"What A Fall Was There—My Country Ruined!": Confederate Soldiers and Southern Society, 1861-1880

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ABSTRACT

DAVID WILLIARD: "What A Fall Was There—My Country Ruined!": Confederate
Soldiers and Southern Society, 1861-1880
(Under the direction of William L. Barney)

This dissertation traces the paths that former Confederate soldiers took in
attempting to reclaim control over their personal lives and reconstitute their
relationship to southern society at large in the aftermath of the Civil War.
Participation in the war gave men status, purpose, a sense of worth in the eyes of
their families and white southern society at large, and investment in a collective
endeavor. Defeat shattered Confederate soldiers' self-image and led soldiers to
doubt the purpose of their sacrifices, to believe that hardships came unequally, and
to question whether their society had any right to determine the status of men
whose experiences it did not understand. At the war's conclusion, the links of
ideology and experience that had bound Confederate soldiers and civilians together
stood largely broken.

The consequences of this division became evident in the postwar South.
While white southerners still agreed on certain widely held beliefs, they no longer
possessed a collective entity through which to mobilize their disparate individual
goals in pursuit of social action. Fighting in a prolonged, destructive war had given
Confederate soldiers experience with living outside the bounds of peacetime civil
society and inured them to many of its conventions. Civilians asked soldiers to

submit to both legal and social mores that initially failed to account for their

wartime experiences. Moreover, the process of Confederate defeat had brought new

material and political power to women and African Americans. For young men

raised to dominate their surroundings as well as their racial and sexual

subordinates, defeat had destabilized the core foundations of selfhood. Because

their understanding of what it meant to be a white man required them to wield

power within their homes, communities, and society at large, former Confederates

had to either regain control of radically changed worlds or find alternate ways to

structure their identities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Cataloguing those people and institutions who have contributed to the conception and execution of this dissertation raises a conundrum similar to the challenge of dissertation writing itself. How to set about a task when one knows that the end product can never fully capture the nuances of the reality it claims to describe? Nevertheless, I have cause to render thanks to many people and institutions and will attempt to do so, asking the forbearance of those mentioned and those who by terrible eventuality I omit.

This dissertation would have remained merely a concept without the financial and institutional support needed to research and write it. Many generous organizations have invested in this project as it took me to archives in half a dozen states. The United States Department of Education changed the trajectory of my graduate school career in an instant when it awarded me a Jacob K. Javits Fellowship, which comprised my primary means of support for the entire course of this project's evolution from idea to question to product. In my hometown of Richmond, the archive in which I first conducted research as a high school student remained good to me a decade later, and I thank the Virginia Historical Society for both its summer Mellon Research Fellowship and for prompting me to make some sense of my diffuse thoughts in conversation with the Society's excellent curatorial

staff and other scholars-in-residence. Closer to home, the Center for the Study of the

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in the South Caroliniana Collections. Both are truly wonderful archives in which to

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Louisiana State University gave generously of their time and expertise,

recommending sources and serving as consultants on nineteenth century

morphology and handwriting.

I have had the good fortune to work with outstanding mentors at many

stages of my academic career. John T. Wilkes inspired me by his example to pursue

an academic interest in history and a professional interest in teaching it to others

during my time at the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School. I have yet to meet a

better classroom teacher. At a later stage, Carol Sheriff reluctantly accepted an

eager freshman into her Civil War Era seminar at the College of William and Mary

and in doing so began an academic relationship build on sage advice and unflagging

support that continues to this day.

When I first met Bill Barney and Joe Glatthaar on a spring day in Chapel Hill, I knew that I had found the perfect team to guide me through my graduate work. Joe has never stopped encouraging me to reach for the next goal or seize a promising opportunity, and his own incredible example of energy, productivity, and enthusiasm has kept me focused and motivated. Those qualities find their ideal complement in Bill's astonishing ability to conceptualize historical relationships, find promise in even the most underdeveloped ideas, and offer a helpful lead from his inexhaustible knowledge of the historical literature of the nineteenth century. As my career at UNC progressed, I benefited from the additional attributes and perspectives that the other members of my committee could contribute. In the classroom and beyond, all of them have made substantial contributions to my academic development. Fitz Brundage encouraged me to view the study of Confederate soldiers as an American problem with a southern context and cautioned me to keep an open mind as I made my way through their lives. Laura Edwards, a model of clear historical thinking and writing, has helped me to distinguish between the rhetoric and reality of people's lives in the nineteenth century and shown me how to make use of both. Heather Williams encouraged me to read Confederate soldiers through the eyes of others and to look beyond their letters and diaries to form a more complete picture of their social significance. All five of these accomplished historians have inspired me to a better grasp of important aspects of the historiography of the nineteenth century and pushed me to see where I could make my own contribution.

Williard, introduced to me a love of knowledge and taught me how to pursue an

examined life. No words can convey what they mean to me.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

LSU   Louisiana State University

UNC   University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

USC   University of South Carolina

UVA   University of Virginia

INTRODUCTION

In a "Retrospective of the Year" written on January 1, 1866, George

Washington Finley Harper, a thirty-two year old planter from Caldwell County,

North Carolina, contrasted his wartime situation as a slaveholder and officer with

his life as a civilian in peacetime. Harper wrote that he "had niggers and have been

niggerless, have walked the earth a proud soldier fighting for the right of self-

government and have ceased to do so. (What a fall was there-My Country ruined!)

Have suffered privations and hardships in the march and in the camp and have

enjoyed the comforts and blessings of Home." The retrospective ended with the

expression "and here I am!"[1]

Harper's brief diary entry catalogued the ebb and flow of what it meant to be

a Confederate soldier during the war and its immediate aftermath. During the

conflict, Harper had stood proud in his identity as a soldier, but the destruction of

the Confederacy had taken both his rights and his pride from him. Emancipation

had cost Harper his slave labor force--and with it his social status as master--and

destroyed the nation that had claimed his loyalty. Though Harper did not reference

challenges to manhood and gendered identity in his "Retrospective," both he and

other Confederates struggled to cope with these as well. Perhaps the most revealing

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[1] Entry of January 1, 1866, George Washington Finley Harper Diary, Southern
Historical Collection, UNC.

part of Harper's retrospective, however, was the conclusion. The same person had lived two lives: one of comfort and blessings, another of suffering and privation; one of pride, another of ruin.

That duality comprises the subject of this study. I explore the relationship between Confederate soldiers and their society from its origins in the soldiers' departures for war to twenty years later, when the bonds between veterans and civilians contained more ambiguity. By relationship, I mean the exchanges that ensued when southern soldiers donned uniforms. In its simplest form, this entailed trading sacrifices for esteem. Men agreed to give up their peacetime selves, both in reality and in reputation, and derive their identities from who they were as fighting men. Promising to serve in the defense of the vulnerable members of their communities, most soldiers looked to the war to bring definition to otherwise unspectacular lives. They wanted to test their courage and fortitude alongside their comrades and against the young men of the Union. The war, most believed, would reveal fundamental facets of character more than any peacetime pursuit ever could, and young soldiers wanted the world to see them in the light of those virtues. They wished to receive praise for their courage, valor, and fortitude, but also to derive a secure self-knowledge from those same attributes. In short, they not only wanted to be good soldiers, but to know themselves and be known by others as such.

In addition to defining their qualities as men, fighting in the armies also defined Confederate soldiers' place and power within their society. During the war this cohort of young men became the decisive actors in southern society, with the

fate of the Confederate nation—and more significantly, the people who constituted it—depending on their sacrifices. Soldiers saw themselves as the most important representatives of their communities, a belief that amplified the antebellum emphasis on social and domestic authority as key elements of white southern manhood.[2] Confederate soldiers internalized their positions as the determinative population in white southern society and defined themselves through it.

When the Civil War ended in defeat for the Confederacy, the components of soldiers' personal and public identities collapsed. They lost both their status as soldiers and their structured relationship to their society. In order to sustain their wartime resolve, soldiers had embraced as the salient elements of their selfhood a set of qualities that promised to yield victory; deprived of that victory and of their ability to continue to serve their communities in uniform, Confederate soldiers struggled to know who they were and what course their lives would take. The subsequent redefinition of their selfhood and rebuilding of their relationship to southern society would play an important role in defining the social and political course of Reconstruction.

This study begins in 1861, when white southern men joined the armies. The endpoint of 1880 represents a more subjective choice, but by scholarly consensus it

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[2] See William Barney, The Making of a Confederate: Walter Lenoir's Civil War (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Stephen W. Berry, All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Stephanie McCurry, Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the South Carolina Upcountry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

reflects a point of departure in both how veterans saw themselves and how their society saw them. Gerald Linderman suggests 1880 as the approximate point at which a culture of "hiberation" gave way to one of "revival," with civilians and soldiers on both sides transitioning from confronting the present consequences of the war to canonizing its memory.[3] Scholars of Civil War memory in the American South have confirmed Linderman's argument, showing that monuments, memorial organizations, and literature idealizing the war became important regional phenomena in the 1880s just as the social and political importance of veterans themselves began to wane.[4] Since I am less concerned with the legacy of the Civil War for the region than I am for its consequences in shaping the personal identities and power relations of the people who fought it, 1880 marked a logical stopping point. In between, I examine how defeat destroyed Confederate soldiers' conceptions of themselves and—at least temporarily—stripped them of any broader social purpose. I then turn to how southern society's inability to account for divergent wartime experiences between soldiers and civilians produced the expectation that veterans would effectively forget their wartime identities and slide back into the structures of peacetime civil and domestic life. Finally, I examine the restoration of the public reconstruction of Confederate veterans as the guardians of

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[3] Gerald F. Linderman, <u>Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War</u> (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 266-297.

[4] See W. Fitzhugh Brundage, <u>The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005); Gaines Foster, <u>Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913</u> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988); and W. Scott Poole, <u>Never Surrender: Confederate Memory and Conservatism in the South Carolina Upcountry</u> (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

white southern society and its consequences for both power relations within communities and the lives of veterans themselves.

Just as this is not a study of Civil War memory, so also it does not seek to engage directly in scholarly debates over the strength of Confederate nationalism. To be sure, scholarship on the investment of soldiers in their wartime identities as soldiers supports the foundations of this project.[5] Yet I make no claim that Confederate soldiers fought on behalf of a particularly durable regional ideology, but rather argue that soldiers derived their social identity and their sense of selfhood from their service. In fact, when my focus turns to the immediate postwar years, one of the underlying assumptions of this project is that the war produced deep and enduring fissures in the southern populace, particularly along the lines of race and gender.[6] Former soldiers' needs to restore their positions of power as protectors and actors on behalf of white women and controllers of African

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[5] See Gary Gallagher, The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave Off Defeat (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Joseph Glatthaar, General Lee's Army: From Victory to Collapse (New York: The Free Press, 2008); Anne Sarah Rubin, A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861-1868 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); Jason Phillips, Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility, 1863-1865 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); and Aaron Sheehan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought: Family and Nation in Civil War Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

[6] See especially William Freehling, The South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Stephanie McCurry, Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010); and Armstead Robinson, Bitter Fruits of Bondage: The Demise of Slavery and the Collapse of the Confederacy (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2004).

Americans' behavior conditioned how they acted and defined themselves in the years of Presidential and Congressional Reconstruction.

Rather than framing my project as an investigation of an aspect of Confederate nationalism, I seek to make three contributions. First, I wish to contribute to a growing literature on what Aaron Sheehan-Dean has termed "the Long Civil War" by showing how the creation of wartime identities and relationships played out in southern society and in the lives of former soldiers after the war.[7] Second, I investigate the assertions of many scholars who gesture towards the place of soldiers in postwar society, particularly as concerns the relationship between violence and masculinity, but do not deeply investigate veterans' lives in the wartime years.[8] Finally, I hope to challenge an oft-repeated assertion that the manuscript evidence of the post-Civil War years has little to offer historians.[9] While

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[7] Aaron Sheehan-Dean, "The Long Civil War: Recent Writing on the Outcomes of the U.S. Civil War," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 119 (June 2011), 107-153.

[8] Examples include Eric Foner, Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863-1877 (New York: HarperCollins, 1988); James Marten, Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in the Gilded Age (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Phillips, Diehard Rebels; and Sheehan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought. While Phillips and Sheehan-Dean speculate on the importance of military masculinity in the postwar South, theirs are studies of soldiers during the war years. Foner asserts the importance of Confederate veterans to anti-Reconstruction political activity but at no point does he delve into the specifics of that relationship. Marten comes closest, but his work relies, in addition to Sheehan-Dean, on early twentieth century fictional depictions and on scholarship on ritual and performance in post-1880s lynchings and contains no manuscript collections on Confederate veterans' outlooks on violence between 1865 and 1880. See especially Marten, Sing Not War, 22-23, 65 and related footnotes.

[9] See for example Peter Carmichael, The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); David

they cannot compare to the volume or the range of expression of the letters and

diaries produced during the Civil War years, the private sources of ordinary men

and women in the postwar South offer their own rich tapestry of doubt and

conviction, engagement and withdrawal, and ideology and pragmatism.

Herbert Donald, "A Generation of Defeat," in Walter J. Fraser, Jr. and Winfred B. Moore, Jr., eds., <u>From the Old South to the New: Essays on the Transitional South</u> (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981); and Marten, <u>Sing Not War</u>.

CHAPTER ONE: "The Props and Braces Must Be Placed Upon His Shoulders"

From his pulpit at First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans, the Reverend Benjamin Morgan Palmer spoke to his congregants and the southern people about their newly created nation. The Confederacy derived its strength and indeed its very essence from being "an incorporated society" that "possesses a unity of life resembling the individuality of a single being."[10] Palmer was wrong. While the unity of the Confederacy as a national polity would be tested, stretched, and broken along many lines of fracture as the Civil War evolved, one fundamental division existed from the day that Lincoln called for men to quash the rebellion and the Confederate states summoned troops to their defense. Some Confederates would be soldiers, and they would fight on behalf of others.

At the commencement of the Civil War, these two groups fashioned a bond to one another that would carry consequences for Confederate soldiers for the rest of their lives. White southern society granted the young men who donned uniforms status, purpose, and definition, acknowledging soldiers as the decisive actors on behalf of their communities. In return, soldiers subsumed themselves into a greater

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[10] Sermon of Rev. Benjamin Morgan Palmer, June 13, 1861, in David Chesebrough, <u>God Ordained This War: Sermons on the Sectional Crisis, 1830-1865</u> (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 202.

whole, defining themselves by their public identity during the formative years of their young adulthood. As the war progressed, this process of identity formation grew ever more dynamic. Not only did soldiers derive their personal identities—both how they thought of themselves and how they presented themselves to others within their society—from their military experiences, but as white southern society disintegrated under the stress of war, soldiers' qualities became the measurements by which the Confederacy defined itself. By the end of the war, soldiers' personal identities and self-image had grown synonymous with the Confederate cause they served.

Men chose to enter Confederate military service and thereby initiate this relationship for complex reasons. The Civil War soldier on both sides, James McPherson argues, signed his enlistment papers with patriotic motives and Constitutional principles joined to the feverish excitement of a national *rage militaire* as his primary motivators, with Confederates also citing defense of home in their justifications.[11] Joseph Glatthaar finds all of these among the men of the Army of Northern Virginia, to which he adds the allure of wartime adventure, duty to the state and to the family, personal honor, and dedication to the institution of slavery.[12] Aaron Sheehan-Dean indicates that "Virginia Confederates entered the war with a host of overlapping motivations, including a defense of home, a belief in state rights,

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[11] James McPherson, <u>For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 16-21.

[12] Glatthaar, <u>General Lee's Army</u>, 29-37.

and a desire to protect slavery."[13] Taking a different tack, Stephen Berry asserts that behind the lofty defenses by which men justified themselves to friends, relatives, and society at large, "they were fighting…for women and for eminence, and they confused the two as liberally as ever."[14] All of these motivations existed among wide swathes of the populations who joined the armies of the Confederacy, and historians have definitively demonstrated that arguing for the primacy of any of them over the others represents a fruitless endeavor.

Yet a common element runs through all of the reasons that scholars have attributed to Civil War enlistments. Young men craved definition—to know who they were, and for others to know who they were—and the army promised to give it to them more rapidly, concretely, and spectacularly than civilian life ever would. Jim Francis Jr., all of twenty-one, captured this when he wrote to his parents to explain his decision to enlist. As his unit, the Fourth Alabama Infantry, prepared to depart for Virginia, Francis confessed that "in the past few years that has been allotted to me I have been unfortunate, unlucky and vixt. with many things to blast my future." He hoped, however, that by joining the army "I have…leaped over them all & should it be my fortune to pass the present move unharmed I thank I can yet make myself independent."[15] Before the war Francis had clerked for a merchant in Selma, Alabama, defined like so many young men in the South by his service to an

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[13] Sheehan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought, 1.

[14] Berry, All That Makes a Man, 171.

[15] James C. Francis, Jr. to James C. Francis, Sr., April 25, 1861, in James P. Pate, ed. When This Cruel War is Over: The Correspondence of the Francis Family, 1860-1865 (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2006), 27.

older man. Whether laboring on a father's farm or keeping an inventory of merchandise for an employer, men like Jim Francis lived in a peacetime world that had yet to afford them much opportunity to define themselves on their own terms. The arrival of war made a man's convictions and his actions his own, not only within his private conscience but also in the public eye.

Others articulated a variation on the theme of definition with more swagger. They exalted in the opportunity to leave home and embark for the distant places where the fates of their families and communities would hang on their actions. "You need not look for me home as long as I have an arm to strike for the 'Southern Confederacy," Alexander Spence wrote to his sister Sallie. Leaving his parents and siblings behind to operate the family's hotel in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, Alex joined the First Arkansas Infantry and intended to cast his whole being into his service to the Confederacy. "I expect most of us have seen Arkadelphia and its inhabitants perhaps for the first time," Spence concluded.[16] Declarations such as these can read as rote and formulaic to the student of the Civil War, and it is tempting to dismiss them as the brash bravado of a young men yet to see combat. But the underlying message merits consideration. Spence and others like him were willing to relinquish the immediate physical relationships they had to their homes, towns, and environs for an indeterminate length of time—perhaps, as Spence accurately foreshadowed in his own case, forever—if they could gain the metaphysical

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[16] Alexander Spence to Sallie Spence, May 10, 1861, in Mark K. Christ, ed., <u>Getting Used to Being Shot At: The Spence Family Civil War Letters</u> (Fayetteville, Arkansas: University Press of Arkansas, 2002), 5.

relationship they sought. Spence would give up his real connections to the most important people in his life in order to become their symbolic arm.

Letters that crossed generational boundaries revealed this relationship most clearly. Sons justified their departure to their parents by dwelling on their lack of dependents. Since they had neither spouses nor children of their own, young men felt best qualified to take on the social responsibility to defend all of the South's defenseless. "I am not acting under any excitement whatever but have resolved to go after a calm and thoughtful deliberation," David Pierson wrote to his father upon joining the Third Louisiana Infantry in April 1861. He denied vociferously that he went "to gratify an ambition as I believe some others do." Instead, Pierson wanted to become a soldier on behalf of others, "to assist as far as in my power lies in the defense of our Common Country." The motivation that he could not escape or minimize, however, came from his status as a young man with no familial obligations. "Hundreds have left their families and their infant helpless children and enlisted in their Country's service," Pierson contended, "and am I who have none of their dependents better than they?"[17] In taking pains to convince his father of his maturity and "thoughtful deliberation," Pierson attempted to demonstrate his worthiness to bear responsibility for dependents. That he and they maintained an impersonal connection did nothing to devalue it; indeed, Pierson attached sufficient value to his status as a defender of white society to make it, and not the more

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[17] David Pierson to William H. Pierson, April 22, 1861, in <u>Brothers in Gray: The Civil War Letters of the Pierson Family</u>, eds. Thomas W. Cutrer and T. Michael Parrish (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 13-14.

concrete relationship he bore to his own family, the underlying rationale for his departure.

Paradoxically, the fathers of children found in their own tangible bonds to real dependents their greatest motivation to go to war. While David Pierson saw in the onset of war an opportunity to define himself as the protector of theoretical dependents, fathers sought in military service to give indisputable substance to their positions as the male heads of their families. While few would have articulated their motivations in terms of imposing a debt or obligation on their loved ones, fathers desired to substantiate the intangible bonds between soldiers and their society through the understanding and approval of their children. Francis Marion Parker of North Carolina asked his wife to tell his children "I think of them every day, and want to see them very much." He further requested that she "explain to Mary," Parker's eldest daughter, "why I am away, that I am doing my duty, that I am working to defend you and their and my rights." Numbering himself as one of a collective identity and speaking on their behalf, Parker wrote that "Home will be so sweet, when our difficulties are settled and we are permitted to return to the bosom of our families, to enjoy our rights and privileges under the glorious flag of the Southern Confederacy."[18] Although he had used a plural pronoun to place himself within a group identity and wrote of his hope to be permitted to return home, Parker had in fact made an individual choice to leave his family and fight for the

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[18] Francis Marion Parker to S. J. Parker, June 2, 1861, in Michael W. Taylor, ed., <u>To Drive the Enemy from Southern Soil: The Letters of Col. Francis Marion Parker and the History of the 30th Regiment North Carolina Troops</u> (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Publishers, 1998), 30.

Confederacy. If Mary understood why, Parker would feel that those most important

to him recognized his status as their protector.

In return for their sacrifices, men in Confederate uniform received the

accolades of those they had pledged to defend. Women bestowed upon soldiers the

status and definition they craved, telling them that they and their comrades carried

the adoration of a people with them to the war. Sarah Morgan wrote in her diary of

the simple public acknowledgement of the bond between civilians and soldiers

when the latter left for the front. "The soldiers, marching to the depot, waved their

hats to the crowds of women and children, shouting, 'God bless you, ladies! We will

fight for you' and they, waving their handkerchiefs, sobbed with one voice, 'God

bless you, Soldiers! Fight for us!'[19] Bishop Stephen Elliott consecrated the sacrifices

that Confederate soldiers made on behalf of white southern society from his pulpit:

> It is the enthusiastic dash of their onsets, the fearless bravery with which
> they rush even to the cannon's mouth, the utter recklessness of life, if so be
> that its sacrifice may only lead to victory, the heartfelt impression that the
> cause is the cause of every man, and that success is a necessity. What intense
> honor do I feel for the private soldier! The officers may have motives other
> than the cause, the private soldier can have none.[20]

Some women even thought that their virtuous soldiers enjoyed such a close

relationship with God that He would raise them above the limitations of mere

mortals. "I still hope for & trust in God," a Nashville, Tennesee woman wrote in

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[19] Entry of May 10, 1861, in Sarah Morgan Dawson, <u>A Confederate Girl's Diary</u>
(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 27.

[20] Bishop Stephen Elliott, <u>Extract From a Sermon preached by Bishop Elliott, on the
18th September, containing a Tribute to the Privates of the Confederate Army</u>
(Savannah: s.n., 1862), 3.

early 1862, "and I believe he will animate our brave defenders with a superhuman power and we will yet drive from our soil the hated invaders."[21] In return for their sacrifices, Confederate soldiers received praise and acclamation from those on whose behalf they fought.

As the war mutated from a hypothetical future commitment to a grind of battles and prolonged campaigns, the sacrifices that soldiers made in order to justify the status they gained grew real. While some experienced death, wounds, or prolonged bouts with disease, all Confederate soldiers with any ties to home felt the effects of sustained absence from their communities and heard of the longings that their loved ones felt for them. Soldiers' denials of the temporal needs of themselves and their families in order to retain the higher bond between protectors and their dependents constituted a critical element of Confederate soldiers' wartime relationship to their society. By sanctifying their duty at the expense of their own and their families' comforts, soldiers showed the priority that they placed on their public status as defenders of white southern society.

William Dorsey Pender, a West Point-educated officer who would rise to become one of the Confederacy's ablest division commanders before taking a fatal wound at Gettsyburg, longed to return home to his wife and two young children in the summer of 1861. "I feel that if it were manly and honorable I would be willing to give up all hopes of distinction and military ambition, to live quietly with my wife

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[21] Annie M Sehon to Sister, February 16, 1862, in <u>Kimberly Family Personal Correspondence, 1862-1864</u> (Electronic Edition: Documenting the American South, http://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/kimberly/kimberly.html), 3.

and children," Pender assured his wife in June 1861. Yet as a man with a military

education and experienced in the command of troops, he felt "honor bound to come

forth these times and defend his country."[22] In the lull that fell over Virginia as the

untried armies recovered from the war's first major battle at Manassas, Elisha

Franklin Paxton, a Virginia lieutenant (and later brigadier general), took a moment

to acknowledge the pain of separation that both he and his wife felt. "You are not

more eager in your wish for my return, than I am to be with you," Paxton wrote.

"But I feel sure," he cautioned his wife, "that you would not have me abandon my

post and desert our flag when it needs every arm now in its service for its defense."

The Confederate officer mooted the possibility of resigning his commission, but

declared that doing so would mark him as "dishonored by an exhibition of the want

of those qualities which alike grace the citizen and the soldier."[23]

Almost two years later in the spring of 1863, another lieutenant, Green Barry

Samuels, wrote to his "dear wife" from his post in the Army of Northern Virginia.

After surviving the battles of 1862, including the bloodiest single day in American

history at Antietam, Samuels knew what sacrifice meant and so did his wife. She

wished him to come home, and for his part he feared that the "horrid war" would

extract even higher costs in the coming campaigns. Yet he remained "sure my brave,

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[22] William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender, June 23, 1861, in William W. Hassler, ed., The General to His Lady: The Civil War Letters of William Dorsey Pender to Fanny Pender (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 38.

[23] Elisha Franklin Paxton to Wife, September 22, 1861, in John Gallatin Paxton, ed., Memoir and Memorials: Elisha Franklin Paxton, Brigadier-General, C.S.A., Composed of His Letters from Camp and Field While an Officer in the Confederate Army (New York: Neale Publishing Company, 1905), 21.

dear little wife cannot wish me to be classed with those infamous skulkers who are deaf to honor and the calls of a bleeding country." Samuels acknowledged that he "could hire a substitute and perhaps live with you in peace, but then I could never tell our unborn child that its father was a soldier." "Enough of this," he closed his letter, "I know you have a brave heart and can endure everything but dishonour."[24] Samuels and his comrades believed that they could enjoy no private happiness without the security of their public identities as defenders of the southern white populace.

The costs of that public identity were high. Men generally left the Confederate Army with their status and reputation intact only if wounded beyond full recovery or dead. Until the very end of the war when Confederate commands began to disintegrate as men took temporary leaves or deserted in order to aid desperate and vulnerable families, the southern public and the general opinions of soldier seemed to view service and sacrifice in absolute terms. These made little provision for the reality that each day required a Confederate soldier to face anew the hardships of the camp and the march as well as the possibility of death, disease, and dismemberment. Instead, a soldier either sacrificed himself for southern society or he did not, and even veterans who made the choice to end their service faced public scrutiny that made small allowance for sacrifices already given.

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[24] Green Barry Samuels to Kathleen Boone Samuels, March 17, 1863, in Carrie Esther Samuels Spencer, ed., <u>A Civil War Marriage in Virginia: Reminiscences and Letters</u> (Boyce, Virginia: Carr Publishing Company, 1956), 267.

Virginia artillerist John Hampden Chamberlayne railed against the Richmond public when it castigated Confederate soldiers reluctant to re-enlist in 1862. "The cry for the reenlistment of the veterans…enrages me," Chamberlayne wrote to his mother.

> I know what these veterans have gone through…..hunger & cold, fierce suns, drenching rains, parching fever, & sickening nausea in the squalid hospitals, & many, worst of all, having left behind them destitute families, sick wives, ailing children.

"With all this," Chamberlayne railed, "all shout, reenlist, and the stay-at-home men & women say come let us dance and sing, to keep up the spirits of the people."[25] Chamberlayne's angry tirade identified two of the central problems of the relationship between Confederate soldiers and southern society. First, the public expected the rigid divisions between those supposed to serve and those entitled to remain at home to remain fixed. While women and newspapers castigated fit young men who stayed out of the armies, this did not relieve any of the burdens placed on soldiers already in the ranks.

In addition to pointing out the inflexibility of the southern public's attitude toward defining soldiers and their duties, Chamberlayne also identified a major objection of Confederates in uniform throughout the war: that even as the public praised the sacrifices of the men who fought, it tolerated those who did not. Even after the Confederacy introduced conscription measures beginning in 1862, enough

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[25] John Hampden Chamberlayne to Martha Burwell Chamberlayne, February 23, 1862, in C.G. Chamberlayne, ed., <u>Ham Chamberlayne--Virginian: Letters and Papers of an Artillery Officer in the War for Southern Independence 1861-1865</u> (Richmond: Dietz Publishing, 1932), 69.

exemptions existed to keep a substantial number of men of military age away from the front lines. This included men in uniform who served in comfortable posts far from privation and danger. Soldiers' anger against the men who shirked their duty and those who allowed them to do so knew no bounds. "Tell Charles Malloy," William Morel Moxley wrote home to his wife in Coffee County, Alabama, "the reason he did not go to the war [was] that [he] wanted to stay & cheat the women & children out of what they had."[26] Alex Spence resented the "government officials around Arkadelphia, the most of them who are yet to smell gunpowder" as well as the women who thought that such men "cut quite a dash." "It looks pretty hard to the young men…who are out in the Service," he noted bitterly, "to see our places filled with strangers."[27]   To many in Confederate uniforms the presence of men enjoying life at home while soldiers confronted the mounting miseries of war seemed a betrayal of the relationship between soldiers and the civilians they protected. While they loathed the men they condemned as too selfish, cowardly, or dishonorable to fight, soldiers also felt that those who consorted with such men in any social setting had let them down.

Confederate soldiers mitigated the damage that such rifts could cause to their self-image and their relationship to southern white society by reminding one

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[26] William Morel Moxley to Emily Beck Moxley, October 25, 1861, in Thomas W. Cutrer, ed., Oh, What a Loansome Time I Had: The Civil War Letters of Major William Morel Moxley and Emily Beck Moxley (London: University of Alabama Press, 2002), 43.

[27] Alexander Spence to Sallie Spence, April 4, 1863, in Christ, ed., Getting Used to Being Shot At, 65.

another that only a true soldier was capable of fully appreciating the hardships implicit in their service.   John Hampden Chamberlayne informed his mother that the men of his battery "think so little of their hardships and privations as would astonish people in civilian life."[28] Edmund DeWitt Patterson, an Ohioan by birth who found himself in the South when the war broke out, volunteered for the 9th Alabama Infantry and followed it to the Army of Northern Virginia. Among his comrades there Patterson observed "a feeling of love—a strong attachment for those with whom one has shared common dangers, that is never felt for any one else, or under any other circumstances."[29] No one who had not directly experienced them, John Camden West of the Fourth Texas Infantry wrote to his sister in the fall of 1863, "can tell the tale of hardships which fall to the lot of the men in the ranks. He is the lowest mud sill in this structure which is being reared, and when the edifice totters all the props and braces must be placed upon his shoulders."[30] West's sentiments conveyed multiple and related meanings. While southern society depended upon its fighting men to keep up the "edifice" of the Confederacy, it also thrust onto its soldiers difficulties that it could never fully appreciate. Confederate soldiers touted their identities as men made exceptional by the hardships of their

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[28] John Hampden Chamberlayne to Martha Burwell Chamberlayne, February 4, 1863, in Chamberlayne, Ham Chamberlayne—Virginian, 153.

[29] Entry of October 30, 1862, in John G. Barrett,ed., Yankee Rebel: the Civil War Journal of Edmund DeWitt Patterson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 73.

[30] John Camden West to Mrs. James D. Blair, October 31, 1863, in John Camden West, A Texan in Search of a Fight (Waco, Texas: Press of J.S. Hill and Co., 1901), 163.

service and reinforced one another's perceptions that the longer the war lasted, the more that white southern society depended upon them to bear its burdens.

As the war's duration and its costs rose to such proportions that many wondered if there was an end to either, men in the Confederate army grew ever more synonymous with the Confederacy itself. This represented a continuation of the bond forged at the beginning of the war: as the sacrifices borne by soldiers grew more immense, their importance to white southerners rose in relative proportion. For those who wished to find a ray of hope amidst the gloom of Union army encroachment, a mounting death toll, a shattered economy, and an ever more intrusive state, the idealized virtues of Confederate soldiers became bulwarks against despair.[31] Among the many threads of Confederate culture, four idealized attributes of Confederate soldiers increasingly became the cornerstones that supported white southerners' efforts to define themselves as a people with distinct and superior features. Through their emphasis on determination and resilience in the face of adversity, belief in vindication at the hands of God, conviction that their enemies possessed inferior moral and human capacities, and reification of their sacrifices, Confederates delineated who belonged to their national community and gave membership in their nation value.[32] More importantly, they believed more

[31] I have adopted this thesis with some modification from Gary Gallagher's assertion that from 1863 forward, Confederate soldiers, especially Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, served as the most important symbol of the nation itself. See Gallagher, The Confederate War, 7.

[32] Here I echo Anne Sarah Rubin's description, drawn from Benedict Anderson, of the Confederacy as an imagined community whose cultural identity as a nation came more readily and displayed more endurance than the apparatus of the Confederate

than ever that their virtues and shortcomings would determine the fate of southern white society. Soldiers' identities and the public culture of their nation grew so intertwined that they dwarfed all other components of selfhood for many young southern Confederates in uniform, convincing them that they personally and as a group embodied their nation and their people.

By the latter years of the war, Confederate soldiers and civilians widely understood that if they achieved independence, it would come from perseverance. If the South could sustain its war effort long enough for the North to grow weary of making the sacrifices necessary to subdue the rebellion, Confederates—like their imagined forebears in the American Revolution—might win the right to nationhood. Even before he took up his command of the Army of Northern Virginia, Robert E. Lee had counseled Jefferson Davis that for the Confederacy to endure, "All must be sacrificed to the country."[33] Four years later in the late winter of 1865, Confederate soldiers still justified their continued military service by that same principle. Samuel Burney of Cobb's Georgia Legion believed that "our independence is resolved to a question of endurance on the part of the South. Let the people

state. See Rubin, A Shattered Nation, 1; Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (London: Verso, 1983). See also Lloyd S. Kramer, Nationalism in Europe and America: Politics, Cultures, and Identities Since 1775 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 7-57, 101-124.

[33] Robert E. Lee to Son, February 23, 1862, quoted in Glatthaar, General Lee's Army, 128.

determine to be free," Burney claimed, "and liberty is gained in the resolve."[34] If the people of the white South showed the resolve of their soldiers still in uniform, Burney believed that no disparity of force could lead to their subjugation.

Since this strategy valued commitment to the war over industrial capacity, population size, or other metrics of modern warmaking potential, Confederates waged a ceaseless campaign of motivation, driving themselves and their countrymen to make every sacrifice necessary in order to prolong the war. "If there is a single spark of spartan heroism left in our bosoms we must rise above the present crisis and tell the world we will be free if it cost us the last man in the Confederacy," Major Rufus Barrier of North Carolina wrote in March 1865. "We must fight them and fight them forever if necessary."[35] Barrier's exhortation to fight forever and to the last man illustrates an extreme version of Confederate perseverance that linked cultural and political ideology, strategy, and personal identity. He simply did not contemplate a world in which he was not a man in a uniform fighting to protect his society.

While men like Barrier embraced an annihilationist vision of the Confederacy that viewed independence as worth obtaining at any cost, others held more nuanced views. Many Confederate soldiers and officers harbored doubts about the likelihood

[34] Samuel A. Burney to Sarah Elizabeth Shepherd Burney, February 13, 1865, in Nat S. Turner III, ed., A Southern Soldier's Letters Home: The Civil War Letters of Samuel A. Burney (Macon, Ga: Mercer University Press, 2002), 289.

[35] Rufus A. Barrier to Mathias Barrier, March 4, 1865, in Beverly Troxler, ed, "Dear Father": Confederate Letters Never Before Published (Concord, NC: Beverly Barrier Troxler and Billy Dawn Barrier Auciello Publishers, 1989), 78.

of victory and the price it would carry even as they remained with the army. Yet the

emphasis on expressing perseverance in order to produce it left little room for men

to voice doubts either in public or private about the final outcome of the war. Even

in the face of the series of hammer blows that befell their war effort from November

1864 to the end of the war, Confederates rigorously censored themselves and their

communities, encouraging one another to focus on the possibility of future success

and to discount setbacks as temporary and inconsequential. When James L. Hubard,

a cavalry officer in the Army of Northern Virginia, expressed the intention of

publishing an anonymous letter on the hopeless state of Confederate military

fortunes, his father sternly admonished him that "No man, whether <u>officer</u> or <u>private</u>

should, by <u>letter</u>, or <u>words</u> express <u>gloomy</u> thoughts & <u>melancholy</u> <u>predictions</u> about

the result of this war." This advice seems to have taken root, for James converted

his pessimism into a resolve that "instead of desponding our young men ought to

turn out from all parts of the country & throw the utmost vigor into our armies in

the spring." [36]   The Confederate war effort not only demanded that its subscribers

relinquish their comforts, resources, and potentially their lives; it also asked that

they abandon individual doubts in order to promote a collective faith in victory.[37]

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[36] Robert T. Hubard to James L. Hubard, January 3, 1865, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA; James L. Hubard to Isetta C. Randolph Hubard, February 11, 1865, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

[37] George Rable argues that ex-Confederates not only refused to publicly admit defeat during the war's closing months but also lacked the ability to internally register the mounting evidence of their cause's demise. "Refusing to admit even to themselves that the cause was being lost," Rable concludes, Confederates "were already laying the foundations for the cult of the so-called Lost Cause." George Rable,

In addition to their culture of perseverance, Confederates relied on a selective interpretation of evangelical Christianity to sustain their war effort. According to this religious ideology, God would subject his chosen people to the severest of tests before delivering them from their enemies. This religious ethos modified evangelical Christianity's emphasis on individual salvation by faith, linking the fate of the Confederacy to its citizens' collective worthiness in the eyes of God. After the two resounding defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in 1863, Stephen Elliott, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the Confederate States, reminded white southerners that victory depended on piety and God's favor rather than mere strength in arms. God had ordained the defeats "to teach us our own weakness; it is the hiding of his countenance from our rulers, from our armies and from our people to make us understand that present victory and final success depend altogether upon his presence."[38] A year later, Methodist minister John Paris of North Carolina told his audience of Confederate soldiers that "I believe in God, to-day, that great good will come to us of the South as a people, if we will only depart from our sins and lean upon the mighty arm."[39]

Confederate soldiers internalized this relationship between personal piety and national victory. John Shaffner, an army surgeon from North Carolina,

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"Despair, Hope, and Delusion," in Mark Grimsley and Brooks D. Simpson, eds, *The Collapse of the Confederacy* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001), 155.

[38] Stephen Elliott, "Ezra's Dilemma," August 21, 1863, in Chesebrough, <u>God Ordained This War</u>, 248.

[39] John Paris, "Funeral Discourse," February 28, 1864, in Chesebrough, <u>God Ordained This War</u>, 273.

summarized this theological relationship by defining "A nation's Guilt" as "the aggregate sum of Individual sins."[40] If Confederates' individual obedience to God as demonstrated by private faith and public action proved worthy, the South would gain independence. The outcome of the war would rest not on superiority in arms, Confederates hoped, but rather in securing divine favor by demonstrating faith and humility before the power of God. As such, Confederate soldiers linked their religious identities to the fate of their quest for independence. Their worthiness as Christians would determine whether they achieved victory, while defeat would constitute a censure from God on an impious people.[41]

The power of this religious interpretation to console Confederates even in the face of successive catastrophes proved immense because it cast temporal reverses as necessary steps on the path to divine deliverance. When he learned of the results of the Battle of Atlanta, which not only inflicted a serious check on the

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[40] John Francis Shaffner to Carolina Louisa Fries Shaffner, November 21, 1864, Fries and Shaffner Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[41] The religious underpinnings of Confederate, and more broadly southern, nationalism have received detailed treatments from scholars wishing to emphasize diverse conclusions. See Gallagher, The Confederate War, 66-67; Eugene Genovese, A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998); Jason Phillips, "Rebels in War and Peace: Their Ethos and its Impact," in Paul A. Cimbala and Randall M. Miller, eds, The Great Task Remaining Before Us: Reconstruction as America's Continuing Civil War (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 154-172; George Rable, God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Rubin, A Shattered Nation, 34-35; and Sheehan-Dean, Why Confederates Fought, 46-47. Broadly, these scholars concur that Confederate Christianity sanctioned slavery but proscribed inhumane treatment of slaves, absolved any guilt derived from killing in the prosecution of a just war, and played an integral role in sustaining soldiers' and civilians' willingness to sacrifice for the Confederacy by promising them ultimate victory.

Confederate Army of Tennessee but also brought Union forces within striking

distances of his home and wife, Samuel Burney of Cobb's Georgia Legion assuaged

his anxieties with the assurance that God would ensure final victory for the

Confederate cause as long as southerners strove to be His people. "Let us not cease

to implore Almighty God to take us in as a people under the shadow of his wings,"

Burney wrote, so that "if it be that we pass through additional tribulation…in the

end our independence may be saved."[42] Confederates felt they deserved God's favor

and protection more than their Union opponents because of the strength of

southern piety and obedience to divine decree. Daniel Robinson Hundley, a

prisoner of war and erstwhile commander of the 31st Alabama regiment, marveled

at how the "boastful Yankee nation may delude itself with the belief that there is no

God." Robinson took comfort in the assurance that "the Almighty will yet convince

even the most truculent of them all that He exists, and that He rules in the affairs of

men, rewarding those who diligently seek Him, and bringing the scoffers and the

unbelieving to judgment."[43] By believing themselves more pious than their enemies

and transmuting that belief into a conviction that God would not let Confederates

experience final defeat, soldiers eroded the separation between their religious and

their national and military identities.

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[42] Samuel A. Burney to Sarah Elizabeth Shepherd Burney, July 29, 1864, in Turner, ed., A Southern Soldier's Letters Home, 280.

[43] Entry of September 27, 1864, Diary of Daniel Robinson Hundley, in Prison Echoes of the Great Rebellion (New York: S.W. Green, 1874), 144.

Faith in the endurance of their collective will to fight and in the divine

salvation of their cause informed how Confederates saw themselves. But

Confederates also cherished a belief in the inferior morality and fortitude of their

enemies.[44] While Confederates held nuanced views of their opponents and soldiers

acknowledged their respect for courageous foes, they seized upon evidence that the

Union depended upon hired immigrants and African Americans to fill out the ranks

of the federal armies. These men constituted a lesser version of humanity, white

southerners felt, and would prove unfit to defeat the hardy, resourceful, and

steadfast men of the South's white population. A southern diarist typified the

contempt she held for an officer of the Union force occupying her hometown in

Georgia, describing him as "a little fat Dutchman, who says he came to America just

to kill Rebels but whose ardor seems to have abated some what as he always takes

good care to keep out of harms way."[45]

Confederates' responses to the Union's arming of African Americans—most

of them former slaves—were both more widespread and more vitriolic. Early in the

war, Vice President Alexander Stephens Alexander Stephens had claimed that the

"corner-stone" of the Confederacy "rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not

equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his

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[44] Joseph Glatthaar has written that soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia developed a "race hatred" toward their opponents rooted in witnessing the behavior of Union forces in Virginia. Glatthaar, General Lee's Army, 152-155; see also Phillips, Diehard Rebels, 154.

[45] Entry of February 4, 1865, in Daniel Sutherland, ed., A Very Violent Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Ellen Renshaw House, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 145.

natural and moral condition."[46] Confederate soldiers longed for the chance to prove

him right, and responded to encounters with regiments of United States Colored

Troops with everything from dismissive contempt to wholesale murder.[47] After the

Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, where Confederate soldiers had shot down

hundreds of nearly defenseless black troops in General Edward Ferrero's division,

Major Rufus Barrier of the 8th North Carolina celebrated the battle's result. "The

negroes were piled up in…ditches six deep," Barrier described in a letter to his

father; "the blood ran in streams from their worthless carcasses." Barrier showed

no remorse for the treatment his men meted out to African American soldiers and

made no attempt to conceal that "the slaughter began in earnest" only after "the

nigger [had] cried for mercy."[48]

In the same month of January 1864, Cicero A. Durham wrote to his father on

the subject of black soldiers. After encountering black Union infantry, Durham and

his companions reacted with revulsion. "Taking prisoners will soon play out in this

Department," Durham confidently predicted. "Col Griffin at Franklin has hung two

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[46] "The 'Model Nation' of History and its Corner-Stone," *New York Times,* April 2, 1861.

[47] For Confederate soldiers' attitudes toward black troops who fought for the Union, see Glatthaar, General Lee's Army, 424-425. The most complete account of Confederate atrocities against African Americans during the Civil War is Gregory J.W. Urwin, ed., Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War, (Carbondale, Ill: University of Southern Illinois Press, 2004).

[48] Rufus A. Barrier to Mathias Barrier, August 6, 1864, in Troxler, ed, *"Dear Father,"* 60.

negroe Soldiers and I understand that he has orders to take <u>no more</u> prisoners."[49]

At twenty-nine years of age, Eli Peal of eastern North Carolina's Martin County drew

no distinction between humans and livestock in his description of the results of a

successful Confederate assault. "Our men has plundered and tore amas all of the

yankis camps up thire is several dead horsis and niggroe around here and they

made a aful sent about here," Peal wrote in May 1864.[50] The veneer of a civilized

conflict and its rules of engagement—such as the taking and exchanging of

prisoners—could not coexist with the militarization of former slaves. For many

Confederates, the temerity of African Americans in taking up arms against their

former masters—and of the United States government for enlisting black regiments

and utilizing them in combat—violated the conventions of war between civilized

nations and justified the most brutal of responses.

Even as Confederate soldiers slaughtered African Americans in Union

uniforms at Plymouth, Petersburg, Fort Pillow, and a host of less prominent places,

Confederates cited evidence of Union "atrocities," from showing disrespect to

women to the seizure and destruction of personal property, to prove that Yankees

lacked respect for law and the codes of civilization. As early as the summer of 1861,

Ida Powell Dulany reflected on the fundamental divisions of character that seemed

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[49] Cicero A. Durham to his father, January 10, 1864, in Ann J. Thompson, <u>North Carolina Confederate Letters, 1861-1865</u>, Volume One (Shelby, NC: Broad River Genealogical Society, 2002), 45.

[50] Eli Peal to his wife, May 1, 1864, in Thompson, <u>North Carolina Confederate Letters, 1861-1865,</u> Volume Two, 153.

to separate the two belligerent sides. "This war has fully brought out and developed

the peculiar dispositions of both North and South," Dulany wrote.

> How poorly does the thieving, burning, murdering Yankee compare with the generous, chivalrous Southerner. While we are caring for and nursing their wounded men, just as we do our own…the unhappy men of the South who have fallen into their hands are threatened with murder every day. And on the very day that a Southern soldier sent back to the family of a dad Northern soldier, the watch he had found on his body, a Northern officer sent on to his wife a box of silver he had stolen out of a Virginia house.

"All these outrages only make us the more determined to resist," Dulany concluded,

"and they show us what we may expect from the Northerners should they subjugate

us."[51]

As the war wound on and Union armies reached ever deeper into the South,

the contrast between the nobility of Confederate soldiers and the barbarity of Union

troops intensified. A South Carolina woman reacted to the depredations inflicted on

her family home by Sherman's army with sheer hatred. "How my whole soul rose

against them as they passed, a band of highway robbers, the slayers of women and

children," Grace Elmore recorded in her diary. "Gladly would I witness the death of

each of those wretches, God hear the curses poured upon their heads, God grant

they may suffer in their homes, their wives their children as they have made us

suffer."[52] On his return from the Union prison at Johnson's Island, Ohio, John House

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[51] Entry of August 10, 1861, in Mary L. Mackall, Stevan F. Meserve, and Anne Mackall Sasscer, eds., In the Shadow of the Enemy: The Civil War Journal of Ida Powell Dulany (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2009), 14.

[52] Entry of February 21, 1865, in Marli F. Weiner, ed., A Heritage of Woe: The Civil War Diary of Grace Brown Elmore, 1861-1868 (Athens, Ga: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 103. For similar accounts by Confederate civilians of the passage of

reported to his sister Ellen that "the Yankees bayonetted thirteen ladies for speaking to rebel prisoners," and that he "saw a [Union] soldier take a young lady by the throat and throw her in [a] house and lock the door."[53] While reports of Union soldiers stabbing a dozen women with bayonets carried clear overtones of absurdity, as the war wound down many white southerners proved willing to believe the absolute worst about their enemies in order to sustain their fighting spirits. Taken together, Confederates' beliefs about who their enemies were and what they were capable of comprised a major motivation for sustained resistance. Those beliefs also reinforced to Confederate soldiers that they constituted a superior breed of man to their enemies.

Perhaps the most compelling reason for Confederate soldiers to prolong their fight against the Union concerned the justification of sacrifices already rendered to the cause. At their most significant, these sacrifices meant the deaths of beloved family members and comrades. While those left behind took some consolation from the knowledge that their sons, fathers, husbands, brothers, friends, and fellow soldiers had lost their lives in the performance of their duty, they also held out hope that the deaths of Confederate soldiers would constitute the steep but worthwhile price of independence. When John Clark Francis died of wounds sustained at Resaca in 1864, his sister-in-law consoled his parents by emphasizing the nobility of the

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Union armies, see the diary entries of Mary S. Mallard and Mary Jones, December 13-24, 1864, in The Children of Pride, ed. Robert Manson Myers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 502-518.

[53] Entry of March 30, 1865, in A Very Violent Rebel, 157.

cause for which Francis had given his life. "Oh! What a glorious death he died. Your noble boy was killed in the most sacred cause which any people ever fought for," Sarah Whitehead Francis declared.[54] For living soldiers, abandoning the cause for which their comrades had made the ultimate sacrifice meant undermining their own position in relation to southern society. Soldiers had won the respect and trust of those they claimed to defend largely by professing their willingness to give their lives, if necessary, in pursuit of their duty. If they now abandoned their posts in the moment of their society's greatest time of need, their dependents would conclude that the best part of their male population lay dead and lose faith in those who remained.

In crafting a creed based on the virtues of their soldiers that would sustain them when the costs of war threatened to become unbearable, ardent Confederate patriots had also created a powerful collective culture in which soldiers became more important to their society than ever. This culture carried an inherent bipolarity. If the Confederacy prevailed, it would do so because of the superior commitment, religious piety, racial and ethnic makeup, and degree of sacrifice that its soldiers exhibited. Yet in binding their selfhood so completely to the fate of the Confederacy, soldiers rendered themselves more vulnerable in the event that their cause failed. By giving up their freedom to doubt and to establish a perspective on the world informed by reality, linking their relationship with God to the outcome of the war, believing their enemies inherently inferior to themselves as men, and

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[54] Sarah Whitehead Francis to Amy and James Francis, May 13, 1864, in Pate, ed., When This Evil War Is Over, 182.

measuring the sacrifices of the living against those of the dead, Confederate society

mortgaged the cost of its survival against the self-image of its soldiers. As defeat

and the surrender of the Confederacy loomed ever more likely, the soldiers in grey

would find themselves paying the cost of that transaction in full. Fully invested in

their definition as the guardians of southern society, Confederate soldiers would

struggle to find themselves when they lost that public role.

CHAPTER TWO: "Ruined Hopes and Broken Pride"

"The Confederacy is dead," wrote Samuel Agnew when news of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia reached his neighborhood in Mississippi.[55] Though the death throes would persist as additional field armies laid down their arms and Jefferson Davis's government attempted to elude capture, Agnew's assessment proved correct. For the soldiers who had sustained the Confederacy during its life, however, the end of the quest for nationhood also began a process of personal transformation. Military service ceased to be a present occupation; instead, it became a set of past-tense experiences and associations. Surrender stripped Confederate soldiers of the collective identity that came from participating in an enterprise as consuming as waging war, forcing them to make sense of themselves as individuals without the structure or definition of military service. Untangling their personal identities from the wreckage of a social relationship in which they had invested all of the elements of their selfhood would prove a painful process.

Confederate soldiers recognized their moment of defeat in different ways and at different times. While most agreed with Agnew that Robert E. Lee's surrender to U.S. Grant at Appomattox Court House marked the death of their cause,

[55] Entry of April 19, 1865, Samuel Agnew Diary, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

others held out hope for weeks afterward. Soldiers and civilians alike disagreed on

the exact point at which their national ambitions died; some cited the fall of

Richmond, others the surrender of one or another of the major Confederate field

armies. Still others, unwilling to trust news reports that they regarded as defeatist

or exaggerated, refused to admit that the war was over until blue-jacketed troops

arrived on their doorsteps. As Agnew observed, "we slowly receive what we are

unwilling to believe. This will explain the incredulity of most persons in the news of

the surrender of Gen. R.E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia."[56]

Accordingly, this chapter treats surrender not as the formal conclusion of

armed conflict during the Civil War, but rather as the moment in which individual

Confederate soldiers recognized the end of their association with an active military

organization and consequently the termination of their own identification as

defenders of white southern society. Whether that meant capture and

imprisonment or deserting the ranks of the army in the final months of the war or

waiting for the army itself to dissolve, men who had spent years forming a personal

identity that had grown increasingly synonymous with the Confederate cause now

faced a monumental challenge.[57] In the words of historian Stephen Berry, they

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[56] Entry of April 20, 1865, Samuel Agnew Diary, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[57] I delineate between the experiences of prisoners and deserters in the final months of the war and those who left the armies earlier based on whether those changes in status carried absolute finality. Early in the war, prisoners might expect to be exchanged for captured Union soldiers and returned to their units on active service. After General Ulysses Grant put an end to prisoner exchanges between the armies in 1864, that expectation disappeared. Similarly, while men often left the Confederate ranks in the war's early years for unauthorized furloughs and came back to the army under the amnesties promised by Lee and Davis, deserters if identified in the final

began "reclaiming themselves from the project that was the Confederacy."[58] In that

moment, men began to come to terms with what they had lost in the war, why they

had lost it, and how their individual outlooks related to and differed from their

collective associations with the Confederacy and its military.[59]

In defeat, Confederates faced the refutation of the ideology that had

motivated and sustained them through four years of devastating warfare and the

end of their attachment to the most consuming social experience in which most of

them would ever participate. The central problem facing soldiers in the immediate

aftermath of the defeat of the Confederacy thus concerned who they were without a

state, an army, and a broad social community to serve. As the previous chapter

demonstrates, the bond between Confederate soldiers and the society they

represented grew more complete but also more contingent as the war dragged on.

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months of the Confederacy faced much sterner obstacles to returning, including
having to cross Union lines to return to the armies and a harsher stance by the
Confederate armies themselves toward deserters. See Glatthaar, General Lee's
Army, 408-472; also Mark Weitz, More Damning than Slaughter: Desertion in the
Confederate Army (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005).

[58] Berry, All That Makes a Man, 196.

[59] Jason Phillips notes that in 1865, channels of communication "were so unreliable
that soldiers seldom discerned the difference between hearsay and fact." For
Phillips, the unreliable transmission of news through the conduit of rumor allowed
diehard Confederates to sustain their ethos by pitting the certainty of their
ideological beliefs against the uncertainty of factual knowledge about the war's
course. This collective uncertainty about precisely what was happening in the
Confederacy's final weeks underscores the appropriateness of a conceptual, rather
than chronological, approach. Anne Sarah Rubin takes a similar view, observing that
"rumors spread faster than news, and since the rumors were generally more upbeat
than the reality, they were often believed." See Phillips, Diehard Rebels, 176; Rubin,
A Shattered Nation, 123.

Confederate soldiers, immersed in a culture that told them they were valued because of their qualities and that those qualities would surely see them through to victory, risked grave personal consequences if the outcome of the war should turn against them. Their social ties to their communities, woven principally out of the threads of commitment, superiority of piety and of ancestry, and veneration of their sacrifice, unraveled as defeat undermined the strength of each cord. As a result, Confederate soldiers withdrew from the broad collective associations that secession and war had produced and then destroyed, defining themselves instead through their individual experiences and familial concerns.

Understanding this process requires examining the relationship between ideology and experience for Confederate soldiers. Confederate ideology served to strengthen the assumption that white southerners possessed the capacity and the right to win their independence as well as to bind that population into a unified nation.   The outcome of the war therefore challenged Confederate nationalism's underlying beliefs and purposes, and substantially weakened the ties between members of the Confederate community. Yet examining ideology without accounting for the influence of experience—specifically, the consequences of seeing combat in a wartime army, with its shared facets and numerous individual variables—misses much of the process through which Confederate soldiers encountered and made sense of their defeat. All Confederates, however, needed to come to terms with two central problems as part of the process of defeat. First, they faced the refutation of all of the beliefs that served as cornerstones of Confederate loyalty. Second, former Confederates had to find a way of disassociating at least

some portion of themselves from a dead nation. The fundamental relationship between these two problems would govern how soldiers interpreted surrender and began to consider life after the Confederacy.

Confederates had nourished their fighting spirits on a steady diet of propaganda, self-delusion, and selective anecdote that taken together foreclosed the possibility that the war would end in anything other than their independence. Letters and diaries from the weeks preceding surrender bear out the tenacity with which Confederate-sympathizing southerners clung to this view, despite mounting evidence of the overwhelming strength of the Union military. While perceptive southerners such as Charles T. Lowndes might claim in January 1865 that "this struggle has no apparent end unless in the failure of our Cause," his willingness to record and share such a view placed him within a distinct minority. By contrast, Lowndes's nephew Edward L. Wells described his comrades in the Army of Tennessee as "confident as ever" in their ultimate triumph. "Be in no anxiety about me, & don't believe all the stupid Northern Newspapers say: that 'the backbone of the Rebellion is broken,' that we are all starved out, & without raiment," Wells implored his family. Instead, Wells hoped that southern civilians would take comfort from the army's "fat and saucy" disposition.[60]

These two members of a single family offer a microcosmic view of one of the principal divisions among Confederates in the final months of the Civil War:

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[60] Charles T. Lowndes to Eliza Carolina Middleton Huger Smith, January 28, 1865, in <u>Mason Smith Family Letters</u>, 166; Edward L. Wells to Julia Wells, January 12, 1865, in <u>Mason Smith Family Letters</u>, 163.

whether they could look beyond their investment in the Confederacy to imagine a world without it. Though in hindsight Lowndes's assessment of the Confederacy's situation seems more accurate than Wells's, the letters and diaries of white southerners tended to reflect optimism rather than resignation even as their military fortunes dwindled to almost nothing. Most Confederates clung to that optimism because a set of individual and collective ideological bonds tied their own fates to that of the Confederacy itself. Even for those southerners who saw the end before it arrived, the collapse of the Confederacy meant contemplating a world filled with uncertainty in which none of the values that had sustained their putative nation could be taken as sure. Defeat implied the failure of the communal tenets and beliefs that undergirded the Confederate war effort, and understanding both what Confederates believed and what forms their investment in those beliefs took gives the process of surrender its ideological contours.

Surrender undermined those structural cords that bound Confederates as individuals together into a collective people united by a common purpose. Since Confederates' investment in victory had undergirded the principal components of their ideology, defeat presented reasons to doubt all of the assumptions that had sustained white southern nationalists' participation in the war. If winning their independence would have demonstrated the strength and persistence of national commitment, confirmed God's favor, vindicated the superiority of southern whites as a race and a culture, and justified the enormous sacrifices of the wartime years, failure to win brought each of these tenets into question.

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Surrender caused soldiers and civilians alike to question the depth of the southern population's attachment to the Confederacy. The war years had shown that the South's white population held varying loyalties—and within those loyalties, varying levels of personal commitment to larger ideals. Yet Confederate soldiers, despite their frequent harangues against disloyalty or selfishness, rarely saw the presence of enemies within the South as reason to doubt whether they should define themselves in terms of their own loyalty and contribution to the Confederacy. In response to surrender, Confederates began to question the value of associating their personal identity even with the core of dedicated nationalists upon whom they had relied.

Isaac W. McAdory of the 28th Alabama infantry attributed surrender not to Union military superiority, but rather to a want of resolve on the part of his countrymen. "Our own people have brought the present state of affairs about," McAdory fumed, "by their own inconstancy and lack of determination."[61] Civilians, too, noted that popular support for the Confederate cause had reached its limits. "I conclude that our people have determined to let the cause go by default," a Georgia woman observed in late April; the only alternative explanation she could conceive of for the Union armies' penetration of the Deep South was that "we have no people left."[62] These sentiments expressed a subtle but significant change in sentiment

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[61] Isaac W. McAdory to Ala Tarrant, April 19, 1865, Isaac W. McAdory Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History.

[62] A.W. Clisby to David Comfort, April 20, 1865, Comfort Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

from the dissatisfaction with Unionists, deserters, shirkers, and profiteers found during the war itself. While imprecations against disloyalty litter soldiers' correspondence and public discourse during the Civil War's final years, these expressions contrasted unworthy segments of the southern population with the sacrifice and commitment of Confederates at large. In the aftermath of surrender, the committed soldiers and civilians of the Confederacy doubted whether they had been right to believe in their own people.

The final victory of the Union demolished the constructs through which Confederates associated their cause with divine favor. Southern whites might continue to believe that they were a chosen people, but they could no longer claim that God would reward them for their fealty with independence. Instead, they faced a choice between resigning themselves to defeat as a product of divine will or choosing to believe that God played little role in governing the affairs of the southern people. Rather than abandon their faith, Confederates reluctantly gave up their belief that heaven had sided with them in the Civil War. They looked for God to help them as a people and as individuals even if He had failed to deliver them as a nation. "All is over and God help the poor South," lamented Sabina E. Wells of South Carolina. She believed that while "these last four years have been dreadful…the next four will be still worse."[63] George Edward Dabney expressed a similar view, fearful of the consequences of defeat but asking for the strength to "bear the burden which

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[63] Sabina E. Wells to Julia Wells, April 10, 1865, in <u>Mason Smith Family Papers</u>, 194.

God has imposed on us."[64] Dabney's admission that God had imposed, rather than merely allowed, the destruction of the Confederacy and its resultant burdens demonstrates the extent to which white southerners clung to their faith at the expense of their defeated nation.

Accepting that God had ordained the fall of the Confederacy and resolving to endure future trials proved an easier process than coming to terms with the human dimensions of the Civil War's outcome. Whether in triumph or despair, devout Christians in the Confederacy believed that heartfelt submission to the authority of an omnipotent God was a virtue. By contrast, abasing themselves before their earthly foes seemed to require rejecting Confederates' beliefs about their own innate superiority. In writing about the meaning of surrender, Confederates dwelled on the humiliation and submission they felt in acknowledging the people of the Union as the war's winners. After years of demonizing and denigrating their Yankee opponents, Confederates balked at succumbing to victorious northerners. Katherine Olivia Foster wondered how she could "ever love the Yankees as brothers when they made these deep and everlasting wounds in my heart."[65] David Comfort, who soldiered briefly for the Confederacy at the war's beginning but spent most of the conflict as a civilian minister, implored a correspondent to "never have for your fellow creatures the feeling of loathing & abhorrence & implacable hatred that I

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[64] George Edward Dabney to John B. Dabney, May 20, 1865, Saunders Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

[65] Entry of July 18, 1865, Katherine Olivia Foster Diary, Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

have for our enemies."[66] In the simpler prose of a defeated soldier, Charles Dabney

pronounced the moment when he surrendered and accepted parole from Union

forces "the bitterest humiliation which providence has yet inflicted on me."[67]

For most Confederates, the worst feature of surrender stemmed from the

realization that they, their comrades, and their loved ones had sacrificed in vain.

During the war years, southerners had justified death, incapacitation, and loss of

property as the high but necessary and worthwhile price of victory. Although few in

the Confederacy were willing to declare that surrender meant that they had

betrayed their dead, a recurring sense that defeat had rendered wartime deaths

purposeless emerges from the writings of Confederate soldiers and civilians. In her

diary, Katherine Olivia Foster regretted "both of [her] noble brothers sacrificed

upon our country's altar as far as I can see for nothing." Though she hoped to "some

day feel that they were taken for <u>some</u> good," she knew that "ever present will be

the losses we have felt during this cruel war."[68] Young veterans who had seen many

comrades perish echoed Foster's feelings. Daniel E. Huger Smith bitterly bemoaned

that the war had brought nothing but "four years hard fighting & the best blood of

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[66] David Comfort to James Comfort, July 10, 1865, Comfort Family Papers, Virginia
Historical Society.

[67] Charles E. Dabney to Father, May 30, 1865, Saunders Family Papers, Virginia
Historical Society.

[68] Entry of July 18, 1865, Katherine Olivia Foster Diary, Mississippi Department of
Archives and History.

our country wasted—worse than wasted!"[69] "All our efforts hardships and privations have been for nothing," Reuben E. Wilson concurred, "indeed this is the worst feature of the whole."[70] Lewis Leon initially allowed himself to be overcome by the gloomy thought that "our comrades who have given their lives for the independence of the South have died in vain." Perhaps afraid of slandering deceased fellow soldiers, Leon quickly modified his expression to "that is, the cause for which they gave their lives is lost, but they positively did not give their lives in vain."[71] Even if Leon balked at denigrating the sacrifices of his fallen comrades, he and other Confederates could point to no redeeming purpose for their wartime losses in the absence of the victory that would have justified them.

Surrender struck powerful blows against the ideological worlds of Confederates. Yet ideology did not completely account for the nature and degree of soldiers' investments in their military service. In the Civil War, soldiers fought for causes, for themselves, and for other people. Most soldiers relied on a combination of these motivations to justify and sustain their service. Accordingly, the relative weight they gave to ideology, their military comrades, their families, and their personal objectives shifted with the war's events. When the results of the war demonstrated that Confederate perseverance had its limits, that divine intervention

[69] Daniel E. Huger Smith to Eliza Carolina Middleton Huger Smith, April 21, 1865, in Mason Smith Family Letters, 197.

[70] Reuben E. Wilson to Julia Jones, May 13, 1865, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[71] Entry of April 1865, in Lewis Leon, Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate (Charlotte: Stone Publishing Company, 1913), 70-71.

on the South's behalf was not forthcoming, that supposedly inferior and atrocious foes could overcome southern virtues, and that the sacrifices of the war might yield no reward, soldiers turned for solace and stability to their duty. By believing that they had fulfilled their obligations as individuals, former Confederates fashioned a foundation on which to build their futures in the face of the dissolution of their national and military communities.

During the Civil War, duty meant performing service on behalf of several distinct entities. Confederate soldiers referenced obligations to uphold personal standards, to defend their families and act honorably while doing so, and to not place unnecessary burdens upon their comrades by abandoning their posts as motivations for enduring the hardships of military life. To be sure, duty neither consisted of precisely similar components nor motivated consistent actions for all Confederate soldiers. Each soldier possessed his own understanding of the obligations he bore, how he should fulfill them, and what priority he would give to different parts when they came into conflict. No period better illustrated the malleability and complexity of a soldier's interpretation of duty than the final year of the war. As Union armies advanced across the South and a growing number of soldiers found their families either fleeing their homes or living under northern occupation, Confederates faced a stark choice between fulfilling their duty to defend their homeland as members of an army and their more immediate responsibilities to personally protect and provide for loved ones in war-ravaged areas. Thousands ultimately left their posts with the armies temporarily or deserted in order to return to their homes and families, an action that for many was consistent with their

prioritization of a set of responsibilities rather than an act of cowardice or a

statement of disillusionment with the Confederacy.[72]

Many of the men who made this choice met with the hostility of the

Confederate Army as an institution but the understanding of their fellow soldiers

who composed it. "General [Nathan Bedford] Forrest is getting severe on

deserters," Samuel Agnew recorded in his diary. "When officers go with men

deserting those who catch them have orders to kill the officers and bring back the

men."[73] Agnew noted that a captain and two lieutenants found in his neighborhood

in Mississippi had already been shot out of hand under those terms. Forrest had a

reputation as a hard commander; a former slave recalled him shooting three men

before breakfast one morning for declaring that they were tired of fighting.[74] But

even Robert E. Lee, whom his troops regarded as a much more sympathetic officer,

had steeled himself against all sympathy for men who left their posts in the

Confederacy's most critical hours. In the winter of 1865, Lee gave explicit orders to

a party of soldiers dispatched to hunt deserters in North Carolina to "take no

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[72] For the extent, implications, and motivations for Confederate desertion, see Ella
Lonn, Desertion During the Civil War (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998
[originally published 1928]); Weitz, More Damning Than Slaughter, and Glatthaar,
General Lee's Army, 408-413. For studies of the effect of desertion on southern
wartime communities, see William T. Auman, "Neighbor Against Neighbor: The
Inner Civil War in the Central Counties of Confederate North Carolina" (Ph.D.
Dissertation: University of North Carolina, 1988) and Victoria Bynum, The Long
Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and its Legacies (Chapel Hill: University
of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[73] Entry of February 24, 1865, Samuel Agnew Diary, Southern Historical Collection,
UNC.

[74] Carter, When the War was Over, 6.

prisoners" from among any men who resisted those sent to return them to the armies. Leniency toward those who resisted being returned to the armies was "a great cause of desertion," Lee wrote, "and they cannot be too sternly dealt with."[75] Soldiers themselves tended to agree with Lee concerning deserters who actively attacked men in Confederate uniform, but took a softer tone generally. "102 of the Brigade run away...there was 13 run away from our Co," Stephen D. Ellis informed his mother in late March 1865. Ellis knew desertion undermined the cohesiveness of the army, but he understood why the men had gone. "Some of them have large families at home entirely dependent upon the worlds cold charities, if they are not there to see to them," he argued. "Are their cares not to be pitied?"[76] Ellis recognized the plight of men who chose to give up their public identities as soldiers of the southern Confederacy in order to preserve their private responsibilities to their families.

Thousands more men, however, remained at their posts despite the demands posed by at-risk homes and increasingly volatile communities across the South. James L. Hubard rationalized his willingness to put aside his own misgivings about continuing the war by citing his duty as both a soldier and a father. "As General Lee says, 'War is a cruel legacy to leave to our children,'" Hubard declared. "I would not wish to see any of mine engaged in such a war, and I shall try to derive

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[75] Robert E. Lee to Zebulon B. Vance, March 9, 1865, in Governor's Letter Book, January-March 1865, North Carolina Division of Archives and History.

[76] Stephen D. Ellis to Mother, March 24, 1865, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

consolation and happiness from attention to duty, and leave the rest to God."[77]

Unlike those who would sacrifice every southern man on the altar of Confederate independence, Confederates motivated primarily by a personal sense of duty rather than their collective investment in the cause anticipated the day when they could trade uniforms for civilian clothes. Henry Trueheart succinctly summarized his motivations for remaining a soldier in a letter to his brother Charles, also in Confederate uniform. "When this war is over, if I survive," Trueheart affirmed, "it will be enough for me & my immediate friends to know that I have come as near the performance of my duty as men generally do."

Men such as Hubard and Trueheart demonstrated their resilience as soldiers, remaining in Confederate service until the armies surrendered. Unlike those Confederates motivated by overt ideological commitment, however, they sustained their military participation from a personal sense of obligation rather than with the rhetoric of southern virtue or Union barbarity. While they ardently wished to see the Confederacy triumph, these soldiers looked forward to peace with duty to self, state, family, and God fulfilled rather than to fighting the Yankees forever. In the wake of surrender, Confederate soldiers would draw strength from their sense of having measured up to their duty even as the larger connections that had tied Confederates together disintegrated.

Some men took longer than Hubard and Trueheart to reach this conclusion and reconcile national defeat with personal duty fulfilled. Andrew H. Gay of

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[77] James L. Hubard to Isetta C. Randolph Hubard, February 11, 1865, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

Louisiana could not express what he felt until nearly eight months after he had lain down his arms, but then composed a poem on the subject that emphasized personal duty as the only consolation he could draw from the ruins of the Confederacy. In response to the poem's opening question "Where is the flag that once floated so proudly," Gay lamented:

> Down is the flag that once floated so high.
> Low lie the hearts that would conquer or die.
> Sheathed are the swords that oft flashed in the van.
> Lost is the cause of truth, freedom, and man.
>
> Hope has departed, life lost all its charms.
> Our armies disbanded. Oh comrades in arms.
> Taunted and scorned in our jackets of grey
> We may envy the brave souls who fell in the fray.

From this abyss, Gay managed to find a way back:

> Hush-hush—my poor heart be at ease, be at rest
> One comfort is mine, that the noblest, the best
> I stood by our banner, I heard the last gun,
> And can now say with pride, I my duty have done.

As if to emphasize both the closure that this emphasis on his personal conduct brought Gay and the sense that the greatest epoch in his life had come to an end, Gay wrote underneath his manuscript the words "Finis, Finis, Finis."[78]

Once even the most intransigent holdouts could no longer doubt the outcome of the war, former Confederates adopted several strategies to prevent surrender from destroying their worlds. Each of these means of coping relied on separating individual narratives from collective failure. While they shared many of the same ideological investments in the Confederacy, soldiers and civilians differed widely how they approached the problem of moving on with their lives. If similar beliefs in the composition and character of the Confederate nation had bound them together as they strove for victory and contemplated defeat, the separation imposed by experience led former combatants to chart a course of personal reinvention that non-soldiers could not replicate.

How soldiers brought themselves to terms with the imposition of defeat depended in great measure on their circumstances at the war's conclusion. Confederate soldiers still in uniform in the spring of 1865 faced a stark and immediate transition from armed combatants to powerless former soldiers as a direct consequence of defeat. Those whose time in military service extended to or even beyond the surrender of the major field armies had to make sense of why their persistence and tenacity had proven unequal to staving off Union victory. Many of them blamed defeat on a lack of collective perseverance and sought to contrast their

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[78] Manuscript poem, "The Jackets of Grey," Andrew H. Gay Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

personal wartime commitment with the flagging will of the Confederate population at large. In its most common form, this interpretation emphasized a soldier's membership in a distinguished group that bore no responsibility for losing the war. Whether they took pride in the wartime dedication and performance of their companies and regiments or saw themselves as members of a more nebulous body of men defined by shared characteristics rather than a particular affiliation, soldiers drew sharp boundaries between their own virtues and their nation's shortcomings.

Isaac W. McAdory believed that a lack of will among southern civilians accounted for the necessity of the Confederacy's surrender. At seventeen years of age, McAdory had enlisted in the 28th Alabama infantry in March 1862, fought for the duration of the war, demonstrated the depth of his personal investment in the Confederate cause through his uninterrupted service, and garnered a promotion to lieutenant in the process. During his regiment's final march as part of General Joseph E. Johnston's Army of Tennessee, McAdory claimed that he and his comrades remained "in high spirits and splendid fighting condition." By contrast, they "were discouraged at every step by the citizens along the route," who circulated reports of Lee's surrender and urged the soldiers to give up the cause as hopeless.[79]

As a "true Soldier of the South," McAdory accepted the humiliation of surrender only because of "the straits to which we are driven by the general wish of our people." He did not stop at creating a simple dichotomy between soldiers and

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[79] Isaac W. McAdory to Ala Tarrant, April 19, 1865, Isaac W. McAdory Papers, Alabama Division of Archives and History.

civilians, but noted that even "men who have stood by their colors like true soldiers since the commencement of the war, deserted them in this hour of darkness, and as they believed humiliation."[80] In his observations, McAdory placed a distinction between soldiers who voluntarily left the army by deserting their units—even if they did so mere days or hours before Johnson's official surrender at Durham Station—and men such as himself who remained with their colors until the very end.

McAdory's judgment notwithstanding, most of the men who left the army in the days before formal surrender ceremonies would not have considered their actions desertion. Thousands of men simply fell out of the ranks of the Confederate armies as they retreated from approaching Union forces. As historian Anne Sarah Rubin has written, many of these "ordinary soldiers knew when their time in the army was over," and left because they viewed continued resistance as futile for the Confederate cause and unnecessary to fulfill their personal sense of duty.[81] By contrast, some of the Confederacy's most intransigent soldiers left the armies and refused to participate in their armies' rites of surrender because they found personal capitulation unthinkable. Rather than lay down his arms at Appomattox, Charles E. Dabney traveled for a month and more than 500 miles, attempting to join various Confederate contingents in order to continue to fight. Only when he realized that all of the organized forces of the Confederacy had surrendered, and

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[80] Ibid.

[81] Rubin, <u>A Shattered Nation</u>, 131.

that he "would be outlawed if [he] held out any longer, without the chance of doing any good to this outdone & sacrificed country," did he finally acknowledge Union victory.[82] Edward L. Wells took part in a similar escapade, leading a small detail of soldiers away from General Lawrence Simmons Baker's brigade to avoid the humiliation of surrender. "Thank God, I have never surrendered," Wells wrote to his mother in May 1865, "& my arm is still free to strike against oppression and wrong."[83] With the surrender of the Confederacy's two principal field armies widely known throughout the South, men like Dabney and Wells could not have imagined that they could partake in effective resistance to the Union. Rather, their unwillingness to surrender served a personal need: it allowed them to preserve a personal legacy as unconquered soldiers, and to carry that consolation into the postwar period. As Daniel E. Huger Smith wrote home in disgust, "There are few of us who would not prefer a prison" to voluntarily embracing the "dishonorable terms" of surrender.[84]

By the end of the Civil War, thousands of Confederate soldiers found themselves held in Union prisons. Most of them would have cautioned Smith to reconsider his preferences. Prisoners-of-war showed little inclination to prolong their incarceration after the collapse of the Confederacy. Captured in the war's final

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[82] Charles E. Dabney to Father, May 30, 1865, Saunders Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

[83] Edward L. Wells to Mrs. Thomas L. Wells, May 1, 1865, in Mason Smith Family Letters, 203.

[84] Daniel E. Huger Smith to Mrs. Robert Smith, April 22, 1865, in Mason Smith Family Letters, 198.

month, John Blair McPhail of the 56th Virginia infantry arrived at Johnson's Island, Ohio, to find that "of the 2800 captives here, nearly all have applied for the amnesty oath."[85] James L. Hubard estimated that the fourteen thousand prisoners held at Point Lookout, Maryland had "with rare exceptions…given up all hope of the Confederacy" by the third week of April 1865. "If by taking the oath [of loyalty to the United States] prompt release could be effected," Hubard continued, "I do not believe there are a dozen here who would not take it.[86] Capture had placed an interlude between prisoners and the experience of campaigning. They no longer played an active role in determining the outcome of the Confederate quest for independence, and this enforced passivity coupled with the hardship and boredom of prison life gave prisoners-of-war ample reason to seize the chance for a new beginning once the war's outcome became clear.

Their enforced severance from the front lines, however, did little to dampen Confederate prisoners' attachment to the cause for which they fought or to their identity as soldiers. Lewis Leon, also held at Point Lookout when the Confederacy collapsed, confirmed that he felt every inch the Confederate soldier despite having spent nearly a year in captivity. "Those that remain to see the end for which they fought—what have we left?" Leon lamented. "Our sufferings and privations would be nothing had the end been otherwise," he continued, but as things stood, Leon and

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[85] John Blair McPhail to George F. Anderson, May 9, 1865, Carrington Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

[86] James L. Hubard to Isetta C. Randolph Hubard, April 22, 1865, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

his comrades could expect nothing but "a desolated home to go to." Despite his anger and dejection, however, Leon took the oath of loyalty when offered the chance, and commenced his life as a former soldier of the Confederacy.[87]

Whether they cherished the consolation of never personally submitting to their enemies or resignedly took the loyalty oath in a Union prison in order to regain their freedom of action, Confederate soldiers found themselves at odds with the world of southern civilians at the end of the Civil War. With the exception of their dead comrades, soldiers felt that they had paid the highest costs of any portion of southern society to sustain the war. Many bitterly resented civilians who raised the standard of nationalism but neither shared in nor understood the burdens of military service.[88] As David Pierson wrote to his brother William H. Pierson, "I expect to be as patriotic as anybody...but I have a perfect disgust for public meetings gotten up by men out of the army to dictate to our soldiers what they should do. They could do immeasurably more good by taking a gun and becoming soldiers themselves. It is in bad taste, to say the least of it, for able bodied men who never

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[87] Entry of April 1865, in Leon, <u>Diary of a Tar Heel</u>, 70-71.

[88] Lisa Laskin and Aaron Sheehan-Dean have both observed that by the end of the Civil War, men in the Army of Northern Virginia felt a distinct separation from Confederate civilians. As Laskin observes, "as a troublesome divide deepened between soldiers and civilians, men in the ANV appear to have shifted their loyalty away from the society they were fighting *for* and toward the army they were fighting *in*." See Lisa Laskin, "'The Army is Not Near So Much Demoralized as the Country Is:' Soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia and the Confederate Home Front," in Aaron Sheehan-Dean, ed., <u>The View from the Ground: Experiences of Civil War Soldiers</u> (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 91-120; Sheehan-Dean, <u>Why Confederates Fought</u>, 155, 172-173.

have fired a gun at the enemy to be ever boasting of their patriotism and urging a spirit of desperate resistance to the soldiers."[89]

Just as convictions about fulfilling their duty had sustained Confederate soldiers in wartime, the belief that they had rendered service to their nation, their families, and themselves functioned as a reservoir of strength to help soldiers cope with surrender. Recuperating after the amputation of his leg, Reuben Wilson declared that "if I never recover I feel that I have done my whole duty in this war and in trying to establish and maintain our independence and this alone makes me feel good."[90] Ezekiel John Ellis feared that Union officials would forbid him " to return to you and to the land of my birth which I love with an almost idolatrous affection." Although "the thought of [such separation] is almost death," Ellis held closely to his belief that "no matter what may betide, I am conscious of having tried to do my duty."[91] Because of the flexibility of its meaning, most soldiers could justify their participation in the Confederacy's failed national venture to themselves and to others by taking solace in having done their part for self, family, comrades, and country. By contrast, this emphasis on military duty meant that the fulcrum with which soldiers pried themselves away from their defeated society was one that no

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[89] David Pierson to William H. Pierson, April 27, 1865, in Cutrer and Parrish, Brothers in Gray, 257.

[90] Reuben E. Wilson to Julia Jones, May 13, 1865, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[91] Ezekiel John Ellis to Father, April 25, 1865, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU.

southern civilian could fully comprehend or share in during the Confederacy's collapse and its immediate aftermath.

For Confederate soldiers, surrender meant transforming their relationship to the society in which they lived and for which they—at least ostensibly—had fought. Without an army to belong to, men whose principal sources of identity and self-definition came from being soldiers had lost the sense of purpose and importance that came from helping to determine the fate of slavery and the outcome of secession. To be sure, these men had renounced personal control over their circumstances as part of the process of military acculturation. In exchange, however, they gained a sense of investment in the collective agency of the Confederate armies. Before soldiers could take stock of the long-term consequences of defeat for their individual lives or the structure of their society, they confronted the loss of access to the mutual power that an army wields in wartime. While many of the tenets of a Confederate soldier's participation in the Civil War--including comradeship, a sense of duty fulfilled, and a commitment to the social and cultural values of white southern nationalism--could withstand defeat, surrender required that Confederate soldiers yield perhaps their greatest source of identity and group cohesion: collective control over their shared fate. They now faced the daunting task of becoming individuals again in a world whose parameters were governed by uncertainty.

In the later years of their lives, Confederate veterans and others in white southern society would engage in a campaign for control of the war's memory in

which they depicted a virtuous and united southern white populace that survived the shock of conquest through shared sacrifice and commitment to sanctifying their wartime losses. At the moment of surrender, however, Confederate soldiers showed more inclination to view their wartime participation as personally honorable, but ultimately wasteful and in vain. Ezekiel John Ellis wrote of neither valor nor glory in interpreting the war and its end. Rather, "it was battlefields & blood, mangled friends & desolate firesides, ruined hopes & broken pride, years of toil & agony and no reward."[92] Lewis Leon catalogued years in which he "suffered hunger, [went] without sufficient clothing, barefooted, lousy, and [had] suffered more than any one can believe, except the soldiers of the Southern Confederacy."[93] Peace would require former Confederate soldiers to think about their future before they could begin to reconcile the praise they received as soldiers with the horrors they had endured to earn it.

Surrender exacted a high price from former Confederate soldiers, challenging both how they understood their own importance and how they related to nonmilitary members of their worlds. Since they had relinquished much of their individuality to the Confederate national project and to membership in its armies, surrender, in destroying both of those institutions, required Confederate soldiers to find sources of personal definition that did not depend on participation in a

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[92] Ezekiel John Ellis to Brother, May 1, 1865, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU.

[93] Entry of April 1865 in Leon, Diary of a Tar Heel Confederate, 70-71.

collective endeavor.[94]   Distrusting the Union victors, unconvinced that southern

civilians could appreciate their wartime experiences, and disillusioned by their

substantial investment in a failed endeavor, former Confederate soldiers entered the

postwar years neither committed to nor relying on attachments to any broad

conception of southern society or its tenets. As they negotiated new interactions

with family members, African Americans, and the traditional leaders of their

communities, former Confederate soldiers would find their outlooks conditioned by

the divisions that defeat had wrought in the structural relationships that gave the

South its contours.

[94] Historians largely agree that Civil War armies reflected a combination of America's individualist, democratic culture and the professional military values of discipline and group cohesion. Men who joined the Confederate armies retained much of their individuality; the variations in their recorded responses to events testify to this. Yet military service did require them to forfeit, for a time, their self-direction in order to function as part of an army. See Glatthaar, General Lee's Army, 207; Reid Mitchell, Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Their Experiences (New York: Touchstone, 1988), 56-59; and McPherson, For Cause and Comrades, 46-52.

CHAPTER THREE: "Will I Can Submit To This Though The Thought Is Almost Death"

Writing from the bench of the North Carolina Supreme Court in 1867, Justice Edwin Reade instructed residents of his state "that liabilities for war-crimes and redress for war-injuries are not to be thought of, and need not be discussed either in private or public."[95] Reade's injunction came in a ruling that upheld North Carolina's amnesty act of 1866, a law that granted widespread immunity from prosecution to soldiers from both the Union and Confederate armies for actions taken during the Civil War. Over the next four years, North Carolina courts would apply the amnesty act to protect former soldiers on both sides from legally sanctioned vengeance. They would also shelter military men who had used the turbulence of war as a cover under which to visit horrific violence on noncombatants.

The amnesty act, its origins, and the course of its passage represented the great paradox confronting former soldiers as they began their postwar lives. In order to place the war behind them and become functioning citizens, Confederate

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[95] "State v. Blalock," in S.F. Phillips, <u>Reports of Cases at Law Argued and Determined by the Supreme Court of North Carolina</u>, Vol. 61 (Raleigh: Nichols, Gorman, and Neathery, 1868), 248. [Hereafter cited as <u>North Carolina Reports</u>.]

soldiers needed reasons to reacquire civilian mores and adhere to both legal and community standards. Yet the war's unresolved legacies defied easy political or social solutions, leaving veterans unwilling to subject themselves to judgments on wartime actions and experiences that lay outside the cope of civil society. Former Confederate soldiers could create a place and a purpose for themselves in the postwar South only when southerners at large declared that they would not pass judgment on their wartime conduct and experiences. Civilians, though, had expectations of their own, and proved willing to overlook the effects of the war only when doing so advanced their own ends.[96]

At the conclusion of the Civil War, Confederate soldiers returned from the armies to a civilian world characterized by severed ties and broken relationships. As their nation crumbled away, the men and women of the former Confederacy, who had structured their participation in the war around a spectrum of beliefs about what they owed their nation and what needs that nation would fulfill, found themselves at odds with one another along almost every imaginable axis of differentiation. Wealthy families faulted middling and poor whites for abandoning the Confederate cause in droves during the final months of the war, while the white southern yeomanry largely resented the rich planter classes for leading the South into a devastating war and then leaving their poorer neighbors to bear the horrific

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[96] James Marten contends that "Confederate veterans were seen as central characters in southern society, honored and successful and valued simply because they were veterans." While this statement accurately describes the public treatment of Confederate soldiers as icons of white masculine virtue during the Gilded Age, it fails to capture the difficult reconstruction of the relationship between soldiers and southern society at large immediately after the war. Marten, Sing Not War, 19.

material and human costs. Soldiers questioned whether civilians who had not experienced killing, wounds, and death as close companions had merited the sacrifices of the men in gray. They also faulted one another for abandoning the cause too early or pursuing it too zealously, and struggled with the consequences of fighting in an army that had failed to fashion a single standard of wartime behavior from its members' disparate values. Nearly all southern whites expressed anxiety about their future relationships to newly emancipated African Americans. Alabama planter Augustus Benners aptly summarized the condition of social relations in the immediate postwar South, writing that a "great gloom hangs over the people" because "no one knows what to depend upon or what to do."[97]

In the war's immediate aftermath, the South possessed neither a consensus about who should govern nor a stable pattern of community relations for configuring everyday interactions. Former Confederate soldiers returned from the war to find themselves on the front lines of a conflict to define new contours for southern society. That conflict revealed that a shared Confederate identity no longer bound former soldiers to their neighbors or to one another. Instead, rifts caused by the unresolved and complex legacies of wartime experiences as well as tensions of class interest and political authority forced Confederate soldiers to confront a postwar world in which their status as veterans had no clear collective meaning.   As they returned home, former Confederates found themselves largely alienated from their society by the material legacies of a destructive war.

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[97] Journal of Augustus Benners, May 14, 1865, in Glenn and Virginia Linden, eds. <u>Disunion, War, Defeat, and Recovery in Alabama: The Journal of Augustus Benners, 1850-1885</u> (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2007), 138.

Some of these legacies would prove elusive and complex, emerging only as former soldiers spent time adjusting to the rhythms of peacetime life. Others were more immediate, and anything but subtle. The rapid and unorganized demobilization of Confederate forces in April and May 1865 produced unanticipated consequences across the South. Released from the bonds of military discipline, thousands of young men accustomed to living by the law of necessity scattered across the landscape from Virginia to Texas. These former soldiers lacked material provisions and could no longer invoke military authority to force civilians to sell them food and horses in exchange for worthless Confederate currency. At least as importantly, their perspectives had shifted. While many soldiers remained proud of their wartime service, in defeat they had lost the sense that they owed anything more to their society. For some, quite the opposite feeling took hold: having sacrificed their health, happiness, and freedom for the people of the former Confederacy, these men now felt entitled to collect compensation by any means necessary.

As the defeated armies trickled through southern communities, residents learned firsthand that whatever ties remained between the armies and the civilian population after the destruction of the Confederacy were anything but reciprocal. Civilians could either provide for the defeated soldiers voluntarily or suffer wholesale theft and personal injury.[98] Julia Baxter of South Carolina's York District

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[98] Dan T. Carter has situated the postwar outbreak of violence as "a continuation of traditional patterns, however exacerbated by the turmoil of civil war, emancipation, and postwar racial adjustment." While the presence of multifaceted violence within the South's slave society certainly undergirded relations between peers and gave

wrote of her distress at "giving meat & bread every hour" to soldiers who seemed "to be half starved." Though the returning Confederates provoked her sympathy, they also engendered fear; Baxter was disconcerted by the "four or five hundred camping around" her house," which she found "distressing." "The soldiers," she observed, "are determined to have horses," and she warned her brother that "it would be best to guard them" when the straggling veterans reached his home.[99] A resident of Augusta, Georgia noted that "the town is under military guard, against our own soldiers, who threaten to sack it."[100] In Mississippi, Samuel Agnew encountered a band of robbers who stole fifteen bushels of corn that had been collected to feed the indigent families of Confederate soldiers. "Although passing for Yankees," Agnew felt it more likely for the perpetrators "to have been a band of robbers made up of our own outlying soldiers or of paroled soldiers returning home."[101] Matters escalated the following week, when three diehard soldiers from

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structure to power hierarchies, the plunder and assault of white civilians unknown to their persecutors represented something quite different. This kind of violence could not achieve the longstanding domination or preservation of personal reputation that motivated southern antebellum violence. Rather than serving a function within an established social order, the random, sporadic violence that accompanied Confederate demobilization demonstrated the collapse of social cohesion. Carter, When the War Was Over, 19. Eric Foner likewise observes that "a wave of violence…raged almost unchecked in large parts of the postwar South," but emphasizes racial violence against freedmen to the exclusion of other manifestations of social dysfunction. Foner, Reconstruction, 119.

[99] Julia Blandina Baxter to Andrew Baxter Springs, "late April 1865," Springs Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[100] Mrs. Allen S. Izard to Mrs. William Mason Smith, May 3, 1865, Mason Smith Letters, 204.

[101] Entry of May 1, 1865, Samuel Agnew Diary, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

Missouri who refused to surrender to Union forces passed nearby. As the soldiers

reached the house of a Mr. Nutt, the civilian invited them to feed and water their

horses on his property. Agnew recorded what transpired next:

> After sitting with them awhile Nutt went out with them to attend to their
> horses. When they got out one of them said we have carried this far enough.
> We understand sir that you have money and we want it. Nutt denied the fact.
> They hung him twice and otherwise badly injured him. They got only $4.00
> from him. These men have no money and they took this highhanded
> measure to get it.

Speaking to how far things had come since the days when southern whites valorized

Confederate soldiers for defending them from a hated enemy, Agnew concluded

with the damning observation that "Yankees do no worse."[102]

Once they had returned home, most former soldiers likely hoped that the end

of the Civil War had freed them of an environment where killing constituted regular

behavior. The excesses of pillaging and peripheral violence that occurred as

Confederate units disbanded could, after all, be seen as the unfortunate

consequences of a bitter and defeated army unleashed on a vulnerable populace.

Moreover, the journey home by definition occurred in places where the civilians and

soldiers were anonymous to one another; by contrast, a soldier's behavior in the

presence of family and neighbors might hold lasting consequences for his reputation

and community relations. As they arrived at home, soldiers therefore cut a very

different figure than the marauding columns immediately after the armies

disbanded. Emmala Reed observed that when her fiancé returned home in April

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[102] Entry of May 8, 1865, Samuel Agnew Diary, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

1865, he wanted nothing more than to put his wartime life behind him. "He was glad to rest &...had enough of war," Reed confided to her diary, and the ardors of military service had left him "sick & worn out."[103] After long years of fighting, most former soldiers sought rest, stability, and a chance at prosperity—in short, all the things that wartime had denied them.

This hope to rebuild normal relations characterized relationships between soldiers as well as those between former military men and civilians. Since Confederate military units tended to come from specific localities, members of a given battery or company often lived in close proximity as postwar neighbors. Many bore grievances that grew from perceptions that men had drifted too far from their comrades' standards of behavior. In some instances, former soldiers found it easier to consign wartime actions to the past in order to move forward with their postwar lives. When he returned to his Virginia home, Jack I. Johnson wrote to Leigh Robinson that "much may be said on such an occasion" but confined himself to saying "I feel thankful, old fellow, your life has been spared through the late bloody struggle."[104] Johnson and Robinson had served together in the 1st Virginia Howitzers until Johnson deserted in September 1862. Their correspondence flourished for years thereafter, suggesting either that Robinson—who remained in uniform until the end of the war—understood the circumstances of Johnson's

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[103] Journal of Emmala Reed, April 28, 1865, in Robert T. Oliver, ed. <u>A Faithful Heart: The Journals of Emmala Reed, 1865 and 1866</u> (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 57.

[104] John I. Johnson to Leigh Robinson, November 23, 1865, Leigh Robinson Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

defection or that the two men succeeded in putting their wartime actions behind them in order to carve out a peacetime friendship. Given the forces that Confederate believed were arrayed against them during the Reconstruction years, maintaining a source of fellow feeling drawn from shared experience may have trumped the desire to bear grudges.

Confederate soldiers would soon find that a desire to disown wartime violence was insufficient to bring them peace. Violence as a product of the broken links between Confederate soldiers and the southern populace at large cut both ways. After enduring years of taxation, confiscation, and the often ruthless repression of dissent enforced by military power, many southerners had scores to settle with the men of the Confederate armies. When a group of western North Carolina bricklayers began recounting their war exploits to each another in the summer of 1865, one of them boasted about his role in the shooting of thirteen men and boys during the infamous Shelton Laurel massacre. The Confederate's lack of repentance infuriated James Norton, who had lost two close family members in the 1863 killings. Hearing of the former soldier's actions, Norton walked up to the Confederate, placed a pistol against his head, and pulled the trigger. Unionists in the North Carolina mountains hid Norton from Confederate sympathizers, and when Norton eventually faced trial the following spring, a Madison County jury acquitted him because it thought the Confederate soldier deserved to die.[105] In August 1865, Joseph Shelton, who had recruited men for Union forces in the North Carolina

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[105] Phillip Shaw Paludan, <u>Victims: A True Story of the Civil War</u> (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1981), 21-22.

mountains, shot and killed a member of the Confederate Home Guard for unspecified actions against Shelton's family.[106] Stripped of the protection that came from serving in the company of armed comrades, former soldiers found themselves answering with their lives for transgressions carried out in the name of the Confederate state.

Fear of reprisals for wartime actions could haunt former soldiers whose support of the Confederacy had been too tepid as well as those who had shown themselves too ruthless. Riding on a train in Charleston, South Carolina, Louise Bacot wrote of the harrowing experience of sharing her car with "a man with delirium tremens who prayed to Minnie and myself to save his life." The man "said that he had been in our Army and that he had deserted and gone to the Yankee Army and that somebody was going to shoot him at Branchville! Much to our relief he got out there, and the last we saw of him he was kneeling on the platform praying that his life should be saved."[107] Though Bacot assumed that the former Confederate suffered from hallucinations, his situation bespoke a very real nightmare for returning soldiers. They found themselves in a disordered society where ardent killers on the Confederacy's behalf and deserters from its armed ranks might both pay with their lives for their wartime actions.

The unresolved legacies of the war provoked more than a temporary outbreak of vigilante violence. As institutions of authority attempted to outline how

[106] "State v. Shelton," in J.M. McCorkle, ed. <u>North Carolina Reports</u> 65, 294-296.

[107] Louise Bacot to James Bacot, December 22, 1865, Bacot Family Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

they would govern peacetime life, they confronted major questions of jurisdiction.

Two particular problems emerged: no clear guidelines or precedents established

which bodies among many overlapping authorities could wield important

regulatory powers, and none of the branches of the national government had

offered a clear interpretation of the validity of legal actions under the Confederacy

or its subordinate state and local governments during the war. While battles for

control between overlapping political authorities would characterize

Reconstruction from its wartime origins to its termination, the question of whether

governing bodies would adjudicate wartime actions taken under the Confederacy

required immediate resolution.[108]

     The first attempts to bring southern communities under control came from

the United States Army. Expediency dictated that, as an outside force with the

ability to compel obedience through force, the process of postwar pacification

should initially fall to the military. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton therefore vested

the Army with all police powers for southern communities in the war's immediate

aftermath and stripped local officeholders of their enforcement powers.[109] The

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[108] For detailed analyses of the power struggles between the United States military, state governors, the Johnson and Grant administrations, Congress, and local courts during Reconstruction, see Michael Perman, Reunion Without Compromise: The South and Reconstruction 1865-1868 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Carter, When the War was Over; George Rable, But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984); Foner, Reconstruction; Laura Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); and Mark Bradley, Bluecoats and Tar Heels: Soldiers and Civilians in Reconstruction North Carolina (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009).

[109] Carter, When the War was Over, 11.

complexion of military governance in the summer months of 1865 varied widely in

locations across the South, with some units actively intervening to impose peaceful

relations and others leaving communities to look after themselves. In many cases,

army officers initiated prosecutions against former Confederate soldiers based on

wartime episodes. Indicted soldiers ranged from privates to major generals and

appeared before military tribunals. The army initiated proceedings against

Confederate Major General George Pickett and Major John H. Gee during the

summer of 1865 for mistreatment of Union prisoners during the war. Military

tribunals indicted Pickett, who fled to Canada to escape prosecution, and convicted

Gee.[110] Less prominent offenders also found themselves called to account before

military courts. Captain Reuben Wilson of North Carolina languished in Libby

Prison during the summer of 1865 as the army's adjutant general's office gathered

evidence to prosecute him for the murder of Unionist civilians in the closing months

of the war.[111] John Willis McCue, a member of Colonel John Singleton Mosby's

partisan rangers, stood trial for killing a Union soldier during a raid into Maryland.

McCue was found guilty and sentenced to life imprisonment, while the army turned

Wilson over to civilian authorities.

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[110] Bradley, Bluecoats and Tar Heels, 123-125. For a vitriolic but detailed account of
proceedings before military courts in North Carolina during Presidential
Reconstruction, see J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, Reconstruction in North Carolina
(New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), 163-169.

[111] William Shultz and John Nissen to Jacob Cox, May 10, 1865, in "R. E. Wilson,"
Confederate Soldier Service Files, NARA 270, National Archives and Records
Administration, Washington, D.C.

With its zealous prosecutions of former Confederate soldiers, the United States Army declared that accounting for wartime violence constituted a prerequisite to resuming normal relations. Confederate soldiers and their families saw the military's actions as evidence that their fears about a vindictive and tyrannical occupation had become reality. "These military commissions before which he will be probably tried are organized to <u>convict</u>," the relative of one accused Confederate declared, and they "rarely disappoint their masters."[112] John McCue's father, himself a major in the 51st Virginia infantry and a former prisoner of war, believed that only the northern desire to punish ex-Confederates explained his son's conviction. His son's actions were "in obedience to orders and [in] legitimate accordance with Mosby's mode of warfare."[113] Although it hardly surprised many southerners who ended the war convinced of Yankee perfidy, the presumption that the victorious Union would treat Confederates as criminals on the slightest pretext left former soldiers believing that they would pay the price of peace and Reconstruction with their own liberty and security.

By the fall of 1865, the federal government had reversed its course on the question of wartime accountability. President Andrew Johnson, who believed in a strictly delineated role for the military in rebuilding southern society, pardoned Pickett, Gee, McCue, and nearly every other former Confederate convicted of

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[112] William A. Hauser to Julia Jones, July 22, 1865, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[113] John Howard McCue to William Cabell Rives, Jr, April 21, 1865, Rives, Sears, and Rhinelander Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

wartime misdeeds by military courts.[114] Within the overall context of his

administration's conduct, Johnson's decision to pardon convicted Confederates

demonstrated a desire to confine the war's impact to clear political objectives. In his

estimation, Union victory meant the emancipation of the slaves, the permanent

resolution of the question of secession's validity, and the removal of the elites who

had led the South into war and governed it during the conflict from political life.

Beyond that, Johnson saw no reason to open a Pandora's box of social unrest by

using federal power to investigate claims of wartime mistreatment. Since moderate

white southerners comprised the key to Johnson's plan for reconstruction, he could

not afford to divide that constituency by positioning the Army as the peacetime as

well as wartime enemy of former Confederates. In order to rebuild national

authority, Johnson considered it essential to limit the scope and use of federal

power.[115]

    Yet if either the Johnson administration or Confederate veterans hoped that

pardoning soldiers indicted by the federal government would resolve community

tensions and help to bring the disparate elements of southern society together into a

unified populace, they sorely miscalculated the animosity that the war had

generated among civilians within the former Confederacy. Once the United States

military had abandoned its policy of investigating wartime behavior that fell outside

of acceptable bounds, southerners with grievances to bear took their claims to state

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[114] *Staunton Vindicator,* November 17, 1865; Bradley, <u>Bluecoats and Tar Heels</u>, 123-125.

[115] Carter, <u>When the War was Over</u>, 30; Foner, <u>Reconstruction</u>, 181, 188-189.

and local courts. Private citizens began flooding the court system with suits

claiming wartime damages, and state prosecutors initiated criminal proceedings in

at least half a dozen notable cases. In North Carolina, prosecutors tried and

convicted Keith Blalock and four associates of forming an irregular partisan band,

attacking the Confederate Home Guard in Caldwell County, and killing some of its

members.[116] On the other side of the coin, Forsyth County courts picked up where

the United States military had left off, arraigning Confederate Captain Reuben E.

Wilson and several of his subordinates for shooting five unarmed men with Unionist

allegiances in the final weeks before the Confederate armies surrendered.[117] By the

time the North Carolina legislature met for its fall term, courts throughout the state

had cases related to wartime grievances on their dockets. "I hope the President of

the United States who has declared all pardoned who have surrendered & taken the

oath of allegiance to his Gov't, will look into the matter & put a stop to these men

who it seems are thirsting for blood of all men who stood by their Country in the last

war," James Jones of North Carolina observed in the spring of 1866. "In place of

restoring peace and harmony throughout the land they are making the rent

larger."[118]

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[116] "State v. Blalock," in North Carolina Reports Vol. 61, 242-248.

[117] "State v. R.E. Wilson," in Record Book, Forsyth County Superior Court, Spring Term 1866, 1390. Forsyth County Criminal Action Papers, North Carolina Department of Archives and History. For more information on the Wilson case, see David C. Williard, "Executions, Justice, and Reconciliation in North Carolina's Western Piedmont, 1865-1867," Journal of the Civil War Era 2 (March 2012), 31-57. .
[118] James B. Jones to Beverly Jones, April 21, 1866, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

Beyond the men prosecuted by the Army or in state courts, a much larger cohort of former Confederates who never faced a trial nevertheless feared that they would meet with similar treatment. "I may soon be an exile and forbidden to return to the land of my birth," wrote Ezekiel John Ellis to his father at the end of the Civil War. "Will I can submit to this though the thought is almost death."[119] Samuel Barron, a Confederate naval captain from Virginia, returned home from Europe only when he received assurances that "the day of arrests has passed & a quiet & unobtrusive gentleman like yourself will become an object of respect" rather than a hunted outlaw.[120] Like the overwhelming majority of Confederate veterans, neither man ever faced judicial scrutiny for his wartime conduct or suffered any recriminations from political authorities. Yet the specter of arrest or exile at the hands of the national and state governments kept many Confederate soldiers from believing that they could return to civil life as protected members of society. Instead, they contemplated futures in which they faced a stark choice: submit to rule by a hated enemy who nursed wartime grievances or build a life that engaged broader public concerns as little as possible.

If the debate over prosecuting former Confederates for war acts constituted a policy question for the Army and for Andrew Johnson's administration, for states and localities it represented a crisis. In governing the defeated states, the federal

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[119] Ezekiel John Ellis to Ezekiel John Ellis, Sr., April 25, 1865, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU.

[120] William G. Harrison to Samuel Barron, November 15, 1865, Barron Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

government possessed a mandate to rebuild southern society drawn from victory, but lacked the manpower and infrastructure to ensure compliance with its decisions within individual communities.[121] State and local governments faced the opposite problem: while their focus was limited in geographic scope, the bounds of their authority extended only as far as the respect their citizens accorded them. In this light, the question of adjudicating wartime behavior took on a complex character. States and localities could not afford to serve as little more than venues for settling scores over the wrongs, real and perceived, for which their citizens felt entitled to redress. But if they ignored the war's destabilizing influence on community relations altogether, they risked allowing the lawless violence that seemed almost quotidian in areas throughout the South to continue unchecked.

To resolve this conundrum, states took measures to determine the degree to which citizens could hold former soldiers accountable for acts committed during wartime.   In its postwar state constitution, Missouri barred its courts from hearing cases pertaining to members of any military organization, declaring that civil law held no jurisdiction over soldiers during war.[122] North Carolina and Kentucky passed general amnesty laws that declared that any act resulting from an order from

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[121] For an excellent explanation of the limitations on effective policy implementation by the Freedman's Bureau, the United States Army, and other federal organizations during Reconstruction, see Gregory Downs, Declarations of Dependence: The Long Reconstruction of Popular Politics in the South, 1861-1908 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 75-100.

[122] Stephen C. Neff, Justice in Blue and Gray: A Legal History of the Civil War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 234-236.

higher military authority would fall under the laws of war, with its perpetrator

therefore exempt from postwar civil prosecution.

North Carolina's Amnesty Act was designed to provide the broadest possible

protections to former soldiers in order to absolve the state of judicial responsibility.

On the first day of legislative business in November 1866, Representative H.M.

Waugh introduced House Bill 1, a resolution of general amnesty and pardon for acts

committed during the war years.[123] The act stated that no person who had served in

any capacity for either the Union or the Confederacy "shall be held to answer on any

indictment for any act done in the discharge of any duties imposed on him."

Furthermore, both criminal and civil courts would presume that all acts emanated

from lawful orders unless insurmountable proof could be offered to the contrary.

Also covered were all private citizens who, " for the preservation of their lives and

property, or for the protection of their families, associated themselves together,"

thereby accounting for the unstructured nature of conflicts within communities

during the war. Finally, the act established amnesty not merely for wartime actions,

but for any crime related to "war duties or war passions" committed on or before

January 1, 1866.[124] In its final form, North Carolina's amnesty bill was nothing less

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[123] Entries of November 20-21, 1866, in Journal of the House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina (Raleigh: William E. Pell, State Printer, 1867), 15, 53. [Hereafter cited as Journal of the North Carolina House].

[124] Public Laws of the State of North Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly at the Sessions of 1866-'67 (Raleigh: William E. Pell, State Printer, 1867), 6. [Hereafter cited as Public Laws of North Carolina]; "State v. Shelton," North Carolina Reports Vol. 65, 294.

than an attempt to quell social unrest and restore civil authority by abandoning jurisdiction over the events of the Civil War.

In other states, courts rather than legislative bodies initially determined the extent of soldiers' immunity from prosecution. In these cases, too, the ultimate result tended to protect former soldiers from all but the most grievous crimes. While West Virginia courts found that citizens could sue Confederate veterans in civil court for damages to persons and property, the state legislature later reversed this ruling.[125] Maryland's courts acquitted William H.B. Dorsey, a former member of the 1st Maryland infantry regiment, for requisitioning a drove of cattle from state citizens during the Gettysburg campaign.[126] Robert E. Lynne, a captain in the 6th Louisiana, succeeded in convincing a New Orleans judge that his status as a Confederate officer protected him from retribution for the killing of a Mr. Roy for guerilla activities in 1863.[127] Whether through legislative action or judicial ruling, every state that heard postwar cases pertaining to Confederate soldiers' wartime conduct decided that some form of amnesty offered the easiest path to the resumption of civil authority. By renouncing jurisdiction over war crimes, states with fractured populations hoped to forge a unified society from bitterly divided wartime enemies. For men who had fought for the Confederacy, the legal conclusion that communities could better heal by forgetting wartime strife than by making retrospective determinations of individual culpability offered a vital reassurance

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[125] Neff, Justice in Blue and Gray, 235-236.

[126] "Trial of a Confederate Soldier in Maryland," Savannah *Daily News and Herald*, August 28, 1866.

[127] "Important Legal Decision," Columbia *Daily Phoenix,* August 11, 1865.

that former soldiers could expect civil protection if they acted within the confines of postwar civil society.

The distance that wartime experience placed between former Confederate soldiers and the communities to which they returned extended beyond issues of legal vulnerability. During the war, the South had witnessed vast changes to domestic dynamics. When young men marched to war they exchanged parental authority for institutional obedience and left women to manage slaves' labor in wealthy families and to provide through their own labor in poorer ones. Just as they had won legal protections from local, state, and national governments as they returned to civil life, former Confederate soldiers also needed to negotiate new relationships that would account for changes wrought by wartime experience within their domestic worlds.

Upon returning to their communities, former soldiers tried to forestall such a reckoning by immersing themselves in the routines of domestic life. They were driven in part by the necessity of economic productivity and in part by a desire to establish a familial identity as valued providers. The prospect of productive labor amidst family and community also enabled them, at least momentarily, to channel their energies away from concerns that loomed on the horizon. Veterans used work to distance themselves from dead comrades, emancipated slaves, and the prospect of land confiscation and redistribution to freedmen, and espoused a sense of optimism and determination when speaking of their labors. Finally, work allowed former soldiers to leverage their productivity in order to return home as valued community members without having to discuss the war and its attendant strains.

Charles E. Dabney of Virginia declared to his father that he intended "to go to work if the Yankees will allow me & swallow up, if possible, in unremitting labors, the haunting sense of individual and state degredation."[128]

George Washington Finley Harper returned to his Caldwell County, North Carolina home and determined to do the best he could to restore tranquility and prosperity to his family life. In diary entries, he indicated that he spent May 1865 "[at] Lenoir and Fairfield working on farm and garden occasionally hunting squirrels." Renewed public engagement was too painful for Harper to consider in the immediate aftermath of the war. "No mail and no public business or trading," Harper emphasized. Unwilling to interact with his neighbors, Harper derived satisfaction from reasserting his role as provider. On June 8, 1865, his entry read "Trying to thrive by holding the plough!"[129] William L. Amonett of the Twelfth Louisiana Infantry agreed. "I have now gone to work," Amonett wrote to a minister in his hometown, "given up all ideas of law for fear that it would lead me into public life."[130] For veterans like Dabney and Harper, labor offered a private, temporary sanctuary from both the unpleasant past and the uncertain future. By focusing on productivity, former soldiers could concentrate on their capabilities rather than their failures and forestall the prospect of public engagement in a changed society.

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[128] Charles E. Dabney to Father, May 30, 1865, Saunders Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

[129] Diary of George Washington Finley Harper, May 8-May 31 and June 8, 1865, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[130] William L. Amonett to Rev. T.M. Ward, September 30, 1865, William L. Amonett Papers, Mississippi Division of Archives and History.

Former Confederates did not reserve such sentiments for their private reflections. Instead, they constructed a domestic identity around their work. In the wake of defeat, former soldiers needed reassurance from their society that their masculine identities had not been lost with the Confederacy. Emphasizing the manly virtues of honest labor allowed southerners, especially women, to remind Confederate soldiers that they still could win the esteem of friends and family even after failing to achieve victory. A Georgia woman wrote to Isabella C. Hamilton praising the "young men belonging to the old aristocracy" whom she found engaged in various odd jobs to scrape together a living. "If I admired them as heros," Hamilton's correspondent wrote, "I admire them still more as <u>woodcutters</u> and <u>fishermen</u>. How nobly do they bear adversity! What an exhibition of real strength and independence of character!"[131]

Veterans encouraged family and friends to subordinate questions about their wartime experience to immediate concerns. Floride Clemson took solace from her brother's determination upon returning from service with the 1st South Carolina Light Artillery. "Calhoun," as she called John C. Clemson, "is very anxious to get to work, & is much more sober than he used to be."[132] Eliza Carolina Middleton Huger Smith delighted in her two sons who returned from the war "active & capable in every way, working well & cheerfully in the details of our refugee life. As soon as

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[131] M. Telfair to Isabella Caroline Hamilton, December 21, 1865, Isabella Caroline Hamilton Papers, Georgia Historical Society.

[132] Journal of Floride Clemson, June 26, 1865, in Ernest Lander and Charles McGee, eds. <u>A Rebel Came Home: The Diary and Letters of Floride Clemson, 1863-1866</u> (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989), 89.

they are allowed to work," Smith optimistically believed that she "[could] count on a future."[133] Veterans and their families shared a stake in the pleasant delusion of a singular focus on labor. Eva B. Jones noted with approval that her husband Charles had "been hard *at work*" ever since his return from his wartime role as chief of artillery for the military district of Georgia, and that his genteel features had given way to "hands hard and burnt like a common laborer's."[134] For former soldiers, work partially occluded both memories (and, in many cases, traumas) of wartime service and anxieties about the future. Family members, meanwhile, hoped to assuage their own fears about how military service might have negatively changed their loved ones.

To observant relatives, however, the thin veneer of work-related optimism was only partially convincing. Floride Clemson noticed that her brother John exhibited the strains of wartime service in both his physique and his behavior. "He stoops dreadfully….I found two white hairs…telling of his sufferings. I do not see that he has changed much in character," she claimed, but allowed "that he is graver. He is very profane which I regret & has roughened in his every day manners." Yet "the most terrible thing," to John Clemson's mind, was "the loss of hope." Clemson's

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[133] Eliza Carolina Middleton Huger Smith to Mrs. Edward L. Cottenet, July 12, 1865, Mason Smith Family Letters, 221.

[134] Eva B. Jones to Mary Jones, June 27, 1865, in Myers, The Children of Pride, 551-552.

lack of aspirations for the immediate future provided a dissonant contrast to familial

hopes that veterans would return whole in spirit as well as in body.[135]

Eva Jones, too, saw through the veneer of her husband's activity. Though

Charles seemed committed to his work, she could tell that he did so under a great

strain. Charles Jones seemed wearied by the circumstances that his immersion in

labor, which had offered a brief reprieve, now compelled him to face. He knew, Eva

lamented, that there was "no way for him, or anybody else scarcely, to make money

now. His wheat crop has utterly failed, and we are all as poor as church mice."[136]

Soldiers blamed members of their own society as well as wartime devastation and

emancipation for their economic setbacks. Charles F. Barnes of the 11th Virginia

infantry railed against southerners who sought profit by employing business-

conscious northerners over former Confederates. "Shameful to say, that most of the

old merchants here have employed fancy Yankee Clerks & salesmen while

numerous poor Confed's walk the streets in utter idleness, searching for work but

finding none," Barnes fumed.[137] For Confederate veterans, initial feelings of solace

drawn from productive activity gave way to crushing doubts when that activity

proved fruitless. The very institutions they had relied upon for support seemed to

offer little but a bleak future.

[135] Journal of Floride Clemson, June 26, 1865, in Lander and McGee, A Rebel Came Home, 89.

[136] Eva B. Jones to Mary Jones, June 27, 1865, in Myers, The Children of Pride, 551-552.

[137] Charles F. Barnes to Rebecca Barnes, July 26, 1865, Barnes Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

The difficulty that former soldiers met in building an identity around productive labor was reinforced by the degree to which the toll that war had exacted from them came as a surprise to civilians. Soldiers' families often found themselves astonished at the state of the men who appeared before them. Unless they had received news to the contrary, civilians expected their uniformed kin to return whole in body and spirit. The weary and generally undernourished men of the Confederacy hardly fit the image of hale southern warriors that soldiers' relatives constantly evoked in their wartime correspondence. Aghast at the appearance of her brother John, Anna Henderson of North Carolina feared that if her extended family discovered "how forlorn" her brother appeared, they "should start home without a moment's delay." Frustrated that John could not carry his weight at home, Anna called him "a used up Confederate," and assumed responsibility for scraping together subsistence for her household.[138] Meta Morris Grimball noted with concern that her sons "Lewis & Arthur gave us some anxiety about their dissipated tendencies" when they came home from the army, with Lewis in particular lacking in religious scruples and self-restraint toward alcohol.[139]

Cultural assumptions about the obligations of couples and of parents and children to one another governed relationships between Confederate veterans and the civilian world to which they returned. Civilians hoped that soldiers would

[138] John Steele Henderson to unnamed, May 29, 1865, John Steele Henderson Papers, SHC, UNC.

[139] Entry of February 20, 1866, Margaret Ann "Meta" Morris Grimball Diary, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

return committed to reconstructing not only material devastation but also interpersonal relationships. Many Confederate veterans did exactly that, taking solace from the support of loved ones and relishing opportunities to restore domestic tranquility. In doing so, they enacted an implicit exchange: former soldiers would pursue traditional social relations as long as those relations cohered with their needs for respect and restored their sense of dominant masculinity. In a letter of proposal to the woman who would become his wife, David Comfort promised to "willingly, if thereby I could promote your happiness in the slightest degree, endure the toil & hardship of a life of manual labor. This indeed, it is not improbable, I may be compelled to do yet from sheer necessity for my own maintenance," Comfort conceded. "But how it would sweeten such a life to feel that the dearest earthly object was entirely dependent on my exertions!"[140] Comfort hoped that by acquiring a wife whose welfare depended entirely upon him he might find a purpose and a status that would place distance between himself and the war.

Others, however, found that after the shock of combat, the privations of army living, and the deaths of comrades, social behaviors such as courtship and civility seemed inconsequential and undesirable. The experiences of Emmala Reed and her fiancé Robert Broyles convey the divide in expectations between former Confederates and elite, white southern women. Reed expected that after the war's conclusion she and Broyles could begin to build their future together. His cool attitude toward her upon returning home exasperated her, provoking her to

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[140] David S. Comfort to Charlotte Comfort, May 24, 1865, Comfort Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

reproach him—a combat veteran of more than three years' service—for a "want of manly courage, so degrading to me!"[141] In Emmala's world, the return home of her lover should have brought about a proposal of marriage and plans to wed. Robert's failure to fulfill her chivalric anticipation could mean only one of two things: that he no longer entertained feelings for her or (as she asserted) that he lacked the courage to express them.

After two weeks of exasperation, Emmala Reed finally discovered Broyles's reasons for reluctance to express or act upon their love. His feelings had not changed, he declared, but he could not marry Emmala because of the war's effects on his personal condition and despairing outlook. As Reed recounted, ""R.B. came up…& had a chat this evg—on our terrible condition—this 'reign of terror now just beginning.' I know he <u>feels</u> it much," she acknowledged. His inability to provide for her—"he has <u>nothing</u> in the <u>world</u> & never expects to have"—had convinced Broyles to "try to 'leave here some day & never return.'" Most importantly, Reed wrote, Broyles's "hopeless nature" led him to see "<u>nothing</u> in the future to entice" the desire to start a family.[142] The contrast between Reed's anticipation of a resumption of her courtship and Broyles's forlorn lack of interest in planning for what he regarded as an unpromising future illustrates the gap in domestic outlooks that the Civil War had created between men and women.

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[141] Journal of Emmala Reed, May 6, 1865, in Oliver, <u>A Faithful Heart</u>, 75.

[142] Journal of Emmala Reed, May 20, 1865, in Oliver, <u>A Faithful Heart</u>, 91.

For the more than two hundred thousand Confederates who returned home from the war with permanent wounds, domestic expectations were even more difficult to manage. Many veterans who had lost the ability to perform physical labor in support of their families nevertheless retained a gendered belief in men as providers that stood at odds with their condition. North Carolinian Reuben E. Wilson suffered the amputation of his left leg during the last days of fighting in 1865. "I cant describe the amount of pain and suffering I have undergone," Wilson wrote to his aunt, Julia Jones, in May 1865. "Death would have been a relief at any time since I was wounded." Yet despite the obstacles and misery that his wound produced, which led him to lament that he "would rather be dead to day than alive," he continued to feel toward his mother and younger siblings a "duty now to do all I can to assist them."[143] To the agony of amputation and debilitation of a missing limb, Wilson added the disappointment of not being able to completely fulfill his belief in his domestic masculine obligations.

Soldiers found that their parents generally showed little inclination to concede that years of wartime experience should grant them independence, with the attendant right to determine which obligations to fulfill and how best to fulfill them. Instead, older members of southern society expected that former Confederate soldiers would continue to defer to their leadership and their instructions. Emma M. Huger of South Carolina implored the members of her generation to overcome their despair at the war's outcome in order to effectively guide their children's

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[143] Reuben E. Wilson to Julia Jones, May 13, 1865, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

postwar lives. "The young require leading in such matters," Huger declared.[144]

Robert T. Hubard showed no compunction about advising his son James, a combat

veteran of many years' service, on every detail of domestic life, including household

furnishings, planting schedules, and managing African-American laborers.[145] When

Ruffin Thomson resumed his interrupted studies at the University of North Carolina,

his father expected Thomson to be "watching the way your money goes & making a

note of it."[146] Apparently, Thomson's ability to manage decisions that carried life-

and-death consequences for himself and others as a lieutenant in the Confederate

Marine Corps counted for little in reassuring his father about his capacity to manage

his expenses.

Confederate soldiers fortunate enough to have parents wealthy enough to

provide them with a start in civilian life endured such scrutiny because it bought

them opportunities amidst a shattered economy. For many, however, parental

pressure to conform to expectations grew increasingly unwelcome, even when it

took the form of solicitude. Thomson asked his father why "a young man

approaching thirty years can not leave home for a week or two without causing

visions of mangled human anatomy to rise in the imagination of a beloved mother

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[144] Emma M. Huger Izard to Eliza Carolina Middleton Huger Smith, April 27, 1865,
Mason Smith Family Letters, 200-201.

[145] Robert T. Hubard to James L. Hubard, November 12, 1865, November 27, 1865,
and December 25, 1865, Hubard-Randolph Family Papers, Small Special Collections
Library, UVA.

[146] "Father" to Ruffin Thomson, December 11, 1865, Ruffin Thomson Papers,
Southern Historical Association, UNC.

thereby creating a source of unhappiness which ought not to exist."[147] The war

years had robbed young soldiers of education and the opportunity to make an

economic start, leaving them dependent on their families for help getting on their

feet. But when that aid carried expectations that jarred with the independence they

felt that they had earned during war, former Confederates resented having to

answer for their behavior.

While the agency of free African Americans and Union dominion over the

southern states constituted the most obvious consequences of defeat for former

Confederate soldiers, they could confront neither of these challenges without first

garnering the support of their communities. Yet in both legal and domestic contexts,

the very communities that Confederate veterans believed they had fought to protect

expected soldiers to account for their wartime actions and the changes that conflict

had wrought in their personalities.   For their part, the men who had fought for the

Confederacy demanded re-entry into southern society on their own terms and

resented both public and private scrutiny. Both soldiers and civilians would find the

accommodation each wanted and needed in the organized extralegal violence that

Confederate veterans would use to limit the meaning of emancipation. Their efforts,

driven by personal need but serving the broader interests of white southern

communities, would allow former soldiers to return to social positions of power and

respect without resolving the tensions between wartime experience and peacetime

expectations and conventions.

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[147] Ruffin Thomson to Father, December 10, 1865, Ruffin Thomson Papers, Southern
Historical Collection, UNC.

CHAPTER FOUR: "We Don't Care a Damn For That"

In mid-December 1865, seventy-five year old planter Felix Allen sent a former slave on an errand from his plantation in Pike County, Mississippi to the neighboring county of Amite. In slavery and in freedom, the man had likely made the trip between Allen's land and the nearby home of Allen's son-in-law John Houston many times and had no reason to suspect that this trip would prove extraordinary. Two days later, however, the man appeared at the nearby Freedman's Bureau office in Magnolia where in the words of the officer on duty, he "presented a most frightful appearance, his breast-bone broken, and spitting blood." Roused out of bed in the middle of the night while staying on Houston's land, the elderly African American man had suffered a prolonged and vicious attack by a group of white men who "jumped into his face and bosom with their heels, stamping and kicking him."[148]

The assault, one of an uncounted multitude that white perpetrators carried out against newly freed African Americans in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, illustrated a transformation in both who wielded power and how they wielded it. After completing his errand for Felix Allen, the man in his employ spent the night

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[148] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1866), Part III, 146; U.S. Census Bureau, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, ser. M653 roll 589, p. 472.

in an unoccupied cabin that had formerly housed slaves on John Houston's

plantation. During the night, six or seven white men entered the cabin, woke its

inhabitant, and demanded that he explain his presence there. This kind of intrusive

supervision—in the form of slave patrols--played a vital and pervasive role in

upholding the institution of slavery, and the African American responded in a way

conditioned by the decades he had spent living under such scrutiny.

The man explained that he carried a pass from Allen describing his errand

and authorizing him to travel between Allen's plantation and Houston's. Under

slavery, a pass from a planter of Allen's prominent stature served as an aegis of

protection. Constituted by law to serve the interests of planter-dominated society,

patrols risked legal and personal repercussions if they mistreated slaves against the

will of their masters without clear cause. With some exceptions, therefore, slaves

acting under orders from their owners and carrying documentation to that effect

could expect to avoid serious maltreatment.[149] Emancipation and the defeat of the

Confederacy had changed that expectation. The men who entered the slave cabin

that December night responded to the African American's presentation of the pass

and his claim that Felix Allen or John Houston could vouch for his errand with a curt

"We don't give a damn for that."   They then dragged their victim off the plantation

to a spot where many other white men had gathered, and commenced the assault

that left his face mangled and his chest shattered. As Allen, the unnamed African

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[149] For a thorough analysis of the composition and function of slave patrols as well
as their post-Civil War iterations, see Sally Hadden, <u>Slave Patrols: Law
and Violence in Virginia and the Carolinas</u> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press,
2001).

American, and people throughout the South learned as they adjusted to life without slavery, the antebellum basis for authority derived from slave ownership and grounded in legal protection of property rights had died with emancipation.   In its place rose a collective claim that white citizens possessed a mandate to survey, regulate, and punish the behavior of African Americans who lived in their midst. Hardened by their wartime experiences and embittered by the futility of their sacrifices, former Confederate soldiers possessed the outlook and occupied the social space necessary to play the critical role in effecting this change.[150]

Understanding Confederate soldiers' relationships to postwar racial violence requires investigating their views on race and its importance, the parameters that shaped their translation of beliefs into action, and the social reception that those views and actions received from broader society in both the South and the nation. Though the more than six hundred thousand men who donned Confederate uniforms and lived through the war certainly possessed divergent attitudes toward African Americans, their dominant reaction was hostile and antagonistic. Former Confederates regarded African American freedom as a direct manifestation of the failure of their cause and African American claims to citizenship and social status as threats to their own attempts to secure respect after the war. For many, such an outlook motivated little action beyond expressing derision and scorn for black peoples' efforts to rise above the conditions of slavery. Yet for thousands of others, the climate of Reconstruction made translating racial ideology into violence

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[150] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 146.

eminently conceivable. Bleak outlooks for their political and economic futures that undercut Confederate veterans' respect for civil institutions, acculturation to killing and to devalued African American life as legacies of the war, and the inconsistency of Federal military intervention on the part of the freedmen removed the most significant potential deterrents to committing atrocities. If mere opportunity provided insufficient stimulus to act, former Confederates found that racial violence carried social and personal benefits. For their families and communities, quelling the manufactured threat of massacre and subduing black insolence reinforced the place of returned soldiers as protectors of home and enforcers of white supremacy, rendering them objects of respect rather than of sympathy or pity.

   The strongest impulse for Confederate veterans' racial animosity stemmed from the dynamic interplay between emancipation and Confederate defeat. While African Americans had proven their power to shape southern society by overthrowing slavery and fighting for the Union during the Civil War, white southern men had lost the authority to direct their society that they had claimed and wielded during the antebellum years. As previous chapters have shown, Confederates knew that white supremacy lay at the foundations of their national project and feared that defeat would bring about an inversion of the South's racial order. Although the fruits of emancipation therefore came as no surprise conceptually, white southerners nevertheless found galling those personal encounters that illustrated the abrupt change in status brought about by their defeat. Fearing that emancipation would amount to a social and political revolution in which former slaves would, at the behest of the victorious North, wield

unchecked power over the white southern populace, many shared the sentiments of Private John Jacob Omenhauser of the 46th Virginia Infantry. While a prisoner guarded by a detachment of United States Colored Troops, Omenhauser sketched a drawing depicting armed black soldiers celebrating their newfound power over despondent captured Confederates, which he captioned "De Bottom Rails On Top Now."[151]

Men who had served in the Confederate armies felt this inversion most keenly. The heroic embodiment of southern manhood during the war and the segment of the population on whose actions rested the outcome of the Confederacy's bid for independence, former soldiers had lost both status and agency when their time in uniform ended in failure. Despair and anger characterized most former Confederate soldiers' reactions when they encountered African Americans emboldened and empowered by their newfound freedom. An Arkansan named Billy Finnely found the collapse of slavery so unbearable that upon returning home from the army he walked to an outbuilding on his family's farm and slashed his throat with a razor. According to his suicide note, Finnely had ended his life " 'cause de nigger free."[152] Most former soldiers confronted the consequences of a new racial

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[151] John Jacob Omenhauser, "Guard Challenging Prisoner," Point Lookout Sketches Collection, New York Historical Society. Reproduced at the American Memory Collection, Library of Congress.

[152] Leon Litwack, Been in the Storm so Long: The Aftermath of Slavery, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 194.

reality less dramatically but still found emancipation, and its reminder of the failure of Confederate arms, a bitter pill to swallow.

Charles Barnes, who had spent three years fighting in the 11th Virginia Infantry, considered African Americans' celebrations of autonomy intolerable. He mocked "the consequential strut" with which "niggers, big & little, old & young, nigger soldiers, sutlers, pie women, &c" walked the streets of postwar Wilmington, North Carolina, "dressed to death in discarded finery." Former slaves' displays of their newfound freedom carried an explicit claim to social respectability that for Barnes paired logically with the lack of respect that African Americans showed to Confederate veterans. He recoiled from "their lofty style of address, calling each other Mr. & Mrs. & Miss," and bristled at "the extreme contempt they have for a rebel."[153] That inversion of titles—men and women only recently regarded as another person's property not only using the honorifics of mature personhood among themselves, but also referring to the armed embodiment of the erstwhile master class with a term connoting unsuccessful resistance to the order of things—captured the transition in power and position that defeat had brought about for Confederate soldiers.

Henry Hunter Raymond, a wealthy Charleston lawyer who had fought with the 20th South Carolina infantry, observed a similar duality among African Americans in his home city. "The negro girls and women parade the streets with

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[153] Charles F. Barnes to Rebecca Barnes, June 9, 1865, Barnes Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

veils," Raymond reported to his mother, "and ride horseback and in carriages with the coloured soldiers." Commenting that "Such a Pandemoneum has seldom been seen since the French Revolution," Raymond felt indignant because, when passing freedpeople in the streets, "I hear them conversing about the d_d Rebels which word is constantly in their mouths."[154] In a short span of time, Raymond, Barnes, and their comrades had lost the ability to compel even cursory displays of respect and obedience from African Americans. While the freedpeople celebrated the change in their condition by parading in the streets, Confederate soldiers had become objects of contempt to people whose racial inferiority they had believed in all their lives.[155]

Such encounters roused many former Confederates out of their postwar torpor. While options for economic recovery and political engagement seemed few and soldiers found themselves disinclined to pursue systemic change, taking a stand against personal disrespect in those social moments where it occurred required neither widespread coordination of effort nor consensus on the proper direction for postwar southern society to take. As shown in previous chapters, Confederate soldiers found contemplating a future that they could barely shape so difficult that most simply refused to attempt it, wishing instead to escape—whether physically or metaphysically—from larger social concerns and rebuild their lives around simpler attachments. But subordination to African Americans constituted an outrage that

[154] Henry Hunter Raymond to "My Dear Mother," June 1865, Henry Hunter Raymond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

[155] For short descriptions of the impact of black assertiveness on white expectations during the process of emancipation, see Foner, Reconstruction, 78-80, and Tera W. Hunter, To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 2-3, 14-20.

men felt viscerally and resisted almost as a reflex, and opposing it restored to former Confederates a measure of purpose and power. Before Reconstruction had taken shape and racial equality emerged as an explicit aim of the Federal government, former Confederate soldiers used confrontations with African Americans not as a means to obtain political control but rather to demand personal respect.

In the minds of white men dealing with African Americans in the post-Civil War South, "respect" could mean anything from gestures of social deference to acknowledgement of the inviolability of property rights to a denial that the Union had won the war. As disparate as confrontational interactions over the definition of respect might be, when taken together they coalesced to a single meaning: that white southern men still controlled their worlds by virtue of their innate superiority. Anything that reminded Confederate soldiers of their defeat or attendant diminution of social control refuted that definition and therefore could give cause for grievance. Amid the uncertainty of a post-Confederate and post-slavery world, both white and black southerners knew that initial encounters would set potentially permanent precedents for what freedom would and would not mean. This broad construction of disrespect led everyday disputes over the terms of work, social interaction, and even self-definition to take on weighty consequences.

The experiences of Charles C. Jones, Jr., a colonel who had risen from field duty with the Chatham Artillery to the position of chief of artillery for the military district of Georgia, illustrate how the links between defeat and emancipation shaped

postwar encounters between former Confederates and freedpeople. Jones returned

from the war to a world constrained by the limitations that the terms of Union

victory had imposed on his personal fortunes. Like many of his comrades, he

resisted sinking into despondency by attempting to reclaim his domestic role as

head of household and provider rather than by dwelling on the ideological

consequences of Confederate defeat. In this he succeeded initially, and within two

weeks of Jones's homecoming his wife recorded that he was "very well and just the

same immaculate darling he always was, but just now so deeply and exclusively

busy at the plantation, earning his daily bread 'by the sweat of his brow.'"[156] The

Joneses soon realized, however, that the scholarly Charles, an antebellum lawyer

and author as well as plantation owner, would not feed his family through his

manual labor, however edifying it proved for his spirits. The family's quickest

routes to economic recovery lay in two directions: making their lands productive

through the use of hired workers and restoring Charles's legal practice. Yet in

January 1865 Congress had passed a law requiring former Confederates to swear an

oath of loyalty to the United States in order to practice law before the federal bench

at any level.[157] Jones's vast real property--totaling more than $48,000 in 1860—

proscribed him from taking the oath and instead required that he solicit a

presidential pardon before resuming his legal practice. The result, as Eva Jones

wrote in June 1865, was that her husband would "not be allowed to practice his

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[156] Eva B. Jones to Mary Jones, June 13, 1865, in Myers, The Children of Pride, 549-550.

[157] For the terms of the law, which were later clarified by the Supreme Court in 1866, see *Ex Parte Garland,* 71 U.S. Supreme Court Reports 333 (1866).

[legal] profession until he is permitted to take the oath," leaving the family dependent on agriculture in the interim.[158]

Constrained by economic necessity, Jones saw the illusion of restoring his independence and his position as an autonomous head of household through personal labor disappearing before him. He was, in fact, dependent in nearly every sense of the word. Jones's ability to practice law hinged on the receipt of a presidential pardon whose issuance he could not predict; he could play no part in choosing his region's political destiny; and his property in land would lay worthless unless he could convince former slaves to work it. Among these limitations Jones could wield leverage only in his relationship to his potential employees. He therefore negotiated terms of work with African Americans who, aware that their former master needed their labor as much as they might need access to his land, drove a hard bargain. Eva Jones noted that "the Negroes…wanted to give a little trouble on his [Charles's] last visit," but with the promise of widespread land distribution to the freedmen rejected by Andrew Johnson, Jones's employees, like African Americans throughout the South, agreed to labor contracts. Jones assured his wife that "he soon straightened them up," and she recorded that "now they [the former slaves] are behaving very well," meaning that her husband had convinced or coerced his former slaves into laboring again for the family's benefit.[159] For Charles

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[158] Eva B. Jones to Mary Jones, June 27, 1865, in Myers, The Children of Pride, 551-552; U.S. Census Bureau, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, ser. M653 roll 115, p. 279.

[159] Eva B. Jones to Mary Jones, June 27, 1865, in Myers, The Children of Pride, 551-552.

Jones, deprived of rank and status after the dissolution of the Confederate armies, unable to resume his antebellum profession, and barred from political influence by the Union's terms of victory, bringing African American labor into productive subordination not only constituted an economic necessity—it was also the only arena in which he could attempt to resist the consequences of defeat.

Other Confederate soldiers imbued initial confrontations with African Americans with a similar significance, and many showed less forbearance or concern for familial interest than Jones. John B. Glymph had enlisted in the 20th South Carolina Infantry on Christmas Eve, 1861 and fought until his unit surrendered at Durham Station. When he returned home to Newberry, South Carolina, he attempted to rebuild his plantation labor force. Glymph offered his workers contracts if they would continue to work his fields, but he found himself confronted—likely for the first time in his life—with direct skepticism from at least one African American man who wished to ensure that Glymph's verbal description of terms matched those contained in the written contract. The laborer announced his intention to have a United States officer stationed at the nearby army headquarters review the offer, which proved too much for Glymph. The commander of the military garrison recorded that the former Confederate, "Indignant that the colored man should not confide in him…seized a shot gun and deliberately fired, the contents entering the arm and back of the Negro."[160] Having his veracity questioned

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[160] Order by the Commander of the District of Western South Carolina, July 15, 1865, in Steven Hahn, Steven F. Miller, Susan E. O'Donovan, John C. Rodrigue, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867 ser.3:

by a former slave doubtless irked Glymph. The greater problem for him, however,

came from the African American's invocation of federal authority and by extension

Glymph's inability to regulate his world without interference. Incidents such as this

one provoked extraordinary violence because they suggested to Confederate

veterans that in losing the war they had also surrendered their autonomy. With

white men's conceptions of personhood intimately bound up with power, defeat

seemed to mean more than thwarted national ambitions: it meant that the most

important tenets of Confederates' personal identity had been made vulnerable.

As John Glymph's outburst demonstrates, when African Americans asserted

any association with the United States government, they called up both of the

consequences of the Civil War that former Confederates found most intolerable—

black autonomy and their own perceived powerlessness. Though white southerners

held contingent and complex views on Federal power and specifically military

authority as they bore on questions of race relations, they showed far less ambiguity

in their treatment of African Americans who claimed a relationship to the nation.

While defeated Confederates could barely tolerate submission to the superior might

of the Union, any word, symbol, or deed that tied African Americans to the failure of

Confederate arms had the potential to set off a conflagration of racial hatred.

John Berry, a former soldier in the United States Colored Troops, learned

precisely how dangerous any reminder that black soldiers had played a role in

Confederate defeat could prove in a confrontation with his erstwhile master. Upon

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vol. 1: <u>Land and Labor, 1865</u> (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008),
137-138.

receiving his discharge, Berry went to the home of Benjamin A. Triplet to demand

the release of his family from bondage. Triplet himself had spent the war in the 8th

Virginia Infantry, a unit that fought in every major engagement of the Army of

Northern Virginia. At Gaines's Mill in 1862 the unit's participation in a costly frontal

assault on a prepared Union position had earned it the sobriquet of "Bloody Eighth,"

which it carried for the rest of the war. Subsequent battles, including the regiment's

involvement at the center of Major General George Pickett's infamous charge at

Gettysburg, amply confirmed the Eighth's nickname. With the 8th Virginia Triplet

had spent the war among men most in need of sustained belief in the Confederacy

and therefore likely to have felt the implications of defeat most keenly.[161]

When Berry arrived on his doorstep, Triplet found himself confronting the

ultimate personification of how radically secession, the Civil War, and emancipation

had changed his world. His former slave stood before him and demanded that

Triplet cede control over Berry's wife and six young children to him on the basis of

his status as the family's rightful head. While records do not reveal whether Berry

wore his army uniform or if he appeared in civilian clothes, his attachment to the

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[161] For the 8th Virginia's war record and Triplet's participation in it, see John E.
Divine, 8th Virginia Infantry: The Virginia Regimental Histories Series (Lynchburg,
Virginia: H.E. Howard, 1983), 22-25, 39-40, 84. Here and elsewhere, my
characterization of sustained frontline service as a crucible that could reinforce or
break a soldier's attachment to the Confederate nation is a revision of several works
that emphasize the endurance of Confederates' fighting spirits and identification to
their cause. In addition to previous chapters see William Blair, Virginia's Private
War: Feeding Body and Soul in the Confederacy, 1861-1865 (New York: Oxford
University Press, 1998); Gallagher, The Confederate War; Glatthaar, General Lee's
Army; Phillips, Diehard Rebels; Rubin, A Shattered Nation; and Sheehan-Dean, Why
Confederates Fought.

United States military was not lost on Triplet. The white man exploded that Berry

had "went to the d---d yankes to fight against him" and that whatever the events

Appomattox and Durham Station had meant, for him "the war was not over yet—

that the niggers were not free." When Berry asked after his family, Triplet declared

to Berry that "he should not have them—that nobody should take them away, and

that if anybody come into the yard he would shoot them."[162] Berry promptly

reported the incident to local military authorities; they turned the matter over to a

Freedman's Bureau court that compelled Triplet to release Berry's family.

The confrontation between Benjamin Triplet and John Berry reveals how

personal identity created by Civil War military service functioned for Confederate

veterans in the postwar world. Soldiers could find honor in defeat so long as they

could retain the respect of their society and continue with their lives free of any

attempts by the victorious Union to deprive them of autonomy in governing their

immediate surroundings. Their bid for nationhood and much of the ideology that

had helped to erect it had failed, but that failure did not necessarily negate the

claims to social status that men with military experience could make as a result of

their service. When former soldiers felt the consequences of defeat in the contest

between armies and nations intruding into the social sphere, they saw the most

important and most vulnerable personal legacy of the war—respectability—

threatened. Triplet had accepted the results of the war to the extent that he had laid

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[162] Statement of John Berry, John Berry vs. Benjamin Triplet, August 11, 1865, in Ira
Berlin, Joseph F. Reidy, and Leslie Rowland, eds., Freedom: A Documentary History
of Emancipation, ser. 2: The Black Military Experience (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 1982), 799.

down his arms and returned to his home in Virginia despite the knowledge that there he would be subject to whatever terms of postwar government the United States saw fit to impose. Yet when reduced to its most visceral dimensions, as a contest between men entered into directly by both Triplet and Berry, the former Confederate could no longer bring himself to accept the conflict's outcome. Instead he stated that in the war between the man who still conceived of himself as master and his onetime slave, the "war was not over yet." Despite yielding to the reality of the general situation, the specific and human manifestation of defeat in the form of a former slave transformed by military service into a participant in the overthrow of the Confederacy proved too much for Triplet to stomach.

In the cases of John Glymph and Benjamin Triplet, confrontations over the conclusions of the war had arisen from material demands made by former slaves. Glymph's prospective employee wanted a Union officer to vouch for the terms of an offered labor contract before agreeing to return to work on Glymph's land. Triplet's outburst toward the freedman John Berry had come as he rejected Berry's request to have the former Confederate relinquish custody of Berry's family. Claims for improved working conditions and respect for family autonomy as well as for black men's rights to control their dependents exacerbated Confederates' ire by attaching tangible consequences to questions of respect, but disputes over the terms of post-emancipation labor between individual whites and African Americans—an endemic fact of life in the agricultural regions of the South as it transitioned to free labor— led to violence comparatively rarely. Indeed, conflicts over material conditions could and usually did result in white landowners using their advantages in

familiarity with legal language and customs as well as the coercive threat of forced

eviction to gain outcomes they found favorable. As long as these questions

remained within the realm of quotidian negotiations, white men generally held the

upper hand; they knew it, and they exploited it. James L. Hubard, a staff officer with

General Beverly Robertson's cavalry brigade, accepted his father's advice when it

came to navigating the currents of postwar agriculture. "Evince neither eagerness,

anxiety or haste," the elder Hubard counseled his son, instructing him to mask his

need for employees and, through patience and feigned indifference, let potential

laborers' desperation for employment lead them to seek out Hubard rather than

vice-versa. "Be calm and apparently indifferent," Robert Hubard promised his son,

"and you will by or before Xmas be able to obtain as many hands as will be

needed."[163] In the wake of emancipation and Confederate defeat, the material

changes occasioned by the war required former soldiers who depended upon hired

labor to recognize the necessity of coming to acceptable terms and to calculate how

best to do it to their advantage.

Racial violence on the part of southern whites accompanied disputes over

work and economic power when those conflicts also contained threats to former

Confederates' deeper sense of self. Triplet's antagonism toward John Berry was

rooted in Berry's wartime conduct—he had run away from his master, joined the

Union army, fired upon white men, and returned in triumph to claim the fruits of

victory, all acts of assertion that undermined Triplet's conception of the proper

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[163] Robert T. Hubard to James L. Hubard, November 27, 1865, Hubard-Randolph
Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

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relationship between race and masculinity. John Glymph likewise could not accept

that a freedman might refuse to subordinate himself to a planter and Confederate

soldier of four years' hard service, instead laying claim to protection from structures

of government that had heretofore been the exclusive province of white men in

South Carolina. In many instances matters of economic consequence initiated

individual conflicts among Confederate veterans and African Americans, but their

violent resolution stemmed from former Confederates' determination to retain the

privileges and prerogatives of their race and gender in the face of perceived

degradation.

Former Confederates could and did choose to find such implications in social

interactions that had no material component. John Cornwell, a soldier in the 17th

Virginia Infantry, threatened a freedman named James Cook by shouting "you d---d

black yankee son of a b---h I will kill you," fired his pistol at Cook (leaving a bullet

hole in Cook's clothes), and beat him severely with the butt of a revolver because

Cook had shown him "impudence." The two men had no relationship either before

or during the war but resided in proximity to one another in the Virginia town of

Brentsville. Cook's "impudence," according to a lieutenant in the Union army and

Freedman's Bureau agent who reported the incident, "consisted in the sole offense

of saying, that he had been in the union army and was proud of it. *No other*

'impudence' was charged against him."[164] The lieutenant's emphasis reflected some

mixture of outrage and disbelief that a fairly innocuous claim should provoke so

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[164] Lieut. Marcus S. Hopkins to Maj. James Johnson, January 15, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 800.

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drastic an attack. Yet Cook's pride in his service against the Confederacy gravely

offended John Cornwell because of its greater implications. Where the local

Freedman's Bureau agent heard a simple statement of fact, Cornwell heard a set of

assertions that indicted his beliefs about the society that produced him and what the

war's outcome would mean for his future.

A former slave of the Prince William County commonwealth's attorney, Cook

was using military service to refashion his social position from perpetual

subordinate to the equal of men like Cornwell when judged by the measure they

valued most. In effect, he attempted to make real the vision of black leaders who

saw military service to the Union as the surest way for black men to win social

respect and ultimately the full rights of citizenship.[165] For an African American to

claim such equality constituted an intolerable affront; the heated threat, attempted

murder, and severe beating from Cornwell were necessary in the mind of their

perpetrator to show black men that former Confederates retained an innate

superiority and to distance African Americans from responsibility for their defeat.

Yet the overwhelming brutality of many of these individual acts of violence

ironically confirmed that Confederates feared precisely the opposite conclusion.

Confederates' sensitivity about African American claims for status derived from

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[165] For African Americans' efforts to use this formulation as both a recruiting
strategy and a means to pressure the Lincoln administration into viewing
citizenship rather than emancipation as the ultimate answer to the question of what
should become of former slaves, see David W. Blight, Frederick Douglass' Civil War:
Keeping Faith in Jubilee (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999) and
Joseph T. Glatthaar, Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and
White Officers (New York: The Free Press, 1989). An outstanding contemporary
view is provided in William Wells Brown, The Negro in the American Rebellion: His
Heroism and His Fidelity (Boston: Lee & Shepherd, 1867).

military service reflected their anxiety that in the eyes of both the law and society, the Civil War had conferred the full measure of manhood on former slaves at the expense of the white men they had defeated. White southern soldiers determined to ruthlessly suppress this perception whenever they could in order to preserve their own social identity.

The initial postwar confrontations between former Confederate soldiers and freedpeople usually saw individual veterans attack a single African American for a perceived display of disrespect. The slight, whether given willingly or unwittingly, tended to strike at the heart of Confederates' self-perceptions by suggesting that the war had removed the prerogatives of mastery from the hands of white southerners or that in the war African American soldiers had forged a new, assertive black masculine identity by overcoming white Confederates' military prowess. To former Confederate soldiers, who held mastery and martial virtue as critical cornerstones of their identity and possessed little else around which to build their postwar lives, putting down such challenges seemed to reaffirm a measure of their own power and self-perception. Yet while individual acts could restore a former Confederate's sense of power to act in the moment, they neither effected lasting changes in the social landscape of the postwar South nor restored to veterans their sense of collective purpose or belonging. Groups of former soldiers acting in concert to impose their vision of racial order on their communities could achieve both of those goals, and after veterans had returned home, shaken off the listlessness that resulted from what historian Gaines Foster has called "the trauma of defeat," and gathered a sense of what avenues for action Union occupation had left open to them,

they began to band together with an eye to minimizing emancipation's impact on southern society.[166] In doing so, they would begin to reclaim their positions as the agents of the white South's ambitions and to relocate the nexus of power in their communities.

By the time the cold of winter had displaced autumn in 1865, groups of former Confederates operated throughout the southern states. Named and unnamed and assembled with varying degrees of formality and permanence, these bands delineated the boundaries of a repressive post-emancipation society with crude technique but symbolic efficiency. The African American man who suffered a vicious assault while on an errand for Felix Allen numbered as one among many victims of a large group of former Confederates in his southwestern Mississippi neighborhood. During mid-December 1865 violence ran unchecked over Amite County. A party of white men on horseback broke up a celebratory ball thrown by African Americans in the vicinity of Holmesville and, in the presence of the assembled attendees, severely flogged one of the organizers. When they met a soldier of the 66th United States Colored Infantry, the group cut the U.S. Army buttons from his coat in the middle of the town of Summit, giving him an hour to vacate the area if he wished to keep his life. Just before Christmas, the same party rode through Amite and Pike Counties and "gave the negroes a general flogging, whether at home attending to business or absent." They then proceeded to a local schoolhouse for African-American children, tore it down, and gave the teacher— himself a former slave—"until the next morning to quit the place." In a state where

[166] Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 11-13.

government institutions and planters alike obsessed over controlling horse thievery, the group stole two ponies from their African American owner, telling him that "negroes were not allowed any property larger than a chicken." To round out their display of aggression, the men visited the plantation of one of their members where they "literally cut to pieces" an African American woman.[167]

Historical records cannot conclusively answer many questions about the group's operations and its membership. They do not reveal whether Fenn and his subordinates chose their targets deliberately and in advance of their attacks or if instead the men picked their victims in the heat of the moment—deciding to stage an attack before determining whom they would visit their violence upon. In either case, however, when taken in total the actions of Fenn's men and the people against whom they acted write their own narrative. Like former soldiers who used violence to claim respect for themselves and deny it to African Americans in individual encounters, the group attacked people whose status and allegiances illustrated the ambitions of former slaves and the defeat of the Confederacy most vividly. While the cause for throwing a ball may have had no direct connection to emancipation or the Civil War, the convivial gathering of African Americans to celebrate anything stood in direct contrast to the disempowerment and general climate of despair circulating among the region's white population. For angry former Confederates looking for provocation, collective displays of happiness may have proved enough of a stimulus to violence.

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[167] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 146.

The group chose other targets for less ambiguous reasons. Destroying a schoolhouse and evicting its teacher struck at the aspirations of freedpeople who sought through education to improve their circumstances both in practice and in principle. Literacy and arithmetic would enable African Americans to protect themselves against fraudulent contracts, avoid being cheated of their pay, and contest the monopoly that whites otherwise held on interpreting religious, legal, and political authority. At a more symbolic level, education represented a testing ground in the eyes of black and white people from the North and the South for the efficacy of investing former slaves with any of the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. People that could learn and improve themselves could contest cultural notions of innate race-based inferiority as well as demonstrate their fitness for full participation in the political and economic dimensions of a free labor system.

White southerners, who had made teaching literacy skills to slaves illegal in every one of the Confederate states during the antebellum and war years, had long recognized the threat that educating African Americans would pose to maintaining black servility. If the laws of the state could no longer deny African Americans access to schools, groups of former Confederates would seek to remove them from their midst in order to deprive black people of the tools necessary to dispute the authority of white men. As one Virginian told a traveling correspondent, "Nothing would make me cut a nigger's throat from ear to ear so quick as having him set up his impudent face to tell a thing wasn't so when I said it was so."[168] Access to

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[168] Quoted in Litwack, <u>Been in the Storm so Long</u>, 287. For the importance that freedpeople placed on obtaining education during Reconstruction and after, see

education promised to give African Americans the ability to look past a local white man's word when they scrutinized the structures of power that governed them.

In contrast to the tangible effects of burning a schoolhouse and forcibly removing its teacher, cutting off the buttons of a soldier of the United States Colored Troops constituted a purely symbolic act. Yet as in confrontations between individual Confederates and African Americans, the symbolic severing of latent connections between freedmen and the organs of United States authority held great importance to the Mississippi riders. In this instance, buttons proved an irresistible target because of their rich and numerous associations. For African American soldiers, the gleaming brass of the buttons of a U.S. army uniform connoted power, commanded respect, and signified acceptance into the greater polity of the United States itself. Frederick Douglass had in 1863 declared that for the African American soldier, "an eagle on his button" as much as the musket he carried or the bullets he fired would guarantee that "there is no power on the earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States."[169] While the former Confederates in Mississippi who cut off the black soldier's buttons almost certainly lacked direct knowledge of Douglass's rhetoric, they understood the relationship to which the famous orator alluded. In stripping the badges of

James D. Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Litwack, Been in the Storm so Long, 472-501; and Heather Andrea Williams, Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

[169] Frederick Douglass, "Address at a Meeting for the Promotion of Colored Enlistments, July 6, 1863," Speech, Article, and Book File, Frederick Douglass Papers, American Memory Collection, Library of Congress.

United States allegiance from the U.S.C.T. soldier, the riders sent a clear message: whatever changes the war had wrought in the laws and policies of the reunited nation, black men carried no authority and merited no respect in Summit, Mississippi.

Military buttons and insignia were also a sore subject for former Confederate soldiers. Throughout the South after the destruction of the Confederacy, victorious Union generals published orders that prohibited Confederates from wearing military buttons, unit insignia, and badges of rank on their uniforms.[170] Soldiers generally complied with these orders without overt resistance. Mollie Cochran wrote to her cousin that Union officials in Richmond "made [Confederate soldiers] cut their buttons off last week so now they dont wear any now or cover them," even though they continued to wear their gray military jackets.[171] Journalist Whitelaw Reid reported that one Confederate brigadier general in Savannah was so eager to avoid provoking confrontation that he allowed "a drunken sergeant, with a pair of tailor's shears" to cut the buttons from his uniform in public view. Reid concluded that "nothing was more touching, in all that I saw in Savannah, than the almost painful effort of the rebels, from Generals down to privates, to conduct themselves so as to evince respect from our soldiers." He counted the general's forbearance as

[170] See for example Maj. Gen. Thomas Ruger's General Order No. 98 issued in North and South Carolina on July 10, 1865. Bradley, Bluecoats and Tar Heels, 74.

[171] Mollie Cochran to "Dear Cousin," June 20, 1865, John Steele Henderson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

an acceptance that in defeat Confederate soldiers had lost the right to wear the

badges of the positions they had held during the war.[172]

If Confederate soldiers accepted removal of their buttons as a bitter but

necessary condition of Union victory, white women with Confederate sympathies

decried it as a vindictive ritual with no purpose but to shame and humiliate. "The

tyrants have prohibited the wearing of Confederate uniforms," Eliza Andrews wrote

from Georgia. "Those who have no other clothes can still wear the gray, but must rip

off the buttons and decorations. The beautiful Hungarian knot, the stars, and bars,

the cords, the sashes, and gold lace, are all disappearing." To Andrews, Confederate

soldiers' "dignified silence" damned the edict more than the most vociferous

protests, as men walked the streets with "their coats flying open to tell the tale of

spoliation." She deemed the policy a "humiliating decree," and her assessment

spoke volumes about the deeper significance of the order to former Confederate

soldiers.[173] The men restrained themselves from overt resistance on streets and in

hotels because they no longer possessed the collective strength to directly contest

federal authority. Yet the burden of having that powerlessness revealed to

presumed dependents—not on a distant battlefield but in their immediate

communities—produced feelings of shame and rage, especially among younger men

without alternate measures with which to structure their masculine selves. For the

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[172] Whitelaw Reid, <u>After the War: A Southern Tour May 1, 1865 to May 1, 1866</u> (London: Sampson, Low, Son, and Marston, 1866), 156.

[173] Entries of May 27 and May 30, 1865, Eliza Frances Andrews, <u>The Wartime Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865</u> (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 270-271, 276.

group of riders in Mississippi, the chance to inflict such shame upon an African American soldier must have proven irresistible.[174]

Burning a schoolhouse, breaking up a celebratory gathering, and stripping a member of the U.S.C.T of his buttons ultimately served the same end that individual Confederate soldiers had pursued in their confrontations: the maintenance of respect for white men and the denial of that same respect to African American men. While denying education to African Americans would come to comprise a discrete political position, it had at its base objective the same goal that John Glymph had sought on his South Carolina plantation. Both Glymph and the men from southwestern Mississippi strove to prevent former slaves from appealing to either outside authority or their own capacity to question the words of whites. Other targets carried a distinctly different cast. Imposing violence onto helpless targets and entire locales of African Americans without regard to their status as well as confiscating personal property saw former Confederates looking beyond demands for respect and toward an extralegal but codified vision of what white supremacy would entail for postwar southern communities.

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[174] For studies of how women's views of masculinity affected Confederates' senses of selfhood as well as structuring postwar social and domestic relations, see Rubin, A Shattered Nation, 172-176, 208-229 and Whites, The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender, 96-159. The two authors take different interpretive positions, with Rubin emphasizing the unwavering support that white women showed toward the Confederate state and culture of nationalism and questioning the masculinity of any white man who did not retain such sentiments even after the defeat of the Confederacy. Whites, by contrast, claims that the loss of political autonomy during Reconstruction combined with veterans' difficulties as economic providers to create a mutually-reinforcing relationship between the public and private dimensions of former Confederates' lives that effectively precluded white men from regaining their self-belief.

Exemplary violence by a group of white men against a black woman—

"cutting her to pieces," whether with a whip or a blade—fell within a relatively

opaque category of behavior in the aftermath of emancipation. Enslaved women

had celebrated emancipation and used the results of the war to claim measures of

personhood much as African American men had done. In households and in the

public sphere, freedwomen asserted control over their bodies and their labor as

well as individual autonomy and freedom of expression, denying white men and

women the powers of regulation to which slavery had accustomed them. Whites

sought to curtail these changes and retain their prerogatives just as they did in their

relations with African American men, and the Mississippi riders' savage attack on

the woman may have been prompted by an unrecorded transgression against the

riders' understanding of post-emancipation racial etiquette. Whether or not the

riders felt provoked, their attack on the woman conveyed multiple meanings. While

denying that emancipation had endowed black women with any civil protections

that former Confederates felt compelled to respect, the assault also carried a

message for black men. It sought to undermine their claims to full manhood by

demonstrating that they could not protect the women of their communities from

harm—the foremost measure of a man, and the one about which defeated

Confederates themselves felt most vulnerable.[175]

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[175] The complex nature of black female agency amid a male-dominated domestic and
civil society has merited fascinating explorations by talented historians, but the
fragmentary and elusive evidence that documents these interactions leaves many
questions without definitive answers. On the question of violence, scholars have
tended to attribute two prevailing functions to physical and sexual attacks
committed by white men against black women after emancipation. The

The woman's maiming, the denial of property rights, and the "general

flogging" inflicted upon several local African Americans changed the terms and

purpose of racially motivated violence. These events showed that former

Confederates' possession of the mandate to employ force to coerce and subdue

African Americans was not contingent upon a particular act of disrespect, but rather

held in check only by their own whims and discretion. Acting in groups, former

Confederates shifted the purpose of their use of violence from protecting their

individual status to claiming vast social powers.

The identities of the perpetrators of these attacks offer valuable insight into

the motivations and objectives that lay behind postwar violence in the American

South. The men responsible for this spree of assaults took no trouble to conceal

themselves from recognition; to do so would have impaired their principal purpose.

Unlike the Ku Klux Klan, whose members used disguises not only to obscure

themselves physically but also to convey their ubiquity and perhaps

otherworldliness to their victims, groups such as the one that terrorized African

interpretation I have used here builds upon the conclusions of Hannah Rosen. "White men," Rosen states, by "creating circumstances under which black fathers and husbands could not prevent the violence against their family members enacted white fantasies of racial difference and inferiority." Phrased more directly, white men targeted black women to demonstrate the unmanliness of black men and thereby to make "white" and "black" adhere as closely as possible to the antebellum definitions of "free" and "enslaved." Hannah Rosen, Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 8. Other interpretations can be found in Lisa Cardyn, "Sexual Terror in the Reconstruction South," in Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War, eds. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 140-167; Edwards, Gendered Strife and Confusion, 202-210; and Glymph, Out of the House of Bondage, 18-31, 97-166.

Americans in southwestern Mississippi relied on being recognized in order to assert their power to all elements within southern society.[176] Felix Allen's employee testified that more than fifty men calling themselves a militia and using honorifics of rank such as "lieutenant" and "captain" to refer to their leaders participated in his beating. He easily identified their leader as Daniel Fenn, and several other members of the militia appear by name in the report of the Freedman's Bureau official that documented the violence in Amite and Pike counties. This certainty about the beating's perpetrators was intentional, as Fenn and his subordinates needed not only their victims but also the planters who employed them to recognize their actions and accept their brutally constituted authority.

Fenn's position at the head of the group raises questions that underscore the complexity of how power and authority were constituted in the postwar South. Daniel Fenn may have garnered the title "captain" from his ad-hoc militia, but he had spent the Civil War as a private in the 4th Mississippi Cavalry. He had fought for the Confederacy for three years, serving in the Port Hudson and Vicksburg campaigns and briefly riding in Tennessee with General Nathan Bedford Forrest to disrupt Sherman's supply lines during his 1864 offensive through the Deep South. Most of the 4th Mississippi's service, however, had taken place within state lines, where the

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[176] For Klan practices and their underlying rationale during Reconstruction, see Allen Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973) and Elaine Frantz Parsons, "Midnight Rangers: Costume and Performance in the Reconstruction-Era Ku Klux Klan," Journal of American History 92 (December 2005): 811-836.

unit projected Confederate power over a state increasingly vulnerable to Federal incursions after the Union had secured control of the Mississippi River.

As with many other former Confederates notable for their participation in acts of Reconstruction violence, Fenn's official records reveal little else about his service, and he left no written evidence that indicated either his wartime reflections or his postwar motivations. Yet census records reveal that in 1860, Fenn headed a small family, owned his own farm, and, while listing $2000 in personal property that might have included a few slaves, he relied on the labor of two hired white workers to render his land productive.[177] By contrast, his two subordinates most noted for their violence, William M. Cain and John Magee, outranked Fenn during their military service (Cain actually served directly above Fenn as a sergeant in Company I of the 4th Mississippi Cavalry), owned property valued at more than double Fenn's prewar worth, and were older in years.[178] Fenn headed the "militia," it seems likely, because of his ardent commitment to a strictly ordered racial society ruthlessly enforced by violence. Unlike Cain and Magee, whose large plantations required black labor to sustain them, Fenn could lead from an ideological position

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[177] Luke Ward Conerly and E. Russ Williams, Jr, <u>Source Records From Pike County, Mississippi 1798-1910</u>, Part I (Greeneville, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, 1978), 204-207; Dunbar Rowland and H. Grady Howell, Jr, <u>Military History of Mississippi, 1803-1898, Including a Listing of All Known Mississippi Confederate Military Units</u> (Madison, Mississippi: Chickasaw Bayou Press, 2003), 407-413; U.S. Census Bureau, <u>Eighth Census of the United States, 1860</u>, ser. M653 roll 577, p. 167.

[178] Rowland, <u>Military History of Mississippi</u>, 503; Conerly and Williams, <u>Source Records for Pike County</u>, 204-207; U.S. Census Bureau, <u>Eighth Census of the United States, 1860,</u> ser. M653 roll 577, p. 246; roll 589, p. 482.

uncompromised by economic interest. What most concerned him was that African Americans of all sorts needed to feel their unqualified subordination to white men.

Combining several different types of sources renders a fairly detailed image of what approximately fifty men from two Mississippi counties could accomplish within their communities by using violence to claim power, as well as a glimpse of what kind of men participated in such activities and how they imagined themselves. Whatever local residents or the nation at large thought of them, these men used military ranks (and presumably followed a command hierarchy) to selectively align their postwar activities with their wartime identities. In other parts of the South, men who had served the Confederacy formed similar groups and engaged in comparable behavior. Mississippi militia organizations formed to preserve law and order included so many former soldiers that an inspecting officer for the Freedman's Bureau referred to them as "rebel State forces." Rather than limit the prevalence of violence over civil law in the areas they occupied, these militia groups gained a reputation for "visiting the freedmen, disarming them, [and] perpetrating murders and outrages upon them." Near Jackson, some of these militia announced the purpose of their organization as to "drive out the thieving yankees, and shoot the niggers."[179] In eastern North Carolina, men styling themselves "regulators"—a term that would gain notoriety and come to describe diverse, unconnected bands of white southerners in 1865 and 1866 in much the same way as "klan" would in the

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[179] Colonel Samuel Thomas to Major General O.O. Howard, December 13, 1865, in Hahn et al, Land and Labor, 805.

later years of Reconstruction—roamed through communities, seizing firearms from

the black populace and "keeping the citizens in a state of excitement and terror."[180]

Wherever slavery had put down roots and Confederate soldiers had homes to

which they returned after the war, those men who saw civil government as too

strong in its aspirations to raise African Americans to equality with whites yet too

weak in its ability to compel unsettled communities to accept social revolution

turned to group violence as an effective alternative to submitting to defeat. In states

that had never seceded or joined the Confederate nation but had furnished soldiers

to its armies, the ability of former soldiers to wield local power through extralegal

violence brought the social conditions that produced such violence into sharp relief.

A disjuncture between Confederate veterans and white people at large may not have

comprised the initial impulse for former soldiers to repress African Americans—the

close links between emancipation, Confederate defeat, and veterans' need for

respect could account for that—but such fractures did give veterans additional

incentive to demonstrate that they could shape society after the war much as they

had during it.

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[180] Bradley, <u>Bluecoats and Tar Heels</u>, 100-101. Bradley ascribes membership in these groups to men who had fought in two kinds of wartime organizations, Union sympathizing "Buffalo" units of native North Carolinians and pro-Confederate guerilla units. If this was in fact the case, it suggests that wartime acculturation to projecting power through military organization and the application of violence, the loss of such power without a comparable replacement for young white men, and a shared antipathy toward African Americans counted for more than Civil War national loyalties in accounting for postwar depredations.

Nowhere did this emerge more clearly than in border states, where bitterly divided national loyalties meant that former Confederates had to protect not only their social status but also their right to belong to the civil polity at all. In such areas, Confederate veterans could turn to violence nearly certain in the conviction that the results of the war had set them on the margins of both formal politics and community sentiment. Deprived of voting rights in many locales and stripped of their land for unpaid taxes in others, men who had followed the Confederate banner had little other recourse if they wished to influence postwar society upon their return.[181] The impulses that prompted former Confederates to participate in collective attacks against African Americans—the preservation of personal identity deeply entangled in military service and of the belonging and power that group cohesion provided—therefore functioned even more intensely in border states and in highly contested parts of the former Confederacy than in solidly pro-Confederate areas. In the central Kentucky counties surrounding Louisville, Brigadier General John Ely attributed "fiendish outrages" against former slaves to "white people, who are in many cases banded together under the cognomen of 'Regulators' 'Nigger Killers' &c." Ely identified the groups' members as "generally returned rebel

[181] For treatments of the postwar lives of Confederate soldiers from border states, see Aaron Astor, Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012); William C. Davis, The Orphan Brigade: The Kentucky Confederates Who Couldn't Go Home (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 237-270; Anne E. Marshall, Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 32-80; and Jeremy Neely, The Border Between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Border (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 132-159.

soldiers of the lowest grade of white humanity, working at no respectable employment."[182]

In Centerville, Maryland, African Americans protested that they "darcent walk out of an evening if we do, and we are Met by Some of these roudies that were in the rebel army they beat us badly and Sumtime Shoot us." In addition to beatings and shootings, these rowdies, like their counterparts in Mississippi, burned the local embodiments of the two most important institutions of black community aspiration and autonomy, the church and the schoolhouse.[183] At Chaptico, a nearby town in southeastern Maryland, Isaac Barbour recounted being "beaten, without cause, by a number of men." The "crowd got me on the ground and kept me there" while prominent former Confederate soldiers Bob Dent and Clem Thompson repeatedly kicked him and attempted to bludgeon him with a club. When Barbour gained his feet and fled, Ripley Tibbet—"a returned rebel soldier [who] makes it his business to injure coloured people"--and an accomplice chased him on horseback "with the intention, which they expressed, of shooting me."[184] From the Chesapeake Bay to the Mississippi Delta and the Gulf of Mexico, men who had carried arms against the Union employed group violence to achieve several related purposes. Most obviously, they acted from a strong desire to prevent the emergence of a new

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[182] Brevet Brigadier General John Ely to Captain H. S. Brown, April 9, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 762.

[183] Charles A. Watkins to Major General Oliver O. Howard, March 13, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 805.

[184] Edward F. O'Brien to Lt. S.N. Clark, February 7, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 803-804.

southern social landscape in which black men, especially African American soldiers, could claim full manhood and its accompanying privileges at the direct expense of defeated white Confederates. Yet collective action, unlike individual violence enacted to make social relations better align with Confederates' self-image, also restored to veterans some of the influence and control over the destinies of their communities that they had wielded as soldiers during the war and had lost in defeat.

Confrontations between Confederate soldiers and African Americans after the war's conclusion carried implications that reverberated throughout southern society as a whole. The importance of those confrontations stemmed from the limitations of the war's political settlement relative to the social changes that the war itself had produced. For both white and black southerners, the concurrent destruction of slavery and of the Confederacy left no clear model for future relations between the races. Union policy during the Civil War had proven much more adept at dismantling the sinews that bound white southerners to the Confederacy than in prescribing what would replace them. Confederates would gain no autonomous nation and could no longer hold people of another race in bondage—the results of the war had made that much clear.[185] Beyond those two conclusions, the conflict had completely destabilized the social structures that had governed the relationship

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[185] No historian has improved upon David Potter's summation of what four years of war had revealed to Americans by the Civil War's conclusion: "Slavery was dead; secession was dead; and six hundred thousand men were dead." Every other product of the conflict remained to be interpreted, adjudicated, or resolved during Reconstruction. Contemporaries recognized this contingency enough to impart significance to local and individual interactions, knowing that some of the war's most important questions lay beyond the scope or the interest of the Federal government to resolve. David Potter, The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861 (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 583.

between race and power in the antebellum South. Despite appeals from both white and black southerners, the Federal government and its military and judicial arms showed no inclination to arbitrate the boundaries of respect or to demarcate acceptable social patterns after emancipation. While invested in granting freedom and eventually electoral rights in the political arena and in upholding free labor in the economic one, the United States government recognized that it could not dictate how people would see themselves and each other even if it wished to and left southerners considerable room to define the contours of their society.

Within this sphere, southerners waged a war over the meaning of race into which they poured all of their understandings of selfhood. Every important social measure in the antebellum South had extended from the axiom that white men controlled black people and that African Americans submitted to whites. White men might show deference to one another based on age, economic status, accomplishment, or other indicators of prominence, but the honor and respect that they displayed to others and demanded for themselves precluded the possibility of submitting to another's control.   This belief occupied so pervasive a position that it influenced not only how white southerners crafted their expectations for one another and for slaves but also how they measured themselves and articulated their ambitions.[186] While those who had toiled in slavery saw emancipation as an

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[186] A rich body of scholarship has explored the astonishing degree to which racial identity predicated both externally oriented social relations and internal sources of identity in the South before emancipation. Among them, I have found most persuasive Berry, All that Makes a Man; Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979); Drew Gilpin Faust, James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery (Baton Rouge:

opportunity to abolish that perception along with the formal bonds of servitude, white southerners clung tenaciously to their belief in black inferiority because they were unwilling to see all that it underpinned swept away.

Confederate soldiers' investments in preventing African Americans from undermining their status thus found purchase in white society at large. John Cornwell's attack on James Cook may have seemed a gross overreaction to the Freedman's Bureau officer who reported it, but it made perfect sense to Dr. C.H. Lambert, a local resident who witnessed the scene. Lambert had been too old to fight in the Confederate armies, but he made it clear that he sympathized with Cornwell. "Subdued and miserable as we are," Lambert told the Freedman's Bureau agent, "we will not allow niggers to come among us and brag about having been in the yankee army." He applauded the beating and attempted shooting of James Cook as "a good lesson to the niggers."[187] Confederate veterans felt an immediate and personal stake in subduing African Americans' claims to manhood because they viewed them as both a direct indictment of their own virtues as displayed in the Civil War and as a relative diminution of their status in the zero-sum contest for racial dominance, and white southerners shared those same concerns at a remove. While the war had severely strained and in many cases severed their attachments to

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Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Steven M. Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987); and Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor.

[187] Lieut. Marcus S. Hopkins to Maj. James Johnson, January 15, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 800.

southern nationalism once its costs became apparent, white civilians as well as soldiers had no desire to count racial equality among the costs of the war.

Yet sharing an interest in repressing African American social agency did not guarantee that Confederate soldiers and white southern civilians would see eye to eye on the means by which to obtain that result or the degree to which its pursuit would reshape community dynamics between white people. Group violence had played a role in maintaining racial control in the antebellum South, but white southerners had employed it under specific conditions and viewed it as subservient to the authority of individual masters over their human property. Moreover, such violence was subject to and for the most part sanctioned by the law. Postwar vigilante groups employing violence against freedpeople by definition stood in opposition to the law, both in its specific protections for human life and property and in its general function as an instrument of governance. Many civilians longed for an orderly, predictable, and relatively peaceful preservation of white supremacy in which paternalist bonds between former masters and their erstwhile slaves, legal restrictions on black agency, and the coercive economic power of a landholding class placing the need for racial dominance over individual advantage would obviate the need for widespread violence. Each of those methods of control seemed feasible, yet the presumptions that undergirded them emanated from a world that had not known the strains of war and emancipation.

Under slavery, white society had relied upon two principal means to police black subservience. The authority of masters to control their human property,

grounded in law and in two centuries of social custom, stood as the central basis for

maintaining the institution itself as a profitable and desirable venture. Yet the

proximity of large numbers of slaves held in unwilling bondage in their midst also

gave white people a proprietary concern for their fate and a stake in preventing

breaches in slave discipline that might lead to catastrophic rebellion. As individuals,

slaveholders relied on the judicious surveillance of the white community, both in the

formal institution of the slave patrol and in the vigilance exercised in everyday

interactions, to prevent their slaves from running away and to ensure that white

solidarity reinforced the power masters wielded in enforcing obedience and

submission. Even if their pride and paternalist delusions prevented slaveholders

from admitting that their own bondsmen needed external discipline or presented a

threat, they could reconcile the maintenance of patrols and occasionally of mass

mobilizations with their own projected self-assurance by embracing community

vigilance as a check against less perfect embodiments of mastery.[188] White southern

communities, for their part, expected masters to keep their slaves from becoming a

threat--in mundane instances to morality and social order and in more extreme

conceptions to their property, physical safety, and very lives.

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[188] Stephen Ash has explained this construct succinctly. "Those who owned
slaves…did not as a rule fear their own: it was everyone else's they were really
nervous about. Masters generally saw themselves as benign paternalists and
believed (wrongly, for the most part) that their bondsmen and bondswomen were
grateful, satisfied, and loyal. But when they looked beyond their own farms or
plantations, slaveholders could not be so sanguine." Stephen Ash, When the
Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865 (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 10.

Southern antebellum law therefore recognized mutually sustaining but sometimes conflicting sources of power and obligation: that of masters to primacy in controlling the behavior of their slaves as well as that of the community to preserve the public interest through massive, militant mobilizations. Masters exercised near absolute dominion in everyday interactions between the races, but both law and custom allowed for both the regular institution of the slave patrol and the spectacular yet rare intervention of the militarized white male populace to put down perceived threats. This combination of "apathy and horror," as Bertram Wyatt-Brown has termed it, saw white southerners regard daily living amidst a large and potentially dangerous population of enslaved people with relative unconcern but erupt from time to time in orgies of rampant fear that sparked community-sanctioned violence on a large scale.[189]

During the Civil War, the relationship between individual slaveholders and the white community at large in maintaining slavery would fall apart and do much to bring the Confederacy down with it. Confederate nationalists, even those who underestimated slaves' political sensitivity and desires to rid themselves of a hated institution, recognized the difficulty that fighting an external war while preserving internal discipline over a slave population would pose. Success would call for

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[189] Wyatt-Brown, <u>Southern Honor</u>, 405. The most complete analysis of the role of paternalism in shaping power relations in the slave South as well as its limitations remains Eugene Genovese, <u>Roll, Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made</u> (New York: Pantheon Books, 1976). See also Melvin Patrick Ely, <u>Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War</u> (New York: Knopf, 2004), 225-244; Lacy Ford, <u>Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 178-180; Hadden, <u>Slave Patrols</u>, 167-219; and Wyatt-Brown, <u>Southern Honor</u>, 366-434.

absolute solidarity within the white population; only with that assurance could soldiers join the armies and leave their families and property—slave and otherwise—to the protection of those who stayed at home. The rhetoric of race that pulsed through the language of Confederate nationalists carried a dual function: it stoked fears of miscegenation, white impoverishment, and bloody slave revolution not only to galvanize resistance to the Union, but also to promote a broad social investment among non-slaveholders in maintaining discipline and control among the slaves.[190]

To that end, militia and Home Guard units buttressed by some state volunteer units spent the war fighting "disloyalty" among slaves and white dissenters instead of Union military forces. Both they and the planters of military age who stayed at home to manage their plantations earned scant respect in the eyes of frontline troops as the war progressed and its costs grew ever steeper. Soldiers criticized those who remain for their self-interestedness and for their inefficiency in ordering the South's slave society, while planters complained that the demands of the war had depopulated their regions of white men to such an extent that communities could no longer act autonomously in holding slaves in bondage. As Union army raids and sustained invasion campaigns plunged ever deeper into southern soil, emboldening slaves and discouraging all but the most steadfast Confederates, planters' control over their slaves disintegrated. Confederate guerillas, Home Guards, and army troops accordingly took police powers under

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[190] For a more thorough treatment of the problem of slavery for Confederate nationhood and specifically for the militarization of white southern society, see Chapter One.

their own purview as masters' authority waned. Having no investment in the

imagined benevolence that comprised a vital component of both paternalism's

transactional nature and slaveholders' identity, these groups wielded force

undiluted by compassion. This development would carry important repercussions

for the postwar emergence of collective racial violence.[191]

By the war's conclusion, slaveholders knew that retaining the trappings of

mastery, rather than its substance, was the best they could hope for in a post-

emancipation world. As a result, the bonds of paternalism, itself at base a form of

power relations veneered by cultural notions of gentility, lay severed forever for

most southerners. White men whose fortunes did not depend on making their lands

produce profitable crops might continue to preserve some of the forms of reciprocal

obligation that paternalism relations entailed. William J. Clarke, a Confederate

colonel who during the war had commanded the 24th North Carolina, exchanged

letters with Samuel Taylor, a former slave, even after the latter had left his employ.

In December 1865, Taylor wrote to Clarke requesting that the colonel use his

influence to obtain better terms for Taylor to purchase land. "My dear master,"

Taylor begged, using slavery's form of address, "I thought if I could get you to write

to Mr. Mavrate you might get him to let me have a piece of ground chapper

[cheaper] than I could get it." To show his good faith, Taylor promised to return a

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[191] A broader discussion of both contemporaries' and historians' reactions to the increasing tensions between slavery and the war effort can be found in Chapter Two. For specific instances of military units and state sanctioned Home Guards regulating the behavior of African Americans, both free and enslaved, in the Confederacy's final years, see McCurry, <u>Confederate Reckoning</u>, 300-307 and Mark Neely, <u>Southern Rights: Political Prisoners and the Myth of Confederate Constitutionalism</u> (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 137-143.

trunk that Clarke's wife had packed with family heirlooms before leaving her home ahead of the Union army's arrival.[192]

Yet the case of Clarke, who within a month of Lee's surrender at Appomattox had negotiated deeds of sale on properties he owned in New Jersey, and Taylor, who wanted to buy land and sought his master's patronage to acquire it, was exceptional. The war had not ruined Clarke's finances and Taylor had approached him obsequiously, leaving Clarke able to relish the title of master and the return of his family's trunk. For most southern slaveholders, the war's end elicited a far different reaction on the subject of retaining relations with African Americans. Disgusted by what they viewed as the disloyalty shown by slaves during the war and at the dawn of emancipation, former masters felt that freedom had relieved them of any obligations to those they had held in bondage. Martin S. Wilkins related the efforts of a neighboring planter to round up his former slaves and return them to his plantation in time for the late summer harvest. With the aid of United States military authorities, the planter "succeeded in getting rations for them...and returned to [Charleston] to have them transported [back to the plantation] forthwith." To the surprise of both Wilkins and the planter in question, however, "they all, except Anthony, refused to go with him." Without a white hand to direct them in productive labor, Wilkins could not imagine how the former slaves could

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[192] Samuel Taylor to William J. Clarke, December 6, 1865, William J. Clarke Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

hope to survive. "Such are the freedmen," Wilkins concluded, "and I suspect their former owners, will soon cease to interest themselves about them."[193]

Wilkins's prediction accurately characterized the indifference and even outright—if probably hysteric—joy that former slaveholders expressed at no longer finding themselves responsible for African Americans. "When I heard the negroes had gone," Emma Rankin Harper of North Carolina wrote to her husband George as his unit retreated from the Petersburg entrenchments in 1865, "I looked upon the move as the dawn of freedom to us. I would not care if every man, woman, & child of them would leave. It would be very hard at first to get along but we would soon...live better than we ever did."[194] Despite the desolation that his home state Virginia had suffered during countless military campaigns, William Cabell Rives, Jr. predicted that things would soon turn for the better in the Old Dominion. "I do not despair of seeing a surprisingly rapid recovery on her part—the more rapid because of the destruction of slavery which all now agree to have been the greatest check to her progress," he wrote the summer after the war's conclusion.[195] While Harper's and Rives's claims of deliverance from their slaves carried more than a tincture of desperate optimism as they searched for a reason to view defeat and emancipation as anything but an unmitigated catastrophe, Henry Hunter Raymond of South

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[193] Martin S. Wilkins to James B. Grimball, August 5, 1865, Grimball Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[194] Emma Rankin Harper to George Washington Finley Harper, April 2, 1865, George Washington Finley Harper Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[195] William Cabell Rives, Jr. to Grace Winthrop Sears Rives, June 19, 1865, Rives, Sears, and Rhinelander Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

Carolina showed a ruthlessness driven by paranoia. In August, Raymond wrote a frantic letter to his mother instructing her to "get rid of the useless negroes as soon as you can. The less negroes the better," Raymond claimed, "as I assure you it is of the first importance that now we have no idle negroes about us." With that, he advised her to give the "idle" Augustus and Andrew to the care of their emancipators, the U.S. provost marshal or the Freedman's Bureau. "By all means do get rid of the surplus negroes," he reiterated, and in his next letter added "By all means get rid of the negroes" for good measure.[196]

Whites who wanted nothing to do with African Americans once they discovered that they could not wield absolute control over free people hoped that former slaves would disappear along with slavery. Rather than engaging in the painstaking and potentially fruitless process of developing new relationships that admitted mutual obligation in the post-emancipation South, whites denied that they depended on African Americans for anything and attempted to reduce their interactions with black men and women to contractual employment. Nor did most formerly enslaved people want dependence or obligation to whites to darken the horizons of their newly won freedom. Believing that if patronage were necessary the United States government would make a more reliable and trustworthy provider than members of the slaveholding class, African Americans found their ideas about the exploitive and repressive nature of white planters' paternalism confirmed when

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[196] Henry Hunter Raymond to "My Dear Mother," August 23 & 28, 1865, Henry Hunter Raymond Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

the latter denied any provision for "unproductive" people.[197] Like Henry Raymond,

they used Union victory as an excuse, thrusting responsibility for meeting the

pressing needs of a destitute populace onto the Union or the freedpeople

themselves. As a result, white landowners forfeited any possibility that they might

exact deference and social influence as the price for protecting African Americans

from white communities' racial animus.

If paternalist relations had frayed to the point of disappearing after the Civil

War, some in the South, especially prominent planters whose allegiances lay with

their own fortunes—literal and otherwise—rather than the passions and hatreds of

nationalist fervor, expected that life back under the control of the United States

would see the legal structures that codified white men as citizens, women as

dependents, and African Americans as inferior beings upheld. They had reason to

hope. Expecting that predictions stoked by ardent Confederate nationalists during

the war--which envisioned rabid abolitionists gleefully mandating intermarriage

among the races and wantonly distributing white-owned property to former slaves-

-would prove correct, they found themselves pleasantly surprised by the

indifference of Union civil and military officials toward southern race relations in

many localities. Few southerners could have dared to hope that they might witness

the contempt that white Union officers and soldiers showed toward African-

Americans. Louisa Porcher found her hatred of the occupation forces somewhat

tempered by their racial attitudes. "The Yankee garrison are here," she wrote to a

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[197] See Foner, <u>Reconstruction</u>, 130-131.

female relative, and "although it is galling in the extreme to see them, yet they are very quiet and orderly, & I have heard of their putting down the complaints of the negroes in a very summary manner."[198] J. Campbell Martin, a veteran of the 1st South Carolina Infantry newly arrived in Texas, described to friends in South Carolina the ways in which Union occupation forces dealt with African-Americans unwilling to work in conditions that differed little from slavery. One army officer came to Martin's neighborhood and imposed his version of emancipation when he "told the planters to manage their Negroes as they had always done." If the freedpeople objected to this arrangement and "did not work," the officer encouraged their employers "to give them a good flogging."[199] Demonstrating their own ambivalence about emancipation, large segments of the Union army's officer corps did nothing to prevent white men from controlling daily interactions between the races with the same tools of leverage and coercion that they had brandished under slavery.

Official pronouncements from federal officials tasked with administering southern communities before the restoration of civil government carried a more polished tone but a similar message. Major General Quincy Gillmore announced that in the portion of Georgia he occupied "it is the manifest and binding duty of all citizens whites as well as blacks, to make such arrangements and agreements

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[198] Louisa Porcher to Anna Smith, July 29, 1865, in Mason Smith Family Letters, 228.

[199] J. Campbell Martin to Andrew Baxter Springs, July 13, 1865, Springs Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

among themselves…as shall be mutually advantageous to all parties."[200] Taking no

notice of the vast power differential that whites could bring to bear in constructing

those "arrangements and agreements," Gillmore, like Union army officers

throughout the South, confirmed that if the forms of contract labor went duly

observed, the forces of the federal government lacked the will, the mandate, and the

ability to enforce racial equality. Even occupation officers who sympathized with

the condition of former slaves couched their desires for racial tolerance as pleas

rather than commands. "You put in peril your own institutions and your own

country to destroy this republic, and failed; accept now the fruits of the rebellion,

bitter though it may be, and carry out the terms of your surrender and allegiance in

the spirit of chivalric men" began Brigadier General Charles Henry van Wyck's order

to conquered South Carolinians. Yet the stern note soon gave way to language that

revealed the limitations and weaknesses under which the general operated. "Do

not," van Wyck begged, "because you may be distant from a military post, visit upon

the harmless and unoffending negro the hostilities and resentments you feel against

the United States."[201]

White southerners who longed for stability after four years of upheaval

believed that they could govern their communities relatively free of interference

and put into place structural limitations on black freedom that would secure white

supremacy without excessive violence. Convinced that the United States military

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[200]General Order No. 63, Department of the South, May 15, 1865, quoted in Perman,
Reunion Without Compromise, 48.

[201] Order by the Commander of the District of Western South Carolina, Newberry,
S.C., July 15, 1865, in Hahn et al, Land and Labor, 139-140.

would do little to interfere with their activities, many planters had no desire to yield control to bands of angry, unpredictable young men who lacked restraint. These men saw a place for violence as a tool of dominance, to be sure, but saw arbitrary attacks motivated by racial hatred and a desire to regain respect as counterproductive and unnecessary. In most cases, they differed fundamentally from the vigilantes not only in their choice of tactics but also in their perceptions of how others saw them.

Unlike the many Confederate veterans who felt that black men's self-assertion constituted a threat to their standing, John D. Ashmore of South Carolina had total confidence in his reputation and relied on it to protect him from the negative consequences of emancipation. While others in the vicinity of Pickens Court House had suffered from the "Many depredations…being committed on the Courthouse Houses by the freedmen" with such frequency that "Not a night passes scarcely without some citizens being a loser," Ashmore remained untouched by either theft or troublesome labor disputes. Ashmore attributed his immunity to such problems to his reputation. Although "almost every neighbor I have, have been plundered & robbed of something," Ashmore was "told they have permitted me to escape only because they believe if caught I am certain to shoot some of them, & did I find them in the act, I should certainly do so."[202] Whether his reputation in fact functioned as a deterrent or if he merely assumed it did, Ashmore's faith in the power of his image in the community to protect him from the freedpeople left him

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[202] John D. Ashmore to James Earle Hagood, February 11, 1866, James Earle Hagood Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

needing neither the repressive social effects nor the restored self-image that group violence brought.

When he announced his plan for returning the southern states to autonomous civil governance, Andrew Johnson further bolstered their hopes. Johnson's plan, announced in the summer of 1865, promised white southerners that they could retain control of regulating social relations and determining the status of freedmen, provided that they accepted the abolition of slavery and renounced secession. Elections in which the vast majority of former Confederates but no former slaves could participate would choose new state legislatures, while provost courts and the Freedman's Bureau would cede authority in local matters to civil institutions.[203] That process seemed promising enough to garner Johnson the support of former Confederates. "I hope soon to get [a pardon] & do honestly think the Presdt is doing all he can for us," G.A. Henry, a Confederate colonel, wrote to an acquaintance. "He is greatly embarrassed by outside people, but he is firm & I think true."[204] Under such terms, even ardent Confederates who had committed themselves fully to the cause and derived much of their identity from their military service counseled taking the amnesty oath which would restore them to political citizenship. Reuben E. Wilson, a diehard North Carolinian who at one juncture in the war had sworn that he was "willing that the balance of my days shall be spent in

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[203] Perman, Reunion Without Compromise, 69-70.

[204] G.A. Henry to A.B. Springs, August 21, 1865, Springs Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

the war rather than submit on any terms," now encouraged his male relatives to take the oath of loyalty based on the following principles:

> In the first place we have no government to be loyal to 2nd nor even a state government 3rd tis our duty to try and do the best we can for ourselves no one I presume will be allowed to vote unless they take the oath and we should try and send good men to the legislature or convention. By sending good men to the legislature we will be able to elect good men senators to go to Washington if every southern state will send two good senators we will with the aid of the democratic party (which is bound to be very strong) of the north we will be able to check the republican party in their wild schemes. Now this isnt half I might say of the benefits which may be desired from taking the oath.[205]

Whatever else he meant by the Republican Party's "wild schemes," Wilson certainly meant racial equality in the former Confederacy. Yet as early as December 1865, when Congress refused to seat the southern candidates chosen by the reconstituted state legislatures, white southerners recognized that they could not control their own political destinies. When Congress dismantled the terms of racially restrictive subjecthood outlined in states' Black Codes by passing the Civil Rights Act in February 1866 and reaffirming it over Johnson's veto, few white southerners could mistake the limitations of their presidential ally's power or the severe restrictions on the ability of the law alone to create a white supremacist society.[206]

The final hope of those who wished to preserve the racial prerogatives of whiteness without resorting to widespread extralegal violence lay in economic cooperation between landowners. Many southerners hoped that if employers

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[205] Reuben E. Wilson to Julia Jones, March 8, 1864, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC; Reuben E. Wilson to Julia Jones, May 13, 1865, Jones Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[206] Perman, Reunion Without Compromise, 185-187.

banded together and refused to let African Americans induce competition for their labor, then reasonable men with property interests might enforce a moderate, orderly racial climate. In such a world, free labor values would guide the South on a course of modernization. White employers, by offering similar terms for employment, might keep black laborers from gaining economic leverage by flocking to those who promised better conditions of work. By keeping expectations constant, landowning white southerners could extend their influence into the realm of *de facto* law, setting standards that African Americans who wished to remain in a given community would have little choice but to accept.

After most of her family's servants had departed over the course of the summer of 1865, Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas wished to hire a cook for her family. She believed that in a woman named Leah she had found an ideal choice, given that in her trial meal for the family Leah had baked "one of the best plum pies I ever tasted." Yet when Thomas's husband arrived later that evening, he demanded that Leah return to her previous employer and obtain a note from him granting permission for Leah to work in the Thomas's household. Leah promised to do so, but Ella Thomas regretted that "as I expected she has not returned." Ella Thomas understood her husband's rationale yet lamented that she had "sacrificed a good deal to principle" by losing an accomplished cook. "I did not know but we are fighting shadows," Thomas confessed, acknowledging that the measures whites took

to impose control on their laborers had little effect.[207] Yet Thomas's husband

refused to sacrifice the economic solidarity of the planter class for short-term

comfort.

Promising as this kind of economic coercion may have appeared, it depended

upon white planters presenting a united front in the face of both personal

discomfort and economic necessity. Sacrificing a well-baked plum pie could be

endured, but losing an entire season's crop because of an inability to secure

sufficient labor threatened to ruin the planter class. The planters had overvalued

their hand; in the contest between land and labor in the immediate postwar South,

the former slaves, accustomed to privation, mobile in a way that real estate

manifestly was not, and with far less to lose, held the trump cards. Cracks in the

edifice of planter unity soon appeared. Edward Barnwell Heyward, an officer in the

Confederate engineering corps who had spent the war managing slave laborers

rather than commanding troops in combat, sought every advantage he could gain

over neighboring planters in the South Carolina Low Country. Recognizing that

most white southerners' blatant antipathy toward free labor gave the upper hand to

anyone who could gain a reputation among African Americans for fair wages and

prompt payment, Heyward set about recruiting the best laborers from surrounding

plantations. "I know I have worked on a different idea from all others and the effect

has been very remarkable," Heyward crowed to a fellow rice planter. "Our main

point of difference seemed from the very beginning to have been this—They all

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[207] Entry of May 29, 1865, in Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, The Secret Eye: The
Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889, ed. Virginia Burr (Chapel Hill:
University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 273.

seemed to think that they could manage to get work done and not pay for it, while I knew it must cost something." The results redounded to his benefit: "The negroes soon found out the trick and have all stopped working [on other plantations], while I get as many as I want."[208] Heyward's actions exposed the vulnerability of plans to use collusion among the planters to achieve economic and social control and enforce white supremacy. Savvy and self-interested landowners had much to gain and little to lose if they responded to market conditions rather than acting on racial principle.

With options for the implementation of white supremacy through conservative methods rendered unfeasible by the collapse of paternalist influence and planter class solidarity, those who sought to limit emancipation's impact on a broad basis had little choice but to accept the radical course of repressing African Americans through intimidation and violence. From the autumn of 1865 through the following spring, perceptive white southerners identified two related conditions of Reconstruction that seemed to confirm violence within communities as the most viable tool for thwarting black agency. Congress had imposed political limitations that would prevent dominance of the freedpeople from being structured through state and local law. Yet the limitations of civil and military institutions in compelling obedience to a more inclusive and equal racial order resounded in the pleas for restraint, contradictory injunctions, and lack of effective enforcement with which

[208] Edward Barnwell Heyward to Allen C. Izard, July 16, 1866, in Twilight on the South Carolina Rice Fields: Letters of the Heyward Family, 1862-1871, eds. Margaret Belser Hollis and Allen H. Stokes (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 215-216.

army officers and Freedman's Bureau officials met former Confederate soldiers' actions against black victims. Together these developments gave white supremacists a clear picture of their options.

In acceding to widespread violence as a tactic of repression, white southerners tolerated, sometimes reluctantly, former soldiers who acted beyond the bounds of either the law or traditionally sanctioned forms of racial control. Confederate veterans wanted more. Rather than merely pursuing their own ends without censure or interference, former soldiers longed to return to positions of power and purpose. While their perceptions of themselves ultimately played the decisive role in whether ex-Confederates felt that they had achieved such a social position, the opinions of their communities mattered a great deal. The desire for repression—as Dr. Lambert of Virginia had put it, teaching "a good lesson to the niggers"—promoted a general climate of acceptance, but stopped short of giving former Confederates a sense that they served as the vanguard of a cohesive society that looked to them as decisive actors. White southerners' annoyance at African Americans' impudence and diminished subordination after emancipation did not constitute sufficient motivation to align their society with the postwar values of violent, confrontational former Confederates whose behavior still jarred them. Outright fear of freedpeople wielding actual control of white southerners' daily lives and threatening their property, their sexual virtue, and their safety, however, forced southern society to choose between dependence on veterans and fears that wild scenes of apocalyptic revolution would materialize.

Those fears not only existed but ran rampant in the aftermath of emancipation and affected white men and women of all classes and backgrounds. Civilians and veterans alike pleaded with state, federal, and military officials to protect them from the massacres they knew loomed in the near future. Rumors of a Christmas insurrection in particular sparked entreaties for authorities to intervene before whites suffered the kind of terror that as individuals and groups they had inflicted upon African Americans.[209] Francis Marion Shields, an officer in the 24th Alabama Infantry, sought help from the provisional governor of Mississippi when he learned of rumors that freedpeople "have an idea that they will all get our lands Homes mules Horses Corn &c &c, by Christmas." Shields attempted to position himself as a disinterested reporter of community hearsay that he did not share and claimed that he spoke for excitable women and lower class whites. He attributed fears that "the negroes intend to fight & kill off the white population & get what they want by force" to a shared belief by "some of the lowest class of negroes & some of the lowest class of white men," and indicated that "our people especially the female

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[209] See Dan T. Carter, "The Anatomy of Fear: The Christmas Day Insurrection Scare of 1865," Journal of Southern History 42 (August 1976), 345-364. Carter demonstrates convincingly that publicizing fears of racial revolt provided a powerful rhetorical function, casting doubt on Reconstruction policies favoring black equality and giving a pretext for southern whites to form militias and vigilance committees. Although Carter claims the insurrection scare proved useful to white southerners because it forced Congress and Freedman's Bureau officials to publicly renounce land confiscation and redistribution, this reading seems rather narrowly confined to the realm of national legislative politics. Rumors of the Christmas insurrection began circulating in the early fall and, while Carter is likely correct in asserting that "it was never a self-conscious conspiracy by southern whites," those rumors did precede nearly all instances of organized collective violence against African Americans in the post-emancipation South and lent legitimacy to repressive actions by both formally constituted militias and extralegal vigilante groups.

Sex are much troubled" and "dread[ed] to see the day when the negroes commences their riots." Yet Shields's own trepidation emerged clearly; beyond his authorship of the letter, which indicated that he considered fears of a bloody insurrection at least plausible, he frankly admitted that "We are a defenseless people" that could not protect itself in the event of a race war.[210]

While Shields attempted to project his own fears onto lower class men and women in order to retain the image of a resolute planter and former Confederate officer, Jane Pringle used her status as a genteel woman to evoke sympathy in her plea to Major General Daniel Sickles, commander of Union army forces in the Carolinas. Claiming that she wrote for herself and "in behalf of the women of this doomed district," Pringle informed Sickles that she had "positive information that a general rising of the Negroes is to take place next Sunday night" and pleaded for Sickles to stop it since the local white militia—which included her sons—"number not more than 80 men against thousands of *armed* negroes."[211] Her panic concerning the possibility of a race war proved unfounded, rendering the request for protection from the army moot, but not meaningless. People of Pringle's background could call to mind a host of precedents for such fears of insurrection from the antebellum years. Whether in the wake of Nat Turner's revolt in 1832 or in more recent scares, such as those surrounding the election of 1860 and the Natchez plot in September 1861, mere suspicion had led to the detention of slaves and free

[210] Francis Marion Shields to the Provisional Governor of Mississippi, October 27, 1865, in Hahn et al, Land and Labor, 821-822.

[211] Jane Pringle to Major General Daniel Sickles, December 19, 1865, in Hahn et al, Freedom: Land and Labor, 882-883.

African Americans, thorough examinations of dozens of people that often featured

torture, mass indictments and confessions, and ultimately executions of suspected

plotters. The entire apparatus of the state and the community had mobilized to

protect the white community from black violence. When the Christmas plot met

with halfhearted investigations from the Freedman's Bureau that led to no

convictions, most white southerners concluded not that the plot lacked substance,

but rather that the United States government would back freedpeople in spite of the

fears of their former masters.

The fears of the white community and the inaction of the United States

military combined to provide the perfect opportunity for groups of Confederate

veterans to redress their defeat, act as the guardians of vulnerable whites once

more, and merge their particular concerns for respect in the postwar world with

those of southern society at large. William T. Martin, once a Confederate major

general, found himself in command once again in the autumn of 1865. Rather than

leading a cavalry division, he headed a militia company after his election as its

captain. "I believe such organizations are essential," Martin wrote to Mississippi's

governor and former brigadier general Benjamin G. Humphreys "and all efforts to

raise a company failed till I took the matter in hand." The transition from divisional

command to defeated officer with no army to lead back to a position of authority—

albeit at a much more local level—at the behest of his community gave Martin and

his peers and subordinates clear postwar direction. Martin knew what he wanted

his militia to do and sought Humphrey's endorsement. Justifying himself by

claiming that he "sincerely believe[d] there is great danger brewing," Martin

proposed to use his organization to make white southerners feel secure in both their safety and their social position and to intimidate African Americans.[212]

Far from seeing his role as a reactionary implementation of a racially defined hierarchy, Martin believed that he was quelling a rebellion against property rights and the established socioeconomic order. "I am not courting a Conflict," the militia captain promised, "but Such a Servile population—So numerous so disaffected, So misinformed, So ignorant & withall so vicious Can not be held in check very Easily."[213] This outlook, common among white southerners who feared what George Rable and others have called "the specter of Saint-Domingue," justified an active defense of the South's white population that included confiscating African-Americans' firearms, searching their homes, breaking up their property, and attacking any who resisted.[214] Thomas Kanady, an inspecting officer for the Freedman's Bureau in eastern Louisiana, outlined the effect that the creation of such forces and their explicit mandate for racial control had on African Americans in his state. When local officials voted to organize "an armed patrol...intended to operate against the blacks," freedpeople assumed that the patrol had but one purpose: "to reduce them again to slavery." Kanady reported that African Americans found the composition of the militia forces, which overwhelmingly contained former Confederate soldiers, particularly threatening. "Most of the members comprising

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[212] Will T. Martin to Governor B.G. Humphreys, October 27, 1865, in Hahn et al, <u>Land and Labor</u>, 823-824.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Rable, <u>But There Was No Peace</u>, 16.

the patrol" as well as the white male populace generally, Kanady noted, walked about "wearing the full uniform of the late so called Confederate states," and "the majority, to judge by their appearance and habits, could not advance necessity, as an excuse for their violation of well known orders" prohibiting Confederate paraphernalia.[215] Riding to protect the vulnerable members of their community and clad in their wartime colors, former Confederates had sealed a critical postwar exchange. In return for the safety they provided to white society, they could avenge the humiliation of defeat, punish African Americans for undermining the experience of soldierhood by laying their own claims to status, and play a meaningful part in southern life on their own terms.

To be sure, many white southerners still balked at coercive violence, and still others accepted militias and patrols created under the auspices of local and state governing bodies but held back from sanctioning the violence inflicted by extralegal groups of young men, most of whom had been Confederate soldiers. Though emancipation and its consequences seemed intolerable, a vocal element within the white southern populace declared itself unwilling to buy white supremacy at the cost of anarchy. According to reports circulated in southern newspapers, a large segment of the white population in the counties surrounding Greensboro, Mississippi, had gathered with the intent of seizing control of the town itself and imposing a more stringent form of white supremacy on its black and white denizens. When residents of the town questioned members of the mob about their intentions,

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[215] Report of Thomas Kanady, Inspecting Officer to the Headquarters of the Eastern District of Louisiana, December 28, 1865, in Hahn, Land and Labor, 878-879.

the following exchange ensued according to a newspaper account: "'We want our rights,' replied one of their number. 'What rights?' said the citizen. 'We want to regulate this town, and we'll do it or burn out the d---d hole.' They were told that they would be resisted to the last." Whether economic interest or the desire to control their own affairs free of coercion no matter its source inspired the townspeople, they successfully prevented the rural mob from rioting.[216]

Commenting on this development, the editors of the Savannah *Daily News and Herald* pleaded for cooler heads to prevail. "It is to be hoped that there will not be a recurrence of such disgraceful scenes," the paper declared. "If the people are to restore peace and harmony, they must desist with the pernicious practice of undertaking to redress their own wrongs, and appeal to the strong arm of the law."[217] In peaceful communities untroubled by threats of massacre, land seizure, or widespread insubordination to white superiority, vigilante groups faced resistance from the very people on whose behalf they claimed to act. The Greensboro episode illustrates that while former Confederate soldiers and white civilians largely shared desires for preserving white supremacy, that common objective remained an imperfect resolution to the vastly different legacies of the war that each group had inherited.

More instructive than the occasional opposition that bounded what Confederate soldiers could do in pursuit of white supremacy were instances where

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[216] Savannah *Daily News and Herald,* August 28, 1866.

[217] Ibid.

decisive action undertaken to that end made flawed men heroes in white public consciousness. Cooper Lindsay, a Georgian by birth, had fought through the war as an enlisted man in the 10th Mississippi. In March 1862 he rose to the rank of sergeant, but when he lost his rifle, bayonet, and cartridge box later in the year, he also lost his stripes. Wounded at Chickamauga in 1863, he returned to his unit in time to take another injury at Atlanta the following year.[218] A fellow soldier's postwar memoir indicates that Lindsay's war evolved from a battle between Union and Confederate forces to a conflict between Lindsay and all those who did not ascribe to his worldview, whatever their race, region, or allegiance. When James H. Wilson's Union cavalry arrived in the outskirts of Columbus, Georgia, in mid-April 1865, Lindsay came upon an officer and four Union privates—two white and two African American—pillaging the plantation home of a former congressman. Lindsay killed the officer with his sword, whereupon the four privates surrendered. When the party reached a nearby swamp, in the words of the memoir, "the two whites died very suddenly from an overdose of lead" and shortly thereafter "the niggers collapsed and died from an internal dose of blue whistlers."[219] Nor did Lindsay confine his willingness to murder to enemy prisoners. In the closing days of the war as relations between frontline and rear echelon soldiers disintegrated throughout the South, a provost guard in Columbus mistook Lindsay's brother John for a deserter and shot him dead. With the aid of members of Joseph Wheeler's cavalry,

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[218] File of Cooper Lindsay, Confederate Soldier Service Files, NARA 270, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

[219] Robert M. Howard, <u>Reminiscences</u> (Columbus, Georgia: Gilbert Printing Company, 1912), 31.

Cooper Lindsay and some of his comrades from the 10th Mississippi nearly hanged the commandant of the provost forces, a Colonel van Zinken, only staying their hands at the behest of the Lindsay brothers' father.[220] By the summer of 1865, his world shattered and at war against all but perhaps his former comrades, Cooper Lindsay had nothing to cling to but his wartime identity as a hardened veteran of four years of fighting and a reputation as a very dangerous man.

Lacking direction and embittered by both the defeat of the Confederacy and the disintegration of his world, Lindsay became a menace to the town of Columbus. By February 1866, he had gained notoriety as a "ruffian and of bad character" prone to heavy drinking and picking fights without much regard for who he fought.[221] An African American minister noted that just as Lindsay's "brother was shot dead by another rebel several months ago, for his devilish conduct," so "the life of this one was threatened by rebels several times."[222] On the evening of February 12, Lindsay, who had spent the day getting drunk, decided that members of the 101st Illinois, a regiment of United States Colored Troops stationed in the town, made better targets than white southern Confederates. Resolving that "he would shoot one of these d---- d niggers before night," Lindsay stepped into the street and accosted James Gant, the

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[220] Howard, Reminiscences, 28-31.

[221] Captain Frederick Mosebach to Captain W.W. Deane, March 8, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 760-761.

[222] Rev. H.M. Turner to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, February 14, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 756-757.

first black soldier he saw.[223] Gant reported walking down the street and catching

sight of Lindsay, but under orders to avoid confrontations with the town's white

population he continued on his way and "never Said a word, never rubed against

him, nor looked at him, until he Cursed me." Despite his efforts, Lindsay called out

that Gant was a "God damn black son of a bitch" and shot him three times with a

pistol.[224]

The shooting instantly sent the town of Columbus into a frenzy and

transformed Lindsay's status within his community. Having chafed under the

occupation of a regiment of African American troops, citizens streamed into the

streets looking for trouble. "Large crowds of rebels gathered around the scene

crying out kill the negro, kill the negro," Turner informed the secretary of war, while

"others Said get your guns boys, hells to pay, the negroes are rising."[225] The officers

of the United States Colored Troops in the town prevented an impending bloodbath

by keeping their men confined to barracks, but in the chaos following Lindsay's

shooting of Gant a soldier discharged a round that hit an elderly man and eventually

caused him to lose his leg. That bullet gave the white residents of Columbus all the

evidence they needed to launch a campaign for the removal of the garrison, and

within three days of the incident the governor of Georgia endorsed the petition of 38

prominent citizens and forwarded it to Andrew Johnson. Jenkins made no reference

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[223] Captain Frederick Mosebach to Captain W.W. Deane, March 8, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 760-761.

[224] Rev. H.M. Turner to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, February 14, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 756-757.

[225] Ibid.

to the exchange of gunfire and its instigator and the petition itself contained only a scant acknowledgement that "a colored soldier was shot," but both the governor and the citizens dwelled at length on familiar themes: sexually suggestive insults to women, rudeness, disrespect, and theft inflicted by black soldiers on white civilians.[226] These provocations, which Reconstruction's most vociferous opponents of racial equality turned into the foundations for their political philosophy, led white southern society to give its support and approval to young men whose violence against African Americans appeared to protect white communities from such outrages. For a society that needed living, active men as well as dead and disempowered heroes to believe in, even deeply flawed former Confederates would provide valuable public reminders that the white South still had defenders.

No one better exhibited the ways in which postwar violence against African Americans could repair rifts between Confederate veterans and white southern society at large than Cooper Lindsay. The notoriously intemperate drunk apotheosized into print as one of the South's most noble sons, and the violent man who cared little whom he killed or under what circumstances he killed them appeared as a peacemaker who used violence only under the greatest duress. According to the *North Alabamian* Lindsay, "one of our best and bravest young men," pulled his revolver only after Gant had intentionally collided with him in the street, called him a son of a bitch, and bragged that "he had put hundreds of like him

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[226] Governor Charles J. Jenkins to Andrew Johnson, February 15, 1866, in Berlin et al, The Black Military Experience, 758-759.

under the ground" while drawing his bayonet.[227] Nor did press coverage far

outstrip the renown that Lindsay gained in Columbus itself. When army

commanders attempted to find a compromise solution that would quell the affair,

ordering Lindsay brought to trial but also removing the 101st Illinois from

Columbus, local courts refused to indict Lindsay because they considered him "their

benefactor and the immediate cause of their having been relieved from the garrison

of colored troops."[228] If Lindsay, an extreme example of the postwar alienation

between the soldiers who defined themselves by war and the peacetime

communities to which they returned, could find himself lauded as a champion of

white southern interests, no degree of division generated by differing Civil War

experiences would prove beyond the power of racially motivated violence to

resolve.

Confederate veterans found postwar violence against African Americans an

expedient tool for addressing many of the problems that the Civil War's outcome

posed for them. Although they had lost the war that might have ensured the

continued and near-absolute structural dominance of white men over all other

categories of people in the South and bestowed a level of respect and power upon

the victorious soldiers unmatched for generations, Confederate veterans could

demand these attributes on a much smaller scale by imposing their power and

curtailing the meaning of freedom for black people. Moreover, using collective

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[227] "Negro Soldier Shot," *North Alabamian*, February 23, 1866.

[228] Captain Frederick Mosebach to Captain W.W. Deane, March 8, 1866, in Berlin et al, <u>The Black Military Experience</u>, 760-761.

violence on behalf of southern white communities that saw themselves as the powerless victims of emancipation addressed at least in part the problem of social identity for Confederate veterans. As men who drew their purpose and to some extent their selfhood from fighting in the service of white dependents—which in this case included men unable to bear the rigors of military life—Confederate soldiers gave their years of early manhood and their innocence as well as their blood, limbs, and lives in exchange for a clear and valued status. Engaging in postwar violence allowed them to recreate that relationship with diminished risks and rewards. Instead of the sacrifices of their bodies, former soldiers' contributions now stemmed from their ability to act cohesively and their willingness to disregard federal authority. In return, southern communities demonstrated in both public discourse and private actions that their defeated soldiers still had a role to play in the present. As the uncertainties of postwar southern life began to crystallize during Congressional Reconstruction and its immediate aftermath, veterans and civilians would use this reconstituted relationship to claim citizenship and pursue autonomous regional self-government. Yet former soldiers would discover that their place as veterans within southern society had limitations and that its terms changed as the Civil War began to fade into memory.

CHAPTER FIVE: "A Time to Come When We Can Once More Say We Are Men"

"By never desponding, but doing always the very best we can, and keeping an eye of faith ever looking ahead to a brighter future, we may yet attain to a degree of quiet and happiness."[229] So promised the political message of a Confederate soldier seeking to prompt his fellow veterans into electoral re-engagement in the late 1860s during what many white southerners regarded as the nadir of their political fortunes. The author captured the object of most former soldiers' postwar lives perfectly. Confederates sought to secure a future for themselves, their dependents, and their society that would allow them to look back with satisfaction and declare that they had fulfilled their duty as men. Many in the South, including the writer who promised a brighter future of quiet and happiness, asked veterans to continue to conceive of their duty in the same relational terms that had bound soldiers and civilians in pursuit of independence during the Civil War and through which soldiers had found their place in a defeated South in the immediate postwar period.

Confederate veterans would indeed serve as symbolic and tangible actors on behalf of white supremacy, becoming objects of mistrust from the northern public and earning acclaim as heroes among southern whites. Yet many former soldiers would find that their static identity as defenders of a vulnerable populace held little

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[229] Anonymous political manuscript, 1867-1868, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU.

substance when compared to the joys of success in constructing a mature male identity within the private sphere or the terrors of failure in the same endeavor.

The year after Appomattox had seen Confederate soldiers and white southern civilians confront the distance that war and defeat had placed between them. Soldiers had navigated challenges to their legal status, swallowed the humiliation of failing to gain independence for themselves and their society, and endured the expectations of families and communities unprepared for the personal changes that military service had created. A partial response to each of those unresolved problems emerged when Confederate soldiers inaugurated a wave of violence against African Americans in the year after the disbandment of their armies to restore themselves to public respect and social importance. That campaign revealed that both former soldiers and white southern civilians had much to offer one another as they navigated the world after Confederate defeat and emancipation.

Yet while Confederate soldiers and their communities were finding a rapprochement with one another through racial repression, the political context in which they acted was evolving. Uncertainty about how the former Confederate states fit into the nation had given southern soldiers and civilians room to reconstruct their relationships to one another. But in taking advantage of this opening by exploiting the lack of clear direction among the implementers of federal policy, former Confederates hastened its closure. While inflicting widespread extralegal violence and adopting restrictive legal codes that seemed to offer no improvement over slavery, white southerners had restored connections between

themselves at the cost of alienating and horrifying much of the northern public and its political representatives.

Former Confederates' actions played the critical role in shaping national attitudes toward Reconstruction because most northerners defined their goals for a meaningful peace in terms of outcomes rather than processes. More than any statutory change, the northern public needed the defeated Confederates to demonstrate their desire for reunion through humility and contrition. The actual measures that the victors would require of the vanquished therefore depended very much on the attitude of the vanquished themselves. If they accepted the tenets of indivisible nationhood and recognized emancipation and free labor capitalism as the bitter but just consequences of the war, former Confederates might earn their place in the national body politic with minimal intervention into their lives and social behaviors. Yet for all the importance that Americans of all races and regions attached to the actions of ex-Confederates, gathering a coherent impression of their attitudes and actions proved an elusive task. People throughout the United States knew that Confederate national authority had been dismantled and the slaves had gained their freedom, but the impact of those large-scale results on daily life in the South remained obscure. This lack of information applied particularly to the state of race relations in the aftermath of emancipation. Private letters from southerners to friends and relatives or from Union soldiers to their families back home broadened public knowledge by giving people a sense of interactions beyond their immediate

surroundings, but throughout the newly reunited nation people clamored for a

clearer understanding of what the war had wrought.[230]

Abraham Lincoln's assassination and the consequent break in executive

leadership contributed substantially to this uncertainty by depriving the United

States of the person that Americans unanimously expected to define the terms of

reunion. Whatever course Reconstruction might have taken with Lincoln as

president (and the subject has occupied scholars for more than a century), his death

cost the United States continuity in its most important office at the critical moment

of transition from war to peace. By winning the war, Lincoln had gained a mandate

to direct policy and manage competing interests that no other political figure could

have possessed. Andrew Johnson, his successor in office, could by no means claim

to be Lincoln's unquestioned heir in assuming the mantle of national authority.

Instead, his became one of many voices engaged in broad and vicious contests to

determine who would have a voice in shaping the course of Reconstruction, how

those voices could access existing levers of power in order to translate their needs

into political objectives, and what means governing institutions could employ in

converting those objectives into results. Securing the ability to govern therefore

required achieving at least a temporary convergence of political actors, institutions,

and constituents, all of which underwent substantial redefinition after the Civil War.

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[230] Michael Perman argues that northerners displayed a fascination with postwar
southern society that approached obsession and thereby created an opportunity for
reports on conditions by quite partial observers to incite political hysteria. Perman,
Reunion Without Compromise, 13-21.

In that context, various interests competed to disseminate visions of conditions in the postwar South that supported their political objectives. Historian Gregory Downs has characterized Reconstruction as "a war over which patrons would heed the cry of which subjects," and political actors strove to portray their chosen constituencies as deserving of the benefits of citizenship while castigating other groups as unfit to participate in the American electorate.[231] Accordingly, in public discourse over postwar conditions broad categories washed out the nuances of loyalty and contingent affiliation that wartime experiences had produced. Commentators depicted southern African Americans and whites as unitary groups, only occasionally and clumsily attempting delineations of class, ideology, and experience. For those committed to federal intervention, the two races were locked in diametric opposition in a contest for power; advocates of "home rule," by contrast, saw black and white southerners coming to terms with new realities together in a devastated postwar world. Confederate veterans stood at the center of public discussion of white southerners' attitudes and intentions in the postwar United States. Their numbers, symbolic importance, and uncertain social position cast them as the deciding figures on how the public would perceive white southerners' intentions and accordingly the degree to which they would seek to remake America's political landscape.

The first comprehensive pictures of conditions in the postwar South reached national eyes primarily through the reports of travel writers dispatched on behalf of major newspapers. The Cincinnati *Gazette* sent Whitelaw Reid, a prolific and widely

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[231] Downs, <u>Declarations of Dependence</u>, 101.

read war correspondent, on a tour through nearly all of the former Confederate states. Not to be outdone, other major newspapers sent their own reporters: Sidney Andrews submitted reports to both the Chicago *Tribune* and the Boston *Advertiser,* while *The Nation* dispatched John Richard Dennett on a similar sweep. John T. Trowbridge embarked on a tour of the war's major battlefields under direct contract from Hartford publisher L. Stebbins. Each of these authors published a manuscript of their collected impressions. Taken together they gave the American people a window into southern life after the war and--equally importantly--allowed white southerners to read how the rest of the nation viewed them.

The travel writers' reports contained anecdotes that depicted former Confederate soldiers as both profoundly decent and capable of barbaric inhumanity. All of them generally agreed that taken as a whole, fighting men represented the most virtuous part of the white southern population. Dennett declared that "the men who fought in the Confederate army are honest in their professions of loyalty and wish for an enduring peace," which stood in marked contrast to "the great body of the people" who he found "as rebellious as they were two years since."[232] With the possible exception of the few steadfast Unionists he met, Trowbridge found that "the most sincerely loyal Virginians I saw in Richmond, or elsewhere, were those who had lately been fighting against us."[233] In Andrews's opinion "The late private

[232] John Richard Dennett, <u>The South As It Is: 1865-1866,</u> ed. Henry M. Christman (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 312-313.

[233] John T. Trowbridge, <u>The Desolate South 1865-1866: A Picture of the Battlefields and of the Devastated Confederacy</u>, ed. Gordon Carroll (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1956), 188.

soldiers of the Rebel army are the best class of citizens in the South," and they showed more loyalty and civility than "nearly all the women, who are as rebellious and malignant as ever; most of the preachers" and "the ex-Rebel officers who didn't see active service."[234] Even Whitelaw Reid, generally the most critical of the authors when speaking of white southerners, allowed that when he encountered groups of former Confederate soldiers on the streets and in hotels, "nothing could have been more unexceptionable than their general conduct."[235]

Graphic and sensational accounts of individuals' actions undermined these promising assertions. Former Confederate soldiers seemed suffused with enough arrogance to force their will into any situation and a willingness to employ the threat or the reality of violence against people regardless of race, class, gender, and age. Reid reported a "returned Rebel soldier" in Florida bribing a girl "scarcely fourteen years old" to marry him; when the girl's mother objected, the soldier "seized upon the child, vowing that she must straightaway come home with him, or he would kill her." Andrews wrote of a wealthy young Confederate veteran in Charleston who walked the streets in his uniform coat and ostentatiously displayed its buttons in contravention of the orders of the United States military commander. When an African American soldier stopped the man and informed him of his violation, the young Confederate drew a knife and slashed the soldier's throat from ear to ear. "It is held to be an evidence of smartness, rather than otherwise, to kill a

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[234] Sidney Andrews, The South Since the War (Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow, &Co, 1866), 386.

[235] Reid, After the War, 206.

freedman," Andrews lamented, "and I have not found a man here who believes it to be a sin against Divine law." Dennett found hatred of the Union and its soldiers alive and well in Mississippi, where a soldier recounted how he and his comrades had murdered prisoners after stripping them of their shoes, hats, money, and valuables. "His audience received quite readily more than one story of cold-blooded cruelty," Dennett observed. Conditions seemed worse outside Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where former Confederate bushwhackers fired from cover at federal officers riding by in the dead of night.[236] Although palliated by general claims of Confederate soldiers' loyalty and trustworthiness, graphic instances such as these lingered in the minds of readers and painted a compelling picture of a region incapable of self-governance.

The accounts of northern correspondents reached a wide readership, but their authors presented too complex a picture of former Confederates, especially soldiers, to motivate clear political action. Yet since the fall of 1865 military commanders, provisional governors, and federal legislators had received a flood of reports from Unionist civilians, African Americans, Freedman's Bureau officials, and United States soldiers and officers posted to occupation duty in the southern states that contained a clear and consistent message. These described Confederate soldiers as defiant of United States authority, vindictive toward Unionists and the freedpeople, contemptuous of free labor, and determined to re-impose the strictures of slavery.[237] Recognizing that the fate of Reconstruction hinged on whether the

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[236] Reid, After the War, 165-166; Andrews, South Since the War, 28; Dennett, South As It Is, 352, 333.

[237] These reports comprise much of the evidence in Chapter Four.

northern public believed that former Confederates or former slaves better deserved

inclusion in the American citizenry, Republicans in Congress resolved to subject the

actions of white southerners to a trial in the court of national opinion.

To accomplish this end, William P. Fessenden, Thaddeus Stevens, and other

prominent Republicans in Congress assembled the Joint Committee on

Reconstruction in December 1865. Composed of fifteen members—twelve of them

Republicans—the Committee solicited testimony from more than 140 witnesses

throughout the spring of 1866. While most witnesses came from the United States

Army forces stationed throughout the South, Freedman's Bureau officers, and

prominent Unionists, former Confederate officers and local officials also appeared

before the Committee. Implicitly political in nature, the words contained in the

records of the Joint Committee spoke to the fundamental importance of former

Confederates to postwar communities but disagreed on their civic virtues. Whether

hostile or sympathetic to Confederate veterans, witnesses before the Committee

eschewed attempting to disentangle the nuanced role of racial and national identity

in structuring former soldiers' relationship to southern society. Instead, they opted

to present former Confederates as unified, purposeful actors bound together by

shared wartime status and experience and therefore possessed of coherent and

transparent motivations.[238]

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[238] Several historians have made use of the compelling and eminently quotable
testimony of witnesses before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. Their
interpretations of the content of the testimony and its proper application vary. Eric
Foner situates the Committee as the principal political battleground between

While they spoke in broad generalizations about the character and inclinations of Confederate soldiers now that they had returned in defeat to the South, witnesses before the Committee chose their words carefully. Playing upon but never directly invoking antebellum and wartime conceptions of southern white men's propensity for violence, aversion to honest labor, and dissolute morality, United States Army officers argued that Confederate soldiers valued none of the tenets of democratic citizenship. Instead, they described how white southerners sought to replace plantation slavery with a system of total racial control bounded by violence and policed by veterans of the armies. The features of that system included local political power aggregated in the hands of Confederate officers and planter aristocrats, aversion to productive free labor on the part of white men, and repressive racial violence of a particularly gruesome nature—all of which demonstrated the unfitness for citizenship of the men who had served in the Confederate armies.

Johnson and his congressional opponents over the question of federal intervention to secure civil rights for the freedmen, and credits the testimony elicited with driving moderate Republicans away from accommodation toward Johnson on the Freedmen's Bureau and Civil Rights Acts. Gregory Downs takes a similar tack, using the Committee testimony to underscore the patronal role that former Confederate political leaders expected Andrew Johnson to play and their subsequent translation of Federal leniency into an expectation of rights. James Marten, meanwhile, echoes the Committee organizers themselves by using testimony from the Committee to construct an argument about Confederate veterans' propensity to "intimidate and threaten or at the very least refuse to back down before Union officials and African Americans." While each of these readings of the Committee's significance have merit, neither reads the testimony or the conditions under which it was given as political discourse designed to create delineated categories of people, which in turn could impel debates about civic worthiness. Foner, Reconstruction, 247-261; Marten, Sing Not War, 67-72; Downs, Declarations of Dependence, 82-86.

Before cataloguing the numerous reasons why Confederate soldiers made bad citizens, those who wished to see the federal government assert its power in the postwar South tried to establish the importance of military veterans to their communities. They emphasized the social respect and esteem that former Confederates still commanded and emphasized that this respect stemmed from veterans' military identities rather than their importance in repairing the fortunes of a devastated region. Brigadier General Charles Howard found former Confederate officers in South Carolina wearing their uniforms in civilian life and "more disposed to make a display of them than otherwise."[239] Rufus Saxton, who shared Howard's rank as well as his location, agreed, declaring "a man in full rebel gray uniform can go from one end of the State to the other without receiving the slightest disrespect."[240] Famed cavalry commander Benjamin H. Grierson carried his perspective still further when he averred that "to have been an officer in the confederate army is a passport to society everywhere throughout the south."[241] When they described the actions and motivations of former Confederates, especially officers, these general officers in the United States Army made it clear that they were speaking of the most respected and influential men in the white southern population.

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[239] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 38.

[240] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 218.

[241] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 123.

Recognizing that the nature of the political authority that Confederate soldiers respected would in large part determine whether lawmakers and the public alike accepted white southerners' pleas for self-governance, most of the witnesses who gave evidence to the Joint Committee took pains to show that veterans had learned nothing from their defeat. They not only retained bitterness toward the United States government, which they continued to view as their enemy rather than their rulers, but also lacked the independence of mind and discernment for participatory democracy.   Alexander Ketchum recounted that "Officers of the late rebel army expressed themselves in strong terms against Union officers, and in some cases insulted them openly."[242] Mordecai Mobley of the Freedman's Bureau told of how a Confederate colonel strode into his office in Jackson, Mississippi, placed a bowie knife on the table Mobley sat behind, and announced that "you whipped us, but, damn you, you have not subdued us; we will try you again, yet."[243]

Bitterness and defiance toward individual United States officers promised an unstable peace but only scratched the surface of the political dangers that former Confederates seemed to pose. While the committee met, American politicians and citizens alike had kept an active watch on events in Mexico where Emperor Napoleon III had massed French troops in support of the regime of Maximilian I. A French puppet monarchy in Mexico not only opposed American interests in the region but also clearly violated the Monroe Doctrine, and the United States

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[242] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 232.

[243] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 20.

government considered war with Maximilian a serious enough prospect to dispatch General Philip Sheridan and fifty thousand men to the Texas border just days after the last Confederate field army disbanded.[244] Witnesses confirmed that given the slightest chance, former Confederates would support the French against the United States if war erupted between the two nations. Dr. G.F. Watson, a Virginia Unionist, warned that "a very large portion [of the ex-Rebels] would join France or any other foreign power" in any future conflict.[245] Charles Mills concurred, affirming that "many at the south would be grateful of the opportunity to go to war if there was a prospect of their throwing off their allegiance to the United States government."[246] If the federal government relaxed its vigilance toward former Confederates, it invited a second civil war—one in which the South might have the support of a foreign power.

Whether a person indemnified all Confederate soldiers without distinction or chose to single out only a particular portion depended on his objectives for Reconstruction. Many army officers and other northern Republicans indemnified the entire class of former Confederate soldiers because they wanted that group to play no significant part in the political reconstruction of the South. Instead they sought federal control of the rebellious region while they redrew its political and

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[244] For the seriousness with which the United States Army considered the prospect of an immediate war with Mexico and perhaps France in the summer of 1865, see Edward M. Coffman, The Old Army: A Portrait of the American Army in Peacetime, 1784-1898 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

[245]Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part I, 20.

[246]Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 136.

social structures to protect African Americans. Lieutenant George O. Sanderson claimed that in North Carolina, "The Confederate soldiers…seem to feel very bitter towards the free class on account of their being raised to an equality with them," and given the chance, these soldiers promised "to send them to hell."[247]

Other witnesses, most of them white southern Unionists who hoped that their wartime loyalty would lead to postwar political reward, distinguished between those Confederates who had held positions of power and influence and men of more humble backgrounds. Although easily misled by wartime bonds or charismatic leadership, the common soldier of the South would prove loyal and responsible so long as he was prohibited from electing former officers and Confederate politicians. To that end, men like Josiah Millard of Virginia exonerated "a good many men who are very poor—reduced almost to starvation—who say 'we have got enough fighting; we are not going to fight any more.'" Properly submissive to the national government when left to their own devices, these men would prove hostile if allowed to choose the same men to lead the postwar South as they had supported in secession and war. "Hitherto the leaders have always induced them to do what they wanted," Millard warned, and without preventive measures "they will probably do the same in the future."[248] J.J. Gries of Alabama drew the same distinction. While in one breath he praised the "thousands of poor Confederate soldiers who were Union before the rebellion and are heartily tired of the rebellion now," in another he

[247]Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 176.

[248] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 29.

warned against the disastrous consequences of allowing southern states to reinstitute military culture and hierarchy through the establishment of militias. Gries had obtained a petition with hundreds of signatures from fellow Unionists "asking the president...not to organize the militia on a rebel basis as they had commenced to do it, with the same rebel companies as before, under the very same old commanders."[249] The commanders, not the men they led, presented the real threat to meaningful political change, and with institutional organization—rather through formal politics or groups like militias--they would rule the South just as they had during the war. Whether malicious to the core or simply too ignorant to be trusted with any but a limited franchise, Confederate soldiers could not be left to themselves to choose the political future of the South.

Beyond their affinity for oligarchs and demagogues and their dubious national loyalties, Confederate soldiers came in for substantial criticism for their hostility to honest work. Echoing an argument pioneered by abolitionists and adopted by the Republican Party in the 1850s, many witnesses presented evidence demonstrating that slavery's legacy of indolence and vicissitude had left white men abhorring labor as the province of those in bondage and those too poor to afford slaves.[250] This attitude rendered white southerners hostile to emancipation not only because it robbed them of their human property and threatened their way of

[249] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 14-15.

[250] On antebellum adoptions of this argument to critique slavery and its ills, see Eric Foner, Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 40-72, 301-319.

life but also because its underlying principle—that American society should rest on a foundation of respect for work and reward those who performed it with greater diligence and ingenuity—ran contrary to deeply held cultural standards about the meaning of manual labor.[251]

For those who wished to see governance in the postwar South taken out of the hands of former Confederate soldiers, the assertion that such men despised work and valued leisure carried serious implications. Confederate soldiers would never choose to find purpose and direction in rebuilding their lives through honest toil. W.L. Chase, a United States Army officer stationed in northern Virginia, found "very few people there who are industrious" and heaped particular scorn upon former soldiers. He identified "a class of young men, returned from the army…who are very bitter against the government, and are lying around bar-rooms."[252] These men went out of their way to provoke conflicts, insult army officers (including Chase), and harass freedpeople because they would not engage themselves in any useful activity. Thomas M. Cook, a war correspondent from the New York *Herald* who established his own newspaper in Wilmington, North Carolina, took a more sympathetic view of southern whites generally than did Chase but still attributed

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[251] Unlike accounts of Confederate veterans' distaste for the United States government, hostility toward African Americans, and affinity for extralegal violence, all of which had substantial foundation in actual practice, accounts that indicted former soldiers for their unwillingness to work and define themselves through it ran directly counter to soldiers' own convictions and showed little appreciation for the obstacles to productivity that people of all races confronted in the postwar South. See Chapter Three for former Confederates' attempts to define themselves through their labor after the Civil War.

[252] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 95.

discord and violence within his community to "hot heads" consisting chiefly of "boys and young men thrown upon the world and living upon the street corners."[253] Since in this formulation of white southern ideology the act and the actor were mutually constitutive--slaves performed manual labor and those who performed such work were slaves--witnesses expressed little surprise that former Confederates forced African Americans to work through coercive violence while showing no inclination to labor themselves. Major General Edward Hatch traveled widely throughout the South and found discouraging conditions everywhere he went because the white population put more energy into racial repression than in repairing a shattered economy, no matter which side they had supported during the war. In Tennessee he attributed "antipathy" toward African Americans primarily to "men on both sides who have been in the army and are not willing to work."[254] Conditions struck him as much the same in Mississippi where Hatch found "bands of 'Regulators,' many of them lately soldiers in the rebel army, going about the country to see that the negroes worked."[255] Since free labor stood as the rallying cry of the Republican North through the war and the guiding ideal for reconstructing the former Confederacy, Confederates' enmity toward it made them unfit to participate in political activity.

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[253] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part I, 277.

[254] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part I, 107-108.

[255] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 5.

The most damning testimony recorded by the Joint Committee concerned the propensity for atrocity that Confederate veterans displayed. Albert Warren Kelsey, stationed in Mississippi, showed comparative restraint when he branded the "Texan scouts…who claim to be Confederate soldiers" residing in his locale as "thieves and murderers."[256] Other characterizations dwelled on the details of the violence performed in particular detail. Captain Alexander P. Ketchum, stationed in the Sea Islands of South Carolina, described former Confederate soldiers in the state's Edgefield district as forming organized bands of "regulators" that "maltreat negroes without any avowedly definite purpose in view. They treat the negroes," Ketchum continued, "in the most horrible and atrocious manner, even to maiming them, cutting their ears off, etc."[257] Numerous witnesses from other parts of the South confirmed Ketchum's account of former Confederates' inclination toward brutal violence. Colonel Eli Whittelsey, who had served with the African American troops of the 46th USCT during the war, spoke of similar conditions in rural North Carolina, where "four young men, some of whom had been in the rebel service" broke into an orgy of violence upon encountering a former slave. The former Confederates "seized him, beat him cruelly, and left him on the ground in such a state that he died before morning," after which they rode through the town of Washington, shooting at white and black residents alike. For gratuitous savagery, no incident matched that reported by J.H. Matthews, a Freedman's Bureau official stationed in Amite County, Mississippi, who described a victim of former Confederate private John H. Magee

[256] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 3.

[257] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 234.

thusly: "*the negro was murdered, beheaded, skinned, and his skin nailed to the barn*."[258] Emphasizing not just the existence of racial violence but its shocking savagery, these witnesses—all Freedman's Bureau agents and army officers—hoped to portray Confederate veterans as barbarians unrestrained by civilized decency and therefore utterly unfit for democratic citizenship.

With their soldiers cast as a unitary group, attacked for their vices, and declared unfit for political power or even social respect, white southerners responded by defending Confederate veterans' character and building their region's political identity around the virtues of the men who had served. A handful of witnesses before the Joint Committee testified to the qualities of Confederate soldiers and suggested that their wartime experiences had not left them the brutal, violent killers suggested by Freedman's Bureau officials. Instead they claimed that the travails of campaigning had deepened Confederates' respect for their Union foes and endowed soldiers with a resolve and humanity that ideally suited them to lead Reconstruction in the southern states. When Montgomery Dent Corse, a former brigadier general in the Army of Northern Virginia and one of the very few Confederate soldiers who gave testimony to the committee, was asked whether he and his men had gone through enough fighting in the war to make peaceful and submissive citizens, he responded "Yes, sir; I think that is the general feeling

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[258] <u>Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction</u> Part II, 184-185; <u>Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction</u> Part III, 146. Matthews's testimony was recorded as referring to "John H. McGee," but comparison with wartime unit and census records indicates that he spoke of John H. Magee and that the person recording Matthew's words transliterated the name.

throughout the community, and I feel that the men who fought the most are the best."[259]

Some Union army officers concurred with Corse. Edward Hatch, who questioned the work ethic of white southerners generally, nevertheless believed that "A rebel soldier who has fought through the war is by far the best man in the country, and the most willing to accept the state of affairs as they are, and the most willing to go to work."[260] Having measured the resolve of their opponents and seen the war's military campaigns take a decisive turn in favor of the Union firsthand, frontline soldiers possessed a more thorough appreciation for their defeat than did men who remained at home or guerillas, whom Hatch regarded as opportunists and criminals. Captain L.H. Whipple served with a regiment of United States Colored Troops in Arkansas and, unlike nearly all of his fellow witnesses, adopted a measured attitude toward Confederate soldiers that allowed for the variances of class and individual experience. While he expressed disappointment with isolated bands of former soldiers who harassed Unionists, Whipple doubted that most veterans "would in any way molest Union men, for a great many men who were opposed to the rebellion were forced into the rebel army; and, again, some of those who entered into the war with all their heart have changed their minds."[261] Among these Whipple felt were many who might make good citizens.

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[259] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part I, 74.

[260] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 6.

[261] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part III, 168.

The most celebrated and compelling speaker to appear before the Joint

Committee in defense of Confederate soldiers was also their most celebrated

commander. On February 17, 1866, Robert E. Lee entered the United States Capitol

and gave testimony about conditions in the postwar South. The members of

Congress who questioned him did little to conceal their animus toward Lee, probing

him on mistreatment of prisoners in Richmond's Libby Prison and the notorious

Andersonville camp. But their most substantial lines of inquiry focused on how

Lee's former soldiers had felt and acted since the end of the war. Asked whether

defeat had proven hard enough on his men to induce them to emigrate to Mexico

rather than submit to reunion on federal terms, Lee claimed that they possessed

enough fortitude to persevere in their home communities and accept the results of

the war. While he confessed that many men felt "that their prospects at home are so

poor now that it is like losing their very lives to remain," Lee noted that the

intervening time between his army's surrender and early 1866 had seen the

migratory sentiment diminish considerably.[262]

Beyond assuring the committee that his soldiers valued their American

identity enough to remain in the United States despite the challenges that such a

course would require, Lee promised that his men sought reconciliation more than

continued sectional strife. At Appomattox, Lee's final words to his soldiers had

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[262] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 134. On the topic of
Confederate migration to foreign countries, both in reality and as a conceptual
possibility, see Foster, Ghosts of the Confederacy, 15-17, 206-207; and Rubin, A
Shattered Nation, 132, 173.

enjoined them to resume their prewar occupations and above all to obey the laws and become good citizens.[263] Almost a year later, he assured his audience that the men of the Confederate armies were following his advice. "They looked upon the war as a necessary evil and went through it," Lee said of his soldiers, but without forming or retaining any lasting malice. Instead, the common experience of battlefield horror and sustained deprivation had endowed Union and Confederate soldiers alike with a comradeship that would provide a solid foundation for reuniting the nation. "I have seen them relieve the wants of federal soldiers on the field," Lee offered by way of illustration.[264] Lee, Corse, and the few other sympathetic witnesses before the Joint Committee told Congress and the nation's public that Confederate soldiers constituted the most trustworthy and loyal segment of the southern white population and those people most likely to render the region economically productive and politically stable.

Their words had little effect. The testimony elicited by the Joint Committee convinced most of the American public outside of the South that defeated Confederates would not voluntarily change their behavior because of the outcome of the war. Widespread and vicious violence toward the freedpeople confirmed that emancipation had failed to produce meaningful change for former slaves. Disrespect to the symbols and officials of the United States indicated a tenuous and superficial loyalty to the national government. Moreover, the election of men from

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[263] Quoted in Robert Hendrickson, The Road to Appomattox (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1998), 202; and Jay Winik, April 1865: The Month that Saved America (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001), 193.

[264] Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction Part II, 135.

the Confederacy's highest echelons to Congress showed that Andrew Johnson had fundamentally miscalculated in assuming that the white population of the southern states would break free of the planter aristocracy and embrace a more egalitarian vision of democracy if given the opportunity. In fact, the South had placed itself as firmly as ever in the hands of the very class of leaders that had received criticism before the Joint Committee from even those witnesses most sympathetic to the former Confederates. Reading the writing on the wall, former Confederate soldier John Dabney warned his father in April that "I see no prospect of our condition becoming better, and a great probability of its becoming much worse. The President is our only safeguard and I fear they will at last pass those abominable Freedman's Bureau and civil rights bills over his veto."[265]

Dabney's predictions, of course, proved correct. The resultant birth of Congressional Reconstruction is a well-studied political subject. Congress, impelled by the outrage of their constituents at the intransigence of white southerners, passed the Civil Rights Act, confirmed it over Johnson's veto, and passed the Fourteenth Amendment in the span of two months from April to June 1866. This legislation altered the definition of citizenship more completely than any law of the United States before or since save perhaps the Nineteenth Amendment by declaring that former slaves were citizens, barring any former Confederate civil or military leaders who had previously taken an oath of allegiance to the United States from federal office, and apportioning representation to the southern states according to

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[265] John Dabney to John B. Dabney, April 1, 1866, Saunders Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

the proportion of male citizens of all races entitled to vote in national elections. When the legislatures of all of the former Confederate states save Tennessee refused to ratify the amendment, Congress passed the Reconstruction Act of 1867, which placed the South under military control until they had ratified new constitutions that enfranchised men regardless of previous condition of servitude and passed the Fourteenth Amendment. Historians have devoted less attention to the effect of this process on Confederate veterans and their relationship to southern society. Yet the federal restructuring of southern political power, which most former Confederates viewed as a simple exchange in which they lost the rights of citizens and African Americans gained them, had serious consequences for how veterans structured their lives, how they interacted with southern society at large, and what southern society asked of them.

In its most immediate impact, Congressional Reconstruction altered how former Confederate soldiers understood their relationship to the national government. At the conclusion of the war, few bore much love for the government that had destroyed their national ambitions, inflicted a personally humiliating defeat on soldiers, and ended their active service in the institution that for most of them comprised the defining portion of their identity. Many had expressed fears of the tyranny with which the North planned to subjugate white southerners, but in the first year of relatively benign rule under Johnson's leadership those anxieties had diminished and former soldiers had made their peace with most aspects of national reunion. After swallowing their pride and taking the amnesty oath, giving up their independence and their slaves, Confederates expected to receive leave to choose

their own leaders and govern their society as white men had always done. Yet while

ordinary soldiers had appeared in a favorable light in both northern journalists'

accounts and in the reports gathered by the Joint Committee, to many white

southerners it appeared that Congress had decided that their political predilections

made them better fit for a martially imposed dictatorship rather than republican

electoral government. The Reconstruction Acts left Confederate soldiers feeling

betrayed. An anonymous Confederate captain circulated a toast that Dorilas Henry

Lee Martz, colonel of the 10th Virginia Infantry, retained as a political philosophy.

An expression of hatred toward both a race regarded by Confederates as inferior

and the northern populace deemed responsible for raising them to equality, it read:

> Here's to the white man!
> The white man before the nigger!
> To the nigger before the dutchman!
> To the dutchman before the dog!
> And here's to the dog!
> Even to a very small, blear-eyed, wire-
> haired, shag-eared, bench-legged,
> stub-tailed, snub-nosed, egg-sucking,
> sheep-stealing little son of a canine mother,
> before the Yankee! And here's to all other Yankees! Before the home-
> made Yankee! whom with Thad Stevens,
> the reconstruction committee and the freedmen's bureau may the Devil
> turn inside out! Amen![266]

Beneath their anger and contempt, however, most former Confederate

soldiers responded to this diminution of their political fortunes with resigned

despair. If their letters are a true indication of their sentiments, veterans never felt

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[266] Jackson Martz to Dorilas Henry Lee Martz, August 3, 1866, Miscellaneous Virginia
Letters, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

such a collective sense of powerlessness and victimhood as they did at the climax of Congressional Reconstruction. Having first fought a war to break away from the national government and then waged a campaign of violence in the early postwar years to diminish the effects of emancipation on their communities, many felt that when an empowered federal government shook off its inaction and proceeded to redefine the parameters of southern democracy they had nothing left with which to resist. William Summer, who had served with the 8th South Carolina Infantry during the war, greeted the arrival of military rule in his home state with fear rather than defiance. "We are in a situation where we must submit and accept the best terms they offer us," Summer counseled his friend George Alan Fike.[267]

J.B. Mitchell of North Carolina wrote to wartime comrade Ruffin Thomson that he no longer had any hope for the future. "The future of the South is a mysterious horror and I decline to contemplate it," Mitchell announced, but admitted "I cannot say that I perceive any light ahead." He had believed in the Confederate cause and in the possibility of independence during the war, but the reality of defeat after prolonged and desperate optimism had crushed his spirits. "Those old wiseacres who during the war were always crying out, 'Never mind boys, keep a good heart, you know the darkest hour is just before day' have disgusted me with hope," Mitchell wrote. Rather than fighting for a better future, Mitchell recommended cultivating an indifferent attitude toward current events as a survival strategy. "I believe that the only way to be happy now is to content ourselves with

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[267] William Summer to George Alan Fike, April 8, 1867, George Alan Fike Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

the old aphorism that 'Whatever is, is right' and endeavor to make the best of it," he gloomily concluded his letter.[268] Major General Evander Law, an Alabamian who had assumed divisional command in the Army of Northern Virginia at Gettysburg, predicted that enfranchising African Americans would lead to a race war in which former slaves would triumph. Yet he wanted no part in politics as long as "political speeches and meetings, all of which are excessively <u>nigger</u> in their complexion, are the order of the day." Rather than fight to change the political climate, Law contemplated moving to "some other state where the whites are in the majority."[269]

Indeed, few Confederate veterans considered that they might prove an effective political counterweight to African American voting interests once the federal government mandated universal manhood suffrage. They expected dominance rather than mere participation and declined to vote with their most prominent leaders barred from office and their ballots rendered equal to those cast by black men. The exclusion of the Confederate civil and military leadership left many former Confederates believing that "our legislaters and officers of all descriptions will have to be of the negro rase or deserters who they call loyal men, if we have any."[270] In consequence, as J.D. McLucas of the 8th South Carolina Infantry wrote to his brother Roderick, "the people here are slow to register" despite the

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[268] J.B. Mitchell to Ruffin Thomson, December 20, 1866, Ruffin Thomson Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[269] Evander McIver Law to Mims Walker, September 8, 1867, Evander McIver Law Papers, Alabama Division of Archives and History.

[270] Philip Lybrook to Henry Lybrook, March 1867, Lybrook Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

threat that "the negroes will take and Rule the Country."[271] The changing political

landscape led some men to reject representative government altogether. Traveling

through Germany to escape the oppressive conditions he saw in his native Georgia,

F.A. Lipscomb claimed that he preferred the monarchies of Europe to the democratic

impulses of the Declaration of Independence. "What arts are there cultivated, but

those of Deception & Fraud?" Lipscomb asked rhetorically. "What life protected?

What liberty guarded? What people happy? What has it done for civilization, but

reversed its course, embonded its teachings, & taught the world to believe that all

men are equal?" Rather than advancing civilization, America's democratic

experiment had shown itself a failure through its effects during Reconstruction. "A

race of ignorant slaves are freed, their masters chained, & they made rulers,"

Lipscomb commented. "This is the work of a 'Big Black Fact,' this is the result of

Democracy. This thing of Democracy must & will be scourged from our land."[272]

While few might have phrased it so blatantly, many former Confederate soldiers

responded to the changing composition of electoral politics in the South by damning

the institution itself and opting not to participate in a system that they could not

control.

 To be sure, Confederate soldiers were not distinguished from white southern

men generally by their disinclination to participate in what they saw as a

compromised political system. Dr. Joseph Davis Smith, nephew of Jefferson Davis

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[271] J.D. McLucas to Roderick Salley McLucas, August 22, 1867, Roderick Salley McLucas Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

[272] F.A. Lipscomb to P.W. Meldrim, May 8, 1868, Meldrim Family Papers, Georgia Historical Society.

and a man exempted from military service by his age and his profession, spoke for many of his class and political inclinations when he declared in 1867, "I don't intend to register or vote again. Let the Yankee and the Negro go together."[273] Nonetheless, veterans' absence from the polls and lack of enthusiasm for the political process carried consequences greater than similar behavior among white southern civilians. The standard bearers of their society during the Civil War, former Confederate veterans had asserted their place as the decisive actors and symbols of white South by policing the boundaries of African American behavior within their communities in the war's immediate aftermath. During the debates that captivated national attention in the first half of 1866, former soldiers had been portrayed as the most virtuous segment of white southern society and the one most deserving of the hopes of their section for postwar leadership. Their reluctance to participate in formal politics threatened party leaders' ability to claim legitimacy in resisting Reconstruction. Until political organizations could find a way to recruit former Confederates to their membership and thereby gain momentum and credibility within the South's white population, the only effective opposition to Congressional policy would come in the form of violent, disorganized, and inchoate resistance within communities.

The process of political reengagement for Confederate veterans in the later years of Reconstruction contained distinct but related elements. The despair of those whom former soldiers had gone to war to defend—principally women and the

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[273] Joseph Davis Smith to Richard Smith, April 30, 1867, Joseph Davis Smith Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

elderly—kindled within some a strong desire to mitigate the effects of Reconstruction policy by any means necessary. After a lull of nearly two years, it seemed that the worst fears that white southerners had imagined would result from defeat (bar violent revolution and widespread murder and rape by former slaves) had come to pass. On New Year's Day 1868, Sally Randle Perry, a Confederate widow from Mississippi, gave in to despondency as she considered how low her home state had sunk. "We are indeed <u>fallen</u> when <u>thieves</u> & adventurers from the North, <u>traitors</u> & <u>renegades</u> in the South & our former <u>slaves</u>, are allowed to disgrace the halls of our statehouse," Perry grieved. "O justice! Where is thy sword?"[274] Alfred Huger, an elderly South Carolina planter who had served in his state's senate in the days of John Calhoun and nullification and was in his eightieth year, wondered how the white South could stand its humiliation. "It is marvelous," Huger reflected, "that cruelty and oppression have not doomed us to madness or driven us to suicide."[275]

Former Confederates might have accepted their own disempowerment and diminished prospects for the future more readily had they not seen and heard women, children, and old people suffering. As with the defeat of the Confederacy, the humiliation of these people—whom soldiers had believed dependant on the protection of men in the fullness of their maturity—suggested that the relationship between white men and their dependents had collapsed because men had not met

[274] Entry of January 1, 1868, Sally Randle Perry Diary, Mississippi Division of Archives and History.

[275] Alfred Huger to Thomas L. Wells, October 3, 1868, <u>Mason Smith Family Letters</u>, 277.

their obligations. Though men rarely wrote confessional letters or entries in their personal diaries that acknowledged as much, they indicated their sense of duty to the powerless within the white community in other ways. Surviving records of the Ku Klux Klan and similar organizations show that these groups justified their existence by promising to protect the vulnerable and to free their communities from the oppression that they considered it their duty to oppose. While these groups maintained political overtones and targeted Radical Republicans and "Negro rule," at their core they all promised to give men a chance to reclaim their roles as defenders of their dependents. In the membership rites of a Klan chapter in South Carolina, senior members bound one hand of each new initiate behind his back to remind him of his current powerlessness and the even graver emasculation that loomed if white men did not seize control of their surroundings. The Grand Councilman then instructed candidates that they stood "with one hand bound hard and fast and in great danger of having the other bound too, unless we band ourselves together and struggle not only to prevent the other from being bound, but to free the one already manacled."[276] The metaphor clearly illustrated the motivations that lay at the heart of men's participation in the Klan and similar organizations. They committed to imposing white supremacy through collective violence because doing so would restore to them the power to act on behalf of their dependents when conventional war and electoral politics had failed.

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[276] Initiation rites of unnamed organization, Artemus Darby Goodwyn Papers, South Caroliniana Library, USC.

The Knights of the White Camellia in Louisiana made their position even more explicit. In their constitution the Knights instructed their members to "protect the weak, the innocent, and the defenceless, from the indignities, wrongs, and outrages of the lawless, the violent, and the brutal"—a pledge that, if highly ironic given the group's methods, nevertheless offered men a vision of righteous activity on behalf of a vulnerable populace. Their highest purpose lay specifically in offering to "succor the suffering and unfortunate, and especially the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers."[277] Men who joined organizations such as this thus drew upon the same mandate that militias, Regulators, and other vigilante bands had used in the months immediately following surrender: to act in the interests of their familial dependents while also claiming theoretical responsibility for and empowerment from white society at large. While historians cannot parse with precision the degree to which claiming to act on behalf of those whom social mores constructed as properly powerless screened vigilantes from having to confront more base and selfish motives, men knew that society judged them foremost as protectors and providers for others. Whether genuine or calculated, the appeals of the vulnerable and on behalf of the vulnerable motivated some former Confederates to resist Reconstruction as Congress envisioned it despite their own self-perceptions of helplessness and even martyrdom.

Appeals to former Confederates that presented a prostrate white South as dependent upon their protection existed outside of vigilante organizations as well as

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[277] Constitution and Bylaws, Knights of the White Camellia Papers, Alabama Division of Archives and History.

within them. Indeed, the high popularity of extralegal groups such as the Klan while participation in formal politics waned proved instructive to leaders who wished to prompt veterans to re-engage. These groups had succeeded because they promised to give former soldiers a conduit through which they could act with purpose and preserve their place as the guardians of white society. In effect, they had overcome the greatest obstacle obstructing political parties after the passage of the Fourteenth Amendment: to make former soldiers believe that political action could offer more than frustration and futility and serve as an important arena to contest the reshaping of southern society. To inspire soldiers to invest in the electoral process, politicians therefore changed their rhetoric and their definition of political activity itself to appeal more directly to former Confederates.

The content of political appeals from Congressional Reconstruction through the "redemption" of the southern states was calculated to rally troops for battle rather than pontificate on the complexities of political philosophy. For elite southerners still able to contend for federal office and all southern politicians clamoring for support in state elections after the ratification of new state constitutions and the withdrawal of military government, refighting the Civil War in the political arena seemed like an effective strategy. William King Easley, a South Carolina state senator, signer of the state's ordinance of secession, and major in the 3rd South Carolina cavalry, knew his way around both constituents and soldiers. In a speech before the 1868 election, Easley contrasted his political outlook with that of "ignorant negroes and of hungry adventurers of citizens of Main Masichusetts of Ohio of Michigan hungry little fellows who upon the invitation of this party have left

for a season their potatoe patches" to reap the fruits of conquest. After a lengthy

discourse on America's foundation as a white man's country and a declaration that

"the attempt…to make the African Race the ruling power in these Southern States

can only end in ruin," Easley arrived at his principal appeal. "We have fought one

great fight with bullets and bayonets upon battlefields," he declared. "We are now

helping to fight another equally as great, with ballots at the ballot box, upon the

issue of which is staked all that has been left to us from the first all we can enjoy

ourselves and all we hope for for our posterity."[278] Easley promised the soldiers of

the Confederacy a chance to recreate through politics their roles as defenders of

both the principles of white supremacy and the tangible futures of their dependents.

Far from an isolated linguistic flourish, Easley's injunction to soldiers to fight a

second, political war patterned a general approach by Democrats, Conservatives,

and opponents of Reconstruction of all labels in the South. They urged soldiers to

battle against the threats of northern domination and black equality—the same

opponents that Confederates most readily identified during the Civil War—by

skillfully making the question turn on the legacy that veterans would leave to their

women and children.

No better exponent of this strategy emerged during Reconstruction than the

anonymous Confederate soldier who circulated his opinion about the importance of

political participation through Louisiana in 1867 and 1868. Addressing "the people

of my State who like the writer were engaged in the late struggle for Southern

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[278] Speech of William King Easley before the 1868 election, William King Easley Papers, USC.

separate independence, and who feel, since their surrender, an earnest desire for peace to attend their country, for prosperity to once more visit us, and for a time to come when we can once more say we are men," the author launched into an impassioned plea that clearly connected wartime service to postwar political engagement by focusing his appeal on masculine obligations. He first reminded veterans of their quality and standing within their communities. "I know they are no lawless band," the author claimed, dismissing the charges leveled by much of the northern public as well as southern Unionists and reflected in the testimony given before the Joint Committee on Reconstruction. "They are the true blue bloods of their state." With this phrase, the author recalled to veterans the degree to which both physical conditions as well as the image of the white South depended upon their actions.[279]

Having positioned former soldiers as the critical actors in determining the South's destiny, the pamphlet then posed the critical question: "What shall we do?" Substantial forces stood arrayed against them, and the author acknowledged them. "We have a military rule established over us," the pamphlet's writer conceded. "Hundreds of our best citizens are excluded from the rights of franchise in the plan which may be given us to get back into the Union." Given these obstacles, the author understood the logic of those who felt reluctant to engage in electoral politics:

> Those who come under its provisions with the right to vote are saying 'we will not vote. We don't care to vote with the niggers. If our citizens, whom we once honored with offices of state, must for that cause, be

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[279] Anonymous political manuscript, ca. 1867-1868, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

disenfranchised, we don't care to vote. We don't care any more what is done. Its all a farce.'

Yet the writer had spent time as a prisoner of war at Fort Delaware, and then as during Reconstruction he had faced the temptation to abandon his duty to southern society "when the armies of the Confederacy surrendered, and the cause failed." He contemplated severing his relationship to southern society entirely by abandoning the region and beginning life anew elsewhere, but resolved that it "was giving up that manliness which we had all along claimed, to run away from our country in time of its humiliation." This was cause for congratulation, as it proved the steadfast resolve of men who "Stand together still and breast the storm" of defeat.

All of this constituted a prelude to the author's rallying cry. "Now it behooves every man who loves his State—who loves his home, his kindred, and who comes within the privilege, to march to the polls when the day shall come, having previously registered, and vote even alongside of the negro," the former Confederate instructed his comrades. "Let us register, and vote, and keep up our manliness."[280] Knowing that their ability to mount resistance in the political arena depended on making voting both promising and personal for veterans, campaigns structured their rhetoric around the same balance of responsibility and power that the Confederacy had promised its soldiers. Enumerating politics as a duty and promising men that they could retain their "manliness"—in effect, their social position and their self-respect—by taking the path of practical engagement with the

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[280] Ibid.

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world as it was gave former soldiers an incentive to overcome the disinclination they felt toward wielding the electoral franchise.

In addition to crafting the language of their political discourse to appeal to former Confederate soldiers, white southerners opposed to Reconstruction also reconsidered what they meant by politics itself. Determined not only to win control of offices over newly enfranchised African Americans but to reclaim the ballot box itself as the exclusive privilege of white men, political leaders meant to drive Republicans away from the polls and, if possible, out of their communities altogether. This was a novel strategy in degree if not in kind. Elections had brought out a violent political subculture since the early days of the American republic, and the secession crisis had seen "vigilance committees" in Deep South communities detain, assault, and sometimes kill suspected abolitionists.[281] Yet the entrance of African American men and opportunistic immigrants from the North into the South's electorate meant that political orientation now equated with an allegiance that not only paralleled wartime allegiance but also contained equally serious implications. Those who voted against white supremacy and for federally controlled Reconstruction cast themselves outside the community and needed to be driven from the field just as if they were the regiments, squadrons, and batteries of an invading army. One South Carolina newspaper urged "friends" of the South to "watch the enemy, and meet and defeat him at all points. Attack him in front, flank,

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[281] For the role of vigilance committees during the secession crisis in Alabama and Mississippi, see William Barney, The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

and rear, giving him no rest day nor night."[282] A local Democratic political organizer

in Alabama defined his party's goals as "to toil on with commendable ambition, &

never, no never, be content until the last hated Radical & Scalywag has been driven

our borders. With a determined & united effort they can be made to flee from it like

the grasshoppers in a mown meadow would flee from the strides of a giant."[283]

To make the enemy flee, a host of paramilitary organizations rose up in the

states of the former Confederacy. Like the aforementioned Ku Klux Klan, Knights of

the White Camellia, and other vigilante groups, these organizations brought

together men with a shared interest in collective enforcement of white supremacy.

Unlike the night riders, paramilitary organizations operated along military

principles and in broad daylight and the goal of their violence was not to inculcate

terror by targeting symbolic transgressors against white dominance but rather to

seize control of the electoral process itself. Whether in the form of Rifle Clubs or

Red Shirts in South Carolina, White League militias in Louisiana, or smaller

organizations throughout the Deep South, these groups promised former

Confederates a chance to serve the causes of white male supremacy and "home

rule," wear a uniform, and win public acclaim by reversing the course of

Reconstruction. In short, they could fight the Civil War again, but on terms that

promised victory. To that end, these groups policed polling places and frequently

invalidated the results of any elections their preferred candidates did not win,

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[282] "Imitate the Enemy," *Columbia Phoenix,* July 10, 1869.

[283] Undated transcript of political speech, Richard C. Ramsey Papers, Alabama
Division of Archives and History.

forcibly ejected Republican officeholders, and touched off massacres in the guise of repressing "negro riots."   In the words of a northern born witness living in New Orleans, "acts of violence and murder exist in nearly all the southern States, in States where there is no claim that the officers are not duly elected; the programme in all these States is to obtain control of the state goverments this the old rebel element determined to do."[284]

The effect of the strategies adopted by opponents of Reconstruction on former Confederates who accepted their message and re-engaged with public life emerges from the postwar writings of Ezekiel John Ellis, a captain in the Sixteenth Louisiana Infantry. At the war's conclusion Ellis felt that his life held nothing of value around which to structure his future direction. "I would give 4 more useless years of a disappointed & embittered life to talk to you but an hour for years are but

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[284] Charles W. Boothby to George Boothby, September 15, 1874, Charles W. Boothby Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, LSU. Scholars have explored paramilitary political violence in the Redemption campaigns of the postwar South in detail. Their examinations focus, however, on narrating their actions or exploring the power relationships between party ideology and violence in political campaigns. While nearly all acknowledge the importance of former Confederates in both numbers and reputation to the success of white paramilitary groups in resisting Reconstruction, none inverts that question to explore how veterans viewed such groups and what factors conditioned former soldiers' participation—or lack thereof—in Redemption era violence. See James Hogue, Uncivil War: Five New Orleans Street Battles and the Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006); Stephen Kantrowitz, "One Man's Mob is Another Man's Militia: Violence, Authority, and Manhood in Reconstruction South Carolina," in Jane Dailey, Glenda Gilmore, and Bryant Simon, eds., Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 67-87; Nicolas Lemann, Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War (New York: Farrar, Strauss, & Giroux, 2006); Rable, But There Was No Peace, 81-186; and Richard Zuczek, State of Rebellion: Reconstruction in South Carolina (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 118-205.

little to us now," Ellis wrote to his brother. He hoped that upon returning home his

brother could "talk [him] into a better way of feeling, a better way of thinking," but

concluded "how dark the future is."[285] After several years of building a family and a

legal practice, political re-engagement allowed Ellis to redress the feelings of futility

and bitterness that had lingered as his Confederate service came to an end. ""It is

only for us to stand firm for we are right, our all is at stake and in our course there is

a moral power composed of truth, of the memories of wrongs, of present suffering

that is worth ten thousand votes," Ellis wrote to his brother in 1872.[286] As the

alliance between paramilitary groups and the Democratic Party in his home state of

Louisiana proved effective, Ellis's enthusiasm grew. "Our people are all up & doing,

registering very fast with more of enthusiasm & spirit than I ever hoped to see," he

exulted in 1874. "Men are registering who hav'nt voted since the war. Our

committees estimate 5000 of this class of men in this city who will do their duty this

time by voting."[287] Whether his allusion to veterans' earlier failure to "do their

duty" referred to the results of the war or their reluctance to embrace the ballot in

the intervening years, Ellis clearly believed that through politics men could secure

their position as the guardians of white southern society. When the White League

seized control of New Orleans in 1874, Ellis's vision of the virtues of those who

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[285] Ezekiel John Ellis to Brother, May 1, 1865, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

[286] Ezekiel John Ellis to Brother, June 22, 1872, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

[287] Ezekiel John Ellis to Thomas C.W. Ellis, September 1, 1874, Ezekiel John Ellis Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

resisted Reconstruction might have provided the epitaph for a statue

commemorating a victorious commander: "firm in council, terrible in war, and in the

very hour of victory calm, moderate, magnanimous."[288] Ezekiel John Ellis had found

in postwar Redemption the success and acclaim that defeat in the Civil War had

taken from him.

In addition to restoring former Confederates to political dominance and

social acclaim, paramilitary organizations allowed soldiers to serve as mentors to a

cohort of white southern men who had not fought in the war. In so doing they

would ensure that the values that underpinned Confederate soldiers' identities

would be passed on to the next generation. Charles F. Hard, thirteen at the

conclusion of the Civil War and embittered against the United States on account of

the death of his older brother John at Chickamauga, revealed how postwar

paramilitary violence allowed those too young to fight to think that they shared a

bond of fellowship with Civil War veterans. Fighting alongside Captain George H.

Walter, a veteran of the Washington Light Artillery of Charleston, the young Hard

boasted that "We fought the nigs in a street fight with about one man to their fifteen,

wounded a large number, and I have reason to believe killed at least four and in

short gave them the devil." Believing himself baptized into the brotherhood of

combat veterans, Hard recounted how "the balls came so close to me that it sounded

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[288] Ezekiel John Ellis to Thomas C.W. Ellis, September 21, 1874, Ezekiel John Ellis
Family Papers, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection, LSU.

like I could throw out my hand and catch them as they sung by."[289] Beyond the excitement and pride of a young man boasting about a dramatic experience to his father, Hard's letter demonstrates the degree to which military identity had permeated masculine self-definition in the white South.

Yet despite tailoring their message, methods, and culture explicitly to appeal to Confederate veterans, the political opponents of Reconstruction achieved mixed results in rallying former soldiers to their cause. Not every veteran followed the course of an Ezekiel John Ellis, reduced to despair by defeat and redeemed by revisiting the same themes in peacetime that had been frustrated by the war. Whether men who had fought for the Confederacy would actively pursue white supremacy in the South depended on the function of Confederate identity in individual soldiers' postwar lives. The intervening years had given veterans access to alternative means to define themselves as men. Success as fathers, heads of household, and providers could give former soldiers reference points for self-evaluation unblemished by the horrors of war and the humiliation of defeat. The legacies of the war had made such pursuits difficult, however, and many men retreated into their status as Confederate veterans because their present lives offered a catalog of disappointment that society would neither understand nor excuse.

For former Confederates whose postwar occupations and pursuits allowed them to measure themselves as men by other standards than as the defenders of

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[289] Charles F. Hard to Father, fall 1874, Charles F. Hard Papers, South Caroliniana Collection, USC.

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white southern society, personal and immediate concerns displaced both Reconstruction politics and the Civil War as the most important elements of their identities. Judith Page Walker Rives wrote of her son Alfred's success as a father and provider for his family in the familiar language of duty that mothers, wives, and sisters had employed to speak of their men at war. Alfred "leads a hard life, but I trust a gracious providence will bless his honest efforts to secure an independence for himself and his sweet little family," Rives wrote to her daughter and Alfred's sister Grace.[290] His struggles to make a living as an itinerant surveyor continued into the following spring. "His duties now call on him from various directions—to the Alleghanies, to Richmond and Alexandria," Judith Rives proudly reported. "A few days ago he had to pass the day walking from point to point of his work though in distinct snow storm and the next day to ride twenty miles in the teeth of a roaring wind with the thermometer at eighteen." She summarized her son's attitude--"Still he is cheerful and bears it bravely"—in much the same way that a mother might describe her son's absence from home while engaged in a prolonged military campaign.[291] This was neither coincidence nor a reflection of Mrs. Rives's poverty of expression. Alfred Rives had engaged in another struggle after his war ended, one not wedded to any great ideological cause but rather domestic and quotidian in its nature. He wanted to succeed by the measures that mattered to him most in

[290] Judith Page Walker Rives to Grace Winthrop Sears Rives, December 20, 1868, Rives, Sears, and Rhinelander Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

[291] Judith Page Walker Rives to Grace Winthrop Sears Rives, March 12, 1869, Rives, Sears, and Rhinelander Family Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

postwar life and protect his family from the enemies of want rather than the foes clad in Union blue.

By the standards of the postwar South, Rives succeeded in providing a comfortable livelihood for his dependents. While historians cannot know how often his thoughts turned to his days as an engineer on Robert E. Lee's staff or to the postwar political conditions in his home state of Virginia, in the decade and a half following the war he seems to have maintained no correspondence on either subject. For other veterans who found postwar economic and personal success, their time as Confederate soldiers retreated from the dominant source of their self-definition to the realm of nostalgia and memory. These men never forgot their service or ceased to draw from it as a positive source of social standing, but nor did they wish to remain locked in a static relationship to white southern society from the war years. Archibald McKinley, a veteran of the 57th Georgia Infantry, noted in his journal the anniversary of every major battle in which he had taken part. Various entries showed that he never forgot the anniversaries of Second Manassas, Vicksburg, the Battle of Atlanta, or Bentonville, and McKinley paid homage to both "the ninth anniversary of the battle of Baker's Creek in which I was wounded" and the date when he assisted in raising our company for the Confederate army."[292] Revealing both his fond associations with his wartime commander and his sympathies on the question of postwar race relations, McKinley called his "puppy

[292] Entries of May 16, 1872 and May 10, 1873, Diary of Archibald McKinley, Georgia Historical Society.

Pat Cleburne, after my old general" and built a pen "for our stallion, 'Kuklux'."[293] But

McKinley's preoccupation consisted not in recalling the glories of victory, brooding

on the ravages of defeat, or railing against the consequences of emancipation but

rather in expanding his planting, beef, and lumber milling interests. The war

remained the source of identification only on the peripheries of his life.

James Washington Moore, who fought with the infantry of Hampton's Legion

and commenced a postwar career as a lawyer, shared McKinley's approach.

Describing a New Year's Eve dinner party that he attended at the end of 1868,

Moore narrated the encounter in the language of battle. "Like the old infantry

soldier, whose courage never faltered while he could feel the elbow touch of his

comrade on either side, I went in manfully," Moore noted, "and created havoc in the

good things before me." As the courses progressed, however, Moore began to feel

unequal to the increasingly difficult task before him. He and his comrades—"as jolly

a set of Confederates as ever"—ultimately succumbed before an enormous bowl of

rum punch, which Moore termed "our Appomattox Court House." " Like the

Confederacy we fought well and in a noble cause," Moore concluded, "but fell at last

under the fearful odds against us."[294] Like McKinley, Moore had fashioned a stable

and respectable postwar identity that allowed him to view his military service with

nostalgic humor rather than as the sole defining source of his selfhood.

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[293] Entries of May 6, 1870 and May 20, 1871, Diary of Archibald McKinley, Georgia
Historical Society.
[294] Entry of January 1, 1869, James Washington Moore Diary, South Caroliniana
Library, USC.

Former Confederates who faced substantial setbacks in adding new dimensions to their postwar lives wrote about the war and postwar politics in more serious terms. James L. Hubard could take pride in a beautiful wife and children, but with the joy he took in their presence in his life came also the heavy burden of providing for them. His father Robert, never shy with words of advice or criticism for his son, congratulated James on being "blest in having such a treasure in your wife & children" but in the same sentence chided his son that "you cannot boast of having any treasure <u>in money.</u>" "Having such a wife and such children," the elder Hubard lectured, "it is your duty to exert yourself and render them as happy & as comfortable as you possibly can."[295] James certainly felt the obligation but as he struggled to make his landholdings productive, he displaced the blame for his shortcomings onto the ineffectiveness of free black labor. "We will have to get white help before long that's clear," James wrote to his wife in a letter reporting the family's economic difficulties. "The negroes will not do."[296] Hubard's difficulty in succeeding as the head of a household led him to consider prevalent political realities, demonstrating the connection that white supremacists exploited in order to attract men beset by personal dissatisfaction to participate actively in their cause. Yet in Hubard's case, the impediments to his image as a responsible provider to his wife and children proved temporary, as did his bitter reflections on race and

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[295] Robert T. Hubard to James L. Hubard, December 31, 1867, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

[296] James L. Hubard to Isaetta C. Randolph Hubard, August 27, 1868, Hubard-Randolph Papers, Small Special Collections Library, UVA.

politics. He simply did not need to define himself in the figurative vanguard of white southern society when surrounded by his own, real family.

If Hubard referred fleetingly to the politics of white supremacy during a momentary setback, other men clung to their wartime identity as the protectors of white society as their only foundation for manhood in the postwar world. Julius Walker Wright of North Carolina ended the war disappointed by defeat but secure in his status as a hero. On a journey from St. Louis to North Carolina in the summer of 1865 Wright "wore my uniform home and there walked through the streets as proudly as if I was returning 'a victorious hero.'" His sense of heroism received a boost when the ladies of his acquaintance in St. Louis refused to dance with Union officers and clearly favored former Confederates. "Instead of Confederate soldiers being below par here they command a premium," Wright boasted.[297] Confident that defeat had not made functioning within southern society impossible, Wright joined the Masonic Order of Wilmington and married his wife Mollie.

By 1868, Wright's promising future had begun to sour. Whether he drank to forget the war or drank because he could not help himself, Wright drank—to such an extent that it became a minor scandal. Admonished by his pastor "in behalf of the church, your own soul, and the happiness of an accomplished and lovely wife, to retreat from the brink of ruin," Wright attempted to live a sober life but could never

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[297] Julius Walker Wright to "Dear Aunt," July 24, 1865, Wright and Murdock Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

escape temptation.[298] His private life continued to decline and Wright's

intemperance cost him both his law practice and his good relations with his wife.

Things reached such a state that his father had to advise Wright on how to

withstand the scorn of his mother-in-law. "If your mother in Law taunts you,"

Wright's father counseled, "I should tell her plainly that I would stand no such thing,

& I would rather take my wife to a hovel than endure her threats, act manly about it,

& let her see that under no circumstances will you allow it."[299] His words suggest

that Wright, unable to procure sufficient income to maintain his own household, had

moved to live with his wife's family—who would not let him forget that his own

weaknesses had given rise to the situation. The censure of his family and

community left Wright a shattered man. In November 1871, Wright, now living

apart from Mollie as he looked for work in Charlotte, poured out his misery to his

wife. "When I contemplate my position for the last year or so," Write lamented, "I

think what a great relief death will be, for then all my troubles will cease. God

knows in my wildest freaks of fantasy I never dreamed that it would ever have been

my portion to have led the life I have."[300]

Wright's downward spiral continued for the next several years. By 1872, it

was clear to all who knew him that the onetime major of the 8th North Carolina

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[298] D.D. van Antwerp to Julius Walker Wright, May 1, 1869, Wright and Murdock
Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[299] A.E. Wright to Julius Walker Wright, September 25, 1870, Wright and Murdock
Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

[300] Julius Walker Wright to Mollie Wright, November 3, 1871, Wright and Murdock
Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

infantry had lost authority over himself, let alone his supposed dependents. A

family friend wrote to Mollie Wright in 1872 to inform her that "The Maj [Wright] is

and has been out of employment for over two months and candor compels me to

say that there is no prospect for his getting employment here," which he attributed

"to his want of firmness in resisting his besetting sin."[301] Bereft of all measures of

manhood save one, Wright turned to the glories of war to insulate him from the

horrors of peacetime life. Drawing upon his status as a field officer of the

Confederate army, Wright delivered an address to the chivalric tournament

assembled in Statesville, North Carolina. "We call to mind the gallantry, the courage,

the chivalry of a Lee, a Stuart…and their devote followers," Wright began, enjoining

the gathering to remember "Deeds which should not pass away."

> Not even the old Crusaders when enthused by the fiery eloquence of the
> church, and marshalled under the powerful influence of Godfrey and the lion-
> hearted Richard even moved into rank and file with more impetuous zeal
> than the devoted sons of the lost cause. Sons of an illustrious ancestry, either
> in this contest or in the great struggle of life which you may be called upon to
> encounter, fail not to remember the honor, the gallantry, the chivalry of those
> noble ones, who being dead, yet speak in the achievement of those glorious
> acts which will follow them through all time.[302]

In a literal sense, Wright was certainly correct, and the South would memorialize its

Confederate sons in bronze, in words, and in legend over the course of subsequent

generations. Yet Julius Wright celebrated the Confederacy and its soldiers not solely

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[301] W.S. Tate to Mollie Wright, September 23, 1872, Wright and Murdock Family
Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.
[302] Address of Julius Walker Wright to the "Knights of a Tournament," November 11,
1873, Wright and Murdock Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

for their prowess, but because it offered him the only positive and respectable association remaining in his wrecked and truncated life. His final letters contained a last admission of defeat. Writing not of the glorious Confederacy or of the satisfaction Wright had gained from participating in its military, he instead spitefully blamed his wife for refusing to act the part of consort to a southern hero. "By your acts," Wright chided his wife for abandoning her faith in him, "you are destroying my very life, crushing my spirits when otherwise all might be well."[303] Less than three years after delivering his oration, Wright died prematurely at the age of forty.

From Congressional Reconstruction to Redemption, former Confederate soldiers faced challenges to both their public identities and their private selves. The Joint Committee on Reconstruction hearings demonstrated that veterans remained the central actors in the public consciousness of Americans throughout the nation. On their image and their actions, the fate of white southern society depended—to a lesser degree than during the war years, certainly, but in much the same capacity. Southern society lionized former Confederate soldiers as the key actors and symbols in shaping the region's political future and asked them to re-engage with public life. Politics became appealing to many veterans because the rhetoric and tactics of anti-Republican organizations carried clear military overtones and promised much the same kind of power and social eminence. Yet investment in politics required Confederate veterans to once again define their lives through conflict. Many men

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[303] Julius Walker Wright to Mollie Wright, February 28, 1874, Wright and Murdock Papers, Southern Historical Collection, UNC.

who had managed to find more stable, more personal, and potentially more rewarding vectors through which to define themselves sought to break away from their youthful identities, sanitizing them and then relegating them to the realm of pleasurable nostalgia. For others, their youthful association with the Confederate military represented their only positive reference in a world defined by misery and failure.

CONCLUSION: "But We—The Shadows--Shall Pass Away"

In 1878, twenty-two former Confederate soldiers gathered in Augusta,

Georgia. Brought together for "the conservation of Confederate memories—the

promotion of fellowship and the cultivation of friendship between the surviving

officers and soldiers…in the active service of the Confederacy," as well as the general

"practice of manly virtues" and the specific "extension of reasonable aid and

sympathy to fellow members in seasons of sickness and distress," the Confederate

Survivors' Association was born. Eventually it would merge with the larger and

better-known United Confederate Veterans, but in the late 1870s it represented the

first large commemorative organization exclusively for veterans in Georgia.   On the

first anniversary of its founding, the group asked Charles Colcock Jones to give an

address. He chose as his theme not the glorious accomplishments of a particular

unit or officer, nor did he wish to reflect on victories that were or that might have

been. Instead, Jones spoke of the distinctiveness of the generation of which he was a

part.

The fraternity of Confederate soldiers, Jones noted somberly, stemmed not

from shared principles or affinities, but rather from a common and singular

experience. "Our right to membership in this organization was begotten in the past,

is born of a bond which can never be renewed, and sinks into the grave with each

one of us," Jones intoned. "There is no rising generation whence we can gather recruits." While southern white society would no doubt memorialize "the battle scenes which the heroes of our war have painted" and pass on "the memories which Confederate valor, loyalty and endurance have bequeathed," they would capture only the public face of an idealized relationship. "We transmit our principles, we inculcate our faith, we bequeath our hopes," Jones told his listeners, "but that proud distinction, that grand fact, *I was a soldier in the armies of the Southern Confederacy,* cannot be transmitted." Instead, the men who bore that identity would carry it to their graves, and "we—the shadows—will pass away."[304]

In the two decades from the commencement of their military service to the Confederacy and its population, soldiers occupied a unique place in the South. They had aligned their selfhood with a doomed cause. Entrusted to protect a society that constructed them as a composite of superhuman virtues rather than ordinary men, they had failed. The war, like all wars, placed a chasm of experience between those who fought and those who did not in which veterans as men became to an extent unknowable. As a substitute for true understanding, that fixed source of identity— "I was a soldier in the armies of the Confederacy"—would define the soldiers of the South to the public for the rest of their lives. Its role in defining soldiers to themselves depended to a great extent on the soldier himself.

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[304] Charles C. Jones, <u>Address to the Confederate Survivors' Association, 1st Annual Meeting, April 26, 1879</u> (Augusta, Georgia: Jowitt and Shaver, 1879), 7. Charles C. Jones Papers, Georgia Historical Society.

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