

Abstract

This chapter addresses the rise of women's memorial organizations such as the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). After 1900, these organizations grew rapidly and gained considerable political influence. In 1913, both the WRC and the UDC played key roles in the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson, the first Southern president since the antebellum era. The WRC and the UDC used material items such as badges, flags, and uniforms to establish public recognition and a tangible social hierarchy for their causes. They also provided women with a wearable form of political heritage. This allowed them to limit the ability of newcomers and to lay claim to their "heritage" to maintain the social hierarchies of the prewar era challenged by postwar economics. While the members of these organizations focused on assistance to their veterans, as the number of living veterans declined, the WRC and the UDC crafted new narratives that positioned women firmly at the center of their mission to perpetuate the Lost Cause and the "true history" of the war. Their use of flags, badges, and uniforms gave a tangible form of social control to these abstract ideas. The first section discusses the goals of the Woman's Relief Corps and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, it focusing on wartime and postwar flags, and on postwar badges produced, purchased, and sold to fund veterans relief and their work. Wartime flags were relics or heritage pieces while they used flags and badges produced for celebration to invoke sentiment and status. The second section expands on the discussion in the previous chapter of uniforms manufactured for both the Grand Army of the Republic and the United Confederate Veterans by discussing the roles that the women played in obtaining those uniforms, and how they provided opportunities for veterans to be seen in public wearing them. Lastly, this chapter analyzes the ways in which Confederate organizations used African American and Native American veterans and the attention they paid to flags, badges, and uniforms as heritage and token "anti-racist" examples to perpetuate their narrative, specifically, the idea of Black Confederates and loyal slaves. It assesses how the GAR, WRC, UCV, and UDC incorporated them into the organizations and "taught" these veterans how to commemorate properly by parading them around at reunions and touting their value to the Union or Confederate cause.