

Musical journey takes place tonight

Loren Ford rocks the Civil War

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Guest Writer

Music is yet another avenue that provides a psychological insight into the people of the Civil War era, as it does any era. There is an opportunity to hear some of this music tonight in the Gregory Forum.

Daniel Partner, who will be the opening performance, not only performs songs from the Civil War era, but plays them on a banjo like those used during that time.

Following Partner, Bill and Carla Coleman will be giving their presentation, "Taps: the Civil War in Word and Song." The program incorporates music, letters and diaries from the Civil War to show what that era was like.

"People influence history and history influences people," says Social Science instructor Loren Ford, which is a primary focus of the Civil War and Psychology class he teaches at Clackamas.

History isn't just a bunch of facts and figures, battle strategies or casualty statistics. When you begin to delve more into the psychology of the people who participated in the events that make up history, you can see there is more than might initially meets the eye. According to Ford, it's the people and how they affected history and were affected by it that makes history really interesting.

Ford first became interested in the Civil War six years ago when he read "The Battle Cry of Freedom" by James McPherson. Since then, he taught this class for three years with Jackie Flowers and is now teaching it on his own. He tries to teach his students critical thinking.

Ford is also a Civil War re-enactor. Re-enactors are people with a love for the Civil War and who want to share their interest and teach others about the war and do so by re-enacting the battles and lifestyle of the times. Re-enacting is one way to get people interested and then drawn into learning about the Civil War, Ford says. He also says that it's a hobby that anyone can find some area they like and can do. Such as a person with a medical background who researched Civil War medicine, and practices, so to speak, at re-enactment events.

Ford was drawn into re-enacting through music. Some of the members of the bluegrass band he is in also performed music at balls where attendees dressed up in period clothing from the 1860's. He is now a sergeant in the Ninth Virginia Cavalry.

Hearing the words of those

who experienced the Civil War can give an indication of what it must have been like to go through that time in our history.

"If September 11 put our country in mourning for a year, what does four years of internal struggle do?" said Ford of the Civil War. Such a conflict had to have a profound impact on the people of the time.

The Civil War was a "defining crossroads" for our country, says Ford, but the effects of that struggle are not limited to the years the war took place. In many ways, it has continued to influence our country and how we perceive ourselves.

In the Civil War and Psychology class, history is approached "in a way that you are exploring the personalities of historical figures and how they influenced events," said Ford.

How the war impacted and continues to impact our lives is something that is also looked at in the class. The class also looks at connections with current events.

One example Ford gives is when, during the course of the 2000 presidential election, George W. Bush, in regards to unfair voting practices, cited the fourteenth and fifteenth amendments, which were written after the Civil War regard-

ing the rights

of blacks. Another aspect of psychology and the Civil War that can be linked to modern times is in regards to symbolism.

Understanding various things with symbolism attached to them, such as the Confederate flag, is part of understanding current controversies like the one that took place in South Carolina a few years ago regarding flying the Confederate flag over the state capital building.

Some of the reasons Ford gives as to why the Civil War and learning about it is important are that it helps us see and understand how we perceive ourselves and our beliefs as a people. It also is important in understanding the Civil Rights movement.

"The most important thing to me in understanding the Civil War is what happened afterwards," said Ford.

The Reconstruction that occurred directly after the war took around 150 years to deal with the aftereffects, Ford says. It is something the country is continuing to deal with.

Though the Civil War took place over a century ago, the effects of it are also present in our lives today, and the Civil

War and Psychology class can help students see and understand, not

only why things happened as they did back then, but how it still affects us today.

"Taps: the Civil War in Word and Song," a free program open to

the public will take

place tonight from 7 to 9 p.m. in the Gregory Forum.

Loren Ford (shown on the left) is an avid re-enactor of the Civil War. Tonight his "Civil War and Psychology" class will co-host a musical interpretation of that era.



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