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Reconciliation in Civil War Movies

By Brenda Ayres

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"The Reel Civil War: The Civil War in the Cinema"

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The greatest trauma and test to the stamina of America, indisputably, was the Civil War. Over three-and-a-half million men, or one out of every ten, fought in the war. In the South, three out of every four men of military age served (Faust 3). An estimate of 600,000-700,000 men lost their lives. Over one million were injured, with over 50,000 returning home as amputees (Barney 107). One out of every eight men, from ages 13-43, died during the war, or 6% of all Northern males and 18% of all Southern males. The country was shattered, America lost many talented and honorable men, the slaves were freed but needed rehabilitation, widows there were aplenty and children without fathers, families were torn asunder, and the South lay in ruins. The price tag was $10,000,000,000 (Lipscomb 145); the long-term devastation, priceless.

Although many families in the South have handed down their own stories and bitter regrets, for most of us, especially those Northerners who wonder why the South seems to be still fighting the Civil War, Gary Gallagher argues that our perceptions of historical events, including the Civil War, have been shaped by the cinema (1). He classifies all Civil War movies into four groupings: 1) the Lost Cause which ennobles the Southern sacrifice in a supreme effort to throw off the tyrannical dictates of the North, 2) the Union Cause which ennobles the Northern efforts to reunite the nation, 3) the Emancipation Cause, in which the movie focuses on the liberation of slaves as being the major reason for the war, and 4) the Reconciliation Cause, in which the story attempts to heal the wounds of a divided nation.

My paper will focus on several films that fall into this last category about reconciliation. Now Gallagher lists *Shenandoah* as a Lost Cause movie, but I see it as a movie of reconciliation. I also see it in another category, one not listed by Gallagher, and that is new historicism, where history is revised to reflect the knowledge and attitudes of its current age.

Shenandoah first was a play by Bronson Howard, which opened in 1889 (Chadwick 33). The movie version starred Jimmy Stewart, already a famous name in show business. It was the highest-grossing film of 1965 and was nominated for an Academy as well as a Golden Globe award. Netflix describes it as "A four-hankie weeper and one of the best melodramas to come out of Hollywood during the 1960s."

Aside from its obvious anti-war messages, or perhaps *through* its anti-war messages, the film urges reconciliation at a time when America was as heatedly divided over the race issue as was the country one hundred years earlier. It is no accident that this movie emerged not only after Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution which officially put America at war against the North Vietnamese; it emerged after Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and shortly after the march that began in Selma, Alabama.

The movie opens at Charlie Anderson's farm, in the Shenandoah Valley, not far from where we are right now. With the sound of canon fire in the not-to-far distance, Jacob, one of Mr. Anderson's six sons, is arguing with his father that they cannot continue to remain out of the war. Later, around the dinner table, Mr. Anderson quizzes his sons as to their stand on slavery and whether they should be involved in a war. Being Virginians, they would have to fight on the side that supported slavery. This ended the discussion. When Charlie Anderson gives thanks for the meal, we learn that he is a very proud man who believes that it is due only to the sweat of

his—and his families'—brow, that they have reason to give thanks for their food. Niggardly crediting even God, he is arrogant in his self-sufficiency and independence.

Still later when Charlie Anderson is challenged again about not sending his sons to war when Virginia was in great need of more soldiers, Anderson argues that his sons did not belong to Virginia; they belonged to him. As such, Anderson refuses to engage in state's rights or any other reason why he should participate in a war not of his making.

He is forced into the war only after his youngest son, Boy, is arrested by a Yankee for being a Rebel soldier. While the family goes searching for him, scavengers kill James and his wife Ann, who were left behind to tend to the farm and their newborn baby. Meanwhile, during a skirmish, Gabriel, childhood friend to Boy, who has joined the Union army as a freed slave, carries a wounded Boy to safety. Then, Jacob is shot by a sixteen-year old soldier half asleep during guard duty. Mr. Anderson nearly chokes the young Confederate to death when he realizes that that the boy is the same age as his missing son. He realizes that violence breeds more violence, that war puts men into a hellish position where they kill without thinking, and the men that suffer the most are the young ones who have to fight. They lack the maturity and wisdom to do the soldier's duty without serious repercussions that will cost other men's lives and their own equanimity for the rest of their lives.

The salient message of *Shenandoah*, in its declarations of the senseless destruction of war, argues for a reconciliation of the two forces, but more salient is the message of spiritual reconciliation. There is nothing like war to force a man into desperation for God.

Once back at the farm, unsuccessful in finding the lost son, Mr. Anderson stands at the gravesite of his buried family members and talks to his deceased wife Martha: "It's like all wars," he says. "Undertakers are winning it, politicians will talk about the glory of it, old men talk about

the need of it. The soldiers just want to go home." He asks Martha what she thinks of it and says he needs to hear from her. The next thing he does hear are the church bells, at which he chuckles: "Ya never give up, do you?" Where Charlie had been a man fiercely proud of his independence and his self-reliance, without recognizing any help from God, he is now at a place of humility in that the war has robbed him of control of his life. He could not rescue his youngest son. He could not protect three of his beloved children from getting killed despite his most determined efforts. So he goes to church, and then, and only then, is the boy returned to Mr. Anderson. With the congregation's singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," the movie ends.

Major revivals broke out during the Civil War. It has been estimated that over 100,000 men on the Union side and 200,000 men on the Confederate side converted to Christianity. Nearly 10 percent of all Civil War soldiers surrendered their lives to Christ (Shattuck 92). Millions of religious tracts were disseminated. In the South alone, one million pages of religious material were put into the hands of soldiers every week, with constant requests for more (Jones 159). The American Bible Society distributed 5,297,832 Bibles during the war (Dwight 272). A wonderful book that gives an amazing account of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that rivaled Pentecost, as George F. Bagby, Chaplain of the 40th Virginia Regiment described it in a letter (358), is John William Jones' book, *Christ in the Camp: Or Religion in Lee's Army* published in 1887.[1]

Charlie Anderson represents a man that is caught between warring factions, and like all of us, he is forced to face his own limitations and mortality, and then must choose: Will he be reconciled to God or not?

The next movie about reconciliation is *The Colt* (2005), which also takes place in Virginia. It was based on a five-page short story titled "Fierce and Gentle Warriors: Three

Stories," written by Mikhail Aleksandrovich Sholokhov of the Soviet Union. Sholokhov won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1965. Most of his novels and short stories are about the Don Cossacks' fight for independence from the Bolsheviks from 1918-1920. A historically vibrant and brave people of military notoriety known for having repelled Napoleon's invasion, the Cossacks refused to cooperate with Soviet policies to surrender their rich farmland for collective farming by peasants. Nor were they willing to have their culture suppressed and be forced to homogenize with the rest of the Soviet Union. A Civil War ensued that resulted in the death and exportation of about 500,000 Cossacks out of a population of 1.5 million (Kort 133), under Lenin's orders. Sholokhov's famed *And Quiet Flows the Don* tells this story. It won the Stalin Prize in 1941.

Although the Confederates did not suffer a similar form of genocide, the parallels, from a Confederate perspective, are apparent. The secessionists refused to surrender their state rights and slaves to the Union, so there was war. A similar decimation followed: the Confederates lost one out of every four (Chadwick 9); the Cossacks lost one out of every three;

With an immature road system, both countries—both enemies—depended upon the horse for transportation. Especially during both civil wars, the horse was essential for the cavalry and for transporting equipment and supplies. The cavalry were the eyes and the ears of the army as they scouted out enemy locations and strengths. They also led the offensive. During the American Civil War, an estimated 1.5 million horses, on both sides, were killed. Most Calvary soldiers brought their own horses, as did Jim Rabb, the protagonist in the film. If the horse was lost, a soldier had sixty days to find another one or else he would become an infantryman, which was considered a loss in status and rank.

Suffice it to say that the cavalry—whether Cossack and Bolshevik, Confederate and Union—shared a love, dependence, and appreciation for their horses. It was one thing that they had in common. It was the central bond, albeit tenuous, that reconciled enemies in the 2005 Hallmark movie.

The Colt opens on May 6, 1864, during the Battle of the Wilderness, a day after the Battle for Yellow Tavern. On May 6, Major General J.E.B. Stuart would be mortally wounded, and in the confusing shrub and thicket of the wilderness, the soldiers were scattered and lost. In the confusion, one could not always know who was friend or who was foe. Lieutenant General James Longstreet would be shot by his own men. The Battle of the Wilderness, from May 5-7, would be the costliest battle of the entire Civil War with the death of 17,666 Federals and 7,500 Confederates ("Civil War Statisitics").

And in the movie's story, it is even less clear as to why the foe is a foe when both share many of the same values.

Early in the film, Jim is burying his brother who died from wounds sustained at the Battle of the Wilderness. In a letter to his father, he records that Tyler died gallantly. That evening, their camp is shelled, and Jim's mare, Jen, fouls. Out of horror and death come forth new life, purity, and innocence. Yet, as an illustrator for *Harper Weekly* notes in the movie, the first thing the colt knew in coming into this world was terror.

Although commanded to kill the colt, Jim cannot bring himself to do it. Neither can his sergeant, Sgt. Longacre, who explains to Lt. Hutton, it would not be a gallant thing to kill something so helpless. This is a form of reconciliation in itself, clarifying when it is inappropriate to kill in the midst of war. Later Jim writes his father about the colt, saying, "It is a consolation to me and reminder that God that allows so much grief and destruction to visit this

world is still the creator of new life." This is another form of reconciliation, reconciliation between man and God, acknowledging that amid all of the chaos of war, God is still in control.

Jim belongs to the First Michigan Cavalry, who are now in Spotsylvania, Virginia, rounding up the Confederates who are dispersed throughout the Wilderness. They pass a string of Confederate prisoners. Even though bowed down with defeat, a Confederate sees the colt, and the enemies are now simply men who love a horse. The prisoner observes that the colt has mustang in him and approvingly suggests, "Keep him out of harm's way. He's a keeper." The colt reminds two enemies that life is worth preserving. The *Harper's Weekly* illustrator sketches the colt and its mother in the midst of war, so that readers are likewise reminded that all innocence and hope for life are not lost.

Meanwhile, the pitiful remains of a North Carolina regiment have been charged to prevent Union troops from crossing the Wilderness River. When the two regiments clash in the woods, Jim cannot control the colt or its mother. Afterward, Jim is ready to kill the colt, but the lieutenant declares that the colt showed "conspicuous gallantry" because the colt ran toward the enemy instead of away as did his soldiers, and the mare showed "maternal gallantry." Lt. Hutton honors the colt with a red cravat.

When scouting, Jim's friend Stanton is shot and Jen and the colt taken by two Confederates. Jim pursues them, kills one soldier, and mortally wounds a young Confederate from Charleston, South Carolina, Isaac Silsbee. He lies dying but laughs when he notices that the colt is wearing a cravat. This eases his way into death. He begs Jim to bury him other than in this "lonesome place" where wild hogs can dig him up. The colt has become the instrument of reconciliation between two enemies and returns Jim once again to his common humanity, as he agrees to write a letter to the dying soldier's sister and to bury the soldier as requested.

With Isaac, now a corpse, wrapped in a blanket and draped over a horse, Jim arrives at a farm just six miles from the Plank Road in Virginia. The farm is owned by a Union sympathizer and his family, Leander and Lucy Calloway. They help Jim bury the Confederate and pray that the Lord will accept this their enemy on earth. And they pray for God to heal this country and protect Jim. The family gives Jim a meal and a bed for the night. For a brief reprieve, the colt has been responsible for returning Jim to some sanity and allowing him to be loved and healed by a God-fearing family.

After Jim returns to his regiment, in the last scene they attempt to cross the Wilderness River when they are fired upon by some North Carolinians. The fighting halts when the colt's rope has been snagged on a fallen tree in the river, which threatens the colt with drowning. Without a weapon, Jim jumps in to rescue the screaming colt. He is able to hold the colt's head above water but is unable to free him. The Confederate sergeant, Woodruff, drops his weapon, runs into the river, and frees the animal. Once again the colt reconciles two enemies by reminding them of decency, innocence, and moral purity, as they work to save the colt's life. All of the fighting ceases as the men watch on, stunned at true gallantry, a value that they equally esteem, perhaps shocked that it was demonstrated by the others who were considered enemies. Peace is possible until, the camera closes up on a young Confederate, who had been derided frequently for being a coward. He breaks the spell of peace by shooting Jim in the back, which reignites the hostilities.

Through the innocent colt, enemies under adverse conditions temporarily are reconciled into a truce. If this is possible during the war, the hope is that there can be reconciliation that will end the war or reunite people after the war. The movie clearly defines gallantry, a value that both enemies recognize, as the stunned viewer is left watching the colt nuzzle his fallen friend, Jim.

The artist sketches the scene and makes clear that it is not for public consumption; it is not for pay. Nevertheless, we know that the scene is imprinted forever in the minds and hearts of the soldiers at the river, and it also speaks volumes to us, the viewers, who grieve for the loss of innocence, which is the price of any war.

Innocence is another instrument to bring about peace in two Shirley Temple movies. The first, *The Littlest Rebel*, premiered in 1935, after Hitler had declared himself führer of Germany, after Germany had violated the Treaty of Versailles and raised an army, and after Germany had stripped Jews of all of their rights. In short, America saw that the problems from World War I had not been resolved and that Germany was pitching the world into another crisis. Therefore, reconciliation from a different war seemed to be a timely message.

The movie opens with credits, but in the background is a Negro voice nostalgically singing about the Old Plantation. It appears that the movie is going to be about the Lost Cause, conveying that slavery was a benevolent institution and that the North misjudged it. The first scene is inside a wealthy plantation home where Miss Virgie (nickname for Virginia), played by Shirley Temple, is celebrating her birthday. She displays perfect aristocratic manners, once more indicating that the South was a highly civilized society, and the North was a villain to destroy it. Yet, two slaves hover over Miss Vergie, ready to do her every bidding even though she is only a child. She hands Uncle Billy, one of the house slaves, her ice cream and he hands it to James Henry, another slave, who then is expected to present it to the little boy who sits right next to Miss Virgie. Although James Henry is depicted as a lazy, shiftless, no-count, ignorant, bug-eyed stereotype, he fails to understand why Miss Virgie can't just give the plate of ice cream to the little boy. After this, Uncle Billy, played by the fantastic tap dancer, Bill Robinson, dances for the children. Throughout the entire movie, the slaves are depicted as unquestionably loyal to

their white masters, even to a little white child, and perfectly happy to serve them in any way possible, even if that means turning their slave cabin into a sick room for Miss Virgie's mother after the plantation burns down, even if it means risking their own lives.

The Yankees, for the most part, are portrayed as people who abuse African-Americans, and they have no manners or morals. The exception is Colonel Morrison, played by Jack Holt. He allows Miss Virgie's father, a Confederate Captain, to wear his Union uniform and carry a note that would give passage through enemy lines to Richmond, where he can deliver his now motherless child to his sister for care. The machination is discovered and both men end up in jail awaiting execution. Uncle Billy and the child appeal to President Lincoln who in turn pardons them, even as the real president was devoted to bringing about reconciliation at the end of the war instead of retribution.

Perhaps the best example of reconciliation is Shirley Temple's *The Little Colonel* (1935). Set in post-war Kentucky in the 1870s, the movie opens with a shot of a showboat and a medley of Southern folk songs. The next scene is the proverbial Southern plantation with its Doric columns. The patriarch's daughter, Elizabeth, is playing the harp and singing a significant song, "Young Love's Dream." It represents a new song, one that longs for peace and reconciliation. It was written, also significantly, by Thomas Moore, the Irish patriot who longed for similar peace in his divided Ireland. It was published in 1846 and 1852 in his collection titled *Irish Melodies*. Elizabeth sings only the first verse:

> Oh! the days are gone, when Beauty bright
> My heart's chain wove;
> When my dream of life, from morn till night,
> Was love, still love.

New hope may bloom,

And days may come,

Of milder calmer beam,

But there's nothing half so sweet in life

As love's young dream:

No, there's nothing half so sweet in life

As love's young dream.

The song begins with a "Gone with the Wind" theme, expressing the regret of what has been lost in the South. Yet, Elizabeth sings of hope that "may bloom" and of better days that are a "milder calmer beam." What is best though is the dream of youth. Elizabeth Sherman is hoping for reconciliation between the North and the South insofar as she plans to elope this night with Jack Sherman, who had been a Union soldier.

Her father, Colonel Sherman, is obviously a stalwart Confederate. Even though slaves have been emancipated, Walker—played by the famous Bill Robinson—is still treated like a slave, and the movie exhibits him, no less, as the happy-go-lucky slave at that. He nearly knocks over a bust while serving drinks and is reprimanded by the colonel who threatens to bust his head. The colonel then proposes a toast before his guests leave. It is a "lost cause" toast, and defies reconciliation. He says:

I give you our homeland.

Glorious in defeat.

Gallant in victory.

Brave in her hour of grief.

And I give you the South

And confusion to her enemies.

When he intervenes in the elopement, he fails to understand how his daughter could marry a man who might have actually killed her brother during the war. Symbolically, as she and Jack leave, the Colonel warns her that if she goes out the door, "It will never open for [her] again." Elizabeth and Jack represent the re-United States, but Colonel Sherman is the diehard Confederate who will have none of it.

Six years pass after Elizabeth and Jack lived in Philadelphia but are now "out West" somewhere seeking their fortune during the Gold Rush. Their child, six-year old Lloyd, has "captured the fort" where they are staying, without firing a shot. The commander of the fort awards her a commission as an honorary colonel. She and Elizabeth will return to Kentucky to live in the cottage left to Elizabeth by her mother, while Papa Jack deals with unethical scoundrels who persuade him to invest all of his money in purchasing land supposedly rich with gold.

Of course, Shirley Temple, aka Lloyd Sherman, wins the heart of the curmudgeon Lionel Barrymore as she is able to do with other crusty, callous characters in most of her movies. The Colonel recognizes his own temper and the danger of it, mirrored by his granddaughter. Like the South, it is full of fight and valor, but it is also a curse. This becomes even more real to him in the closing scenes when Lloyd asks for his help because there are bad men who want to hurt her sick father. At first he demands to know why he should help the Yankee—which is a reversal of reconstruction where the South needed but did not want the help of the North to recover. When he refuses to come to her father's aid, Lloyd barks out a threat that she never wants to see him again, reminiscent of the last words he spoke to his own daughter prior to her marriage. In full realization of the destructiveness of his attitude, he rescues Papa Jack and begs their forgiveness.

The North and the South are reconciled in this family, especially through the offshoot, the little colonel—who received her commission, not in the South, and not in the North, but in the West, with a promise of a new life with peace and hope.

The reconciliation is a bit disturbing as the movie continues to perpetuate stereotypes of the African-Americans. Even if he is subservient to the Colonel-Master, Walker does defy him at times and agrees with him when the Colonel calls himself a fool. However, he plays the same happy, loyal slave that serves not only a white master but a little white girl as if she were his mistress, as he did in *The Little Rebel*. Hattie McDaniel plays Mom Beck or Becky Porter who is the happy, loyal mammy, as she was in *Gone with the Wind*. The two of them play buffoons as well who cannot speak or spell English correctly, although Walker does have a clever malapropism in describing Elizabeth's return as "co-in-si-dal." He meant "coincidental," but it prophesies the two—the father and daughter as well as the South and the North—coinciding with each other in peace. In addition, two children play the giggling, dumb pickanninnies, terrified of their own shadows. In fact, Colonel Sherman calls them pickanninnies. There is a stereotypical scene of a water baptism which I think is quite lovely, where everyone is singing, clapping or raising their hands, and shouting for joy—all of which is scriptural, but in 1930, such stereotypes reassured 1930 white America that African Americans are either happy or content to be oppressed and will not cause trouble as long as they put their hope in an escapist form of religion.

So, even if the movie cannot promise reconciliation between white and black from a black perspective, it does attempt to bring reconciliation between white Yankees and Confederates with the historical background of appeasement with Germany.

My last two movies under review also have child stars, take place in Virginia, and like *Shenandoah*, were made in the 1960s.

The Disney version of *Johnny Shiloh* is the true story of John Joseph Klem (1851-1937). The nine-year-old boy so admired the President, he changed his middle name to Lincoln. Determined to help Mr. Lincoln save the union, he tried to join the Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry as a drummer boy but was sent home because of his age and size. In real life, he ran away from home and joined the 22nd Michigan Volunteer Infantry ("John Lincoln Clem")—at least according to the December 19, 1893 issue of *Harpers Weekly*, but others list him as serving with the 24th Ohio at Shiloh, and after that joining the 22nd Michigan ("John Joseph Klem). In the movie he is portrayed as having been accepted by an Indiana regiment, but then the Ohio Blue Raiders adopt him, with a Sergeant Gabe Trotter, a surrogate father, determined to protect him. Regardless of what infantry he fought with, the real drummer boy did distinguish himself in several very important battles.

The Battle of Shiloh, also known as the Battle of Pittsburg Landing, was a major battle fought on April 6 and April 7, 1862, in southwestern Tennessee. Major General Grant was about to cross the Tennessee River and hook up with Major General Buell's Army of the Ohio. They were met with a surprise attack by the armies of Generals Johnston and Beauregard. Grant was pushed back to Pittsburg Landing and was reinforced at a sunken road aptly called the "Hornet's Nest."

In a scene, Johnny is in a church praying that Buell will arrive in time to help with a counterattack. What did follow in actuality has often been called the "bloodiest battle" in U.S. history, with a victory for the Union forces, the Battle of Shiloh.

The next battle in the movie is Chickamauga on September 19-23, 1862, credited as being the most important victory for the Union. The Army of the Cumberland clashed with the Army of Tennessee at the Chickamauga River, which begins in Tennessee and flows into Georgia. "Chickamauga" translated from Cherokee is "River of Death" (Eicher 580). This Union victory broke General Bragg's hold on Chattanooga, which soon fell thereafter, which made way for Sherman to begin his Atlanta Campaign into the Deep South (Bowman 531).[2]

Johnny distinguished himself even more at this battle. A Confederate Colonel shouted at him, "Stop, you little Yankee devil," and Johnny shot and killed him ("Our Youngest 85). In the movie version, he wounds the colonel to save his sergeant, and later that night, he apologizes to the colonel for shooting him. Either way, he was made Lance Sergeant and was placed on the roll of honor.

He serves as a messenger between General "Pap" Thomas or George H. Thomas, and Major General Isaac Stevens, when he is taken captive. It is in the Rebel camp that the movie promotes reconciliation. Johnny learns that the Rebs are no different from the Yanks. A young orderly, appropriately called Billy, is supposed to guard Johnny. One night Johnny listens to the camp sing "When This Cruel War Is Over,"[3] which was a favorite on both sides. In fact, Bruce Catton, author of *Mr. Lincoln's Army*, claimed it to have been "the most popular song ever written in America," selling more than a million copies during the war (175-6). The next song is definitely Confederate, with a subtitle of "A Southern Patriotic Song." It was the "Bonnie Blue Flag."[4] The Confederates invite Johnny to sing a song, but when he declines, as a friendly gesture they sing "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." This was a song composed by Patrick Gilmore, the "father of the American Band," and also known as the "father of the military band." When he read about Johnny's exploits in Shiloh in the *Harper's Weekly*, he wrote the song in

honor of Johnny Shiloh.[5] Billy and Johnny become good friends, so that when Billy catches Johnny trying to escape, he is unable to stop him.

Johnny returns to the Blue Raiders and shares with Gabe that the Confederates are not much different, and when he learns that they are due to go home on leave, Johnny says that he is glad because he does not want to fight any more rebels. Thus the movie ends with reconciliation between two young boys and promotes anti-war. The viewer is supposed to assume that Johnny has had enough of war and goes home, but the real Johnny Shiloh survives the war, is admitted to West Point thanks to General Grant, and remains in the army to become a Second Lieutenant and later, in 1903, the youngest colonel and Assistant Quartermaster General of the United States Army. After that, he was the Chief Quartermaster at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio. In his last years, he was the last surviving veteran of the Civil War to hold active duty. His gravestone in Arlington National Cemetery has this etching: "The Drummer Boy of Chickamauga" ("Colonel John Clem").[6]

Another Disney movie was released two years after *Johnny Shiloh* and *Shenandoah.* Like *Shenandoah* and *The Colt*, it too takes place in Virginia, near the Fairfax Courthouse in 1861. Originally titled *Willie and the Yank*, *Mosby's Marauders* follows a similar strategy of reconciliation as does *Johnny Shiloh*. Private Willie Prentiss, played by a very young Kurt Russell, is a Confederate who holds "the position" on one side of a river, while Corporal Henry Jenkins, played by James MacArthur,[7] is the Yank on the other side. The river is no less than the Rappahannock River, which flows 184 miles from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Potomac. It has been designated the Eastern Theatre boundary between the North and the South during the war. So, we have two young men on opposing sides but on friendly terms, swapping coffee for tobacco. About Yankees, Willie says several times in the movie, "Them fellas ain't so bad."

Willie grew up in Frying Pan Church, Virginia. Founded in 1791, it came by its name because someone found a frying pan in a nearby river left behind by a previous settler who had been mining copper (Robison). It was called Frying Pan Meeting House at first because colonial law allowed only Episcopalians to call their meeting houses, churches (Vetter). By the time of the Civil War it was Frying Pan Church, famous for being the headquarters for Lt. Col. John S. Mosby and the site of a number of skirmishes throughout 1863.[8] Historically accurate in its portrayal of Mosby, the movie records the great aggravation and embarrassment that he caused to both sides of the war. Known as the "Gray Ghost" he led a band of raiders from the 43rd Virginia Cavalry Battalion in nightly raids and using undignified, uncivilized, non-West-Point, guerrilla tactics. A frustrated Grant put out the order to "hang without trial" any of Mosby's men (Eicher 752). Mosby's Marauders often disguised themselves as Yankees or attacked at night or during a rainstorm so that Union soldiers could not identify them as the enemy. This is interesting in that, even if Mosby was clear on who the enemy was, no one else seemed to be, not when a Yankee soldier married a Southern girl in a family that was very loyal to the Confederacy.

The story line in the movie includes Mosby's capture of the 24-year-old Federal officer, Edwin H. Stoughton. Mosby's 29 raiders captured 33 men, 48 horses, and one Brigadier General Stoughton in his bedclothes in the midst of a strong Union force at Fairfax County Courthouse. Stoughton was most indignant toward Brigadier General Fitz Lee[9] for this unconventional, undignified, unchilvarous action unbecoming of a West Pointer.

After the capture of Stoughton the rest of the plot is fictitious, but it has reminders of some historical details. Mosby's doppelganger was Richard Blazer of the 91st Ohio, who was a scout and used similar unconventional methods as did Mosby (Stephenson). In 1864 he would be

subdued by Mosby in West Virginia, but in the movie, in 1861, he plans a trap for Mosby at the wedding of Willie's cousin Oralee, to his Yankee friend, Henry.[10] Mosby is warned of the trap but turns the plan to his advantage to surround the Yankees when they closed in on the wedding. Although different people, this is similar to the true account when Laura Ratcliffe, the granddaughter of the founder of Fairfax City, warned Mosby that he was headed for a trap, and Mosby turned it to his advantage. In both cases, it was a non-suspecting Yankee who told the wrong person about Blazer's plans. Ironically, in real life, Mosby was serving with the First Virginia, but so was the Lieutenant Palmer who had planned the trap. The only difference was that Palmer's First Virginia was one of the few Southern regiments serving in the Union Army (Bakeless 62-3).

Besides the reconciliation between Willie and Henry, one might ponder the implications of this reality: Confederate Mosby and the Union Blazer were mirror images of the other. Why would you fight your own reflection?

Bruce Chadwick, author of *The Reel Civil War: Mythmaking in American Film*, who also was the keynote speaker for this seminar, bemoaned: "Few periods in American history have been so romanticized, eulogized and hopelessly distorted through films as the Civil War" (5). No doubt this is true, but I would argue the power of fiction to cause us to probe deeper into the meaning of history. The movies that I discussed may not have been terribly historically inaccurate, but their value lies in their ability to reconcile nation with nation, people with people, a person with himself, and one's self with God.

In the last movie I discussed, much of the setting was Frying Pan Church in Fairfax County, Virginia. I realize that battles have to be named for some geographical fixture like the Wheatfield in Gettysburg or the White Oak Swamp in Virginia, but I find it very significant, that

churches were the sites of many battles. Of course in any given hamlet or town of America, even if there was no school or courthouse, there would be a church, and churches were commandeered for not only hospitals but headquarters and meeting places for soldiers. During the Overland Campaign in the spring of of '65, there are markers for fighting at Zion Methodist Church, Massaponax Church, Bethel Church, Mangohick Church, Carmel Church, Enon Church, Polegreen Church, Bethesda Church, and Old Church.[11] How tragic it was that these churches, including Frying Pan Church, were not locations where enemies came together as Christians and let themselves be reconciled together in Christ. We all know that the North and the South each held conviction that God was on their side and the war was fought for holy reasons, but if they entered into these churches to worship God, they would have been reminded of God's law in Matthew 5:24: If you are searching for peace with God, you must "First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." One cannot have peace with God if one is not at peace with his brother. The Bible is even more explicit: "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him (I John 3: 15), and in the next chapter, he is called a liar if he says that he loves God but hates his brother (I John 4: 20). The only way to end a war or to prevent a war is reconciliation. Reconciliation is the very heart of God. In fact, the entire Bible is the story of reconciliation, encapsulated in the second book of Corinthians: "Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation … God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18-19).

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Notes

1. For further reading regarding revivals during the Civil War, see Samuel S. Hill Jr., *The South and the North in American Religion* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia P, 1980); Sandra Sizer, "Politics and Apolitical Religion: The Great Urban Revivals of the Late Nineteenth Century," *Church History* 48 (1979): 88-89; Donald G. Mathews, *Religion and the Old South* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1977): 180-81, James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse:Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1978; and Robert Mathiesen, *Critical Issues in American Religious History* (Waco, TX: Baylor UP, 2001).

2. For a complete account of the Battle of Chickamauga, see Eicher's "Chickamauga Campaign" *The Longest Night*, 587-99. Chapter 19 details the battles for Chattanooga, and 25 is Sherman's march.

3. Also known as "Weeping Sad and Lonely," it was composed by Charles Carroll Sawyer and published in 1863. To hear its melody see http://dixierising.com/when_war_is_over_by.htm and http://freepages.music.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~edgmon/cruelwar.mid.

4. Composed by Harry McCarthy and published in 1861, its subtitle is "A Southern Patriotic Song." To hear its melody and read the lyrics, see http://freepages.music.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~edgmon/bonnieblue.mid.

5. The credit for this song goes to Patrick Gilmore, an Irish-American Union bandleader, and it was published in September of 1863, Gilmore has been called the "Father of the American Band" and is listed in the Songwriters Hall of Fame "Patrick S. Gilmore." He came from Ireland in 1848, and it has been long argued and refuted that the origin of the song comes from an early Irish song, "Johnny, I Hardly Knew Ye," when he adapted an African-American song.

Regardless, he composed it while he was in New Orleans, sent there by President Lincoln, to help restore order to the city through music ("When Johnny"). This would have been nearly the same time that Johnny would have been outside Chattanooga, Tennessee, which means the song would have had to travel very fast. You can hear the music and lyrics at http://www.manythings.org/songs/johnny/. http://www.songwritershalloffame.org/index.php/exhibits/bio/C199. Another song inspired by him was "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" with lyrics by Will S. Hays in 1863. See http://sniff.numachi.com/pages/tiDRUMRBOY;ttDRUMRBOY.html and http://www.pdmusic.org/hays.html.

6. He died in San Antonio on May 13, 1937 in San Antonio but was buried in the National Cemetery in Arlington. He was 85.

7. Film frames are at http://www.jamesmacarthur.com/MosbysMarauders/MosbysAlbum/index.shtml.

8. June 4 and October 17, in particular.

9. Fitzhugh Lee: at Chancellorsville, Brandy Station, Gettysburg, Overland or Wilderness Campaign, Winchester, Petersburg, Appomattox.

10. Samuel Bates, charged by the state government of Pennsylvania to create a roll of all Pennsylvania volunteers during the Civil War, listed a Colonel Henry Jenkins as having been mustered into the 48th Pennsylvania Regiment Company F. He signed up at the age of 19 but died in Philadelphia in September 1862 from fatal gunshot wounds ("Civilian"). But he also lists one mustered June 4, 1865 and mustered out five days later (998). Still another was mustered into the 44th 1st Calvary on August 16, 1861 and received his discharge from a surgeon, January 19, 1862 (1040).

11. See "Grant VS Lee: The Overland Campaign," 12.