

Civil War Round Table Potpourri
June 12, 2007
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I SPEAK TO YOU TODAY NOT AS A PERSON FROM CONNECTICUT, NOT AS A NORTHERNER, NOT AS A SOUTHERNER, BUT AS AN AMERICAN. I SPEAK TODAY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF OUR HISTORY. HEAR ME FOR MY CAUSE.

IF YOU THINK THOSE WORDS PARAPHRASE ONE OF THE GREATEST SPEECHES IN ALL U.S. HISTORY YOU'RE RIGHT. DANIEL WEBSTER'S WORDS CHALLENGING THE NATION TO PRESERVE THE UNION 1850'S ARE AMONG THE GREATEST AND MOST POIGNANT IN THE SPEECHES OF OUR COUNTRY. WEBSTER'S GREATEST SPEECH WRECKED HIS POLITICAL CAREER, BUT HE SPOKE OUT FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED AND LOVED, THE PRESERVATION OF OUR NATION. WHAT'S RIGHT IS NOT ALWAYS POPULAR AND WHAT IS POPULAR IS NOT ALWAYS RIGHT. IT TAKES GUTS AND VISION TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT, EVEN IN THE FACE OF GREAT PERSONAL OR FINANCIAL COST.

BEING A FORMER HISTORY TEACHER, I THINK ABOUT HISTORY QUITE OFTEN. FOR ME AS AN AMERICAN THERE IS NO HISTORY MORE RELEVANT AND COMPELLING THAN THAT OF THE CIVIL WAR THAT PRESERVED OUR NATION. OUR NATIONAL HISTORY IS UNDER SEIGE. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER OF THE CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST, I CHALLENGE YOU TO BECOME ONE.

OFTEN THE MAGNITUDE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A CIVIL WAR BATTLE IS GAUGED IN TERMS OF THE SCOPE AND HORROR OF THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES; HOWEVER, THE STRATEGIC WHEELS OF FATE OFTEN TURN ON MORE SUBTLE OCCURANCES OF EVENTS. MANY TIMES PRESERVATION RECEIVES PUBLIC ATTENTION AND SUPPORT ONLY IN THE CASE OF THE LARGE BATTLES DETERMINED AS MOST IMPORTANT. I ASK YOU, HOWEVER, WHAT IS THE VALUE OF ALL OF THE LAND WHERE AMERICANS PAID FOR THEIR BELIEFS WITH THEIR LIVES? I BELIEVE IT IS PRICELESS AND IT DESERVES OUR PROTECTION.

ANYONE WHO CARES ABOUT AND UNDERSTANDS THE HISTORY OF OUR NATION CARES ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR. ANYONE WHO CARES ABOUT CIVIL WAR HISTORY UNDERSTANDS THAT THE PRESERVATION OF THE LAND WHERE GREAT STRUGGLES FORGED OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY IS CENTRAL TO OUR ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND THAT HISTORY. CIVIL WAR BATTLEFIELDS ARE THE OPEN AIR CLASSROOMS OF OUR NATION. PRESERVATION OF THESE NATIONAL TREASURES WILL BE OUR GENERATION'S GIFT TO OUR CHILDREN AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF OUR GREAT COUNTRY. WE CANNOT ACCEPT FAILURE IN THIS GREAT TASK.

THAT THE PRESERVATION COMMUNITY STANDS ON THE BRINK OF ETERNITY IN THE PRESERVATION STRUGGLE IS APPARENT TO ANYONE WHO VISITS THE OAK GROVE IN SHARPSBURG WHERE ROBERT E. LEE MADE HIS HEADQUARTERS DURING THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM. ALONG SIDE THAT BEAUTIFUL, QUIET SHRINKING STAND OF OAK TREES MARKED AS LEE'S HEADQUARTERS BY A GRANITE TABLET, ONE TURNS TO SEE DIRECTLY ALONG SIDE A STRIP OF BRAND NEW, PARTIALLY BUILT MODERN HOUSES GOING UP WITH THEIR FOUNDATIONS ALMOST ADJACENT TO THE GROVE ALONG THE BOONSBOROUGH PIKE. TRY TO CROSS THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE OLD STONE HOUSE ON MANASSAS BATTLEFIELD, WITHOUT BEING HIT AT THE BUSY CORNER OF THE WARRENTON TURNPIKE AND MANASSAS SUDLEY ROAD. STAND IN THE BACK YARD OF THE BELLE GROVE PLANTATION AT THE HEART OF THE CEDAR CREEK BATTLEFIELD AND HEAR AND SEE THE HUGE TRUCKS POURING IN AND OUT OF THE HUGE QUARRY THAT RIPS THROUGH THE LAND NEXT TO THE BATTLEFIELD. TRY TO LOCATE THE BATTLES OF NASHVILLE THAT RESIDE NOW ONLY UNDERNEATH THE PAVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA.

EVERYONE DEDICATED TO PRESERVATION KNOWS THAT WE STAND AT THE ABYSS. WE WILL EITHER PRESERVE AND PROTECT OUR HALLOWED GROUND NOW FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, OR WE WIL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND IT AGAIN. IT WILL BE FOREVER BURRIED UNDER THE STRIP MALLS, ASPHALT, AND TRACT HOUSES THAT WILL DESTROY IT FOREVER WITHIN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. OUR HISTORY IS UNDER SEIGE. IF YOU CARE, JOIN THE BATTLE FOR PRESERVATION; RALLY AROUND THE CAUSE. SUPPORT THE CIVIL WAR PRESERVATION TRUST. IF YOU ARE NOT A MEMBER JOIN. IF YOU ARE ALREADY A MEMBER, PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR SUPPORT. GOD BLESS AMERICA, OUR UNION AND OUR GREAT REPUBLIC. HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER AND WE'LL SEE YOU IN THE FALL.