

Civil War Enthusiasts OHP059

OH2641

Garbert, Norma

“Civil War Fascination”

Interviewed by Brenda Maingot

Date: October 26, 1997

Language: English

Ephemera: Copies of Photos and Songs from Civil War

Project: Civil War Fascination

Status: Incomplete, Digitized on two CD's, migrated to server.

Abstract: An oral history with Norma Garbert, an active member of the lineage groups United Daughters of the Confederacy, Daughters of the American Revolution, and The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Specifically, role as former president of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, conditions for acceptance, chapter meeting procedures, and duties of the president. Garbert delves into the history of these lineage groups, the reasons behind their founding, their purpose and mission, the various awards like the Cross of Military Service given to the descendents of Confederate soldiers who are serving in a theater of war based on the Confederate Cross of Honor during the Civil War.

She talks about her research regarding Jefferson Davis and his descendants and her Jefferson Davis Medal given to her for her outstanding research. Garbert gives details on how to research genealogy, primarily through the use of National Archives Census information. Addresses the fascination with the Civil War, the collection of Civil War memorabilia, namely large volumes of rare, out-of-print books donated from private collections to each individual Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy, and the collection of “Gone with the Wind” Paraphernalia. Garbert reminisces about past Confederate Memorial Day experiences at Hollywood Memorial Park on the last Saturday in April each year.

OH2642

Rietveld, Ronald

“Civil War Fascination”

Interviewed by Brenda Maingot

Date: October 28, 1997

Language: English

Ephemera: Copies of Photos and Songs from Civil War

Project: Civil War Fascination

Status: Incomplete, Digitized on two CD's, migrated to server.

Abstract: An oral history with Ronald Rietveld a California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) professor of history, and a Lincoln Scholar. He remembers his childhood in Pella, Iowa and his fascination with Abraham Lincoln and the American Civil War from a young age which led him to correspond with seven of the last living Civil War Veterans in Iowa as well as many Lincoln

scholars, including a Judge Bollinger. Discusses his attendance at a dedication ceremony after Bollinger's death, at the age of fourteen, and being invited to Dr. Harry Pratt's home in Springfield, Illinois for several weeks to visit Lincoln Landmarks. During this trip he discovered a photograph of Lincoln Lying in State, the only one of its kind, and discusses the media hoopla that followed. He was featured in Life Magazine in 1953 and soon after took a trip to the National Hobby Convention for Civil War memorabilia and reminisces about a road trip driving across the east coast and seeing the homes and gravesites of sixteen presidents.

Attended Wheaton College for his undergraduate work, and the University of Illinois for his MA, and upon completion returned to Wheaton College to teach, ironically, European history. He remembers coming out to California, at the urging of his wife, and coming to teach as an associate professor at CSUF in the summer of 1969, where he pioneered Black history and later served as undergraduate coordinator. He discusses the history of the campus and his involvement as a member of the board and the names given to each building. He is a member of the Abraham Lincoln Association as well as many other historical societies and a lifetime honorary member of the Long Beach Civil War Roundtable. He also briefly discusses the war itself and military command, as well as several anecdotes about Lincoln.

OH2643

Otott, George

“Civil War Fascination”

Interviewed by Brenda Maingot

Date: October 28, 1997

Language: English

Ephemera: Copies of Photos and Songs from Civil War

Project: Civil War Fascination

Status: Incomplete, Digitized on one CD, migrated to server.

Abstract: An oral history with George Otott, a Civil War re-enactor and member of the First Texas Infantry Regiment in California and involved with other confederate and federal units. He provides a background of his life and how he became a Civil War re-enactor and the convictions of the typical living historian. He explains the two types of reenactments, Tactical and Anniversary type reenactments. He details the various types of people and interests within the hobby; the firearms specialists, the tactical leaders, the uniform “stitch counters,” the “show-offs,” and the genealogy experts. He discusses how re-enactors find their identities and often create characters based on actual Civil War participants who they try to emulate in speech and dress. Discusses the decision to become a Confederate or Union re-enactor and the flaws with individuals who choose not to study the history and merely proselytize their beliefs; Namely what he calls Union Mythology, that the Union was righteous and pious and fighting to free the slaves, and what he calls Neo-Confederates, who promote the “Lost Cause” mentality. He mentions that most of the re-enactors in his experience do not fit these descriptions but adds that most Sons of Confederate Veterans members tend to be what he calls Neo-Confederates.

He discusses the increasing popularity of the hobby from his beginning in the nineteen-eighties, especially with regard to women civilian and even military re-enactors, and that it reached its

plateau in the nineties. He also discusses the reasons for this increase, Ken Burns's documentary, Gettysburg, and Glory, and goes into re-enactor authenticity in equipment and life recreation before the tape ends.