1993, Turner was so impressed he decided to release it theatrically through New Line Films, the independent studio he had just acquired. "Gettysburg" received fine reviews and earned more than \$10 million in its limited run. Turner himself financed the prequel, based on the book written by Jeff Shaara after

the death of his father.

"Gods and Generals" was set to open through Warner Bros. before an even longer version played on cable. Turner resigned from AOL Time Warner last month — the movie is being released through his Ted Turner Pictures — and to add insult to injury, Turner's small role has been trimmed to a 3-second walk-on.

"A lot of stuff had to be cut, I suppose," says Duvall. "You're trying to get a lot of history and strategy on the screen, but you have to remember you're trying to engage an audience who just wants to see a good story told well, too."

If Duvall's role is mostly limited to speeches in "Gods and Generals," he's back in action for three upcoming movies. In his own "Assassination Tango," he plays an assassin sent to Argentina.

Duvall did his own riding in "Open Range," a Western directed by and starring Kevin Costner, due for release in May. "Secondhand Lions," set in 1960s Texas, sees him back in the saddle again, with Michael Caine.

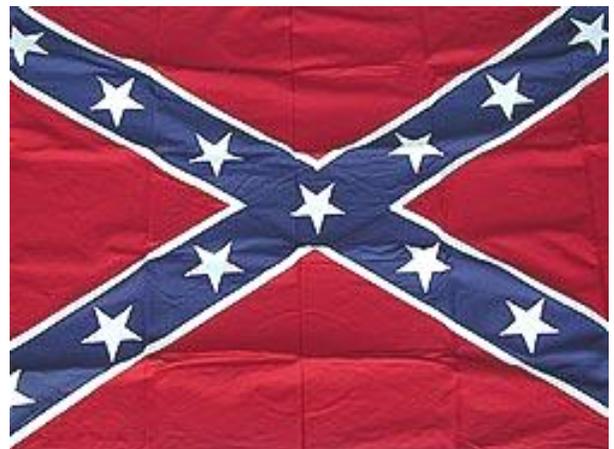
Of Duvall, Caine says flatly: "He's one of the three best actors I've ever worked with. And, as you know, I've had the good fortune to work with some of the best in the world. But this guy, he's just phenomenal."

New Book:

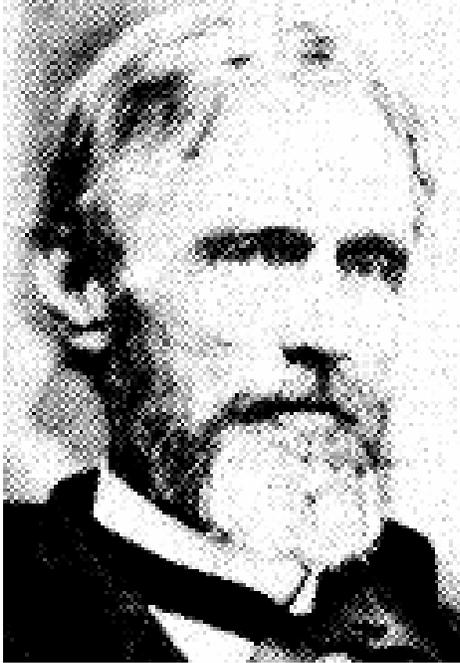
They Fought Like Demons

by DeAnne Blanton and Lauren Cook, this book tells the compelling stories of women warriors during the Confederate War. African American and White women who felt a devotion to their country so strong they served as soldiers in a society that condemned women in combat.

— Submitted by Corky Reed, SUV



WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT



"The contest is not over, the strife is not ended. It has only entered upon a new and enlarged arena." President Jefferson Davis, address to the Mississippi legislature - 16 years after the wars ended.

3rd Annual Vista Confederate Reenactment

The American Civil War will come to life on March 8-9, 2003, as North and South clash in raging battles at the Vista Antique Gas & Steam Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Avenue, Vista, CA 92083.

Living History and tours of Union and Confederate camps start at 10:00 a.m. Cars must be out of camp by 10:00 a.m. Battles will take place on a spacious battlefield at 12:00 p.m. & 2:00 p.m. both days. Artillery demonstrations will take place at 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Firewood, hay and the usual amenities will be provided. The museum cafeteria will offer low cost food for reenactors. Separate bivouac sites will be available for campagners. Vista is 7 miles inland

from Oceanside. Directions: From the junction of I-5 and the 405 Freeways in Orange County, go approximately 39 miles to Oceanside. Merge onto Hwy. 76E. Go 7 miles to North Santa Fe Avenue. Turn right and go approximately 2 miles to the museum which will be on the right side of the road.

Sutlers and anyone desiring **additional information, please contact Ed Mann at Howitzers1@aol.com or call 805.496.7736.**

Division Convention 6, 7, and 8th June to be held in Fresno and Clovis

by Marcia Norred, Centennial Chapter, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Fresno

There are many reasons why we desire to hold the convention here in our area (Fresno and Clovis) ... The SCV camp here has abruptly changed leadership, the work that "should have been done" months ago is a challenge that WILL be victoriously overcome.

The enthusiasm is infectious!

Our plans ... We want to secure a nice facility with a Historic theme.

Our group alone will be larger than all in attendance last year.

The UDC here has pledged total support with everything from fundraisers to table decorations etc.

We have two secured speakers, one being myself. I'll explain: I am the founder of a Medical Corps with a presentation on Civil War Medicine. My emphasis of research has been Southern Nurses. The medical advances from the war were enormous.

Our Southern ladies were there with their money, their social influences, and most of all they sacrificed their husbands, sons, fathers, etc.

We have been invited to speak to genealogical groups, schools, reenactments and others. Our board of directors has among others is comprised of 3 RN's and a lady with a public health degree (I am one of the RN's).

The second speaker is a descendant of Stonewall Jackson. He portrays Stonewall at reenactments throughout the state. He is not only an expert on Stonewall, but he looks just like the man!

In addition to holding the convention in a nice facility, we wanted to have it near shops and activities for the ladies, while you all are meeting. And what

would a convention be without a DANCE!! Yes, that is also planned.

And we hoped by having it here would help our northern brothers/sisters attend as well as Southern folks.

CWRS Medical Corps Founded

From Commander Chuck Norred, Fresno Camp 1804

Hello Vernon: I am so proud of my wife I just felt I needed to let you know. Marcia, finally a UDC member and an outstanding Registered Nurse, accomplished a project she has been working on for months.

She has spurred enough excitement within the C.W.R.S. that they are starting a Medical Corps.

Not the Hollywood type with an eye bulging out of one's head, but a Medical Corps that will attempt to teach to the public the true story of medicine and how it was practiced during "The War Between The States," and, the practice of medicine today.

THE BOARD: CSA Surgeon: Jim Elsome will portray CSA Surgeon Hunter Holmes McGuire.

FOUNDER: Marcia Norred, RN & UDC member

CO-FOUNDER: Taya Cline, UDC Chapter founder and Chapter President (BA in Journalism)

OTHER BOARD MEMBERS: Bobbi Desmond, RN; Lasley Tidd, RN; Nancy Hand, BS in Public Health Administration; Charles Henry CWRS President / CSA; Mike Gonzales, CWRS President / Union; George Burrell, Past CWRS President.

MISSION: Promote, in both members and the general public, a deep appreciation for the rich medical heritage of the War Between The States 1861-1865.

The means of accomplishing this goal will be to present historical talks to groups, living histories, exhibits, parades, and medical re-enactments.

I am extremely proud of Marcia, as most of her resources have been on Confederate nurses.

We do not live in the South, but the South lives in both our hearts.

Thank you Vernon. May the Proud Heritage of The South Live On For Ever

Chuck Norred

Letter to the Editor: Shame on You!

Dear Vern,

Shame, Shame on you!

Last year "MAYBE" 40 people attended the "California State SCV Convention" held in "Po-Dunk, California, USA".

This year promises outstanding speakers, and an opportunity for statewide members to attend by virtue of a centralized location. The attendance is expected to be 10 fold over last year.

The Centennial Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy has pledged FULL support.

Speakers are committed from Modesto, Madera, Monterey, and so forth. None of this was "worthy" of mention in your "February Newsletter"????

A new Ted Turner Hollywood movie was more important news than The Statewide Convention of The Sons of Confederate Veterans???

Oh my soul!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Marcia J. Norred, RN, Founder, CWRS Medical Corps, Centennial Chapter UDC Member

Editor Responds

Dear Ms. Marcia Norred,

May I say what a delight it is to get a Letter to the Editor! This is the 14th Issue of the *Vidette*, and I am now able to run my first "Letter to the Editor"! Perhaps the year will come when I will be able to run **TWO** letters to the editor ... Be still my heart!
Vern Padgett, Ed.

--Apologies to Sandra Ashdown-Turner, who sends me wonderful feedback on every newsletter, but then, she is my girlfriend ...

California SCV Web Site

Check www.scvcalifornia.net for the California SCV website. Gary Waltrip, Commander Camp 1440, The Stainless Banner, San Jose, continues to expand and add to the web site. See Gary's own site at www.RebelGray.com.

Since the last issue of the *Vidette*, Webmaster Waltrip has posted new Home Pages for Camp 2007 Long Beach and the Tehachapi/Bakersfield Camp, in formation.

Commander Waltrip has also put past newsletters of the Inland Empire Camp 1742 up for viewing, and past newsletters of Camp 1208 Los Angeles as well. Take a look at our fine work!



SCV Life Membership

Apply for Life Membership by completing application at www.SCV.org. Fee is \$300 if you are 59 or younger; \$200 for those aged 60 to 69, and \$100 for those aged 70 and older.

Mail check and form to HQ. Life Members are assigned to Camp 2 and are also listed on local Camp rosters with "LM" instead of an expiration date.

Sewing for Reenactors III: More About Homespun

By Toni Van Beveren and Vernon Padgett

What Makes a Cotton Garment "Homespun"-- is it the Style of the Weave, or the Closeness of the Weave, or What?

The fabric is a coarse weave, but not as rough as flaxen or other cotton fabrics with obvious fiber fillaments spread over it. The fabric you buy today is not real homespun-- it is manufactured in factories. The factories try to copy the weave as it would have been done on a home-style loom, with the same colors and patterns of the 19 Century --hence, "homespun" of the 20th Century.

What Garments Were Made from Homespun-- Shirts and Blouses Only, or Dresses? Trousers? Jackets?

Homespun was used for nearly everything-- homemade uniforms, shirts, dresses, children's clothing, etc. There are companies today that sell homespun uniforms for the hardcore reenactor. It is appropriate for men and women's clothing, and is especially appropriate for Confederate dresses since silk dresses were donated to make hot-air balloons. It is also very appropriate for period dress of the middle

and end of the war when the Union blockade increasingly prohibited fabric from reaching Southern stores.

How Can I Recognize Today's Homespun?

Most of it is now of cotton, and the patterns are very much like they were during the 19th century: Plaids, stripes, and solids. I have yet to see any example, modern or vintage, or other patterns such as florals, linears, &c. in a homespun weave, and I recommend you do not buy it if you should happen across it. Quilting books give the best examples of vintage homespun fabric -- many can still be found in those original colors and weaves in some fabric stores.

For other articles on Black Confederates, see

<http://www.rebelgray.com/BLACKREBS.htm>

[Did Black Confederates serve as combatants in the War for Southern Independence?](#)

[How did Black Southerners respond when war was declared?](#)

[Did Blacks serve in the Confederate army as soldiers?](#)

[Were Blacks forced to fight for the South?](#)

[Why Blacks fought for the Confederate States of America](#)

[The Valor of Black Confederates](#)

[Twelve Reasons we don't want to believe in Black Confederates](#)

[Why Americans Want to Believe the Civil War Was Fought To Free The Slaves](#)

<http://www.rebelgray.com/slavery02.htm>

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