

Olustee Observer

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

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BattleOfOlustee.org

HOLIDAY 2015 EDITION

November 30, 2015

Fond Farewell to a Living History Legend

While we were all grateful for the time off from work to be with our families this Thanksgiving holiday; *many hearts hung heavy with the news of Don Bowman's death*. As it came rather suddenly on the eve of the holiday weekend, it undoubtedly left many of us in a somber and reflective mood. Thousands knew him as the long, lean, grey-clad warrior who sat tall in the saddle, evoking unmistakable qualities of courage, chivalry, élan, and devotion. Several in the reenactment community were aware "Colonel Bowman" had been ill for some time, though he was last seen by some at the September Museum Committee meeting and looked to be in good spirits, if not his usual self. Don's presence was special. He brought an influential grace, intelligence, and zeal for authenticity to the craft of living history. In the wake of Thanksgiving - - rest assured of one more thing to be thankful for: we had Don Bowman representing the reenactment community for many blessed years. This loss will be intensely felt for many moons to come. Read more on his eventful passing later in this holiday edition of *The Olustee Observer*.



Above top: The Florida Department of the Gulf's Colonel Don Bowman astride the trusty bay warhorse that served him well for so many years. Photo taken at Olustee in 2001. Left and directly above: Bowman in attendance for the funeral of the recovered sailors perished in the CSS Hunley submarine. Photos taken in Charleston 2004.

Christmastime in the Civil War



Pictured above: A Christmastime illustration from Thomas Nast, conveying the compounded separation anxiety that couples endured during this sacred time of religious observance and family togetherness. Note in the upper left one of the earliest depictions of Santa Clause making one of his many chimney descents.

Civil War in Florida Holiday Memory Chest

Tampa - Christmas Eve, 1861

Robert Watson reported "[We] launched our 2nd boat and had a jolly time of it. Mr. Post requested Lieutenant Maloney to name her *Mollie Post* which was done. He brought down a lot of whiskey and we launched the boat with Mr. Crusoe and little Mollie Post in her. When the boat was in the water Mr. Crusoe gave us a short but very appropriate speech after which we all took a drink, and after supper went serenading and got gloriously tight on egg nog." Then on Christmas day, after a "splendid dinner, Watson again praised the egg nog. "We spent a very agreeable day at his [Mr. Richards] house and at night he had some of the best egg nog I ever drank."

Pensacola/Warrington - Christmas Day, 1861

The 75th New York now called their humble quarters *Camp Seward*. The morning drill underway was called off by Colonel Brown. "There should be no more drilling today. Andrew Frazer and some of his friends went shelling on the beach and passed entirely to the westward of Fort Pickens, and with a glass enjoyed a fine view of the rebel forts and batteries...pieces of exploded shells were lying around in great confusion, while in many places the ground was fairly plowed up by cannonballs...we returned by the bake house, and found that they had but a small amount of bread ready baked for our men."

References: *Diary of Robert Watson*, "Key West Avengers", 7th Florida; 75th New York History, "The Civil War in Florida - A Military History" by Lewis G. Schmidt

Civil War Holiday Memory Chest

The famous writer, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, had a son who joined the Union army without the blessing of his father. Henry was informed by letter from this oldest son, "Charles", of the fateful decision. Dated March 14, 1863: *"I have tried hard to resist the temptation of going without your leave but I cannot any longer," he wrote. "I feel it to be my first duty to do what I can for my country and I would willingly lay down my life for it if it would be of any good"*. Charles soon made lieutenant but in November was wounded in the Battle of New Hope Church (in Virginia) during the Mine Run Campaign. The father had only recently lost his wife, Frances, in an accidental fire. The grief and the worry overwhelmed Henry, inspiring him to write the poem "Christmas Bells" on Christmas day in 1863, later to become one of our greatest carols.

I HEARD THE BELLS ON CHRISTMAS DAY
THEIR OLD, FAMILIAR CAROLS PLAY,

AND WILD AND SWEET
THE WORDS REPEAT
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!

AND THOUGHT HOW, AS THE DAY HAD COME,
THE BELFRIES OF ALL CHRISTENDOM

HAD ROLLED ALONG
THE UNBROKEN SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!

TILL RINGING, SINGING ON ITS WAY,
THE WORLD REVOLVED FROM NIGHT TO DAY,

A VOICE, A CHIME,
A CHANT SUBLIME
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!

THEN FROM EACH BLACK, ACCURSED MOUTH
THE CANNON THUNDERED IN THE SOUTH,

AND WITH THE SOUND
THE CAROLS DROWNED
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!

IT WAS AS IF AN EARTHQUAKE RENT
THE HEARTH-STONES OF A CONTINENT,

AND MADE FORLORN
THE HOUSEHOLDS BORN
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!

AND IN DESPAIR I BOWED MY HEAD;
"THERE IS NO PEACE ON EARTH," I SAID;

"FOR HATE IS STRONG,
AND MOCKS THE SONG
OF PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN!"

THEN PEAL'D THE BELLS MORE LOUD AND DEEP:
"GOD IS NOT DEAD, NOR DOETH HE SLEEP;

THE WRONG SHALL FAIL,
THE RIGHT PREVAIL,

WITH PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD-WILL TO MEN."

References: Wikipedia

Civil War Era Christmas Recipe

Molasses Candy was loved by children and adults alike at Christmastime.

Take 2 quarts of molasses.

Put it in a large vessel (it boils over easily). Boil and stir it constantly to keep it from scorching. (Use medium heat).

Cook until it will form a soft boil when you drop a spoonful in very cold water.

Now remove it from the heat. Let cool enough so you can handle it with your hands. Have a dish or butter handy.

Grease your hands until candy won't stick to your hands.

Now take enough of the candy in your hands to make 2 or 3 sticks. Now pull the candy double back and pull again. Keep pulling and working the candy. In about 5 minutes, the candy will turn light yellow in color. Then it is ready to cut in stick lengths.

Stick it out to about the size of an ordinary stick of candy. Cut in stick lengths with a sharp knife.

Wrap in waxed paper. Store in cool place.

References: American Civil War Forum, Mountain Mak'ins in the Smokies





Above: Period illustration showing women's' fashions for Christmas 1864

Upcoming Meetings & Events	Articles of Interest	Odds & Ends
<p>Questions and membership dues can be mailed to: Olustee CSO, P.O. Box 382, Glen St. Mary, FL 32040</p> <p>The 2016 Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Olustee or Ocean Pond will be February 12-14.</p> <p>The next CSO board meeting, 1st Quarter 2016 will be held Saturday, January 9th at the park.</p> <p>The next museum committee meeting will be held Saturday, January 9th, 9:00a.</p>	<p>By-laws of the CSO and its Board of Directors have been updated. Copies are available through the CSO.</p> <p>Enticing corporate membership packages are being developed. More on this later.</p> <p>A very small fraternity of gentlemen have actually participated in every reenactment at OBHSP. Look for them to be honored at the upcoming 40th Anniversary event. More on this later.</p>	<p>For more information on the Osceola National Forest and other national forests in Florida, visit http://www.fs.usda.gov/florida .</p> <p>Visit floridareenactorsonline.com for a list of living history & reenactment events throughout Florida.</p> <p>A website is in development that will make logging volunteer hours with the Florida Park Service much easier!</p> <p>Acquisition of the Plum Creek lands across Highway 90 may be in the works. There have been meetings to discuss boundaries.</p>

The Reviewer

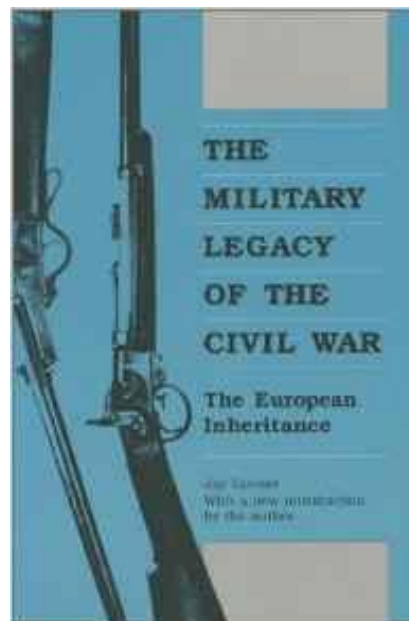
Reviews and recommendations of related books, music, & film....

CIVIL WAR

The Military Legacy of the Civil War – The European Inheritance

By Jay Luvaas, Professor of Military History, U.S. Army War College

If you are looking for a fascinating tale of the men who fought in the American Civil War and the battles they fought in, this isn't it. Instead the author provides us detailed information on how the European military, especially the British, French and Germans, observed and rated America's greatest conflict. Each nation of foreign observers saw our conflict in a different light, sometimes not to our credit. What they were mostly interested in was our use of railroads, large masses of volunteers, fortifications and how our generals utilized their artillery and cavalry assets. The observers also considered how this information might be used to sustain or revamp military concepts in Europe. After several chapters describing each nation's foreign observers and their actions, the author then devotes several chapters describing how the observers' information was used by their military. While this is interesting to the dedicated Civil War student, probably the finest section was the last. Here the author describes how the European military, especially the British, re-evaluated the American Civil War toward the end of the century and discovered that the Civil War and its leaders were much more important than originally thought. This trend continued past the end of World War I and into World War II. Available on Amazon, Google Books - *Fasulo*



ANTEBELLUM/CIVIL WAR FLORIDA -

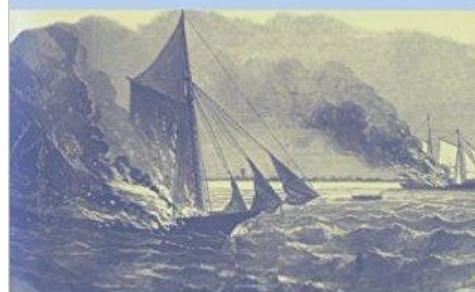
Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands by George E. Buker

The author brings his naval experience to the hot topic of *Civil War on Florida's Gulf Coast from 1861-1865*. This is the unusual story of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron. Perhaps in no other theater of the War Between the States did Federal maritime raids on blockade runners, salt works and the like evolve into the support of guerrilla warfare then into the galvanization of fully Federalized regiments of rebels among rebels. This is the bitter backstory of internecine fighting between loyalist Floridians and their Confederate government, of slaves into combat soldiers, of Union sailors and infantry officers pushed to their limits as they both coalesce and clash with this rare Cracker breed fighting for their families and their hold in the frontier state. Buker nicely frames the inside stories of the Fort Meade Raid, Skirmish at Cedar Key, Battles of Fort Myers, Natural Bridge, and others. He even produces some interesting information on Milton. *"Governor Milton thought that the gathering of disloyal families at Camp Milton was a mistake. He believed that people who were not disloyal also lost their homes and he pointed out that this in no way stopped the violence and lawlessness in those regions. On the contrary, such actions further alienated the men and put an additional barrier between them and the Confederacy."* The Journal of American History said, *"The proliferation of publications concerning the American Civil War occasionally produces one that really contributes to our understanding of the conflict. George E. Buker's 'Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands' is such a book."* - Terrell

BLOCKADERS, REFUGEES, & CONTRABANDS

CIVIL WAR ON FLORIDA'S GULF COAST, 1861-1865

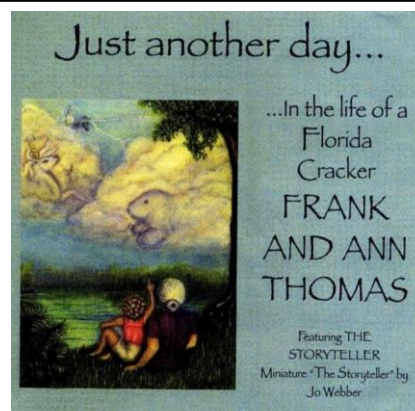
GEORGE E. BUKER



ROOTS & FOLK MUSIC -

Just Another Day in the Life of a Florida Cracker – Frank and Ann Thomas

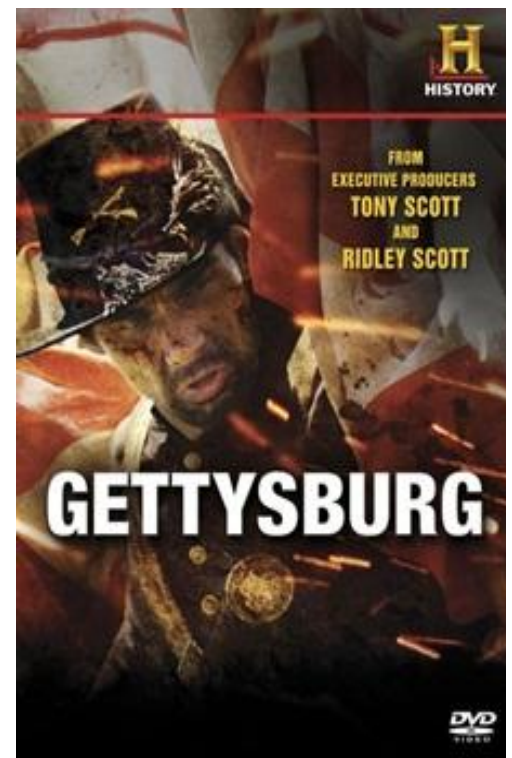
We reviewed one of the earlier Thomas albums, *Florida Stories* in the Fall '14 edition, but this *Just Another Day* is a diverse and colorful slice of Floridiana every collection should covet. We got your Christmas gift right here – with what some consider perhaps his best work! Though Ann passed in 2004, the Grand Old Man of Florida folk still makes the rounds sing'in songs from this incomparable classic album – like *The Flatwoods of Home*, a Civil War reminiscence: *"As I dream tonight of my home in Florida, I know my family misses me. As this train chugs along through the hills of Virginia, it's those flatwoods of home I long to see."* Looking for Christmas music? *"Now, Rudolph, you're in charge. Your fly'in's been first-rate. Our next stop is Tallahassee, down in the Sunshine State!"* Alternately tear-jerking, inspirational, and hilarious. Available on Amazon - *Terrell*



FILM –

Gettysburg - Scott Free Productions

The British-born brothers that birthed blockbusters like *Blade Runner* and *Top Gun* are thankfully history connoisseurs as well, crafting provocative epics like *Gladiator*, *Kingdom of Heaven*, and *Robin Hood*. Now they bring their enormous talent and resources to the American Civil War in this documentary for The History Channel. No two stories on the same subject are ever quite the same; nor should they be. The same could be said for movies and documentaries. A grand, red-stained affair like the Battle of Gettysburg had a thousand perspectives or more; so how to tell anew a dissected chronology for the 150th anniversary of the war? Well, the Scott Brothers picked their angle and attacked. This is pure grit performed at an unprecedented level of production quality for a documentary. It dispenses with background and context, firing you like a musket ball into the heart of 3 unfathomable days. Un-tread personalities unveil new windows into the battle - - like Rufus Dawes from the git-go leading his Iron Brigade of Western frontiersmen to an unlikely victory at the “Railroad Cut”. The narrative cuts a swath for the viewer and combined with excellent motion graphics and battle-mapping make for a quickly digested understanding of the X’s and O’s of this turning point in the war. After a series of shocking and violent shoot-outs, the film settles into the second day with the C.S. Army trying to un-hinge the Federal “fish-hook” defensive position from the surrounding series of hills. Top-shelf scholars are on-hand for guiding interstitials: James McPherson (*Battle Cry of Freedom*), Dr. Peter Carmichael (*Civil War Institute*), Dr. Ed Ayres (*Crucible of the Civil War*), etc. This is a different style of documentary filmmaking than the Ken Burns opus, relying on modern cinematography of hard-core reenactment and pyrotechnics. Available in Blu-ray from Amazon and TopDVDBuy.com, it’s an excellent gift for the historian in the family. Be warned - - it is NOT for youngsters! - Terrell



“Cold Morning at Olustee” Photo taken 2005 in Federal Infantry Camp. Get your firewood ready! It could be another cold one at the old battlefield.

Historical Profile

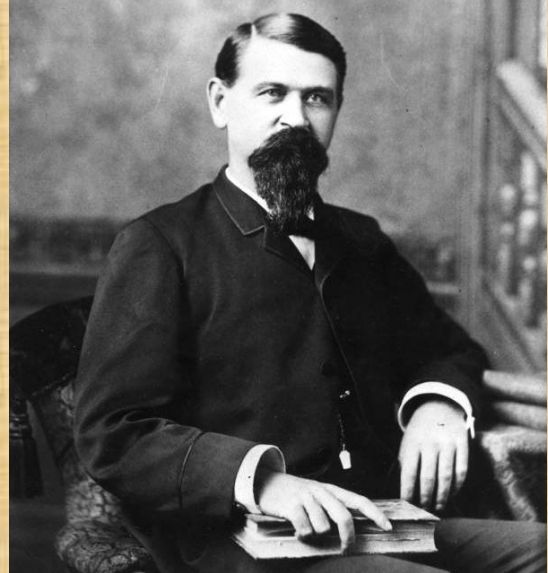
George Paul Harrison, Jr. was born at Monteith Plantation on the Savannah River in March of 1841. His father, George Sr. was a representative for Chatham County to the Georgia House. At the commencement of the conflict, Governor Brown appointed Harrison Sr. Brigadier General of state troops. Young George attended Effingham Academy and later the Georgia Military Institute in Marietta.

Harrison started his military career as second lieutenant of the First Georgia Regulars and was at the seizure of Fort Pulaski. After finishing school in '61, he returned to the army and was successively promoted to first lieutenant, major, colonel, and acting brigadier general. On May 15, 1862, he was elected colonel of the 32nd Georgia Infantry Regiment. He commanded Confederate strongholds in South Carolina, including John's Island where he was wounded twice. He reinforced Fort Wagner during its relentless attack by Shaw's 54th Mass in July of 1863. He would meet the colored troops again at The Battle of Olustee in Florida the following winter.

At Olustee, Harrison commanded an entire brigade: the 1st Florida Battalion, 32nd Georgia Regiment, 64th Georgia Regiment, 1st Georgia Regulars, 28th Georgia Artillery Battalion, Abell's Florida Artillery, & Guerard's Georgia Battery. He was in the thick of the front line fighting and received significant credit towards the Southern victory. Intel of the advance Federal cav "supported by only 3 infantry regiments" prompted Finegan to modify his plans. He sent out Colquitt, then Harrison to possibly eliminate the U.S. force in the open woods. *"I had scarcely put my command into double-quick when the sound of artillery in my front indicated the fight had opened. Quickening our pace, we moved on until within a few hundred yards of the place where the road we were on crossed the railroad. At this place the shells of the enemy's artillery were exploding over us. I halted for a moment to take in the situation and observed the enemy's position across the railroad, which was then sweeping the front of my command with a battery stationed near the crossroads. I saw General Colquitt forming a line of battle, and then I moved my command in double-quick time across the railroad and formed a line of battle on the left of that just established by General Colquitt."*

Harrison was critical of the Southern horse soldiers, but had this to say about a unit of the 4th Georgia Cav: *"I well remember Captain Brown...riding up to me in the midst of the fight and demanding that I assign him a place in the line of battle. I told him he had made a mistake, that I had nothing to do with the cavalry. To this he replied: 'I know that but you are the ranking officer I find in the fight and I demand that you assign me a place.' I then told him that if it was a fight he wanted here it was and directed him to deploy his squadron on my left and keep me posted of the movements of the enemy. This he gallantly did, and it was on account of information given by him and communicated by me to General Colquitt that the 6th and 32nd Georgia Regiments were move to the right flank of the enemy and caused them to fall back in confusion."*

Colonel George P. Harrison



The young 23 year old colonel commanded a prison camp at Florence and was commended by the prisoners for his humane treatment of them. He went on to lead a brigade in the Carolinas Campaign and at the Battle of Bentonville.

Harrison moved to Alabama at war's end in 1865, where he studied law and served as commandant of cadets at Auburn University. He commenced practice in Auburn, Alabama, and also worked as a planter. The veteran Harrison was as member of the constitutional convention of Alabama in 1875. He served in the State senate between 1878 and 1884 and was its president in 1882–1884. He served as delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1892. Harrison was elected as a Democrat to the Fifty-third Congress to fill a vacancy. He was reelected to the Fifty-fourth Congress and served from 1894, to 1897. After his final term in Congress, he returned to his law practice, now in Opelika, Alabama. He served as delegate to the State constitutional convention in 1901 and again served in the Alabama State senate in 1900 and 1902. In his practice, the ex-Colonel was general counsel for the Western Railway of Alabama and as Division counsel for the Central of Georgia Railway.

This from the *Opelika Daily News* July 17, 1922: "Gen. George P. Harrison, aged 81, soldier, capitalist and lawyer, died at his home in this city after a lingering illness extending over two years. His condition became worse a few days ago and death today was not unexpected by his physician and family. Funeral services will take place Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock... The death of Gen. Harrison rounds out one of the most unique careers in the state's history. For years prominent in the political affairs of Alabama, he was perhaps as widely known as any other Alabamian...In May 1899 he was elected Major General of the Alabama Division of United Confederate Veterans..."

Bibliography: Battle of Olustee, 1864 by Robert Broadwater, Confederate Veteran, Wikipedia, US Gen Web Archives, Chatham County, GA Archives

Osceola National Forest Highlights

Fall presents the best temperatures of the year to get out and see the forest. These days, more and more folks are using 2 wheels instead of 4 to see the sites and get a workout.

Cycling – Cycling is allowed on most forest roads in the Osceola National Forest. There are many opportunities for wildlife viewing as well as outstanding examples of long leaf wiregrass and hardwood hammock ecosystems. The roads are not particularly technical but less experienced riders should be cautious of the long distance to avoid tiring out on the return trip. The roads have no designated or preferred direction so watch for other riders and vehicles, as well as tree roots and downed trees.

“FROM THE OCEAN POND PHOTO ARCHIVES”



“Confederate Victory March” Terrell, 2001
(Battle of Olustee Reenactment Photo Gallery Archives)



Farewell to Friends

As of this writing, just after Thanksgiving 2015, the CSO, living history & reenactment community lost one of its all-time finest gentlemen and signature figures, Don Bowman. It's going to be hard to imagine Olustee as we know it today without him.

"Donald D. Bowman, known as "The Colonel" 62, died with honor on 11/25/2015 after a brave fight with merkel cell carcinoma . He passed peacefully with caring family and friends by his side at Gulfside Hospice Center, Zephyrhills. He is survived by his high school sweetheart of 41 years, Michele and 2 loving daughters, Melanie Kelly (David) and Vanessa Bershad (Chris) and 3 grandchildren; Aurora Grace and Scarlett Ava Bershad , Benjamin Donald Kelly and his beloved Shizu, Toby.

Don is a proud graduate of Jesuit High School, class of 1972, He was a journeyman wireman out of IBEW local 915 for 28 years, then worked for Stroh's for 2 years. He retired from Yuengling Brewery of Tampa after 17 years as a maintenance electrician in 2014.

Don studied many periods of history and was an active Confederate reenactor for almost 40 years. He and his horses, Lady and Beau, became iconic figures on the reenacting field. As the Colonel in the reenacting community, he commanded hundreds of men in many events all over the country.

Other interest included NASCAR, Star Trek, fine scale modeling, toy soldier dioramas, college sports, Harry Potter, and all things Reese Witherspoon.

*In lieu of flowers donations may be made to Lifelink Foundation Legacy Fund at
www.lifelinkfoundation.org/legacyfund*

*or University of Washington Merkel Cell Carcinoma Fund at
www.giving.uw.edu.*

"Colonel Bowman" was laid to rest in his beautiful hometown of Zephyrhills, Florida.





General Jesse & Colonel Bowman, of the Florida "Army of the Gulf" at Olustee Battlefield reenactment



Michelle & Don Bowman in early reenactment days.



Colonel Bowman in peak form, Olustee 2001

EDITOR'S CORNER

Just a quick Don Bowman story: I was at Olustee talking with Lewis Schmidt, perhaps the ultimate Florida Civil War researcher, as he was selling his famous volumes. Then from over our shoulders -- the rattling of canteens and belt buckles, the stamp of brogans and hoofs into the pine straw covered sand, the penetrating melody of fife and drum. We looked out to the Confederate camp road and there they came on -- with Colonel Bowman leading that brave brigade of butternut and grey. I looked at Lew and his wife, those Yankees from Pennsylvania Dutch country, and there was Lew's wife, all misty-eyed and reaching for a handkerchief. There was something about the men that day. It was what the art of reenactment was for since the first old veterans of Gettysburg hobbled out the footsteps they'd walked many decades before -- to reach down deep and pluck a heartstring of remembrance. Don looked over and saw us. I'd just finished a Civil War project website, you see, and it had a picture of Don in one of the banners. You could even hear his voice in an auto-play audio track. Well, instead of maintaining his grim visage, about the business of meeting the Federals any moment on the field of battle, Don totally broke character and gave us all a big ol' friendly wave, shouting, "I saw the website -- love it!" That was a great moment -- one worth a big smile for me then-- and now.

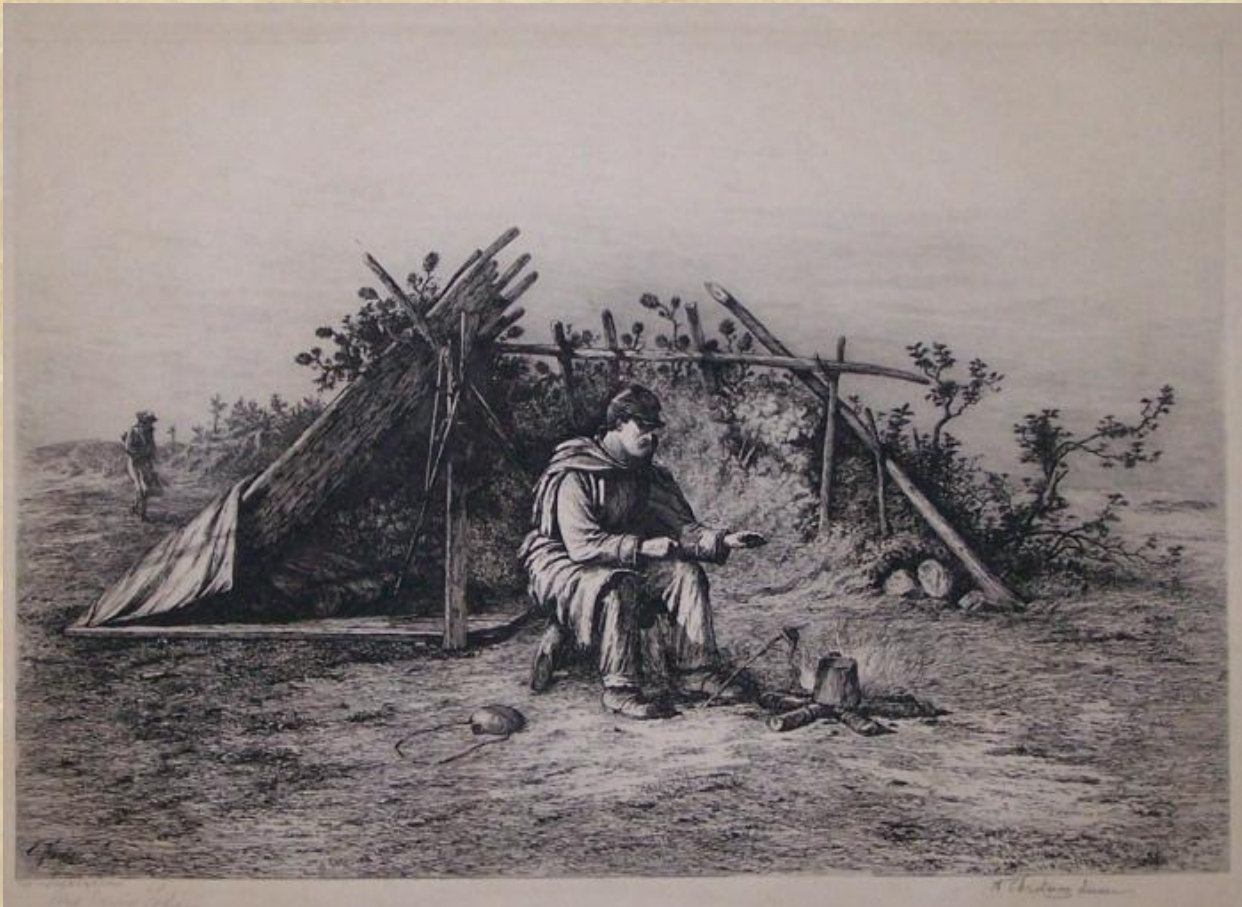
Look for more vintage pictures of Don and other Olustee reenactment veterans in upcoming issues.

Brian Terrell

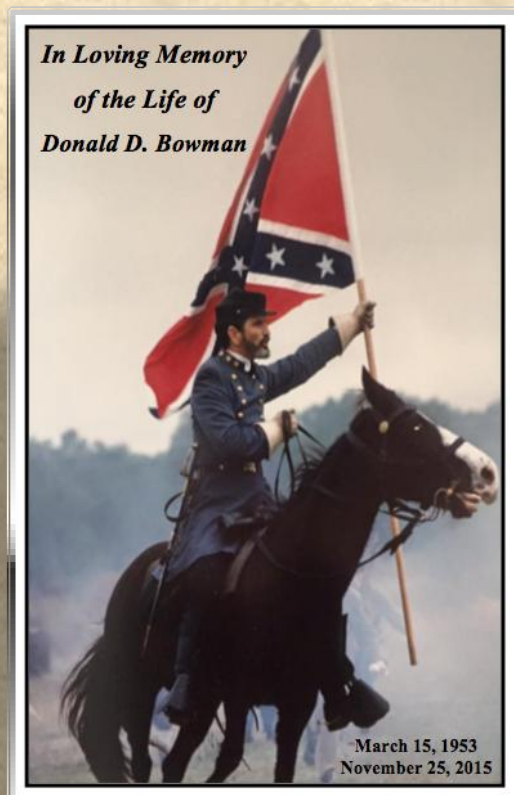
Editor



Pictured above: "The Colonel" Donald Bowman (one of the Olustee's first reenactors) & family



Period artwork "Christmas Dinner"



*"He has crossed the
river to rest
under the shade
of the trees."*