

THE DAILY ADVANCE

LYNCHBURG, VA., WEDNESDAY EVENING, AUGUST 14, 1974 19



Attractive new entrance

This attractive new entrance gate to the Old City Cemetery off Fourth Street was built through the joint efforts of the Colonial Dames and the City of Lynchburg at a cost of about \$9,500. Contractor for the work at \$8,360 was Smith-Wimer, Inc., of Lynchburg. J. Everette Fauber Jr. prepared the plans for the new entranceway. The gate was adopted by the Colonial Dames as its Bicentennial project. Brick used in the gate came from collapsed portion of the old brick wall around the cemetery. (Aubrey Wiley Photo)

2,701 Confederate Soldiers
From 14 Different States
Are Buried Here

THE DAILY ADVANCE, Lynchburg, Va., Wed., Aug. 21, 1974



"REBELS" — Modern-day "Confederates" who experienced living history at the Civil War battlefield in Chancellorsville were, from left, Vance Sheffer of Hanover, Pa.; Charlie Childs of Louisville, Ohio; Dave Jurgella of Stevens Point, Wis., and Craig Carroll of Fredericksburg. (AP Wirephoto)



CAMPSITE — A "Confederate" walks across living history campsite set up by the National Park Service at the site of the Civil War battle of Chancellorsville. (AP Wirephoto)

Operated by National Park Service

Chancellorsville revisited battlefield

By LARRY EVANS

Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star

CHANCELLORSVILLE BATTLEFIELD (AP) — I sit and watch three flies slowly walk up my woolen pants leg. Gnats are buzzing near my ears and rivulets of sweat keep sliding down my face. It's hot.

An hour ago I had been sitting in an air conditioned office building, but from now until this time tomorrow morning I'm going to be out here in the steamy woods of Spotsylvania County, living a semblance of the life of a Confederate soldier.

I will be staying in a camp as authentically Civil War as the National Park Service could make it. The camp and the eight men who work in it are here to give people an idea of how the common soldier lived. The NPS calls it living history.

Things are quiet now. A thin line of gray smoke curls up from a cooking fire in the center of the clearing. A black hen struts around the camp, her head occasionally darting toward the earth to grab a morsel of food.

One of the two men on duty is sleeping on a cot in a woodshed; the other busies himself tidying the blankets in one of the camp's two tents. We are but a short distance down a path from Chancellorsville Visitor Center; but then again, neither do we seem very far from 1863.

The man who had been sleeping emerges from the shed, pulling suspenders over his shoulders. A yawn culminates in a grin when he sees that another Confederate has joined the ranks.

The awakening soldier is Vance Sheffer of Hanover, Pa. The other Confederate, with whom I will spend the day and night, is Dave Jurgella of Stevens Point, Wis. Both are students working from June 12 through Labor Day in this seven-day-a-week, 24-hour-a-day living history program. Two other summer employees and four park service historians also are participating in the program, manning the camp in shifts.

During introductions, Vance and Dave compliment me, saying I look as though I had stepped out of a Matthew Brady photograph of a Confederate soldier. It's in my blood, I tell them. My maternal great-grandfather, Rubeen Henry McGhee of Fredericksburg, was about my present age of 28 when he fought for the South.

As I look around, it intrigues me to think that an ancestor of mine quite likely spent time in a similar camp. I wonder what he did with his time, what he thought about.

I walk over to a chopping block and pick up an axe. Hands that in months have handled nothing rougher than an IBM Selectric typewriter begin sending the sharp-bitted

tool tearing through the spine of logs. The labor is awkward at first, but a rhythm slowly develops. I feel muscles move. I watch wood chips fly. I listen to the crack of the striking axe echoing through the oak forest. The work feels good, but my woolen pants and long-sleeved shirt are becoming sweatsoaked.

I sit on a stump to rest. I am surrounded by odors. There is the smell of decaying leaves, the smell of smoke, the smell of my own sweating body, all mingling with the smell of dust.

I watch the ever-changing patterns of shadows caused by the canopy of oak leaves hanging above us. I listen to the raucous noise of crows. Dulled senses are coming alive.

Were these the things my great-grandfather noticed while sitting around a camp? Probably not. I am a man from a technological society basking in the aura of this elemental setting. My great-grandfather lived the harsh existence of a 19th century man and was swept up into the even more severe life of a soldier. To him, the woods probably were just another enemy, something to be beaten if he wanted to get back home again.

My thoughts are interrupted by visitors to the campsite. A man and woman and their two children look at Civil War artifacts and listen as Dave tells them that the scene represents a small camp that would

have been set up following the Battle of Chancellorsville to guard a logging road that could have been used as a return route by the Yankees.

The visitors listen with interest to what Dave tells them, but most of their questions concern the present-day residents of the camp: Do you really sleep out there? Do you eat what you cook? Do you use insect repellent? The visitors are seeing living history, and

the lessons apparently are being driven home with a cultural shock.

The characters coming down the road are preventing any boredom that may have arisen. There is a man with loose-fitting sport clothes, looking debonair with flowing salt-and-pepper hair and chin

whiskers. He passes out cigars and talks about the time in Atlanta when he posed for a photograph wearing a Confederate general's uniform. He says he looked the spitting image of old Robert E. Lee himself. There is also a middle-aged family man with close-cropped red hair who suddenly

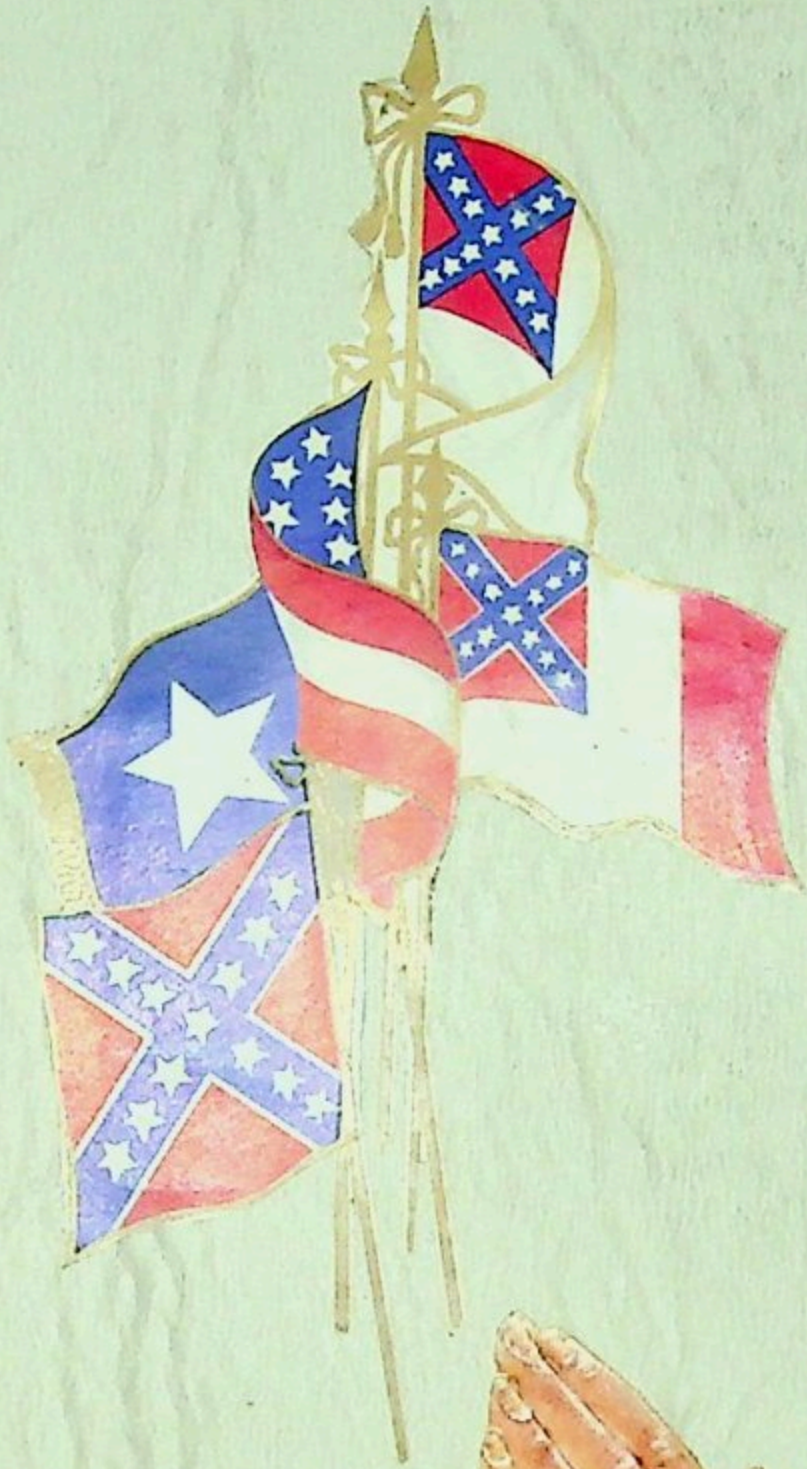
begins tell me that what this federally controlled country needs is a good violent revolution.

As the afternoon wears on, the heat continues to be bothersome. We share a large chunk of watermelon. Its coolness gives us a surge of energy, and we begin preparing a sup-

*Our
Confederate
Flag*



**Traditions and Code for the
Correct Use of the
Confederate Flags**



"LOVE MAKES MEMORY ETERNAL"

