

Memories of Dixie lures coach into Civil war garb

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

Dave Finney plans to spend his summer vacation lecturing about the Civil War while dressed in a wool homespun Confederate soldier's uniform with matching scratchy wool underwear.

It's a dream come true for the girls' softball coach from North Farmington High School. When he isn't coaching softball, Finney teaches a course in Civil War history. It's an extension of an interest that has haunted him since he was 12 years old.

The story of Finney's family and the Civil War entwined. Finney's great-grandmother had four brothers. Three of them died serving in the Confederate Army. It was stories his father told about the family's role in the Civil War that sparked his youthful interest in the conflict.

The only one of his great-grandmother's brothers to survive, Joe Carson, led Gen. Robert E. Lee's sharpshooter division. The night before Lee's last push against the north, Carson's 18-year-old brother came to visit him. The boy came for the older brother's body if he should be killed in the coming battle.

must live through the war to take care of their parents.

Joe Carson told his younger brother to get some sleep and wrapped the boy in his wool greatcoat. At dawn, the battle began and Carson assured his brother had stayed behind the lines.

But in the evening one of the men told Carson he had seen the boy follow the division into battle.

Racing back to the battlefield, Carson saw his greatcoat laying on the field. He rolled it over and discovered his dead brother wrapped inside of it.

Carson died at the beginning of the 20th century but a photo of the way he looked during the war remains in one of the books Finney has in his extensive Civil War library.

For Finney, the Civil War isn't a series of battles and dates. It is the people who lived through those times who make it interesting.

"I don't teach a lot of dates in the class. I talk about the people — the famous and the infamous," he explained.

It is with this feeling toward people who live through historic times that he built his collection of Civil War memorabilia.

PICTURES OF SOLDIERS staring at old-fashioned cameras line shelves

and walls and fill boxes in Finney's library.

While the photos illustrate clothing and weapons at the time, they carry with them tidbits of uneventful personal history.

A young man's photo is set in blue velvet. In the connecting frame long blonde locks are tatted together in an artful knot, set there long ago by unknown woman to a long-forgotten soldier.

In back of another picture, a young man has written, "This is how I looked on the first of September, '63. When you see, remember me."

Next to the picture is a small collection of bullets found on the sites of Civil War battles.

One bullet was found at Pickett Mill, Georgia by Finney. A professor friend of his took him and some other Civil War buffs out on an archeological expedition and used a metal detector to find the small treasures.

"We must have looked funny — all these grown men anxiously foraging through the dirt," Finney laughed.

Across the room is a photo of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson's bedroom and a piece of the blanket which covered the general in death.

JACKSON IS a favorite with Finney who ranks him as one of the geniuses of the Civil War.

"He was an odd personality. He was extremely disciplined. His mother and his father died when he was young and he was shuffled around by family members. He graduated 17 in a class of 59 from West Point," Finney said.

One of the methods Jackson adopted to study his lessons was to stand facing a wall for two hours each evening, reciting everything he had heard that day in class and thinking about it. He felt he had to compensate for the missing pieces in his spotty formal education.

"After he married, he continued to face a wall for two hours every evening, except that instead of standing he sat down," Finney said.

Jackson had other curious habits. He never read at night and kept a special diet because he was afflicted with stomach problems. He sucked lemons to settle his stomach.

"He entered battle, not waving a sword but sucking on a lemon," Finney said.

The general died from wounds inflicted by his own forces in Chancellorsville in 1863.

HE AND HIS STAFF were returning at night from a scouting expedition when they were halted at the Confederate lines. The guards mistook the group for Yankees.



Dave Finney proudly displays one of his rooms full of Civil War memorabilia. Finney, a teacher in the Farmington School District, has been enamored with that war since learning as a child that his ancestors took part in the saga. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)



White T-shirts may display today's social comment, Finney found that these ribbons expressed sentiments in earlier days. This is part of his extensive collection.

Alcoholism health center to be completed by 1980

Recognizing that eight percent of Detroit's work force has a significant problem with alcohol, Henry Ford Hospital, in conjunction with the automobile companies, plans to break ground this summer for the construction of a health care center for the treatment of alcohol.

The building will house a maximum of 50 patients and will include sleeping quarters, dining areas, recreational space, therapy and staff areas, a detoxification unit and examining areas.

It is designed to provide a non-institutional, home-like atmosphere that is also functional for treatment. The country-like setting will be an integral part of the program, since exercise is an important part of treatment.

Before the mix-up was discovered, Jackson had been wounded in both arms and his horse was carrying him to the Union lines when he was knocked to the ground by a tree limb.

When the Confederate troops found him, they carried him back to their lines, dropping his stretcher once in the dark.

His left arm was amputated and that evening Jackson was sitting up and drinking soup. But he caught pneumonia and died a few days later.

His left arm was buried in Chancellorsville and his body lies in a Lexington, Va. cemetery.

It's an added thrill to Finney that he will be lecturing in costume at the site of Jackson's death.

Finney, who grew up in Georgia, has a familiarity with history that transcends books. Back home, the Civil War still has "the aura of a lost cause" for the older generation.

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

SPRING IS THE TIME when a bargain hunter's fancy turns to rummage sales. The Nardin Park Rummage Sale and Inflation Fighter will be conducted from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. on May 4-5 at the Nardin Park United Methodist Church, 29887 West Eleven Mile in Farmington Hills. The United Methodist Women are sponsoring the sale. (Ready, set, rummage)

DOWN AT ORCHARD RIDGE campus, future chefs graduated from Oakland Community College's culinary arts department recently. The family of one graduate from Iraq wanted him to return home. So papa built him his own hotel. (We all have to start somewhere.)

IT'S CIRCUS TIME at Kenbrook Elementary School. The school's PTA will be sponsoring "Circus '79" from 11:45 a.m. - 4 p.m. on May 6 at the school on 32130 Bonnet Hill in Farmington Hills. A parade of decorated bikes, big wheels, wagons, pets and persons will be led by a Farmington Hills Fire Department engine through the subdivision at 11:45 a.m. At noon the indoor activities will begin. A kitchen, elephant walk, bake sale, handicraft sale, make-up booth, fish pond, indoor miniature golf, book nook, balloon vendor and assorted games will be featured. Proceeds go toward Kenbrook school.

LADY LUCK HAS SMILED on two Farmington area residents who are winners of the Instant Game put on by the Michigan Lottery. Salvatore Felocia and Betty J. Morgan each won \$5,000 during March and April.

OIL, BLACK GOLD, (will be the subject when Alaska's Governor Jay Hammond comes to the Detroit Economic Club to speak. "Alaska Has the Oil: Why Can't Detroit Have It?" is the title of his speech which will be delivered at 10:30 a.m. April 30 at the Detroit Plaza.

WOMEN CONSIDERING career changes as well as those looking for advancement in their present careers are invited to attend the Madonna College Career Development Institute for Women from May 18-21 at Madonna College sponsored by the Department of Business Administration. Participants will be given the opportunity to learn interviewing techniques with video-taping sessions. Dual careers resume writing, and the legal rights of women will be highlighted. Resident fee for the conference is \$50, commuter fee is \$45. All meals are included. Women must register by calling Madonna College Resource Center at 591-6331 or Theresa Spinelli, 591-1200, ext. 45. Enrollment is limited.

COUNTY CIRCUIT judges and attorneys will share their legal knowledge as instructors in the Madonna College legal assistant and legal administrator program during the spring-summer term beginning in May.

Judge Gene Schaezler will conduct Law Office Economics and Management on Tuesdays from 6:30-10 p.m. from May 1-July 24. Schaezler is an Oakland County Circuit Court Judge.

Judge Patrick Duggan will teach contractual and commercial relations which meets on Thursdays from 6:30-10 p.m. from May 3-July 19. Duggan serves in Wayne County Circuit Court.

John Gillespie will teach legal writing and analysis on Wednesdays from 6:30-10 p.m. from May 2-July 25. Gillespie is the project staff attorney for the Michigan Medical Schools Council of Deans' Medical Legia Project in Ann Arbor.

Registration for the spring-summer term must be completed before April 30 at the Registrar's Office in the administration building from 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

IT'S SPRING FEVER time again. It's also the time of year when just about every occupation known to man has its own week. One a harried reporter was heard on the phone saying, "Volunteers week? Well, we have dance week and secretaries week but when's volunteers week?" Angles is waiting for Geometric Figures Week.

THEN THERE WERE the young tykes who walked into the newsroom and tried to sell their pet chameleon or a Scientology pamphlet given out for free on street corners. It's always inspiring for Angles to see young businessmen starting out. Can million dollar salesmanship be far behind?

DEADLINE

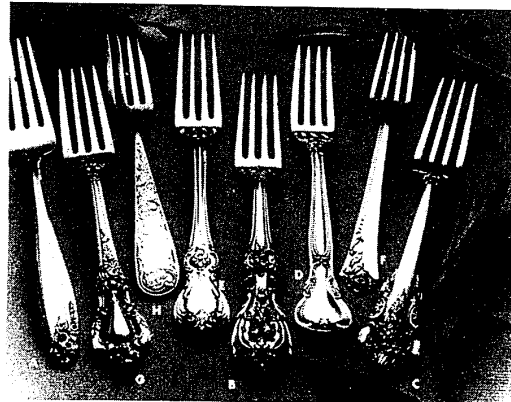
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