

ALABAMA CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAGS: HISTORY, PRESERVATION,
AND INTERPRETATION

by
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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on the preservation and interpretation of Alabama Confederate battle flags, mainly those at the Alabama Department of Archives and History. I study the complex history of Confederate flags, along with the now almost singularly known ‘Rebel flag’, in order to better understand modern day preservation and interpretation attempts both at the ADAH and other historic venues across the United States. This thesis explores the society that existed before the Civil War in the southern United States and how that unique culture was eventually tangibly embodied within those flags. I also research the wartime use of Confederate flags to understand what they meant in the context of those times and how they were used as utilitarian military objects in combat, but took on greater meaning and developed in to a source of pride for the men who fought under them. I then explore the post war history of the flags, from their repatriation to archival repositories across the South, to their use by the KKK, and their place in Southern culture. Finally, I briefly explore contemporary issues concerning the flags and how those factors influence their preservation and interpretation. Lastly, I discuss the latest trends at the ADAH concerning the preservation and interpretation of Alabama Confederate flags.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1999, I heard news that two Confederate flags, one belonging to the 10th Alabama Infantry and one belonging to the 44th Alabama Infantry, had been found and that the owner was considering donating them to the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Upon hearing the story of these two flags, my interest was piqued and I intently followed developments concerning their discovery. Shortly after their discovery, I enrolled at MTSU. The flags were of such interest to me that I wanted to do further research on not only those flags, but Confederate flags in general in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, the ADAH. So, after writing one paper for class on that topic, I decided to pursue this as my thesis. The ‘racist’ history of ‘the’ Confederate flag has been more than thoroughly well documented. However, aside from people interested in the Civil War, a study of Confederate flags through the structured format of academia has been absent in the narrative on Confederate flags.

This thesis will explore the origins of Confederate flags, and in particular Confederate flags relating to Alabama and Alabama regiments, their construction and design, their usage in battle, and the story of post war efforts to preserve and display those flags in their rightful context.

CHAPTER I

THE CONFEDERATE FLAG & ITS INTERPRETERS

The preservation and interpretation of Confederate battle flags became part of the historical fabric of the American narrative the moment the Civil War ended. In light of very recent events in modern U.S. society, it is more crucial now than ever to understanding Confederate flags and how they shaped and continue to shape American history, culture, and society. In recent years objects related to the Confederacy have been the subject of derision and division in the country, as many seek to destroy or only partially interpret Confederate flags and other relics and artifacts of Southern culture and history. The story behind the flags is much more diverse than the vast majority of the American public understands. Historians, Civil War buffs, and those with a strong passion for the subject have the led the way to the current understanding of the very essence of Confederate flags.

Historian John Coski in his authoritative study, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, concluded:

Overcoming the Confederate flag, seeking to understand why people revere it, or simply making peace with it are more constructive and realistic ways of dealing with the flag than campaigning to banish it. The Confederate battle flag is an American flag, and some Americans will continue to revere and defend it, especially as others attack it. Above all, the Confederate battle flag represents the most contested chapter in American history, and it is destined to remain a contested symbol.¹

¹ John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 306.

The question this dissertation wishes to address is how to interpret Confederate flags. These flags, as tangible cultural artifacts of American history, they are in fact valuable artifacts with multiple contexts and meanings. The wartime usage of the flags together with their individual fates after the Civil War must be identified and interpreted so their material culture value can be better understood.²

Confederate flags have two histories: the history of the flags as relics of the Civil War and the history of the flags as used by the KKK and other hate groups as a symbol of hate and racism. The former subject almost always receives less attention not just in academia, but also in all aspects of society while the latter indeed receives the most attention in social commentary and political dialogue.

It was upon the cessation of hostilities that the darker history of the Confederate flags emerged as it is known today. To be sure, many Southerners were pursuing respectable methods by which to honor the former Confederacy and Confederate flags. All members of Southern society however did not accept this benevolent mindset concerning the loss of the Civil War and the desire to peacefully rebuild and coexist with the Northern states. The KKK embraced a very different method by which to 'remember' the former Confederacy.

The racist appropriation of the Confederate battle flag shapes African American perceptions of the flag's value. Racial violence towards blacks continued during

² Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 305-306.

Reconstruction and the long decades of the Jim Crow laws.³ Then in the 1950s and 1960s, in particular, those who opposed the end of segregation used the Confederate flag in their public rallies.⁴ It is obviously understandable that almost all African Americans detest and loathe the Confederate flag as to them it represents hate and suffering and slavery.⁵

The most prominent influence concerning the use of Confederate flags is, and for the most part always has been, the practice as carried out by members of the Ku Klux Klan since the 1920s. When this secretive entity began using as its standard numerous Confederate flags, which developed mainly into the use of the Miles pattern flag, the current nuances of 'the Rebel flag' originated into its own distinct story. The history of Confederate flags and the history of the KKK are almost inseparable in modern times.

The Ku Klux Klan formed in Pulaski, Tennessee and consisted of former Confederate soldiers who were attempting to regain the political and social standing they had lost as a result of the war.⁶ The Klan quickly changed and became more racist and violent. As a result many of the members of the original Klan left the

³ Michael Newton, *White Robes and Burning Crosses: History of the Ku Klux Klan from 1866* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company Inc., Publishers, 2014), 26-27.

⁴ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 143.

⁵ B. Brain Foster, "Confederate Monuments are more than reminder of our racist past," *Washington Post*, August 24, 2017.

⁶ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 49.

organization as episodes of violence emerged. Omnipresent with this violence and hatred were the Confederate flags.⁷

As the reorganized KKK developed and gained attention in the media and the press in the 1920s and later, the use of Confederate flags became indistinguishable from the activities of the Klan and other hate groups, particularly during the Civil Rights Movement. Scores of historical documentaries produced since the inception of visual entertainment, beginning with the highly controversial silent film *Birth of a Nation*, highlight the dark history of Confederate flags.⁸ This film combined the extant racism of the early twentieth century with both the realities and myths of the KKK and Confederate flags, which resulted in a somewhat falsely dramatic stylization of these aspects of Southern history.

The modern KKK did not limit itself to only brandishing Confederate flags in its fanatical pursuits. The modern Klan often utilized Confederate flags alongside of the Nazi swastika, the American flag, and certain Christian related flags.⁹

The most obvious history of Confederate flags developed during the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. Succinctly stating the circumstances of that time period, the editors of *The Confederate Image* stated, "Whites resisting the modern civil rights movement sometimes waved Confederate battle flags and marched to the strains of 'Dixie', while some saw in these symbols only the icons of an ignorant and

⁷ Glenn Feldman, *Politics, Society, and the Klan in Alabama, 1915-1949* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1999), 53

⁸ Ibid, 12.

⁹ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 87.

aggressive racism, best forgotten forever."¹⁰ Officials placed Confederate flags on top of capitol buildings throughout the South as a public response to the Civil Rights Movement, a real display of racism for sure.

Author John Coski thoroughly researched and expounded upon the use of Confederate flags in his work *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem*. His examples included the use of the flag by the Klan, flying of the flag on state capitol properties around the South, and the general use of the flag throughout the South from football games to Nascar racing.¹¹ His institution, the ACW, known for decades as the Museum of the Confederacy, in Richmond, Virginia, displays Confederate flags from the Civil War. A recent newspaper review sums up the museum's approach:

When people see this flag, this is what they think of as the Confederate flag," said the exhibit's curator, Cathy Wright. "But we wanted to explain that there really are a plethora of patterns and designs." To that end, the next gallery over features a flag fashioned from a fringed burgundy shawl. On display there, as well, are samples of what Mr. Coski calls "endless kitsch"—a comic book showing a black woman wearing a Confederate flag uniform, a pair of flag shorts, a photograph of RuPaul, the drag queen, in a long sequined flag gown.¹²

Does this interpretation appropriately address the subject? The display of Confederate battle flags captured at Gettysburg placed beside images of RuPaul in a Confederate drag queen dress may well disgust visitors with Confederate veteran

¹⁰ Mark E. Neely Jr., Harold Holzer, and Gabor S. Boritt, *The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 3.

¹¹ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, viii.

¹² "Even in Museums, Sounds of Battle over Confederate Flag Are Heard," *New York Times*, March 26, 2018.

ancestors rather than provoking civil dialogue or reflection. As one former patron of the American Civil War Center observed, people donated artifacts and flags to be preserved with dignity, not to be displayed in such a divisive manner.¹³

At the end of the war, in both conscious and unconscious attempts to rekindle former cultural activities, Southerners again actively sought out this visual representation of the South. During the years of Reconstruction, Confederate flags and emblems were banned from public display. Only later did the flags begin to emerge at veteran's reunions and similar social gatherings. After the turn of the century, with the War Dept's return of the flags to the South, Southerners again utilized Confederate flags as symbols of regional pride.¹⁴ This sense of pride has even carried over in to other wars in which the United States has taken part.

A fact that many Americans do not know, or realize, is that the Confederate flag has been carried in other American wars besides the Civil War. Soldiers carried Confederate flags, particularly the Miles pattern "rebel flag", into battle in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and even Iraq and Afghanistan.¹⁵ Soldiers that hailed from the South often received favorable accolades from their enemies, the latter group often referring to the flag. German soldiers and Vietnamese communists often remarked that soldiers under the Confederate flag were fierce adversaries and would fight harder

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 107.

¹⁵ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, centerpiece and 379.

than other troops; indeed the first flag Marines raised on Okinawa was a Confederate flag.¹⁶

The use of Confederate flags by the KKK is now unfortunately the predominant conception most Americans have about the flags. Speaking of the Confederate flag and its use by white supremacist groups, author William C. Davis states, “Those who cheapen it by putting it on underwear and license plates and flying it at white supremacist rallies do the flag and those who followed it a disservice.”¹⁷ The wartime history of the flags suffers and is often completely drowned out along with other historical aspects of the flags, most importantly their use and actual meaning during the war. Understanding that story, beginning with the circumstances as to how the flags originated, and their post war history, leading in to modern times, this work looks to finally address that complete story.

Secondary sources that shape my understanding of the Confederate flags include for example, the authoritative *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee* by historian and flag expert Howard Michael Madaus; *Battle Flags of Texans in the Confederacy* by Alan K. Sumrall; *Confederate Battle Flags in the Collection of the Old State House, A Museum of Arkansas History* by Lucy Robinson; *Confederate Flags in the Georgia State Capital Collection* by members of the Georgia Historical Society; a forthcoming work on Tennessee flags by Sheila

¹⁶ Greg Grandin, “What Was the Confederate Flag Doing in Cuba, Vietnam, and Iraq?,” *The Nation*, July 7, 2015.

¹⁷ William C. Davis, *The Cause Lost. Myths and Realities of the Confederacy* (Wichita, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1996), 190.

Green; *The Flags of the Confederacy* by Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr.; *Flags of the Civil War* by Philip Katcher, *The Confederate Battle Flag* by author John Coski, and pertinent to Alabama, the benchmark work *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection at the Alabama Department of Archives and History* by historian and Alabama Confederate flag expert Robert B. Bradley, and lastly *The Flags of Civil War Alabama* by Glenn Dedmond.

These historians, for the most part, believe that Confederate flags are largely misunderstood and that the flags have a rich history beyond their connection with racism. Beyond any doubt, historian Howard Madaus offers the most thorough research and conjecture into the history of the Confederate flags of the Army of Tennessee, including information on their production, use, capture, and subsequent fate.¹⁸ Madaus's work provides a rich collection of information for Confederate flag enthusiasts and to the history of the Army of Tennessee. The work contains a great deal of research on Alabama Confederate flags, but the book has been out of print for some time and is difficult to obtain. The works of Dedmond, Katcher, and Cannon offer a more visual exposure to the flags with heavy illustrations in their works and less text than that of Madaus.

These studies, particularly those by historians Madaus and Bradley, provide a useful foundation on the making of and regimental contexts for Confederate flag history. Most of these works do not necessarily contain a thesis, but work more to

¹⁸ Howard Michael Madaus, *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee* (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1976).

disseminate basic information about the flags concerning size specifications, dates of production, capture, and similar facts, which is a tremendous undertaking itself.

The preeminent work of Alabama Department of Archives and History curator and historian Robert Bradley is a good departure point for my own study on Alabama related Confederate flags. Until his retirement, Bradley and his colleague Bob Cason constantly added new stories and information to *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection at the Alabama Department of Archives and History*.¹⁹ To counter the outdated nature of the work, the ADAH maintains a website with information on the flags. This compilation of facts represents much of the latest information about Alabama Confederate flags. In developing the text for the published book and the ADAH website, Bradley utilizes in many instances photographs of the original flag under question, along with the details of its manufacture, use, capture, and heavily its history after the war, focusing on the return of the flags to Alabama. The work of Glenn Dedmond is basically a repetition of the work of Bradley, and does not necessarily add any new information, although it is a valuable resource.²⁰

With such a multitude of voices being lent to the dialogue about Confederate flags, it becomes rapidly apparent that there will probably never be anything even close to consensus within the American public concerning these flags. Within this spectrum are

¹⁹ Robert Bradley, *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection at the Alabama Department of Archives and History* (Np. Nd.), iii.

²⁰ Glenn Dedmond. *The Flags of Civil War Alabama* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company. 2001).

people who vehemently believe that anything Confederate should be erased from public view. Most people will agree, slavery and the KKK were wrong and a blight to the country. On the other end of the spectrum are people who wave and brandish the flag out of a sense of pride without due consideration of how other people view the flag. Part of the possible reasoning behind this mentality was summed up by author Jerry Adler, stating, “For many ordinary white Southerners, the Civil War has an immediacy and reality that citizens in other parts of the country just don’t share.”²¹

In reference to the longevity of the Civil War, the Confederacy, and by default Confederate flags and the resulting influence on society, author Frank Vandiver stated, “They fought hard enough to exhaust their nascent nation, heroically enough to enlist against them the fiercest efforts of the United States, and honorably enough to linger on in legend for a hundred years.”²² The current sentiments associated with Confederate flags are a result of an amalgamation of events over time and the flags now represent anything from slavery, to the Old South, to relics of the Civil War, to the KKK and skinheads, to the Lost Cause, and to the Southern way of life in general.

As author Robert Bonner states in *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South*,

Recent Confederate flag controversies say something important about the times in which we live. They remind us that the stubborn legacies of race and region still matter in the contemporary South, even as they have moved into the realm of cultural memory. This interest in how the past is remembered is a tribute to the success of the Civil Rights movement in discrediting overt racism in the present. Flags have become flashpoints in the contemporary South because of current

²¹ Jerry Adler, “Revisiting the Civil War,” *Newsweek*, October 8, 1990, 63.

²² Frank E. Vandiver, *Their Tattered Flags* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1970), 1.

tensions that make two sharply opposed visions of a regional heritage more relevant than ever.²³

One of the ugly, modern sparks that once again brought about heated debate about Confederate flags was precipitated when Dylan Roof entered the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina on 17 June 2015 and began shooting, killing nine people and wounding three others. Upon investigation photos were found of Roof where in one photograph he held an American flag, and in another photograph he held a Confederate flag. These outrageous images renewed demands for Confederate flags and monuments to be removed from public view, particularly on state properties. Rapidly, and without discussion, monuments were removed from across the South. Likewise across the South a wave of vandalism struck as Confederate monuments were spray painted and broken and cemetery grave markers were likewise pushed over and broken.

The State of Alabama previously flew the Miles pattern Confederate flag above the capitol building in Montgomery. Opposition to this practice by the NAACP and similar groups eventually led to the removal of the “rebel flag”, although this action took place amidst heavy opposition from pro-flag supporters, including members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and related groups.²⁴ The flag was, most would agree rightfully, moved from atop the capitol building to a Confederate monument beside the capitol. At the time this change seemed like a sensible agreement and proper consensus on the issue.

²³ Robert. E. Bonner, *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1.

²⁴ Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag*, 239.

After the violence in Charleston, however, Alabama officials suddenly removed the flag from the monument.²⁵

The Miles pattern Confederate flag also was previously displayed inside the Alabama House of Representatives in the Alabama Capitol building in Montgomery. This practice ended however after the protest from anti-flag groups and even some politicians led to the removal of the flag, which was replaced by the Confederate First National flag. This event did not come about because of a heated vote, but rather because of the decision of one man. According to Birmingham News staff writer Michael Sznajderman, “House Clerk Greg Pappas is responsible for the ‘care, custody, and control’ of the House Chambers, and as such he did not require approval to change out the flag.”²⁶ Pappas simply removed the Confederate Battle Flag and replaced it with the Confederate First National flag.

Issues concerning Confederate flags, or more specifically what people consider ‘the’ Confederate flag, largely remain at a tense impasse in modern times, with occasional passionately heated engagements usually following a tragic event that is, rightly or not, associated with Confederate flags. It would seem that a national dialogue, understanding, and consensus must be reached, but it is impossible to say whether that will take place or not. In order to at least somewhat have a better understanding of all viewpoints in this debate, a better understanding of Confederate flags, their use in the

²⁵ “Alabama governor has Confederate flag removed from state Capitol grounds,” *Washington Post*, June 24, 2015.

²⁶ Michael Sznajderman, “Rebel Flag Retreats: House replaces controversial battle banner,” *The Birmingham News*, Friday, March 5, 1999, 2a.

war, and what they actually meant to the men and women of the South at the time is necessary. As author Robert Penn Warren philosophically stated about the war,

The Civil War is our only 'felt' history-history lived in the national imagination. This is not to say that the War is always, and by all men, felt in the same way. Quite the contrary. But this fact is an index to the complexity, depth, and fundamental significance of the event. It is an overwhelming and vital image of human, and national, experience.²⁷

Under the Confederate flags over half a million people fought and died, friendships and allegiances were shattered, race relations have suffered in incomprehensible and somewhat unchangeable ways, and the history of the American people has been shaped. As stated by Jerry Adler, "There never is a last word on the Civil War as we all live eternally in its shadow, as well as its light, all of us, white and black, North and South."²⁸

²⁷ Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 4.

²⁸ Jerry Adler, "Revisiting the Civil War," *Newsweek*, October 8, 1990, 64.

CHAPTER II SOUTHERNERS AND THEIR FLAGS

The diverse people inhabiting the South have utilized symbols such as flags, signs, certain shapes, and mottos to represent themselves, and their values. According to author Brian Barker, "The significance of symbolism goes right to the roots of human society, with the Greek word for symbol being derived from a term meaning the bringing-together; the name, sign, representative object or totem which united the members of a family, tribe, or a city state."¹

Many historians have attempted to associate Confederate flags with Southern aristocracy in both antebellum and modern times, while others have tried to associate it with Celtic roots and Southern military tradition.² Indeed, the "Emerald Guards", which became Company I of the 8th Alabama Infantry, carried a green flag on which was painted a harp encircled by a wreath of shamrocks and the Celtic war cries 'erin go bragh' and 'faugh a ballagh'; on the other side of the flag was the First National flag of the Confederacy, and a full length figure of George Washington in the center.³ In the flag of Company I of the 8th Alabama Infantry, soldiers paid homage to their ethnic backgrounds at the same time showing their patriotism. This flag no longer exists, but Appendix C of this work contains a sampling of the Confederate flags housed at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Historian Grady McWhiney has argued that Celtic military characteristics existed in the South well before the American Revolution. Celtic warriors were known as fierce

¹ Brian Barker, *The Symbols of Sovereignty* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979), 9.

² Barry Vann, *Rediscovering the South's Celtic Heritage* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Overmountain Press, 2004), 12.

³ Glenn Dedmond, *The Flags of Civil War Alabama* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 2001), 52.

fighters and often associated war with family or clan honor. So in the South during the Civil War, and closely associated with the deepest aspects of manhood in Victorian times, Southern men viewed duels, fighting, and most any type of combat as highly reflective of themselves, their families, and their honor.⁴

Celtic countries such as Ireland, Wales, and Scotland have long standing traditions as being home to a warrior class of people. Author Bertram Wyatt-Brown asserts the similarity that, "Bloodthirsty, lengthy feuds-revenge fights among families that were so prevalent in early Celtic and Germanic tribes-were also likely consequences of brawls and killings among American hill-country yeomen in the South."⁵

Dueling allowed men to settle disputes on "the field of honor" as it came to be known. Often times, duels resulted as men would disagree and come to the conclusion that their reputation and honor had been brought into question.⁶ Being illegal in many areas, most duels took place in remote locations to avoid detection. Even though strangely ironic, the violent nature of dueling followed a strict set of rules and guidelines that again reflected upon the participants. This same type of chivalry emerged during the Civil War as carrying the flags or the capture of a flag became a subject of pride and honor.

The relationship between the act of dueling and Confederate flags lies in the fact that both were held in high esteem as the quintessential essence of honor, respect, and many other facets of Southern culture.

⁴ Ibid, 148.

⁵ Bertram-Wyatt Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 143.

⁶ McWhiney, *Cracker Culture*, 156.

Issues concerning honor, family, gentility, and similar factors almost completely pivoted upon class structure. Author Bertram-Wyatt Brown argues, "Antebellum Southern society produced more men of sensitivity, intelligence, and education than positions of trust and honor for them to occupy."⁷ Yet, as Wyatt Brown admits, crude mannerisms and the callous existence of a strict social order did exist which created part of the distinctive disposition of Southern culture.

Outsiders viewed Southerners as being either elegant, refined, and of high standing, or oppositely viewed as barbaric, ill-mannered, lower class citizens. Not only color, but also class segregated most social activities as well.⁸ The irony of the situation is that during the Civil War and to a great extent these two groups both came together and devoted themselves to the same banner and were willing to die for one another. This connection speaks to the camaraderie developed in wartime, but it also alludes to the long-standing beliefs in Southern society. According to author David L. Carlton in *The South as an American Problem*,

Although peculiar institutions of race relations have generally been seen as basic to the 'southern way of life,' numerous other traits have also been offered as evidence of southern uniqueness: persistent poverty, the end mance traditional behaviors, beliefs and values; a deep political and social conservatism.⁹

Southerners often viewed themselves as defenders of the Revolution. Historian John Resch stated, "Orators honored citizen-soldiers' as a 'band' of the people, and as 'hardy

⁷ Bertram-Wyatt Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 190.

⁸ Lawrence R. Samuel, *The American Middle Class: A Cultural History* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), viii.

⁹ Larry J. Griffin, and Don H. Doyle, editors, *The South as an American Problem* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1995), 34.

yeomen' who endured a 'painful' struggle against great odds to defeat a superior force."¹⁰

This same type of convincing and compelling discourse resurfaced in the South prior to the Civil War as zealous speakers attempted to unite the people of the South under a common cause.

For many of the white Southern men of fighting age during the Civil War the American Revolution and their forefathers served as their main association with war and their role models, respectively. Many soldiers on both sides during the war had fathers or grandfathers that fought during the Revolution. Likewise many men destined to be generals during the Civil War attained their training under the auspices of the lessons learned during the Revolution and the War of 1812. After these wars, many aspects of American and Southern society began to change at a rapid pace.

Southern women had vastly fewer rights than men during this time, yet the ideal of 'womanhood', especially in the South, was highly revered.¹¹ Women greatly influenced the emergence of the flags in a number of different ways. They took on the responsibility of appropriating and making flags, often with material taken from their own homes and clothes

Women often made state flags as well as the regimental battle flags behind which their husbands, fathers, and brothers fought and died.¹² Indeed they made many flags using wedding dresses, as the silk dresses made very handsome flags. Not all Southern women were keen about the design of the First National Flag however, and some even moved to get

¹⁰ John Resch, *Suffering Soldiers: Revolutionary War Veterans, Moral Sentiment, and Political Culture in the Early Republic* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 3.

¹¹ Bertram Wyatt-Brown. *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press. 2007), 234.

¹² Deborah A. Deacon, and Paula E. Calvin, *War Imagery in Women's Textiles: An International Study of Weaving, Knitting, Sewing, Quilting, Rug Making, and other fabric arts* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc. 2014), 49.

the design changed. Historian Caroline E. Janney documented this important role from the outset of fighting.

A month after the first major battle of the war at Manassas, another group of Fredericksburg's women organized the city's second patriotic society. Acting on the suggestion of Captain Matthew Fontaine Maury, the women held a meeting on August 21 to discuss whether a new flag should be adopted by the Confederate states. Calling themselves simply the Ladies of Fredericksburg, they elected Betty Maury president and Mrs. William T. Hart secretary. Maury's cousin, Ellen Mercer Herndon, wrote the petition to Congress citing their objections to the "Bars and Stars", as they called it, on the grounds that it was an ugly, "servile imitation" of the U.S. flag that conveyed "no idea of principle to the eye of the stranger or the citizen of our nation." Instead, the women suggested that the national flag be a "Southern Cross" upon an "azure field".¹³

This petition, and similar petitions, no doubt played at least some role in the adoption of the Second National Flag. The flags themselves came to represent the women of the South and the cultural values and beliefs of the South, which were largely centered on women and womanhood. The honor associated with the sexuality of Southern women and Southern womanhood was a subject unsurpassed by most other beliefs in Southern society.¹⁴

Though not necessarily intentional, the flags served as a medium by which the intangible became tangible. The chain of allegiance in the minds of many Americans in the time before the Civil War rested first with family, and then state, and devotion to country last. Thus many Southerners chose loyalty to their state as other states began seceding. Devotion to state and family went from being an indescribable belief or state of being to that of a tangible object in the form of flags. Flags with mottos such as "Noli Me Tangere", Latin for "Touch Me Not", saw widespread use during the Revolution, and almost one

¹³ Caroline E. Janney. *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press. 2008), 21.

¹⁴ Jennifer Ann Newman Trevino, "The Aggressions of the North Can Be Borne No Longer": White Alabamian Women during the Secession Crisis and Outbreak of War," *The Yellowhammer War: The Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama*, Kenneth W. Noe, Editor (Tuscaloosa: University Alabama Press, 2013), 36.

hundred years later Southerners began using this same motto, along with similar ones, in the attempt to form their own country.¹⁵ Indeed, the Wilcox True Blues of the 1st Alabama Infantry used this motto on one of their flags, which can be seen in Appendix C Figure 4. Many Southerners devoutly supported first their families, then their states, and lastly their country. This simple fact later influenced such men as Robert E. Lee to choose between the government of the United States and family and state.¹⁶

The divisive nature of Confederate flags began before James W. Jackson fired the first shot of the Civil War. Jackson, a storekeeper in Virginia, shot Colonel Elmer Ellsworth after Ellsworth removed a First National Confederate flag from atop his store in the Marshall House.¹⁷ This incident was for many the first exposure to any form of a Confederate flag. Derogatory comments and the meanings of the flags during the war simply referred to the flag as a dirty emblem of rebellion, thus the term 'Rebel flag' came into use.

Soldiers and the flag themselves postulated that devotion to a piece of cloth seemed somewhat strange. According to historian Richard Rollins, "Private Carlton McCarthy concluded that the Southern soldier's feelings about his flag, the war and his role in it were essentially irrational, though he did not use that word."¹⁸ This honest statement by a

¹⁵ Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr. *The Flags of the Confederacy: An Illustrated History* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 1997), 38.

¹⁶ Michael Fellman, *The Making of Robert E. Lee* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 87.

¹⁷ Robert E. Bonner. *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 71.

¹⁸ Richard Rollins. *"The Damned Red Flags of the Rebellion": The Confederate Battle Flag at Gettysburg* (Redondo Beach, CA: Rank and File Publications, 1997), 4.

Confederate soldier amplifies the assorted gamut of ideology extant in the South before and during the war.

As the Civil War progressed the bond between Confederate soldiers and their flags grew exponentially, expounding upon the early passion with which these people adopted Confederate flags. Indeed the relationship between the soldiers and the flags grew into the realm of legend and folklore.

Upon looking at the subject in detail, it is obviously evident that the themes surrounding Confederate flags involve a host of abstract ideas intermingled with reality, folklore, and legend, with historians and museum staff still struggling with the subject in modern times.¹⁹

The Civil War nullified many of the beliefs and cultural practices in existence in the South. As asserted by author Guion Johnson, "The triumph of the federal government automatically established the de facto status of that cluster of ideologies which shall be referred to loosely as representing the point of view of the North and the de facto destruction of those ideologies typical of the South."²⁰ The North and South adhered to the same type of democratic, capitalist government prior to the war, but it was there that the similarities between these two regions ended.

Despite the outcome of the Civil War, Confederate ideology remained strong in Southern culture. Historian Emory Thomas admitted: "The ante bellum South was 'different;' Southerners by 1860 had developed a way of life or lifestyle which diverged

¹⁹ Kevin M. Levin, editor, *Interpreting the Civil War at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 11.

²⁰ Fletcher Melvin Green, ed. *Essays in Southern History* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1949), 124.

from the American mainstream.”²¹ Southern identity remained important and added greatly to the wartime dedication to Confederate flags. Historian Bruce Collins called it “Southernism”. He explained:

Social bonding forged by a particular and successful historical experience aggressive race pride, economic well-being physical mobility, open yet unobtrusive government, common rituals, religion, and a strong regard for the ideals of family and respectability, gave substance to 'Southernism'.²²

Confederate flags and the emotion associated with them in the 1860s and beyond arose due to extant beliefs long in place in Southern society. Only by extrapolating information from a multitude of different sources can the bizarre and fierce loyalty to flags and other emblems come to be understood.

²¹ Harry P. Owens, and James J. Cooke, eds. *The Old South in the Crucible of War*, 6.

²² Bruce Collins. *White Society in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Longman Group Limited, 1985), 182.

Chapter III

CONFEDERATE FLAGS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

According to noted flag Historian Michael Madaus, “The erroneous notion of a single Confederate ‘battle flag’ is rooted in two misconceptions—one a misunderstanding of the prerogatives of field commanders in the chain of command during the war, and the other a case of disproportionate publicity”.¹ Unfortunately, most lay people simply do not realize how many flags were used during the war by the Confederacy. Indeed, many people are shocked, hesitant, and skeptical when they are told a flag is a Confederate flag when it does not resemble the Miles Pattern ‘rebel’ flag.

As historians Dave Powell and Greg Biggs state, “There were probably as many as eight different patterns of flag carried as Confederate battle flags, and most of them looked nothing like what we now call ‘the’ battle flag. And that doesn’t even count the minor variants within the larger pattern types.”²

In the early days of the war, some Confederate units, including the 2nd Alabama Infantry, carried the United States flag as their company flag.³ Appendix C Figure 5 displays the flag of the 2nd Alabama Infantry, with the only difference in it and a standard United States flag being the lack of stars, and the addition of words, in the blue canton of the flag. Disagreement about this practice of using the United States flag,

¹ Howard Michael Madaus, *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee* (Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1976), 7.

² Dave Powell & Greg Biggs. *Flags, flags, and more flags: A Confederate Odyssey*, <https://chickamaugablog.wordpress.com/2016/04/23/flags-flags-and-more-flags-a-confederate-odyssey/>

³ <http://www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/flags/013014.html>

both on and off the battlefield, soon forced Southern leaders to amend the situation and to seek an appropriate flag for use by the Confederacy.

Alongside the use of variations of the United States flag, newly formed companies would use elaborate company flags. Most of these flags were made out of the best materials, painted by skilled artisans, and were often very heavy. Most of these flags never saw use on the battlefield as they were often so large as to be cumbersome and therefore they were sent home early in the war.⁴ And while these company flags only represented individual companies, the fledgling Confederacy still needed a National Flag.

At the outset of the Civil War, the Confederate Congress established a Flag Committee to review proposed flag designs for the fledgling Confederacy. According to vexillologist Devereaux Cannon, “The Committee received hundreds of designs for flags which were submitted to it by citizens from all parts of the country, and even citizens of states still among the United States sent in proposals.”⁵ William Porcher Miles served as the chairman for the committee, and he himself submitted designs for review. Though not accepted in 1861, the Miles pattern, also known as the Southern Cross, saw service later in the war, and became the flag most easily identified as being a Confederate banner or rebel flag. Indeed, when most people today think of “the” Confederate flag, it is the Miles pattern flag to which they refer.

⁴ Robert Bradley. “Alabama’s Civil War Flags: Tattered Banners,” *Alabama Heritage*, Number 96, Spring 2010. 17.

⁵ Devereaux Cannon, *The Flags of the Confederacy* (Memphis, TN: St. Lukes Press, 1988), 7.

In the end, the committee accepted what became known as the First National Flag, or the Stars and Bars. The committee chose the flag in part because of its similarity to the United States flag, which many people still favored and wanted to keep as the banner of the Confederate States of America, even this far into the selection process. The First National flag included a blue square with eleven to thirteen stars in the upper left hand corner, called the canton, and the field consisted of two horizontal red stripes split by a single white stripe.

For visual clarity, Appendix C Figure 9 displays two versions of the first National Confederate Flag, with its obviously similarity to the U. S. flag. Even though many Southerners held no ill will towards the U.S. flag, and indeed did not mind to continue its use, others were adamantly opposed to even suggestions that the U.S. flag and the Confederate First National Flag looked similar. Some men, such as Johnson J. Hooper, editor of the *Montgomery Evening Mail*, even opposed particular verbiage in describing the Stars and Bars. As pointed out in *Tattered Banners*,

Johnson J. Hooper declared, ‘We protest against the word stripes as applied to the broad bars of the confederacy. The word is quite appropriate as applied to the Yankee ensign or a barber’s pole: but it does not correctly describe the red and white divisions of the flag of the Confederate States.’⁶

It is unclear, even to this day, exactly who designed the Stars and Bars. According to vexillologist Devereaux Cannon, “The claimants to the honor were Nicola Marschall, a Prussian artist who lived in Montgomery, Alabama, and Orren Randolph Smith of North

⁶ Robert Bradley. “Alabama’s Civil War Flags; Tattered Banners,” *Alabama Heritage Magazine*, Number 96, Spring 2010. 16.

Carolina.”⁷ Many historians tend to believe that the proper title belongs to Nicola Marschall, though no concrete evidence exists at the present time.⁸

The Confederate government only used three flags to represent the Confederate States of America during the course of the war. Use of the Stars and Stripes ended quickly as this caused massive confusion on the battlefield in telling friend from foe and unfortunately resulted in what is referred to as friendly fire in modern military parlance. As author Edward Cunningham relates, at the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee, a Confederate soldier tentatively identified as Aaron V. Vertner was riding towards the 4th Louisiana Infantry.⁹ Vertner was wearing a Federal kepi and had a captured U.S. flag draped around his body. Seeing the man approaching, and seeing the U.S. flag, the 4th Louisiana fired, killing him, with some of the bullets landing among the 13th Arkansas Infantry CS who were positioned in Lost Field, which was located behind the oncoming horseman.¹⁰ This friendly fire incident resulted in casualties in the 13th Arkansas, who, thinking they were under attack, actually returned fire on the 4th Louisiana before officers realized what was going on and put an end to the situation. Ironically, on 27 March 1862, just a week before the Battle of Shiloh, Confederate General Braxton Bragg had ordered that officers under his command were to, basically, walk around with the flags making a show of all the different flags in use, so that friend from foe might be identified.¹¹

⁷ Ibid, 10.

⁸ Ibid, 15.

⁹ O. Edward Cunningham, Gary Joiner, and Tim Smith. *Shiloh and the Western Campaign of 1862* (New York, NY: Savas Beatie, 2009), 188.

¹⁰ Ibid. 188.

¹¹ Stuart Salling. *Louisianians in the Western Confederacy: The Adams-Gibson Brigade in the Civil War* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. 2010), 164.

It was reported that some Federal units, being approached by unknown soldiers, held their fire, thinking that the flag they saw being carried by the oncoming soldiers was a U.S. flag, when in actuality it was a Confederate First National flag. From a distance, or in the absence of wind to keep the flag aloft and fully visibly, there was indeed an even stronger resemblance between the U.S. flag and the C.S. First National flag.¹² Confederate units continued to use First National Flags in the field for some time however.

The Second National flag incorporated the Miles Pattern battle flag in the canton, with the remainder of the field being white in color. This flag, in turn, created a new problem; it was easily mistaken for a flag of truce. Appendix C Figure 1 displays the Second National Flag and its obvious resemblance to a flag of truce. The first official use of the Second National flag occurred upon the death of Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson in 1863. According to historian Philip Katcher, “It was first used to cover the coffin of the beloved Lt. Gen. Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson, who had been badly wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville on 2 May and died of pneumonia on 10 May 1863.”¹³ The Second National flag also became known as the Jackson Flag or the Stainless Banner.

Because the Second National flag looked so similar to a flag of truce, the Flag Committee soon approved the Third National Flag. The Third National Flag was an exact copy of the Second National, but with a red stripe added to the end, or edge, of the flag to distinguish it from a flag of truce. Appendix C Figure 1 illustrates an example of

¹² Bradley, “*Alabama’s Civil War Flags: Tattered Banners,*” 19.

¹³ Philip Katcher, *Flags of the Civil War* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Osprey Publishing, 2000), 16.

the Third National Flag with the new red stripe addition. This banner was only utilized for a short period of time before the war ended. These three flags represented the Confederate government, but Confederate military forces also carried them in the field, but the soldiers also carried other flags in addition to the official government flags.

Before joining Confederate service, many volunteer regiments carried flags with Latin mottoes, and bore no resemblance to other standard battle flags or to official Confederate flags.¹⁴ This difference in flag designs had an influence on the battlefield because commanders often did not recognize individual unit flags as belonging to their own troops, thus creating confusion. Though not necessarily confirmed of creating any confusion, the flag of the Wilcox True Blues, Co. I-K, 1st Alabama Infantry CS is an example of the uniqueness of many Confederate flags.¹⁵ Likewise, the flag of the 1st Alabama Infantry holds a strong material culture history because the story of its very production, and the story of its use, and ultimate fate, have been documented.

This flag was made from the blue silk dress of Miss Adele Robbins of Canton Bend and was painted by Samuel Tepper. It was presented to the company prior to their departure for Pensacola, Florida in February 1861. The regiment was captured at Island No. 10, in April 1862 and the flag was taken from a private home in Tiptonville, Tennessee near there. The flag was discovered in Lansing, Michigan in 1917 by Miss Maude McWilliams who was visiting her sister. At that time, the flag was being displayed at the capitol. Miss McWilliams then notified her father, Mr. Richard Ervin McWilliams of Camden, who had served with the True Blues. Through the efforts of Mr. McWilliams, the flag was returned to him by permission of the Board of Governors of the State of Michigan and the Michigan Grand Army of the Republic. The letter granting permission is dated September 16, 1920. Dr. Owen, Director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History, had previously requested the return of the flag without success. McWilliams' daughter presented the flag to the Department on May 7, 1921.¹⁶

¹⁴ Bradley, "*Alabama Confederate Flags: Tattered Banners*," 17.

¹⁵ <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/011.html>

¹⁶ Ibid.

As a result of the culmination of different factors, including the lack of Confederate First National flags, and due to the wide variety of local flags carried by individual units, some senior military officers attempted to impose regulations. General Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard and General Joseph E. Johnston, for example, wanted the display and use of one standard flag for the forces under their respective commands.¹⁷

In the spring of 1862, the standard Confederate battle flag, originally designed by William Porcher Miles and submitted to the Flag Committee to represent the Confederate States, came into wider use. Beauregard and Johnston altered the flag slightly and the square shaped banner became known as the “rebel flag” in popular parlance.¹⁸ The square shaped Miles Pattern flag first saw service in the Army of Northern Virginia. This flag, also known as the St. Andrew’s Cross, consisted of two blue stripes running diagonally on which white stars were placed, and this combination lay across a red field. Several flags in Appendix C Figure 2 represents the Miles pattern battle flag, often referred to as ‘the’ rebel flag.

As the evolution of this flag occurred, necessity dictated that a first, second, and third issue bunting be distributed. These flags were almost identical, saving only minor changes in material and dye color due to shortages of adequate resources in the South, including in Alabama by late in the war.¹⁹ Some flags, especially those issue to troops carried to the field, were more pink than red in color due to inferior quality dyes. Once the Confederate Congress adopted the First National flag, and with units in the field requiring flags, regardless of color quality, the task of producing these banners in large quantities emerged.

¹⁷ Salling, *Louisianians in the Western Confederacy*, 164.

¹⁸ William S. Connery, “Birthplace of the Confederate Battle Flag,” *Civil War in Northern Virginia 1861* (Charleston, SC: The History Press. 2011), Para 3.

¹⁹ Andrew F. Smith, *Starving the South: How the North Won the Civil War* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2011), 170.

Pursuant to this demand respected textile manufacturers, government clothing depots, and ladies aid societies all worked feverishly to produce flags for use by the Confederate armies in the field. Women throughout the South raised money to procure the services of various textile manufacturers from both the North and South to produce flags for local units. According to Craig Haffner, “Contrary to popular belief, most of these flags were not the handiwork of women left behind, but rather they were banners finely crafted by contractors as respected as Tiffany and Company of New York.”²⁰

As noted flag Historian Greg Biggs points out, when Gosport Naval Yard in Norfolk, Virginia surrendered to Confederate forces in 1861, the soldiers captured a large stock of imported wool bunting that and ended up as future Confederate naval flags and army battle flags.²¹

As the war progressed, and the use of the Miles pattern flag became prevalent, indeed more and more flags were professionally produced. Some banners, such as two flags belonging to the 10th Alabama Infantry and the 44th Alabama Infantry Regiments, were made out of state and never actually even entered the State of Alabama. These two flags, displayed in Appendix C Figures 10 and 11, respectively, were manufactured at the Richmond Clothing Depot in 1862 and went directly to Virginia for service.²²

The issue of flags to new regiments was a grand affair attended by large crowds with politicians giving passionate speeches to attentive listeners. Pomp and circumstance marked the ceremonies in which newly formed units received their flags.

²⁰ Craig Hauffner, *Banners of Glory*, Civil War Journal (New York, NY: A&E, 1993)

²¹ Greg Biggs, <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/us-csan.html>

²² <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/120124.html>

On the occasion of the receipt of a flag by the 18th Mississippi Infantry, an unknown orator stated,

We prize this flag, ladies, not so much for its intrinsic worth, but the sake of those who gave it, and while it floats o're us, fauned by the passing breeze, its every fold shall tell, in terms more eloquent than tongues can speak, of the fair form that bent over it and the bright eyes that followed the fingers as they plied the very stitch; and every thread to chant the praise of woman's virtue and woman's worth.²³

These flag ceremonies would often mark the last time soldiers, and in many cases the flags themselves, would ever return home as soldiers made their way to the front. Generals P. G. T. Beauregard and Gen. Joseph Johnston managed to adequately and uniformly equip the Army of Northern Virginia, for the most part, with similar flags. Other Confederate forces still maintained huge differences in the types of flags they carried.

In the spring of 1862, General P. G. T. Beauregard came to the Western theater of the war and served with General Albert Sidney Johnston. When Johnston was killed at the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee, Beauregard took command of the Confederate Army of the Mississippi. As he and Gen. Joseph E. Johnson had done to the Army of Northern Virginia, Beauregard attempted to impose upon his soldiers similar flag regulations.

According to the editor of *Echoes of Glory*, Henry Woodhead, "The flags were contracted with a local sail maker, one H. Cassidy, whose inspiration for the design came from a silk standard that the 5th Company, Washington Artillery of New Orleans, received from its fellow companies serving in Virginia".²⁴ Cassidy, based in New Orleans, produced both a square and a rectangular flag, both of which saw service in the Army of Tennessee.

²³ Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers 1989), 22.

²⁴ Henry Woodhead, ed, *Echoes of Glory: Arms and Equipment of the Confederacy* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1998), 226.

Confederate forces in the Army of Tennessee used as many variations of flags as their counterparts in the Army of Northern Virginia. One flag of the 18th Alabama Infantry that was made by H. Cassidy and used at the Battle of Shiloh currently resides at ADAH and can be seen in Appendix C Figure 21.

Strangely, even by 1862 some Federal soldiers had never even seen any version of a Confederate flag, be it the Miles Pattern, the Hardee Pattern, or what have you. Speaking about action at the Battle of Shiloh on 6 and 7 April 1862, as stated by Leander Stillwell of the 61st Illinois Infantry, Miller's brigade, Prentiss' division, in *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Shiloh*,

I saw men in gray and brown clothes, with trailed muskets, running through the camp on our right, and I saw something else too, that sent a chill all through me. It was a kind of flag I had never seen before. It was a gaudy sort of thing, with red bars. It flashed over me in a second that that thing was a Rebel flag.²⁵

Another flag now at the ADAH and that was carried at Shiloh was that of the Pike Grays, Company I, 22nd Alabama Infantry and which is displayed in Appendix C Figure 22. The Army of Tennessee's wide array of flags meant that many were not frequently recognized as Confederate flags. Most Confederate flags, coming from different sources, had slight differences, while many display the artistic license of the maker. Many units refused to give up their old flags and were permitted to continue to carry those old ones. These different flags included the Hardee Pattern Flag, the Polk's Corps Flag, the Van Dorn Pattern Flag and a few others. One of those unique flags belonged to the 22nd Alabama Infantry and was

²⁵ David R. Logsdon, ed., *Eyewitnesses at the Battle of Shiloh* (Lyles, Tennessee: Kettle Mills Press, 2011), 20.

captured at the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia in September 1863, as seen in Appendix C Figure 17.

The Hardee Pattern Flag utilized a simple blue field with a white moon in the middle, with this pattern surrounded by a white border. Appendix C contains numerous examples of the Hardee Pattern Battle flag, with its distinct difference from the “rebel flag.” The Polk Corp flag utilized one red stripe running vertically and one running horizontally. These two red stripes dissected the flag in the middle with white stars adorning them, and this configuration rested on a blue field. The Van Dorn pattern flag consisted of a red field with a white crescent and white stars located in the upper left hand corner, with a border of yellow material. No Alabama units carried the Van Dorn pattern flag, however several Alabama units fought in the same theater of operations as Van Dorn during the war. Even among these flags there are still existing differences that make each flag stand out, though in the larger context they are similar enough to be uniform. These flags each add a unique facet to the overall history of Confederate flags and they form the basis for the majority of the existing historiography on the subject. After the flags were made and issued, they took their place on the battlefield.

On the battlefield, Confederate battle flags served their intended utilitarian purpose. In order to understand this purpose, it is imperative to be familiar with battlefield tactics of the time period. Using Napoleonic tactics, soldiers of the Civil War fought in large battle lines, fighting shoulder to shoulder with a front and rear rank separated by thirteen inches.²⁶ In these compact lines the flag would split the formation, being placed in the middle of the line of battle in the front rank, but located in the rear rank during firing.

²⁶ Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 73

During the Civil War a revised set of tactics entitled *Hardee's Light Infantry Tactics* and written by Confederate Major General William J. Hardee saw use by both the Federal and Confederate Army.²⁷ For reference, the Hardee pattern battle flag was indeed named for General William J. Hardee. The tactics prescribed in *Hardee's Light Infantry Tactics* changed very little until around 1864, when both the Federal and Confederate Army learned the value of digging fortified entrenchments to resist attack. The use of the flag changed somewhat due to these tactical advances, but the significance of the flag as an important symbol remained the same.

In the confusion of battle, flags could be seen above the smoke, and thus leaders could keep track of their men and soldiers could identify where their correct position on the battlefield should be at any given moment. In case a unit ever became disorganized, the flag serves as a rallying point for the troops. During the Battle of Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga, Tennessee, visibility was so limited that soldiers watched the movement of the flags to mark the progression of the battle. At the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia, the 15th Alabama Infantry and the 19th Alabama Infantry came close to having a “friendly fire” incident. As related by Historian Howard Maddaus and as stated by Colonel Samuel K. McSpadden, “Just here, the Fifteenth Alabama Volunteers, who were to the right of my rear, began a heavy enfilading fire upon me. I immediately discovered they were friends, and ordered my colors back to the edge of the open field, and waving them, discovered to the Fifteenth Alabama their error.”²⁸ Appendix C Figure 15 displays a flag carried by the 15th Alabama Infantry during the war.

²⁷ Steven T. Ross, *From Flintlock to Rifle: Infantry Tactics, 1770-1866* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, Inc., 1979), 181

²⁸ Maddaus, *The Battle Flags of the Confederacy*, 11.

To further aid identification on the battlefield and thus avoid friendly fire incidents, as well as serving as a symbol of unit pride, regiments often inscribed their unit numerical affiliation in tall, prominent lettering on the flag. Flags were usually marked with a shortened version of the unit numerical designation, although discretion seems to have been up to the person doing the painting. This largely unique unit designation on the flags made each unit stand out for its' own merits, and assisted commanders in spotting their troops in battle. The 33rd Alabama Infantry Regiment simply put 33 Ala. in the middle of the white moon on their Hardee Pattern battle flags, while other units spelled out the word regiment, while yet others used other abbreviations. Describing the flags used by the 33rd Alabama, veteran W. E. Preston of Company B stated,

The 33^d Alabama Regiment, carrying a Confederate battle flag, was placed in Wood's-Lowrey's Brigade at Corinth, Miss., in May, 1862, and at Tupelo in June drew one of Cleburne's 'bonney blue flags' with about an inch and a half of white border about it, a white new moon in the center, with 33d Alabama Regiment', drew another like it in Wartrace, Tenn., about March, 1863, with 'Perryville, Murfreesboro' on it, and another at Dalton, about March 1864, with 'Chickamauga' also.²⁹

Other units did the same, but they often would paint their designations on the flag with different style fonts and paint color. White, blue, black, and olive green were the most prevalent color paints used. Some units painted their numbers and letters in very large size, and sometimes in all capital letters.

Officers allowed individual units to put battle honors on their flags. These painted on battle honors marked battles in which the regiment took part. Some units even used exclamation points on their flags after the end of the name of the battle. Regiments that captured an enemy artillery battery were allowed to paint crossed cannon on their flags,

²⁹ Glenn Dedmond, *The Flags of Civil War Alabama* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company. 2001), 88.

usually in the center of the flag or just below their unit designation.³⁰ This artistic work exhibited on flags was often short lived, as necessity forced units to accept new flags.

Most units during the Civil War carried more than one flag during their service. A very fascinating fact is that flag preservation attempts astoundingly started during the war. “On April 20, 1863, Colonel Edward Asbury O’Neal, 26th Alabama Infantry forwarded the regiments’ old battle flag to the Governor of Alabama stating, “The Government having issued to this Regiment a new flag, we respectfully ask that the old one may be deposited in the Archives of the State.”³¹ Flags would be replaced due to weather, battle damage, exposure, and other deteriorating elements. Therefore in many cases more than one existing flag is attributed to the same regiment. The 33rd Alabama Infantry, for instance, carried as many as four different flags during the course of the war, two of which are still known to exist. Due to the importance of caring for and carrying the flag, doing so was considered a noble position in both armies.

Flags symbolized the morale of the regiment, and therefore the bravest, most respected soldiers carried the banners. Soldiers cited for bravery in battle were often given the privilege and honor of carrying the flag and the Color Guard consisted of some of the bravest soldiers in the regiment.³² In both the North and South, Color Sergeants carried the battle flags and they were surrounded by the Color Guard, which consisted of Sergeants and Corporals for the most part. The number of men in the Color Guard varied from two to eight men, in most cases with fewer Color Guard members in Confederate units.

³⁰ Madaus, *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee*, 18.

³¹ <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/047048.html>

³² Steven E. Woodworth, editor, *The Loyal, True, and Brave: America's Civil War Soldiers* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2002), 65.

According to historian Michael McAfee, “Carrying the colors was hazardous duty and it cost many a brave man his life, limbs, and health.”³³ Flags and the soldiers who carried them often received a large portion of the hostile attention and firepower of opposing troops because seeing the flag fall had a demoralizing effect. The Color Guard of a regiment often sustained very high casualties due to this fact, and when one color bearer went down wounded, another would take his place, and subsequently that color bearer would also be wounded or killed fairly quickly. The 2nd Battalion of Hilliard’s Alabama Legion took heavy casualties on Snodgrass Hill at the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia in September 1863. As stated by Gen. Archibald Gracie about the regimental color bearer,

It was this battalion that first gained the hill and placed its colors on the enemy’s works. Its colors bear marks of over eighty bullets. Its bearer, Robert Y. Hiatt, though thrice wounded and the flagstaff thrice shot away, carried his charge throughout the entire fight. He deserves not only mention but promotion.³⁴

The Color Guard carried muskets, but they did not fire their weapons, protecting the flag and the color bearer. Instead of fighting their main priority involved protecting the flag. The Color Guard would fire their weapons only in the event that the flag was in imminent danger of being captured, and if the flag went down, the next man would pick it up and carry on. In many instances fighting around and over flags proved to be some of the deadliest, fiercest, vicious and most intense fighting of the entire war. Soldiers would sacrifice themselves rather than have their flag captured.

Hardee’s Light Infantry Tactics set the standard and provided guidance concerning the color guard. *Hardee’s Tactics* provided that,

³³ Michael J. McAfee, “Color Sergeants: A Breed Apart,” *Military Image*, January/February 2001, 27.

³⁴ Archibald Gracie Jr., Report of Brigadier-General Archibald Gracie, Jr. O.R. Series I, Vol. 30. Pt. 2. (Washington), 127.

The front rank will be composed of a sergeant, to be selected by the colonel, who will be called, for the time, color-bearer, with the two ranking corporals, respectively, on his right and left; the rear rank will be composed of the three corporals next in rank; and the three remaining corporals will be posted in their rear, and on the line of the file closers.³⁵

In many cases when soldiers knew they were about to be captured, they would tear their flags into small pieces and distribute them amongst one another so that the colors would not fall into enemy hands. In 1861, the United States government began issuing the Medal of Honor to Federal soldiers, and the deed of capturing a flag automatically earned a soldier this award, the highest in the country.³⁶

More often than not, a regiment would be totally disorganized or routed before their regimental flag could be captured. One man in the 33rd Alabama Infantry, W. E. Preston, related the story of the capture of the 33rd Alabama flag at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee stating, “Neal Godwin, the regiment’s color bearer, was killed on the works, bayoneted through the body, and the Federals seized the colors.”³⁷ Federal troops also captured the flags of the 16th Alabama Infantry and the 45th Alabama Infantry, both in the same brigade as the 33rd Alabama, at the Battle of Franklin. These flags now reside in the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

At the Battle of Gettysburg, during Pickett’s Charge on the afternoon of 3 July 1863, the 1st Delaware Infantry captured three Confederate flags. Among these were the flags of the 5th Alabama Infantry Battalion and the 13th Alabama Infantry Regiment. According to flag historian Richard Rollins, “Lt. William Smith picked up the flag of the 5th Alabama

³⁵ Brig. Gen. William J. Hardee, *Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics, for the Exercise and Manoeuvres of Troops When Acting as Light Infantry or Riflemen* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1861), Pp. 9-10.

³⁶ Boston Publishing Company, *The Medal of Honor: A History of Service Above and Beyond* (Minneapolis, MN: Zenith Press, 2014), 47.

³⁷ W. E. Matthews, *As Told By Mr. Preston: A Confederate Soldier* (Np. Nd.), 41.

Battalion, and Pvt. Bernard McCarren probably picked up the 13th Alabama flag, dripping with blood from wounds inflicted by the spear on the top of the flagstaff.”³⁸ These two flags are also now in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

The flag of the 13th Alabama is now at the ADAH, but when he captured the flag Pvt. McCarren kept a star from the flag of the 13th Alabama Infantry as a souvenir, and that lone star is now in the possession of the Gettysburg Museum of History.³⁹ It should be noted in this case which was repeated in numerous other battles that the flags were ‘picked up’ on the battlefield. That is literally what is meant. In many instances, the color sergeant and the color guard were all killed down to the last man. Unwounded soldiers were often not able to recover the flag. As a result, after the battle, Federal soldiers would simply walk out onto the battlefield and pick up flags from the ground. That happened with the flag of the 13th Alabama, when Pvt. McCarren picked the flag off the ground. Three color bearers died carrying the flag of the 13th Alabama, the last one being shot down right at the Federal lines.⁴⁰

Two flags, one belonging to the 10th Alabama Infantry and one belonging to the 44th Alabama Infantry, captured at the Battle of New Market Cross Roads in Virginia, and at the Battle of Sharpsburg, Maryland, respectively, were returned to Alabama on 24 March 2001.⁴¹ Federal soldiers captured both of these flags in severe fighting. The color bearer of the 10th Alabama Infantry lost the flag only after being bayoneted. The 44th Alabama Infantry

³⁸ Richard Rollins, *“The Damned Red Flags of the Rebellion”*: *The Confederate Battle Flag at Gettysburg* (Redondo Beach, CA: Rank and File Publications, 1997), 194.

³⁹ <https://www.gettysburgmuseumofhistory.com/portfolio/a-star-from-a-confederate-flag-of-the-13th-alabama-captured-during-picketts-charge-at-the-battle-of-gettysburg/>

⁴⁰ Randy Bishop, *The Tennessee Brigade* (Bloomington, IN: Rooftop Publishing, 2007), 221.

⁴¹ <http://www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/flags/120124.html>

became completely decimated, and thus they lost their flag, when apparently it was left out in 'no man's land' following severe fighting.

Even though Federal soldiers earned the Medal of Honor for the capture of a Confederate flag during the Civil War, no system existed for flags to go through the proper military channels to be recorded. Soldiers and officers often tucked flags away amongst their possessions and carried them home as a trophy of war rather than turn them in through military authorities. Often officers would seize the flags upon their capture, therefore accurate credit would not be given to the soldier actually responsible for the capture, or recovery, of the flag. An accurate number of captured flags will probably never be known because of errors made in counting the number of Confederate flags taken by Federal forces.

At the end of the war, Southern soldiers reluctantly turned over their battle flags. Confederate troops at Appomattox, Virginia under Gen. Robert E. Lee and at Durham Station, North Carolina under Joseph E. Johnston finalized the surrender of the two major Confederate armies in the field by surrendering their weapons, ammunition, cannons, and above all, their flags. A famous photograph exists that was made at Appomattox and shows several men awarded the Medal of Honor holding surrendered Confederate flags. This humiliation was often more than many Confederate soldiers could bear. According to historian William C. Davis, "Some embittered Southerners burned their flags, or buried them or tore them into pieces as souvenirs, rather than surrender them."⁴² Stories exist in a few instances where Confederate soldiers hid flags under their clothing, thus preventing the capture of the flag. One famous example of this type of action is that of Silas Buck of the 10th Mississippi Cavalry. According to historian Richard W. Murphy, "When Buck's unit

⁴² William C. Davis, *Brothers in Arms: The Lives and Experiences of the Men who fought in the Civil War-In Their Own Words* (Edison, NJ: Chartwell Books, Inc., 2000), 135.

surrendered, the 17-year-old color bearer hid the flag from his captors, then gave it to a Confederate officer for safe keeping.”⁴³

During and after the war Confederate flags were, to many men, the embodiment of numerous tangible and intangible beliefs, ideas, and people. To soldiers, the flag represented their cause, their home, their family, their comrades, their religion, and the South. When soldiers risked their life for their flag, it was more than just a simple piece of fabric for which they fought and died. As historian Coski stated, “The flag’s symbolism is subject to a confusing welter of interpretations.”⁴⁴ These concepts are difficult to grasp and understand in modern times, as they were during the war, and they meant different things to different people. According to historian Richard Rollins, “It stood for their defense of their family, home, and community; their efforts to preserve their heritage of freedom and democracy tracing back to the American Revolution, all of which they believed their new nation embodied.”⁴⁵

Confederate flags symbolized various beliefs, attitudes, and personal emotions during the war, and with the passion of war now being absent, only common, generalized concepts about the South can be used to generate and relate those feelings in modern times.

The wartime sentiment and emotion associated with the flag is highly evident in a post war account by Private Tom Wilkins of Company E, 11th Mississippi Infantry, speaking about Pickett’s Charge during the Battle of Gettysburg,

⁴³ Richard W. Murphy, *The Nation Reunited: War’s Aftermath* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1987), 161.

⁴⁴ Michael J. Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su. *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 89.

⁴⁵ Richard Rollins, ed. *The Returned Flag* (Redondo Beach, CA: Rank and File Publications, 1997), i.

When we got back down to the Emmitsburg Road, I saw to my dismay my close friend, 2nd Lt. Pleas Goolsby laying on his back staring up at the sky with blank sightless eyes. A big hole was in his chest and his breath came in faint convulsive snorts, which expelled a pinkish red froth from his mouth, nose, and the hole itself, which covered most of his upper torso with bloody foam. ‘The flag’, he murmured, “Did we save the flag?’. Then the last blood bubble burst on his blackened lips and his head flopped over. He was dead; but I was hard to leave him out there in no-man’s land. A fond memory flooded over me of Pleas, so boyish and proud as he paraded our new flag around the drill field at our mustering-in-ceremony back home.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Billy Ellis. *Tithes of Blood: A Confederate Soldier’s Story* (Murfreesboro, TN: Southern Heritage Press, 1997), 129.

CHAPTER IV

THE LOST CAUSE AND REMEMBRANCE

The history of the Confederate flag is one part of the Civil War that did not end with the hostilities. After the war, flag repatriation marked the next step in the history of these artifacts. Subsequently, the repatriation of the flags not only to Alabama but also to other states continues to influence the interpretation and preservation issues historians and archivists face in dealing with the flags.

By studying the context of the turn of the century movement to remember the Civil War, and the repatriation of Confederate flags during that time, it is possible to understand how repatriation influenced modern interpretation and preservation methods concerning these flags and also ongoing issues with the flags. The broad history of this movement places the repatriation of Alabama Confederate flags in perspective and allows Alabama to be viewed as a case study. Historically, the repatriation of the flags is part of a larger movement to preserve and protect artifacts and important places associated with the war. The repatriation of the flags reached its zenith around 1905. Sentiment throughout the country between 1865 and 1905 dictated the fate of the flags and serves as an important part of their history. The main theme throughout the early controversy over the return of Confederate flags centered on the unwillingness of Union veterans to return the flags as well as their disapproval of early attempts at such action. The history of the repatriation of the flags and the movement to remember the war is similar for most Southern states. Events closely related to flag repatriation included the formation of veterans' groups and ladies' memorial associations, the advent of Memorial Day, the erection of monuments, and the opening of national military parks.

At the end of the Civil War, the South lay in ruins and Federal soldiers occupied most major Southern cities. The presence of former Confederate soldiers, Federal occupation soldiers, black troops, former slaves, and freedmen combined to create a tense political and emotional environment. Following the cessation of hostilities, a Federal mandate made it illegal to display Confederate symbols, including military style buttons on coats, rank insignia, and Confederate flags. These events and actions prompted many former soldiers to once again become militant-minded. In the midst of the turmoil sweeping across the South at this time in the winter of 1865, the Ku Klux Klan emerged. Initial Klan members did not use the flag, however.

After the war, veterans and their families formed such groups such as the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), and the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), formed with national, state, and local chapters. These veterans would gather in elaborate ceremonies and festivities to honor and remember the war. Eventually, veterans of the North and South held reunions on battlefields from Franklin, Tennessee, to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Speaking of Southern veterans, historian Rod Gragg stated, "Through the efforts of the United Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, they reassembled for reunion events, pursued common objectives, lobbied for fair treatment by historians, and eventually happily joined their former foes for joint encampments on the battlefields of history."¹

Railroad companies frequently sponsored these reunions and offered passage for the troops to the various battlefields across the country. In 1905, one railroad company, the St. Louis and South Western Railroad, known as the "Cotton Belt Route," provided veterans at

¹ Rod Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1989), 243.

a reunion in St. Louis with a pamphlet on Confederate flags.² The document provided information on some of the flags in the collection of the War Department along with color lithographs of some of the flags. Federal veterans often protested the presence of Confederate flags at these reunions, but over time this issue died away as veterans of both sides became more tolerant of their former enemies. These large veterans' reunions combining both Federal and Confederate veterans saw particularly high turnouts during celebrations around the turn of the century.

More often, however, veterans would gather in small social functions in their hometowns after church services on Sunday. During these reunions original battle flags would often be displayed and they would be the center of attention. Veterans who secretly kept their regimental flags at the end of the war would use these reunions as a chance to display their old banners. These reunions and informal meetings continued until the last Confederate and the last Federal veterans died in the 1940s and 1950s.³ In the North and South women played a vital role in these reunions and served as some of the earliest caretakers of Confederate flags. Were it not for the actions of women, many Confederate flags would not exist today.

According to historian J. Michael Martinez, "Although men played important roles in their establishment, many Ladies' Memorial Associations (LMA's) arose from 1865 until the turn of the century, at the urging of influential women in each community that had

² Richard Rollins, ed., *The Returned Flags* (Redondo Beach, CA: Rank and File Publications, 1997), Vii.

³ Frank L. Grzyb, *The Last Civil War Veterans: The Lives of the Final Survivors, State by State* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2016), 6.

furnished soldiers to the war effort.”⁴ LMA’s arose as an offshoot of Civil War era aid societies predominantly run by women. Marielou Armstrong Cory gathered information about the Ladies Memorial Association of Montgomery, Alabama. She discovered that, “During the war there were many societies among the ladies of Montgomery for the alleviation of suffering, among them being Ladies’ Aid Societies, where the good women met and plied their needles for love’s sweet sake.”⁵ Cory continues stating about these women that they worked “with sewing needles and knitting needles, making every needful thing for the soldiers in distant camps and battlefields.”⁶ After the war women in the LMA’s contributed diligently to the preservation of battlefields, the reburial of soldiers from battlefield trenches to manicured cemeteries, ensuring the care of those cemeteries, and the preservation of artifacts, including flags. LMA’s sponsored various fundraisers and fairs to collect money and memorabilia for Civil War museums opening across the South. Women across the country, but particularly in the South, started decorating graves and holding ceremonies to commemorate the war. These and countless other events and activities started a trend that would eventually lead to the return of the flags.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy formed in 1889 with the majority of its members being formerly associated with various LMA’s. The UDC continued the LMA works erecting monuments and holding ceremonies for the aging veterans. According to historian Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., "The immediate postwar associations were products of

⁴ J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 138.

⁵ Marielou Armstrong Cory, ed., *The Ladies Memorial Association of Montgomery, Alabama: Its Origin and Organization 1860-1870* (Montgomery, AL: Alabama Printing Company, 1902), 10.

⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

what has been called the "bereavement" phase of the southern memorial movement."⁷ Many women who belonged to ladies' aid societies during the war continued their work after the war in numerous capacities. One such post-war society included the Confederate Memorial Literary Society of Richmond, Virginia. In 1905 this entity would receive a large number of Confederate battle flags returned by the federal government.

Women served as some of the earliest advocates of battlefield protection as well, working with the War Department towards this end. Along with the flags left over from the war, the War Department became the caretaker of the major battlefields in the South and North before they were turned over to the National Park Service.⁸ The War Department maintained possession and management of these battlefields in order to use them for training purposes. Military leaders could use the tactical and strategic lessons learned from the Civil War while training for future wars. The War Department continued to use these lands not only as historic sites, but also as training areas for soldiers. Doughboys trained for service in World War I on such battlefields as Gettysburg and Chickamauga.⁹ Shortly after the Civil War, veterans groups began rapidly erecting monuments and markers on these battlefields and at cemeteries and on town squares. Many soldiers later trained within viewing distance of these reminders of another war.

Battlefields across the country opened as military parks, largely in the 1890s, and visitors could tour the landscape, view monuments and historical tablets, and reminisce about

⁷ Edward D. C. Campbell Jr., and Kym S. Rice, eds., *A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 137.

⁸ Lary M. Dilsaver, *America's National Park System: The Critical Documents* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 53.

⁹ Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012), 111.

one of the bloodiest periods of American history. The War Department maintained control of battlefields across the country until 1933, when the National Park Service took over this task.

The affinity for battlefields and the nostalgia associated with them actually began during the war. According to historian Richard W. Murphy, "As early as 1863, veterans in both the North and the South began banding together in fraternal organizations dedicated to preserving wartime friendships, caring for crippled comrades, honoring the dead and providing for their widows and orphans."¹⁰ Veterans were the first driving force behind the attempt to preserve battlefields and erect monuments. In 1863, in the midst of the war and continued fighting, veterans still in active service erected the Hazen Monument at Stones River National Battlefield, arguably the oldest monument dedicated to soldiers of the Civil War.¹¹

The erection of monuments took on markedly different characteristics in the North and South. Federal veterans, who started the process of erecting monuments during the war, continued with this practice. These veterans, particularly members of individual regiments, raised money to erect monuments to their regiment. Before long the Southern landscape became sprinkled with these tributes to former Federal soldiers. Individual Northern states also employed the services of skilled monument artisans to develop prototypes of possible statutes that would represent the entire state.

Similar to the display of Confederate flags at joint veterans' reunions, the presence of monuments and markers created tension and disagreement. The placement of many tablets,

¹⁰ Richard W. Murphy, *The Nation Reunited: War's Aftermath* (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1987), 163.

¹¹ Dave Roth, "The Battle of Stones River," *Blue & Gray*, Volume 28 (2012), 52.

markers, monuments, and statues took place before the turn of the century while sensitive emotions over the war still prevailed in the minds of many of the veterans of both sides.¹² One factor that led to the almost total absence of markers to individual Confederate regiments arose from this sentiment. The delineation of battle lines for the contextual and historical purpose of documenting battles proved to be a decisive issue. Many veterans could not agree on the positions of themselves and their own battle lines, and even more so that of their foes, during battle.¹³ The problem developed into the disagreement on exactly where monuments should be positioned. Southern veterans often believed that monuments should be placed farther forward, marking the furthest point reached. Federal troops did not agree with this type of placement of the markers to Southern troops.¹⁴ Federal veterans more often than not had the last say in where these monuments were placed. This process often led Confederate veterans to boycott paying for monuments and placing them on battlefields.

The lack of battlefield monuments to Southern troops is largely a result of these types of objections. Some do exist though because of the actions of concerned veterans, such as at Shiloh, Tennessee, at Vicksburg, Mississippi, and Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

During and after the war, veterans and civilians started the process of preserving war-related memorabilia. A somewhat unusual phenomenon occurred after the Battle of Manassas in July of 1861, when speculators purchased a large portion of the battlefield shortly after the battle in the hopes of turning the area into a tourist attraction. Similarly,

¹² Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill, The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 107.

¹³ Timothy B. Smith, *This Great Battlefield of Shiloh: History, Memory, and the Establishment of a Civil War National Military Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2004), 81.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 81.

Federal soldiers would often pick up souvenirs from battlefields, some even in the midst of battle, as well as from private residences and among those souvenirs would be Confederate flags.¹⁵ Most soldiers would turn in captured flags to their superior officers, but many others would send the flags home as trophies of the war.¹⁶

With the surrender of Confederate armies across the South, Federal officials had to deal with the daunting task of handling tons of munitions, war materiel, and flags. Officials initially stored the flags in various repositories and holding areas in Washington, D. C. Originally kept in the Adjutant General's office in the War Department, the flags began to deteriorate rapidly from neglect and exposure to various agents of deterioration. According to historian Richard Rollins, "In 1867 the Superintendent of the War Department building, apparently without authorization, had the flags moved into his office, where they were placed in boxes and pigeonholes."¹⁷ The flags remained in the Ordnance Museum for a short period of time before being removed to the basement of the War, State, and Navy building in 1882. A flag that now resides at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History was reportedly carried by the 6th Mississippi Infantry. The 6th Mississippi sustained atrocious casualties at the Battle of Shiloh and this flag was said to have been carried by that unit at Shiloh. Amazingly, the flag has been stored inside a candy jar since before it was returned to the state in the early 1900's.¹⁸ Other Confederate flags have likewise been stored in similarly

¹⁵ Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 230.

¹⁶ Teresa Barnett, *Sacred Relics: Pieces of the Past in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press, 2013), 111.

¹⁷ Rollins, *The Returned Flag*, iii.

¹⁸ <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/senseofplace/tag/flags/page/2/>

odd manners, and needless to say this type of storage has done significant damage to those flags.

In *Flags of the U.S. A.*, historian David Eggenberger stated, “In June, 1887, President Grover Cleveland enraged the Grand Army of the Republic by approving a War department order for the return to the South of battle flags captured during the Civil War.”¹⁹ Some Union veterans, upset at the thought of returning the battle flags, demanded that the order be canceled. Historian J. Michael Martinez stated, “Union veteran organizations denounced Cleveland, who had avoided military service by hiring a substitute, as a viper, traitor, skulker, and contemptible politician.”²⁰ After only a week of protest, President Cleveland backed down and stopped the action, claiming that Congress should be responsible for returning the flags if such an event ever took place. Speaking of the order to return the flags to the South, Union veteran General Luscious Fairchild stated, "May God palsy the hand that wrote that order, may God palsy the brain that conceived it, and may God palsy the tongue that dictated it."²¹

The idea of returning the flags to the South did not resurface again for almost ten years due to the sensitivity of the subject. The start of the Spanish-American War brought Americans together in a common cause, and this in turn led to the desire to confront unresolved issues and emotions left over from the war. According to historian Rod Gragg, “In 1898, the Spanish-American War ignited a unified spirit of nationalism in the South and

¹⁹ David Eggenberger, *Flags of the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964), 154.

²⁰ Martinez, et. al., *Confederate Symbols*, 105.

²¹ Henry F. Graff, *Grover Cleveland* (New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co., 2002), 84.

North, and Confederate veterans would parade down Southern boulevards holding aloft patriotic banners pointedly denouncing any citizen ‘who ain’t for his country’.”²²

After tension calmed about the flag issue, due largely to the national unity created by the Spanish-American War, Congress passed a resolution on February 28, 1905, under the administration of President Theodore Roosevelt. The new order called for the return of the flags to the Southern states. The 1905 repatriation also included the return of national and state flags to the various northern states by the federal government. This repatriation marked the largest single return of flags to Southern states. Historian Richard Rollins stated, "In an effort to determine who would get what, the Adjutant-General's office spent considerable time compiling a hand written inventory of each flag, and added as much information as they could develop about its capture.”²³

The lack of documentation for many of the flags, a very common occurrence, made providing individual flag provenience a troublesome undertaking. Upon their arrival at the War Department, officials marked most of the flags with a piece of paper giving the details of their capture.²⁴ This casual documentation and identification system proved to be inadequate. Some flags could not be adequately documented, and often the paper slips attached to the flags became lost. As a result, the history of many of the flags is now lost, possibly forever. The flag inventory by the office of the Adjutant General did, however, provide much needed information about the flags in the collection of the War Department.

²² Gragg, *The Illustrated Confederate Reader*, 251.

²³ Rollins, *The Returned Battle Flags*, iii.

²⁴ *Ibid*, iii.

Another problem with flag documentation involved the actions of various government officials who loaned flags from the collections of the War Department.²⁵ Two flags belonging to the 10th and 44th Alabama Infantry Regiments became lost as the result of this situation. Over 130 years after their disappearance, these two flags resurfaced and now reside in the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

Flags that could be identified were returned to the Confederate Memorial Literary Society in Virginia. The flags then slowly returned to the various states, and archivists started to handle the task of managing, preserving, and interpreting these unique artifacts. Even flagstuffs became part of the repatriation effort by the War Department. War Department officials assigned flagstuffs, in many cases sticks serving as flagstuffs, their own catalog number, by which they are still known today.

In 1904, before the War Department conducted their inventory of the Confederate flags in their collection, the United Confederate Veterans sponsored a similar, but more limited study. According to flag historian Michael Madaus, "In June of 1904, the United Confederate Veterans, then meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, had established a five man committee to research and define the proper designs and dimensions of those flags."²⁶ This UCV study resulted in a rather meager five-page pamphlet. The UCV study, the inventory by the War Department, and the pamphlet by the St. Louis and South Western Railroad Company comprise the earliest histories of the Confederate battle flags. The disparity in these three studies mainly involves the differing accreditation of certain flags to certain

²⁵ United States, Government Printing Office, "Captured Battle Flags: Letter from the Secretary of War", *The Executive Documents of the House of Representatives For The First Session of the Fiftieth Congress 1887-'88* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 5.

²⁶ Madaus, *The Battle Flags of the Confederate Army of Tennessee*, 21.

regiments, and discrepancies in the often confusing, incorrect, and incomplete stories of the actual capture of the flags during the war.

The repatriation of the flags from the War Department served as a major step in the attempt to collect and preserve Confederate flags by Southern states. Confederate flags also came from other sources, however, such as former Confederate soldiers, former Federal soldiers, private collections, and auctions and flea markets. In a poignant example of the sentiment associated with the return of the flags, T. W. Castleman, Adjutant General and Chief of State of the Louisiana Division of the United Confederate Veterans stated, “Like receiving an old comrade back into the ranks, these emblems of a loved lost cause were welcomed with reverent ovation by the old soldiers who fought so valiantly under their glowing standards.”²⁷

The modern day return of flags to Southern museums and archives largely involves archival activities and relevant paper documents associated with obtaining the flags. Civil War Roundtable meetings, military buffs, and re-enactors also discuss the subject of flag repatriation. As the internet is now a common method of communication, authors, experts, and noted individuals on Confederate flags, and their history often communicate through this medium as well.

Interest in flags in general has sparked the evolution of vexillology, referring to the study of flags.²⁸ In the past twenty years, vexillologists have concentrated on Confederate flags, including their manufacture, use, meaning, and preservation. Vexillology enthusiasts often include common citizens simply interested in the history of Confederate flags. These

²⁷ Rollins, *The Returned Battle Flags*, 42.

²⁸ Devereaux D. Cannon Jr., *The Flags of the Confederacy* (Memphis, TN: St. Lukes Press, 1988), 3.

amateur flag historians regularly glean information through their own research that serves as a great boon to historians in archival settings.

Historians are devoting more time and energy to working with Confederate flags and flag collections throughout the country. Several state archives throughout the South have recently devoted attention to the detailed documentation of Confederate battle flags in their collections, including their repatriation after the war. The State of Alabama started such a program under the guidance of Robert Bradley, chief curator of the flags in Montgomery. Much of the information about the flags contained in the Alabama Archives over time became misplaced or had been insufficiently recorded, or in some cases none existed whatsoever.

Similarly, Sheila Green of the Tennessee State Library and Archives worked on documenting the Confederate flags in the State of Tennessee. In 1988, Lucy K. Robinson published *Confederate Battle Flags in the Collection of the Old State House, A Museum of Arkansas History*. With interaction between states and other governmental and archival agencies, the processes by which flags are documented, preserved, stored, displayed, and interpreted is gaining commonality. Similarity among state practices in dealing with the flags makes the process more efficient and allows best practices to move from state to state.

The rich history of the flags and their repatriation includes more than just their return after the war. Repatriation served as only part of a larger movement to remember, preserve, protect, and honor the men and women of the Civil War. The history of the repatriation of the Confederate flags is a subject that needs to be explored further by modern historians. The return of the flags in many ways signifies another stage of the war that did not end with the fighting and this history of the flags is just as historically important as their history during

the war. The history of repatriation is an issue that archivists, historians, and military buffs must face when preserving and interpreting the flags.²⁹

²⁹ David Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory & the American Civil War* (Amherst & Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 177.

CHAPTER V: ALABAMA CONFEDERATE FLAGS: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

At the heart of this work is the importance of the preservation and interpretation of Alabama Confederate flags, particularly those at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Alabama. The genesis and evolution of Confederate flags, the societal life-ways from which they developed, their use and meaning in the American Civil War, their repatriation after the war and subsequent preservation and interpretation, and the contemporary debates surrounding them can all be explored by using Alabama Confederate flags as a case study.

It was not until the last few months of the war that Federal cavalry forces under General James Wilson swept through the heart of Alabama, beginning in northern Alabama, destroying blast furnaces, mills, factories, arsenals, and other industries and material valuable to the Confederate war effort.¹ Indeed, some of the targets of the Federal war machine were the railroads mentioned by Historian Greg Wilson in *Soldiers of the Southern Cross*.²

The lack of strategic targets is the predominant explanation as to why no relatively major Civil War land battles took place in the state. However, heavy fighting did take place in late 1864 and early 1865 at Selma, Ebenezer Church, Spanish Fort, Fort Blakely and Fort Morgan.³ These actions are minor in comparison to the brutal fighting in other southern states and for the most part the outcomes of these battles in Alabama were inconsequential to the final results of the war. Despite the relative unimportance of the battles in Alabama, the sacrifice of the men

¹ Walter Fleming, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Alabama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1905), 71.

² William Gregory Wilson, *Soldiers of the Southern Cross: The Confederate Soldiers of Tallapoosa County, Alabama* (Kellyton, Alabama: William Gregory Wilson, Author, 2011 2nd e.d), 4.

³ Malcolm C. McMillan, *The Alabama Confederate Reader* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1963), 432.

involved was nonetheless heroic and admirable on the part of both Federal and Confederate forces. Several Alabama Confederate flags captured during these aforementioned battles now reside at the ADAH.

Speaking about the capture of flags in Alabama during this time, an official order issued by Federal Maj. General E. R. S. Canby states,

All battle-flags captured in the engagements at Spanish Fort and Blakely, or in the expedition from Pensacola to the latter place, will be carefully collected and turned over to these headquarters. Commanding officers are also required to furnish an accurate account of all the trophies turned in, stating how, when, and by what commands they were captured, and giving the due credit to those individual officers and men who were most instrumental in securing them.⁴

By the end of the war, as seen in the Canby memo, Federal forces were attempting to ensure a more regulated accounting of events when flags were captured. These last battles marked the end of a long term of service by the men and women of Alabama and their support of the Confederacy. Alabama provided much needed supplies to the Confederate cause, but it took time to build the infrastructure necessary to produce these goods and war materials.

Alabama was an agrarian state, relying on the growth of cotton, tobacco, and other crops as the key elements of its economy.⁵ Contrary to this, Northern states had industry and vast stores of material needed to wage war whereas Alabama lacked the industry and materials that would be needed for the war effort. These facts did not hamper scores of Alabamians from volunteering their services to the state of Alabama when the war began in 1861.

The saga of the role of the secession crisis and the Civil War concerning Alabama is akin to those of other Southern states. Alabama seceded from the Union on 11 January 1861,

⁴ United States War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington: Govt. Print. Off., Series I, Vol. 49. 1880), 336.

⁵ Rogers, et. al., *Alabama: The History of a Deep South State*, 173.

becoming the third state in the Deep South to take this course of action.⁶ Upon the formation of the Confederacy, Montgomery served as the capital of the new nation before the capital was moved to Richmond, Virginia, closer to the front lines of the war. Jefferson Davis took the oath of office as the President of the Confederacy at the capitol building in Montgomery. According to author Malcolm McMillan, "While Lincoln was making his inaugural address in Washington, Letitia Tyler, granddaughter of President John Tyler of Virginia, raised the new national flag of the Confederacy, the Stars and Bars, over the capitol in Montgomery for the first time."⁷ These early patriotic events and gatherings gave way to the brutal reality of the conditions of the war and the suffering that many Alabamians would endure.

Almost immediately, the cities of Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans fell to Federal forces, and thus those cities were denied as major manufacturing facilities and ports of entry for the Confederacy. Mobile served as the only port city for the State of Alabama, and thus the only entrance point for blockade runners loaded with materials and other desperately needed supplies from overseas. As part of these vital shipments, textiles from abroad would be fashioned into uniforms and also into Confederate flags.

For the modern historian the wide variety of flags from Civil War Alabama provides insight into socio-economic factors, as the flags represented, to some degree, social status and wealth. For example, soldiers who were lawyers, doctors, and merchants would often have better equipment than their counterparts from rural regions previously engaged in small scale or subsistence farming. The former group could afford to equip themselves better than the state could provide, while the latter group did not have this luxury.

⁶ Christopher Lyle McIlwain, *Civil War Alabama* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2016), 42.

⁷ McMillan, *The Alabama Confederate Reader*, 82.

These men used numerous flags to represent themselves prior to and during the conflict. Examples of the most elaborate and fancifully decorated flags at the ADAH include those of the 4th Alabama Infantry. The 4th Alabama served from the Battle of 1st Manassas in July of 1861 until the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia at Appomattox Court House in April of 1865. One flag of the 4th Alabama, carried by Company G, the “Marion Light Infantry”, incorporates an elaborate map of the State of Alabama, with the obverse of the flag adorned with a cotton plant and a cotton bale.⁸ That flag can be seen in Appendix C Figure 8, even though the flag is now much more obviously faded and not as vibrant as when it was first made. The preservation process renewed some of the original luster of the flag. That flag of the Marion Light Infantry was present when Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson earned his nickname at the 1st Battle of Manassas.⁹

Impressive flags such as those belonging to the 4th Alabama often include silk as part of the material, a superior fabric in short supply in the Confederacy, especially as the war progressed. Another artistically impressive flag at the ADAH is that of Company D, the “Canebrake Rifle Guards” of the 4th Alabama Infantry, which can be seen in Appendix C Figure 7. Most of these flags belonging to the individual companies of the 4th Alabama Infantry were returned to the State of Alabama before the 4th Alabama saw its first combat.

The majority of the Alabama Confederate flags at the ADAH consist of cotton or wool bunting, a more practical material, and for the most part many of the flags lack highly artistic expression and other signs of sophisticated workmanship. Regimental flags from the government and from other sources adequately represented the men of Alabama. Ironically,

⁸<http://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/progress/2015/07/31/archives-preserves-scores-confederate-flags/3092224/>

⁹ <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/018019.html>

these men lacked a flag that represented the state of Alabama because none existed.

According to flag historian Glenn Dedmond, "Alabama, however, had no state flag from its formation and acceptance into the United States until its secession."¹⁰ However, Alabama women presented a flag to members of the Alabama secession convention, but this device never represented the state of Alabama in an official capacity.¹¹ This secession flag incorporated Lady Liberty on one side holding a sword and a flag emblazoned with the name Alabama. The obverse of the flag simply stated *Noli Me Tangere*, the Latin phrase for "Touch Me Not".¹² This phrase had been popular in the American Revolution and the people of the South utilized it for their purposes as well. In *Emblems of Southern Valor*, author Joseph Crute notes,

The *Montgomery Advertiser* of January 12th carried this editorial: 'Yesterday will form a memorable epoch in the history of Alabama. On that day our gallant little state resumed her sovereignty, and became free and independent, the beautiful flag, presented by the ladies of the Convention, was run up on the Capitol, the gun squad began to fire a salute, the various church bells commenced ringing and shout after shout might have been heard all along the principle streets.'¹³

Alabama had a state seal during the Civil War, but no official state flag existed. The State of Alabama became a state in 1819, and it seems odd, but the state went without an official state flag for over 75 years. Not until 1895 did Alabama adopt an official state flag to use to represent the state. The secession flags were the closest representation of what could be called a state flag representative of Alabama at the time. During the war Confederate National flags were flown over the capital in Montgomery. Three Alabama secession flags now reside at the ADAH, one of which is affiliated with supporters of secession in Mobile.

¹⁰ Dedmond, *The Flags of Civil War Alabama*, 16.

¹¹ Devereaux D. Cannon, Jr., *The Flags of the Confederacy: An Illustrated History* (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing Company, 1997), 36.

¹² *Ibid*, 38.

¹³ Joseph H. Crute, Jr., *Emblems of Southern Valor: The Battle Flags of the Confederacy* (Louisville: Harmony House, 1990), 42.

The modern Alabama flag saw use during the Civil War. According to a 1941 publication by the members of the WPA: "The model for the first Alabama state flag was designed and made of white long cloth and oil-boiled calico by Mrs. John W. A. Sanford, daughter-in-law of Colonel John W. A. Sanford, a Confederate veteran."¹⁴ The flag, consisting of a white field crossed by two red bars in the form of a cross, commonly referred to as resembling the shape of 'suspenders', was used by some Alabama forces during the Civil War, but it was not until near the turn of the century that this flag became the official Alabama state flag.

Thomas McAdory Owen spearheaded the interest in the preservation and interpretation of Confederate flags in Alabama.¹⁵ The development of the ADAH and the flag collection grew largely because of the turn of the century attempts to acquire Confederate flags associated with Alabama.

In 1901 Owen founded and became the first director of the Alabama Department of Archives and History.¹⁶ Owens' relatives served in the Confederate Army. Many of the flags under which Owens' relatives fought now reside in the Alabama State Archives, largely due to his efforts to secure them. Owen also worked diligently to collect other war-related material and memorabilia including flags, uniforms, weaponry, and other Civil War artifacts. He was able to amass a sizeable collection of artifacts in order to preserve them for posterity at the ADAH, and this collection continues to grow.

¹⁴ Work Projects Administration of Alabama, *Flags, Seals, and Coat of Arms of Alabama* (Montgomery, AL: Visual Education Project, 1941), 11.

¹⁵ Thomas McAdory Owen, *Alabama Department of Archives and History, Bulletin, Issue 1* (Montgomery, AL: The Dept., 1904), 36.

¹⁶ Robert Bradley, *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection at the Alabama Department of Archives and History* (Montgomery, AL: ADAH, 1997), ii.

The ADAH is now home to 90 flags, and fragments of flags, from the Civil War era.¹⁷ The number of flags at the ADAH fluctuates from time to time. For instance, one flag belonging to a Georgia regiment, and another belonging to an Arkansas regiment were returned to their respective native states. In return, the State of Georgia gave the ADAH a flag in its collection that belonged to the 15th Alabama Infantry. The majority of the flags at the ADAH belonged to the various infantry regiments from the State of Alabama, but flags belonging to cavalry and artillery regiments, independent companies, as well as naval flags and three flags of secession are also housed at the ADAH. Appendix A lists a sample of known Alabama Confederate flags, many captured during the war and documented by the War Department after the war.¹⁸ Appendix B lists the flags in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery, Alabama.¹⁹ This impressive collection took several decades to develop into its' current size.

Many Alabama Confederate flags remain in museums in northern states. One of those flags is believed to be that of the 47th Alabama Infantry at the New York State Military Museum and Veterans Research Center. Wartime provenance is an ongoing issue with Confederate flags and very often the lack of factual evidence makes it difficult to definitively identify flags. Federal units would capture a flag in battle, but never discover to whom the flag belonged, that is to say to what regiment the flag belonged. Therefore, it is now a 'best educated guess' as to whom the flag in question belonged. The story of what is thought to be

¹⁷ Marty Roney, "Archives preserve scores of Confederate flags," *Montgomery Advertiser*, July 31, 2015.

¹⁸ Richard Rollins, *The Returned Battle Flags* (Redondo Beach, CA: Rank and File Publications, 1997), 1.

¹⁹ Bradley, *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection*, 1.

that of the 47th Alabama Infantry flag falls into this scenario. A history at the NYSMM concludes:

On September 17, 1862, during the Battle of Antietam, Maryland, Private Stanislas Beneaux, Company E, 35th New York Volunteers, captured a Confederate flag reportedly from an Alabama regiment, most likely the 47th Alabama Infantry. In his official report, Third Brigade, First Division, I Corps commander Brigadier General Marsena Patrick acknowledged the capture, ‘we checked the enemy’s advance sufficiently to push our liens up the road, which we held firmly for some time, the Thirty-fifth Regiment capturing the colors of the rebel regiment advancing on our battery.’ The Confederate first national pattern flag, identified in museum records as the flag captured by Beneaux, is made of cotton with 15 appliquéd stars in the canton. On display at the Great Wardrobe Clothing Store in Watertown, New York in June 1863, the flag joined the New York State Battle Flag Collection, via Captain John Haddock, 35th New York Volunteers, by February 1864. Flag dimensions are: 37 ½” hoist x 42” fly.²⁰

So, it is unknown for sure, but it is very highly probable that the flag in question did indeed belong to the 47th Alabama Infantry, which can be seen in Appendix C Figure 15. Sadly, other flags, including some at the ADAH, have even less provenance and supporting documentation concerning their history.

In the early 1900s Thomas McAdory Owen worked with many northern states and with private owners across the country seeking to take possession of these flags. He sparked an interest in Alabama Confederate flag preservation that continues today. Subsequently, the history of the repatriation of the flags is evident in the modern day treatment of these artifacts. The return of the flags dictated, and still dictates, how archivists handle the flags.

Given the history of the treatment of the flags after the war, and their less than ideal storage conditions at the War Department before the turn of the century, the poor condition

²⁰[https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/btlflags/other/CSA_1stNational_47thAlabama1995.0303.h
tm](https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/btlflags/other/CSA_1stNational_47thAlabama1995.0303.htm)

of many of the flags and lack of supporting documentation is not surprising.²¹ All Confederate flags that still exist today are extremely delicate because of their age and construction. Most flags made during the Civil War consist of cotton, wool bunting, silk, and other fine materials. These fabrics are sensitive to a host of agents of deterioration, including light, moisture, mildew, heat, dirt, dust, and rodents among others. These elements can destroy a flag beyond any hopes of repair in just a short span of time. The poor conditions in which the flags were initially stored over one hundred years ago now influence the preservation and interpretation of Alabama flags in modern times.²² Lack of money to properly preserve the flags hampers efforts to safely put them on display without further exposing them to agents of deterioration. Luckily, even though many of the flags are not in any condition to be displayed, citizens can request a meeting to see the flags in storage.

Two flags acquired by the ADAH in March of 2001, those of the 10th Alabama Infantry and the 44th Alabama Infantry are waiting professional cleaning and maintenance to ensure their survival. The flags of the 10th Alabama Infantry and of the 44th Alabama Infantry can be seen in Appendix C Figure 11. Mr. Tom Blackford of Maine donated these flags to the ADAH after discovering the history behind these artifacts. The following account records the story of those two flags,

Following the U.S. Sanitary Fair in 1864, Captain Joseph Brinton who had served in an Indiana regiment during the war, somehow acquired the flags of the 10th and 44th Alabama Infantry regiments. Both flags were cared for by several generations of Captain Brinton's family. In the 1960's Brinton's granddaughter, Mrs. Edith Litchfield Denny, gave the flag of the 44th Alabama Infantry to her grandson Thomas Blackford. In 1999 Mr. Blackford of Edgecomb, Maine, discussed the flag with Dave Martucci, a wellknown vexillologist. Martucci in turn contacted Howard Madaus, the acknowledged expert on Confederate flags. In September, 1999, at Mr. Blackford's

²¹ Bradley, *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection*, iii.

²² *Ibid.*

invitation, Mr. Martucci and Mr. Madaus examined and authenticated the flag. Discovering the true identity of the flag, Mr. Blackford initiated efforts to have it returned to Alabama. Mrs. Denny also donated the flag of the 10th Alabama Infantry. Both flags were presented to the Alabama Department of Archives and History by Mr. Thomas Blackford on March 24, 2001.²³

Blackford originally had both flags pinned to the wall of his bedroom with thumb tacks, using them as decoration for his room. This resulted in some slight light and dust damage to the flags, with an ever so subtle color difference in between the side that was exposed to sunlight and dust versus the side that was against the wall of Blackford's bedroom wall.

Today the flags of the 10th and 44th Alabama Infantry Regiments "lie in gray metal storage cabinets at the archives, where they await professional cleaning and soaking to remove acid from the cloth."²⁴ The process of cleaning a flag, and most other historical cloth, is a very expensive venture and often stretches the budgetary constraints of museums and archives especially at the state and local level where budgets are often miniscule in the first place. As well as being very expensive, the process of preserving a flag is very time consuming as well. The flag of Company E, the "Liberty Guards," 22nd Mississippi Infantry, preserved by Textile Preservation Associates, required 260 hours to complete the conservation process.²⁵

The procedure for cleaning the flags is very complicated and technical, requiring the attention of textile preservation specialists. The first step usually involves vacuuming the flag before washing it, but this is merely the first step in a long course of action to stabilize the flag. These preservation steps first involve cleaning of the flag and eventually framing

²³ <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/120124.html>

²⁴ David White, "Dixie history comes calling: Banners belonged to state's 44th, 10th infantry regiments," *Birmingham News*, June 12, 2001, 1B.

²⁵ Conserving a Civil War Flag, <http://www.mdah.ms.gov/senseofplace/tag/flags/page/2/>

them in such a way as to prevent or hamper further damage due to light, dust, and other elements.

This system of correctly preserving and mounting a flag requires experts to ensure the procedure is done correctly, as any error could result in irreversible damage. Some flags were folded or waded up decades ago and stored in that manner for years. As a result even the process of unfolding the flags is painstaking and slow to ensure the flags do not tear due to the resulting stress points in the fabric and threads. One of the leading experts on textile preservation in the United States has been Fonda Thomsen of Maryland.²⁶ She operated the firm Textile Preservation Associates, Inc. In 2007 Cathy Heffern acquired the firm and continues Fonda's work.²⁷ Textile Preservation Associates has been responsible for working on articles belonging to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, as well as the United States flag hoisted over Iwo Jima, along with other extraordinary material items of American history.²⁸

Many Alabama Confederate flags have been subject to the detailed work of Thomsen along with her team of experts. The manner detailed above describing the process of preserving the flags is a specialty of her firm. According to author Mary Ann Fergus, "The system, called pressure-mounting, provides uniform support over the entire surface of the flag without any intervention and the flag is not exposed to fluctuations in

²⁶ http://www.nonpareilonline.com/news/foundation-offers-battle-flag-preservation-lab-tours/article_d7fce1a8-1986-5de8-9c07-bcd6f7cbf6c6.html

²⁷ https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/economy_and_business/ranson-firm-preserves-fabric-of-american-history/article_c0a81d0f-6fe1-5bbb-9634-6f88bdb3487c.html

²⁸ Ibid.

temperature."²⁹ Fergus continues, stating, "The average cost of conserving a flag is about \$10,000."³⁰ This estimate is a low figure, as most flags require more work and therefore the cost is greater. Another source states that "some flags cost more than \$25,000 to restore."³¹

Unless and until flags are pressure mounted, the best and basically only way to store them is to lay them flat in a metal drawer as stated earlier about the flags of the 10th and 44th Alabama Infantry Regiments. In speaking of flag conservation around the country, in *Changing Views of Textile Conservation*, it is noted that,

Beginning in the mid-1980's, textile conservators, working with curators and historians, have been reevaluating the condition, care, storage, and display of many of the significant flag collections in the United States. This time, rather than being cared for in isolation, flag collections are being evaluated and treated according to the guidelines of mainstream textile conservation. The current emphasis on preventative conservation, including documentation and re-housing, that is seen throughout contemporary textile conservation is the key to present-day flag conservation and preservation.³²

Changing Views observes that, "Rather than treating individual flags for exhibition, textile conservators now seek to care for entire flag collections."³³ These operations require generous sums of money to cover the cost of the delicate task of correctly maintaining the physical condition of the flags before they are put away safely in archival storage. The preeminent issue concerning the display, preservation, and interpretation of the flags at the ADAH is undoubtedly the issue of the availability of monetary resources to realize these objectives. Sources of revenue materialize from numerous organizations, both public and private.

²⁹ Mary Ann Fergus, "The Story of Texas Flags, 1836-1945," *Houston Chronicle*, January 7, 2002.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ <http://www.firstwhitehouse.org/confederate-flags-conserved-at-alabama-archives/>

³² Mary M. Brooks and Dinah Eastrop, eds., *Changing Views of Textile Conservation* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2011), 55.

³³ Ibid.

Officials at the ADAH established a flag preservation fund, known as the Flag Conservation Project, to receive monetary contributions for the preservation of the flags in the archives.³⁴ In some cases, money can be earmarked to be used on the preservation of certain flags. This money is a crucial supplement to the meager and otherwise inadequate amount of money that the ADAH receives from the state to develop their preservation efforts. Luckily, nonprofit organizations, the Sons of Confederate Veterans, Civil War reenactors, and similar groups contribute time and money to the flags and to the Save the Flags Fund, without which many flags would be in danger of being lost forever.³⁵ This time and money allows the staff of the ADAH to properly curate the flags, or hire outside sources to handle the cleaning and preservation processes.

After the flags have undergone proper cleaning techniques, they are still subject to deterioration unless properly maintained. The majority of the flags at the ADAH are stored in special metal drawers in one room in order to tightly control their safekeeping. The room is closely monitored for variations in temperature and humidity to ensure that the flags are kept in pristine conditions conducive to their continued existence. In just a short amount of time, the flags can either become too dry and fade and crack, or oppositely they can become too moist and begin to mold, mildew, and grow damaging fungus. Neither of these conditions is necessarily evident to the human eye, but they can cause irreparable damage. Several of the flags at the ADAH are in such poor condition that they are rarely and in some cases never displayed and the drawers in which they are housed are likewise rarely opened. One such flag is that of the 26th/50th Alabama Infantry Regiment, of which only a few shreds

³⁴ Robert Bradley, "Alabama's Civil War Flags; Tattered Banners," *Alabama Heritage Magazine*, 96 (Spring 2010), 21.

³⁵ Bradley, *Documenting the Civil War Period Flag Collection*, iii.

of the original flag exist.³⁶ That flag falls into the latter category, in that it will never be displayed due to its delicate condition. The remnants of that flag can be seen in Appendix C Figure 17.

Some flags, however, are in great condition, including the flags of the 22nd, 33rd, and 18th Alabama Infantry Regiments. One of the flags of the 18th Alabama Infantry was repatriated to the state of Alabama in 1905 due to the work of Thomas Owen.³⁷ The history of these flags and other Alabama Confederate flags are complete enough to understand their entire history, from their initial use during the Civil War until their current history at the ADAH.

One of the most feared battle flags of the Civil War belonged to several hard fighting regiments under the command of Confederate General Patrick Cleburne. Known as the Hardee Pattern Battle Flag, this flag simply consisted of a white moon on a blue field.³⁸ Along with the name of the unit, these colors often incorporated battle honors attributed to the regiment. The 33rd Alabama carried a flag of this type for the majority of the war, as did many of her sister regiments, including the 18th Alabama Infantry. A flag of the 33rd Alabama can be seen in Appendix C Figure 12. During the war the 33rd served respectively in Hawthorn's brigade, followed by Wood's brigade and finally Lowrey's brigade, along with the 16th and 45th Alabama regiments, and the 32nd and 45th Mississippi regiments.³⁹

³⁶ <http://www.archives.state.al.us/referenc/FLAGS/049.html>

³⁷ Military Service Institution of the United States, *Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, Volume 37* (New York: By Authority of the Executive Council, 1879), 579.

³⁸ Cannon, *The Flags of the Confederacy*, 55.

³⁹ Stewart Sifakis, *Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama* (New York, NY: Facts on File, 1992), 102.

Other units served in these brigades, but these particular regiments fought together the longest.

Two flags, one of the 33rd Alabama and one of the 16th Alabama, reside in the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery. One flag of the 45th Alabama Infantry and one of the 31st Alabama Infantry were in the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa, but were returned, on loan, to Alabama.⁴⁰ Those flags can be seen in Appendix C Figure 14. The 33rd, 16th, and the 45th Alabama regiments all lost their flags in the savage fighting around the Carter Cotton Gin at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee, on November 29, 1864.⁴¹ These flags of the 33rd Alabama Infantry and the 16th Alabama Infantry were repatriated in 1905 and Thomas McAdory Owen received them to keep and maintain them for the State of Alabama.

Fortunately these flags are stable enough that they are capable of being put on display for the public, however they are closely monitored. The Alabama Department of Archives and History utilizes one special room to house a rotating display of Alabama Confederate flags. This room is again closely monitored to control agents of deterioration, and the room itself is dimly lit as one aspect of this proactive preservation process. The museum is only able to display a mere fraction of the flags in the collections of the ADAH. The archives generally displays only 3 or 4 flags. The flags are aligned on the wall of the room behind a barrier behind which visitors are not allowed.

Often articles associated with the same unit are displayed alongside the flags, including swords, letters, pictures, or other items that lend a personal, human story to the flag itself.

⁴⁰ <http://www.peachlivingmagazine.com/?p=336>

⁴¹ Dedmond, *The Flags of Civil War Alabama*, 65.

Any number of factors can eliminate a flag from being displayed at the ADAH. The dual function of the ADAH as both a storage facility and a museum for public display is not only limited by money, but also space among other factors. It would require an inordinate amount of space to display the flags even if they were all preserved.

The display of Alabama Confederate flags and the accurate portrayal of their unique history remain almost impossible given the monetary restrictions and the effort that would be required to correctly convey this history. Not being able to handle so many tasks at once, the ADAH exhibits suffer because of neglect on the level of government administration rather than suffering from museum staff. In a delicate balance in attempting to interpret these flags, the flag exhibit focuses primarily on the brief history of the flag, including its origin, use in battle, often its capture, and subsequent history prior to being preserved at the archives.

Alabama officials are still working to obtain additional Alabama related flags from other states and also from private owners. Some groups, including both states and private owners, simply refuse to donate or sell these artifacts to the ADAH. Confederate Memorial Hall in New Orleans currently stores an Alabama flag pierced by 82 holes during the Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia.⁴² The flag is not displayed in a protective case, but rather is folded up and barely recognizable as the exceptional artifact that it is.

A private owner loaned a flag of the 42nd Alabama Infantry to the State of Alabama and the ADAH put forth the money to have the flag properly cleaned and framed. The owner then requested the flag be returned to him and subsequently sold the flag after the state had paid for its proper preservation. A flag of the 33rd Alabama Infantry is also in

⁴² Ibid., 111.

private hands, and the owner has no intentions of relinquishing ownership to the ADAH. These current stories of successes and as of yet failures by the ADAH mark the latest trends in the history of Alabama Confederate flags and their preservation and interpretation.

As stated by author Randal Allred, "One cannot begin to express adequately the impact of the American Civil War on our cultural consciousness."⁴³ Without seeming pessimistic, it currently appears almost impossible to adequately display Alabama Confederate flags at the ADAH, as well as other artifacts from the Civil War, given the host of factors that exist beyond the control of the museum. The museum rather serves as an elaborate storage facility. Given the current conditions, it is difficult to extrapolate upon the future history of Alabama related Confederate flags. The preservation and interpretation issues surrounding the Alabama Confederate flags at the ADAH are immensely complex, but regardless of this fact the current conditions at the ADAH need improving. Issues encompassing the historical context of the flags and also their historiography, including their preservation and interpretation, need to be studied and positive strides at the ADAH must be taken to further promote flag history.

The growth of the flag collection exponentially enlarges the need for space, money, and qualified curators and professionals to handle the task of caring for these flags. As it stands the Alabama Department of Archives and History is doing a commendable job with their Confederate flag collection given the conditions under which they are working. The history of the Alabama Confederate flags in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery is need unique and adds a certain dimension of historical awareness to the State of Alabama and the United States as a whole.

⁴³ Randal Allred, "Catharsis, Revision, and Re-enactment: Negotiating the Meaning of the American Civil War," *Journal of American Culture*, 19.4, Winter 1996, 1.

The Alabama Department of Archives and History continues to receive generous monetary contributions earmarked for the Confederate flag preservation fund. This funding has made it possible for many flags to be sent away for conservation treatment. To aide in this endeavor, the ADAH has developed a small brochure which describes the Flag Conservation Project and examples of successes concerning flag preservation.⁴⁴ Although issues regarding the display and interpretation of Confederate flags may be at an impasse, the work of physically preserving the flags continues. Through these processes the flags are well preserved, and once stored in adequate locations at the ADAH, as well as being closely monitored, they are in the best condition possible given modern technical and scientific capabilities.

Speaking about the history and the preservation of Alabama Confederate flags, historian Robert Bradley expertly states, “These flags are fragile reminders of Alabama’s political and military history. It is important that they be preserved and that they are studied and analyzed within the context of the time in which they were created and used.”⁴⁵

The future fate of Confederate flags rests in the realm of the unknown. One can only hope that future generations of historians can continue to learn more about these flags and pass their knowledge on to others. As with the flags of the 10th and 44th Alabama Infantry Regiments, for over 100 years their fate was unknown. Now that they have been found once again, as well as being properly preserved, hopefully they will never be lost again. Hopefully curious visitors can visit the Alabama Department of Archives and History for years to come, view the flags, and take away from the experience what meanings, emotions, and history that they so choose.

⁴⁴ http://www.archives.alabama.gov/gallery/tattered_banners_guide.pdf

⁴⁵ Robert Bradley, “Alabama’s Civil War Flags; Tattered Banners,” *Alabama Heritage Magazine*, 96, (Spring 2010), 21.

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**APPENDIX A:
RECORD OF REBEL FLAGS CAPTURED BY UNION TROOPS AFTER APRIL 19,
1861*¹**

- 2.** Confederate Battle Flag of 5th Alabama Regiment, captured at Chancellorsville, Virginia May 3rd 1863 by 111th Pennsylvania Volunteers, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division, 1st Corps. See 222.2
- 5.** United States Flag Stars and Stripes, captured at Battle of New Market Road, June 30th 182, by Patrick Ryan, Co. D., 4th Regiment Pennsylvania Reserve Volunteer Corps from the 11th Alabama Regiment. This flag was used by the Rebels to deceive the United States troops. Supposed to have been loaned and never returned.
- 21.** Confederate Battle Flag of 30th Alabama Regiment captured at Murfreesboro February 1863 by General A. G. McCook. Returned 3-25-05. C. Ord. Office.18.
- 42.** Confederate Battle Flag of 11th Alabama Regiment captured at the Battle of Willis' Church, Virginia, June 30th 1862, in a charge by Colonel L. Magillon 4th Regiment Penn Reserves Corps Mead's Brigade General McCalls Division 5th Army Corps by Isaac Springer Co. K of the above Regiment. Known in general orders as the Battle of New Market Roads. Returned 3-25-05 C 37.
- 60.** Confederate Battle Flag of the 13th Alabama Regiment, captured by Company C 1st Delaware Volunteers. Returned 3-25-05. C 54.
- 61.** Confederate Battle Flag of 11th Alabama Infantry, captured by the 57th New York Volunteers, Richardson's Division, Sumner's Corps. Returned 3-25-05. C 55.
- 72.** Confederate Battle Flag, captured at the battle of New Market Cross Roads, June 30th, 1863 (1862), by Private Wm. Gallagher Co. F 9th Regt. Penn Reserve troops 3rd Brigade McCalls Division, from the 10th Alabama Infantry. Gallagher having killed the original bearer of the colors, took prisoner a second, who attempted to recover and raise it. Delivered to 61st N.Y.V. Dec 30 1863 by order of the Secty of War. 66.
- 86.** Battle Flag of the 18th Alabama Regiment, captured by Liet. S. F. Josselyn, 13th Illinois Infantry. Gen'l Osterhaus' Division 15th Army Corps, at the Battle of Missionary Ridge November 25th 1863 Returned 3-25-05. Ord. Office 78.
- 91.** Confederate Battle Flag, of 38th Alabama Infantry captured at Missionary Ridge Nov. 25th 1863 by the 2nd Regt. Ohio Vols. Col. A. G. McCook, Carlins Brigade, Johnson's Division, Palmer's 4th Corps Thomas' Dept. Gen'l Grant's Military Division. Returned 3-25-05.
- 194.** Battle Flag of the 6th Alabama Regiment captured by B. F. Davis 22nd Mass. Volunteers 2nd Brigade 1st Division 5th Army Corps. S. W. Ord. Office Returned 3-25-05. 177.
- 206.** Colors of the 8th and 19th Alabama Regiments. C. Returned 3-25-05. 189.
- 222.** Battle Flag of the 5th Alabama Regiment, captured by the 111th Penn. Vols. 2nd Brigade, 2nd Division 12th A. C. at Chancellorsville VA. May 3rd 1863. Ord. Office See No. 2 Returned 3-25-05.
- 232.** Battle Flag of the 38th Regiment Alabama Volunteers, captured at the Battle of Resaca, May 15th 1864 by Captain Box Co. D, 27th Indiana Vols. 2nd Brigade 1st Division 20th Army Corps, Army of the Cumberland, Major General Thomas Commanding. C. Ord. Office Returned 3-25-05. 214.
- 242.** Flag of the 16th Alabama Regiment, captured by A. Greenwalt Co. G 104th O.V.I. 1st

¹ Ordnance Museum, War Department, *Catalogue of Rebel Flags captured by Union Troops, since April 19, 1861* (Washington: A.G.O.), n.p., n.d.

- Brigade, 3rd Division, 23rd A. C. S. W. Ord. Office [Nov. 30/64] Returned 3-25-05. 224.
- 259.** Battle Flag of the 41st Alabama Volunteer captured by Corp. F. W. Lutes Company C. 111th New York Volunteers in the charge of the enemy upon our lines before Petersburg March 31st 1865. S. W. Returned March 25th 1905. 239.
- 347.** Battle Flag of the 14th Alabama Regiment captured by Ed Hoary, Priv. Co. B 25th N.Y. Cav. At Winchester, Va. Sept. 19/64 Samuel Cassady 1st U.S. Cavy assisted in capture Information acc'd from Wm. D. Campbell late of 25 NY Cavy P.O. 464 manor Street Columbia Pa E. W. Returned 3-25-05. 325.
- 392.** Battle Flag of the 48th Alabama, Fields Division, Longstreet's Corps, N. W. Ord. Office Returned 3-25-05. 371.
- 449.** 2nd Ala Inf. Rebel Flag, captured by Serg't. Geo. F. Robinson, Co. B, 119th Ill. Vols at Blakely Ala. April 9th 1865. C Ord. Office Returned 3-25-05. 427
- 453.** Ala Rebel Flag, nearly Blakely, Ala April 4th 1865 by Private Thomas Riley, Co. D, 1st La. Cavalry (captured) NW Ord office 431.
- 521.** Ala. Rebel Battle Flag captured by Private P. Murphy Co. K. 5th Ohio Vols at the Battle of Antietam Sept . 17th 1862. C. Returned 4-26-05. 496.
- 534.** Colors of the Clanton Alabama Brig. Captured by the 2nd Indiana Cavalry, 2nd Brigade, 1st Division Cavalry Corps M. D. M. near Montgomery. Ala. April 1865. F. R. Returned 3-25-05. 505.

*Note: The numbering system used here represents the number given by the War Department to the flag upon its capture thus the record is numbered 1-545. For instance, the number of the flag of the 14th Alabama Infantry Regiment is 347.

This appendix only gives a partial counting of Alabama flags, as other unnamed/unnumbered flags in the record belong to Alabama regiments, but are not written in the original record as such.

Grammatical errors have not been altered, including punctuation and sentence fragments, even though clarity and sometimes meaning are affected.

**APPENDIX B:
FLAGS AT THE ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY²**

Infantry Regiments and Battalions

1st Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. C-G, Perote Guards)
 1st Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. I-K, Wilcox True Blues)
 2nd Alabama Infantry Regiment (Reserves, Re-designated, 63rd Alabama Infantry)
 2nd Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. C, Claiborne Guards)
 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. C., Magnolia Cadets)
 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. D, Canebroke Rifles)
 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. E., Conecuh Guards)
 4th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. G, Marion Light Infantry)
 5th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 5th Alabama Infantry Battalion (Co. B, Calhoun Sharpshooters)
 5th Alabama Infantry Battalion
 6th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 6th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. E., Hayneville Guards)
 7th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. K, Florence Guards)
 8th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 10th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 11th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. E, Yancey Rifles)
 11th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 13th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 13th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 14th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 15th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 16th Alabama Infantry (Hardee Pattern)
 18th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 18th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Hardee Pattern)
 20th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 22nd Alabama Infantry Regiment (Polk's & Bragg's Corps Pattern)
 22nd Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. I, Pike Grays)
 23rd Alabama Infantry Regiment
 23rd Alabama Infantry Regiment
 24th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 24th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. E., Dickinson Guards)
 26th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 26th/50th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 28th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 29th Alabama Infantry Regiment (misidentified as the 34th Alabama Infantry)
 30th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 33rd Alabama Infantry Regiment (Hardee Pattern)
 34th Alabama Infantry Regiment

² <http://www.archives.alabama.gov/referenc/flags/index.html>

36th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 37th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. E)
 38th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Hardee Pattern)
 38th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 39th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. K, Mitchell Volunteers, fragment)
 40th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 40th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 41st Alabama Infantry Regiment
 43rd Alabama Infantry Regiment (probable)
 44th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 45th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. B, Dixie Sledge Guards, not Civil War)
 48th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 57th Alabama Infantry Regiment (Co. A, Clanton Rifles)
 58th Alabama Infantry Regiment (32nd and 58th combined)
 59th Alabama Infantry Regiment
 Hilliard's Legion

Cavalry Regiments

1st Alabama Cavalry
 6th Alabama Cavalry

Artillery Batteries

Lumsden's Battery
 James R. Cumming's flag (a gunner in Ketchum's Battery)
 Waddell's Battery (miniature)
 Water's Battery (Polk's & Bragg's Corps Pattern)
 Montgomery True Blues (W. G. Andrews' Battery)
 Gage's Battery (probable)

Brigades

Rucker's Brigade (carried by Co. F, 7th Alabama Cavalry)

Companies-Listed by Name (Regimental Designation Unknown)

Rifle Scouts (captured in Selma by the 4th Ohio Cavalry)

Companies-Not Attached to a Regiment

Watts' Cadets (late war, Montgomery home guard unit)
 Marion Rifles or Marion Light Infantry (possible)

C.S. Naval Flags

Auxiliary Flag of the C.S.S. Alabama
 Flag of the C.S.S. Florida
 Admiral Semmes' Flag

Civil War Flags (with no regimental or company designation)

C.S.A. Flag (miniature, combined First and Second National Pattern)

C.S.A. Flag (miniature, First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (Third National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (miniature, First National Pattern)
 C.S.A. Flag (fragment of the original First National flag)
 C.S.A. Flag (fragment, First National Pattern, questionable Civil War vintage)
 U.S. National Flag (34 stars)
 U.S. National Flag (printed, 34 stars)
 U.S. National Flag (34 stars, possible Regimental Flag)

Secession Flags

Alabama Secession Convention Flag
 Alabama Secession Convention Flag (fragment)
 Young Men's Secession Association, Mobile

Mexican War

1st Alabama Volunteers (Co. D, Chattahoochee Guards)

*Flags with multiple listings indicates that more than one flag is contained within the collection for that regiment. This list is amended; flags no longer in the collection have been deleted.

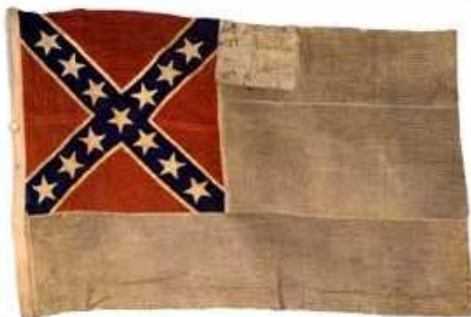
APPENDIX C: Alabama Confederate flags*

Flags of the Confederacy

The Confederate States of America adopted three different national flag patterns between 1861 and 1865. The Provisional Confederate Congress adopted the **First National pattern**, also referred to as the "*Stars and Bars*," on March 4, 1861. This pattern flag flew over the Capitol at Montgomery, Alabama, where the Provisional Congress met prior to the bombardment of Fort Sumter in April 1861.



The **Second National pattern**, also referred to as the "*Stainless Banner*," was adopted May 1, 1863 and incorporated the Army of Northern Virginia's battle flag design in the canton on a white field. The first official use of the Second National pattern flag was on Stonewall Jackson's casket when his body lay in state in Richmond, May 10, 1863.



The **Third National pattern**, adopted March 4, 1865, shortened the white field and added a vertical red bar to the end of the Second National pattern flag. Very few, if any, of the Third National pattern flags saw service during the war, since General Lee's Army of Northern Virginia surrendered just a few weeks later at Appomattox.



In addition to the national flags of the Confederacy, there were many battle flag patterns used by the Confederate armies. The following are among the battle flag patterns represented in the Museum's collection:

Figure 1. First, Second and Third National Confederate flags. Image source: http://www.leonidaspolk.org/linked_files/Flags%20of%20the%20Confederacy%20Museum%20of%20the%20Confederacy.html

*All images from the Alabama Department of Archives and History except where noted

The **Army of Northern Virginia pattern battle flag**, first issued to units beginning in November 1861, was designed to be a distinctive flag for use on the battlefield. It underwent numerous revisions in design and materials throughout the war. Although this particular flag is the most common flag pattern associated with the Confederate States of America, the Confederate Congress never officially adopted this flag, except as the canton of the Second and Third National patterns.



The **Hardee pattern battle flag** was designed by Gen. Simon Buckner who led a division under Gen. William Hardee. According to an anonymous soldier under Buckner's command, Buckner's wife made flags that had "no artistic taste about it, but which could not be mistaken." The Hardee pattern battle flag was issued to units beginning in November 1861. It featured a blue field with a white border enclosing a full moon.



The **Polk pattern battle flag**, which incorporated a St. George's cross, was designed by Gen. Leonidas Polk, an Episcopal bishop before the war. It was issued to units beginning in January 1862. It incorporated eleven white stars on a red St. George's cross on a blue field.



Figure 2: Army of Northern Virginia pattern battle flag, Hardee pattern battle flag, Polk Corps pattern battle flag. Image source: http://www.leonidaspolk.org/linked_files/Flags%20of%20the%20Confederacy%20%20Museum%20of%20the%20Confederacy.html

The **Van Dorn pattern** battle flag was carried by The Army of the West under the command of Gen. Earl Van Dorn and was issued to units in 1862; June through September 1862 are the generally accepted issue dates, but the flag may have been used as early as March 1862. It featured thirteen white stars and a crescent moon on a red field.



The **Army of Tennessee pattern** battle flag was ordered by Gen. Joseph Johnston in an attempt to standardize the flags carried by the Western Army. This rectangular design with no borders was based on the Army of Northern Virginia battle flag. The Army of Tennessee pattern battle flag was issued to units beginning in January 1864. It incorporated twelve to thirteen white stars on a blue St. Andrew's cross on a red field.



After the Civil War, 545 captured Confederate flags were held by the U.S. War Department in Washington, D.C. These flags were stenciled with a number in black ink and, in some cases, capture histories were handwritten on linen tags sewn onto the flag. Detailed records were kept so that the government could award the Congressional Medal of Honor for capturing an enemy flag. Today, these records, detailed in the National Archives' Register of Captured Flags, are valuable tools for historians.

Figure 3: Van Dorn pattern battle flag, Army of Tennessee pattern battle flag. No known Alabama infantry, cavalry, or artillery units carried the Van Dorn pattern flag. Alabama troops did however fight alongside Confederate troops that did carry the Van Dorn pattern. Image source:

http://www.leonidaspolk.org/linked_files/Flags%20of%20the%20Confederacy%20%20Museum%20of%20the%20Confederacy.html



Obverse



Reverse

Figure 4: Flag of Company I and Company K, “Wilcox True Blues”, 1st Alabama Infantry. Obverse of flag with “Noli Mi Tangere”, Latin for “Touch Me Not”. Reverse of flag with “Wilcox True Blues Woman’s Offering to Patriotism” painted on the flag.



Obverse



Reverse

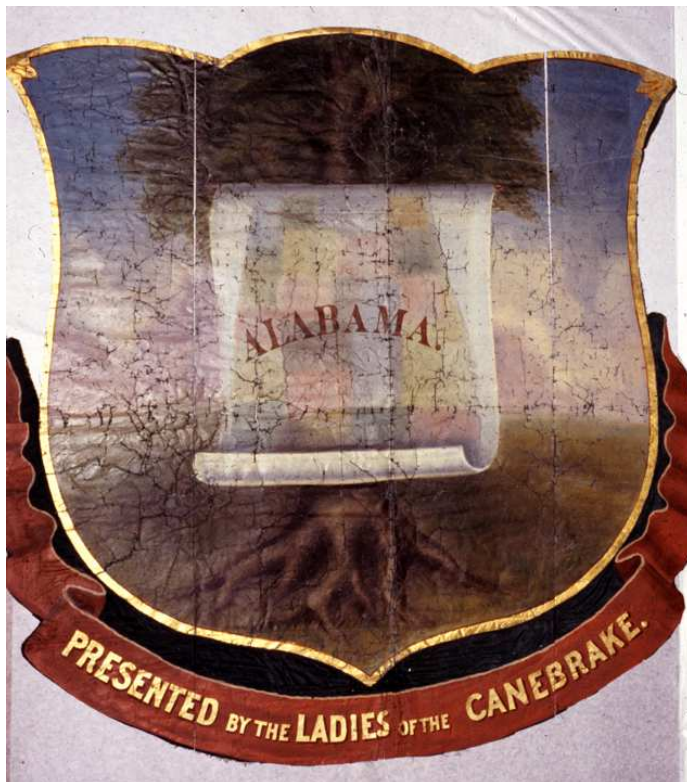
Figure 5: Flag of the "Claiborne Guards", Company C, 2nd Alabama Infantry. Obverse marked "Claiborne Guards March 1861". Reverse marked "Citizen soldier, the Shield of Freedom". Strong resemblance to the United States flag.



Figure 6: Top: flag of the “Magnolia Cadets”, Company C, 4th Alabama Infantry. Bottom: flag of the “Conecuh Guards”, Company E, 4th Alabama Infantry. Both are unique company flags and bear little resemblance to any standard Confederate flag.



Obverse



Reverse

Figure 7: Flag of the “Canebrake Rifle Guards”, Company D, 4th Alabama Infantry. This flag was actually never carried in combat.



Obverse



Reverse

Figure 8: Flag of the “Marion Light Infantry”, Company G, 4th Alabama Infantry. This flag was carried at the Battle of 1st Manassas and according to history the flag bearer was carrying this flag when he witnessed the conversation which resulted in Gen. Thomas Jackson earning his nickname “Stonewall”.

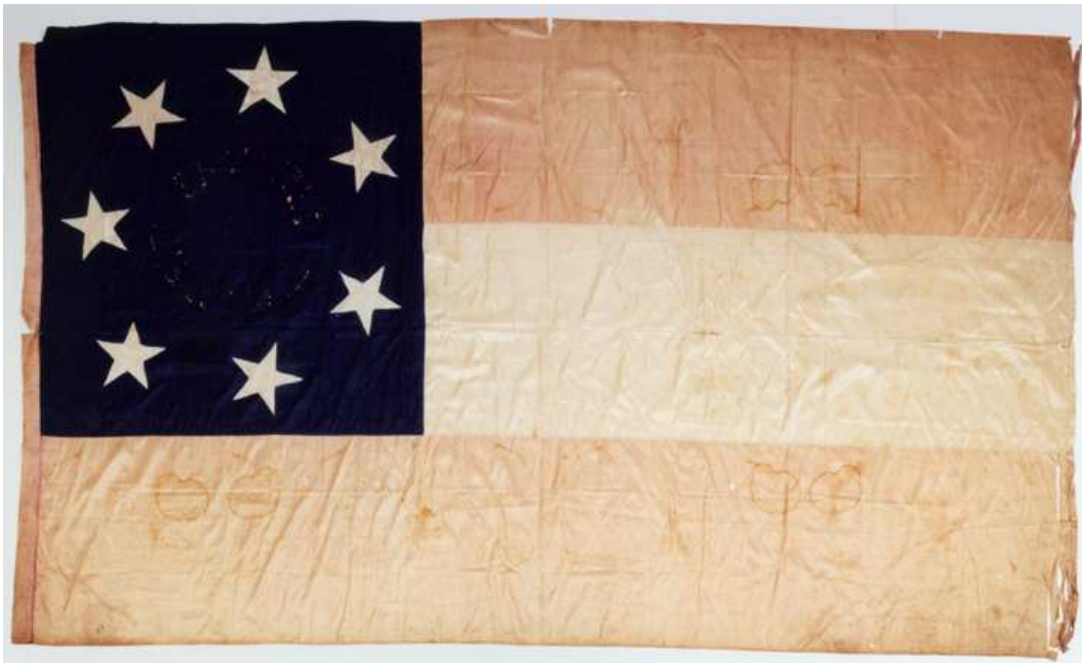


Figure 9: Top: flag of the “Calhoun Sharp Shooters, Company B, 5th Alabama Infantry Battalion. Bottom: flag of the “Florence Guards”, Company K, 7th Alabama Infantry. Both flags are examples of the Confederate First National Flag.



Obverse



Reverse

Figure 10: Flag of the 10th Alabama Infantry. This flag was captured at the Battle of Frazier's Farm, Virginia. This flag, along with a flag belonging to the 44th Alabama Infantry (Figure 11), was returned to the State of Alabama by Mr. Thomas Blackford in 2001.

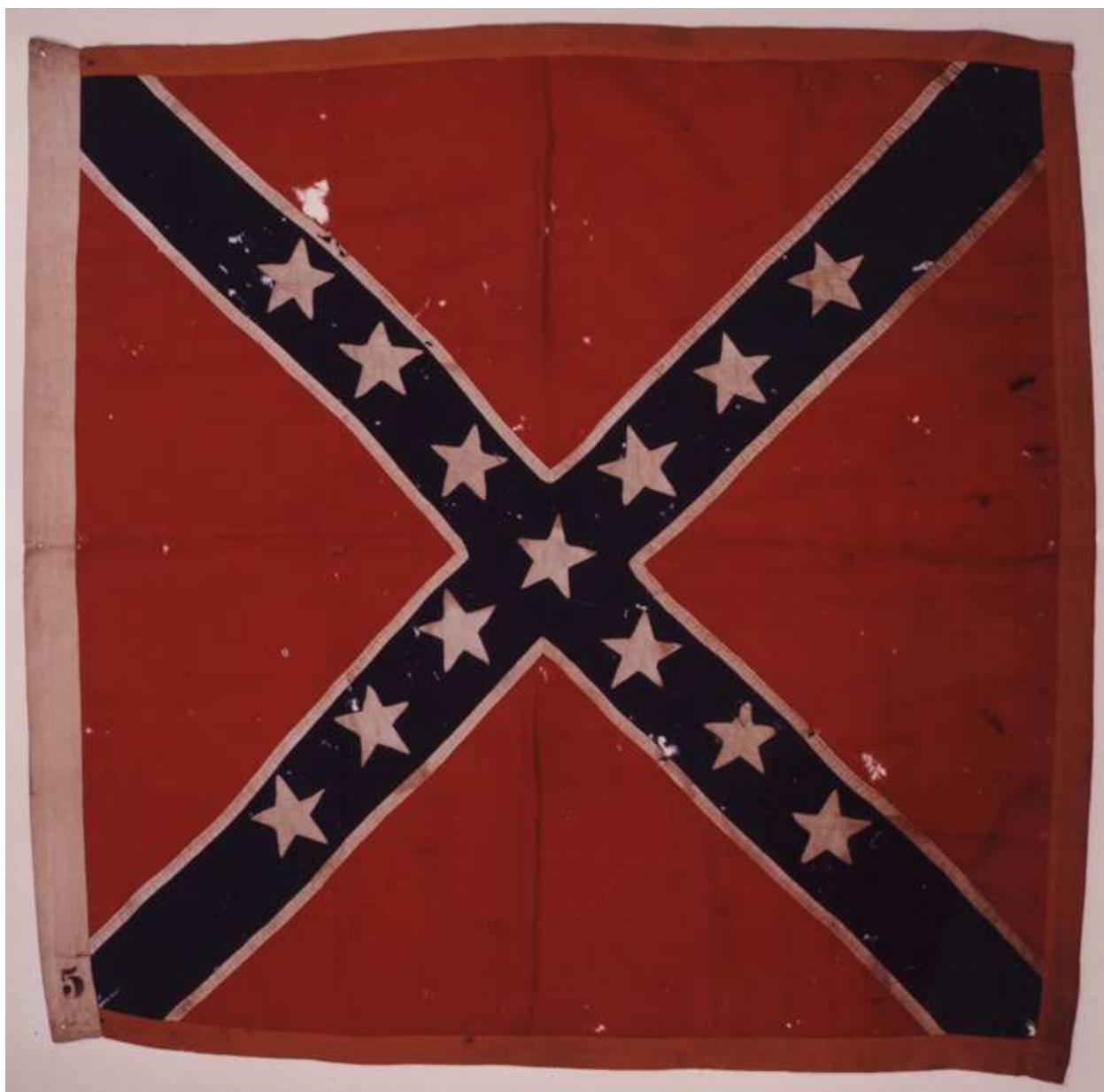
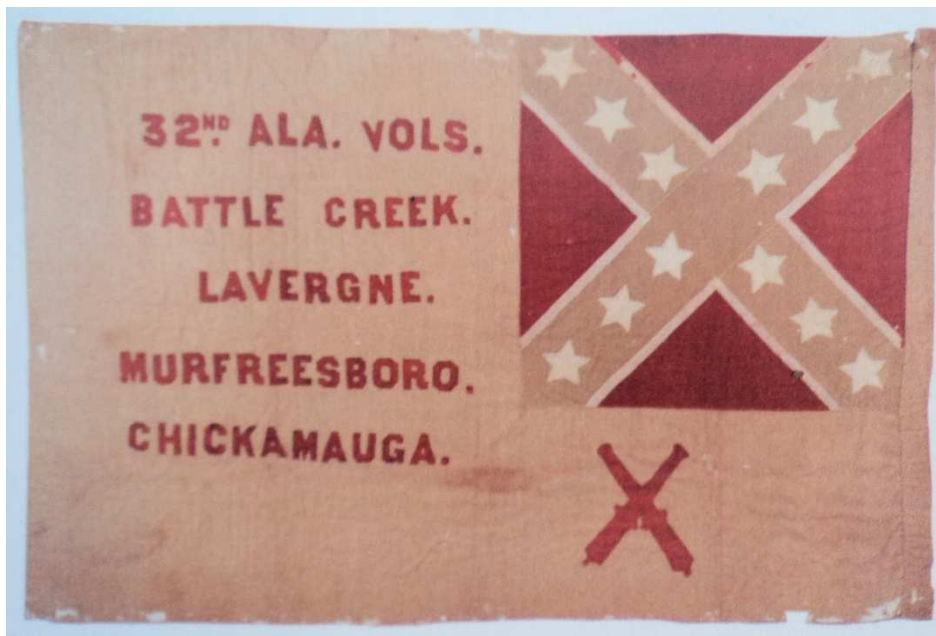


Figure 11: Flag of the 44th Alabama Infantry. This flag was captured at the Battle of Antietam on September 17th, 1862. This flag, along with a flag belonging to the 10th Alabama Infantry (Figure 10), was returned to the State of Alabama by Mr. Thomas Blackford in 2001.



Figure 12: Top: Hardee pattern flag of the 33rd Alabama Infantry. Bottom: Hardee pattern flag of the 16th Alabama Infantry. Both flags were captured at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee in 1864.



Confederate Second National Flag - Connected to Alabama Captain Reuben Kidd

Figure 13: Top: Flag of the 32nd Alabama Infantry.¹ Bottom: Personal flag belonging to Cpt. Reuben V. Kidd, Company A, 4th Alabama Infantry.² At present both flags are for sale in the public market available for anyone to purchase.

¹ <http://www.oldsouthantiques.com/os4008p1.htm>

² http://www.hcauctions.com/confederate_second_national_flag_connected_to_al-lot41127.aspx



Figure 14: Top: Flag of the 31st Alabama Infantry. Bottom: Flag of the 45th Alabama Infantry. The flag of the 31st was captured at Baker's Creek, Mississippi, while the flag of the 45th was captured near Atlanta, Georgia. The flags have recently been returned to Alabama by the State Historical Society of Iowa.³

³ <http://www.peachlivingmagazine.com/?p=336>

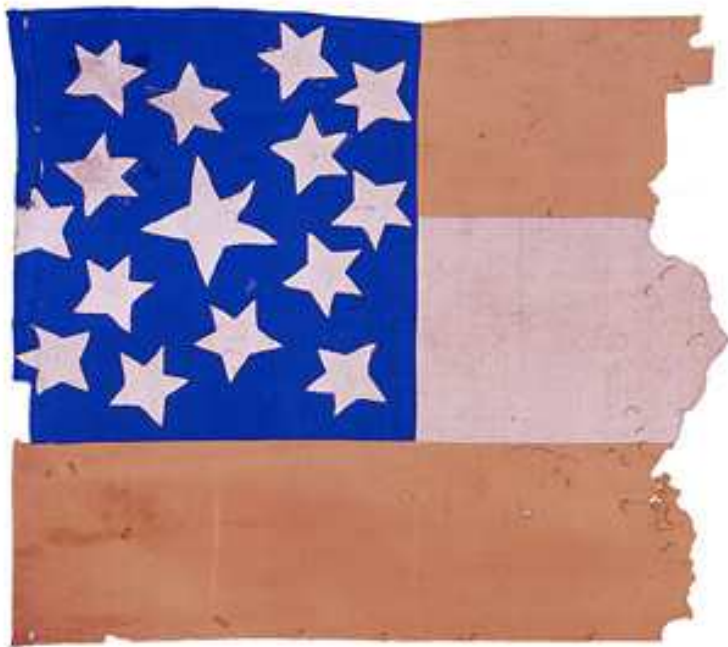


Figure 15: Top: Flag of the 15th Alabama Infantry used during the Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1862, image from the ADAH. Bottom: Remnant of flag thought to belong to the 47th Alabama Infantry and captured at the Battle of Antietam on September 17th, 1862.⁴

⁴ “47th Alabama Infantry (probable) National Flag, First National Pattern, Civil War”.
https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/btlflags/other/CSA_1stNational_47thAlabama1995.0303.htm

Obverse



Reverse



Figure 16: Flag of Hilliard's Alabama Legion. Hilliard's Legion was composed of infantry, cavalry, and artillery branches.

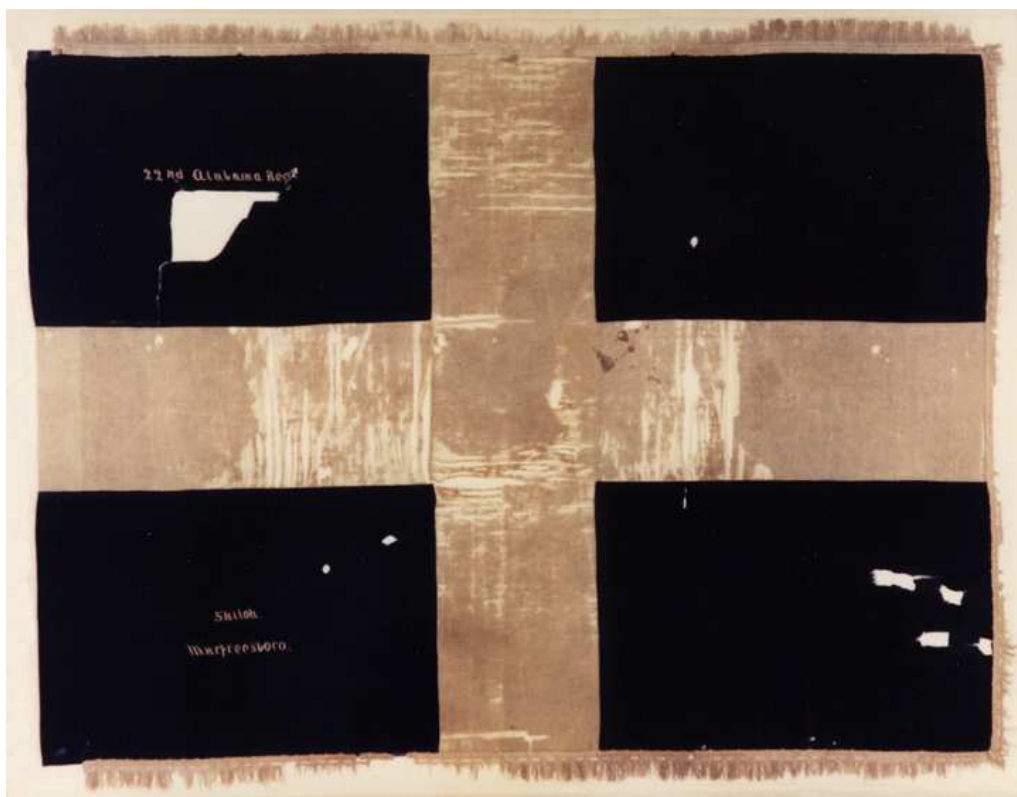


Figure 17: Top: Remnant of the flag of the 26th/50th Alabama Infantry. In such fragile condition, this flag is unable to be placed on display. Bottom: Polk's Corps pattern battle flag of the 22nd Alabama Infantry.



Figure 18: Top: Late war flag of the 48th Alabama Infantry. Bottom: Late war flag of the 14th Alabama Infantry.



Figure 19: Top: Flag of the 11th Alabama Infantry captured at the Battle of Frazier's Farm, Virginia on June 30th 1862.⁵ Bottom: Flag of the 11th Alabama Infantry captured at the Battle of Sharpsburg (Antietam), Maryland, on September 17th, 1862.

⁵ <http://moconfederacy.pastperfectonline.com/webobject/CA6CA534-94BE-4F43-B56D-615407303430>

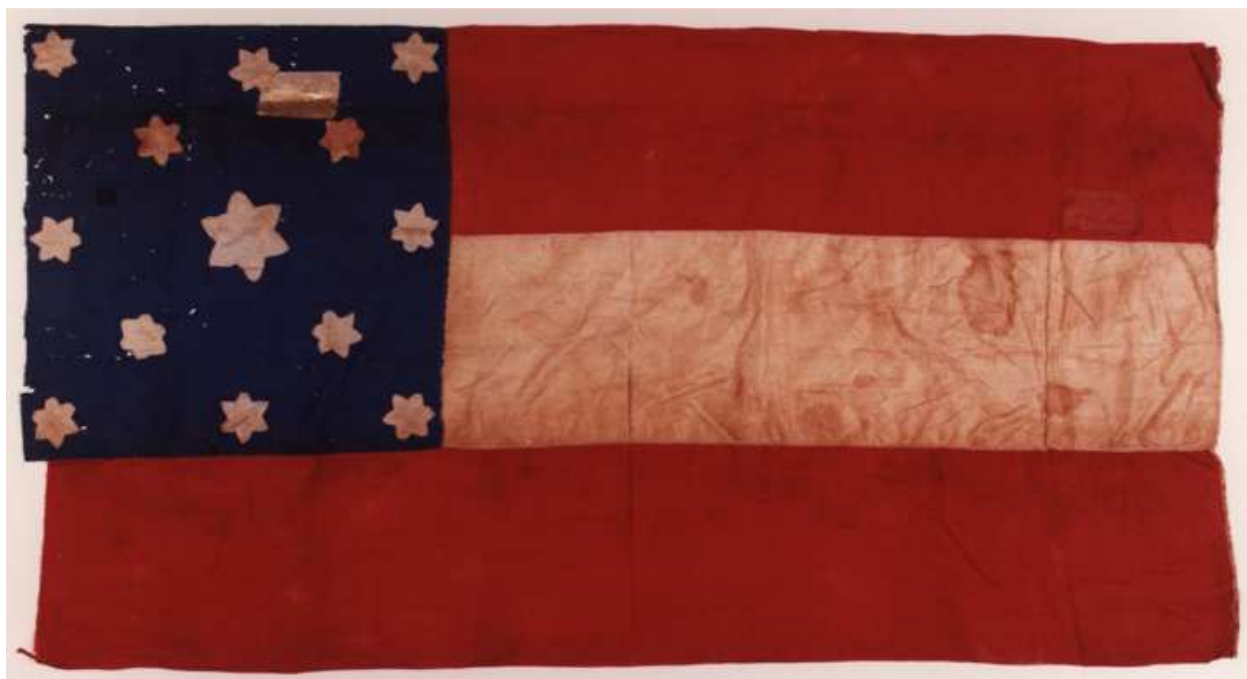


Figure 20: Top: Flag of Company E, 37th Alabama Infantry, First National Pattern. Bottom: Flag of the 18th Alabama Infantry used during 1864.

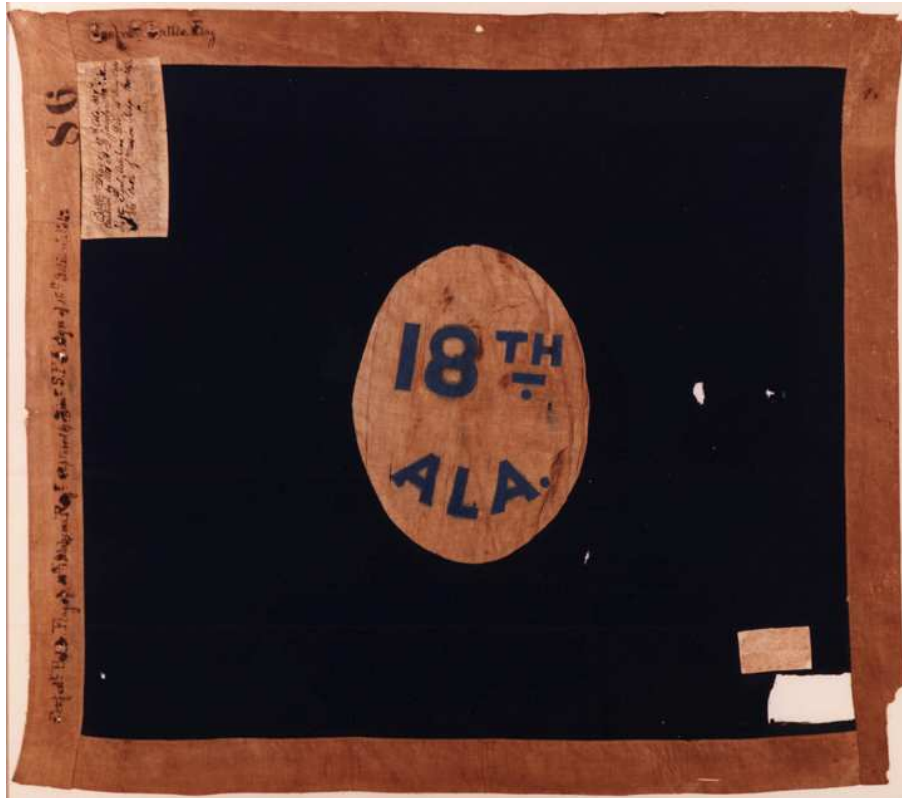


Figure 21: Top: Hardee pattern flag of the 18th Alabama Infantry captured at the Battle of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee on November 25th, 1863. Bottom: Flag produced by Henry Cassidy of New Orleans, carried by the 18th Alabama Infantry at the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee on April 6th, 1862.



Obverse



Reverse

Figure 22: Flag of the Company I, "Pike Greys", 22nd Alabama Infantry, carried at the Battle of Shiloh, Tennessee on April 6th, 1862. When the color bearer was killed carrying the flag, Captain William O. Baldwin of Company G took up the flag.