

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

The Rebel Yell: The Seething Blast of an Imaginary Hell

By **Richard G. Williams, Jr.**

Resources

To truly understand the Rebel Yell one has to listen to it. Below are links to several rare recordings of old Confederate veterans demonstrating the Rebel Yell. There are two YouTube videos from the Museum of the Confederacy explaining how they used one of these recordings of one soldier in a sound studio to reproduce the Rebel Yell as it would have sounded being given by hundreds or thousands of men. They recorded the soldier's voice over and over in a sound studio altering treble, bass, speed and tenor until he sounded like hundreds or thousands of individuals yelling all at once.

Some sources suggest the Rebel Yell had three parts to it—one high pitched yelp, “yip!”, followed by a low pitched bark, “woof!” followed by a single high pitched extended yelp, “yiiipp!” It is important to note several sources suggest the version of the yell varied from source to source, region to region and unit to unit. Listen to the second YouTube video to hear how re-enactors immediately understood that while a loud yelling emptied their lungs leaving them gasping for breath, the real Rebel Yell let them advance quickly without interfering with their breathing.

If you want to really understand the eerie, spooky, hair-raising sound of the Rebel Yell and feel the shiver go up your spine when you hear it, you have to listen to the Museum of the Confederacy CD.

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Warren, Craig A.	<i>The Rebel Yell: A Cultural History</i> . Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014.

Books

Author	Title. City: Publisher, Year.
Elliott, Terry W.	<i>The History of the Rebel Yell</i> . Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 2013.
Smith, Allen H.	<i>The Rebel Yell: Being a Carpetbagger's Attempt to Establish the Truth Concerning the Screech of the Confederate Soldier Plus Lesser Matters Appertaining to the Peculiar Habits of the South</i> . New York: Doubleday, 1954.

Organizations

Web Resources

URL	Name and description
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6jSqt39vFM	This is a Library of Congress recording of various Confederate veterans demonstrating the Rebel Yell, circa 1930s.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Las17ywdN0	This is a brief recording of a Rebel Yell from a veterans' reunion at Gettysburg.
http://www.26nc.org/History/Rebel-Yell/rebel-yell.html	The 26 th North Carolina Regiment website includes recordings and an interview with Confederate veteran Pvt. Thomas N. Alexander of the 37th North Carolina in which he demonstrates the Rebel Yell. This is the recording used by the Museum of the Confederacy to reproduce the Rebel Yell.
https://beta.prx.org/stories/38018	This is the recording in the possession of the United Daughters of the Confederacy of SS Simmons of the 8 th Virginia Cavalry, recorded in 1934 when he was 93 years old. This recording was used by the Museum of the Confederacy to validate the authenticity of Thomas Alexander's recording.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dfHylwlq9Ow	This is the Museum of the Confederacy's The Rebel Yell Lives Part 1 Rediscovering History.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buZ1M3iN-UE	This is the Museum of the Confederacy's The Rebel Yell Lives Part 2 – The Re-

	enactors.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7mGAsLYIF8	This YouTube video includes part of the Museum of the Confederacy's reproduction of the Rebel Yell and footage of re-enactors emulating it.

Other Sources

Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
The Rebel Yell Lives CD	The Rebel Yell Lives is a CD produced by the Museum of the Confederacy which can be purchased for \$15 at the Museum or on line at: https://www.moc.org/haversack-store/cds/rebel-yell-lives-cd-museum-confederacy

Scholars

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Google Keywords

Rebel Yell Seething Blast of an Imaginary Hell Rebel Yell Bourbon The Particular Corkscrew Sensation that it Sends Down Your Backbone Pibroch of Southern Fealty Ghoulish Shriek of Death Sweet Song of Victory First Manassas Stonewall Jackson Cherokees Penetrating Rasping Shrieking Blood-curdling Noise.
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