

his refusal to acknowledge the Confederate service of those graduates. Some historians have misinterpreted Cullum's disapproval of the Southern graduates' participation in the war against the Union as a "fierce hatred."²⁸ Both Cullum's influence in the Association of Graduates and his hatred of Southern graduates must be called into question because of significant events that occurred during his tenure as the Association's executive committee chairman.

The reunion of 1879 was significant because it was the first time that a Southern graduate delivered the opening address of the meeting. Francis H. Smith, Superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute and Cullum's classmate, delivered his address entitled, "West Point Fifty Years Ago," which D. Van Nostrand of New York later published. The address ended with an emotional roll-call of the twelve remaining living members of the Class of 1833 who were all present at the reunion. Cullum actively participated by responding "here" to Smith's roll-call. If Cullum was so influential in the Association and hated Southern graduates so intensely, why then would he allow Smith to give such an important address at the annual meeting? There are two possible answers to this question. Either Cullum did not have much influence in the Association as its Executive Committee chairman, or he too wished to reunite with his old classmates and friends. Perhaps both answers are correct. Cullum, although he strongly disapproved of the Southern graduates' participation against the Union in the Civil War, as did most Northern graduates, was apparently ready and willing to mend the bond that had broken.

As each annual reunion passed, more Southern graduates became members of the Association. Those who attended the annual meetings actively participated in the reunion activities with Northern graduates with no apparent discrimination or animosity. At the dinner that followed the annual meeting held in 1883, Confederate General Robert Ransom (Class of 1850), who had

commanded a division of the Army of Northern Virginia during the Battle of Fredericksburg in 1863, was one of nine members who responded to the traditional toasts of the evening. His toast ironically followed that toast responded to by Ulysses S. Grant.²⁹

At the annual reunion of 1884, Confederate General Isaac R. Trimble (Class of 1822), who had commanded a division in Ewell's 2nd Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, gave the opening address. Again, Cullum's influence in the Association, as the chairman of its executive committee, and his supposed hatred of Southern graduates again must be called into question. In his address, Trimble called for renewed friendships between the Northern and Southern graduates:

We have felt as brothers in early days. I know that unnatural strife for a few years divided us, but we stand together on this venerated spot-in the eyes, as it were, of "our kind mother"-with the "shade" of that illustrious man, Sylvanus Thayer, who was the father if not the founder of West Point Academy, seeming to hover over us; shall any of us wish to desecrate a place so attractive to all that is beautiful in boyhood, and so sacred to maturer years, by any thought that would mar the harmony of early friendships? Let us rather strive to create-what no others can so well do as the men of the Army-sentiments of good will and kindness towards each other; sentiments which shall in time pervade the whole land, and cause all sections to emulate each other only in advancing the happiness, the virtue, and the glory, of our common country.³⁰

Trimble spoke of West Point as a "sacred" ground where ill-will and animosity must not exist. Trimble's address was symbolic because it represented what the Association of Graduates had been calling for since its formation in 1869. Additionally, it was only the second address given by a Southern graduate at an annual meeting. Ironically, both occurred while George W. Cullum was the executive committee chairman. The executive committee, at this time, was ultimately responsible for having Trimble speak at the meeting. Thus, Cullum apparently approved of having the Southern graduate deliver the address.

As time passed, Southern membership in the Association of Graduates steadily increased. By 1885, the Southern membership grew to thirty-one members and increased to forty in 1890, and forty-four in 1895. By the year 1902, of the forty-five living graduates who had served in the Confederate Army, twenty-seven were members of the Association of Graduates. Among the many Southern graduates present at the USMA Centennial celebration, James Longstreet was the most prominent. Contrary to the beliefs of some historians, the Centennial celebration was not the first time Northern and Southern graduates met formally at the Academy. This had been occurring consistently in the Association of Graduates since 1872. During the ceremonies of the Alumni Day celebration, a Union and a Confederate General, who had each commanded in the Civil War, gave addresses. Union General Thomas H. Ruger (Class of 1854) spoke in support of the Confederate graduates who fought for their cause. He stated: "Hypocrites do not combine for fighting. When the end came there was found in their hearts an echo to the words 'Let us have peace.' . . . It is gratifying to meet many such graduates on this occasion for gratulation, and to further renew the tie of good-fellowship. . . . So may it always be."³¹

In Confederate General E.P. Alexander's (Class of 1857) address, which immediately followed Ruger's, he said that the American Civil War was a necessary war for the country. He said that "the firm bonds which today hold together this great nation could never have been wrought by debates in Congress. . . . Such bonds must be forged, welded, and proved in the heat of battle and must be cemented in blood. Peace congresses and arbitrations have never yet given birth to a nation, and this one had to be born in nature's way."³² Both addresses were symbolic in both their content and their interpretation. By 1902, the Civil War was recognized as an inevitable event in the evolution of a unified nation and the Northern graduates accepted the Confederate position. The

Centennial publication even acknowledged this acceptance by stating: "Impartial history will record that the Confederacy was surpassed by no previous efforts in the gallantry with which it maintained the cause it espoused. The valor shown by its armies, led by graduates, excited the admiration of soldiers everywhere."³³

Representing all graduates from the North and South who had fought in the Civil War, Ruger and Alexander came to the Centennial celebration with the message of peace and understanding. Graduates had called a truce and the bond that was "broken asunder by civil discord and war" finally reunited.

The founders of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy saw the Association's primary mission as one of reunification of the Academy's Northern and Southern graduates after the Civil War. With its stated object being "to cherish the memories of our Alma Mater and to promote social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates," the Association never strayed from this purpose from 1869-1902.³⁴ The founding fathers' intentions in creating the Association on 22 February 1869 at the College of the City of New York, were, in fact, sincere. The four years that had passed since the end of the Civil War demonstrated to them the need for an organization that would help mend the bond between Northern and Southern graduates that the war had broken. Throughout this period the Association attempted to mend this broken bond by nurturing an atmosphere that begged for reunification. The Association's efforts successfully culminated with the formal reunification at the Centennial celebration of the Academy in 1902. Although there were graduates on both sides who were reluctant to unify, the Association was successful in its charter. Some will say that it is time that heals wounds. Yes, this may be true but, in this case, the Association of Graduates expedited the healing process.

Appendix 1 - Constitution and By-Laws of the Association (1869-1902)

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE GRADUATES OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY.

CONSTITUTION.

ART. I.—THE ASSOCIATION OF THE GRADUATES OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY shall include all the graduates of that institution who shall have assented to the Constitution and By-Laws.

ART. II.—The object of this Association shall be to cherish the memories of our Alma Mater, and to promote the social intercourse and fraternal fellowship of its graduates.

ART. III.—*Par. 1.* The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of five members.

Par. 2. The oldest graduate belonging to the Association shall be the President; and in his absence the senior graduate present shall preside at the meetings of the Association. The Secretary and Treasurer, to be selected from the officers of the Military Academy, shall be appointed by the Presiding Officer, at each annual meeting, for the ensuing year.

Par. 3. The Association shall meet annually at West Point, New York, on the 17th of June whenever that falls on Thursday, otherwise on the Thursday next preceding the 17th.

ART. IV.—Political, or any other discussions foreign to the purposes of the Association, as set forth in this Constitution, or any proceedings of such a tendency, are declared inimical to the purposes of this organization, and are prohibited.

ART. V.—This Constitution may be altered or amended at any regular meeting of the Association, by a vote of three-fourths of the members present.

BY-LAWS.

1. Every graduate desiring to become a member of this Association shall be admitted upon paying an initiation fee of ten dollars.

2. At each annual meeting, the Presiding Officer shall appoint an Executive Committee of five members, whose duty it shall be to make all needful preparations and arrangements for the ensuing meeting, and transact such other business as may not devolve upon the other officers of the Association.

3. The Treasurer shall disburse all the moneys of the Association upon the order of the Executive Committee, attested by the signature of its Chairman, and shall at each annual meeting make a full report of his receipts and disbursements.

4. The Secretary shall cause a books of records to be kept, exhibiting the address and occupation of every member of the Association.

5. The records of the Association shall be preserved at West Point, N. Y., and shall be open to the inspection of the members.

6. All members of the Association, who may be prevented, by any cause, from personally attending the annual meeting, are expected to notify the Secretary, and to impart such information in regard to themselves as they may think proper, and as may be of interest to their fellow members.

7. No member of the Association shall speak more than once on any subject or question of business, and no longer than five minutes, without the consent of the meeting being first obtained.

8. A two-thirds vote of all the members present at any regular meeting shall be required to alter or amend these By-Laws.

9. Cushing's Manual of Parliamentary Law shall be authority for the government and regulation of all meetings of this Association.

Appendix 2 - Presidents of the Association of Graduates (1869-1902)

Name and Class	Term
Sylvanus Thayer, 1808	1870-1872
Simon Willard, 1815	1872-1874
Charles S. Merchant, 1814	1874-1879
Daniel Tyler, 1819	1879-1882
Joshua Baker, 1819	1882-1885
William C. Young, 1822	1885-1893
*George S. Greene, 1823	1893-1898
David S. Stanley, 1852	1898-1899
Egbert L. Viele, 1847	1899-1900
John M. Schofield, 1853	1900-1906

*** Note:** The first elected President of the Association was George S. Greene in 1897. Prior to this time the oldest living graduate who was a member of the Association was the President.

Appendix 3 - Chairmen of the Association's Executive Committee

Name and Class	Term
Thomas G. Pitcher, 1845	1870-1871
Dennis H. Mahan, 1824	1871-1872
Robert P. Parrott, 1824	1872-1878
George W. Cullum, 1833	1878-1892
John M. Wilson, 1860	1892-1893
Oswald H. Ernst, 1864	1893-1898
Albert L. Mills, 1879	1898-1902

Endnotes

¹*Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy. Bulletin No. 2.* (New York: USMA Press, 1902), 53-79.

²Walter S. Dillard, "The United States Military Academy, 1865-1900: The Uncertain Years" (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1972), 104.

³Sidney Forman, *West Point: A History of the United States Military Academy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1950), 132.

⁴Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 189.

⁵Thomas J. Fleming, *West Point: The Men and Times of the United States Military Academy* (New York: William Morrow & Company, 1969), 210.

⁶Dillard, 323.

⁷Sylvanus Thayer to Robert Anderson, 12 February 1869, Thayer Papers, Special Collections, USMA Library, West Point, New York.

⁸*ibid.*

⁹George S. Pappas, *To The Point: The United States Military Academy, 1802-1902* (West Port, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 1993), 369.

¹⁰*The Constitution of the Association of Graduates, 1869.*

¹¹*ibid.*

¹²"West Point Alumni Meeting," *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. VII, no. 45 (25 June 1870); 703.

¹³Simon B. Buckner to C. C. Parsons, 12 June 1870, Association of Graduates, Book 1, USMA Archives, West Point, New York.

¹⁴Benjamin S. Ewell to C. C. Parsons 16 August 1869, Association of Graduates, Book 1, USMA Archives, West Point, New York.

¹⁵George W. Cullum's Will, contained in the *Twenty-Third Annual Reunion of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 9, 1892* (Saginaw, Michigan: Seeman & Peters, 1892), 104-108.

¹⁶*The Constitution and By-Laws of the Association of Graduates*, 1869.

¹⁷Fleming, 211.

¹⁸*The Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy, Annual Reunion, June 17, 1870* (New York: Waldron and Payne, 1870), 2.

¹⁹Ellsworth Eliot, Jr., *West Point in the Confederacy* (New York: G. A. Baker & Company, 1941), 27.

²⁰*Third Annual Reunion of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 14, 1872* (New York: Crocker and Company, 1872), 54.

²¹"West Point Alumni Meeting," *Army and Navy Journal*, vol. X, no. 46 (28 June 1873); 733.

²²"West Point Academy: The Annual Meeting of the Alumni," *New York Times*, 12 June 1874, p. 5.

²³Francis H. Smith, *West Point Fifty Years Ago: An Address Delivered Before the Association of Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at the Annual Reunion, June 12, 1879* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 1879), 7-8.

²⁴*Sixth Annual Reunion of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 17, 1875* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1875), 9-15.

²⁵Smith, 8.

²⁶Dillard, 106.

²⁷George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point, New York*, 3d ed., rev. and ext. (New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 17.

²⁸Dillard, 106.

²⁹*Fourteenth Annual Reunion of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 12, 1883* (East Saginaw, Michigan: Courier Printing Company, 1883), 143.

³⁰*Fifteenth Annual Reunion of the Association of Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, June 13, 1884* (East Saginaw, Michigan: Courier Printing Company, 1884), 31-32.

³¹*The Centennial of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York: 1802-1902, vol. 1, Addresses and Histories* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 76.

³²*ibid.*, 82.

³³*ibid.*, 745.

³⁴*The Constitution and By-Laws of the Association of Graduates, 1869.*

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