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# "Fame's eternal camping ground": Louisiana and Virginia Civil War cemeteries

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“FAME’S ETERNAL CAMPING GROUND”: LOUISIANA AND VIRGINIA CIVIL WAR  
CEMETERIES

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
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by  
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## ABSTRACT

The Civil War in the United States was the deadliest conflict faced by Americans during the nineteenth century. The resulting numbers of dead bodies called for a change in both cemetery planning and traditional cemetery use. The Union created what became the National Cemetery System, consisting of standardized, nearly identical cemeteries created throughout the South both during and immediately after the war. This system, controlled by the federal government, sought to honor the loyalty of the Union dead while simultaneously dishonoring the Confederate dead, who could not be buried in national cemeteries. In contrast, southerners formed local organizations, primarily made up of women, to provide burial services for their dead. They also sought to restore honor to the Confederate dead through such methods as the Lost Cause, which provided a southern perspective on the Civil War and proclaimed the Confederate dead to be heroes. Both sides used their respective burial grounds as sites for commemoration, further recognizing the loyalty and heroism of the dead and showing that they could provide proper care for the graves of their fallen soldiers.

The states of Virginia and Louisiana both went through the process of cemetery creation and commemoration after the Civil War, but in different ways. Virginia, in the Upper South, was the site of numerous battles, resulting in large numbers of dead and therefore large numbers of burials in the state. The process of cemetery creation as well as commemorative practices in Virginia was competitive between the federal government and southerners, with each side striving to show better care for the dead. In Louisiana, however, fewer battles during the war combined with a Deep South location that limited the number of northerners in the state, resulted in fewer national cemeteries and Confederate burial sites. The process of cemetery creation and the commemoration that followed in Louisiana was therefore not as contentious as the process in

Virginia. Together, the history of Civil War cemeteries in Virginia and Louisiana provides a broader understanding of the process of cemetery creation and commemoration that resulted from the Civil War.

## INTRODUCTION

On Fame's eternal camping ground  
Their silent tents are spread,  
And glory guards with solemn round,  
The bivouac of the dead.

-Theodore O'Hara, "Bivouac of the Dead" (c. 1858)<sup>1</sup>

Death, and the relationship of the living to the dead, has long been a focus of societies around the world. Much of this focus centers on the burying of the dead and the location of their burials. From the pyramids of Egypt and the tombs of classical Greece, to the catacombs of Ancient Rome, to the development of modern cemeteries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, "it is clear that the architecture and artifacts of death have been important in all civilizations as a canalization and formalization of loss, and as a reflection of social, religious, and artistic tendencies in cultures."<sup>2</sup> The rituals surrounding death, burial, and commemoration all developed as ways for the living to deal with and understand death. Many of the ideas and rituals surrounding death and burial practices were transformed from society to society and passed down through generations at least partially intact to the Victorian Age.

During the nineteenth century, Victorians in both Europe and America added to older views of death and burial practices new sensibilities by transforming burials and burial places into spaces for more personalized rituals for the living. New rituals also emerged concerning mourning for and remembrance of the dead. Similar to the ancient "Greek burial custom [where] the emotional aspects of severance were satisfied within observances that were essentially

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore O'Hara, a soldier in both the Mexican American War and the Civil War, originally wrote "Bivouac of the Dead" in honor of fallen comrades in the Mexican American War. During the Civil War, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs, who created the first national cemetery, appreciated the solemnity of the poem and ordered that the first stanza be displayed at the gates of Arlington National Cemetery. Since then, many national cemeteries pay homage to the poem by placing this stanza at their entrances.

<sup>2</sup> James Stevens Curl, *A Celebration of Death: An Introduction to Some of the Buildings, Monuments, and Settings of Funerary Architecture in the Western European Tradition*, (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1980), 3.

traditional, and which enabled grief to be expressed ritualistically,”<sup>3</sup> Victorians expressed their grief in highly ritualized ways, but nevertheless made the grieving more personal. Family burial plots and individual graves became sites for personal remembrance that gave hope to the living. Victorian gravestones contained symbols replete with hopeful meanings including angels, doves, anchors, pyramids, and palms which represented the soul, peace, hope, eternity, and victory, respectively.<sup>4</sup> These new concepts of personalizing burials and graves for the sake of the living, along with “the idea of associations with the dead, and with worthy memories, was central to much of the thinking behind nineteenth-century design.”<sup>5</sup>

Nineteenth-century views about death and burials gave rise to new methods of cemetery planning. New cemeteries were designed to be more conducive to the needs of the living to commemorate their dead. Prior to the Victorian Age, most burials took place in churchyard cemeteries. By the early 1800s, however, churchyard cemeteries had become dangerously overcrowded. Other churchyard burial hazards also existed, including the risk of public disease, drunken gravediggers, grave robbing, and body snatching, all prevalent during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These dangers led to a preoccupation with cemetery reform. The desire for safe burial grounds that could also be visited and enjoyed by the living contributed to the creation of rural, or garden, cemeteries.<sup>6</sup>

The first garden cemetery, Paris’s Pere Lachaise, opened in 1811 and became the inspiration for new cemeteries across Western Europe and in the United States. The first garden cemetery in the United States, Mount Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Massachusetts, was

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 34.

<sup>4</sup> Valerie Ann Bazarian, *A Criteria for Cemetery Design*, (Baton Rouge, LA: College of Design, Louisiana State University, 1977), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Curl, *A Celebration of Death*, 260.

<sup>6</sup> Bazarian, *A Criteria for Cemetery Design*, 11.

established in 1831 and set the stage for a generation of American cemetery design. Mount Auburn, and the many cemeteries modeled after it, was unique because the cemetery was “so unlike any existing graveyard or churchyard, [instead it] was a scenic composition of winding avenues, paths, and ponds on hilly, wooded terrain with dramatic panoramic views over the metropolitan area.”<sup>7</sup> Garden cemeteries were “also meant to be an attractive place of history, an assemblage from the past of exemplary individuals, the accounts of whose virtues and accomplishments might be read inscribed on neoclassical stones.”<sup>8</sup> Garden cemeteries were thus designed specifically to be locations for both private mourning and public commemoration of the dead. The cemeteries also became places of relaxation and leisure for America’s upper and middle classes, bringing the living and the dead together in a new way. Even though “cemeteries are pieces of perpetual (and tantalizing) alienation, points of communion that are forever thwarted by silence, separation, and inaccessibility,”<sup>9</sup> garden cemeteries allowed for greater interaction at cemeteries than ever before.

The onset of the Civil War in 1861 changed in fundamental ways how Americans ritualized death and commemoration. During the four years of war, casualties occurred on a larger scale than ever before in American history, which necessitated a new system of cemetery creation as well as facilitating an outpouring of commemoration. Traditional nineteenth-century cemeteries across the South were transformed during the war into mass gravesites for the Confederate dead that then became shrines sacred to the memory of the Confederacy. While

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<sup>7</sup> Blanche Linden-Ward, “Strange but Genteel Pleasure Grounds: Tourist and Leisure Uses of Nineteenth-Century Rural Cemeteries,” in Richard E. Meyer, ed., *Cemeteries & Gravemarkers: Voices of American Culture*, (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1989), 293.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>9</sup> Susan Krane, “Striking Out: Another American Road Show,” in Lucinda Bunnell and Virginia Warren Smith, *Scoring in Heaven: Gravestones and Cemetery Art of the American Sunbelt States*, (New York: Aperture, 1991), ix.



these burials were incorporated into the pre-existing garden cemeteries, the necessity of burying the Civil War dead also gave rise to a whole new phase of cemetery creation and design. Military cemeteries were created across the South as burial spaces for the Union dead and became the beginning of the federal National Cemetery System. These cemeteries were strikingly different from the existing garden cemeteries. The newly created cemeteries came to be characterized chiefly by their stark aesthetics, most clearly seen through rows and rows of identical white tombstones. These nearly identical cemeteries ushered in not only a new system of cemetery creation, but also new ways of commemorating the dead.

Commemoration of the Civil War dead took place in both the older cemeteries that had been transformed to accommodate the Confederate dead and in the newly created cemeteries for the Union dead. Though many of the ritualized commemorative practices that took place in the cemeteries were similar, cemeteries became sites of division rather than reunification between the North and the South in the initial decades after the Civil War. Instead of joining in mourning for the dead as a method for bringing the two sections of the country back together after the bitterness of the Civil War, northerners and southerners were in many ways drawn farther apart by the divided Union and Confederate Civil War cemeteries. Cemetery commemoration in national, or Union, cemeteries focused on remembering the victorious dead and celebrating the loyalty and honor of Union soldiers. On the other hand, commemoration in Confederate cemeteries stemmed from the need of defeated southerners to understand and come to terms with the effects of the Civil War, as well as their standing as second-class citizens in the military that remained until the Spanish-American War, and, in some ways, until the First World War. As southerners found ways to restore honor to the Confederate dead through memorialization and

the Lost Cause, tensions between the North and South began to ease and cemeteries eventually became places of reunification as both sides came together to remember the dead.

Cemetery creation and commemoration in the years during and after the Civil War differed subtly across the southern states, but current scholarship argues that there were general trends throughout the South. Works such as John R. Neff's *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* provide a broad look at the issues surrounding Civil War cemeteries from the perspectives of both northerners and southerners and highlight the overall pattern behind cemetery commemoration after the war.<sup>10</sup> Other works, including *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, edited by Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, use local studies to show how small communities practiced commemoration and fit into the larger trends occurring throughout the South.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, William Blair's *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, provides a study of the politics behind cemetery commemoration in the years after the war.<sup>12</sup> All of these works outline general trends in cemetery commemoration after the Civil War that focus on contestation and contention between northerners and southerners over the issue of commemoration. Some of these trends are more consistent in some states than in others, though.

Virginia, an Upper South state, was the site of more Civil War battles than any other state. The large scale of war in Virginia naturally produced a huge number of Civil War dead, thus making the state a site for numerous Civil War cemeteries, including the largest and most

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<sup>10</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation*, (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds. *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Willaim Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, (Chapel Hill, NC: Universty of North Carolina Press, 2004).

important cemeteries for both the Union and the Confederacy. Due to both the large number of cemeteries and the presence of northerners in the state, commemoration in Virginia's Civil War cemeteries also occurred on a large scale in both Union and Confederate cemeteries, making these cemeteries focal points for commemorative practices for the entire United States.

Commemorative practices in Virginia tended to be much more contentious than in other states, resulting in a much greater divide between northerners and southerners in the state that took much longer to overcome than in other southern states. The history of Virginia's Civil War cemeteries closely follows the trends outlined in recent works.

In the Deep South, however, these trends are far less obvious. Occupied by Union forces in 1862, Louisiana, a Deep South state, had relatively little fighting during the Civil War, in spite of the highly contested passage of the Mississippi River. As a result, the state became home to relatively few Civil War cemeteries. Fewer cemeteries and northerners in Louisiana resulted in a more modest scale of commemoration in the state's cemeteries, especially in the Union cemeteries, with some notable exceptions. This smaller scale of commemoration allowed for an earlier and easier reconciliation between northerners and southerners in Louisiana than in Virginia.

Though both Louisiana and Virginia shared basic experiences in cemetery creation and commemoration practices, the degree to which the war took place in each state created important differences in the way each state commemorated the war. These differences show the divide between the practices of Upper and Lower South states regarding Civil War cemeteries and commemoration, as well as the different ways in which reconciliation occurred in the years after the war.

## CHAPTER 1

### GENERAL TRENDS OF CIVIL WAR CEMETERIES

During the Civil War and in the years following the conflict, both the North and South made every effort possible to bury and bestow honor upon the war dead. In the North, the government created the National Cemetery System, while southerners formed local organizations, primarily led by women, to ensure proper burials. Historians argue that the systems established to bury and honor the dead fostered divisions between the North and South, both during the Civil War and after, until sectional reconciliation began near the turn of the century.

The creation of Civil War cemeteries began long before the war itself ended. Mounting casualties called for new ways of dealing with dead bodies. Because of the huge number of battlefield deaths as well as deaths resulting from wounds and illness, both the Union and the Confederacy had many bodies to bury at a time. The simplest way to deal with the problem was mass burials on or near the sites of battles or hospitals. When there were fewer bodies to be disposed of or when there was ample time between battles, they could be shipped back to their families to be buried in their hometowns. More often than not, however, as the war progressed and casualties grew, that option became increasingly impractical. At the same time, however, both the Union and the Confederacy felt that mass burials in unmarked graves deprived their fallen soldiers of honor. To prevent such graves from becoming the last resting places of their dead, both sides began during the war to work more systematically to ensure proper burials for the war dead.

The Union provided the most organized and systematic framework for the burial of dead soldiers, although the system went through several changes as the war progressed. In 1861, the

War Department took the first step toward creating an efficient burial system when it issued General Order 75, outlining proper procedures for the permanent burial of Union war dead. The order specified that burials should take place either in local cemeteries or in new cemeteries to be created on donated land. General Order 75 also placed strict restrictions on the amount of control generals in the field could exercise over the burial process, requiring that all decisions be subjected to the approval of the quartermaster's office. Early in 1862, Congress first approved appropriations to buy land for the purpose of military burials. The Union's early attempts at organization, however, proved ineffective; Army officers often had little time in which to implement the procedures outlined in General Order 75.<sup>13</sup>

Beginning in the spring and summer of 1862, because of increasing death tolls in both the Eastern and Western theaters of the war, the United States government formally established the National Cemetery System, controlled by the Department of the Army's Veteran's Administration (now the Department of Veteran's Affairs). The new system provided for the creation of national cemeteries for the Civil War dead.<sup>14</sup> The administration of the National Cemetery System fell in large part to the United States Quartermaster General, Montgomery C. Meigs. With no precedent for the large number of war burials that had to be dealt with, Meigs turned to older, civilian cemetery traditions for inspiration. Meigs created a new type of cemetery that included the best qualities of nineteenth-century cemetery design. The new

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<sup>13</sup> Catherine W. Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System," in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 27.

<sup>14</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "History," 17 April 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/cem/hist/datesest.asp>. As the study of genealogy, and by extension, cemetery research, has become increasingly popular, a number of websites have been constructed to help facilitate such research. Many of these online sources present the most accurate cemetery information available. The websites used in this paper all represent reliable information on graves and cemeteries. Most of these are websites run by the United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, in conjunction with Louisiana State University's United States Civil War Center, or by the cemeteries themselves. The other online sources are all widely used and respectable genealogy websites.

national cemeteries combined the peace of church cemeteries and the visitation practices of garden cemeteries and then added the solemnity of military burial to the design.<sup>15</sup>

Although Meigs had control of the overall administration and planning of the new cemeteries, the new procedures for establishing a national cemetery were more lenient than those previously laid out in General Order 75. Under the new guidelines, commanding generals were ordered to bury the dead on or near battlefields. The generals could choose the site at their own discretion and execute their plans immediately, without waiting for direct approval and supervision from the quartermaster's office. Meigs maintained the system, however, by creating standardized designs for the national cemeteries. These plans were highly specific but at the same time flexible enough to be widely applicable. Meigs's cemetery designs all contained common parts such as walls, gates, a rostrum, a flagpole, and a cemetery lodge, that helped to tie all of the national cemeteries together and create a common identity for them. The uniformity of the headstones that never varied, regardless of whatever other differences the cemeteries contained, further enhanced that sense of identity. According to Meigs's plans for the national cemeteries, graves were laid out in patterns, most commonly in concentric circles or squares, to provide neatness and uniformity. Commanding generals, however, also put their own personal mark on the cemeteries. As a result, plans varied greatly as generals laid out cemeteries according to their own tastes and around local landscapes.<sup>16</sup> The national cemeteries were thus planned with a central design in mind but with a measure of personalization in the implementation of that design.

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<sup>15</sup> Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South," 37.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29, 31-32. This variation in cemetery design tended to be limited to such decisions as the shape of the cemetery and the land where the cemetery was located. Meigs's designs were easy enough to be implemented on a wide variety of landscapes. Thus, while some national cemeteries are laid out in circles, others are arranged in squares. Similarly, some cemeteries occupy flat land while some were placed in hillier areas. Such variation, however, did not minimize the fact that overall the national cemeteries consist of the same features, causing them to all look relatively similar.

Although the National Cemetery System eventually established cemeteries across the country, most of the original cemeteries established were located in the South, on or near Civil War battlefields. The practice of using a battlefield as a location for a new cemetery continued from 1862 to 1872. Throughout these years, the national cemeteries expanded to include not only graves for soldiers killed in battle, but also for soldiers who died as prisoners-of-war or in army hospitals. Thus reinterments became a large part of the National Cemetery System. In 1863, a combination of heavy casualties and the need for army mobility made the existing burial procedures nearly impossible. The procedures were often ignored, resulting in a multitude of substandard gravesites that lasted through the end of the war, even as more cemeteries were being created.<sup>17</sup>

The cemeteries created by the National Cemetery System provided only for Union dead, not the Confederate dead, with only a few exceptions. Interment of Confederate dead in a national cemetery usually only occurred because of desperate needs for expediency in burials before the war ended, and generally only included Confederate prisoners of war.<sup>18</sup> Even with such minor exceptions, national cemeteries came to be considered hallowed ground for loyal Union soldiers. Confederate soldiers, who had waged a rebellion against the government, could not be included. For the North, national cemeteries quickly became an important source of honor because, “while there is nothing intrinsic in the act of interment that suggests doing honor to the dead, Northerners embarked on an aggressive campaign of securing the proper and

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<sup>17</sup> United States Department of Veteran’s Affairs, “History.”

<sup>18</sup> Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South,” 40.

honored interment of the Union dead.”<sup>19</sup> The National Cemetery System thus became dedicated to preserving the memory and honor of the Union dead.

The design of the national cemeteries also furthered the preservation of honor for Union dead. The overall design of the cemeteries laid out by Meigs generally included a centrally placed flagpole that ensured that “Union soldiers’ allegiance, loyalty, and service to the United States was marked in death as it was in life.”<sup>20</sup> The affects of the design of the national cemeteries went farther than just the flagpole, however. Each part of the cemetery served as a reminder of the Union and of victory, even in death. The entire “purpose of the [national] cemetery landscape [was] not merely to dispose but to instruct. Symmetrical rows of identical headstones convey concepts of order and equality, representing the loss of one life for the greater, enduring nation.”<sup>21</sup> Each cemetery, then, became a vehicle for asserting the righteousness of the Union war effort and making the presence of Union victory a permanent feature on the American landscape.

During the war, the Confederate government developed no systematic approach to burials comparable to the National Cemetery System. In fact, the Confederate government provided no system for burial at all. All efforts made to identify and bury the Confederate dead were carried out on a local level, where southerners worked to create their own system for dealing with the dead. Southerners faced difficult challenges in creating an effective system, however, mostly because of a lack of sufficient resources. Nevertheless, southerners were both very well organized and efficient in their efforts to secure proper burials for Confederate soldiers. Locally

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<sup>19</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 115.

<sup>20</sup> Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South,” 31.

<sup>21</sup> Jewett, Leah Wood. “The Body Politic: Burial and Post-War Reconciliation in Baton Rouge” (Master’s thesis, Louisiana State University, 2003), 31.



organized groups worked to secure land for cemeteries, to locate and identify Confederate dead, to bury the dead in proper graves, and in some cases to provide for reinterment. Throughout the South these local groups discovered that regional and local organizations proved much more effective in organizing local burial efforts than a national effort could have been. Local organizations could play on the emotions of their communities and the loyalty that communities felt for their own soldiers in order to encourage help in their efforts in ways that larger organizations could not understand or fully exploit. Throughout the war, southern women were the most important organizers and members of these local groups. They worked tirelessly to ensure that Confederates were given proper and honorable burials whenever possible. In fact, the women ran their local and regional organizations more efficiently than the Union did in the early years of the National Cemetery System.<sup>22</sup>

In both Union and Confederate burial grounds, ritual visits by family and friends became common as a way to remember the dead and to preserve the memory of the Civil War. These rituals by the living and for the dead began during the war. Throughout the war, funerals for fallen soldiers were held in both national cemeteries and private southern cemeteries with great solemnity and included processions of family members and off duty soldiers. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported many instances similar to that of the burials of two soldiers who died early in the war in which, “the remains of the two were followed to the grave by detachments of the Mecklenburg and Mercer county companies of Virginia volunteers and a procession of citizens.”<sup>23</sup> Families on both sides also began the practice of regular visits to cemeteries to grieve and to show honor to the dead.

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<sup>22</sup> Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South,” 40.

<sup>23</sup> “Death of a Soldier,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 7 August 1861.

When the Civil War ended, the process of creating cemeteries and ensuring proper burials for soldiers did not end; instead, the process intensified. For the Union, the wartime conditions that had resulted in substandard burials in the middle of the war had only worsened during the latter years of the conflict. By the end of the Civil War only 101,736 out of 359,520 Union dead were buried in permanent recorded graves. Because of public pressure to correct the condition of Union burial sites, in June 1865 the War Department began a large-scale effort to correctly record the names and locations of individual soldiers' burial plots and to search battlefields to find and identify any remaining Union dead for reinterment in national cemeteries. As a result, the National Cemetery System expanded, adding fifteen new cemeteries in Virginia alone in 1866. Yearly efforts to find, identify, and permanently reinter the Union war dead lasted until 1870.<sup>24</sup>

In the process of expanding and perfecting a system that would honor the Union war dead, the North created a related issue that would become important to the National Cemetery System. National cemeteries in effect imposed northern honor on southern soil, while at the same time denying southerners, and most particularly the Confederate dead, that same honor. By denying the Confederate dead entrance into the cemeteries of the National Cemetery System, northerners achieved a different kind of victory over the South. The South was already defeated militarily, and the creation of national cemeteries on southern soil became a strong emotional reminder of that defeat. The National Cemetery System became a tool for northern Reconstruction efforts, becoming a permanent architectural feature of government design and influence on the southern landscape. In this way, national cemeteries “not only honored the fallen dead of the Union army but also served an ideological agenda as a permanent, systematic embodiment of Federal authority within the former Confederacy—an agenda easily understood

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<sup>24</sup> Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South,” 29.

by northern and southern audiences.”<sup>25</sup> Northerners understood that national cemeteries across the South preserved the Union Civil War victory while at the same time reminding southerners of their defeat.

Southerners, on the other hand, considered the imposition of national cemeteries on their soil as one of the many humiliations that they were forced to endure during Reconstruction, as well as one of the longest lasting reminders of southern defeat. Southerners saw the National Cemetery System as sheltered areas of federal land being maintained within the bounds of the Confederacy and protected by Union soldiers. In the minds of most southerners, then, the National Cemetery System was a way for northerners in general and the federal government in particular to discriminate against southerners and the South. The Richmond *Daily Dispatch* reported that the national cemeteries were a way for the North to continue “carrying their discriminations to the very grave, and cursing the bones of the ‘rebel dead’ as they were pleased to style them, with neglect and opprobrium, while the ‘Union dead’...were placed under the flag of the Union and guarded and kept in order by a public officer. These cemeteries are scattered throughout the South, and their green, regularly-shaped graves, with the country’s flag waving over them, are always in the vicinity of the rude resting places of the Confederate dead, who, by law, are damned irretrievably.”<sup>26</sup> Ultimately, the national cemeteries forcefully reminded southerners that not only did the rest of the country consider the Confederate dead unworthy of honor, but that they had also been regulated to second-class status as American citizens and denied some of the rights that all other Americans enjoyed.

Even though southerners condemned the National Cemetery System for its discriminatory burial practices, the majority of southerners actually had no desire to bury Confederate soldiers

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>26</sup> “Patriotism and Partisanism,” Richmond *Daily Dispatch*, 24 May 1873.

in national cemeteries. Any efforts made towards inclusion in the cemeteries were unpopular and quickly abandoned. The groups of women who had formed local organizations to secure proper burials for the Confederate dead during the Civil War, continued these efforts after the war had ended, with their main emphasis centering on reinterment of Confederate dead, mostly from battlefields, to southern cemeteries.<sup>27</sup>

While this activity was going on during the early post-Civil War years, the federal government kept abreast of southern efforts to care for the dead. The efficiency of the local southern organizations compared to the problems and inefficiencies of early northern efforts to provide permanent burial grounds spawned a rivalry between northerners and southerners to provide proper burials and honor the dead. Although not a rivalry that in any way led to violence, both sides wanted to show that they could and would provide the best care for the dead to demonstrate lasting concern. Both northerners and southerners sought to win this psychological battle, which played itself out on many levels, including through popular literature of the time. Poet Henry Peterson called for the South to be kind and fair in its attentions towards the graves of all Civil War soldiers, while at the same time asserting, “And ye, O Northmen! be ye not outdone in generous thought and deed.”<sup>28</sup> The North campaigned to win the contest by adjustments to the National Cemetery System that made the organization more efficient and embarked on an intensive program of locating and identifying the Union dead. In the end, the national cemeteries made competition over care for the dead move beyond the South’s meager resources, which were drastically reduced after the end of the war. In a final meaning, then, “the National Cemetery System, in addition to caring for the dead with dignity, should be viewed as

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<sup>27</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 145-149.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Patterson, “Ode for Decoration-Day,” in Francis F. Brown, ed., *Bugle-Echoes: A Collection of the Poetry of the Civil War, Northern and Southern* (New York: White, Stokes, & Allen, 1886), 324.

an intensely competitive propaganda for the perceived righteousness of the Union cause. By inviting comparison in cemetery design, the government reminded Southerners again of its victory.”<sup>29</sup> Though the North won the battle for providing the best care for the dead, southerners did not fully concede victory. The rapidly expanding and increasingly efficient National Cemetery System went far beyond the abilities and financial resources of the defeated South. The success of the National Cemetery System could be viewed as a challenge, though, “and it was a tremendous source of pride that southerners rose to the challenge. Thus each stone laid was significant—an act of survival and continued genteel resistance.”<sup>30</sup> In the years following the Civil War, southerners thus continued to provide burial services and care for the Confederate dead to the best of their ability.

In the process of burying their dead, southerners had to overcome a major obstacle that northerners never had to face. Southerners needed to find a way to restore honor not only to themselves, but also to the many soldiers who had given their lives for the Confederacy. Honor had long been an important characteristic in the South and, following the war, “proud southerners still rankled at northern charges of treason and immorality and feared that someone might believe them. In the peace as so often in the war, southerners found themselves on the defensive.”<sup>31</sup> The limits of the National Cemetery System separated northern from southern dead and gave honor to Union soldiers while denying honor to Confederate soldiers. In response, southerners created their own separate means of honoring their dead. In part reacting to the belief that the rest of America saw the South as disgraced and dishonorable, “the Southern

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<sup>29</sup> Zipf, “Marking Union Victory in the South,” 41.

<sup>30</sup> Mills, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, xvi.

<sup>31</sup> Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South 1865-1913*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 24.

postwar memorial efforts remembered their cause: from the beginning, Confederates worked toward a goal of separation.”<sup>32</sup> This separation in order to create a sense of honor for both the Confederate dead and living southerners came to be reflected in all of the South’s commemorative efforts, and in particular the southern myth of the Lost Cause.

Southerners turned increasingly to the Confederate dead as a means of restoring honor after the Civil War, and southern cemeteries became the center of the early Lost Cause. Through the Lost Cause, southerners found a way to restore some measure of lost pride and honor, both for themselves and for the Confederate dead. The Lost Cause was most popular and had the most strength in the South from the 1880s through the 1910s, though elements of it existed earlier and became particularly evident in southern cemeteries. Essentially, the Lost Cause is defined as “a whole body of writings, speeches, performances, prints, and other visual imagery that presented a certain version of Confederate history—as told from a southern white perspective.”<sup>33</sup> The influence of the Lost Cause did not remain solely literary, however, but expanded to include much of public southern life. In other words, “armed with the privileges of whiteness and influence, commemorative activists employed the full array of cultural resources at their disposal—scholarly monographs, mawkish stage dramas, romantic poetry, atmospheric local-color fiction, heroic public sculpture, and pious public commemorations—to insinuate their memory into the public realm.”<sup>34</sup>

The creators of the myth of the Lost Cause sought to influence every aspect of southern public life, including, most importantly, the South’s commemorative efforts regarding the Civil

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<sup>32</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 7.

<sup>33</sup> Mills, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, xvii.

<sup>34</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “‘Woman’s Hand and Heart and Deathless Love’: White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South,” in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 70.

War, and especially in behalf of the Confederate dead. Through the Lost Cause, in effect, southerners created their own explanation of “how a people so blessed and prosperous became humbled by divine Providence through war, how a society groping for independence from what it perceived to be tyranny could remain—after so much loss and destruction—still subordinate to that national power.”<sup>35</sup> The Lost Cause became a way for southerners to explain the Civil War from their point of view and to assert the righteousness of their cause.

For many southerners, the Lost Cause closely resembled and was thought of as a civil religion. At “the heart of the religion of the Lost Cause were the Confederate heroes, who came to embody transcendent truths about the redemptive power of Southern society.”<sup>36</sup> Through the Lost Cause, the Confederate dead could be remembered as heroes, worthy of honor and respect. Confederate heroes during the war were those who stood out most in the Lost Cause after the war. Veterans were told, “when called upon for a defense or justification of the cause in which you were enlisted...point proudly and confidently to the character of the great leaders whom you followed—Lee and Jackson—for your complete vindication.”<sup>37</sup> Veterans’ organizations and women’s groups across the South described their obligations in part to offer, “cheer for those who still remain of that proud host that followed where Lee and Jackson led.”<sup>38</sup> The dead heroes of the Confederate cause helped to vindicate the South in the minds of southerners. While heroes like Lee and Jackson certainly stood out in the memory of southerners, the ranks of heroes were extended to include all of the Confederate dead. By using the dead as sources of

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<sup>35</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 7.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, “The Lost Cause as Civil Religion,” in Paul D. Escott, David R. Goldfield, Sally G. McMillen, and Elizabeth Hayes Turner, eds. *Major Problems in the History of the American South, Volume II: The New South*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 205.

<sup>37</sup> *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 24 Feb. 1883.

<sup>38</sup> “Ladies Confederate Memorial Association of Baton Rouge,” in *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, (New Orleans, LA: Graham Press, 1904), 167.

vindication and objects of respect, supporters of the Lost Cause made Confederate burials and graves a central focus of the Lost Cause myth.

Southern white women took the initiative in preserving the memory of the Confederate cause and the Confederate dead. This made a strong contrast to Union memorial efforts, which were primarily undertaken by the federal government and Union veterans, rather than by northern women. Women in the South, however, worked hard to preserve the memory of the Civil War. They formed voluntary organizations across the South, predominantly in the form of Ladies Memorial Associations, in order to raise money to further the preservation of Confederate memory. By appointing themselves the guardians of Confederate tradition and Civil War memory, they expanded their influence into the public sphere. Many southerners saw this as an extension of women's roles from the Civil War. Former Confederate General Clement A. Evans explained,

It is not man's privilege, but woman's to raise these memorials throughout the land. The fitness of things commands us to yield to her the foremost place in this pleasing duty. Her smile encouraged our ardent youth to put on the armor of war. Her voice cheered them into the thick of battle. Her sympathies followed them like angels through the dreary toils of camp and march and siege; her hands bound up their wounds, and her tears fell upon their cold, pale, bloody corpses. And before the smoke of battle had fairly cleared away, she stood up...and said, 'We will build monuments to our fallen men.'<sup>39</sup>

In fostering the myth of the Lost Cause and preserving the memory of the Confederate dead as honorable heroes, southern women demonstrated great organizational skill and fund raising ability. Their efforts centered on ensuring proper burials and suitable monuments for the dead. Though women used such acts of remembrance and commemoration to move into the public sphere of southern life, their actions did not actually differ greatly from their earlier, more traditional roles. In reality,

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<sup>39</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 147.



The earnestness and stamina displayed by white women's associations in southern city centers demonstrated the potency of the ideology of public service that many women embraced. Inherited ideas of 'republican motherhood' and the cult of domesticity had long given women an important role in the transmission of culture within the home and had even encouraged them to assume an ever-widening range of public responsibilities...Arguably, women's 'patriotic' activities...after the Civil War were a logical extension of their traditional role as educators and moral stewards of the nation's children. Women's historical organizations and activism, then, were just another manifestation of moral housekeeping writ large.<sup>40</sup>

The Lost Cause, then, allowed southern women to expand their traditional views in a way that helped preserve and promote the memory of the Confederate dead as heroes on a large scale.

Throughout the South, "the commemoration of past valor and sacrifice meshed easily with the belief held by many women that public life should be conducted according to moral convictions."<sup>41</sup> Southern women held the moral conviction that the Confederate cause had been just and righteous. To the best of their ability, these women passed that sentiment to the generations that followed. They worked to instill in future generations the importance of preserving the memory of the Confederate dead and of honoring the burial sites of those confederate heroes. Efforts to ensure that the Confederate tradition would be carried on came through clearly in such teaching aids as the United Daughters of the Confederacy's Catechism for Children, which included questions and responses such as:

What purposes have the Daughters of the Confederacy?

To preserve the true history of the Confederacy and keep in sacred memory the brave deeds of the men of the South, their devotion to their country and to the cause of right...

What other purpose have the Daughters of the Confederacy?

To teach their children from generation to generation that there was no stain upon the action of their forefathers in the war between the States, and the women of the South who nobly sustained them in that struggle, and will ever feel that their deathless deeds of valor are a precious heritage to be treasured for all time to come.

For what was the army of the South particularly noted?

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<sup>40</sup> Brundage, "'Woman's Hand and Heart and Deathless Love,'" 72.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

For its great commanders—great as soldiers and great as men of stainless character—and for the loyalty of the men in the ranks, who were dauntless in courage, ‘the bravest of the brave,’ ever ready to rush into the ‘jaws of death’ at the command of their great leaders.<sup>42</sup>

Through such efforts by southern women to promote the Lost Cause, the Confederate dead could, and in many instances would, be viewed as heroes across the South. Because of this, the burial spaces that southerners created for the Confederate dead were both respectful to the memories of the fallen soldiers as well as hallowed to the Lost Cause.

The North used the Union dead to further its sense of victory in the face of devastating loss. On the other hand, southerners used the Confederate dead to glorify the Lost Cause and to keep alive the memory of the Confederacy, thereby slowing the process of reconciliation by focusing instead on the reality of southern defeat. Along with the continued fact that while, “Union soldiers lay within stone walls, in neatly arcing rows; the Confederates remained scattered across farmland and churchyard. The example to be taken from the dead was continued sectionalism.”<sup>43</sup> While reconciliation between the North and the South after the Civil War was the stated goal of both sides, the ways in which each side used their Civil War dead hampered a full reconciliation just as surely as the confusion and poverty of Reconstruction in the South did. Until the Spanish American War, southerners still remained second-class citizens, in life and death, with most southerners unable to join the army or be buried in national cemeteries. During the Spanish American war, however, the situation changed. Before the war, “Southern soldiers were suspect until they took up arms for the protection of American interests...but overlooked in the military experience of the Spanish-American War was that, in addition to fighting together,

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<sup>42</sup> *U.D.C. Catechism for Children, 1912*, in Escott et al., *Major Problems in the History of the American South*, 195-196.

<sup>43</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 120.

northern and southern sons died together and were buried together.”<sup>44</sup> In many ways, the small scale of the Spanish American War meant that southerners’ second-class status as citizens did not end until World War I. The size and duration of World War I caused Americans on the home front to rally behind their troops and support the war to an extent that had not been possible during the relatively short Spanish American War. World War I, however, provided a greater chance for soldiers, both northern and southern, to become heroes and to be seen as patriots. During World War I, American troops even used the memory of the Civil War to promote patriotism and loyalty rather than separation.<sup>45</sup>

In the years and decades after the war, gravesites, both Union and Confederate, served as important sites for commemoration. While commemoration occurred outside of cemeteries, most commonly in the form of public monument dedications, cemeteries remained central to Civil War commemoration in ways that are important, though not always widely understood. Cemeteries work to bring together the living and the dead because, “the relationship between bodies in motion and at rest, the quick and the dead, the former and present and future tense, informed this ancient and honorable agreement that we witness and keep track of our own. Not because it matters to the dead, but because the dead matter to the living in ways best articulated in the terrible stillness of stone.”<sup>46</sup> Rituals to honor the dead reinforce honor as well as the memory of the dead to the living. Additionally, both “the dead and the living require witnesses—some testimony to the fact of their being. The marked graves of the dead provide such witness. The efforts of the living to keep track and to distinguish their dearly gone but not

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

<sup>45</sup> Andre Morize, *The Lesson of Our Dead: An Address in Sanders Theatre, Harvard University on Memorial Day, May 30, 1918*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918).

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Lynch in William K. Greiner, *The Reposed*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1999), v.

forgotten from the general population of the cemetery seem at once both noble and futile. The grave speaks volumes and keeps silent all the same.”<sup>47</sup> In Civil War cemeteries, this reinforcement was especially important, for both northerners and southerners.

One important aspect of cemetery commemoration that held special importance is the ambiguous nature of cemeteries and the remains that they hold. After the Civil War, living northerners and southerners could use the Civil War dead in any number of ways and to symbolize a wide variety of things because, “a body’s symbolic effectiveness does not depend on its standing for one particular thing, however, for among the most important properties of bodies, especially dead ones, is their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy. Remains are concrete, yet protean; they do not have a single meaning but are open to many different readings. Because corpses suggest the lived lives of complex human beings, they can be evaluated from many angles and assigned perhaps contradictory virtues, vices, and intentions.”<sup>48</sup> In this way, both northerners and southerners could reconstruct the memory and honor of their Civil War dead.

Even though they almost unwittingly hindered northern and southern reconciliation by enforcing separation, Civil War cemeteries eventually served to facilitate reconciliation. Many of the rituals and ceremonies that took place at both Union and Confederate burial sites were very similar. When the Civil War ended, local organizations in both the North and the South began yearly commemorative practices in cemeteries. These were celebrated with military processions, solemn speeches that remembered the heroic lives of the dead, and the laying of flowers and wreaths on the graves of the dead. As time progressed, ceremonies also occasionally

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

<sup>48</sup> Katherine Vedery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 28.

included the dedication of cemetery monuments.<sup>49</sup> Cemetery commemoration eventually became more and more ritualistic, with local yearly commemoration ceremonies evolving into the organized celebrations of Memorial Day and Confederate Memorial (Decoration) Day, both traditionally held around the last weekend in May.<sup>50</sup> The similarities in these cemetery commemoration rituals over time brought northerners and southerners closer towards reconciliation over their mutual commemoration of the dead. As time passed, commemoration on both sides came to focus more on the memory of the dead rather than the issues that had caused the Civil War or the animosity between northerners and southerners that continued in the years following the war. By the turn of the century, “glorious remembrance was all but overwhelmed by an even more glorious forgetting.”<sup>51</sup> At Civil War burial sites, both Union and Confederate organizations joined to remember the dead of the war together, leaving behind the bitterness that the war and the initial separation of burial grounds had created.

The commemoration that grew from the Civil War cemeteries also reinforced a broader trend that occurred throughout the United States in the decades following the Civil War. Cemetery commemoration in general became a much more popular form of remembrance during this time and was increasingly seen as not only a way to remember specific people but as a key to understanding (and in some cases, as with the Lost Cause, rewriting) history.<sup>52</sup> While this popularization of cemetery commemoration occurred in non-Civil War cemeteries, those cemeteries remained some of the most popular and important sites of cemetery commemoration

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<sup>49</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 153-155.

<sup>50</sup> Jacqueline S. Thursby, *Funeral Festivals in America: Rituals for the Living*, (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 16, 21-23, 121.

<sup>51</sup> David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 9.

<sup>52</sup> Brundage, ““Woman’s Hand and Heart and Deathless Love,”” 66.

throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Even though general trends in both the creation of cemeteries and the commemoration that occurred in them do exist, important differences between states show that these trends tend to be exaggerated. These differences are especially noticeable between the Upper South and the Lower South. A close examination of the history of Civil War cemeteries in Virginia and Louisiana reveals differences between the two as well as divergences from the general trends of cemetery creation and commemoration.

## CHAPTER 2

### VIRGINIA

More Civil War battles took place in Virginia than in any other state. Virginia's many battles, from Manassas to Appomattox, left the state with many dead bodies in the war's wake. Virginia became home to sixteen national cemeteries along with numerous Confederate burial sites in a wide variety of cemeteries. Virginia's Civil War cemeteries include some of the largest collections of Civil War graves as well as the most important Union and Confederate burial sites.

The vast numbers of Union dead in Virginia were an important factor in the creation of the National Cemetery System, and many of the first of these federal cemeteries were created there. These Union cemeteries followed the same National Cemetery system guidelines as other federal cemeteries throughout the country with identical headstones and uniform features. All were established between 1862 and 1867, either in the first round of cemetery creation or in the initial reinterment movement after the war, as a direct result of the need to properly bury the Union dead. Of the sixteen Civil War national cemeteries in Virginia, thirteen are controlled by the Department of Veteran's Affairs: Alexandria National Cemetery in Alexandria, Culpeper National Cemetery in Culpeper, Danville National Cemetery in Danville, Hampton National Cemetery in Hampton, City Point National Cemetery in Hopewell, Ball's Bluff National Cemetery in Leesburg, Cold Harbor National Cemetery in Mechanicsville, Fort Harrison National Cemetery in Richmond, Glendale National Cemetery in Richmond, Richmond National Cemetery in Richmond, Seven Pines National Cemetery in Sandston, Staunton National Cemetery in Staunton, and Winchester National Cemetery in Winchester.<sup>53</sup> The National Park Service controls two more national cemeteries, Fredericksburg National Cemetery in

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<sup>53</sup> The Department of Veteran's Affairs controls two additional national cemeteries in Virginia: Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center Cemetery in Hampton and Quantico National Cemetery in Triangle. Neither of these cemeteries was created as a result of the Civil War.

Fredericksburg and Poplar Grove National Cemetery in Petersburg. The most important Union cemetery, Arlington National Cemetery, is under control of the Department of the Army.<sup>54</sup>

In sharp contrast to the uniformity of the national cemeteries, Virginia's Confederate burial sites reflect the lack of central organization in caring for dead Confederate soldiers. Their graves are spread throughout the state, located in many different cemeteries. Some of these cemeteries are pre-existing garden cemeteries such as Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond and Blanford Cemetery in Petersburg, but others are even older church cemeteries like Christ Church Cemetery in Mathews. Some are found in cemeteries created especially for the Confederate dead such as Stonewall Cemetery in Winchester.<sup>55</sup> Throughout the war many bodies of Virginia natives were shipped to their families for burial, causing a wide dispersal of Confederate gravesites across Virginia. Even with the multitude of scattered graves, some Virginia cemeteries contain large sections of Confederate graves, the most important being Hollywood Cemetery.

Commemoration took place on a much larger scale in Virginia's Civil War cemeteries than in many other southern states. Several factors caused this difference. Most important, the number of both Union and Confederate burials in Virginia caused a general outpouring of commemoration. As an Upper South state, Virginia's proximity to the North also allowed for greater participation in commemorative activities at national cemeteries. At the same time, the

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<sup>54</sup> There are 137 national cemeteries in the United States. The Department of Veteran's Affairs controls 122 national cemeteries, while the Department of the Interior controls fourteen, and the Department of the Army controls two. Fredericksburg National Cemetery and Poplar Grove National Cemetery initially fell under the control of the National Cemetery System. These two cemeteries, however, are part of larger historic sites and in the twentieth century were combined into other historic sites. Fredericksburg National Cemetery is part of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefield Memorial National Military Park, and Poplar Grove National Cemetery is part of the Petersburg National Battlefield. Arlington National Cemetery remained under the control of the United States Army after the rest of the National Cemetery System was put under the control of the Department of Veteran's Affairs in 1973.

<sup>55</sup> In some records, Blanford Cemetery is named Blandford Cemetery, but as both names refer to the same cemetery, Blanford is used throughout for consistency.



close association between northerners and southerners possible in Virginia caused commemoration to be more contentious than in other states, and reconciliation took decades longer in Virginia than in other southern states. Another difference in Virginia commemoration in both Union and Confederate cemeteries is the presence of cemetery monuments. Monuments are much more common in Virginia's national cemeteries than is usual in the National Cemetery System. Confederate cemetery monuments are also more numerous in Virginia cemeteries than in many other states.

Although all of Virginia's national cemeteries reveal relatively similar information about the creation of the federal cemeteries and the devotion given to the burial of Union dead, several of the cemeteries' specific histories highlight parts of the underlying story of Virginia's national cemeteries. The first national cemetery created in Virginia, Alexandria National Cemetery, established in 1862, was one of the fourteen original cemeteries created under the National Cemetery System. During the early part of the Civil War, Alexandria served as one of the Union army's main campsites. Later, when the front lines moved south and west, the city remained an important supply center. Since shipments to and from the city occurred with relative ease and frequency, the decision to locate a cemetery at Alexandria made perfect sense. Corpses could easily be transported to the city, and since Alexandria was firmly controlled by Union forces, burials could take place safely and properly.<sup>56</sup>

Alexandria National Cemetery, as one of the first national cemeteries, helped set the standard for cemetery design and uniformity. The attention to detail in the layout of the cemetery as well as the belief that a well-planned and well-cared for cemetery honored the Union dead was expressed in a letter to Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Brevet

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<sup>56</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Alexandria National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/alexandriava.asp>.

Lieutenant Colonel and Assistant Quartermaster James M. Moore informed Meigs, “the site is admirably adapted for burial purposes, and has been laid off into blocks... Well-kept gravel walks traverse the grounds, the graves have been sodded, and white tablets, lettered in black are placed at the head of each, giving name, rank, regiment, and date of death... Every care and attention have been bestowed by the officer in charge in ornamenting and beautifying this cemetery, and making it a suitable resting place for our deceased soldiers.”<sup>57</sup> Alexandria National Cemetery, then, helped set the standard for the national cemeteries that followed.

Although Alexandria National Cemetery became a firmly established cemetery during the Civil War, City Point National Cemetery in Hopewell was not created until after the war’s end. Established in 1866 in the first round of national cemetery creation after the war, the creation of City Point National Cemetery underlines the importance placed on giving the Union dead proper burials. Located between the James River and the Appomattox River, City Point had become an important transportation center and railroad hub before the war. During the last year of the war, City Point became the major Union supply depot for General Grant’s campaign against Petersburg and Richmond. In addition to sending supplies to the front, the railroads helped to ship both the wounded and dead back to City Point. Because of the large numbers of wounded entering City Point, seven hospitals opened in the vicinity to accommodate the Union casualties. Initially the dead from the frontlines as well as the soldiers who died in the hospitals were buried in hastily dug graves next to the hospitals. When City Point National Cemetery was formed after the war, the bodies from these cemeteries were the first interments.<sup>58</sup> Union dead from

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<sup>57</sup> United States Army Quartermaster General’s Office, *Roll of Honor: Names of Soldiers, Victims of the Rebellion, Buried in the National Cemetery at Alexandria, Virginia*, (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866).

<sup>58</sup> Because many of the interments in City Point National Cemetery were reinterments from hospital cemeteries rather than resulting from battlefield deaths, the cemetery has more known burials than unknown graves.

cemeteries in Chesterfield and Charles City counties also received reinterment in the new national cemetery. All of the initial interments in the cemetery were removed from other cemeteries in order to accord the Union dead with the honor of burial in an ordered, well cared for national cemetery. The cemetery, after these first interments, was enlarged in the years after the war as corpses unearthed during farming and construction were reburied in the national cemetery.<sup>59</sup> As a national cemetery location, near to a number of small, scattered Union cemeteries, City Point National Cemetery became a central location for reburial efforts. By gathering the bodies of the Union dead at a central site, the federal government ensured that the graves could be easily cared for and made certain that the honor of the Union dead remained intact in a pristine, well-tended national cemetery.

Virginia is also home to the most important of the country's national cemeteries, Arlington National Cemetery. The land the cemetery occupies has a story much older than the Civil War. It was purchased in December 1778 from the Alexander family and named Arlington by John Parke Custis, stepson of George Washington. George Washington's grandson, George Washington Parke Custis, was the first of the family to live at Arlington, and built Arlington House overlooking the Potomac River and Washington, D.C. Little of this history would likely be considered important today, if it were not for the fact that the heir to Arlington, the only surviving Custis daughter, Mary Ann Randolph Custis, married United States Army Lieutenant Robert E. Lee in 1831.<sup>60</sup> Thus, when the Civil War began, the Arlington plantation, highly

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<sup>59</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "City Point National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/citypoint.asp>.

<sup>60</sup> Enoch Aquila Chase, *The History of Arlington: Where America's Sons of Valor Sleep*, (Washington, DC: National Art Service Co., Inc., 1929), 5-14.

visible from the nation's capital, was owned by the man who would become the most famous Confederate general and a lasting symbol of the Confederate cause.

During the war Union forces controlled Arlington, and Mrs. Lee was forced to leave her home. After she had gone south, it became impossible for her to cross back through Union lines to pay taxes on the property (the taxes, amounting to \$92.06, had to be paid in person). Accordingly, the land was considered forfeited and passed into government ownership.<sup>61</sup> Shortly afterwards, under the command of Quartermaster General Meigs, bodies of Union soldiers began to be buried at Arlington, with the first burials taking place in Mrs. Lee's rose garden. Meigs particularly approved of the burials at Arlington because he blamed Lee's generalship for the continuation of the war, which resulted in the death of Meigs's son, John Rodgers Meigs. Under Meigs's direction burials continued at Arlington throughout the war, including the burial of his son. The site did not formally become part of the National Cemetery System until 1865, however, when Alexandria National Cemetery became overcrowded.<sup>62</sup> In the end, thousands of Union soldiers from all over the Union were buried at Arlington, making the cemetery an important shrine of national remembrance of the dead.

The formation of Arlington National Cemetery was not the end of the story, however. Many of the national cemeteries had been created on private land, and for the most part the government quietly paid southerners for the land and took lawful possession in the years following the war. Arlington was a different matter entirely. Beginning in 1877, Robert E. Lee's son, George Washington Custis Lee sued the federal government for unlawful confiscation of property. The importance of Arlington as a national cemetery, along with the history of the

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<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>62</sup> Montgomery C. Meigs Papers, boxes 18, 24, 40, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

government's ownership of the land and the identity of the former owners insured that the matter would not be settled quietly. In 1879, the United States Circuit Court for the Eastern District of Virginia ruled that the government title to Arlington was indeed unlawful. The government was not prepared to be ejected from Arlington without a fight, though. The Department of Justice took the issue to the Supreme Court, where the case was tried in October 1882. On 4 December 1882, the Supreme Court ruled that Lee was entitled to the property and that the government must evacuate and exhume the thousands of buried Union soldiers. In the end, however, Lee decided to sell the family home to the government, and on March 31, 1883, and for \$150,000, Arlington National Cemetery came under the possession of the federal government.<sup>63</sup> In spite of these legal issues that highlighted the tension between the federal government and southerners, in the years following the Civil War, Arlington National Cemetery became a shrine for northern commemoration of the Union dead.

Virginia's national cemeteries highlight the order and efficiency of the National Cemetery System and the emphasis that the federal government put on proper burials for the Union dead. The Confederate graves in Virginia, in contrast, show the lack of central organization behind Confederate burials but nevertheless testify to a deep commitment to the Confederate dead. The variety of Confederate graves alone marks a departure from the graves of the National Cemetery System. For the most part, Virginia's Confederate graves are scattered here and there throughout older church or garden cemeteries. Some cemeteries, especially church cemeteries, contain only a handful of Confederate graves. Christ Church Cemetery in Mathews, for example, contains only two Confederate graves, but one of them belongs to a woman. The headstone of this grave proudly announces that it marks the remains of Captain Sally L. Tompkins, CSA. Confederate President Jefferson Davis granted Captain Tompkins a

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<sup>63</sup> Chase, *The History of Arlington*, 25.

commission as a captain of cavalry for her work in the Robertson Hospital in Richmond, where she cared for over a thousand soldiers. Even this unusual Confederate grave shows the devotion of Virginians to the memory of the Civil War. The epitaph notes that both Confederate veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected the headstone in appreciation of Sally Tompkins's loyalty to the Confederate cause.<sup>64</sup>

In contrast to the two Confederate graves at Christ Church Cemetery, all of the graves in Stonewall Cemetery in Winchester hold the remains of Confederate dead. The cause for the creation of this cemetery had nothing to do with the existence of a consolidated plan to bury the Confederate dead, but instead had everything to do with the dedication of Winchester locals, especially women. The women of Winchester, who formed the Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association of Winchester, felt that the Confederate dead in the area should be collected and buried together in their own cemetery so that they could be properly cared for and not subjected to desecration. The devotion to the Confederate dead shown by these women was considerable, for "the undertaking was a large one. The Southern people were impoverished, and the Shenandoah Valley had been laid waste. But these noble women of the Winchester Memorial Association determined to overcome all difficulties, and what they lacked in money they made up in pluck and devotion."<sup>65</sup>

The task seemed overwhelming, since not only had a large number of soldiers been buried in an abandoned church cemetery, but an unknown number of graves were scattered over the battlefields surrounding Winchester. The women, however, were so efficient at raising

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<sup>64</sup> Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Joseph Bryan Branch, Gloucester, *Epitaphs of Gloucester and Mathews Counties in Tidewater Virginia Through 1865*, (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1959), 129-130.

<sup>65</sup> "Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association, Winchester, Virginia," in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, 316.

money that only a year after the war they purchased land for a cemetery and began reinterments. Remains were unearthed from as far as fifteen miles away, and each set of remains was given a separate coffin and grave. In total, the women of Winchester reburied 2,494 Confederate soldiers. In an impressive display of devotion and commitment to securing permanent and honorable burials for the Confederate dead, “on the 25<sup>th</sup> of October, 1866, eighteen months after the close of the war, the work of removal had been completed and ‘Stonewall Cemetery’ was formally dedicated.”<sup>66</sup> The creation of Stonewall Cemetery shows the dedication displayed toward the Confederate dead by a local, efficient group of women.

Similar dedication on the part of southerners also existed in Virginia’s older garden cemeteries, though such dedication manifested itself in a different form. Blanford Cemetery in Petersburg is one such example. Blanford Cemetery contains over sixty Confederate graves scattered throughout the cemetery, most in family plots. The headstones on these graves, for the most part, do not give just the list of name, rank, regiment, and date of death that is so common on military headstones, especially in the National Cemetery System. Instead, the epitaphs on Blanford Cemetery’s Confederate graves are a sign of love for and devotion to the dead and, by extension, the Confederate cause, by the families of the deceased. These gravestones are personalized, making the occupants of the graves more than simply faceless parts of a large, unified whole as in the national cemeteries. While the national cemeteries showed the uniform loyalty of the Union soldiers, Confederate tombstones, such as those at Blanford Cemetery, were personal reminders of specific soldiers. Confederate soldiers were not portrayed as a faceless entity, but as real individuals, capable of being heroes. Many of these epitaphs tell of the bravery of the Confederate forces. One such headstone reads, “Winfield S. Wilkinson...A Christian

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 316-317.

solider of Lee taken prisoner at Gettysburg, Last Confederate at Point Look Out.”<sup>67</sup> A similar epitaph tells the story of “John F. Moody, First Lieut. Co. 1, 40<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Virginia Volunteers, Born Feb. 25, 1827, Fell mortally wounded in the Battle June 27, 1862, while bravely leading his Co. in the charge upon the enemy and died June 30, 1862.”<sup>68</sup>

Other graves in the cemetery tell of the devotion of the dead to the Confederacy and their belief in the righteousness of the cause for which they fought. For example, one headstone reads, “John E. Meade, Born March 16, 1841, Died Dec. 31, 1862 of disease contracted in defense of his native state. Sustained by Christian faith, he faltered not in duty and was contented thus early to yield up his life in full assurance of blissful immortality.”<sup>69</sup> Another reads, “Richard Kidder Meade, Major of Engineers in the C.S. Army. Died July 31, 1862, His life a priceless boon to his country given.”<sup>70</sup> These graves are anything but impersonal, instead, they are tokens of love and grief and most especially devotion, put in place by the family and friends of the dead. The Confederate graves in Blanford Cemetery show the importance felt by southerners to remember the dead personally, and as heroes who fought for the righteousness of the Confederacy.

The most important Confederate burial site in Virginia, one considered sacred to the memory of the Confederacy throughout the South, is Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond. This garden cemetery, established on the outskirts of the state capital in 1847 was admirably described by the Richmond *Daily Whig* as “about forty-five acres...with a handsome grove of trees, and the undulating situation will strike everyone that nature must have intended it for this

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<sup>67</sup> Works Progress Administration, Virginia, *Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory: Dinwiddie County, Blanford Cemetery*, 1937, 13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 74, 230.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 102.



purpose. We...hope to see it a second Mt. Auburn.”<sup>71</sup> When the Civil War began, Hollywood Cemetery became a popular site for burying the Confederate dead since the dead and wounded were often shipped back to the capital of the Confederacy. Though the Confederate government provided some funds for the burial of the dead, no systematic approach to these burials existed and the Hollywood Cemetery Company covered many of the burial costs as well as donating land to be used as a Soldier’s Section in the cemetery. By August 1861, nearly a hundred interments had already taken place, and the number only grew as the fighting continued.

Funerals became commonplace in the city. Richmonder Constance Cary Harrison remembered, “Day by day we were called to our windows by the wailing dirge of a military band preceding a soldier’s funeral. One could not number these sad pageants: the coffin crowned with cap and sword and gloves, the riderless horse with empty boots fixed in the stirrups of an army saddle; such soldiers as could be spared from the front marching after with arms reversed and crape enfolded banners; the passers-by standing with bare, bent heads.”<sup>72</sup> By May 1863, over 1,000 Confederates were buried at Hollywood. As the fortunes of the Confederacy fell, the number of soldiers graves in Hollywood Cemetery rose. In the summer of 1864, Hollywood’s gravediggers worked from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. in order to keep up with the number of dead pouring into the city. At the end of the war, a total of 11,000 Confederate soldiers were buried in Hollywood Cemetery.<sup>73</sup>

The end of the Civil War did not mean the end of Confederate burials in Hollywood, however. In the years after the war, hundreds of bodies were reinterred in the cemetery from the

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<sup>71</sup> Richmond *Daily Whig*, 17 June 1847.

<sup>72</sup> Mary H. Mitchell, *Hollywood Cemetery: The History of a Southern Shrine*, (Richmond, VA: Virginia State Library, 1985), 48.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60.

battlefields around Richmond. As with many cases across the South, women organized these reinterments. Richmond women asked local farmers for help in locating abandoned Confederate graves. Reinterment efforts continued for most of the decade following the Civil War. The biggest reinterment effort, however, came during the early 1870s. In 1871, the Hollywood Memorial Association of Richmond, which had formed in the city five years before, began a vast effort to reinter the Confederate dead from the Gettysburg battlefield to Hollywood. After the famous three-day battle, the Confederate dead had been buried in trench graves, identified only by signs marking the number of dead buried in each grave. The women of Richmond were anxious to return the bodies to southern soil, and their anxiety increased with reports of grave desecration by Pennsylvania farmers plowing up gravesites. Beginning in spring 1872 and continuing through the fall of 1873, nearly 3,000 bodies were returned to Richmond and buried in Hollywood.<sup>74</sup> Hollywood also became the final resting place of some of the war's most famous Confederates, including the graves of such prestigious men as J.E.B. Stuart, George Pickett, Matthew Fontaine Maury, and Jefferson Davis. By the time that Davis was buried in the cemetery in 1893, Hollywood Cemetery, with its thousands of Confederate graves, had become a shrine to the memory of the Confederacy just as Arlington National Cemetery had become a shrine for the Union.

At both Union and Confederate gravesites, commemoration in Virginia's Civil War cemeteries occurred on a massive scale. Many of the commemorative activities that took place on both sides were similar to the activities that took place across the South. Both sides conducted separate Memorial Day services, usually including parades and speeches, along with the decoration of graves with flowers and evergreens. The contention between the two sides in honoring the dead was magnified in Virginia as nowhere else in the country. Each side was

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-73, 83-91.

determined to show the best care for its dead. This competition could be seen in many of Virginia's Civil War cemeteries in the dedication of cemetery monuments as well as the celebration of Memorial Day. At the same time, much of this competition occurred between Arlington National Cemetery and Hollywood Cemetery, the two cemeteries that symbolized their respective section's attitudes toward the Union and Confederate dead.<sup>75</sup>

Many of Virginia's national cemeteries contain monuments to the dead, a more common feature for national battlefields than national cemeteries. These monuments tend to serve as memorials to certain regiments or companies that either fought in battles in the vicinity or that have many of their number buried in a particular cemetery. Veterans, out of respect and loyalty to their fallen comrades, erected many of the monuments. For example, the Massachusetts Monument in Culpeper National Cemetery was erected in 1893 by veterans of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Massachusetts Infantry in remembrance of those members who died at the Battle of Cedar Mountain.<sup>76</sup> Other cemetery monuments were put up by individual states to honor the sacrifices of their native sons such as the 8<sup>th</sup> New York Heavy Artillery Monument at Cold Harbor National Cemetery. This monument was dedicated to the members of the regiment who died in the Battle of Cold Harbor by the state of New York in 1909.<sup>77</sup> A few monuments were put up by the federal government in remembrance of the loyalty to the Union shown by the dead. Hampton National Cemetery contains one such monument, dedicated by the government in 1868. The sixty-five foot obelisk is inscribed with the words, "In Memory of Union Soldiers

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<sup>75</sup> Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South," 41-42.

<sup>76</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Culpeper National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/culpeper.asp>.

<sup>77</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Cold Harbor National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/coldharbor.asp>.

Who Died to Maintain the Laws.”<sup>78</sup> Monuments such as these show the devotion to the Union dead that was felt by all northerners as well as highlighting the loyalty of the Union soldiers.

Memorial Day services were also a large part of commemoration at national cemeteries. The first official national Memorial Day occurred in 1868, under the direction of General John A. Logan, commander in chief of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest Union veteran’s group that maintained a presence in the South. Logan set aside May 30 as a day of remembrance. He called for “strewing with flowers or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country...and other fitting services and testimonials of respect.”<sup>79</sup> After Memorial Day in 1868, the practice of decorating the graves of the Union dead became a yearly event, leading to movements to declare the day a national holiday. Decoration of graves as part of Memorial Day services occurred at all of Virginia’s national cemeteries. In some cases, the activities were not well attended as southerners refused to participate in ceremonies. Instead, most participants were Union veterans and African Americans. Members of the GAR in Virginia welcomed African American participation in Memorial Day exercises and for the most part welcomed African American veterans into the organization. In contrast to many other southern states, most local GAR groups in Virginia were not segregated, and members protested against movements aimed at segregation.<sup>80</sup> At some cemeteries, however, many people came to honor and remember the Union dead. At Winchester National Cemetery, an observer noted, “the crowd was so great that everybody was astonished...it was most pleasing to all the Union people, because it was the first ‘social’ (if I may so style it) gathering of the

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<sup>78</sup> United States Department of Veteran’s Affairs, “Hampton National Cemetery,” 24 April 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/hampton.asp>.

<sup>79</sup> Peter Anderson, *In Honored Glory: The Story of Arlington*, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1966), 24.

<sup>80</sup> Wallace E. Davies, “The Problem of Race Segregation in the Grand Army of the Republic,” *Journal of Southern History* 13 (August 1947): 360-364.

loyal people of this town.”<sup>81</sup> The observance of Memorial Day in Virginia’s national cemeteries then, served not only to honor the Union dead but also to celebrate loyalty to the Union by the living.

Virginia’s confederate gravesites also became places of commemoration through both monument dedications and Memorial Day observances. Virginia women, in a variety of Ladies’ Memorial Associations, were the main force behind the creation of these monuments. Most of these monuments praised the heroism of the Confederate dead and their willingness to die for the glorious cause of the Confederacy. On 3 September 1878, the Ladies’ Memorial Association of Danville dedicated a monument in Danville’s Green Hill Cemetery to the Confederate dead of that city. One side of the obelisk monument is inscribed, “Patriots. Know that these fell in the effort to establish just government and perpetuate Constitutional Liberty. Who thus die will live in lofty example.”<sup>82</sup> Many communities in Virginia erected similar monuments to the Confederate dead. All showed not only the devotion to the dead by memorializing their actions, but also the desire to show that the Confederate dead were honorable and had fought for a just cause. Even monuments to the unknown dead reinforce the point. The Ladies’ Confederate Memorial Association of Winchester dedicated a monument in Stonewall Cemetery to the over eight hundred unknown dead buried in the cemetery. The inscription, “Who they were, none know, What they were, all know,”<sup>83</sup> shows that even though the dead buried there are unknown, southerners know that they were loyal Confederates, devoted to the cause that cost them their life.

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<sup>81</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 138-139.

<sup>82</sup> Augusta Yates, “Ladies Memorial Association, Danville, Virginia,” in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, 276.

<sup>83</sup> “Ladies’ Confederate Memorial Association, Winchester, Virginia,” in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, 317.

Memorial Day was an important holiday for southerners throughout Virginia. Though for years each community celebrated on a different day, Confederate Memorial Day activities were usually accompanied by large crowds, led and organized by local Ladies' Memorial Associations. Memorial Day services usually included the decoration of graves and often included a speaker to "remind the aged and show forth to the young what the occupants of these honored graves laid down their lives for."<sup>84</sup> Just as the national Memorial Day showcased the devotion to the Union dead, the Confederate Memorial Day activities highlighted the love and devotion of southerners towards the Confederate dead and proved that southerners could and would actively care for the graves of their dead heroes.

Some of the most controversial situations about commemoration in Virginia occurred between the two opposing shrines—Arlington National Cemetery and Hollywood Cemetery. There were several contentious factors between Arlington and Hollywood. At the end of the war, Arlington was the final resting site of over a hundred Confederate prisoners of war. Hollywood, on the other hand, contained the graves of a handful of Union soldiers that had been buried there near the end of the war. In April 1866, Congress approved funds to keep the Union graves at Hollywood at a time when maintenance of the Confederate graves could hardly be afforded by southerners. The Richmond *Examiner*, angry at the federal government, called for southerners to take up the challenge, telling readers that while wrong of Congress to consider the Confederate dead "less a hero because he failed...If he does not fall into the category of the 'Nation's Dead,' he is *ours*—and shame be to us if we do not care for his ashes."<sup>85</sup> Eventually the Union dead were removed from Hollywood, but not before Richmond was mobilized in a

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<sup>84</sup> "Ladies' Memorial Association, Manassas, Virginia," in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, 287.

<sup>85</sup> Richmond *Examiner*, 13 April 1866, in Mitchell, *Hollywood Cemetery*, 64.

massive effort to care for and honor the Confederate dead. At the same time, however, southerners, and mainly Virginians because of their proximity to the cemetery, were denied the right to decorate the graves of Confederates buried at Arlington. The Grand Army of the Republic announced in 1873, regarding Memorial Day, “any attempt by the friends of the rebel dead to strew flowers on their [the Confederate dead at Arlington] graves will be regarded as an interference with the programme of the day and will not be tolerated.”<sup>86</sup> This policy helped to keep commemorative practices in Virginia cemeteries separate for years.

Both Arlington and Hollywood contain important monuments to the Union and Confederate dead, respectively. Arlington National Cemetery, as the ultimate national Civil War cemetery, contains a monument to the unknown dead of the war. The forerunner to the present day Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington’s Tomb of the Unknown Dead contains the remains of 2,111 Union soldiers from the Battles of Manassas and the route to the Rappahannock River. The tomb is the major national consecration for the Union Civil War dead in the United States (see **Figure 1**). The sheer amount of loss captured in the ten-foot by twenty-foot grave is staggering testimony to the cost of the war to the people of the North. The Tomb of the Unknown Dead served as a marker for mourning all of those who were lost and a way for family members to connect to their dead whose bodies were not identified and whose graves were unmarked.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> “Patriotism and Partisanism,” *Richmond Daily Dispatch*.

<sup>87</sup> James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1988), 189.



**Figure 1.** Tomb of the Unknown Dead. <http://www.brotherswar.com/02-08-01-2111Dead1.jpg>.

The Union Tomb of the Unknown Dead is understated by comparison to Hollywood Cemetery's Confederate Monument. The Confederate Monument at Hollywood, built through the efforts of the Hollywood Memorial Association, was intended to be a forceful reminder of the Confederate dead and the loyalty that southerners owed to their memory. The *Richmond Daily Dispatch* reported after the first Memorial Day celebrations held in the cemetery, "the truest monument that can be raised to our dead will be to stamp indelibly their virtues and their constancy upon the souls of the southern people!"<sup>88</sup> In 1869, the dedication of the Confederate monument made a statement that could not be easily ignored in the cemetery. The President of the Hollywood Memorial Association, Mrs. William H. MacFarland, explained the need for the monument as a tribute to the Confederate soldiers who "dying, they left us the guardianship of their graves. It is a grateful service, due alike to them and to their surviving friends. Let us keep green the turf above their heads, and build monuments to mark for generations yet to come the

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<sup>88</sup> *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 1 June 1866.



place of their repose.”<sup>89</sup> The resulting monument was a ninety-foot pyramid composed of blocks of granite from the James River (see **Figure 2**). Towering over the many unknown graves in the Soldier’s Section at Hollywood, the Confederate Monument helps to insure that the Confederate dead do not go unnoticed and forgotten.



**Figure 2.** Confederate Memorial, Hollywood Cemetery. Photograph by author.

Due to the competition in erecting cemetery monuments and in showing care for the dead at Memorial Day celebrations, along with the rivalry between Arlington National Cemetery and

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<sup>89</sup> Mrs. William H. MacFarland, "To the Women of the South, " in Lizzie Cary Daniel, *Confederate Scrap-Book*, (Richmond, VA: J.L. Hill Printing Company, 1893), 124-125.

Hollywood Cemetery, commemoration in Virginia cemeteries was far more competitive than in much of the rest of the South, and reconciliation took longer. Cemeteries remained a dividing line between Union and Confederate for much longer in Virginia, with reconciliation not fully happening until the turn of the century. In 1898, President McKinley finally approved Confederate commemoration at Arlington, resolving a decades old issue for Virginians. By 1907, Confederate Memorial Day services at Arlington also included the decoration of Union graves, particularly the Tomb of the Unknown Dead.<sup>90</sup>

The final reconciliation in Virginia's Civil War cemeteries did not take place until 1914, when the United Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated a memorial to the Confederates at Arlington in the middle of the cemetery's Confederate Section (see **Figure 3**). The Confederate Monument at Arlington, familiarly known as New South, though it admitted military defeat, still told the story of the Civil War from a decidedly southern perspective and within the framework of the Lost Cause. It offered reconciliation to the North while still maintaining the dignity and honor of the Lost Cause of the South. The Confederate Monument showed that the South could participate in reconciliation but that it would only do so on its own terms and without letting go of the Lost Cause and the way that the South chose to view commemoration. In effect, "it was a monument of reconciliation, but a reconciliation based on terms that the white South found to be acceptable. As a token gift to the nation, it acknowledged military defeat and nothing more."<sup>91</sup>

The reconciliation between the North and South in Virginia was also made easier at the same time through the patriotism begun by the Spanish-American War and would increase during

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<sup>90</sup> "Memorial Day, 1907. Order of Exercises at Confederate Section of Arlington Cemetery, Virginia," in Leroy S. Boyd Papers, box 2, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

<sup>91</sup> Karen L. Cox, "The Confederate Monument at Arlington: A Token of Reconciliation," in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 160.

World War I, when both sides embraced their Anglo-Saxon roots, making the South's version of history more acceptable to the North.<sup>92</sup>



**Figure 3.** Confederate Monument, Arlington National Cemetery.  
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/csa-memorial-1927.jpg>.

Virginia's Civil War cemeteries in many ways followed the same pattern of separation and reconciliation that occurred throughout the South. However, Virginia's cemeteries experienced this pattern to a more extreme degree due to the scale of warfare in the state and the proximity to the North that made divisions last longer and become more competitive, factors that do not fit into the framework of cemetery creation and commemoration in the Deep South. The competition between national cemeteries and Confederate burial sites in Virginia occurred on a grand scale as each side attempted to provide the best care for the dead. Reconciliation in the cemeteries did not even begin, for the most part, until thirty years after the end of the Civil War when more pressing concerns of the Spanish-American War and then World War I reduced the tension between northerners and southerners in Virginia.

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<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 149-150.

## CHAPTER 3

### LOUISIANA

In sharp contrast to Virginia, Louisiana had few major battles during the Civil War, although the state did have its share of both military activities and casualties. The Mississippi River Campaign in the eastern part of the state to gain control of the river and the port city of New Orleans during the first half of the war, and the Red River Campaign in western Louisiana during the latter part of the war made Louisiana a contested state throughout the Civil War. By 1862, however, the majority of the state was occupied by Union forces, taking Louisiana out of most of the war's serious fighting. Instead, Louisiana was the site of only intermittent warfare as well as an occupying Union army. With deaths from both warfare and disease in the occupying forces and in Confederate forces as well, Louisiana became home to a number of Civil War cemeteries that became sites for commemoration during, and especially after, the war.

Union and Confederate burials throughout Louisiana followed a pattern of creation and commemoration that took place in Civil War cemeteries throughout the South and showcase the differences and the separation between the two systems, even though this pattern is far less pronounced than in Virginia. For the Union dead, cemeteries were created during the war that followed the guidelines of the National Cemetery System as closely as possible in the midst of war. At the same time, other Union burials took place on battlefields or in small, isolated cemetery plots as necessity dictated. After the war, the adjustments made to the National Cemetery System made Louisiana's Union cemeteries standardized. Bodies were moved to cemeteries from both battlefields and smaller cemeteries that were considered too remote to be cared for effectively. Several of the Union cemeteries created during the war were formally put under the control of the National Cemetery System. Finishing touches that had not been

completed during the war were added so that the cemeteries became nearly identical with their rows of ordered white tombstones (see **Figure 4** and **Figure 5**).



**Figure 4.** Chalmette National Cemetery. George Francois Mugnier Photograph Collection, New Orleans Public Library.



**Figure 5.** Baton Rouge National Cemetery. Andrew Lytle Photograph Collection, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University.

Confederate burials in Louisiana, both during and after the Civil War, highlight the lack of organization in Confederate cemetery planning. Like Virginia and other southern states, Louisiana dealt with Confederate burials through local organizations since the Confederacy during the war and then the state government after the war lacked sufficient resources to provide a comprehensive system for burying the Confederate dead. These burials took place during the war in a wide variety of locations throughout the state. Some soldiers were buried in older, garden cemeteries while others were buried on battlefields or in training camps. After the war ended, some of these bodies were left in their original locations while others were moved into pre-existing cemeteries.

Commemoration in both Union and Confederate cemeteries in Louisiana occurred for the most part after the war ended. Each side held separate ceremonies on Memorial Day and Decoration Day. Union ceremonies remained small due to the limited number of northerners in Louisiana while Confederate ceremonies tended to be larger affairs celebrating the righteousness of the southern cause and the honor of the Confederate dead. This separation between Union and Confederate commemoration in Louisiana ended quietly, however, since beginning in the late 1880s, sectional reconciliation began in the state as the two sides began to formally acknowledge the sacrifices of the dead on each side.

Louisiana's national cemeteries are rather isolated as well as limited in number. The state contains four cemeteries created within the National Cemetery System. Alexandria National Cemetery in Pineville, Baton Rouge National Cemetery in Baton Rouge, and Port Hudson National Cemetery in Zachary are all national cemeteries under the control of the Department of Veteran's Affairs. The Department of the Interior's National Park Service controls Chalmette National Cemetery in Chalmette. In addition to these four national

cemeteries, the state of Louisiana contains numerous Confederate graves in a variety of cemeteries, including Mount Olivet Cemetery in Pineville, Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery in Tangipahoa, Magnolia Cemetery in Baton Rouge, and Greenwood Cemetery and Metairie Cemetery in New Orleans.

Following the federal guidelines for establishing cemeteries, Alexandria National Cemetery was created under the National Cemetery System in 1867. A crossroads for both Union and Confederate troops in Louisiana, the town of Alexandria suffered two invasions by the opposing armies before being burned to the ground by Union troops in May 1864. When federal troops moved into the area to oversee Louisiana's Reconstruction, the United States government appropriated eight acres from Francis Poussin and created Alexandria National Cemetery.<sup>93</sup> In addition to the troops from Alexandria and the immediate vicinity buried in the cemetery during the war, Union troops were reinterred at Alexandria from surrounding towns including Mount Pleasant, Cheneyville, and Yellow Bayou after the cemetery was formally established.<sup>94</sup>

Also created in 1867, Baton Rouge National Cemetery is the smallest of Louisiana's national cemeteries, located on roughly eight acres of land. During the Civil War, Baton Rouge was part of the Union's effort to control the Mississippi River. After conquering New Orleans, federal forces took control of Baton Rouge. The August 1862 Battle of Baton Rouge led to the occupation of the city for the rest of the war. Union soldiers who died in the Battle of Baton Rouge were buried in a field near the site of the battle. After the occupation of Baton Rouge, this impromptu cemetery also served as a burial ground for sailors from the Union naval campaign

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<sup>93</sup> Ten years later, Mr. Poussin's family filed suit against the United States government for illegal seizure of land and were reimbursed with \$1200 for the property.

<sup>94</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Alexandria National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/alexandrial.asp>.

on the Mississippi River and along the Gulf Coast. This site became Baton Rouge National Cemetery after the war as part of the National Cemetery System's creation of Union cemeteries throughout the South. When the national cemetery was formed, Union dead were reinterred from battlefields around Baton Rouge as well as Union dead from Plaquemine, Louisiana, and Camden, Arkansas.<sup>95</sup>

The remaining national cemetery in Louisiana to fall under the Department of Veteran's Affairs, and the largest of the state's national cemeteries, is Port Hudson National Cemetery near Zachary. Port Hudson, twenty miles north of Baton Rouge, became a strategic position in the defenses of the Mississippi River between Baton Rouge and Vicksburg, Mississippi. For forty-eight days in the early summer of 1863, Union troops laid siege to Port Hudson in what became the longest siege in American history. During the siege, the Union army suffered over 4,000 casualties before finally taking control of Port Hudson. While the siege was taking place, the burial of the dead proceeded haphazardly, with soldiers burying their dead as time and space allowed. Several times during the siege, one side or another called a temporary truce to retrieve and bury the dead. For both the Union and Confederate soldiers, burial procedures quickly became solely about speed and convenience amidst the turbulence of the siege. Once it ended, L.T. Townsend of the 16<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire Volunteers noted that, "the graves, too, of the dead Confederates were many. Some of their number had been buried in single graves, though the new-turned earth showed plainly enough that 'heaps of their slain were crowded into platooned graves that were left unmarked.'"<sup>96</sup> Edward Bacon of the 6<sup>th</sup> Michigan Volunteers made similar observations about the burials of Union soldiers. He noted that some soldiers were buried in

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<sup>95</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Baton Rouge National Cemetery," 27 March 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/batonrouge.asp>.

<sup>96</sup> Mary H. Manhein and Ann M. Whitmer, *1988 Investigations of the Port Hudson Military and Civilian Cemeteries*, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1989.



private graves, like his recollection that “Simonds lies in one of the many graves which the siege of Port Hudson left, never to be found by friend or relative after the little board on which his comrades marked his name was broken.”<sup>97</sup> Many others, however, were buried in “long trenches [that] had been dug by negroes, and into these the blackened, flyblown bodies were thrown and covered up.”<sup>98</sup> The Union dead were left in these makeshift and largely unmarked graves after both the siege and occupation of Port Hudson ended.

Beginning in late 1863 and continuing throughout the war, Union occupation forces in Louisiana attempted to find and rebury the Union dead at Port Hudson. They searched the area of the siege to locate all of the scattered unmarked graves of the Union dead, while the Confederate dead were left in their original trench graves. The troops removed the Union corpses from the makeshift graves and reburied them in what would become Port Hudson National Cemetery, thereby giving the Union dead the honor of a proper burial while leaving the Confederate dead in rural, unmarked graves. The cemetery, though, was not officially designated as part of the National Cemetery System until 1866. Along with the battlefield deaths resulting from the siege of Port Hudson, Union soldiers who died in nearby military hospitals were also interred in the cemetery throughout the war. While roughly 4,000 soldiers from the battle are buried there, only the remains of 600 could be identified.<sup>99</sup>

Louisiana’s final national cemetery, Chalmette National Cemetery in Chalmette is one of only fourteen national cemeteries not controlled by the Department of Veteran’s Affairs. Instead, Chalmette National Cemetery is under the control of the Department of the Interior’s

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<sup>97</sup> Edward Bacon, *Among the Cotton Thieves*, (Detroit: The Free Press Steam Book and Job Printing House, 1867), 207.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> United States Department of Veteran’s Affairs, “Port Hudson National Cemetery,” 4 May 2007, <http://www.cem.va.gov/CEM/cems/nchp/porthudson.asp>.

National Park Service.<sup>100</sup> The cemetery became a national cemetery in May 1864, on the site of a much earlier battlefield. During the War of 1812, the ground where the cemetery now exists was the same ground on which the British artillery massed during the Battle of New Orleans. When the national cemetery was established, the initial interments were the dead from the surrounding area, particularly New Orleans, as well as sailors from the Union naval campaigns in the Gulf of Mexico. Federal authorities located the cemetery at a distance from New Orleans in part because many of the initial burials resulted from diseases that spread through the city and the occupation forces, and they wished to prevent the further spread of disease by placing the cemetery as far from the city as conveniently possible. After the end of the Civil War, over 7,000 Union dead from abandoned cemeteries across southern Louisiana, southern Mississippi, and the Ship Islands were reinterred at Chalmette National Cemetery, which brought the cemetery's total to 12,000, with nearly 7,000 unknown.<sup>101</sup> Among these Union dead lie the remains of Private Lyons Wakeman of New York, one of the more interesting burials in the cemetery. Private Wakeman died of dysentery near New Orleans in 1864 and was buried at Chalmette. In 1994, however, cemetery officials discovered that Private Lyons Wakeman was in reality Private Rosetta Wakeman, who disguised herself to serve as a Union soldier.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to that interesting side note to history, Chalmette National Cemetery's original interments included the graves of 132 Confederate soldiers who had been held in the area as prisoners of war. However, in 1868, the Ladies Benevolent Association of New Orleans

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<sup>100</sup> Similar to the national cemeteries at Fredericksburg and Petersburg, Chalmette National Cemetery originally was under the control of the United States Veteran's Administration. Because the land was part of a larger battlefield rather than an isolated cemetery, during the twentieth century the cemetery was combined with several other historic sites in the vicinity to form the Jean Lafitte National Historical Park.

<sup>101</sup> United States Civil War Center, "Chalmette National Cemetery," 13 June 2002, <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/cwc/projects/dbases/chalmla.htm>.

<sup>102</sup> Julie Major, "Battlefield Shares Historic Ground with Cemetery," University of Miami, 1 May 2004, <http://com.miami.edu/parks/chalmettecem.htm>.

circulated a petition calling for the removal of the Confederate dead from Chalmette. Besides the fear of disease, another reason for locating the cemetery at a distance from New Orleans had been the often open hostility between New Orleans residents and occupying Union troops. Many Federal officials thought that a cemetery close to the city would be easily susceptible to vandalism by angry southerners. Southerners, in turn, approved the decision to move the Union dead as far from their city as possible.<sup>103</sup> In light of all of the hostility between northerners and southerners in New Orleans, the request of the Ladies Benevolent Association is understandable. While northerners left their dead in national cemeteries in the South as a sign of continued victory and national unity, southerners felt it necessary to return Confederate soldiers to southern soil—which did not include the federally owned land of the national cemeteries. The women of New Orleans thus felt that they were removing the sacred sons of the South from the contamination of the Union dead. This was a way to fulfill one of the objects of the Ladies Benevolent Association, which was “to mark and protect the graves of the Confederate dead, and, when deemed necessary and found practicable, to remove their remains for more perfect and satisfactory protection.”<sup>104</sup> Accordingly, the 132 Confederate soldiers originally buried at Chalmette were removed from the national cemetery and reinterred at Greenwood Cemetery in New Orleans in 1874.

Commemorative practices in Louisiana’s national cemeteries tended to be subdued affairs. For the most part, commemoration during the war was nonexistent. After the war, both individual veterans and veteran’s memorial groups participated in activities in the state’s national cemeteries to promote the memory and honor of the Union dead. The GAR, with its first post in

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<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> “Monument to the Confederate Dead—The Work of Louisiana Ladies,” *New Orleans Times* 5 April 1874.

Louisiana organized by Union veterans in 1883, planned and participated in annual Memorial Day and Fourth of July ceremonies at many of Louisiana's national cemeteries, yet worked to maintain the inconspicuous nature of those ceremonies, which were generally limited to the placing of flags or wreaths at gravesites in remembrance of the patriotism of fallen soldiers. Union veterans who had moved to southern states in general and in Louisiana in particular wanted to minimize the animosity that many southerners felt towards northerners after the Civil War. They therefore downplayed the ceremonies at national cemeteries. GAR members instead worked to make themselves "respected individually, and [to make] the Grand Army an honorable organization, so recognized among the strongest and worst confederates of Louisiana."<sup>105</sup>

Another method that Union veterans adopted to fit into life in Louisiana was the practice of excluding African American veterans from their ranks and ignoring the contributions of African American soldiers during the war. Starting in the 1880s and continuing through the end of the century, the GAR practiced a system of segregation in its southern posts, a policy first employed in Louisiana. GAR members in the state defended their support of segregation as a necessary measure to fit into life in the South. The Louisiana GAR senior vice-commander explained,

Through force of circumstances which they [Union veterans] could neither control nor avert, they found themselves domiciled in a section of the country where peculiar social conditions exist and which they are powerless to change. The inexorable law of this social condition is such that the white man who associates upon terms of social equality with the black man is barred from all association with the people of the white race and practically excluded from the privilege of earning a livelihood. It points the finger of scorn and derision to the wife of his bosom and the children of his love.<sup>106</sup>

GAR members in Louisiana not only practiced segregation within the organization but also ignored the role played by African American soldiers in the Civil War. This was

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<sup>105</sup> Davies, "The Problem of Race Segregation in the Grand Army of the Republic," 356.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 356-357.

particularly evident at Port Hudson National Cemetery. As a cemetery under the control of the National Cemetery system, Port Hudson National Cemetery contained the graves of both white and African American Civil War soldiers. However, Port Hudson played a larger part in the story of African Americans during the war. During the siege of Port Hudson, two African American regiments, the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Louisiana Native Guard, participated in fighting and endured heavy casualties. These were some of the first African American troops that the Union sent into combat. Additionally, after the siege ended, Port Hudson became a recruiting station for local African Americans until 1866.<sup>107</sup> During the trials of Reconstruction, the role of African Americans in the defeat of Port Hudson was a subject to be ignored by all Louisianans, including white Union veterans. And for years the subject was ignored, along with the national cemetery.

Because of the history of Port Hudson, the cemetery became the most despised of Louisiana's national cemeteries. During the 1870s, hostile landowners near the cemetery restricted drainage access for the cemetery by denying the federal government the right to cut ditches across parts of their land. For years then the cemetery was unable to drain properly, leaving it marshy and hard to care for.<sup>108</sup> This was only one outward sign of the much bigger problem facing commemoration of the Union dead in Louisiana. Southerners naturally resented the imposition of national cemeteries on their land. Even more, the internment of African Americans in these cemeteries was considered particularly insulting to Louisianans. After years of claiming that African Americans were property that could be bought, sold, and owned, suddenly Louisiana soldiers were considered dishonorable and undeserving of proper burial while former property attained hero status. This situation hampered Union commemorative efforts in Louisiana for years as efforts to honor the Union dead were tied to more lasting

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<sup>107</sup> United States Department of Veteran's Affairs, "Port Hudson National Cemetery."

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

problems surrounding honor and the southern system of race relations that developed after the Civil War.<sup>109</sup>

In contrast to the Union burials in Louisiana's national cemeteries, the state's Confederate gravesites lacked central organization. Instead, Confederate graves are scattered throughout the state and consisted of a range of burial types, from small church cemeteries to the large and sprawling cemeteries of New Orleans. For the most part, documented Confederate graves in Louisiana followed the same pattern as Confederate gravesites throughout the South and are found in older, preexisting cemeteries, where a separate section of the cemetery was often set aside for Confederate burials.<sup>110</sup> These cemeteries were often planned under the influence of the Mount Auburn or Pere Lachaise cemeteries as garden cemeteries. Like garden cemeteries throughout the United States during the early nineteenth century, many of Louisiana's cemeteries containing the Confederate dead were specifically designed to include rustic qualities and to take advantage of natural landscapes, resulting in sprawling, tree-filled, garden-like burial grounds.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, while some of Louisiana's Confederate dead were buried in cemeteries during the war, such as those in Mt. Olivet Cemetery and Magnolia Cemetery, most of the Confederate dead in Louisiana were moved to their final resting places after the war ended in a movement to provide proper burials for the fallen Confederate heroes. Commemoration at Confederate gravesites also did not become widespread until the 1870s.

Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Pineville is an example of an extremely small Confederate burial ground, located in part of a church cemetery. Mt. Olivet contains the graves of several

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<sup>109</sup> Davies, "The Problem of Race Segregation in the Grand Army of the Republic," 371-372.

<sup>110</sup> Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 39.

<sup>111</sup> James J. Farrell, *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 99-112.

Confederates who died in and around Alexandria during the Civil War. The cemetery itself dates to 1824, however, and is owned by St. James Episcopal Church in Pineville. Although Mt. Olivet's interments are, for the most part, local parishioners, during the Civil War members of the church agreed to bury some of the area's fallen Confederate soldiers in the cemetery. This was because Mt. Olivet Chapel served as Union headquarters during the army's occupation of Alexandria, and therefore suffered the least damage of other churches and cemeteries in the area and was not burned along with the rest of the town. Mt. Olivet Cemetery contains thirteen marked Confederate graves.<sup>112</sup>

In contrast to Mt. Olivet Cemetery, and in fact to most other Confederate burial grounds, the Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery in Tangipahoa contains the graves of only Confederate soldiers. Camp Moore served as Louisiana's largest training camp, where over 25,000 Confederate troops trained during the war. Initially located at Camp Walker in Metairie, Louisiana, near New Orleans, training moved to Camp Moore because of scarce drinking water and fear of disease. The move took a somewhat ironic turn, though, when several epidemics, including measles and typhoid fever, swept through Camp Moore in the summer and fall of 1861.<sup>113</sup> After Union troops took control of the eastern half of Louisiana, Camp Moore served as a cavalry base for the remainder of the war. The seven-acre cemetery, founded in 1861, was used as a burial site during the war for the Confederate soldiers who died in camp. Estimates of the dead buried at Camp Moore range from 200 to 800, though most authorities place the number closer to 300 burials, with nearly all of the deaths resulting from disease. Only 123 of the graves are marked since Camp Moore's documents were destroyed near the end of the war and many of

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<sup>112</sup> Elaine Hicks, "Mt. Olivet Cemetery," United States Civil War Center, 20 September 1999, <http://www.lib.lsu.edu/cwc/projects/dbases/olivet.htm>.

<sup>113</sup> Yvonne Lewis Day, *The Soldier's Grave: Military Burials in the Rural Cemeteries of Tangipahoa Parish*, (Baton Rouge, LA: 2002), 15.

the original grave markers were later destroyed. The soldiers buried at Camp Moore are also generally thought to be from more distant parishes in the state, since locals were sent home when they became sick or were returned to their families for burial.<sup>114</sup>

After the Civil War, the cemetery itself was abandoned until the early 1900s, the site became overgrown and most of the tombstones had either been damaged from storms or stolen.<sup>115</sup> In 1906, through the work of memorial associations, the cemetery was fully reclaimed from the elements. The cemetery was then reopened as a Confederate commemorative site and presented to the state of Louisiana.<sup>116</sup> This makes the cemetery different from other Confederate burial sites in that the state government willingly took over for the care of the cemetery. Perhaps this is because the Camp Moore cemetery is not part of an older, larger cemetery that could take on the care of the graves. The state did not fully seize control of the cemetery, though. Beginning in 1906, and continuing to the present, while the Louisiana legislature approves funds for the upkeep of Camp Moore, the cemetery is directly maintained and managed by a collection of various Confederate memorial associations.<sup>117</sup>

Marked with simple white markers, the graves in this cemetery are more reminiscent of national cemetery gravestones than is common for many Confederate graves. A monument to the Camp Moore dead, a pillar topped with the statue of a Confederate soldier, was also placed in

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<sup>114</sup> Day, *The Soldier's Grave*, 15.

<sup>115</sup> It is interesting that this cemetery remained abandoned for so many years after the Civil War in light of the many efforts both in Louisiana and throughout the South to care for the Confederate dead. Unfortunately, there is no evidence explaining why this occurred.

<sup>116</sup> Margaret Dixon, "History of Camp Moore," in *Camp Moore Memoirs and Recipes*, (Tangipahoa, LA: Camp Moore Chapter No. 562 United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1965), 3-4.

<sup>117</sup> United States National Park Service, "Camp Moore," <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/louisiana/cam.htm>.



the center of the cemetery in 1905.<sup>118</sup> The dedication of the cemetery and the monument occurred chiefly because of the work of women's groups, particularly the Camp Moore Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Like women's organizations throughout the South, the women involved at Camp Moore worked to give honor to the Confederate dead and to ensure that they are remembered. The inscription on the monument shows the importance placed on remembrance and continued dedication to the Confederate dead. The inscription reads "Twine a garland, drop a tear o'er Louisiana's unnamed dead who slumber here."<sup>119</sup> The care that women took in reclaiming and dedicating the cemetery testified to their continued devotion to the honor and memory of the Confederate dead.

A more common burial method for Confederate soldiers, that of interring (or reintering) the dead in older, garden cemeteries, took place in Magnolia Cemetery in Baton Rouge. Magnolia Cemetery was established in the early 1850s for the citizens of Baton Rouge. In 1862, however, the burial ground became a battleground as part of the Battle of Baton Rouge was fought over the tombstones in the cemetery. When the battle ended, the dead were buried within the cemetery. Shortly afterwards, however, soldiers as part of the Confederate rearguard in Baton Rouge removed the bodies of Union soldiers from Magnolia Cemetery and reburied them a short distance outside the cemetery fence. The Confederate dead from the battle were then reburied in a mass grave inside the cemetery. This is a striking move, since Confederates deemed the reburial of the Union dead outside a southern cemetery necessary. The reburial took place even with the imminent occupation of the city by Union forces and highlights the separation between the Union and Confederate dead. The land where the Union dead were

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<sup>118</sup> Wayne N. Cosby, "Camp Moore Confederate Cemetery and Museum, Tangipahoa, LA," Camp Moore Historical Association, 2004, <http://www.campmoore.com>.

<sup>119</sup> *Camp Moore Memoirs and Recipes*, 5.

buried was the same ground that eventually became the Baton Rouge National Cemetery. This of course put the two cemeteries almost directly next to each other, providing one of the clearest differences between cemeteries for Union and Confederate burial sites. The national cemetery is a standard national cemetery, formed along the guidelines laid out by Montgomery Meigs and represents order and national identity while Magnolia Cemetery is a typical garden cemetery, with individual clusters of family plots scattered through a semi-rural landscape. One showcases national unity and victory in death, while the other characterizes traditional rural cemetery burials with no clear-cut underlying message. In effect, the two cemeteries side by side, separated only by a road and their own walls, served to “represent...an ideology diametrically opposed to the other.”<sup>120</sup>

Two of the largest cemeteries in Louisiana with Confederate gravesites are found in New Orleans. Both of these cemeteries, Greenwood Cemetery and Metairie Cemetery were originally designed as garden cemeteries. At the same time, though, the two are also New Orleans cemeteries, which makes them different from other cemeteries in general and from other Civil War cemeteries. New Orleans cemeteries are highly influenced by both culture and environment. The most notable and recognizable difference between cemeteries in New Orleans and elsewhere in the United States, is that burials take place above ground as is more frequent in older European cemeteries (see **Figure 6**). New Orleans cemeteries also have long been dramatized in popular culture as places that foster an uneasy relationship between the dead and the living. In New Orleans, this relationship between living and dead is unique since “the dead are drier than the living, and that accounts for their air of superiority. They have shelter, eternity, and are cautiously but faithfully attended by the living. They are also more numerous than the living—New Orleans is an old city—and love to congregate, haunt, and dance. Only the thinnest

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<sup>120</sup> Jewett, “The Body Politic,” 2-3, 31.

film, a razor-edge of twilight, separates them from their descendants.”<sup>121</sup> Though both Greenwood and Metairie are more clearly garden cemeteries than other New Orleans cemeteries, they maintain some of these important elements that are relatively unique to New Orleans and the Confederate burials in these cemeteries fit into the both the larger picture of Confederate burials and commemoration across the South and the already established culture of commemoration that existed in New Orleans.



**Figure 6.** Greenwood Cemetery, New Orleans. S.T. Blessing, Stereograph 24, Stereograph Collection, New Orleans Public Library.

The New Orleans Fireman’s Charitable and Benevolent Association established New Orleans’s Greenwood Cemetery in 1852. The cemetery originally opened in order to deal with severe overcrowding in Cypress Grove Cemetery because of the 1852 yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans. In 1874, the Ladies’ Benevolent Association of New Orleans dedicated the first Civil War monument in New Orleans at Greenwood Cemetery. The Ladies’ Benevolent Association formed in New Orleans in May 1866 to begin the work of reburying the Confederate

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<sup>121</sup> Andrei Codrescu, “A Trumpet in Heaven: Some Notes on the Disposition of Bodies in New Orleans and the Stories They Tell,” in Sandra Russell Clark, *Elysium, A Gathering of Souls: New Orleans Cemeteries*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 10.

dead in what they considered more adequate burial spaces.<sup>122</sup> Just as it was important to Confederates during the war to separate the Union dead from the southern dead in Magnolia Cemetery in Baton Rouge, it was equally important for southerners after the war to continue this separation by removing the Confederate dead from the Union dead at Chalmette. The Confederate dead could not help to restore southern honor or be memorialized through the Lost Cause while remaining in a federal cemetery. The Ladies' Benevolent Association thus needed to show that Louisianans could adequately care for their dead on southern soil. The main goal of the Ladies' Benevolent Association, according to the *New Orleans Times* was "to carry out its plans for taking up and removing to one cemetery, the remains of dead Confederates, scattered here and there in the State, and place above the mausoleum, a monument that would, at a glance, tell its simple but eloquent story."<sup>123</sup> The women of the association eventually raised over \$11,000 to accomplish their goal, though it took nearly ten years to achieve.<sup>124</sup>

The Ladies' Benevolent Association dedicated the Confederate Monument in Greenwood Cemetery on 10 April 1874. The monument, the *New Orleans Times* reported admiringly, consisted of a "tall shaft that supports the topmost figure, rises from a granite foundation covering the mound, and is surrounded on its four faces by life size marble busts of Stonewall Jackson, Sidney Johnson, Leonidas Polk and R.E. Lee. The statue is a life size figure of a Confederate soldier, in uniform, standing on guard, in an easy attitude, leaning on his gun, his

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<sup>122</sup> Eventually the association was renamed the Ladies' Confederate Memorial Association of New Orleans, since the first name was adopted only because restrictions placed by the Union military government in Louisiana that prohibited the use of the term "Confederate" in the names of organizations.

<sup>123</sup> "Monument to the Confederate Dead—The Work of Louisiana Ladies," *New Orleans Times*, 5 April 1874.

<sup>124</sup> "Ladies Confederate Memorial Association, New Orleans," in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, (New Orleans, LA: Graham Press, 1904), 170-173.

countenance expressive of intense watchfulness and vigilance”<sup>125</sup> (see **Figure 4**). When the work was completed, the mausoleum contained the remains of 600 Confederate soldiers, including the 132 soldiers removed from Chalmette National Cemetery. The identities of only a small number of the soldiers buried in the mass grave are known.<sup>126</sup>



**Figure 7.** Confederate Monument, Greenwood Cemetery. George Francois Mugnier Photograph Collection, New Orleans Public Library.

The dedication ceremony at Greenwood Cemetery followed a predictable pattern of commemoration. Both the opening prayer and the dedication speech focused on bestowing honor on the Confederate dead and through the memory of the dead, restoring honor to Louisiana, in spite of the defeat of the Confederacy. The prayer, given by the Reverend Dr. Palmer spoke of the importance of remembering and honoring the dead. He told the gathered crowd that God had “assembled us this day at the spot where our hearts are the saddest. We

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<sup>125</sup> “Monument to the Confederate Dead,” *New Orleans Times*, 5 April 1874.

<sup>126</sup> Fireman’s Charitable and Benevolent Association, “Greenwood and Cypress Grove Cemeteries,” <http://greenwoodnola.com/greenwood.php>.

kneel together as mourners beside the tomb of those whom we loved in life, and whom we honor in death. Amidst melancholy memories we raise this Memorial of our love over their sleeping dust, and with pious hands unveil it before the world.”<sup>127</sup> The oration, given by H.N. Ogden, pressed the importance of commemoration even more. He reminded the audience that as Louisianans, “we are not here a conquering, but a conquered people. We have come in the face of defeat, disaster, and suffering, with a country desolated and in ruins, simply to testify before the world, that we are faithful to our dead. That time and misfortune have only served, and can only serve to freshen and purify the eternal gratitude we feel to those noble men who laid down their lives for us.”<sup>128</sup> The fact that it had taken nearly a decade to realize the goal of reburying the Confederate dead and raising a monument in their honor only served to make Louisianans prouder of their devotion that had persisted in spite of the problems that faced the former Confederate states during Reconstruction. Louisianans were proud of their ability to raise a monument to the Confederate dead and to help secure the memory of the Confederacy for the future. As Ogden explained, “it is a proud thought that these monuments, which we are raising in our weakness, to commemorate the deeds of a fallen cause, are to become, at no distant day, centers of universal attraction;--that this sacred spot will never be less loved, less faithfully tended than it is this evening.”<sup>129</sup>

The remainder of the dedication ceremony followed along the same solemn lines as the speeches had and displayed the importance that southerners felt towards commemorating the Confederate dead. Between 3,000 and 5,000 people attended the ceremonies to pay homage to

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<sup>127</sup> Ladies Benevolent Association of Louisiana, *Dedication of the Confederate Monument at Greenwood Cemetery, on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1874*, (New Orleans, LA: Jas. A. Gresham, 1874), 7.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

the dead. As the New Orleans *Republican* commented, “far from restraining the Southern people from keeping fresh and green the memory of their gallant dead, we would think them craven and dishonored if they did otherwise.”<sup>130</sup> The crowd filed by the monument silently after the formal dedication. The New Orleans *Picayune* described their actions as, “beneath the statue, each one left some memento to the dead—a cross of flowers, a wreath, a bouquet, an humble but devout offering to some dead dear one, to a lost cause.”<sup>131</sup> As the first confederate monument in the city, the monument in Greenwood Cemetery demonstrated the perseverance of Louisianans, and especially the women of New Orleans, in seeking to properly honor and memorialize the Confederate dead.

New Orleans is also home to Metairie Cemetery. Established on the grounds of the Metairie Race Track in 1872, Metairie remains one of New Orleans’s most famous cemeteries, and garden cemeteries heavily influenced its design. The cemetery was the “apotheosis of Victorian grandeur.”<sup>132</sup> Metairie was initially a rarity among New Orleans cemeteries because of its garden design and ostentatious tombs. In New Orleans, “the older cemeteries shimmer palely white, with their whitewashed brick and white marble tombs. But the tombs of Metairie are polychrome fantasies. Polished marble and granite run the gamut of hues from white through red, brown, and black, and rough granite and limestone express the entire spectrum of gray, tan, and yellow tones.”<sup>133</sup> Just as the regular tombs in the cemetery attracted notice, so did the Confederate graves.

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<sup>130</sup> “Dedication of the Confederate Tomb,” New Orleans *Republican*, 11 April 1874.

<sup>131</sup> “The Confederate Tomb, Ceremony of the Unveiling at Greenwood: Mortuiri te Salutant,” New Orleans *Picayune*, 11 April 1874.

<sup>132</sup> Patricia Brady, “The Seductive Face of Death,” in Sandra Russell Clark, *Elysium, A Gathering of Souls: New Orleans Cemeteries* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 25.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

Even though Metairie Cemetery was not established until seven years after the end of the Civil War, the ground that became the cemetery was intimately tied to the Civil War. The Metairie Race Track had operated on the land since 1838, but with the advent of the war, the racetrack closed and part of it was transformed into the Confederate training camp, Camp Walker, which eventually relocated to Camp Moore. When the war ended, the devastation across the South effectively ended any attempt to restore the racetrack and the land was sold for the purpose of becoming a cemetery. Since the war caused the end of the successful racetrack as well as the eventual establishment of Metairie Cemetery, “it is fitting that this city of the dead contain so many Civil War veterans.”<sup>134</sup>

Many of the Confederates buried in Metairie were moved to the cemetery from graves across the South. Families traveled to battlefields to collect the bodies of sons, husbands, and brothers who had died and been buried away from Louisiana. In the years after Metairie opened, many reinterments were held at the cemetery, and “the heart-breaking pilgrimages to far away battlefields and burial grounds to reclaim the bodies of loved ones, are recorded in inscriptions—Newport News, Shiloh, Sharpsburg, First and Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, Amelia Springs, and others.”<sup>135</sup> The desire and willingness of Louisianans to reinter family members spoke of their continued devotion to the Confederate dead as well as the lack of a unified system for caring for the dead. While proclaiming loyalty to all of the Confederate dead in public speeches, devotion was nevertheless greater when local. It was important for Louisianans to have their dead buried not only in southern soil, but also in Louisiana soil.

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<sup>134</sup> Robert Florence, *New Orleans Cemeteries: Life in the Cities of the Dead*, (New Orleans, LA: Batture Press, 1997), 164.

<sup>135</sup> Henri A. Gandolfo, *Metairie Cemetery: An Historical Memoir, Tales of its Statesmen, Soldiers, and Great Families*, (New Orleans, LA: Stewart Enterprises, Inc., 1981), 22.



Among Metairie's Confederate graves are those of both regular soldiers and well-known Confederates such as General John Bell Hood and General Pierre Gustave Touissant Beauregard. General Hood is buried in his own grave, but General Beauregard is buried in the vault of the conspicuous Army of Tennessee Tomb. The Army of Tennessee Tomb is one of Metairie's dominant features. It is one of the two tombs in the cemetery that were built by veterans associations in New Orleans. These associations were formed among veterans as a way of remembering the camaraderie of war, but also, more importantly for the services that they offered. Dues that the veterans paid contributed to medical care for association members as well as burial services when veterans died. The Army of Tennessee tomb consists of a thirty-foot tall burial mound containing forty-eight vaults. A large equestrian statue of General Albert Sidney Johnston, a former occupant of the tomb, tops the mound (see **Figure 8**), and a life size statue of a Confederate soldier stands at the entrance of the tomb. In addition to the forty-eight vaults within the tomb, the tomb contains an extensive eulogy to General Albert Sidney Johnston. Johnston was originally buried in the tomb, but his body was later moved to Texas. Of the forty-eight vaults, three were held in high enough esteem to be sealed shut and not reused when space was needed. One belongs to the private who wrote Johnston's eulogy for the tomb. Another belongs to Confederate Colonel Charles Didier Dreux, who was the first Confederate field officer killed in action during the Civil War. The last sealed crypt holds the remains of General Beuregard, who died in 1893. The last interment that took place in the Army of the Tennessee tomb took place in 1929.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-26.



**Figure 8.** Tomb of the Army of Tennessee. George Francois Mugnier Photograph Collection, New Orleans Public Library.

Metairie Cemetery also contains the slightly less conspicuous tomb of the Army of Northern Virginia. A thirty-eight foot tall column topped with a statue of General Jackson marks the tomb (see **Figure 9**). The statue was unveiled in 1881 by Mrs. Jackson. This collection of fifty-seven vaults became the first resting place of Confederate President Jefferson Davis when he died in New Orleans in December 1889. As a sign of respect, Crypt 49, where the Confederate president's body was interred temporarily, was permanently sealed and remained vacant after Davis's body was moved.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.



**Figure 9.** Tomb of the Army of Northern Virginia. George Francois Mugnier Photograph Collection, New Orleans Public Library.

Commemorative practices at Louisiana's cemeteries containing Confederate graves were similar to those in national cemeteries. Memorial, or Decoration Day was generally celebrated with visits to the graves of Confederate soldiers to place flowers or evergreens in memory of the dead. During Reconstruction in Louisiana, this tradition tended to be carried out by individuals only. Family members of fallen soldiers or small groups of women from various Ladies' Memorial Associations would decorate the graves throughout the day. Except for monument dedications, there were often no organized commemorative events in cemeteries.<sup>138</sup> Near the end of Reconstruction, however, Memorial Day ceremonies came to be more ritualized with programs and processions. New Orleans ceremonies for Confederate Memorial Day developed throughout the 1880s and generally included solemn processions of veterans to the graves of

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<sup>138</sup> *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, 167-180.

Confederate dead while members of the Ladies' Benevolent Association along with groups of children decorated the graves.<sup>139</sup>

At the same time that these ceremonies were becoming ritualized in Louisiana, there was also a lessening of tensions between northerners and southerners in the state. Though some tensions eased when northerners fit themselves into the social system (i.e. by accepting segregation) in Louisiana, the Civil War cemeteries had remained strictly separate. In the end, though, cemeteries eventually provided a way for both sides to come together over the dead. The Ladies' Benevolent Association of New Orleans first recorded that on Memorial Day 1875, three women and two United States officers placed flowers at the Confederate Monument in Greenwood Cemetery. The association reasoned that "perhaps one near and dear to them, had given up his life on the altar of duty, and had been laid to rest among strangers, and in placing these flowers on the monument to our dead, they hoped that some kind friend would remember the one they loved."<sup>140</sup> Similar incidents through the 1870s and 1880s occurred in both New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

By the end of the 1880s, Confederate organizations and Union veterans regularly decorated the graves of the other side on their respective Memorial Day. The Baton Rouge *Weekly Truth* reported that in 1886, participants in Confederate Memorial Day exercises at Magnolia Cemetery also took flowers to decorate the graves at Baton Rouge National Cemetery.<sup>141</sup> In return, at the Memorial Day ceremonies in Baton Rouge National Cemetery it was announced that "immediately after the closing ceremonies at the National Cemetery, [the

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<sup>139</sup> "Ladies Confederate Memorial Association, New Orleans," in *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South*, 180.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, 180-181.

<sup>141</sup> Baton Rouge *Weekly Truth*, 30 April 1886.

veterans] will proceed to Magnolia Cemetery and as a tribute of respect for the Confederate dead, will decorate the grave of the late Major A. S. Herron, CSA.”<sup>142</sup> This willingness to honor the dead of both sides led to greater reconciliation in Louisiana.

As the bitterness of the war and Reconstruction began to fade from memory in Louisiana, the cemeteries that had been places of separation gradually changed. The state’s national cemeteries were originally created to highlight Union victory, and by extension, Confederate defeat. The southern system for burying the dead remained unorganized and local, though Louisianans took great pride in caring for their Confederate dead on southern soil. The two systems underscored the sectional differences between the North and South through the distinctive differences between national cemeteries and Confederate burial sites. Finally, though, Louisiana’s Civil War cemeteries became places for reunion and a way to honor the dead of both the Union and the Confederacy.

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<sup>142</sup> Baton Rouge *Capitolian-Advocate*, 1 June 1886.

## CONCLUSION

Both Virginia and Louisiana are part of the history of Civil War cemeteries and the commemoration that occurred in them. The two show different sides of the same story, however. In Virginia, with four times the number of national cemeteries than Louisiana as well as a greater number of Confederate gravesites, cemetery creation and commemorative practices became central to the hostility between northerners and southerners in the state. With so many Union and Confederate graves in Virginia, the ability to care for the dead became a source of pride and competition between the national cemeteries and cemeteries containing Confederate graves. This competition manifested itself in both the dedication of cemetery monuments and in Memorial Day ceremonies. Due to the scale of war in Virginia, and the resulting number of national cemeteries and Confederate graves, along with the deep divisions over commemoration in those cemeteries, sectional reconciliation in Virginia took much longer than in many other states. The divisions that were so marked in the cemeteries did not fully heal until the beginning of World War I.

Louisiana, as a Deep South state, underwent the same basic process of cemetery creation, but with results quite different from Virginia. With fewer battles and fewer northerners in the state, both the creation of cemeteries after the Civil War and the commemoration that took place in them tended to be low key affairs. National cemeteries still fostered division between the Union and Confederate dead, and both sides were dedicated to the care of the dead and the preservation of honor, but the competition and hostility that marked Virginia commemoration was not present in Louisiana. Instead, northerners in Louisiana kept a low profile, holding only small Memorial Day events and adopting measures such as segregation to blend in more with local Louisianans. Commemoration in Louisiana did not create long-term divisions as it did in

Virginia. In fact, sectional reconciliation began in Louisiana cemeteries decades before it occurred in the Upper South and even before the Spanish-American War, which is often viewed as the first real turning point for reconciliation. Louisiana, though following a very general pattern of cemetery creation and resulting commemoration, does not completely fit into the traditional story of Civil War cemeteries.

Virginia and Louisiana therefore show two different patterns that existed at Civil War cemeteries, one of sharp divisions and delayed reconciliation and one of accommodation and early reconciliation. The history of federal and Confederate burials in the two states shows the differences between the Upper South and Lower South regarding cemetery commemoration, while at the same time presenting a larger picture of the part cemeteries played after the Civil War in both creating division and finally promoting reunion.

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