

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Andrew E. Masich
President & CEO

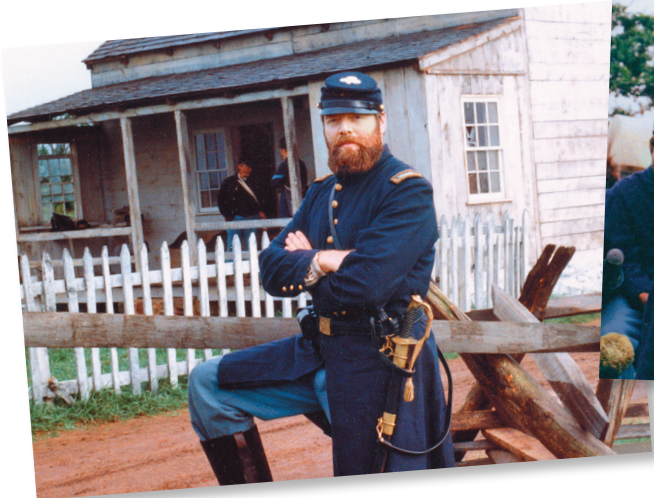
Andy's Civil War Museum

One summer, as a 10-year-old, I explored the attic of my grandmother's Victorian house at Lake Chautauqua. Braving the bats, I discovered in a dusty bureau a cigar box filled with boyish treasure: pocket knives, marbles, and a .69 caliber Civil War bullet. The big lead slug, covered with dirt and lead oxide, weighed nearly two ounces. I was fascinated with this relic and carried it in my pocket. I wrote letters to museums all over the country, penciled on notebook paper in my imperfect scrawl, including one to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. To their credit, the curators wrote back. They told me how in 1849 French army Captain Claude-Etienne Minié invented the expanding bullet that bore his name. This innovation increased the velocity and accuracy of muzzle-loading rifled muskets and made the Civil War the deadliest conflict in American history.

Using the money I earned mowing my neighbors' lawns for \$1 an hour, I began collecting minié balls and related artifacts, eventually assembling the largest Civil War bullet collection in Yonkers, New York. "Andy's Civil War Museum," located inside my second floor bedroom, opened to family and friends one year later. Everything was properly labeled, and visitors took a purple-ink, mimeographed brochure from a rack

just outside the door. On sunny days, I dressed the neighborhood kids in Civil War uniforms and re-enacted battles in the backyard. The *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* were crafted from silver-painted Popsicle sticks. Hats and swords were fashioned from papier maché and my old Boy Scout uniform was converted into Confederate butternut. Even at that early age, I realized I wanted to tell stories, re-live history, and be a museum director.

I still have that minié ball. I am still fascinated by the people who made history 150 years ago. And I still love stories—tragic, heroic, inspiring—of the Civil War. I hope you'll join the History Center along with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission and other PACW150 partners across the state as we commemorate the Civil War sesquicentennial with exhibitions, publications, and public programs. Read on to learn more and visit us at www.heinzhistorycenter.org/civilwar. 🌟



Left: Andrew E. Masich, President and CEO, took part in the 1992 filming of *Gettysburg*, based on Michael Shaara's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *Killer Angels*. He stands in front of Meade's headquarters and with Ken Burns, producer of the popular PBS series on the Civil War.

Above: Andy Masich holding a minié ball.