

THE HOME FRONT AS BATTLEFRONT:
INTERACTIONS BETWEEN UNION SOLDIERS AND SOUTHERN WOMEN
DURING THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

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ABSTRACT

Union soldiers and southern women's interactions during the American Civil War were more than passing exchanges between strangers. This project argues that their relationships had real effects on the battlefield and on the home front; they affected ideas about citizenship and republicanism; cultural notions of gender roles, racial difference, and socioeconomic status; and definitions of intimate space.

Studying soldiers and women together reveals that wartime hostilities exacerbated conflicts over citizenship and inclusion in the republican nation. Focusing on these interactions demonstrates how individual Americans used wartime upheaval to redefine American citizenship. In addition, wartime exchanges between Union soldiers and southern women illuminate nineteenth-century social stratification, gender roles, and race relations. I argue that these interactions bridge a significant gap in the literature between studies of widespread antebellum social and cultural upheaval with the well-documented changes to gender, racial, and class barriers in the postwar period. The intermingling of soldiers and women during the American Civil War demonstrates the ways in which individual behavior, the fixity of racial divisions, and the supposed superior morals of socioeconomic elites, were constantly challenged by the actions of everyday people.

This project frames these analyses through the lens of intimate space. When used in the context of the Civil War, intimate space reveals the tension in the relationship between the home

front and battlefield by demonstrating that everyday actions in private spaces reverberated throughout the larger world of government and military decisions. In this way, intimate space encompasses not only “private” space—from privately owned land to the houses, slave dwellings, and other structures built upon it as well as to the human and inanimate property housed within—but also the relationships, labor, affective ties, and reproductive actions which occurred in these spaces. Ultimately, an analysis of intimate space reveals that southern homes were already political spaces even before the Union army set foot on southern soil, thus illustrating that the Civil War intensified rather than politicized southern homes. Examining relationships between soldiers and women reveals the complex political, social, and cultural ideas at the heart of the nineteenth-century American home and nation.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my granny, Jean Hasselgren, not only because she loved history, but because she taught me the importance of carefully listening to others while remaining firm in one's own convictions. I think she would have been immensely pleased that I turned out to be an historian.

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"To create a single story, show a people as one thing, as only one thing, over and over again, and that is what they become . . . Th[is] creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story . . . The consequence . . . is . . . [that] it robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar."

--Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Polish poet and Nobel laureate Wisława Szymborska once said that she owed many things to people she did not love. I have incurred great debts while writing this dissertation, but I am happy to say that I am quite fond of those who have helped me along the way. During my undergraduate years at the University of Washington, James Felak, Richard Johnson, and Tracy McKenzie (now of Wheaton College) encouraged me to pursue graduate school. They read endless drafts of my statement of purpose and, more importantly, advised me to never show up to class without at least one intelligent thing to say.

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INTRODUCTION THE CIVIL WAR AND INTIMATE SPACE

The facts seemed quite plain: on June 11, 1863, Union soldiers burned the small town of Darien, Georgia to the ground. Whether it deserved to burn was another matter. The details appeared damning: African American soldiers, commanded by an abolitionist and associate of John Brown, destroyed a town inhabited largely by civilians. Regimental historian Luis Emilio acknowledged that the Federals had “landed without resistance,” but even so Colonel James Montgomery issued “express orders” that Darien be burned, even “applying the torch to the last buildings with his own hand.” Major Robert Gould Shaw vehemently disagreed with the decision. Shaw pointed out that the town was “deserted, with the exception of one white woman and two negroes,” and called the incendiaryism a “barbarous sort of warfare” the he argued descended into “wanton destruction.” While Montgomery left no account, Shaw remembered the Colonel telling him that, “Southerners must be made to feel that this was a real war” and that Federals were not “bound by the rules of regular warfare.” Major General David Hunter, Montgomery’s commander, took the opportunity of Darien’s burning to remind him of orders prohibiting unnecessary destruction. Hunter cited two reasons for restraint: the contested nature of the “employment of colored troops,” and Rebel’s repeated threats to resort to guerrilla warfare. He therefore concluded, “It is of the first moment that the infamy of this deterioration

[of warfare] should rest exclusively and without exception upon the rebel Government.”¹

Enlisted men and Darien residents responded more positively to the destruction. African American soldiers and war correspondents George E. Stephens and James Henry Gooding wrote of Darien’s burning with no attribution of responsibility: Stephens described how the “town was enveloped in flames” and Gooding remarked that “the town of Darien is now no more; the flames could be distinctly seen from the camp.” Stephens, Gooding, and regimental historian Emilio focused more on how well they lived off the city’s confiscated resources. Stephens remarked to his readers in the *Anglo-African* that “Cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, and many things of use and comfort were secured.” Emilio put it more bluntly: “The plunder acquired afforded many comforts and even luxuries.” The enlisted men even questioned whether the raid had traumatized Darien residents. George Stephens recalled that, given the chance to come with the Union army, the Darien women they met “requested to be left behind.” Freeborn African American Elizabeth Geary corroborated these sentiments in her testimony before the Southern Claims Commission. Although Geary’s home was plundered and eventually destroyed, she remembered the time fondly and recounted how, living in a slave state, she had been “threatened with death and injury to [her] person, family, and property . . . molested and injured by being driven from place to place and out of [her] own house.” Geary and her family happily followed the army to Beaufort, South Carolina to wait out the war.²

¹ Luis Fennollosa Emilio, *History of the Fifty-Fourth Regiment of Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, 1863-1865*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Boston Book, 1894), 41-42; Russell Duncan, ed., *Blue-Eyed Child of Fortune: The Civil War Letters of Robert Gould Shaw* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992), 342-344, 348; *OR*, ser. 1, 14:466-467. For another officer’s view of the burning of Darien, see Christopher Looby, ed., *The Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters of Thomas Wentworth Higginson* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 200), 288-289.

² Emilio, *History of the Fifty-Fourth Regiment*, 44; James Henry Gooding, *On the Altar of Freedom: A Black Soldier’s Civil War Letters from the Front*, ed. Virginia Matzke Adams (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 30; Donald Yacavone, ed., *A Voice of Thunder: The Civil War Letters of George E. Stephens* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 242; Claim of Elizabeth Geary, Chatham County, Georgia. Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Southern Claims Commission, Record Group 217, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Hereafter SCC-NA.

In a microcosm, Darien's destruction illustrates the often fraught, ever debated, and diversely interpreted interactions between Federal soldiers and southern women during the American Civil War. The burning of Darien—and Union soldiers and southern women's various responses to it—demonstrates the ways in which the policies of the Federal army and the actions of Federal soldiers affected the livelihood and wellbeing of southern civilians. Although Union officers and enlisted men, from Colonel James Montgomery to Major Robert Gould Shaw to soldier George E. Stephens, disagreed over whether Darien deserved its fate, the attack allowed civilian Elizabeth Geary and her family to escape the Confederacy. While incendiaryism, foraging, confiscation, raiding and other policies began as Union commanders' ideas for dealing with noncombatants, they often quickly became realities, as officers issued orders which soldiers then implemented. These policies profoundly altered the lives of white Confederates, white Unionists, and free and enslaved African American women.

Union soldiers and southern women intermingled frequently during the American Civil War. In fact, an army of mostly young, mostly single, and most certainly lonely men could be sure to seek out feminine companionship. What makes these relationships particularly compelling for historical study is the variety of people involved. Examining interactions between Union soldiers and southern women brings together scholarship on white Unionist and Confederate women, free and enslaved black women, immigrant and African American Union soldiers, and studies of military policy and military occupation. Studying interactions illustrates the relationship between individual actions and the larger world of military and political policymaking. Focusing on a wide array of exchanges, this project illuminates not only how southern women and Union soldiers encountered each other during the war, it also investigates

the connections between interactions on the home front and their relationship to changes in military policy and military conduct, and considers *why* these interactions mattered.

Studying soldiers and women together reveals how wartime hostilities exacerbated conflicts over citizenship and inclusion in the republican nation. Because the Union army defined “civilians” based on citizenship status, white men and women achieved a coveted position that conferred on them certain legal rights such as protection of property, while denying that designation, and those same protection of rights, to African American men and women and German and Irish immigrants. Scholars who study these issues often treat women and soldiers separately, which obscures the ways these groups worked with or against each other to test the boundaries of citizenship.³ Civil War-era race and gender scholars demonstrate that women’s wartime actions had important ramifications for their citizenship status. White Unionist and Rebel women’s political actions, Stephanie McCurry argues, wreaked havoc on the notion of white women as neutral wartime observers, while Hannah Rosen and Leslie Schwalm explain how black women attempted to carve out citizenship in the face of white opposition.⁴ Recent

³ The nineteenth-century home determined who was a citizen, and thus who was (and was not) a soldier and who was (and was not) a civilian. A nebulous concept, citizenship applied to most natural-born or naturalized white men and women, although the rights of citizenship applied unequally to these groups. See Laura Edwards, *The People and Their Peace: Legal Culture and the Transformation of Inequality in the Post-Revolutionary South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 258, 273-279. White men’s control over their dependent wives, children, and property (enslaved and otherwise) translated into political power, while the dependence of women, enslaved people, and even free blacks barred them from political power. For the legal impediments to voting and citizenship faced by northern whites and African Americans, see Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free State, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 65, 93; and Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1830-1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

⁴ Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 87-132; 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); Leslie Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We: Women’s Transition from Slavery to Freedom in South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997). The Union army did not regard black women, whether free or enslaved, to be citizens of the United States. And since black women were principally property, the army did not consider them civilians either, but instead viewed them as part of the belongings of white southerners. Thus, women of color’s relationship to the Union army largely grew out of their value as laborers. See Edwards, *The People and Their Peace*, 224-226, 277-280; 290; Nancy Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms: Race, Rights, and the Politics of Household in the Delta, 1861-1875* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Noralee Frankel, *Freedom’s Women: Black Women and Families in Civil War Era Mississippi* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999);

studies of Union soldiers focus on American men marginalized because of their racial or ethnic background, and emphasize the way in which military service seemed to promise full inclusion.⁵ What is lost in these separate accounts are the alliances that Federal soldiers and southern women formed crossing political and cultural divisions in order to achieve a more (or less) inclusive American nation. Rebel women aided Irish and German Union army deserters to strengthen the Confederate cause, black women engaged the assistance of white antislavery soldiers to gain legitimacy for black families, and some white Unionist women transferred their political sympathies to the Confederacy when emancipation threatened to undermine their racial and class privilege. Focusing on the interactions of Northern soldiers and southern women, this dissertation examines how individual Americans used wartime upheaval to redefine American citizenship.⁶

Wartime exchanges between Union soldiers and southern women also illuminate nineteenth-century social stratification, gender roles, and race relations. Exploring the intermingling of soldiers and women builds on earlier studies of Union soldiers by Bell Wiley, Reid Mitchell, and others who emphasize the cosmopolitan nature of the Union army with its jumble of ages, occupations, religions, ethnicities, and racial backgrounds. Similarly, this dissertation contributes to Civil War gender scholarship by focusing on the diverse and revealing

Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, from Slavery to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

⁵ Nativist and anti-Catholic sentiments encouraged white Union soldiers and white southern women to regard immigrants as potentially dangerous to American political institutions. Immigrant and naturalized Irish and German soldiers believed they could solidify their citizenship rights through military service, which demonstrated their commitment to republican institutions. In addition, white Americans held that black men were neither citizens nor fully men. In response to this exclusion, some black men singled out military service as a way to prove their manliness and fitness for citizenship. See James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 601, 608-609; Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Manhood, Honor, and Violence in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 70-72; David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 1991), 169-172. For African American men, see Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship during the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 5-6.

⁶ Without explicitly saying so, the Union army defined “civilians” as white men and women, while denying African American men and women and German and Irish immigrants that designation.

experiences of southern women and their interactions with Northern men.⁷ But even when studies focus on Federals and women together, as do recent works by Jacqueline Glass Campbell and Lisa Tendrich Frank, they devote little attention to men and women's interactions.⁸ Highlighting these interactions, however, bridges a significant gap in the literature between studies of antebellum social and cultural upheaval with the well-documented changes to gender, racial, and class barriers in the postwar period. Focusing on the interplay between cultural stereotypes and everyday social relations reveals that seemingly ironclad gender roles, class divisions, and racial barriers were in fact inherently unstable and constantly negotiated. The intermingling of soldiers and women during the American Civil War demonstrates the ways in which gender norms, the fixity of racial divisions, and the supposedly superior morals of socioeconomic elites, were constantly challenged by the actions of everyday people.

This project frames analyses of citizenship and gender, racial, and socioeconomic barriers through the lens of intimate space. While scholars of European colonialism such as Ann Laura Stoler and Elisa Camiscioli use intimate space to explore government intervention in “private” gender and racial arrangements, scholars of Atlantic slavery use the framework to highlight

⁷ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952); Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997); Catherine Clinton, ed., *Southern Families at War: Loyalty and Conflict in the Civil War South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber, eds., *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Laura Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore: Southern Women in the Civil War Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); LeeAnn Whites, *Gender Matters: Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Making of the New South* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2009).

⁸ Jacqueline Glass Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North From the Sea: Resistance on the Confederate Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Lisa Tendrich Frank, *The Civilian War: Confederate Women and Union Soldiers during Sherman's March* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

enslaved women's struggles against gender and racial oppression.⁹ When viewed in the context of the Civil War, intimate space strengthens the relationship between the home front and battlefield by revealing that everyday actions in private spaces reverberated throughout the larger world of government and military decisions. In this way, intimate space encompasses not only "private" space—from privately owned land to the houses, barns, slave dwellings, and other structures built upon it as well as to the human and inanimate property housed within it—but also to the relationships, labor, affective ties, and reproductive actions which occurred in these spaces. Moreover, the "intimate" advances the idea of the nineteenth-century household set forward by gender scholars Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Laura Edwards, and Stephanie McCurry because it recognizes the way in which local, state, and national governments help to establish and attempt to regulate (by either action or inaction) "private" space.¹⁰ In addition, intimate space builds upon historian Thavolia Glymph's argument that southern households, and particularly southern plantations, were not private spaces but were instead places of economic and political importance.¹¹ A more fluid and inclusive concept, the "intimate" underscores the significant role that enslaved people played in establishing and maintaining southern private spaces. Ultimately, an analysis of intimate space demonstrates that southern homes were already

⁹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 19; and Elisa Camiscioli, *Reproducing the French Race: Immigration, Intimacy, and Embodiment in the Early Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 2-3; Marisa Fuentes, "Power and Historical Figuring: Rachael Pringle Polgreen's Troubled Archive," *Gender and History* 3 (November 2010): 564-584; Annette Gordon-Reed, *The Hemingses of Monticello: An American Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009); Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Tiya Miles, *Ties that Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Laura Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹¹ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 3.

political spaces even before the Union army set foot on southern soil, thus illustrating that the Civil War intensified rather than politicized southern homes.

Beginning in the early months of 1861, Union soldiers and southern women formed important perceptions and expectations of each other. These perceptions and expectations centered on concepts of soldiers' duties to civilians and civilians' obligations to the army, both grounded in notions of gender roles and gender relations. Southern women anticipated that Union soldiers would protect them as women and noncombatants; how they defined protection, however, varied greatly according to their political sympathies, class status, and racial background. White women expected soldiers to behave like their male relatives by providing them with the protection that their unique status afforded.¹² White Confederate women, many of whom were wealthy, assumed that they would be treated as ladies—that is, respected because of their supposed moral superiority and membership in the southern elite. For white Unionist women, protection meant not only security of property rights but also preferential treatment based on their political sympathies. Free and enslaved black women hoped that the Union army would recognize them as loyal sympathizers but also support—or at least not interfere with—their decisions to flee slavery or remain with their owners.

Similarly, Union soldiers' differing ideas about civilian obligations depended on their rank, their attitudes toward the origins of the conflict, and their birthplace. These distinctions notwithstanding, the army as a whole expected that white women would remain loyal to the nation and materially support its army.¹³ Officers and enlisted soldiers believed that women had

¹² Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 14-16; Charles A. Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 83; John Fabian Witt, *Lincoln's Code: The Laws of War in American History* (New York: Free Press, 2012), 16-19, 51, 70-72.

¹³ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 6; Linda K. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), xxiii, 10, 11; Jeannie Attie, *Patriotic Toil: Northern*

a duty to remain neutral observers in a war between men. White, middle-class officers assumed that wealthy white women would behave according to standards of true womanhood, which justified women's removal from the market and politics and their installation in the home on the basis of physical weakness and religious and moral superiority.¹⁴ Enlisted men, particularly from the northeast, drew fewer distinctions between Unionist and Confederate, judging all white southern women to be "secesh" and less deserving of preferential treatment. Soldiers from the midwest reflected that region's complex attitudes toward slavery, as some singled out slaveowners for retribution while others mistreated black men and women. Whatever their rank or region, Federals' treatment of southern women often grew out of their ideas about the origins of the conflict. Those who considered secession the work of a powerful political class regarded white women as unfortunates caught in the middle. Those soldiers who believed secession treasonous sought to punish women who aided their male relatives. Those who regarded the war as a conflict over slavery might be generous toward African Americans, or they might vent their frustrations on them for being the cause of a "negro war." Federals' varied treatment of southern women, from "true" women to traitors to intermeddlers, reveals that soldiers' ideas of which southern women should receive the coveted status of "lady" and what the army should expect of women civilians was in flux throughout the war.

The creation, implementation, and negotiation of Federal military policy toward civilians undermined conventional ideas about masculine and feminine roles, noncombatant status, and citizenship. Based on faulty ideas about the conflict and uniformed presumptions about civilians,

Women and the American Civil War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 31, 125; Judith Giesberg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War on the Northern Home Front* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 9-10.

¹⁴ Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 4, 7, 11-12; Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 137-138, 143; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 72-74, 90, 91-96.

military policy regarding civilians seemed destined to fail. Many northerners wrongly assumed that secession was the work of a few radical politicians, and supposed that most southern civilians, particularly white women, remained loyal.¹⁵ For these reasons, Federal military commanders instituted a conciliationist policy toward civilians that mandated respect for civilians' citizenship status and property rights. By limiting the conflict to the battlefield, military commanders hoped to prove their goodwill toward southern civilians and encourage them back into the Union.¹⁶ This well-intentioned policy set the Union army on a collision course with southern women, however. Many white Confederates, who alleged that Union soldiers entered the South bent on subjugation, remained steadfast to their state and to their family.¹⁷ White Unionist women, many of whom were slaveowners, feared that northern soldiers would be abolitionists and foreigners, and so they prioritized protection of their citizenship and property rights.¹⁸ Free and enslaved African American women trusted that the war would bring them liberation from gender and racial oppression. Many hoped that by biding their time, and by demonstrating their support for the Union through aid and material support, that they would eventually gain full inclusion in the nation.¹⁹ Harboring such vastly different ideas about the conflict and about how the army and noncombatants should behave, soldiers and southern women re-evaluated policies, stepped up their opposition to the enemy, stressed common political loyalties, and waited patiently or seized freedom to gain what they wanted.

¹⁵ For expectations of Union soldiers toward white southern civilians, see Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 8-11.

¹⁶ Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 2-3, 8, 11, 17, 20, 21, 23, 43, 45, 46.

¹⁷ McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 86; Anya Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters: Young Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 19, 38; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 45.

¹⁸ McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 87-132; Judkin Browning, *Shifting Loyalities: The Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 4-5; and William A. Blair, *With Malice Toward Some: Treason and Loyalty in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

¹⁹ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 7; Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999); and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2003), 63-65.

Once Union soldiers and southern women confronted one another, they clumsily and inexpertly navigated the turbulent waters of social relationships, thus clearly revealing the racial, gender, and socioeconomic barriers that separated nineteenth-century Americans. As soldiers and women took in each other's appearance, observed each other's character, and made decisions about social contacts, gender roles and cultural ideas of behavior, in addition to political sympathies, influenced their decision-making.²⁰ Northern soldiers entered a world in which black skin was associated not only with degradation but also with enslavement. Soldiers assumed that all people of color were either field hands or house slaves, ideas that viewed black women not as individual people and potential citizens but as laborers. In addition, the abject poverty of many southern whites astonished and repulsed Federals. Soldiers blamed dirty houses, uneducated families, and penury on slavery's degradation of both white and black.²¹ Federal soldiers often preferred to associate with wealthy southerners, even if they were slaveowners and Rebels. White and black Unionist women, initially impressed by Federals' clothing, cleanliness, and manners, found northern soldiers' preference for middle- and upper-class southerners galling. For their part, Confederate women maintained that the polished appearance of Union soldiers underscored how appearances could be deceiving. Many refused to behave like ladies in front of Federals and instead forged a new southern ideal of true womanhood, one which tolerated angry

²⁰ Growing out of the Romantic movement, new standards of beauty increasingly pictured women as frail and delicate, justifying white middle-class women's household roles. And in a world where, thanks to new modes of transportation, people moved about more quickly than ever before, and cities grew and frontier areas expanded, beliefs in the transparency of people's faces made Americans less anxious about the astonishing amount of unfamiliar people they now encountered. However, Americans also realized that appearances could be deceiving—a well-dressed man might actually be a con man; a well-dressed woman might turn out to be a prostitute. See Lois W. Banner, *American Beauty* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 50-56; Karen Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830-1870* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Noonday Press, 1991).

²¹ Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 506; Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109.

tirades, deceptive actions, and patriotic public displays that advanced the Confederate cause.²² Union soldiers initially thought that they could appeal to wealthy white southern women's ladylike sensibilities to bring them back into the Union, and such persuasion sometimes resulted in relationships ending in marriage. But Federals soon learned that they could not simply assume that white women would adhere to ideals of true womanhood, as ladylike Confederate women often used their gender and socioeconomic privilege to smuggle goods and letters through Union lines, or to hide Confederate soldiers and smuggle information to Rebel authorities.

As the war entered its second year, civilian resistance spurred changes in military policy, bringing foraging and confiscation into southern women's homes. Foraging, which authorized Federals to take necessary provisions from the homes of southern civilians, put into practice the expectation that women would materially support the army. But the army resorted to coercion in 1862 because many Confederate women refused to give willingly—or at all. Foraging thus asserted Federals' authority over intimate space as it permitted soldiers to enter private land and private houses to requisition military supplies. The policy, however, did not work out as smoothly as Federals hoped. Enlisted men and officers often made little distinction between Confederate and Unionist, instead using the policy as an opportunity to take what they wanted. And the policy unintentionally made life more difficult for enslaved African American women, who went hungry along with (or long before) their owners. The expansion of confiscation in 1862 had a similar impetus: to deprive Rebels of necessary resources (in this case, the labor of African Americans) needed to continue the war. Even as black women affirmed it as a rightful exercise of military authority, the policy drew the ire of slaveholding Confederate and Unionist

²² Leonardo Buonomo, *Immigration, Ethnicity, and Class in American Writing, 1830-1860: Reading the Stranger* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2014); Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women; Kasson, Rudeness and Civility*.

women, both of whom expected the Union army to safeguard their property. Foraging and confiscation illustrate the ways in which Union soldiers used military policy to force women to contribute war supplies, even as women themselves used the policies as leverage to obtain greater protection of domestic spaces.

Conflicts over the fate of African American women and children increased tensions between civilians and soldiers, as policies of emancipation and conscription, which seemed to create problems with military discipline, reignited conflicts over citizenship, republican institutions, and the privileges of whiteness. With emancipation, southern plantations increasingly came under government control. At the same time, this policy called into question the citizenship status of African Americans as well as whether the army had a responsibility to protect black families and labor arrangements. As more and more black men and women fled slavery to work for the Union army, they insisted that the federal government owed them control over and protection of their homes, families, and labor. Conscription also highlighted problems in defining citizenship, as immigrant soldiers expected their military service would earn them full inclusion in the nation. But as the attitudes of native-born soldiers and civilians demonstrated, Americans were reluctant to grant German and Irish soldiers, whom many did not consider to be white, all of the benefits of citizenship.²³ In addition, commanders and civilians blamed the intemperance, rowdiness, and sexual promiscuity rampant within the army and on the home front on immigrant and black soldiers and on poor white and black women. An emphasis on good behavior as the basis for citizenship, rather than racial or ethnic origin, reveals the ways in which white middle- and upper-class officers and women attempted to police the boundaries of inclusion in a world upended by the emancipation and martial service of nonwhites.

²³ See Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*.

The final dismantling of barriers between the home front and battlefield came with the institution of raiding policies in the final year of the war. By asserting the army's authority over all aspects of intimate space—including women's houses, farms, and property—this policy demolished barriers between public and private. In addition, raiding hardly took into account women's political sympathies, noncombatant status, or female privilege. At the same time, raids took on a particular character in the western theater, the eastern theater, and Georgia and the Carolinas. Shaped by the number of civilians present, the ratio of Unionists and Confederates, and even the attitudes of individual commanders and enlisted men, raiding evolved from seizing necessary supplies to the destruction of civilians' houses and farms and the southern countryside. More so than any other military policy, raiding confirmed that boundaries separating the battlefield and the home front were both artificial and permeable.²⁴

The world in which Union soldiers and southern women interacted, although profoundly affected by war, had been shaped by a multitude of changes in the early to mid-nineteenth century. The advent of political parties, the expansion of the electorate, the growth of industry, new patterns of immigration and westward expansion, as well as advances in communication and transportation, transformed nearly all aspects of American life.²⁵ These dramatic changes altered how Americans viewed the home. In the North, the appearance of factories and the rise of the professions meant that both working and middle-class men increasingly labored outside the

²⁴ At least two studies are entirely devoted to civilians' experiences of raiding during Sherman's March. While both examine Union soldiers and southern women's experiences, neither focuses exclusively on interactions nor takes into account the duration of the campaign or how raiding differed in particular theaters of the war. See Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North From the Sea*; and Frank, *The Civilian War*. Civil War scholars debate the amount of destruction during the war. Although Mark Neely argues that destruction was quite limited, the balance of scholars agree that destruction evolved into a widely accepted policy. See Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012); and Royster, *The Destructive War*.

²⁵ For a comprehensive treatment of these changes, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

home, transforming domestic spaces from centers of work and production to a middle-class ideal as centers for private, family life. For many in the middle and working classes, men's work outside the home changed the nature of women's work. Instead of toiling alongside their menfolk on farms and in small shops, women were now to focus almost exclusively on rearing children and creating tranquil domestic spaces.²⁶ This new role for women, succinctly captured in the phrase "cult of domesticity," was heralded by male clergy and female reformers as an extension of the post-revolutionary ideal of "republican motherhood," in which women inculcated republican values into their children using their supposed moral and religious superiority.²⁷ As caretakers of home and children and directors of philanthropic activities, women could lead purposeful lives and promote social change. What remained unspoken was the way in which domesticity provided a rationale for removing women, who had long been a cheap source of labor, from the workplace, as well as justifying women's continued dependence on male relatives for social and political representation.²⁸ Domesticity specifically aimed its arguments toward the white middle and upper classes, emphasizing reproduction as women's primary role that necessitated their retreat from the increasingly male world of the marketplace.²⁹

²⁶ Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 24-43, 46, 58.

²⁷ For these ideas, see Linda K. Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980).

²⁸ These changing gender roles were hardly unique to the United States. Although more advanced in their industrialization, and more stratified socially and economically, Western Europe experienced similar revolutions in work and family life. See Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) and *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); and Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoisies of Northern France in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

²⁹ Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 2-8.

At the same time, the southern United States underwent a transformation of its own, as western conquest and federal intervention paved the way for the continued advancement of slavery.³⁰ Although the development of industry increased in the mid-nineteenth century, most southern production continued to be oriented around rural, slave-based agriculture. Whether or not white families owned slaves, agricultural production kept the home as the site of family life and economic activity. Even so, the upper classes and burgeoning middle classes embraced key ideals of the cult of domesticity. In a world rife with sectional conflict and radical reform, the South, with its rigid social hierarchy, embraced domesticity and the elevation of home and family life as an answer to the twin assaults of abolitionism and feminism.³¹ But domesticity took on a distinctive character as southerners sought to defend the “peculiar institution” from northern onslaught by including slaves within the protected sphere of the household. Slaveowners defined southern plantations as domestic rather than economic spaces, insisting that the home offered refuge for plantation owners’ white and black “families” and also provided a realm in which slaveowners could “civilize” their black “family.” By articulating a peculiarly southern type of domesticity, slaveowners hoped to advance their pro-slavery agenda even as they appeared to conform to northern gender roles.³²

Changing ideas about the home had far-reaching implications, since nineteenth-century Americans understood their place in the nation in terms of the position they occupied in the household.³³ North or South, white men’s authority conferred status on white women, granting

³⁰ Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

³¹ Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household*, 29-30, 38-39; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 64-65.

³² Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 43-44, 64-66; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*; Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 70-75.

³³ See Edwards, *The People and Their Peace*, 258, 273-279; Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 65, 93; Wilentz, *Chants Democratic*, 92-96, 248-250. Scholars of Western Europe have also noted the nation-as-family metaphor. See Judith

them responsibility for rearing republican citizens while emotionally and materially supporting families—and, during war, soldiers and armies—through household production. White women's special status as wives, mothers, and dependent citizens allowed them to claim the protection of the United States government.³⁴ Yet women's increasing association with the home did not mean they lacked government recognition. Instead, as the wives of white men and the mothers of citizens of the nation, they enjoyed the benefits of local, state, and federal governments' sanction of their marriage and familial relationships and protection of their property rights. For southern white women, this included the right to hold human beings in bondage and to manage their labor.³⁵ In both the North and the South, the increased importance of the home often meant that the government had more rather than less incentive to ensure its success, as the future of the nation and the virtue of its citizens depended upon it.³⁶

Linked with the cult of domesticity, the idea of true womanhood hid middle- and upper-class white women's racial and class privilege behind notions of moral superiority. The ideology of true womanhood held that elite white women led lives as ladies—which entitled them to leisure, consumption of luxury goods, and reliance on domestic labor—not because they were wealthy and white, but because they were delicate, gentle, kind, and pure. The cultivation of such

Surkis, *Sexing the Citizen: Morality and Masculinity in France, 1870-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); and Lynn Hunt, *The Family Romance of the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

³⁴ Starting in the late eighteenth-century, middle-class women's political participation became linked to their status as benevolent housewives, although their primary duty was to their husbands and families. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*, xxiii, 11; Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 5,8, 31; Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 68, 95-99. Southern households conformed to these ideas in a distinct way. See Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 6, 65-66; Ann Firor Scott, *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830-1930*, 2nd ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 31, 34, 36; Varon, *We Mean to be Counted*, 137-138, 143; and Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 76-80.

³⁵ Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the Unite States Government's Relations to Slavery*, ed. Ward M. McAfee (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001); Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 11-17.

³⁶ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 2-3; Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms*, 2-3, 4; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds*; Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion*; Peter W. Bardaglio, *Reconstructing the Household: Families, Sex, and the Law in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Victoria Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

qualities necessitated women's removal from the world of markets and politics. Moreover, the ideology presumed that woman's sensitive nature combined with a supposedly fragile physical constitution rendered her unsuitable for work outside the home or for demanding labor within it. Elite white women were to be domestic managers focused on spreading their inherent goodness and selflessness in homes, churches, and local communities. Upper-class white women's moral superiority was often belied by their actual behavior, particularly in the South, where ideals of pure, gentle ladies and tranquil domestic spaces clashed with elite white women's participation in and sanction of the brutal and violent practices of slaveownership.³⁷

No one better understood the southern household's role in displaying slaveowners' wealth and status than black women. Women of color recognized the ways in which labeling the home as a private, domestic space hid the labor of enslaved men and women. To black women, the plantation was an inherently economic space which made possible the social and political power of its white members. But just as white women's privileged racial and class status hid behind notions of moral uprightness, black women's forced servitude was widely accepted as a reflection of their immorality and corruptibility. Their supposed slothfulness, roughness, dirtiness, coarseness, and lasciviousness made them everything white women were not, and also suited them for hard work in white houses and on plantations. Given longstanding misconceptions about black women's hardy physical constitution and pain-free childbirth, black women were often not considered women at all. Enslavement meant that black women lacked

³⁷ Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters*, 19-45; Victoria Ott, *Confederate Daughters: Coming of Age during the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2008), 5; Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 3-21; Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted*, 10-40; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 4-6.

not only the legal privileges conferred upon wives, mothers, and daughters, but even the very basic privilege of citizenship, denying them control over their labor and their families.³⁸

Racial and ethnic bias also permeated nineteenth-century notions of masculinity. For white, native-born, Protestant men, ideas of masculinity were no longer community-oriented and hierarchical but were based instead on values of independence and self-assertion. Fueled by western expansion and the market revolution, manliness now encouraged individuals to make their own way in the world. This shift was particularly acute in the North, where changes in masculinity mirrored changes in the workplace: no longer did men work in community-oriented agriculture or in guilds. Instead, work was centered in factories, offices, and commercial farming, all of which required industriousness and risk. Newer conceptions of masculinity also changed the relationship between manhood and boyhood: what now distinguished a man from a boy was control over one's passions, whether for money, power, strong drink, or sex. This dichotomy established contrasts between middle- and upper-class white men and white working-class, immigrant, and black men. Elites viewed racial and ethnic minorities, as well as the poor, as more boyish and less manly because of their supposed inability to control their moral and physical appetites. But these ideas about manliness set up another, more positive contrast with elite women. Respectable women, as morally superior beings, were supposed to guide men in controlling their passions. They did so by example and by creating domestic settings that allowed men to rest from their endeavors.³⁹

Even in the supposedly free North, black men lived on the fringes of citizenship, independence, and respectability. The early to mid-1800s marked a period of increased activism

³⁸ Bercaw, *Gendered Freedoms*, 2-6; Frankel, *Freedom's Women*, 1-13; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 2, 21, 38, 42-43, 66-67; Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 36, 40, 49, 69, 75-77, 100-102, 105-106, 135.

³⁹ Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*; Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Free Press, 1996); E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 18-25.

and the development of separate institutions in the African American community, as white Americans made clear that black families were not welcome in their churches and schools. White Americans further limited the freedoms of African Americans through nighttime curfews, segregated public and private facilities, and restricted voting and jury service. Even before Chief Justice Taney declared in the 1857 *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision that African Americans lacked citizenship, black men acutely felt their second-class status in the constricted occupations and areas of residence open to them. In response, black men, particularly in urban areas, formed societies and organizations aimed at racial advancement. Among their goals were ending slavery and obtaining the rights and privileges of citizenship; service in the United States military promised to achieve both objectives. By demonstrating their bravery and self-control through military service, and by contrasting their loyalty with the treason of white Confederate men, African American soldiers hoped to secure their civil, political, and socioeconomic rights as American citizens.⁴⁰

Foreign-born men, particularly those of German and Irish decent, also lived on the political and civic fringes. Although they had immigrated legally, and many even became naturalized citizens, the country's limited conception of citizenship and lack of protection for those who had naturalized worried many émigrés. Foreign-born residents, particularly those from Ireland, faced religious and ethnic bias. As nativist sentiment increased during the nineteenth century, Irish immigrants found that Americans questioned whether their Catholic religious beliefs and possible ties to foreign powers were at odds with republican institutions. Relegated to

⁴⁰ Graham Russell Hodges, *Root and Branch: African Americans in New York and East Jersey, 1613-1863*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 229-257; Leonard P. Curry, *The Free Black in Urban America, 1800-1850: The Shadow of the Dream* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 81-94; James Oliver Horton, *Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 116; John Wood Sweet, *Bodies Politic: Negotiating Race in the American North, 1730-1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 355; Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 14.

menial occupations where they competed with African Americans for steady work, some immigrant men viewed military service as a way to prove their worthiness as citizens.⁴¹

In addition to wartime challenges to the racial and ethnic makeup of the citizenry, war disrupted several important steps in the process of turning boys into virtuous republican men. For one, war impeded the transition from boyhood to manhood, particularly for the enlisted soldier who might join the army as early as age sixteen. An army full of young men was an army still unsure of how to channel and direct its energies toward socially constructive purposes. Young enlistees were also impressionable, and could easily take on the habits, good or bad, of those around them. The importance of family, particularly of female family members, was crucial in steering young men toward worthy companions, industrious occupations, and harmless and wholesome leisure activities. Since women provided men with virtuous influences, their absence worried many that United States soldiers might be more susceptible to immorality. For these reasons, chaplains, temperance societies, religious meetings, family ties, and morally-upright officers were seen as necessary to keep young soldiers from destructive vices so that they might develop into virtuous men and citizens. Even local southern civilians, particularly women, might help socially condition soldiers—hence many commanders encouraged rather than prohibited their men from associating with southern women.

But surrogate communities and righteous instruction could only do so much, and the Union army looked to strict military discipline to keep soldiers morally upright. This was particularly the case when it came to forming military policy, especially toward civilians. As commanders looked to lessons from previous wars, they recognized the pitfalls of an army that was not strictly controlled. Recent history demonstrated this to be true. American servicemen's

⁴¹ Martin W. Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic: European Immigrants in the Union Army* (Westport, CT.: Praeger, 2008); Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 5, 15, 43.

many crimes against civilians during the Mexican-American war were forefront in the minds of commanders. Eager not to repeat past mistakes, military theorists and Union army commanders stressed that strict control, clear policies, and sobriety would keep Northern soldiers' conduct above reproach and would ultimately bring victory.⁴²

This dissertation examines how interactions between Union soldiers and southern women during the American Civil War helped to define citizenship, reframe republican ideals, and alter the wartime and post-war worlds both in the North and in the South. As the Darien incident demonstrates, their relationships had real effects on the battlefield and on the home front; they affected intimate space, military occupation, military policy, and ideas about gender roles, racial difference, and class divisions. These men's and women's thoughts and relationships reveal the way in which restrictive gender roles, exclusionary racial barriers, and stratified socioeconomic classes, just as much as the ideals of freedom, liberty, and equal opportunity, lay at the heart of the nineteenth-century American home and American nation.

⁴² Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 3-7, 72-75; Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*; Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*; Witt, *Lincoln's Code*.

CHAPTER 1

THE YANKEES ARE COMING! PERCEPTION, RUMOR, EXPECTATION, AND THE ENEMY, 1861

The imminent arrival of Union soldiers created panic in Nashville. The weather during mid-February 1862 had been gloomy and foreboding, perfectly reflecting the citizens' feelings as the Union army approached. Merchants threw open their stores, encouraging passersby to help themselves. Grocers forced their customers to take all they could carry. Carriages, carts, wagons, and buggies lined the streets of the city as families raced to pack up their belongings. Eyewitness Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin recorded the chaos, describing how "men, women, and children, the rich, the poor, white and black, mingled together in one struggling mass" in their haste to leave the city, giving way only long enough for retreating Confederates to pass.¹

On February 25, victorious Federals marched into the city to find it nearly deserted. "All who could go had skedaddled," observed Union officer James Birney Shaw. Soldiers wondered at the inhabitants' hasty exit: beautiful residences sat empty. Fields lay idle. Gorgeous furnishings now adorned the residences of Nashville's poor. Friendly African Americans told Northerners about how these strange sights came to be: hundreds of wealthy white civilians,

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¹ For weather in Middle Tennessee in late winter 1862, see Lucy Virginia French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal, 1862-1865*, ed. Jerry W. Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Libraries, undated), 12; James Birney Shaw, *History of the Tenth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry: Three Months and Three Years Organizations* (Lafayette, Ind.: Burt Haywood, 1912), 163; Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin, *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, ed. G. Glenn Clift (Louisville: Dunne Press, 1963), 33.

whipped into frenzy by rumors of Yankee brutality, fled the city rather than face robbery, murder, and ravishment at the hands of Union soldiers. Incredulous Federals could scarcely comprehend Confederates' naïveté. "The fools believed [the exaggerated stories]," Shaw remarked, "and left the city."¹

The panicked exits, shocking desolation, and uneasy alliances that characterized the invasion and occupation of Nashville occurred all over the South. This was because soldiers and civilians' faulty perceptions, unfounded rumors, and unrealistic expectations of each other created tension and conflict when they finally came face to face. Perception, rumor, and expectation worked on three different but interlocking levels. Perceptions of enemies and allies helped each side make sense of confusing new allegiances. Soldiers and civilians projected their ideas about the war onto caricatures of their enemies and allies, and their notions about the conflict and about their friends and foes reassured them that their convictions were right and their cause was just. Rumors gave shape to these perceptions, which were largely based in stereotypes about the reasons for war, the composition of the Union army, and the allegiances of southern civilians. These stereotypes situated perceptions into a coherent narrative, which allowed northerners and southerners to tell war stories that reflected their hopes and fears and imbued the conflict with meaning and certainty. Perceptions and rumors inevitably influenced soldiers and civilians' expectations of each other. Both sides assumed that the people whom they would soon encounter would conform to their expectations.

Competing perceptions, rumors, and expectations profoundly influenced initial encounters between Union soldiers and southern women. Both soldiers and women faced challenges to their ideas about the war and their expectations of the "other" which required them

¹ Shaw, *History of the Tenth Regiment*, 163; Andrea R. Foroughi, *Go if You Think it Your Duty: A Minnesota Couple's Civil War Letters* (St. Paul, Minn.: Minnesota Historical Society, 2008), 68.

to rethink their view of the conflict. Military policy confronted a diverse and divided southern populace, and a simple conciliationist approach failed to account for the large number of openly hostile civilians. Confederate women, intent on displaying their patriotism, found that unladylike behavior made them appear less like civilians and more like partisans who should be held accountable for their rebellion. Unionists found liberation and protection from Confederates, but protection from Rebel reprisals did not prove to be a priority of the Federal army. African American women confronted an army that did not necessarily embrace the end of slavery nor view them as civilians deserving protection. Federals and civilians soon learned that war required them to re-evaluate longstanding ideas of civilized warfare, proper behavior, and loyalty and its rewards.

Northern policymakers believed that secession had deeply divided white southerners. Indeed, they maintained that only a few rabid secessionist politicians wanted disunion and that support for the Confederacy was weak. Based on these observations, some northerners, particularly those serving in the federal government in Washington, D.C., perceived white southern civilians to be mostly loyal. These policymakers spread rumors which reinforced their ideas of a small-scale conflict between the United States and a few secessionist politicians. Because they viewed the war as unpopular, Northern rumors told of thousands of southern men, women, and children trapped in the Confederacy. These notions led Union policymakers and military commanders to expect that throngs of grateful white men, women, and children would welcome Federal armies into southern cities. Based on these ideas, the army crafted a civilian policy that mandated kind treatment for noncombatants in the hopes of easily luring white southern civilians back into the Union.²

² For expectations of Union soldiers toward white southern civilians, see Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 8-11.

To these same northerners, black southerners seemed much more problematic. While abolitionist soldiers hoped to encourage slavery's end by assisting African American slaves, many simply felt unsympathetic to the wants and needs of what they regarded as an inferior, even subhuman race. They feared that enslaved blacks would seize on wartime destabilization to foment large-scale rebellions. For these reasons, Northern policymakers and military commanders did not consider African Americans as part of the southern civilian population whom they had a duty to protect. Based on racist assumptions and rumors of slave rebellions, army officials crafted entirely different policies for the treatment of black southerners. The Union army was to prevent servile insurrection, through force if necessary, while protecting the rights of white southerners.³

Ardent Confederates wholeheartedly believed Federals to be brutes intent on the destruction of southern society. Ideas of Union soldiers as savages fed rumors that the army intended to murder, rape, and pillage southern civilians. Rebels found these stories to be believable because they fit with preconceived notions about the type of men who had joined the Federal army—hired mercenaries, ruthless immigrants, and troublesome African American runaways. These rumors fed Confederate expectations that civilians should flee before the Union army or risk subjugation. Rebels who were unable to leave felt it was their patriotic duty to show how much they hated Federals through their words and actions. Even women behaved with such anger, rudeness, and contempt that northerners began to revise their opinion of the rebellion and their policy toward civilians.⁴

³ For Northern expectations of and policies toward African American southerners, see Adam Goodheart, *1861: The Civil War Awakening* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011); and Glenn David Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁴ Jason Phillips, “A Brothers’ War?: Exploring Confederate Perceptions of the Enemy,” *The View from the Ground: Experiences of Civil War Soldiers*, ed. Aaron Sheehan-Dean (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 68.

Confederates singled out their own southern neighbors and friends as their adversaries. White Unionists and free and enslaved blacks suddenly found themselves labeled as public enemies. Confederates worked long and hard to label Unionists as dangerous traitors because instilling hatred would be crucial for building a southern nation. By spreading rumors that white Unionists spied on secessionists for Union officials or that free and enslaved blacks intended to take up arms against them, Confederates attempted to justify harsh treatment of internal enemies. Whether forcing free blacks to work on Confederate fortifications or arresting white Unionists, Confederates maintained that taking such action against civilians was crucial to national security.⁵

Often living in hostile territory, white Unionists had to tread carefully. Many did so by stressing their opposition to disunion and to Lincoln, hoping their moderation would endear them to Confederates as they waited for Federals to arrive. However, rumors about the savagery of the Union army led even Unionists to fear the Yankees. White Unionists, numerous in Maryland and Kentucky, became scarcer as the armies advanced deeper in the Confederacy. Given their small numbers and the months of Confederate oppression they had endured, loyal southerners did not immediately welcome Union soldiers. Cautious that the army might withdraw and leave them once again to the mercies of their Rebel neighbors, white Unionist women reacted coolly at first to Federal invasion. Even so, their political sympathies and the kind treatment they received at the hands of Union soldiers eventually won out. White Unionist women responded more

For white Confederate women, see Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 80; Ott, *Confederate Daughters*, 35-72; Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters*, 239-280.

⁵ Phillips, "A Brothers' War?," *The View from the Ground*, ed. Sheehan-Dean, 69. Phillips' excellent article mainly concerns Confederate soldiers' perceptions of Union soldiers, although he does discuss Confederate civilians to an extent. I build on his work by suggesting that Confederates used similar enemy stereotypes to describe those southerners who dissented from the Confederacy.

positively to the army by crafting ceremonies and providing supplies to Federals, demonstrating their support for the Union in hopes of securing the army's protection.⁶

The Union army's largest outpouring of support came from the most unlikely and most undesired of areas. Many black southerners, even those in remote places, knew that a war was being fought over the issue of slavery. African American men and women felt certain that the Union army intended to end the peculiar institution and rumors soon spread among the South's enslaved and free black population about armies of liberation. Because black southerners well understood that both white Confederates and white Unionists remained committed to the institution of slavery, information about freedom spread quietly through codes and signals. Nevertheless, perceptions and rumors traveled quickly throughout black communities, influencing expectations that the Union army brought freedom. When encounters with Federals did not yield the expected results, black southerners exchanged information about Confederate military strength as well as their physical labor for status as quasi-free contraband of war.⁷

Taken together, perception, rumor, and expectation influenced the formation of Union policy toward civilians, the reaction of civilians to Federals, and explain the terror, anger, mistrust, and apprehension which influenced the first interactions of Union soldiers and southern women. Examining these perceptions, rumors, and expectations reveals that Union soldiers and southern women's ideas about each other and the conflict were rooted in assumptions about the nature of intimate space, the laws of war, and the relationship between citizens and the federal government. In keeping with nineteenth-century ideas of warfare, the Union army expected that civilians would stay out of the conflict. But white Unionists expected Federals to play an active role in protecting them and their private property. The Union command also defined civilians as

⁶ For white Unionist women, see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 117-132.

⁷ For African American women, see White, *Ar'n't I a Woman*, 162-165; and Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet*, 63-65.

white, citing local, state, and federal laws that regarded enslaved people as property. However, black southerners laid claim to civilian status as they fled plantations and articulated their desires for citizenship. Perhaps most troubling were the attitudes of white Confederate women, who rejected the Union and displayed ardent support for the Confederacy. By acting as partisans in the conflict while at the same time expecting to receive preferential treatment because they were civilians, Rebel women challenged policies of conciliation. In this way, perception, rumor, and expectation provide a basis for understanding interactions between Union soldiers and southern women. By understanding their views of each other and the conflict, and how those views were formed in the initial stages of the conflict, it is apparent that Federals and civilians clashed over ideas of civilized warfare, of civilian status, and of intimate space from the very start of the war.⁸

Perception, Rumor, and Expectation

Confederate propaganda fanned the flames of patriotism by instilling hatred of the foe. Although rebels vociferously condemned the Union to shore up patriotism, much Confederate ire was directed toward internal enemies. Lack of unity plagued the Confederacy from its inception. Families found themselves divided, close friends were at odds, and counties within the same state took different sides. Confederates reserved their deepest hatred for their internal enemies because southerners who remained loyal, whether white or black, slave or free, challenged their new nation's unity and legitimacy. Combatting enemies from within became a crucial task for

⁸ Jason Phillips, “A Brothers’ War?: Exploring Confederate Perceptions of the Enemy,” *The View from the Ground: Experiences of Civil War Soldiers*, ed. Aaron Sheehan-Dean (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2007), 68. While Phillips’ essay deals with Confederate ideas about Union soldiers, his ideas apply equally to the ways in which stereotypes of enemies and allies worked more broadly during the conflict. Jason Phillips, “The Grape Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence,” *Journal of Southern History*, no. 4 (November 2006), 759-760; Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010). Rumors also created uncertainty about the war and its progress. For civilians unsure of what to expect from the war and Union soldiers, see Rebecca Campbell Light, ed., *War at our Doors: The Civil War Diaries and Letters of the Bernard Sisters of Virginia* (Fredericksburg: American History Company, 1998), 15. For Union soldiers and southern women’s expectations of each other, see Mammina, “Graceless Yankee Tramps and Secesh She-Devils,” 92-120; and Mammina, “In the Midst of Fire and Blood,” *Civil War History*, forthcoming.

Confederates, who used negative stereotypes of white and black Unionists to inspire hatred and spur fellow rebels to wage war on the home front. Whether lambasting Federals as savages and mercenaries or skewering Lincolniters as immoral traitors, Rebels used stereotypes of their enemies to buttress the Confederate cause.⁹

Confederates disparaged disloyal family members for sacrificing their family's best interests for political purposes. Louise Humphreys Carter, a native Virginian but living in Washington, D.C., was dismayed when one of her relatives joined the Republican Party. She described the man, who wore black in mourning for his deceased wife, as having principles "the same colour as his raiment." Alice Ready from Murfreesboro, Tennessee criticized her sister and brother-in-law for "taking [Union soldiers] to their bosom" when those same soldiers might kill their brother in the Confederate army.¹⁰ In describing family members who supported the Union as devoid of morals, Confederates maintained that unity was absolutely necessary because lives were at stake. Not only were Unionists on the wrong side of the war, but their very convictions encouraged the enemy to continue the fight and also put family members in the Confederate army at risk.

⁹ Phillips, "A Brothers' War?," 69. While most Confederates did remain loyal to the Confederacy and the war effort throughout the entirety of the conflict, many southerners—especially free blacks, bondspeople, and poor whites—dissented from the very beginning of the conflict or as the war dragged on. There are many excellent books on divisions within the Confederacy, two of which are William W. Freehling, *The South vs. The South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*. Some historians take issue with this viewpoint and stress unity, not division, within the Confederacy. See Gary Gallagher, *The Confederate War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999). It is difficult to estimate exactly how divided the Confederacy was, since Unionism fluctuated during the war. Loyalty increased as southerners, particularly the poorer classes, grew tired of the war, but it also decreased in border areas due to the emancipation proclamation. I find numbers to be less important than the fact that the Confederacy was divided, creating friction at the national, state, and local levels. See Daniel Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); John C. Inscoe and Gordon B. McKinney, *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia: Western North Carolina in the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and John C. Inscoe and Robert C. Kenzer, eds., *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives on Unionists in the Civil War South* (Athens: University of Georgia, 2004).

¹⁰ Louise Humphreys Carter Reminiscences, page 1, Library of Virginia, Richmond, VA [hereafter LV]; Alice Ready, *Diary of Alice Ready, 1860, 1862* (New Canaan, CT: Readex Film Products, 1990), 63.

Many Rebels reserved their harshest words for white Unionists. Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin described East Tennessee, renowned for its loyalty to the Union, as questionable in both “truth and patriotism.” Hardin felt East Tennesseans were willing to aid the Federal army because “no climate nor blood nor government can make all men honest.” For Hardin and other Rebels, Confederates were loyal and honest while Unionists behaved deceitfully and treacherously. By disparaging Unionist neighbors, Rebels distanced themselves so they could view these folks as the enemy. The hate their words inspired made it easier to turn their backs on (and even betray to Confederate authorities) those who had once been their close friends. While the conflict was a brother’s war, brotherhood with Unionist family members and neighbors had to be forgotten in order for the cause to succeed. By ruthlessly attacking foes within the Confederacy, Rebels hoped to silence opposition and unify the new nation around the government and military.¹¹

White Southern Unionists felt acutely their precarious position in the Confederacy. A small but vocal minority, they walked a tightrope between placating their Rebel neighbors and holding fast to the Union. Unionists fought against Confederate stereotypes by casting themselves not as radicals or traitors but as moderates. Josie Underwood, a twenty-one-year-old Unionist from Bowling Green, Kentucky, described the dilemma of many Unionists as fighting “[Lincoln’s] extreme views as well as the secessionists.” Despite a commitment to the Union, many had not voted for Lincoln nor did they approve of the Republican party’s policies. Such moderation was lost on Confederates intent on neutralizing internal enemies.¹²

Life in the South became “disagreeable” for white Unionists when Confederate family members and close friends accused them of spying and treason. Mary Austin Howard and Eliza

¹¹ Hardin, *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 30. See also Phillips, “A Brothers’ War?,” 69.

¹² *Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary*, ed. Nancy Disher Baird (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 51.

Bolling Skipworth Gordon of Baltimore, Maryland had been close friends before the war broke out. Their relationship became strained when Gordon continued to talk about her loyalty to the Union among her overwhelmingly Confederate family and friends. Gordon's actions earned her the reputation of reporting on her secessionist relatives to Northern officials, although she had done nothing more than discuss her Union leanings toward friends and family. As enemies living in a hostile country, Unionists found it difficult to even discuss their loyalty without antagonizing Rebel family members, friends, and neighbors.¹³

Not surprisingly, Unionist women eagerly anticipated the Federal army's arrival. Unionists bore the brunt of Confederate soldiers' foraging and confiscation policies, watching helplessly as "gray backs" seized their livestock, overran their fields, and put them out of their homes. In Bowling Green, Kentucky, the Confederate army occupied the home of Josie Underwood and her family and then burned it to the ground. Such mistreatment left many southern Unionists hoping and waiting for the arrival of the Union army. News that Federal soldiers would soon occupy areas in which white Unionists suffered under Confederate rule resulted in much anticipatory rejoicing.¹⁴

Enslaved and freeborn African American Unionists did not let the South's oppressive slave society prevent them from expressing support for the Union. Unlike their white counterparts, black southerners supported both the preservation of the Union as well as Lincoln and the Republican Party. African Americans regarded slavery as central to the conflict and a Union victory key to slavery's demise. Jane Ferguson, mother of Booker T. Washington,

¹³ *Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary*, 51, 62, 87, 88; see also Ibid., 62; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky: The Diary of Frances Peter*, ed. John David Smith and William Cooper, Jr (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 73; Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 21-22. Even Confederates who extended kindness to Northerners or southern Unionists earned the scorn and hatred of other Rebels. See Underwood, *Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary*, 90-91.

¹⁴ *Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary*, 137-139, 142, 148-149, 154, 155-156, 157.

expressed her Union loyalty by praying over her children that the Federal army would be successful so that they would all be free. Virginian Mary Blackburn, an enslaved woman married to a free man, had seen all three of her sons sold by her master. She told members of the Southern Claims Commission that she had become a staunch Unionist that very day. While African Americans held the Union to be perpetual, they also believed it required improvement. A Republican president gave them hope that soon the nation would truly embody the biblical ideas of brotherly love and care for one's neighbor by destroying slavery.¹⁵

Black Americans relied on various sources of information when forming opinions about Union soldiers, ranging from rumors spread by white Confederates, information gathered from the "grape-vine telegraph," and newspapers read clandestinely. White Confederates hoped to dissuade African Americans from supporting the Union army by telling slaves that Union soldiers were demons with horns or that they would harness African Americans to carts and use them as horses. Twelve-year-old Susie King Taylor, born a slave in Savannah, Georgia, exemplified the uneasiness growing out of such conflicting reports. Taylor's white owners and neighbors tried to scare her by insisting that Federals used African Americans as beasts of burden, intimating that Union soldiers primarily regarded African Americans as sources of menial labor rather than as potential fellow citizens. But Taylor challenged such claims by reading newspapers that described the Union army in glowing terms. Taylor's grandmother settled the matter by instructing her not to believe everything white people told her. Even before African Americans set sight on the Union army they engaged in lively debates and hushed

¹⁵ Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Penguin, 1986), 7. Claim of Mary Blackburn, Augusta County, Virginia, SCC-NA; *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight, Lieut-Col Second Mass. Int. Vols* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1868), 299. The Southern Claims Commission contains some of the most extensive material in which black Unionists describe their loyalty and how they navigated Unionism within the Confederacy. See Claim of Judith Hass, Campbell County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Testimony of Mary Brown, Claim of Edmund Brown, Charles City County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Claim of Lucy Green, Charles City County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Testimony of Catherine Alford, Claim of Robert Alford, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, SCC-NA.

conversations about what the army's arrival might mean. Bitter disagreements between white Confederates and white Unionists about whether Union soldiers brought oppression or liberation were not lost on free and enslaved people. Instead, faced with this range of rumors, African Americans formed their own opinions, with many hoping that the arrival of Federal soldiers must surely signal the end of slavery.¹⁶

Confederates held few illusions about the loyalty of slaves and free blacks, rightly identifying African Americans as potential enemies. After the outbreak of war, Rebels identified free blacks as one of their biggest liabilities. Citizens of Charlotte County, Virginia admitted as much in a petition requesting that Governor John Letcher round up able-bodied free black men to work on Confederate fortifications. The county's white residents feared that, "thrown . . . out of employment" due to the war, freeborn African Americans would become a "nuisance," or worse, "dangerous to [the] safety" of white Virginians. While free blacks had always occupied a tenuous position in southern society, many of them lived in relative peace with local whites before the war. Spooked by the thought of free African Americans taking up arms, Confederates moved against freeborn black neighbors before they could pose a threat. By labeling free blacks as dangerous enemies who threatened the well being of the Confederate nation, Rebels could justify conscripting them into the Confederate army where they could monitor their movements.¹⁷

¹⁶ Ira S. Owens, *Green County Soldiers in the Late War*. . . (Dayton, Ohio: Christian Publishing House, 1884), 91; Susie King Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir* (Athens: University of Georgia, 2006), 7-8. Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet*, 63-65.

¹⁷ Citizens of Charlotte County to John Letcher, May 3, 1861, Lehman Ullman Petition and Letter, LV. See Melvin Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s through the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 5, 7, 14, 137, 139, 404-405. See also speech of Confederate General Thomas C. Hindman, in which he characterizes the Union army as composed of "free negroes, Southern tories, Kansas jayhawkers, and hired Dutch cut-throats." *OR*, ser. 1, 22/1:82. Charlotte County, Virginia had a sizeable free black population due to its proximity to Prince Edward County, home to Israel Hill, a community of African Americans established after Richard Randolph freed his slaves upon his death in 1796. Free blacks moved between these two counties, working as small farmers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, and boaters. Many Virginians shared the

Most jarring for Confederates was the thought that the enslaved members of their households would rise up against them. The politically and socially prominent Mary Chesnut of South Carolina and her female friends decided that civil war meant, “Yankees in the front and negroes in the rear.” Confederate General James Longstreet accused Union commanders of “declaring [slaves’] freedom” and thus stirring up “servile insurrection.” Rebels realized that the war would upset the delicate balance of power in southern society, revealing their bitterest enemies to be the men and women they held in bondage. Although many Confederates hoped their own slaves would be loyal, they expected to fight a war on two fronts—one against Union soldiers and another against slaves, who would seize upon wartime unrest to make trouble on plantations or flee to freedom.¹⁸

Confederates felt sure that upon their arrival Federal soldiers would unleash unspeakable horrors. One sergeant characterized Federals as “dastardly foe[s]” and “barbarian[s].” Virginian Helen Struan Bernard, unmarried and living alone at her family’s farm in Fredericksburg, was convinced that the Union army’s “sole object is to subjugate and plunder the South.” Confederate Major General Thomas C. Hindman described Union soldiers as “Pin Indians . . . and hired Dutch cut-throats.” Rumors depicting Federal soldiers as violent savages drew on two

fears of Charlotte County’s residents and not two months after the petition the state convention conscripted free black men as laborers in the Confederate army.

¹⁸ Mary Miller Boykin, *Mary Chesnut’s Civil War*, ed. C. Vann Woodward (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 44; *OR*, ser. 1, 9: 605; Betty Herndon Maury, “The Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury,” *Fredericksburg History and Biography*, vol. 9 (2010), 70; John Q. Anderson, ed., *Brokenburn: The Journal of Kate Stone, 1861-1868* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1955), 298; Eliza Andrews, *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl, 1864-1865* (New York: D. Appleton, 1908), 355; Susan B. Jervay, *Two Diaries: From Middle St. John’s Berkeley, South Carolina . . .* (St. John’s Island: St. John’s Hunting Club, 1994), 4. For Confederate fears of their slaves and servile insurrections, see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 218-219, 225. While McCurry characterizes black participation as a massive slave revolt, other historians emphasize that up to 80% of enslaved people remained on plantations during the war. See Susan Eva O’Donovan, *Becoming Free in the Cotton South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 59-110; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 97-136; and Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Vintage Books, 1976), 97-112. Genovese rightly notes that “any change in [masters’ and mistresses’] perception of the slaves intrinsically meant a change in their perception of themselves.” While many owners believed “Yankees” would incite rebellion, their comments before and during the war and their efforts to move slaves to remote locations and increase patrols suggest a fear of enslaved people themselves.

powerful strains of American mythology: the savage Indian and the professional mercenary, both of whom used war as an excuse to commit horrific crimes. It was no accident that Confederates likened the Union to Native Americans and British soldiers, the two foes which Patriots fought against during the American Revolution. Such comparisons signaled that the Confederacy was continuing, not breaking with, the spirit of 1776, an idea that gave legitimacy to the Rebel cause. Rather than traitors guilty of dissolving the Union, Confederate rebellion was consistent with the behavior of American Patriots, since they resisted the tyranny and oppression of a government unrepresentative of their interests.¹⁹

In keeping with ideas that drew on Revolutionary rhetoric, Confederates perceived that unprincipled Union soldiers brought with them subjugation and enslavement by denying freedom and liberty to Confederates. Mississippian Jane Pickett dreamed on the eve of invasion that “the enemy overran the country & sold us all for slaves.” Language contrasting ‘freedom’ with ‘slavery’ had been used since the Revolution to signify the dangers stemming from a fanatical and authoritarian government that refused to prioritize the interests of its citizens. Confederates feared virtual if not actual enslavement, believing that the Federal government was now controlled by radicals determined subdue the South through military force and then abolish the peculiar institution. But Rebels also feared something less metaphorical. Savages who refused to abide the rules of civilized warfare often took the people they had subjugated captive and even sold them into slavery, a practice that white Americans believed was widely used by both Native Americans and Africans. In these fears, Confederates foresaw hired Union mercenaries

¹⁹ Sergeant Welch, quoted in Karen E. Fritz, *Voices in the Storm: Confederate Rhetoric, 1861-1865* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1999), 44; Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 28; *OR*, ser. 1, 22: 82; Phillips, “A Brothers’ War?,” 71-73. For colonial perceptions of Native Americans, see Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1973). For fears of standing armies, see Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979).

combining forces with enslaved revolutionaries to bring about a race war that would result in the enslavement of white Southerners. In this way, the fear of subjugation by military force, the fear of metaphorical enslavement in the loss of liberty, and the fear of actual enslavement through slave uprisings both supported Confederates' belief that they were engaged in the same struggle as their revolutionary forebears and encouraged Rebels to fight to the bitter end, for surrender meant extermination.²⁰

Barbaric Union soldiers would not even shrink from attacking the most helpless members of society, and southerners frequently referenced the Federal army's intention of ravishing white southern women. Alice Ready, a sixteen-year-old from Murfreesboro, Tennessee and daughter of former U.S. Congressman Thomas Ready, worried that Federals would try to enter her bedroom. Ready intended to defend her chastity by shooting Union soldiers and "pil[ing] their dead bodies at the door." Henry Wise, a Confederate general and former governor of Virginia, warned fellow Rebels that Northerners would "invad[e] the sanctity of [southern] homes" and endeavor to play "master, father, and husband" to Confederate women. Since white Confederate men left plantations unprotected when they joined the army, Confederates felt sure that Yankees would seize on the absence of white men in order to harass white southern women. Just as northerners seemed intent on the political domination of the South, Federals would attack the basis of Confederates' political power by violating the most treasured of their dependents—their white wives and daughters.²¹

²⁰ Jane E. Pickett to Louisa Clark Boddie, December 27, 1862, Boddie Family Papers, Mississippi State Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi, (hereafter MSDAH); Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1967), 232-235.

²¹ *Diary of Alice Ready*, 45. Henry Wise, quoted in Fritz, *Voices in the Storm*, 44-45. See also *OR*, ser. 1, 16:958; *OR*, ser. 1, 16:605; and *OR*, ser. 1, 9/2: 945. For white men's political power as heads of household and their dependents, including wives, children, and enslaved people, see J. Mills Thornton III, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), xviii; Diane Miller Sommerville, *Rape and Race in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

Fears of ravishment particularly focused on African American Union soldiers. Many Confederates, appalled by the thought of African American military service, particularly that of former slaves, assumed black Federals would commit sexual depredations against white women. One report in Houston, Texas involved a plot to murder all white men except for abolitionists, keeping young white women to become black men's wives. Another tale concerned a Massachusetts colonel who allowed African American troops to rape the wife of a Confederate private who had just given birth to a baby. The woman was so traumatized by the assault that she was "almost a maniac, and begs that some one will kill her." Rumors of black troops acting as sexual predators persisted late into the war. In 1864, Emma LeConte, a Confederate resident of Columbia, South Carolina, claimed that even white officers had grown tired of the attacks and had reportedly shot thirty black soldiers for "violating women." Many Confederates believed enslaved black men to be docile and harmless, but that if given their freedom, they would prey on white women. Rumors of black men assaulting pure Confederate women testified to what was at stake in the conflict: not only the possible dismantling of slavery but the entire racial hierarchy and all it represented, including necessary precautions to guard the purity of white southern women. Such rumors testified to the centrality of slavery to southern and Confederate identity and motivated Confederates to fight.²²

2004), 5-7, 11, 22, 27; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 25-27, 98-99; Kerber, *No Constitutional Right*, 13-15.

²² OR, ser. 1, 26/2:187; OR, ser. 1, 40/3:743; Emma LeConte, *When the World Ended: The Diary of Emma LeConte*, ed. Earl Schenck Miers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), 80-81. Diane Miller Sommerville asserts that "Most white southerners believed slaves were innately docile." See Sommerville, *Rape and Race*, 10. Fears of African American soldiers were related to everyday worries about slave revolts, which only increased during the war. Since the majority of African American men who fought for the Union Army were from the South, some historians have suggested that southern whites feared attacks on white women would be retribution for white men's sexual domination of black women during the antebellum period. For fears of wartime slave revolts, see McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 238-239; Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*, 25, 27, 29, 44-49; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 174-175. For the centrality of slavery to Confederate national identity, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988), 60-61.

In contrast, northerners perceived Confederate civilians more optimistically. Many Yankees, including most Union army officials, believed that secession and war had been fomented by a coterie of rabid politicians. Abraham Lincoln gave voice to this very idea in a message to Congress, stating that, “there is much reason to believe that the Union men are the majority in many . . . of the so-called seceded states.” Northern representatives, both Republicans and Democrats, agreed. One congressman characterized the Confederate experiment as a “struggle between the people on one side, and a privileged class on the other” while another described the Confederate government as a “military oligarchy” that once subdued would unleash the Unionist sentiments of the vast majority of southern civilians. Northerners felt sure that most southern men, and certainly most women and children, would not be openly hostile to occupation. Instead, southern civilians would be grateful to the Union army for liberating them from Confederate despotism.²³

The Formation of Policy

Assumptions about the loyalty of southern civilians helped shape military policy. Northern commanders believed most southerners were loyal to the Union, and so they crafted a conciliatory policy designed to foster Unionism. Such a policy would protect loyal southerners’ Constitutional rights instead of treating them as hostile foreign enemies. Military commanders noted of the lessons of the history of American warfare when crafting civilian policies. Hard war tactics such as foraging and plundering, committed by Napoleon against the Spanish in the early nineteenth-century and by Americans during the war with Mexico in the 1840s, only served to ignite the ire of civilians and unleash guerrilla warfare. For all of these reasons, conciliation

²³ “Message to Congress in Special Session,” July 4, 1861, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 4:437; James M. Ashley, quoted in Kenneth M. Stampp, *And the War Came: The North and the Secession Crisis, 1860-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 254; *OR*, ser. 1, 5:700-702.

seemed the best policy to win over the homefront and assure southern men that Federals only wanted to preserve the Union. Through a combination of aggressive military action toward Confederate troops and compassion toward southern women and children, Northern commanders felt sure they could quickly and victoriously end the war.²⁴

The army's civilian policy took for granted that southern women, guided by the ideals of true womanhood, still held fast to the Union. True womanhood pictured women as virtuous, selfless, and magnanimous beings who were apolitical and yet encouraged patriotism and fealty to the Union. Indeed, it was because of women's virtue and lack of self-interest that they were the perfect vessels to transmit patriotic sentiment to future generations. What many Northerners did not realize was how deeply ingrained sectionalism had become among middle- and upper-class southerners during the political strife of the 1850s. Perceived attacks on southern institutions led southern mothers to begin instructing their children in loyalty to southern interests. By the outbreak of war, many southern women believed allegiance to the South to be more important and more virtuous than allegiance to the Union. Northerners who imagined that most male southerners remained loyal could not fathom that upright white women would abandon the Union to support the Confederacy, for such a leap also seemed to be an abdication of their adherence to the ideas of true womanhood. Linked as true womanhood was with the ideas of Republican Motherhood formed directly after the American Revolution, women's service to family and country was indelibly linked. To Northerners, then, a woman who supported the rebellion not only forsook the Union but also her status as a lady. To many, the

²⁴ Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 2-3, 8, 11, 17, 20, 21, 23, 43, 45, 46. Grimsley argues that "the success of the conciliatory policy depended on two variables: the willingness of northern soldiers to leave civilians alone and the willingness of civilians to leave soldiers alone. From the outset, the first condition was seldom secured; and the man in the ranks soon discovered that the second was quite unlikely" (46).

very idea that women would stoop from goodness and altruism to self-interest and treason seemed ludicrous.²⁵

Initial Encounters: Federals and White Unionists

Conciliation sentiment characterized the very first orders to Union soldiers. As the Federal army prepared to enter Virginia, Brigadier General Irvin McDowell reminded his troops that far from invading enemy territory, they were poised to enter “American soil” and should conduct themselves accordingly. McDowell instructed his soldiers that they had three tasks as they invaded Virginia. First, they must “punish sedition” by vanquishing the Confederate army on the battlefield. Second, Union troops needed to “protect the loyal,” including men who refused to take arms against the Union as well as any women and children they encountered. “Protecting the loyal” mandated restraint in dealing with noncombatants. Army policies largely equated loyal civilians with white civilians, an assumption made clear in McDowell’s third rule, which required his troops to “suppress servile insurrection.” McDowell’s orders demonstrate that only the loyalty of white southerners would be rewarded. The Union army did not expect to protect black southerners but instead would protect white southerners from African Americans who engaged in slave rebellions. Not only did Federals refuse the help of enslaved African Americans, they also assumed black southerners could be kept from participating in the war. At this juncture, Union war aims focused on patching the country back together by fair treatment of white southern civilians and by neutralizing rebellious activity among African Americans.²⁶

²⁵ Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 4, 7, 11-12; Varon, *We Mean to be Counted*, 137-138, 143; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 72-74, 90, 91-96. American ideas about women’s patriotism first surfaced around the American Revolution. Republican Motherhood defined men’s and women’s obligations to the state by granting men status as republican citizens while giving women a special place as the custodians of public virtue, tasked with creating moral and patriotic children. These ideas expanded in the early nineteenth century as middle-class women, freed from many household tasks, enlarged their role as moral custodians by linking household management, child-rearing, and philanthropic activities.

²⁶ *OR*, ser. 1, 2:907.

The Federal army's first interactions with southern civilians demonstrated that it would take more than kindness and respect to win over noncombatants. Confederate perceptions of the enemy had generated wild and widely circulated rumors. By the summer of 1861, tales of Yankee barbarity and brutality had reached such levels that even Unionist civilians believed Federals would steal, plunder, and ravish. Union commanders soon realized that a key part of conciliation would involve combatting slanderous reports. John N. McElroy, commanding forces in western Virginia, acknowledged the difficulties his soldiers would face since Confederates labeled them as "robbers and murderers of women and children." Because of such perceptions, his men did not stop as they passed through the town, but "march[ed] through in soldierly order, no man leaving the ranks or shouting or making unnecessary noise." While Confederate propagandists sought to keep civilians in line through fear and intimidation, Union soldiers believed that their conduct could reassure the frightened women and children who remained loyal to the United States.²⁷

Army commanders seemed gratified with any proof of white civilian loyalty to the Union. Lieutenant Charles Stone found in Poolesville, Maryland that while the "women and children had been taught by the Virginians and active secessionists here to expect every species of outrage and horror" when the troops arrived, the women "seem to gain confidence in the Government day by day." The encounters of commanders with southern women during the war's first few months confirmed expectations that many civilians remained loyal. Military officials continued to believe or at least hope that Unionist sentiment could be encouraged through the irreproachable conduct of their men and mild treatment of civilians.²⁸

²⁷ *OR*, ser. 1, 51/1:425.

²⁸ *OR*, ser. 1, 2:113. See also Julian Wisner Hinkley, *A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry* (Madison: Wisconsin History Commission, 1912), 17; Shaw, *History of the Tenth Regiment*, 125, 126; *OR*, ser. 1, 27/2:177. For Confederates spreading rumors about Union soldiers, see *OR*, ser. 1, 9:363.

In order to convince civilians of the army's good intentions, northerners extolled the mild treatment of noncombatants. While stationed in western Virginia, General George McClellan had "an affecting interview . . . with a woman we liberated from prison." McClellan and his officers discovered that the woman had been imprisoned by the Confederacy for three weeks merely because of her Union sentiments. Ohioan John H. Shober wrote his uncle that "the union feeling predominates" in Loudon County, Virginia partly due to the Confederate government which confiscated "cattle, horses, wagons, or . . . grain. . . with out leave or remuneration." Northern soldiers viewed Confederate treatment of civilian women with distaste. By punishing Unionist women with imprisonment or confiscation, Confederates violated the rules of war which stipulated that soldiers watch over noncombatants regardless of their loyalty. Union commanders and northern lawmakers maintained that unlike Confederates, they abided by the rules of civilized warfare. Reports of Confederates who mistreated civilians confirmed to the Northern army that their invasion of southern territory was necessary to win the war and to liberate civilians from rebel oppression.²⁹

Enlisted men shared their commanders' hopes for the loyalty of southern civilians. While few soldiers wrote about their expectations as the war began, once they arrived in southern territory they commented voluminously on the countryside and its inhabitants. Those who had never before been south seemed enchanted by the rolling hills, dense woods, and scenic waterways of the Upper South. Federal soldier John Viles of the Thirteenth Massachusetts remarked on the beauty of the Old Dominion, describing Winchester as "much the best looking

²⁹ George McClellan to Mary Ellen Marcy McClellan, July 12, 1861, in *McClellan's Own Story: the War for the Union* (New York: C.L. Webster, 1887), 62. See also *OR*, ser. 1, 2:123; John H. Shober to Uncle, John H. Shober Letter, September 19, 1861, LV. See McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 87, 90, 116, 117; Inscoe and McKinney, eds., *The Heart of Confederate Appalachia*, 200; Margaret M. Storey, *Loyalty and Loss: Alabama's Unionists in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 106-108; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 72-74, 86, 87. Mitchell argues that although Northern soldiers fought mostly on southern soil, one of their principal reasons for fighting was in defense of their wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters, as well as their homes and communities, during the war.

place I've seen out this way" due to its expansive squares, well-spaced streets, and generous groupings of trees. But the beautiful countryside stood in stark contrast with the jarring sight of abandoned homes. Viles described that "many of the prominent Secesh decamped before the Union troops come [*sic*] in." Pennsylvanian Robert Wait wrote home that he saw few white women around, while Perrin Lambert of New Hampshire described Maryland's Montgomery County to be "rough country . . . the old plantations look desolate." Soldiers who fervently believed that most southern civilians remained devoted to the Union found it strange that so many had fled before the advancing Federal armies. Abandoned homes and desolate farmland aroused the suspicion of enlisted men, who began to wonder if the Unionism of southern civilians had not been greatly exaggerated.³⁰

Unionists who warmly greeted Federals did much to reassure them that many white southerners remained loyal. In Maryland and Virginia, West Virginia and Kentucky, Unionists came out in droves to welcome the Federal army. Marching through Winchester, Virginia, a Wisconsin soldier noted that "citizens were rejoicing everywhere over their deliverance from the Confederates." When Union forces arrived in Louisville, they found the city streets crowded with loyal citizens. James Birney Shaw particularly found that "the female sex was most ardent and effusive in their welcome." The greetings that soldiers received in Winchester and Louisville reassured Northerners that most white southerners could be counted on to support the Union army.³¹

³⁰ John Viles to Frank, John Viles Letter, March 18, 1862, LV. For descriptions of the southern countryside, see Robert F. Harris and John Niflot, eds., *Dear Sister: The Civil War Letters of the Brothers Gould* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 75; Owens, *Greene County Soldiers*, 104; Perrin Lambert to Mr. S.F. Mathews, November 7, 1862, Perrin Lambert Letter; Robert H. Wait to Julia A. Wait, January 8, 1863, Robert H. Wait Letter, both LV.

³¹ Hinkley, *A Narrative of Service*, 17. Shaw, *History of the Tenth Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry*, 125; see also *OR*, ser. 1, 21:33.

White Unionist women conducted ceremonies to show their loyalty and gratitude to Union soldiers. The white women of Harpers Ferry, Virginia held a flag raising ceremony for Union troops when they arrived. Loyal citizens sent the national emblem to Maryland for safekeeping during the city's occupation by Confederate General Joseph Johnston. Gathering on a warm summer evening in the town square, officers and women exulted as the red, white, and blue once again flew over the town. "Long may it wave!" the band rang out. Such ceremonies allowed Unionist women to publically express their patriotic devotion, an important step in demonstrating that they were true women and therefore could be trusted. In addition, such displays also demonstrated their appreciation for the protection that Federal forces provided, a protection that they believed would continue because they had proved themselves to be Unionists and therefore worthy of the Union army's support.³²

Many white women tried to remain within Union lines for protection. Soldiers encountered desperate civilians in Kentucky, where fleeing Rebel troops reportedly forced women to turn over their husbands' clothing and killed loyal civilians who got in their way. When Union forces retreated after the defeat at First Bull Run, Massachusetts Colonel Wilder Dwight, a Harvard-educated lawyer, noted how "panic stricken women and children pursued us. . . not daring to remain without our protection." Loyal white women, stranded for months in enemy territory, hoped Federal soldiers would protect them from hostile Confederates. By welcoming Union soldiers, staging flag ceremonies, and following the army, white Unionist women proved to Federals that loyal southerners did, in fact, exist. The first interactions of

³² Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 56.

Union soldiers and white Unionist women left both sides feeling optimistic that through collaboration, the war would be short and easily won.³³

Initial Encounters: Federals and African Americans

Union soldiers seemed both surprised and delighted by African Americans' displays of loyalty. Commanders' instructions to suppress slave rebellions seemed to assume there would be conflict between white Union soldiers and enslaved black southerners. But Federals found African Americans more celebratory than insurrectionary. African Americans gathered from miles around in Versailles, Kentucky to greet the 72nd Indiana Infantry regiment. Commander Benjamin McGee and his men found the "shout[ing], danc[ing], leap[ing], yell[ing], and pray[ing]" to be "quite amusing . . . and touching." Soldiers found the joyous reaction that they had expected from white Unionists in the treatment they received from African Americans. Many favorably compared the joyous celebrations of enslaved and free blacks with the rather lackluster reception by the relatively small group of loyal white southerners, leading some to question the genuineness of white southern Unionism.³⁴

African American civilians hoped that Union soldiers' arrival marked the coming of liberation. Wilder Dwight observed slaves sitting on fences and staring in wonder while the army marched into Charlestown. As a devout abolitionist, Dwight recognized that for the enslaved population the army's passing meant "freedom to them." Savilla Burrell, a formerly enslaved woman, declared years after the war that slaves "looked for the Yankees . . . like us

³³ See Testimony of Anna Maria Armstrong, Claim of Benjamin Armstrong, Spotsylvania County, Virginia and Claim of Elizabeth Mummaw, Frederick County, Virginia, both SCC-NA. Armstrong was threatened with imprisonment for her Unionist sentiments and Mummaw narrowly avoided having her house burned down. *OR*, ser.1, 7:497; Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 82.

³⁴ Benjamin F. McGee and William Ray Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana Infantry of the Mounted Lightning Brigade* (Lafayette, IN: S. Vater, 1882), 60. See also James I. Robertson, Jr., ed., "An Indiana Soldier in Love and War: the Civil War Letters of John V. Hadley," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 59, no. 3 (September 1963), 208; Zenas T. Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy: the Civil War Reports of a Massachusetts Corporal*, ed. William C. Harris (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 75; Jenkin Lloyd Jones, *An Artilleryman's Diary* (Madison: Wisconsin Historical Commission, 1914), 44.

look now for de Savior and de host of angels at de second comin'.” African Americans taught Union soldiers that the type of liberation that black Americans expected was entirely different from what white civilians expected. While white women hoped for liberation from Confederates, enslaved people expected freedom from slaveowners. In exchange, black men and women proved to be some of the army’s most loyal supporters.³⁵

African Americans’ push for freedom created difficulties for Union commanders. Soon after the Union army occupied parts of Virginia, free and enslaved blacks absconded to Union lines rather than continue their forced labor on Confederate fortifications. Although Union generals knew that they did not have the authority to free slaves, some realized that the army’s policy of returning enslaved people to their owners only helped the Confederacy. Union commanders in Virginia were forced to make a decision. Irvin McDowell adhered to official policy and sent runaway slaves packing, but Benjamin Butler believed this did a disservice to the army and to African Americans. Welcoming black southerners to Union lines would deprive rebels of their labor, and when Butler took command of Fortress Monroe in Virginia, he did just that. By taking Confederates at their word when they spurned the Constitution, Butler argued that the Union army was under no obligation to return runaways under the Fugitive Slave Act. When Butler declared enslaved people within Union lines to be “contraband of war,” the relationship between black southerners and the Federal army fundamentally shifted from one of runaway slave and slave catcher to one of vital war resource and the army who protected that resource. African Americans who came to Union lines helped forge a policy that, while stopping far short of their goal of liberation, changed the way in which some Union commanders viewed black

³⁵ Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 51; Savilla Burrell in George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Greenwood, CT: Westport Publishing, 1972), 2:151. Historians raise valid concerns about the use of WPA Narratives because white interviewers may have deterred black interviewees from speaking candidly. While taking these considerations to heart, I have decided to include them because they are one of the few Civil War-era sources available that give enslaved black women a voice. See Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 14-15n38.

southerners. Instead of potentially violent insurrectionaries, Federals began to see African Americans as more complex and even sympathetic figures. While soldiers still did not all view black Americans as fully human beings, their close proximity allowed Union soldiers to interact with enslaved people and listen to their stories, many of them for the very first time.³⁶

African Americans' expectations of freedom taught Union soldiers that loyal southerners might demand a great deal from the bluecoats. African American women raised this issue by seeking freedom within Union lines. Two months after the announcement of the contraband policy, nearly nine hundred African Americans claimed the Union army's protection at Fortress Monroe. Over half of them were women and children. Suddenly, generals had to provide not only for their own troops and male contrabands but for the women and children who followed in their wake. Adults could be put to work cooking, washing, and doing menial labor, but soon there was not enough work to spread around. With the new contraband policy, it seemed inadvisable to return escaped slaves to their Confederate owners, but surely commanders could not be expected to care for hundreds of women and children. Looking for guidance, generals referred the matter up the chain of command. Writing to Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs, Brigadier General Thomas W. Sherman complained that "the large families" of fleeing slaves "make a great many useless mouths." One general asked Secretary of War Simon Cameron if he should find "food and shelter for the women and children, who can do nothing for themselves?" By claiming their freedom, enslaved women declared war on the plantation and

³⁶ Jessie A. Marshall, ed., *Private and Official Correspondence of General Benjamin F. Butler during the Period of the Civil War* (Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press, 1917), 1:105-107, 117-118, 119, 165, 183, 187. See McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 355-356; Goodheart, *1861*, 314, 324, 326, 329-331; and Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign*, 5, 27, 33, 38, 97 for the North's developing policy toward contrabands.

asserted that the Federal army had a duty to loyal women. Even early on in the war, loyal women believed that the Union army had an obligation to devoted civilians.³⁷

The army's indecision about how to deal with black women and children revealed that while Union officials appreciated the loyalty and labor of black Americans, they did not wish to give them the full benefits of white civilians. Certain northern officials, such as Postmaster General Montgomery Blair, hoped the Union army would adopt a narrow application of the contraband policy. Blair advised commanders to be discerning about which enslaved people received this distinction "so as not to be required to feed unproductive laborers." If Blair's ideas were followed, many African American women and children would be without means of support. Some commanders rightly argued that such equivocation violated the ideas of civilized warfare. Benjamin Butler asserted that northern military policy toward civilians applied to black women and children as much as it did to whites. "I should take the same care of these [black] men, women, and children," he declared, "as I would of the same number of men, women, and children, who, for their attachment to the Union, had been driven or allowed to flee from the Confederate States." For some commanders, the presence of African American women and children within Union lines not only spurred them to broaden the contraband policy but even to chip away at the Union army's definition of noncombatants as exclusively white. In realizing that it was not only white southerners who needed and desired protection, by July 1861 the Federal army was taking steps toward recognizing African Americans as the equal of whites in terms of their loyalty and service and ultimately toward recognizing their full citizenship.³⁸

³⁷ Marshall, ed., *Private and Official Correspondence*, 1:183; *OR*, ser. 1, 6:201; *OR*, ser. 1, 4:614. For other commanders struggling with contrabands, see *OR*, ser. 1, 2:52; *OR*, ser. 1, 9:399; *OR*, ser. 1, 13:202; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 7.

³⁸ Marshall, ed., *Private and Official Correspondence*, 1:117-118, 186-187.

Initial Encounters: Federals and Confederates

Confederate women partisans forced the Union army to reconsider its policy of conciliation toward southern civilians. Federal soldiers who assumed, based on ideas of true womanhood, that southern women remained loyal were soon disabused of the idea by many young, outspoken Rebel women. Northerners felt shocked by the sheer number of respectable white women, especially wealthy ones, who treated soldiers with contempt. Enlisted soldier John Viles seemed incredulous that secessionist women in Winchester “sa[id] many very insulting remarks” to Union soldiers. Other soldiers encountered women who blatantly displayed Confederate colors, loudly cheered for Jeff Davis, and generally behaved “sauc[ily] and impudent[ly]” with “disdainful faces and pouting lips.” What bothered soldiers the most was that Rebel women believed they could hurl abuse with impunity, trusting that their sex was “sufficient protection.” The behavior of Confederate women defied the Federal army’s expectations and flouted their ideas of appropriate female behavior, which required women to remain neutral in political and military affairs, support the Union, and encourage male relatives to do the same. By acting as partisans in the conflict, by supporting an illegitimate and treasonous Confederate government, and by encouraging their male relatives in their rebellion, Confederate ladies had rejected proper female roles. To Union soldiers, this behavior signaled that Rebel women had abandoned true womanhood and that therefore they were not really ladies at all.³⁹

The women behavior of women who supported secession and rebellion changed the way in which the Union army regarded female noncombatants. After a few interactions with Confederate women in Virginia, Wilder Dwight concluded that the Union army had “under-

³⁹ John Viles to Frank, March 18, 1862, John Viles Letter, LV; *OR*, ser. 1, 12/3:161; *OR*, ser. 1, 17/2:22; *OR*, ser. 1, 19/2:107; William Babcock Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service* (Boston: Ticknor, 1885), 18; Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 68.

estimate[d] the strength of the secession sentiment and overestimate[d] the Union feeling.”

Major Edward B. Eno, stationed in Missouri, described the feeling among the women there as “intensely secesh,” and worried that a Confederate victory would encourage them to take up arms and fight against his men. An army chaplain stationed in Georgia declared southern women and girls to be the “worst secessionists,” believing their behavior to be outrageous enough that they should no longer be spared the suffering and destruction of war. Confederate women who publicly sided with rebels seemed to be renouncing the special treatment afforded to civilians. Rather than thinking of them as citizens to be protected, Federals began to regard rebel women as enemies and she-devils.⁴⁰

For their part, Confederate women wondered why Union soldiers would expect them to forsake their family and friends to support the Union. Rebels who regarded Union soldiers not as liberators but as oppressors, despots, and cutthroats found it laughable that Yankees anticipated being welcomed by grateful citizens. Kate Carney of Murfreesboro seemed incredulous when Federals complained to her that they had not received a single kind word since arriving in the town. “How can they look for kindness,” she marveled, “when they have come to take every thing away . . . [and] ruin every thing we hold dear [?]” As invaders of southern soil who seemed intent on its subjugation, Union soldiers were clearly the enemy.⁴¹

Rebel women defended their behavior toward Union soldiers by claiming to uphold—not reject—conventions of true womanly behavior. Since a woman’s ultimate role was to serve her family and preserve patriotic sentiment, Confederate women took pride in the ways they shunned the Union army. Elizabeth Hardin claimed to take no delight in insulting Union soldiers since it

⁴⁰ Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 201; *OR*, ser. 1, 12:482; George S. Bradley, *The Star Corps, or, Notes of an Army Chaplain during Sherman's Famous "March to the Sea"* (Milwaukee: Jermain and Brightman, 1865), 225.

⁴¹ *Kate Carney Diary* (New Canaan, CT: Readex Film Products, 1990), 376, 369. See also *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 38; McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 86.

transgressed appropriate female behavior. Yet that did not stop Hardin and her friends from “refus[ing] to let even the hem of [our] garments touch [Union soldiers] and their most polite bows were returned with a stony glaze.” Other women reproved male friends and acquaintances who had joined the Federal army. By rejecting the attention of Yankees, whether it meant ignoring them on the street or declining their requests to visit, Confederate women established that wartime allowed true ladies, who normally needed to kind to all, to behave rudely to their country’s sworn enemies. Rebel women’s antics served an important function. Union soldiers admitted to sixteen-year-old Alice Ready, sister-in-law of Captain John Hunt Morgan, that Confederate women deserved “the credit for the number of men the South has in the field.” By ignoring, scolding, glaring, and goading—behaviors all considered unladylike—Rebel women sought to punish invading Union soldiers and embolden Confederate troops.⁴²

Confederate women soon realized that their very public decisions about their loyalty had immense ramifications. By aligning themselves with male relatives who were considered the nation’s enemies and traitors, women found that male protection could no longer shield them from obligations to the state. For southern women living in northern cities, this lack of protection made life very uncomfortable. At the outbreak of hostilities, Washington D.C. suddenly became “a perfect chaos” in which Southern sympathizers read doom and destruction in the smallest occurrences. Louise Humphreys Carter, married to a Confederate official, panicked when one day she saw “men writing the numbers of houses in little books.” She felt sure that government officials were “taking notes of those which contained Southern Officers and sympathizers” in order to keep tabs on their enemies. Women found that their loyalty was no longer viewed as

⁴² Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters*, 19, 38; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 45; *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 38, 42; *Diary of Alice Ready*, 84. Some Confederate women believed that their comrades took rude behavior toward Union soldiers a bit too far. See Sarah Morgan, *The Civil War Diary of a Southern Woman*, ed. Charles East (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), 76, 121-122.

neutral or of little consequence. Instead, their allegiance to the Confederacy and their relationship to Confederate fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons aroused the scrutiny of government officials and the suspicion of neighbors and friends.⁴³

Consequently Rebel women hardly received preferential treatment from powerful men. Native Virginian Betty Herndon Maury, daughter of former U.S. Naval Commodore Matthew Maury, felt anxious to leave the nation's capital when her father resigned his commission and joined the Confederacy. Because of her southern sympathies, the War Department denied Maury's application for a pass through the lines. Just to leave the capitol and join her family in the south, Maury was forced to enlist the aid of a family friend in the Union army. Before the war, Maury's status as a wealthy white woman would have granted her a sympathetic hearing from government officials. Now that she was a Confederate with ties to male relatives in the Confederate government, she needed the aid of Unionist friends and a little deception to get what she wanted. Only by using her mother's maiden name to hide her identity did Maury obtain permission from General Winfield Scott to go south.⁴⁴ For ardent Confederate women, questions of loyalty and obligation to the government had become fraught topics. In the eyes of many northerners, rebel women no longer deserved protection or preferential treatment. When ladies became rebels, they also became traitors.

⁴³ Louise Humphreys Carter reminiscences, page 2, LV. Coverture made a woman's primary obligation not to the state but to her husband and family, and it was the foremost way in which the United States understood married and unmarried women's obligations to the state. Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*, xxiii, 11. During the Civil War, these ideas about women's obligations to the state were hotly debated. Confederate women insisted that they owed the federal government no obligation since their primary loyalty was to their family and transferred their allegiance to the CSA. Northern politicians and military officials argued that secession was treason and therefore rebel women were traitors to the state. Northerners felt justified in disciplining Confederate women by imprisoning them or confiscating their private property. See McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 115.

⁴⁴ Maury, "The Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury," 9-10.

Conclusion

Northerners and southerners entered the early days of the war with very definite expectations of their friends and enemies. Many soldiers and civilians did not realize that these notions were often rooted in false perceptions, wild rumors, and impossible expectations. Northerners believed that putting the Union back together would be a simple task since most white southerners, especially white women, remained loyal. Winning the war could be as quick and easy as liberating captive Unionists from Confederate oppression and preventing African Americans from fomenting slave rebellions. What Federals discovered instead was a bitterly divided southern populace that never quite conformed to expectations. White Unionist women shared the army's commitment to preserving the Union but rejected more radical elements of Northern politics. Beleaguered by life in enemy territory, these loyal white women expected Union soldiers to liberate them from oppression and restore the status quo. African Americans greeted the Union army with the jubilation soldiers expected, partly because black southerners believed the war signaled the end of slavery. Faced with conservative army policies, African American women proved that their labor and guidance were crucial to the war effort and gained ground through new contraband policies. Confederate women proved to be the most troublesome of all. Their fierce loyalty to the Rebel government and conviction that the Union army was intent on their destruction encouraged intensely partisan behavior. Soldiers could only explain their conduct as an abandonment of ladylike ideals. Perceptions, rumors, and expectations shaped the first encounters between Union soldiers and southern women and in the process called into question ideas of civilized warfare, citizenship, and the nature of intimate space.

As initial encounters between Union soldiers and southern women turned into actual interactions, it became clear that ideas of genteel behavior and true womanhood influenced

exchanges as well as perceptions and expectations. Throughout the next year of the war, as the Union army occupied more territory and Federals and civilians began to live in close proximity to one another, their initial impressions of each other became more detailed as they assessed each others' appearance, observed character, and interacted with each other socially and even romantically. Throughout these interactions, standards of genteel behavior, which were inextricably tied to ideas of gender roles, racial barriers, and socioeconomic status, influenced how and when soldiers and civilians interacted. Rather than merely associating with those who shared their political sympathies, soldiers and women demonstrated that ideas of race and class were just as if not more important in determining with whom they chose to spend their time.

CHAPTER 2

“DAM PRETTY GALS”: APPEARANCE, OBSERVATION, ROMANCE, AND TREACHERY, 1862

Cora Owens Hume, a young Unionist woman from Louisville, Kentucky, was deeply perplexed. Her father had just informed her that one of her close friends, diehard Rebel Myra Moore of Columbus, Kentucky, had married Union army Lieutenant Joceyln S. Foulkes of the 4th Missouri Cavalry, “who had been paying her a great deal of attention.” As Hume wondered how this could possibly be, she remembered that Moore had said that she had “something to tell me for a good while—this must be it, but she was afraid—she said—to tell me.” She surmised that her friend’s reticence was partly due to the fact that “often I have spoken to her of how heartless it is in girls, who are Southern—to be marrying Federals--& I expect that she was afraid to tell me—for fear of making me angry with her.” Even so, Hume marveled that her friend had gone through with the marriage since Moore “would not marry a yankee under ordinary circumstances.” Hume concluded that Moore’s marriage must have occurred because “she thinks that there is no one else to marry & she loved this Federal.”¹

Hume’s thoughts concerning her Confederate friend’s marriage were far from unique. The Civil War brought Union soldiers and southern women into close contact, and social mixing—even romantic relationships and marriage—resulted. Whatever their character, these social interactions remained firmly grounded in nineteenth-century ideas of masculine and

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¹ September 23, 1864, Cora Owens Hume Diary, 1863-1866, vol. 2: July 28, 1864-August 27, 1865, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter FHS).

feminine behavior. Whether of the “self-made man,” which stipulated men’s duty to prove their worth through success in business and through caring for female relatives, or of “true womanhood,” which relegated women to roles as caretakers of home and children, rigid nineteenth-century gender roles had important socioeconomic and racial components. Men who worked menial jobs—mainly immigrants and African Americans—and who could not adequately provide for female relatives were excluded from mainstream definitions of masculinity. And women who worked in or out of the home, from enslaved black women to poor white women, did not meet ladylike standards of leisure. In this way, Americans’ very homes—their intimate spaces—defined who met standards of “proper” gender roles. Wartime encounters between Federals and southern women provided moments of camaraderie and tension, and revealed that nineteenth-century gender roles were in fact rooted in racial difference and socioeconomic barriers.

Nineteenth-century attitudes linked gender roles, class status, and racial background to one’s place in the world and strongly influenced relations between Union soldiers and southern civilians. Upper-class white northerners and southerners shared certain assumptions about masculine and feminine roles. Men should be successful and ambitious, but true manhood also involved refined manners, care for dependents, and protection of worthy women.¹ Men’s duty to care for women (albeit only those of similar socioeconomic and racial backgrounds) served to

¹ Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 23, 26, 43, 44, 54-55. European gender historians have shown that these developments were not a uniquely American phenomenon. See Joan Wallach Scott, *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996) and *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Mary Louise Roberts, *Civilization Without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917-1927* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and *Disruptive Acts: The New Woman in Fin-de-Siècle France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002); Bonnie G. Smith, *Ladies of the Leisure Class: The Bourgeoisies of Northern France in the Nineteenth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981). By proper gender roles, I mean those roles created by a particular society that define how men and women ought to behave. In the nineteenth-century, these definitions—which called for women to be ladylike and men to be gentlemen—had definite class and racial components. Both ladies and gentlemen were white, the products of genteel families, and displayed their wealth and membership in the upper class through their clothing, accouterments, and good manners.

reinforce middle-class gender ideology. This need for protection, grounded in ideas of “true womanhood,” was based on women’s perceived physical and emotional weakness.² In this way, women provided men with respite from the acquisitive world and transformed children into virtuous, hardworking citizens. Above all, a lady comported herself in such a way that reflected well upon herself and also upon her family. In the words of one woman, “a true lady is loved by all.”³

These gender roles, stemming from the market revolution’s widespread social and economic changes and propagated by clergymen and women writers in prescriptive literature, situated men and women in a “genteel” society defined by strict socioeconomic and racial barriers. What gentility offered middle- and upper-class Americans was a way to make sense of a world turned upside down by political democracy, immigration, and industrial change. Genteel manners set elite whites apart from the masses, and based their privilege in their good character and good morals rather than their gender, socioeconomic status, or racial background. Following these standards, poor white and free and enslaved African American men and women could not be ladies or gentlemen not only due to their lack of wealth but also due to perceived deficiencies in their character. Elite Americans suspected that working-class whites and free and enslaved blacks were indigent because they were shiftless and immoral. Poor whites were considered

² By the term ‘lady’ or ‘ladies,’ I refer to the nineteenth-century idea that bestowed this label on wealthy white women from good families, whose wealth allowed them to display, through their clothing, accoutrements, and good manners, their membership in the upper class. See Jabour, *Scarlett’s Sisters*, 19-45, and Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 3-21. Thavolia Glymph makes the important point that being a lady entailed a certain socioeconomic status, because for these women, work outside the home was a "disqualifying act." Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 4.

³ Scott, *The Southern Lady*, 4-5; Jabour, 19, 38, 45; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 4. Underlying these notions were the racial and class components of being a lady: a woman from a poor white family could not be a lady, and neither could an enslaved woman. This was because a lady was more than genteel manners. She dressed in fine clothes, was educated in music, needlework, and French, and spent her days in leisure. Although these were the standards of ladylike behavior, this does not mean that antebellum women always lived up to them. Glymph argues that slaveholding women’s violence against slaves “contradicted prevailing conceptions of white womanhood” (5) and that “in the South, white gender ideals clashed with white women’s domestic dominance” (6).

dishonest and depraved, while free and enslaved blacks' darker skin color was a permanent marker of their inferiority and their suitability for menial labor. In addition, poor white and black women's poverty and ignorance led many to suspect that they were sexually immoral, thus marking them as women with whom gentlemen and ladies had no business associating.⁴

Ideas justifying nineteenth-century gender roles, socioeconomic status, and racial barriers had important wartime ramifications. Men's perceived obligation to "weaker" members of society justified their wartime roles as protectors. The Federal army, however, never set out to protect all southern women, for its very definition of civilians excluded black women, and Union commanders initially only saw themselves as the rightful protectors of white southern women. But even white women's civilian status was predicated upon them behaving as disinterested, hospitable, and truthful ladies who quietly served their families and worthy soldiers. Instead of living up to these expectations, Confederate women's behavior reflected a tension between the dictate of kindness to all (including Union soldiers) and the need for devoted service to families (who might be staunch Confederates). Not surprisingly, many Rebel women refused to be kind and courteous to soldiers, and even aided and encouraged the Confederate army and Confederate guerrillas, revealing their primary allegiance to their families and to the newly formed nation. Not only were wealthy white women not acting like ladies, but Unionist white and black women demanded the protections afforded to other civilian women. Capitalizing on the Federal army's view of them as property, African American women labored for the army in order to demonstrate their loyal political sympathies. White Unionist women, on the other hand, hoped to prove that they were the only civilians with whom the army should associate when they informed Federals

⁴ Leslie M. Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery: African Americans in New York City, 1626-1863* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 98-99; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 1-12, 283-286; Stansell, *City of Women*, 19-30; Ruth H. Bloch, *Gender and Morality in Anglo-American Culture, 1650-1800* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 46-47; Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 98-99.

that Confederate ladies often acted deceitfully. As they assessed each other's appearances, observed each other's character, interacted on social occasions, formed romantic relationships, and even betrayed and deceived one another, Union soldiers and southern women's social interactions demonstrate the inconsistencies inherent in nineteenth-century gender roles, and highlight how socioeconomic status and racial barriers effectively separated and segregated Americans in a supposedly classless society.

Assessing Appearances

Union soldiers and southern women's first impressions of each other were heavily influenced by outward appearance. Because nineteenth-century Americans believed that a person's exterior form revealed their inner character, Federals and southern women—white and black, free and slave—sought to “read” the clues contained in appearance in order to better understand the strangers they confronted.

Polished and well-dressed Federal forces inspired the praise of African American women, who patriotically concluded that Federals were “[the] prettiest men” they’d ever seen, and they admired how dressed up they looked in their uniforms. Even years after the war, formerly enslaved women commented on the shininess of soldiers’ buttons and the beautiful sight of hundreds of bluecoats sitting on the side of the road. For African Americans, a Union soldier’s handsome appearance confirmed his status as a gentleman. Federals were men of virtue because they opposed slavery and were committed to liberating bondspeople. Thus enslaved women correlated the soldiers’ fine appearance with both personal character (gentlemen) and political virtue (abolitionism).⁵

⁵ Patsy Hide, Candis Goodwin, and Millie Simpkins in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:18-19, 33, 68; Hattie Clayton in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 6:77; see also Halittunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 37.

African American women, however, inspired a sense of pity and contempt in Union soldiers. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, colonel in the 33rd United States Colored Infantry, observed, “most of the black women [in Beaufort, South Carolina] are utterly repulsive in aspect & attire.” Union soldiers cringed when African American women used rags to wave on the army, and some hinted that their cheers of “vehement approbation” seemed both unladylike and unfeminine. White Federals’ impressions of black women’s physical appearance did little to dispel these notions. John L. Hoster described visiting a “negro hovel” where he saw a “young she n[egro] with a head two thirds as large as a half bushel.” Union soldiers interpreted African American women’s hard labor and boisterous displays of emotion as indications that they were definitely not ladies and might not even really be women.⁶

⁶ Looby, ed., *Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 58; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 75; Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 44; Andrea R. Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty: A Minnesota Couple’s Civil War Letters* (St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society, 2008), 169; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 144-145; see also April 24, 1863, James McCann Dunn Diary; February 8, 1865, Thomas Y. Finley Diaries, both Civil War Documents Collection, United States Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania [hereafter USAHEC]; April 1, 1863, John L. Hoster Diary, Emory University, Special Collections Division, Atlanta, Georgia (hereafter Emory); Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 196.



Figure 1. Edwin Forbes, *Slave Cabin near Warrenton, Va.*—Union soldiers looked down on the poverty and squalid living conditions of African Americans, believing this to mean that they were morally inferior. Such attitudes demonstrate the links between cleanliness, morality, and white supremacy. In this sketch by Union soldier and war correspondent Edwin Forbes, the artist depicts a cabin belonging to enslaved people in Warrenton, Virginia (Library of Congress).

Enslaved women had reasons of their own to doubt that Federals would live up to their appearance as gentlemen. Federal forces inspired alarm because, as soldiers and white men, they might inflict violence or they might disrupt community stability. Millie Simpkins, living in Dickson County, Tennessee, near the Cumberland River, had an unobstructed view of Federal gunboats steaming toward Nashville. But she felt afraid rather than elated at the presence of the Union army. “I [was scared] [th]ey would shoot,” she recalled. Julia Casey lived in West Tennessee, and vividly remembered that Yankee soldiers took two of her sisters off during the war. Jennie Bell ran and hid “every time the Yankee men” came to her home in North Carolina, because the soldiers “took so many young women to wait on them” that she was afraid “every time they would take [her].” Enslaved women worried that, as the property of Confederates, they

would be caught in the crosshairs of the conflict. So while African American women admired virtuous soldiers, they worried about how Federals might treat them and questioned their roles as liberators.⁷

Union soldiers found their preconceived notions of black women to be confirmed in the degradation of the slaves, particularly in their perceived sexual licentiousness. William Smith of Massachusetts wrote no less than three letters to a married friend in another regiment, recounting the promiscuity of African American women in New Bern, North Carolina. Smith informed his friend that he could “git n[egro] women far 6 cents” and told him that “if you will come down I will get one far you.” Illinois soldier William A. Smith responded to his wife’s request for an eyewitness account of slavery by noting the lack of modesty and sexual propriety among women of color. “I have saw pregnant women,” he declared, “at the hardest work, with only an excuse for a skirt and a short petticoat on . . . I have seen one woman that has tended eighteen acres of corn and suckled an infant.” John Boucher criticized slaveowners for denying “marriage virtue” to their enslaved men and women. Such attitudes ranged from sympathetic to exploitative, but all displayed racist assumptions and stereotypes about black women’s sexuality. Even before the Federal Army arrived on southern soil, white soldiers believed black women—northern or southern, free or enslaved—to be little better than prostitutes. And while soldiers faulted the slave system for the sexual immorality it perpetuated, white men also placed some of the blame for immodesty and sexual promiscuity on women of color.⁸

⁷ Millie Simpkins in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:18-19, 68; see also Nellie Smith in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:309-310; Julia Casey in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:3; Bessie Myers in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:175. African American women also talked of the army forcibly taking black men away from their families. See Anna Parkes and Lucy McCullough, Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 13:68, 162; Minnie Fulkes, Candis Goodwin, and Elizabeth Sparks, Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:13, 19, 52.

⁸ William Smith to Samuel Brooks, July 22, 1862, July 24, 1862, July 29, 1862, Samuel Brooks Papers; William A. Smith to Wife, August 29, 1862, William A. Smith Letters [emphasis in original]; John V. Boucher to Polly, June 22, 1863, Boucher Family Collection, Part Two of Three, USAHEC; see also Looby, ed., *Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 53, 58, 144; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and

Southern black women were well aware that white men considered them to be sexually available; for this reason, many women of color hid when Yankees arrived in their towns. This was particularly the case in Georgia and South Carolina near the end of the war. Rachel Sullivan of Edgefield, Georgia remembered that when Union soldiers came to her owner's plantation, all of the black men put all of the women in the children's house with a guard in front. Sullivan stated that the men did not "want to put no temptation in [th]e way o[f] [th]em soldiers." In South Carolina, Tena White's mother locked her daughter in the house to guard against attacks by "brutish" Yankee soldiers. Instead of indulging their curiosity toward Union soldiers, young adult and adult black women felt it necessary to hide themselves. Even as white stereotypes held that black women lacked sexual virtue, southern black women took precautions to protect themselves from sexual violence.⁹

For their part, white Unionist women displayed little fear at the approach of the Yankees because they expected good things from those who shared their commitment to the nation. White Unionist women felt that shared political sympathies linked them to northern soldiers, and they proudly commented on Union soldiers' appearance. Julia Chase of Winchester, Virginia noted that once Federals took possession of the town "it was so good to see some one outside of Dixie." Frances Peter of Lexington, Kentucky referred to Union soldiers as "our men," even though many of the soldiers she encountered came from other states. Unionist women even believed that Federal soldiers embodied the ideal citizen soldier who was both a warrior and a gentleman. Peter noted a striking contrast when Confederates marched a few prisoners past her house: "[I] couldn't help comparing *them*, so clean & gentlemanly looking & looking so well fed

Wang, 1978), 82-83; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 506; Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109; White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 38; Harris, *In the Shadow of Slavery*, 99, 110, 233.

⁹ Rachel Sullivan in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 13:228; Tena White in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3: 196-198; see also Anna Parkes in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 13:162; Bessie Myers in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:175; Mamie Riley in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:23.

[with] the half starved, half clothed, dirty [Confederates].” The favorable impressions of white Unionist women showed more than simple patriotism. Since a person’s outward appearance revealed signs of inner character, the good health and cleanliness of Union soldiers demonstrated that they were virtuous and sincere. By taking pride in their appearance, Union soldiers showed that they were respectable gentlemen worthy of Unionist women’s trust.¹⁰

But white Unionist women’s lack of fear did not mean that they felt no anxiety at the approach of the Federal army. Instead, they hoped that Union soldiers would live up to gentlemanly standards, thus vindicating their cause as just and moral. Julia Chase tired of hearing Confederate neighbors disparage the Union army’s treatment of civilians, countering the accusations by maintaining that “there is evil no doubt & enough too among soldiers of both armies.” Even so, once Federals arrived in Winchester, Chase hoped that Federal “troops will show by their conduct . . . that they are not all monsters,” because “th[e] cause [cannot] prosper” if its soldiers committed “wicked actions.” By linking gentlemanly appearance, good behavior, and the justness of the Union cause, Unionist women like Chase demonstrated that their focus on Federals’ appearance was much more than skin deep—indeed, the success of the war rested upon them looking and behaving like gentlemen.¹¹

Federal soldiers proved difficult to please when it came to white southern women, for even though they found young and attractive Unionists, they believed that they paled in

¹⁰ Michael G. Mahon, ed., *Winchester Divided: The Civil War Diaries of Julia Chase and Laura Lee* (Mechanicsburg: StackPole Books, 2002) 22; Peter, *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 33, 73; Josie Underwood, 165, 169; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 3. For nineteenth-century ideas about outward appearance and inner character, see Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 92-99; for middle-class fascination with the appearance of virtue, see Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 39-52. Halttunen quotes William Alcott, prominent nineteenth-century American reformer and father of Louisa May Alcott, who asserted that “cleanliness of the body has . . . a connection with mental and moral purity.”

¹¹ Mahon, ed., *Winchester Divided*, 8, 22. For links between good conduct and success in battle, see George C. Rable, *God’s Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 127, 299-316; Megan Leigh Bever, ““War is a Terrible Enemy to Temperance:” Drinking, Self-Control, and the Meaning of Loyalty in the Civil War Era,” (PhD diss., University of Alabama, 2004), 15.

comparison to northern “true” women. Stationed in Little Rock, Arkansas, Iowan Charles Musser considered marrying “some loyal Arkansians’ fair daughter.” “There are plenty that wants to marry,” he declared, and he “almost lost [his] heart among the beautyfull Daughters of the “Sunny South.”” For Musser, the only hiccup was that although “clever and amiable,” southern girls lacked the buxomness, rosy cheeks, intelligence, and “edjucat[ion]” of northern women. In northern Alabama, Union officer Jenkin Jones considered local factory girls a mixed group, “some of them good looking, others passable.” The men of the 72nd Indiana found the factory workers in Roswell, Georgia to be “really good looking,” mainly because most of them were from the North. “Most all the women we have seen for the past year have been fearfully homely,” one of the men added. Federals did not believe their evaluation superficial when they disparaged Unionist women’s physical appearance. Instead, they accepted the notion that southern women’s plainness signified deficiencies of character. Influenced by ideas of true womanhood, Federals believed southern “true” women would be beautiful yet artless, educated yet demure, women whose good character found expression on lovely faces and whose good manners shone forth in every interaction. Union soldiers believed that loyal southern women lacked beauty because they also lacked the education and good character of northern women.¹²

These ideas of true womanhood led Union soldiers to believe that the dirtiness and ignorance of poor white southern civilians indicated an absence of virtue. Occasionally women’s lack of knowledge was amusing, as when a poor southerner mistakenly identified the greasy haversacks of Union soldiers. “These are the proudest lot of Yankees that I have seen,” she exclaimed “Every fellow has a looking glass hanging to him.” But Federals mostly interpreted

¹² *Soldier Boy: The Civil War Letters of Charles O. Musser*, 29th Iowa, ed. Bobby Popchock (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2008), 90; Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 118; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 337; Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 57-59. Ideas linking true women with good character and education had their roots in the post-Revolutionary idea of Republican Motherhood. See Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 206-207, 210, 228-231.

misunderstandings and malapropisms as indictments of southern society. George Bradley described the ignorance of southern women as “sad” and “lamentable,” but went on to remark how their grime, ignorance, and tobacco habits disgusted him so much that he “prayed that my destiny might never be linked with any of them.” Madison Bowler of Minnesota wrote his wife that even Tennesseans who practiced a skilled trade were ignorant and poor. Bowler was shocked after visiting a shoemaker’s house to find that “the shop, hencoop, and pig-pen [were] in the same room with the family” and that none of the family could read and write. Even in Kentucky, Federal soldiers described civilians as “butternut[s],” and observed distastefully that the women “seem to have children by instinct, intuitively, or some other process.” Although soldiers might pity these civilians, their penury and filth encouraged the men to keep their distance, revealing the ways in which many Federals felt their middle-class upbringing—or middle-class aspirations—set them above poor illiterate southerners.¹³

Ironically, Federal soldiers believed Rebel women much more closely embodied the qualities of “true womanhood.” Newspaper correspondent Zenas T. Haines and his fellow soldiers visited the plantation of a North Carolina farmer and commented that the female members of the family, gazing down at them from the piazza, were only “tolerably good looking,” but they did have “a quiet, venerable aspect” which earned the men’s admiration. Soldiers passing by the home of Virginian Lucy Rebecca Buck admired her sister Nellie’s manners and elegant apparel, calling out “Little Secesh in a white dress!” as they passed by.¹⁴ The fact that Federals found the disloyal yet beautiful (and more wealthy) Confederates better

¹³ Henry Harrison Eby, *Observations of an Illinois Boy in Battle, Camp, and Prisons, 1861-1865* (Mendota, IL: n.p., 1910), 70; Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 265; Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 157; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 73. Northerners often faulted slavery as the reason for southerner’s moral and educational failings. See Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 506; Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109.

¹⁴ Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 82; Elizabeth R. Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia* (Athens: University of Georgia, 1997), 118.

examples of true womanhood spoke volumes. While true womanhood supposedly did not entirely depend on class or wealth, it was nearly impossible to achieve the standards of dress, etiquette, and leisure necessary without them. It was the affluence of secessionist ladies as much as their beauty and good manners that impressed Federal forces.

Somewhat begrudgingly, Confederate women had to admit, at the very least, that Federal soldiers did *look* attractive. Even Rebels could not deny that the Union army outfitted its soldiers well. Civilians in Winchester nicknamed Federals “Lincoln’s Fancy Men” on account of their brass buttons, “polished guns” and “shining” boots. Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin described the uniforms of Federal forces who captured Nashville as “magnificent.” Clara Solomon of New Orleans noted that Federals sported “uniforms with any quantity of brass buttons.” Rebel women noted the well-clothed appearance of northern forces in part because their own Confederates had to scrape together handmade uniforms, resulting in a kaleidoscope of colors, fabrics, and cuts. The quality of Federal uniforms did impress Confederate women, but they refused to believe that fine clothing indicated anything positive about Union soldiers’ character.¹⁵

Even though Yankees dressed well, Rebel women insisted that Union soldiers failed to meet the standard of genteel manhood due to faults in their behavior and manners. Lucy Rebecca Buck made the distinction that Federal soldiers were “‘Men, but anything else than *gentle* men” and described them as “ruffianly fellows” because of their destructive behavior on her family’s plantation. In Nashville, Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin faulted Federals for their rudeness toward civilians. Not only was Hardin almost run over by Yankee cavalry while out walking one day, but the officer who reproved the cavalrymen berated them loudly with unseemly language. “[I] sneer[ed] at his cursing in the presence of ladies,” Hardin recounted. Other women scorned

¹⁵ James H. Bayne to Parents, January 22, 1863, James H. Bayne Papers, USAHEC; *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 38; Elliot Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon: Growing Up in New Orleans, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1995), 355; see also Ready, *Diary of Alice Ready*, 39, 51, 63.

Federals for their displays of violence in the towns they occupied. Tennesseans Alice Ready and Kate Carney noted that Union cavalry rode around town seeming ready to fire off their weapons, and in New Orleans, Clara Solomon seemed surprised that a party of Yankees were not “accompanied by some cannons” while walking around town, “as this seems to be their principal article of defense.” The behavior of Federal officers and enlisted men confirmed Confederate women’s belief that underneath their bright uniforms Union soldiers were “demons,” “cowards,” and “scarcely . . . gentlem[e]n.” Nineteenth-century Americans had a name for men who wore fine clothes but lacked good manners: they were confidence men, tricksters who hid their ill-breeding and dastardly intentions behind wealth and fashionable apparel. By comparing Union soldiers to confidence men, Rebel women characterized Union soldiers’ cleanliness and elegance as nothing more than artifice.¹⁶

Confederate women who assumed Union soldiers were “scarcely gentlemen” were surprised to find men of virtue and sincerity within the ranks. When Nannie Haskins of Clarksville, Tennessee, visited with several Union generals, she described one commander as a “black-hearted abolitionist” but felt that Colonel Rodney Mason of the 71st Ohio was a person whom “the citizens thought as much of . . . as one could of any enemy.” Cordelia Lewis Scales, a young woman from Holly Springs, Mississippi, discovered a friend of her brother Dabney among the Federal forces swarming Mississippi. “I liked him as well as I could a Yankee,” she

¹⁶ Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 40; *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 43, 92; *Diary of Alice Ready*, 51; Kate Kate Carney Diary, 431; Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 360; see also Minoa D. Uffelman, Ellen Kanervo, Phyllis Smith, and Eleanor Williams, eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams: A Southern Woman’s Story of Rebellion and Reconstruction, 1863-1890* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2014), 2, 102; *Diary of Alice Ready*, 65, 69; July 25, 1863, Catherine (Kate) Oliva Foster Diary, MSDAH. See also the opinion of Confederate General Abraham Myers, who said he “never knew a Northern man of gallantry, they pretend to be gallant to women to cover their low designs at producing infamy and ruin,” *OR*, ser. 1, 15:501. Alice Ready commented that Federal troops were “remarkably well clothed [and] . . . seem to have plenty of money, gold & silver and want to pay for every thing they get.” *Diary of Alice Ready*, 63. Even the term ‘Yankee’ was a regional type of the nineteenth-century confidence man, a hypocritical, calculating, and industrious person who exploited those who placed their trust in him. See Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 30-31.

remarked, and she told the soldier that “it seemed to be the policy for the Yankee government to send one or two gentlemen with every regiment to let it be known that there were some gentlemen in the north.” The difficult to please Elizabeth Curtis Wallace of Glencoe, Virginia found a Federal lieutenant who was “gentlemanly and quiet in his manners.” And in Fredericksburg, Betty Herndon Maury was pleasantly surprised by the “superior discipline” of Union soldiers. “I have not seen a drunken man since they have been here,” an uncommon occurrence in an army of young men. While Rebel women occasionally found it possible for Union soldiers to act as gentlemen, they stressed that it was a man’s character and manners that set him apart. By insisting that Yankees be closely vetted, women emphasized that acceptable Federals were the exception and not the rule.¹⁷

Observing Character

Even as Union soldiers and southern women decoded each other’s outward appearances, they knew that unprincipled people sometimes hid behind finery. Because of this, soldiers and women observed each other from a distance, looking for confirmation of character in a person’s behavior. Those who dressed well and displayed refined manners showed themselves to be true ladies and gentleman. Ultimately, the people who middle- and upper-class soldiers and women observed only served to confirm their biases against poor and uneducated lower-class white and black Americans.¹⁸

¹⁷ July 25, 1863, Catherine (Kate) Olivia Foster Diary, MSDAH; Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 2; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, January 27, 1863, Cordelia Lewis Scales Papers, MSDAH; Eleanor P. Cross and Charles B. Cross, Jr., eds., *Glencoe Diary: The War-Time Journal of Elizabeth Curtis Wallace* (Chesapeake: Norfolk County Historical Society, 1968), 109; Maury, “The Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury,” 74; see also Ready, *Diary of Alice Ready*, 65, and 49, 64; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 40; Hardin, *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 62.

¹⁸ Halattunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, xvi, xvii, 25, 39, 40, 51-52, 93; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 34-111. Uniforms posed a problem to ideas that appearance indicated character. While the industrial revolution had standardized dress, middle-class Americans increasingly embraced heavy ornamentation and rich fabrics to distinguish themselves from the poor. Union centralization put men of all races and social classes in the same clothing, posing a problem for southerners who tried to discern which men were gentlemen and which were not. For

White Union soldiers and white southern women's observations of each other often began when commanders and officers made their headquarters in local homes. In August 1861, the Federal Quartermaster's Department housed several regiments on the western Virginia farm of Ellen Tompkins, a Unionist whose husband served in the Confederate army. Tompkins remained on the farm caring for sick and wounded soldiers, putting all of the land and buildings on the farm "[to use] in various ways for the benefit of the troops." Lieutenant Colonel Wilder Dwight, stationed in Seneca, Maryland, found quarters in the house of an elderly civilian rather than remain in camp that winter. He defended his intrusion by simply stating that, "she has given us her parlor and the use of her cooking-stove . . . [and she] is repaid by our protection."¹⁹ Commanders and officers who commandeered civilians' houses did not primarily do so in order to observe Unionist women more closely; instead, they sought living quarters befitting their rank. But character assessment did play a role in requests for lodging, as soldiers expected civilian women to accede to their requests because true womanhood dictated that white women should behave hospitably.

Lodging with Union families became challenging as the army moved south, forcing Federal officers to seek shelter with Rebels. In Warrenton, Missouri, John Boucher was simply happy to have "a room and a good feather bed" while rooming with a widow. Around Nashville, Tennessee, Alfred Pirtle and his fellow officers found quarters in a local hotel. Pirtle reported the accommodations comfortable, but the proprietor's family problematic. The owner's daughter,

dress used as a class marker, see Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 37, 61; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982, 1999), 43-44. For the standardization of fashion, see Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 61. A soldier's uniform signaled to outside observers not only that he was a member of the army but that he embodied military authority and that his body was "disciplined" by military precision and control. See Michel Foucault's idea of "docile bodies in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 135-139.

¹⁹ William S. Rosecrans to Ellen Tompkins, January 1871; Jacob D. Cox to Ellen Tompkins, December 7, 1870; Petition of Ellen Tompkins to Secretary of War, November 26, 1869; Tompkins Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, Virginia (hereafter VHS); Dwight, *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight*, 158.

although “rather good looking” in appearance, was criticized as “a very hot secesh.” When Wilder Dwight moved into Charlestown, Virginia, he asked a “good lady” to let him lodge in a few rooms of her house. The “good lady” informed Dwight that she wanted nothing more than for the Union army to be “beaten in [their next battle],” but she agreed to the arrangement and even had a fire built to make the rooms more comfortable. Dwight termed her Confederate sentiments and her compliance with his request “charming feminine consistency.”²⁰ Although rooming in close confines with Confederates was far from ideal, Federals still felt they could count on Rebel women because ideas of true womanhood held that worthy women rose above partisan concerns to care for others. In fact, soldiers found that these women’s honest expressions of Confederate sympathies proved their status as ladies, since ladies were unable to disguise their true feelings.

Confederate women expressed distaste at having to share close quarters with Federal soldiers. Louisianan Clara Solomon resented even having to share the city of New Orleans with her enemies, describing how at one point in time she had “breathed the air of a free city” and yet now she “breathed the air tainted by the breath of 3,000 Federals & trod a soil polluted by their touch.” In Virginia, Lucy Rebecca Buck despised how the arrival of Union soldiers “pollute[d] with their foot steps” her “old familiar home spo[t].” That Rebel women had a chance to observe Federals as they served as guards over their property did little to endear them. Buck’s examination of Federals led her to exclaim that she “never yet saw the traces of low cunning and beastly ferocity so plainly written on human countenances.” Solomon felt contempt for the “Yankee sentinels” who guarded her neighborhood, finding their laughter and composure to be

²⁰ John V. Boucher to Wife, January 17, 1862, Boucher Family Papers, USAHEC; March 2, 1862, Alfred Pirtle Papers, FHS; Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 201. For the history of women’s wartime service, including opening up their houses to soldiers, see Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 54-55.

provoking.²¹ Living in close proximity to Union soldiers did nothing to change Rebel women's belief that Federals were not gentlemen. Instead, they took soldiers' mere presence as invaders of their country to be signs of their ungentlemanly conduct.

After close observation of southern women's behavior, Union soldiers realized that ideals of true womanhood would not keep women from betraying military secrets. Union soldiers in Kentucky learned this the hard way, for after a year of occupying Lexington, several Union soldiers called on the Unionist family of Frances Peter, hoping to find lodging and declaring that "they did not wish to board at any but a Union house." Ellen Tompkins of western Virginia, although a Unionist, caused consternation in Union ranks because her husband was an officer in the Confederate army. Since Americans assumed that women's political sympathies followed those of their fathers or husbands, soldiers did not have a frame of reference for women who disagreed with their husbands' political sentiments. Because of these ideas, rumors swirled in camp that Tompkins used the cover of darkness to signal troop movements to Rebel soldiers stationed nearby. Other soldiers surmised that Tompkins sent her enslaved men and women to pass information to Confederates while running errands. These concerns led General William S. Rosecrans to remove Tompkins and her family from their farm and past Union lines, stating that her house was "requisite if not indispensable for the use of the command," although after the war he declared that he believed that she "kept unstained faith as not communicating with our adversaries." While Union soldiers continued to board with Rebels throughout the war, they kept careful tabs on their housemates and were less likely to trust that women always behaved according to pre-war ideals of conduct.²²

²¹ Ashkenazi, ed., *Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 355, 354; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 42, 55.

²² William S. Rosecrans to Ellen Tompkins, January 1871, Tompkins Family Papers, VHS; Peter, *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 182. For the idea that women could not be independent political beings, see Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 36, 51-53.

Racist ideas made rooming with African Americans distasteful, so white soldiers' observations of black women tended to come from the close quarters of camp life. As hundreds of black southerners sought refuge from slavery, Union soldiers—many for the first time in their lives—experienced life quite near to those of different racial backgrounds. Often, the observations were less than flattering, as were Michigan soldier John Morton's, who compared the “little naked n[egroes] shouting and yelling” in the camp to a “swarm of turkeys.” Illinoian William A. Smith was startled to find an enslaved woman who “was nearly white with smooth hair” in Decatur, Alabama. And fellow Illinoian Douglas Ritchie Bushnell, while stationed in Helena, Arkansas, saw a curious sight one summer evening as he made his way back to his tent. Bushnell watched a “poor n[egro] and his wife laying on the ground out in the open moonlight, they were both fast asleep, the man lay on his back and his poor wife lay up by the side of him, with both arms around his neck.” What Bushnell found remarkable was not the presence of African Americans (he had written his wife earlier that the “whole army and town is swarming with darkies”), nor that the couple were asleep on the ground. Instead, Bushnell was struck because the black man and his wife “looked as loving and as affectionate as white folks.” Throughout their observations, white Union soldiers confirmed that they viewed African Americans to be less than equal to whites.²³

As Union soldiers became more enmeshed in the communities they occupied, their contact with the local population extended not only to where they boarded but also to the churches they attended on Sunday. The presence of Yankees in houses of worship caused a stir among Confederate women. Kate Foster of Natchez contemptuously observed that “there were a great many Yankees at church and the officers thought they were dressed killingly but their

²³ John Morton to Mother, September 16, 1861, John Morton Correspondence; William A. Smith to “My Dear Wife,” August 9, 1862, William A. Smith Correspondence; Douglass Ritchie Bushnell to Wife, August 6, 1862, Douglas Ritchie Bushnell Correspondence, all USAHEC.

uniforms cannot compare the least with ours.” Indeed, Union soldiers’ behavior during worship services became yet another area for Rebel women to find fault. Kate Carney seemed appalled when one Sunday morning “just after service began, the Yanks got up and left.” Such behavior reinforced southern women’s assumptions that Federals were little better than infidels. During the Vicksburg siege, resident Emma Balfour noted that even though it was Trinity Sunday and “all nature wears a Sabbath calm,” still “the thunder of artillery reminds us that man knows no Sabbath—Yankee man at least.”²⁴ From failure to observe the Sabbath to misbehavior in church, Yankees demonstrated to Confederate women that they were not pious, and if they were not pious, then they could not be gentlemen.

While Union soldiers seemed to enjoy the stir they created when attending local places of worship, they also hoped that their presence would demonstrate their good character. Alfred Pirtle joined his cousin Laura one Sunday morning at the Church of the Nativity in Huntsville, Alabama. Pirtle reported to his parents that there were “few gentlemen present except Federals,” and that his presence “excited the secesh ladies a good deal.” Thomas Speed recounted a notable visit to George Washington’s place of worship, Christ Church, in Alexandria, Virginia, during which he attracted notice for quite a different reason: lack of familiarity with the Episcopalian service. A young Confederate woman “had to find all the places for me in the prayer book,” although when it came time to sing he triumphed “at the fact that I knew how to find [the hymns].” These Federal officers maintained that attending services with local southerners created goodwill. Pirtle believed that his and other officers’ church attendance “convinced [some

²⁴ July 28, 1863, Catherine (Kate) Olivia Foster diary, MSDAH; *Kate Carney Diary*, 377; *Diary of Alice Ready*, 68; May 31, 1863, Balfour (Emma) Civil War diary typescript, 19, MSDAH.

Confederates] that there are a good many gentlemen, even among the “Yankees.””²⁵ By allowing Rebel women to observe their behavior during church services, soldiers hoped to demonstrate proof of their good character behind their flashy uniforms.

Union soldiers’ observations of African Americans also revolved around churches and freedmen’s schools. While stationed in Chattanooga, Tennessee, Jenkin Lloyd Jones and a friend sought out a local revival meeting in which “two large negro women” who were “from all appearances raving maniacs . . . screech[ed], yell[ed], jump[ed], hugg[ed], danc[ed], cr[ied], sh[ook] hands, and utter[ed] incoherent sentences, foaming at the mouth.” Jones hardly felt surprised that black women participated in such strange practices, since he reasoned that the “superstitious character and education of the negro” predisposed them to zealous outbursts. Officers from the 72nd Indiana Infantry routinely watched the church services of two neighboring African American regiments. Although the men had “seen nearly all denominations worship God . . . [we] have seen none who so fervently threw both soul and body into it as did those negroes.”²⁶ In New Bern, North Carolina, Charles Duren found it “amusing as well as interesting” to observe the freedmen’s school in the town where “the darkies come in joyful and bright as any group of young learners” and that the “youngest ones” and the “older ones” sat down together. Even so, Duren found the work to be “not very pleasant in some respect.”²⁷ Federals interpreted the proceedings in black churches and schools through the lens of racial difference and racial inferiority: African Americans were emotional, superstitious, and lacked the innate intelligence of civilized whites.

²⁵ Alfred Pirtle to Ma, June 22, 1862, Alfred Pirtle Letters; Thomas Speed to Ma, January 29, 1865, Thomas Speed Letter book, both FHS; see also Andrew J. Lorish to “My dear friends,” October 19, 1862, Andrew J. Lorish Papers; George A. Wilson to Sister, July 14, 1862, George A. Wilson Correspondence, both USAHEC.

²⁶ Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 351; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 227; May 3 and May 24, 1863, John L. Hoster Diary, USAHEC; Looby, ed., *Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 64.

²⁷ Charles Duren to Father and Mother, May 2, 1862, Charles M. Duren Papers, Emory; see also Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 181.

Black women did not have the time or the luxury to observe Union soldiers. Worries about soldiers taking sexual liberties, as well as about their workloads, kept them busy and far away from Federals. So it was often black children who had the leisure time and courage to observe Union soldiers. Frances Batson of Nashville recalled how she and other children would climb on a hill overlooking the Yankee barracks to listen to their music. Julia Bunch remembered that when Union soldiers came through it was “[th]e fir[st] drum and fife music I ever hea[rd].” The music played by Federal bands was one of the fondest memories that young black girls had of Union soldiers, as many of them experienced American military bands—and patriotic anthems—for the first time.²⁸

Confederate women seemed ambivalent about Federal military bands, as they could be both enjoyable and provoking. In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, Alice Ready was initially “indignant at [the] impertinence” of the Union band, because they insisted on playing “notwithstanding [her] refusal.” Even so, the music was “so fine I was obliged to listen, much against my will I confess—I never heard a finer band.” Kate Foster of Natchez, Mississippi admitted that “even if I do hate these our foes so much I enjoyed the playing of their band . . . I do not know when I have had so much pleasure listening to the sweet music.” Yet now even music had political connotations. Lucy Rebecca Buck enjoyed the “fine brass [band]” that played for her and her family “until they struck up “Yankee Doodle,”” at which point she and her sisters “turn[ed] their backs to the window and drop[ed] the curtains.” A few days later, Buck was incensed when Federals played the Confederate anthem “Johnson’s March to Manassas. “Thieves!” she accused them, “They come to steal our liberty, steal our property, our slaves, and, not satisfied with this

²⁸ Frances Batson in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:1; Julia Bunch in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:159; Hannah Davidson in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave* 16:31; Ann Mathews in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:43.

robbery, actually steal our *National* music.”²⁹ Rather than providing a moment of camaraderie and setting aside of political sympathies, music now could be used as a political tool, and one that inflamed rather than calmed the fierce political loyalties of Rebel women.

By observing each other, Union soldiers and southern women did not so much discern character as seek confirmation of assumptions about gender roles and racial stereotypes. Union soldiers questioned Rebel women’s adherence to ideas of true womanhood when their behavior demonstrated that family and sectional loyalties took precedence over “proper” behavior. On the other hand, Federals took cultural practices specific to the south, such as black women’s exuberant religious services, to be signs of inferiority. For soldiers and women, observing character often amounted to confirming biases and preconceived notions, which then determined which groups they interacted with.

Casual and Formal Interactions

Soldiers and women’s observations of each others’ character paved the way for them to make acquaintances and interact socially. Whether casual—as when soldiers stopped in to call on a young Rebel woman or buy food from an African American woman—or deliberate—as when officers or civilians threw a dance or a party—these exchanges demonstrate how soldiers and civilians attempted to set aside partisan and sectional concerns. And yet relatively friendly relations could not completely subsume wartime tensions. Unkind looks from Confederate ladies reminded soldiers that good manners could not make enemies into friends. And Union soldiers’ tendency to ignore the complaints of poor white women and to direct the labor of black women reinforced the status of these women as laborers and not civilians.

²⁹ *Diary of Alice Ready*, 69-70; August 23, 1863, Catherine (Kate) Olivia Foster diary, MSDAH; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 74, 76.

Union soldiers emphasized a supposed friendship that existed between the army and black women, and this often revolved around procuring food. Charles Duren felt that his “old friend and cook,” an African American woman named Carolina, “cannot do enough for me and all the soldiers—she would do any thing for them. She feels grateful.” Ohioan Lester DeWitt Taylor, marching through Georgia with Sherman’s army, described how soldiers found “the colored population our friends at all times,” since African American women instructed soldiers on where to find the food and valuables that their owners had hidden. Some soldiers emphasized that they labored alongside black women, as did Johnson Culp, who helped black women dig up “about a 4 acre field . . . of sweet potatoes” and harvested enough to feed him and his men for several days. Framing these interactions as mutually beneficial emphasized Union soldiers and black women’s common goals of advancing the Union cause and ending the rebellion.³⁰

Even so, white Federals tended to expect black women to labor for them. John L. Hoster “went out to an old darkies” one morning to “g[e]t [his] breakfast.” Midwesterner William A. Smith decided to forgo his rations one raw February morning and instead “went to a tavern . . . just to see [how] a meal of victuals that was cooked by a woman (negro) would taste.” Ohioan William W. Osborn recorded that he and his regiment stopped at a “beautiful plantation” and “engaged in roasting peanuts” which he and his companions “took from the N[egroes].”³¹ Whether slaves or free blacks, African American women’s close association with enslavement and domestic work meant that white Union soldiers felt entitled to command their labor and possessions.

³⁰ Charles Duren to Father and Mother, May 5, 1862, Charles M. Duren Papers, Emory [emphasis in original]; September 6, 1863, Johnson W. Culp Diary; December 15, 1864, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; November 27, 1864, Alfred Wilcox Diary; all USAHEC.

³¹ April 2, 1863, John L. Hoster Diary, Emory; William A. Smith to Wife, February 8, 1862, William A. Smith Correspondence; November 23, 1864, William W. Osborn Diary; both USAHEC.

For African American women, the arrival of Union soldiers could mean an abundance of provisions and an upending of southern racial hierarchies. Hannah Austin related that Federals ransacked her owner's dry goods store and then told her and the other children, "help yourselves to these clothes take them home with you." "After this," she recalled, "they opened the smoke house door and told us to go in and take all of the meat we could." Mary Ella Grandberry of Tuscumbia, Alabama interpreted Union soldiers' ordering her white owners to "cook for [th]e colored an[d] serve [th]em while [th]ey [ate]" as showing "[th]e white folks what it was to work for somebody else." South Carolinian Delia Thompson viewed the Yankees who came to her house as "gentlemen" because "they never took a thing, but left provisions for our women folks from the commissary." Angeline Martin enjoyed the months she spent with Union soldiers living on her Georgia plantation after her owners refugeeed to Mississippi, because she had "plenty" to eat.³²

Such moments were often fleeting, as African American women found Union soldiers to be just as likely to command their labor. In South Carolina near the end of the war, Manda Walker complained that Union soldiers had made her and other enslaved children "run down and [catch] [th]e chickens for them." In Montgomery, Alabama, Lucy Brooks was relieved that Federals "never hurt anybody" but resented how "they took what they could find to eat and they made us cook for them." Nellie Smith of Athens watched as "soldiers made my aunt cook for them." Letty, a slave in the household of the Wynne family of Fredericksburg, Virginia, chastised a Union soldier who tried to take some of the strawberries she was selling. "Take your fingers out of my strawberries," she commanded. "I don't [al]low nobody to put their hands in

³² Hannah Austin and Alice Green in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:20, 35; Mary Ella Grandberry in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 6:163; Delia Thompson in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:160; Angeline Martin in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:49; see also Martha Colquitt and Alice Hutcheson in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:247, 283; Ike McCoy and Mattie Mooreman in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 6:12-13, 131; Sallie Paul in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:234.

my strawberries much less Yankees.” The language of coercion rather than mutuality underscored black women’s disappointment that even as the Union army brought emancipation, the behavior of its white soldiers tended to reinforce their status as laborers.³³

White Unionist women’s racial privilege allowed them to escape the drudgery that black women performed. But that did not mean that white Unionists did not labor for the army; it simply meant that they labored *within* the home rather than outside of it. Elizabeth Dabbs of LaGrange, Tennessee, explained her womanly duties as “t[aking] care of the Federal sick and fe[eding] the hungry.” Elizabeth Tucker, who also resided in West Tennessee, maintained that she “took care of so many sick and wounded” that she “[could] not remember all of them.” Over in Nashville, Jane Maynor described that she “fed, clothed, and kept from the weather the U.S. soldiers.” Drawing on longstanding traditions of American women laboring for soldiers, white Unionist women emphasized the way in which their political sympathies led them to care for Federal soldiers in their homes. Opening up domestic spaces to soldiers cemented their status as “true women,” because they used their household labor to provide womanly care for the Union army.³⁴

Union soldiers capitalized on Unionist women’s willingness to provide feminine comforts to the army, often framing these exchanges in terms of reciprocity. But while they had emphasized mutual labor for food when dealing with African American women, to white women they offered something entirely different: protection. Oliver Boucher of Illinois illustrated this exchange when he “stopped in to a good looking house” while stationed near Vicksburg and

³³ Manda Walker in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:170; Lucy Brooks in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:2; Nellie Smith in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 13:310; 10 June 1862, Diary of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Maxwell Alsop Wynne, Wynne Family Papers, VHS (emphasis in original); see also Ellen Thomas in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 6:376-378; Lucinda Miller in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:192.

³⁴ Claim of Elizabeth J. Dabbs and Claim of Elizabeth F. Tucker, Fayette County, Tennessee; Jane M. Maynor, Davidson County, Tennessee; see also Claim of Nancy Couch, Hardin County, Tennessee; all SCC-NA; Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 3-4; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 8-9; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 74.

“toled [sic] the lady that I was sent to guard her house & person against any assaults whatever.”

After offering the woman his protection, he hinted that he had not eaten dinner. To his delight, she replied that “if [protection] was my business I could get the best she had.” Robert Erwin of Pennsylvania had so many “nice suppers” while in Virginia that he decided that “it appears to be their (the citizenry of this part of Virginia’s) whole delight to feed the soldiers.” George Hill, Jr. of New York found he could get a good dinner once he assured southerners that he “would not harm them.”³⁵ Federals’ treatment of white Unionist women demonstrates that framing exchanges in terms of reciprocity was important to both soldiers and civilians alike because it established Federals as gentlemanly soldiers who did not take by force, and set up women as patriotic caretakers of the army. But white women’s status clearly came into focus as Union soldiers recognized that these women wanted—and soldiers felt that they needed—protection from an army full of young men, a privilege that was not extended to women of color.

While Union soldiers appreciated the labor that poor white and black southern women provided, they sought out their social equals—or even their social betters—when it came time to relax and unwind during the evening hours. In Columbia, South Carolina, Colonel Oscar Lawrence Jackson was pleased to find an intelligent Unionist lady who commiserated with him about the evils of secession and the tyranny of slavery. Lewis Bayard Smith had the good fortune to spend an evening with a family “living in very handsome style” near his camp. And even though the family resided in the secessionist haven of Baltimore, Smith found “the ladies of the family” to be “very pleasant,” mostly because they were all “strongly Union in feeling.” More often than not, soldiers sought a refuge from political discussions when they visited Unionist civilians, looking for “things [to be made] quite homelike for us after the routine of the day’s

³⁵ Oliver Boucher to “Madam,” June 22, 1863, Boucher Family Papers; Robert E. Erwin to Sister, July 26, 1861, Robert E. Erwin Papers; George Hill, Jr. to Brother, April 10, 1862, George Hill, Jr. Papers, all USAHEC.

work,” as Julian Wisner Hinkley put it. Union soldiers sought out middle-class women and their families because these environments reminded them of home. The talking, laughing, dining, singing, and piano playing engaged in with people of similar social status allowed soldiers not only to unwind, but to be comfortable in an atmosphere in which they were familiar.³⁶

Union soldiers principally looked for genteel families with whom to spend their time, and given the South’s rather small middle class, this search mostly led them to wealthy slave-owning Confederates. One Pennsylvania soldier exulted in being posted near the house of “one of the F.F.V. [First Families of Virginia].” Ohioan John C. Baum regarded the Presbyterian minister’s daughter in Plaquemine, Louisiana to be not only “very handsome” but also “the only virtuous girl in the whole town.” Some soldiers even admitted a certain attraction to plantation society. New Yorker William Mickle felt “quite taken up” with the “style of living” of wealthy Virginians, admiring how they “cherish[ed] [the] house as the most sacred spot on earth & concentrate[ed] all affection in their families.” Mickle was so infatuated with upper-class southern ways that he contemplated accepting an invitation to dine with some prominent families even though he despised slavery. Union soldiers felt they shared common ideals with these slaveholding southerners. With their large houses, fine possessions, and many house servants,

³⁶ Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 99, 185; Alfred Pirtle to Ashley, June 21, 1862; Alfred Pirtle to “Ma,” June 27, 1862; Alfred Pirtle to “Ma,” August 22, 1862; Alfred Pirtle Letters, FHS; Hinkley, *A Narrative of Service*, 111; Lewis Bayard Smith to Mother, August 19, 1862, Lewis Bayard Smith Letters, USAHEC; Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 220; for soldiers’ distaste for African American and poor white women, see September 1, 1863, Orrin Albert Kellam Diary, USAHEC. For the home as a setting of personal expression and a sanctuary, see Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 169; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 64-65, 74. The home became a central aspect of nineteenth-century gender roles as men justified women’s exclusion from the workplace so that women could preserve their innate goodness by creating a refuge from the competitive, acquisitive world. The home supposedly became a place where men could escape the pressures and anxieties of the workplace and learn from women’s virtue and self-control. In addition, the home allowed family members a respite from excruciating standards of self-control and self-possession. But precisely the qualities which made the home appealing also made it insufferable: the home could be too domesticating and too feminizing. By strictly separating the workplace and the home, men justified women’s exclusion from public concerns as they defended their need for all-male spaces.

upper-class southerners showed that they had attained the comfort and ease required in genteel culture—features that greatly attracted the attention of appreciative soldiers.³⁷

Many Federals held up Sarah Childress Polk, widow of the former president James K. Polk, as an example of a woman who graciously interacted with Union soldiers. The experience of the Tenth Indiana Volunteer Infantry was emblematic: after landing in Tennessee, the regiment marched straight to Polk's residence. Regimental historian James Birney Shaw wrote approvingly that once the soldiers arrived, "Mrs. Polk came out on the verandah and greeted us kindly, the boys responding with cheers." Polk allowed soldiers from both sides to tour her late husband's homestead and entertained many officers in her home. Acknowledging that her sympathies lay with the Confederacy, Union soldiers applauded the way Polk adhered to the standards of true womanhood by her equitable treatment of both armies.³⁸

After observing that some Confederates shared common attitudes and seemed quite hospitable, Union soldiers believed they could spend enjoyable evenings with their enemies. Freland Holman of Maine spent many pleasant occasions with Rebels, telling a friend that he had been "treated kindly and respectfully by all the Secession Ladies, [who] make it a particular trait to use all the [Union soldiers] well." New Yorker William Henry Shelton was enthused when several good-looking Rebels invited him and his friends into their home. They ended up discussing political subjects, but Shelton described the afternoon as "amiable" even though the girls did say they "didn't want to go to Heaven if Yankees went there." Such talk seemed all in good fun until the young men were not invited to a dance because the girls might have to join

³⁷ Greenland to "Friend Dolf," February 1, 1863; see also Jack to Daul, March 10, 1863, George Simpson and James Randolph Collection; John C. Baum to Parents, December 25, 1863, John C. Baum Diaries, USAHEC; William Mickle to Parents, August 3, 1863, William Mickle Letter, LV. See also Jones, *An Artilleryman's Diary*, 231. For these ideas about genteel culture and the home, see see Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 169-181; and Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 59, 102-103, 107-108.

³⁸ Shaw, *History of the Tenth Regiment*, 165; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 235, 283; Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 70-71.

hands with their adversaries. Although reminded of the biblical injunction to love one's enemies, the young women remained unmoved. In Huntsville, Alabama, Alfred Pirtle of the Tenth Ohio sounded guardedly optimistic about the prospect of a social truce. Admittedly the civilians treated Union soldiers "as enemies" and there was "none, or very little of, good feeling between the citizens . . . and our troops." However, Pirtle hoped that "time and an interchange of views" would soften each side. Only a few weeks later, things had not gotten better. Pirtle wrote his sister that he had a "right spicy conversation" with several secessionist women and that he did not care if his rejoinders hurt their feelings. Union soldiers expected that ideas about ladylike behavior would prevent Confederate women from treating them like enemies, but many soon had to admit their error. Although Federals tried to be kind, Confederates seemed intent on "rebelling" even in their parlors.³⁹

Union officers believed that given enough time, Rebel ladies would soften their tone and behave kindly to their enemies. In Columbia, Tennessee, the men of the First Ohio Cavalry were clearly attracted to the good-looking, "hot-headed and bitter rebels" of the town. Although the women at first refused to give soldiers any attention, over time many of them became friendly. The soldiers fondly remembered "many flirtations" occurring during their short stay. In Savannah, Oscar Lawrence Jackson described the ladies as "the tastiest "Secesh" [he] ha[d] seen" and felt certain that they "would get to like Yankees." Federal officers found Confederates' standoffish behavior to be a challenge that could presumably be overcome with time and good treatment, and many considered it a victory when Confederate women relented. Rooted in ideas that considered women to be emotional and irrational, Union soldiers believed

³⁹ Freland N. Holman to [unidentified], July 17, 1862, USAHEC; William Henry Shelton to Louisa, May 13, 1865, William Henry Shelton Letter, LV; Alfred Pirtle to "Ma," May 4, 1862, and Alfred Pirtle to "Sis," May 28, 1862, Alfred Pirtle Letters, FHS; see also Jackson, *The Colonel's Diary*, 185, 194, 208; see also Andrew J. Lorish to Brother, November 16, 1863, Andrew J. Lorish Papers, USAHEC.

Rebel women could be reasoned out of their treasonous views. By persuading Rebels into friendships, Federals hoped to dissuade Confederate women from rebeldom and bring them back into the fold of true womanhood, where women were patriotic yet not political actors.⁴⁰

Some soldiers, however, admitted that they were less interested in winning Rebel women's hearts and more interested in their money. Indiana soldier Lewis Brigham Heald found himself in a predicament upon learning that a Vicksburg woman had fallen in love with him. Even so, he declared that he had not yet "decided . . . whether to marry the girl or [her] gold." Ohioan Jacob Klein was so pleased with the South's climate that he expressed the desire to take up residence there after the war and even "take up [his] abode with some noted Lady of the Chivalry," although his one stipulation was that she be possessed of "a large fortune." Richard H. Watson observed that the "aristocratic" white women in Lebanon, Missouri were rabid secessionists, and did not "hesitate to own it although the Town is full of Soldiers." Perhaps as retaliation for their political sympathies, Watson frequently called on these very women, asserting his power as a Federal soldier to go into "any Mansion that I took a notion to and without being requested to do so, take a seat. And with all the sangfroid request to hear a few pieces on the Piano." These soldiers seemed to delight in their power over elite Confederate women, whether as members of the occupying Union army or as young, attractive, and single men. Federals implied that Rebel women knew better than to—and perhaps could not—try to refuse them.⁴¹

⁴⁰ William L. Curry, *History of the First Regiment Ohio Volunteer Cavalry* (Columbus, OH: Champlin Printing, 1898), 31, 34; Jackson, *The Colonel's Diary*, 174, also 182-183; some soldiers believed this to be true based on past experience; see Douglass Ritchie Bushnell to Wife, May 7, 1862, Douglass Ritchie Bushnell Correspondence, USAHEC; Kerber, *Women of the Republic*, 283-287.

⁴¹ Lewis Brigham Heald to Sister, September 10, 1862, Von Deck Collection; Jacob Klein to Cousin, September 18, 1864, Jacob Klein Correspondence; Richard H. Watson to Jennie, February 6, 1862, Watson Brothers Correspondence; all USAHEC.

Confederate women resented Union soldiers' assumption that Rebels welcomed polite conversation with their enemies. Even so, some older and more mature Confederates recognized that behaving courteously remained part of being a lady. Lucy Rebecca Buck's mother reproved her daughter for allowing Union soldiers to make her upset, instructing her that it was "wicked to allow [her] passions to get such an ascendancy over [her] better feelings." Mississippian Catherine Olivia Foster anticipated Union soldiers calling on her and her family when they first arrived in Natchez but hoped that "if they do visit us they will remember that they have mothers, wives & sisters at home and treat us as they would wish them to be by our men." Foster committed herself to behaving quietly so as not to give soldiers "any cause for ill treatment." In this vein, she allowed a Union officer to call on her about a month later. Foster seemed gratified that "his sympathies are with us and his opinion of the Lincoln government is no better than [ours]" but she refused to ask the soldier to sit and found his penchant for flattery "insult[ing]."⁴² By allowing her social equal to visit, Foster fulfilled her duty as a genteel middle-class woman—and by faulting the soldier's manners, she signaled that she was unwilling to continue the association further. Because true womanhood dictated that women needed to be careful gatekeepers of the home, Rebel women could be kind to Federals while only allowing worthy people to enter their homes on the basis that true women only associated with people of manners and good character.⁴³

Other Confederate women, most often those who were young, worried less about ideas of true womanhood and more about betraying their political principles and therefore favored avoiding contact with Federals. In Murfreesboro, Alice and Mattie Ready left their house to visit

⁴² Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 61, see also 71, 59; July 14, 1863 and August 16, 1863, Catherine [Kate] Olivia Foster Diary, MSDAH; see also Louise Humphreys Carter reminiscences where Carter refuses to greet an old family friend because he joined the Union Army. Louise Humphreys Carter Reminiscences, pages 7-8, LV.

⁴³ Cott, *Bonds of Womanhood*, 69; Halattunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 59.

relatives to avoid spending time with Union general Ormsby M. Mitchel. In New Orleans, women vacated train cars, walked out of churches, or “turned [their] backs” on Federals while walking past them on the street. Lucy Rebecca Buck and her Rebel friends went so far as to wear “thick brown veils” to church once Union soldiers occupied the town, vowing “not to let a Yankee see our faces.” In Glencoe, Virginia, middle-aged Elizabeth Curtis Wallace proved just as headstrong as younger Rebels. By remaining busy when Union soldiers came for a “social chat,” her husband was forced to entertain them by himself. Although these women knew that their behavior violated ideals of ladylike behavior, they blamed Union soldiers for having the impudence to call on them, insisting they would rather “die [than] receiv[e] Yankees.” While Confederate women admitted that it was their duty to be polite to male social equals, they maintained that during a time of war the rules of etiquette hardly applied to one’s enemies. In so doing, these women demonstrated that they adhered to sectional ideals of female behavior, which stressed women’s duty to support and encourage the Rebel cause.⁴⁴

Adhering to the new role of Southern true womanhood, Confederate women justified certain transgressions of ladylike conduct. Rather than rebuking her daughter for rudeness, Betty Herndon Maury proudly observed that her four-year-old refused a Union soldier’s offer of candy by saying that “Yankee candy would choke me.” When an enlisted man “spoke in disrespectful terms” of Confederate soldiers, Kate Carney lay aside her sewing and “blazed out at him.” Young Confederate women even had a difficult time controlling their tempers around their social equals. Lucy Rebecca Buck and her sister took it upon themselves, as southern true women, to

⁴⁴ *Diary of Alice Ready*, 70, 62, 63; Ashkenazi, ed., *Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 355, 396; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 55; Cross, eds., *Glencoe Diary*, 103; *Kate Carney Diary*, 367, 376, 379, 429, 436; see also June 6, 1862, *Diary of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Maxwell Alsop Wynne*, *Wynne Family Papers*, VHS. For Carney turning her back on Union soldiers, see *Kate Carney Diary*, 377. For Ready on “impudence” of Union soldiers, see *Diary of Alice Ready*, 59. For Carney dying before she would receive Yankees, see *Kate Carney Diary*, 376. For sectionalism and true womanhood, see Varon, *We Mean to be Counted*, 138, 152.

“quarrel with a young lieutenant and clerk” who were Virginians serving in the Union army. “[We] tr[ied] to shame them in their treason,” Buck declared, drawing on ideas of women as the gatekeepers of Confederate nationalism. Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin, traveling on a boat with northern soldiers and northern female passengers, knew that she could only keep quiet for so long. After one soldier read aloud from a northern editorial denouncing the “hell-born rebellion,” Hardin lost her patience. Thankfully, her “prudence . . . gave way entirely” while talking to a Union officer who bore all her “fierce Southern sentiments with a quiet good humor.” Perhaps anxious to cover up her social faux pas, Hardin recorded in her diary that their conversation never became heated due to their shared commitment to genteel behavior. For Confederate women, defense of the Confederacy had become more important than strictures of ladylike behavior.⁴⁵

Kind and well-mannered Federal officers might eventually assuage some of Rebel women’s hostility. Lucy Rebecca Buck came to like a Union soldier named Frank stationed on her family’s property, describing him as a “clever sort of fellow” and even going so far as to wish “if he only just was not a Yankee I would like him so much.” As it was, Frank became one of the only Federals that Buck conversed with, describing how one day during a walk they had a “most refreshing argument.” Despite their best efforts to despise their enemies, Kate Carney and her sister came to like the well-behaved officers who guarded their home. These men treated Carney and her sister so well that the young women decided it was time to join them for a meal. “Bettie & I haven’t eaten with them yet,” Carney disclosed, “but thought as they were so kind to us, we would.” Maria Smith Peek, refugeeing in Richmond during the war, cast aspersions on the

⁴⁵ Maury, “Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury,” 77; Carney, *Kate Carney Diary*, 398, 392; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 106, see also 72, 73, 98; *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 45-47. Some women attempted, at least for a time, to ignore Union soldiers so as not to give vent to their tempers. See *Diary of Alice Ready*, 64; *Kate Carney Diary*, 407, 415.

Union soldiers boarding at her home but found their refined manners and gentlemanly ways to be quite engaging. Peek admitted that their behavior might “[win] over the Southern people.” For some women, interacting with Union soldiers did not betray their political sympathies if the Federals were their social equals, behaved like gentlemen, and did not try to talk them out of their Confederate sympathies.⁴⁶

As Confederate women became more friendly and Unionist women became better acquainted, southern civilians and Union soldiers found opportunities to turn initial encounters into more enduring ones by organizing dinners, dances, and picnics. Unionist women, particularly in Border States, used these occasions to demonstrate their gratefulness to Federal soldiers. In Lexington, Kentucky, prominent Unionist women spent weeks organizing a Thanksgiving Day dinner for injured Federal soldiers. The “delighted” soldiers “hoped the Lexington ladies would live forever,” and “paid the ladies all kinds of compliments.” Josie Underwood of Louisville marveled at “how war and gaiety go together,” commenting on the many “pleasant officers” who were stationed in town during spring and summer 1862. The soldiers gave “‘hops’ at headquarters—visit the girls. They are often up here to call—take tea and I ride quite often with several of them.” In McMinnville, Tennessee, a Union provost marshal only allowed Union women to go with Federal soldiers on a visit the mountain town of Beersheba springs, and only Union women attended the raising of the U.S. flag over the town, bringing along bouquets for the officers. And near Nashville, Cynthia Brown described her “Melrose” plantation as being the “social headquarters for U.S. officers.”⁴⁷ Common political

⁴⁶ Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 94, 98; *Kate Carney Diary*, 432; Henry C. Backison, ed., *Refugees in Richmond: Civil War Letters of a Virginia Family* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 60-61, 68-69.

⁴⁷ *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 170, 173; *Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary*, 170, 176; French, *L. Virginia French’s War Journal, 1862-1865*, 125; Claim of Mrs. Aaron V. Brown, Davidson County, Tennessee, SCC-NA.

sympathies, as well as a desire for companionship, led Union soldiers and Unionist women to seek each other out in social outings, particularly those centered around patriotic activities.

Shared political sympathies sometimes translated into exclusive interactions between Union soldiers and Unionist women. Some Union soldiers chose to associate exclusively with northern ladies in protest against the rude behavior of Rebel women. Samuel Brooks of Massachusetts grew tired of the women in Winchester, who constantly reminded Federals that “thay don’t like the yankies.” “Wee don’t cair for them [either],” Brooks stated. Pirtle declared to his mother that “we are starting a society that will be as exclusive as the secesh . . . the “Feds” think they can get along without the secesh quite as well as they can with the “Feds.” Occasionally, however, Union soldiers had no choice but to associate with Union women. In Tennessee, Federals “tried first to get the rebel ladies to [associate] with them but when they politely declined, the Union feminines were taken as a “dernier resor[t].” Confederate Lucy Virginia French found the whole situation amusing, wryly noting how the association served the interests of both sides. The Union women “never had been able to get into respectable society and they imagined they could now make an entrée with an armed force,” while it seemed convenient that Federal soldiers neglected loyalty when there was “a ghost of a chance to catch a “rebel” smile.”⁴⁸ Union soldiers seemed determined to spend at least some of their free time in the presence of women. Women’s supposedly superior moral and religious influence, as well as the possibility of a romantic relationship, made Federals believe that even in the midst of war, female company was not only desirable but necessary.

⁴⁸ Samuel Brooks to Wife, October 7, 1864, Samuel Brooks Papers, USAHEC; Alfred Pirtle to “Ma,” June 27, 1862, Alfred Pirtle Letters, 1862-1863, FHS; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 139-140; see also Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 108, 112; John D. Hill to Sister, March 28, 1863, Civil War Letters of John D. Hill; these ideas of women’s moral and religious superiority were so ingrained that one commander refused to allow this soldiers to associate with female civilians until his men “learn[ed] to behave themselves better,” J. Willoughby to Friend, Undated (perhaps March 1862), George Simpson and James Randolph Collection, USAHEC.

Yet Unionist women found relationships with Federal soldiers to be less than ideal.

Attending a party in Louisville, Kentucky, Josie Underwood had a “pleasant evening and made some agreeable new acquaintances,” but she seemed disappointed that there were “no home boys” present. “The officers we meet now,” she explained, “are . . . only here for a little while . . . so there is no background of association to give ease or interest to meeting them.” In Lexington, Union women threw a dinner for Union soldiers, but excluded all but “Kentucky soldiers” and “Home Guard[s].” Once it became clear that there would be leftovers, the women sent word to the 11th Michigan Cavalry that they were invited to participate in the festivities. Even more exclusive was the creation of a “Sociable Club . . . formed for the purpose of dancing & amusement by several of the young ladies of Lexington.” Frances Peter went on to explain that “None but ladies can be members,” yet “each member has the privilege of inviting & bringing with her any gentlemen whom she may choose, *always providing that it is not one whose society is disagreeable to any of the other members.*”⁴⁹ Whether the Sociable Club intended to exclude men of certain political sympathies is not clear; what is apparent is that the feelings of the community trumped individual preferences. At least in Kentucky, Unionist women preferred spending time with “their” men—Federals who were born and raised in the Bluegrass State, while Unionist women and Union soldiers in other areas, particularly those with few Unionists, could not be quite as particular.

At times the desire for companionship led to social outings mixing Union soldiers, Unionist women, and Confederate women. When Jenkin Lloyd Jones and his men were stationed in Huntsville, Alabama in 1864, they displayed a much different attitude toward associating with local women than had Alfred Pirtle. The day before Valentine’s Day, Federals held a ball “in the

⁴⁹ *Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary*, 193; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 192-193, 200 [emphasis mine].

open air with music from the fiddle and bow.” Jones described the presence of local Huntsville women as a “necessity.” A few months later on a lovely day in June, Jones and several other officers went on a picnic with “Southern ladies,” declaring that he had had “a good dinner, champagne in plenty and dancing.” And in New Bern, Zenas Haines and other men from the 44th Massachusetts held a New Year’s festival which was “well attended by ladies” where dancing was the “order of the night.”⁵⁰ As occupying forces and local civilians became better acquainted, some were able to put aside their differences in the pursuit of a good time. For soldiers and civilians alike, maintaining a sense of normalcy proved important, with moving past seeing each other as enemies an essential step in the process of retaining a sense of humanity during a time of war.

Associations that mixed soldiers and civilians of different political sympathies were not without their awkward moments. In Louisville during the late winter of 1862, Josie Underwood attended a dance given by Federal officers at their headquarters. Although Underwood had a “very pleasant time,” she marveled at the number of Rebel young women who attended. “Only Lizzie Wright [out of all of the Confederate young women] has [refused to associate with] the Union officers,” Underwood explained, “[and] I respect Lizzie for the attitude she takes. The very man she might have danced with last night—may next week—kill her lover.” Other Confederate women stood firm against associating with Yankees. In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, one smartly replied to a Union officer who inquired about organizing a picnic that such a thing could be easily done “when [the Rebel army] returns.” Further north in Clarksville, Nannie Haskins emphasized that town residents only invited the Union commander to a social function “through policy.” Yet a few months later, the same commander gave a “grand picnic,” and

⁵⁰ Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 176, 217; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 118; see also Lucius B. Corbin to Friend William, August 12, 1863, Lucius B. Corbin Correspondence; Lewis Bayard Smith to Ersky, August 16, 1862, Lewis Bayard Smith Letters, both USAHEC.

Haskins sorrowfully reported that “some of the young ladies from town . . . attend[ed].” Even worse, Haskins could barely escape being around Union soldiers herself. While attending a barn dance with friends, Haskins was horrified when two Union soldiers showed up; in spite of her begging, her friends refused to leave early.⁵¹ Union soldiers, Unionist women, and Confederate women eventually ended up interacting at social functions. While some young women’s political sympathies prevented them from associating with the enemy, other civilians eventually became so used to occupying forces—or so starved for social attention—that they attended dances and parties.

Occasionally even soldiers and women of color met on formal occasions. In Murfreesboro, General Ormsby Mitchel refused to allow his soldiers to hold a “negro ball” because he “did not come here for that purpose & that he was not going to let his soldiers have sweethearts in town.” Commanders in New Bern were more open to this idea, and in spring 1863 war correspondent Zenas Haines noted that a “n[egro] ball took place” at the “house of Black Lovinia.” The affair truly was interracial, and Haines described how “it was a marbled crowd, the upper stratum being described as yellow and white, and the lower one pure black and white.” Racial mixing was a more common occurrence during holidays or on occasions that white southerners had no interest in marking. In Clarksville, Tennessee on July 4, 1864, Nannie Haskins observed that “the negroes and Yankees are having a big picnic. They have been . . . here in great droves together.” Elsewhere in Tennessee, a Rebel woman reported that the “darky feminine element . . . hung . . . about the necks and brows of “Uncle Sam’s boys.” And white soldiers and black women who lived in the Union army camp in Beaufort, South Carolina, celebrated Emancipation and Thanksgiving with processions, ceremonies, and feasts. Susie King

⁵¹ Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary, 170-171; Kate Carney Diary, 401; Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 22, 44, 46; Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 125, 128.

Taylor, who taught school and served as a laundress for the regiment, remembered how everyone in camp “enjoyed every minute” of Emancipation Day, particularly “the crowning event” which was a “grand barbecue.” These celebrations underscored white soldiers and black women’s common humanity and common citizenship as they observed national holidays together.⁵²

In casual and more formal settings, interactions between Union soldiers and southern women underscored the ways in which Federals and civilians shared their lives together. From procuring food to celebrating national holidays, the war did not stop soldiers and women from associating. Even so, soldiers and women’s social interactions continued to replicate the nation’s gender, class, and racial divisions. Simply because Federals and black women held picnics together did not mean that soldiers regarded black women as anything other than laborers; Confederate women might have been fine dancing with a Union soldier for an evening, but still regarded them as a rowdy, ungentlemanly bunch. Moments of camaraderie, it seemed, did little to alter longstanding ideas about gender roles, racial divisions, or socioeconomic standing.

Romantic Relationships

While soldiers and women of all races and socioeconomic backgrounds did mingle during dances, picnics, and holiday celebrations, white Federals drew a line between social intercourse and long-term romantic relationships. To some soldiers, the very idea of romantic involvement with African American women seemed preposterous. Michigan soldier George Telling reacted with incredulity when a fellow soldier began “talking of getting married to a pretty Colord girl here,” although he insinuated that his friend’s feelings were merely because the young woman “comes to see him almost every night.” Wesley Gould joked to his family that

⁵² *Kate Carney Diary*, 436; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 177; Uffelman, et.al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 70, 107; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 126; Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*, 18; see also April 24, 1865, Abner Eisenhower Diary, USAHEC; Looby, ed., *Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 74-78; Gooding, *On the Altar of Freedom*, 85; see also John C. Baum to Parents, December 25, 1863, John C. Baum Diary, USAHEC.

if he did get married in South Carolina “it will be to a Negro Wench, for I have not seen a white girl for about six months.” Gould admitted, though, that he had “not yet got in love with the Negroes” so he most likely would remain single. Minnesota officer Madison Bowler’s wife trusted him to hire a black woman to do his cooking because “if any one is bad enough to have anything to do with a black woman, I think likely they have opportunities enough without having them employed.” Bowler responded to his wife lightheartedly, remonstrating that “you know we are away from home, and *you* are not selfish enough to see anyone suffer by being denied what few little privileges he is able to secure.” Federals demonstrated repulsion for black women but also believed them to be sexually available.⁵³

Aware that white soldiers considered them only fit to satisfy their appetites, sexual and otherwise, African American women hardly shed tears over white Federals’ rejection of them as long-term romantic partners. But black women still found wedded bliss with Union soldiers—their husbands came from the ranks of the thousands of black men who fought for the Union. The white officers of black regiments recorded many of these marriages, describing African American brides as “jet black, in low necked white muslin dresses, shirt sleeves, straw colored sashes, with good figures” while the grooms were in “uniform coat & festive white pants & gloves,” as the wedding party “s[at] under the trees, awaiting the Chaplain.” African American soldiers seemed to prefer what they termed “settled women,” or widows, while others stated a preference for “dark girls.” Whatever the case, countless marriages occurred between black women and black soldiers during the war, although many still practiced the custom, rooted in slavery, of a social ceremony followed a few weeks later by exchanging vows before a chaplain. No matter how the marriages occurred, it is clear that black women seized upon the chance to

⁵³ George Telling to Brother, January 20, 1863, George Telling Letters, USAHEC [emphasis in original]; Harris and Niflot, eds., *Dear Sister*, 19; Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 160, 166, 170, 181.

enter into legal marriages with romantic partners chosen of their own free will, and particularly black soldiers, whose martial service conferred upon them the standing not only of married women, but of soldiers' wives.⁵⁴

White Union soldiers proved far more open—and far more susceptible—to relationships with white Unionist women. Although no marriages resulted, Wesley Gould proudly declared to his brother Martin that his regiment had been so popular while stationed in Paris, Kentucky that “there was some of the women felt so bad [when the regiment left] that they shed tears. That was making love pretty quick, was it not?” Cora Owens Hume of Louisville, Kentucky, noted that her friend Neeta Hale was “engaged to be married to a yankee officer . . . a perfect dandy looking man.” Unionist Sallie Brown of Nicholasville could not put childhood friend James McCampbell out of her mind, especially once he joined the Union army. The couple got engaged a few months later.⁵⁵ Although not as frequent as one might expect given that both sides shared common political sympathies, relationships and marriages between Federals and loyal women did occur throughout the war.

Surprisingly, it was Federals and Rebel women who were most likely to enter wedded bliss. Throughout the South, quite a few soldiers courted and eventually married Confederates. During a court martial regarding a mutiny in Bloomfield, Missouri, the court noted that one of the men involved, a Major Montgomery, had married “one of the two most notorious rebel women in the country, who had carried dispatches and written ballads for the rebel army.” In Huntsville, Alabama, two soldiers in the United States Second Brigade married young women they had met in Scottsboro. Perhaps the most notable conquest was a young woman known only as the “Belle of Lavergne,” a Tennessee Rebel infamous for her bitter denunciations of Yankees.

⁵⁴ Looby, ed., *Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 66, 138, 144, 156, 219, 337.

⁵⁵ Harris and Niflot, eds., *Dear Sister*, 78; April 19, 1863, Cora Owens Hume Diary; November 9, 1861, November 8, 1861, and March 13, 1862, Sallie Brown McCampbell Wagner Diary; both FHS.

Yet the men of the 41st Ohio had the last laugh when, at the close of the war, they became reacquainted with the young woman, now married to “one of the same Yankee officers she had abused.”⁵⁶ Nashville became infamous after the war because of the number of marriages between Federals and Rebels: over thirteen officers and quite a few enlisted men married Volunteer State Confederates during the course of the war. Marriages between Federals and Confederates seemed to be an example of women’s natural inclination to be less certain of their political opinions and thus more likely to follow the political sympathies of their male relatives. These romantic relationships proved that, particularly as the war dragged on, the true womanhood ideal that women’s preference for love, marriage, and home life would eventually win out over sectional loyalty.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, romantic relationships between Union soldiers and white Confederate women were not without opposition, and some Rebels attempted to ostracize these couples. At a concert in Clarksville, Tennessee, Nannie Haskins lamented that some young ladies “carried on shamefully with the Yankees.” “Everybody is talking about them,” she observed disapprovingly. “I think they have disgraced themselves.” Kate Foster of Natchez looked down on other young women who associated with the “enemy,” viewing such behavior as a betrayal of “relatives, friends, or lovers” in the Confederate army. In Tennessee, Lucy Virginia French contemptuously repeated gossip that one Rebel girl had “procured the Federal uniform, a blue riding dress and rides around with the Yankees as she used to do with Morgan’s men.” French exulted, “I supposed this would be the end of her Southernism. It was too intense too last long.” Being kind and agreeable to the enemy, unless it was for some legitimate and presumably Rebel purpose, only undermined the war effort and revealed cracks within the Confederate nation. While Rebel

⁵⁶ *OR*, ser. 1, 12/1:720; Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 219; Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service*, 69-70.

⁵⁷ Don Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 29; Alfred Leland Crabb, *Nashville: Personality of a City* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1960), 72.

women who associated with Federal soldiers only treated them as a true lady should, Confederate public opinion revealed that it was not always appropriate to behave like a lady.⁵⁸

Even so, some women braved community censure by becoming romantically involved with Federals. Haskins described one of her friends who had "carried on shamefully about [her Union beau]" as not having "any principle" and being devoid of even a "particle of modesty." Williams considered their friendship over. Ellen Renshaw House expressed disappointment when she learned that one of her friends had become engaged to a Union soldier, and could not understand "how a southern girl can marry a Yankee." Even more frustrating were the daughters of Confederate commanders and government officials who consorted with Federals. While vacationing in Russellville, Haskins met two women, one the daughter of a Confederate general, the other the daughter of a Confederate Congressman, both of whom formed relationships with Union soldiers. Rebel young women committed to the cause deemed it a "great shame" that some Confederates fraternized with the enemy.⁵⁹

Public censure did little to prevent relationships between Confederate women and Union soldiers. More ardent Confederates attempted to discourage these relationships because they undermined national unity. Whatever their ladylike dignity, women with Union beaux betrayed their families and the cause of their new nation. In this instance, acting too agreeable became a liability rather than an asset. When Confederate women allowed themselves to be wooed by the enemy, it demonstrated a shallow commitment to the cause. Not only that, they were viewed as betraying their families and communities. Although ladies must be gentle and kind, they needed

⁵⁸ Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 32; September 20, 1863, Kate D. Foster Diary, Rubenstein Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina [hereafter Duke]; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 106.

⁵⁹ Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 39, 43 [emphasis in original]; Daniel E. Sutherland, ed., *A Very Violent Rebel: The Diary of Ellen Renshaw House* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 145; Backison, ed., *Refugees in Richmond*, 38.

to put their families before their own desires. When they did not, their friends and communities berated them for acting selfishly. According to many Rebel women, one could not be a true lady and entertain the attentions of the enemy.⁶⁰

Treachery and Betrayal

Of all the standards of true womanhood, the one that northerners and southerners seemingly could agree upon, even during a time of war, was that it was contrary to a lady's nature to engage in behavior that called attention to herself. Even so, Confederate women seemed intent upon publicly demonstrating their commitment to the cause. Such blatant transgressions of true womanhood drew the ire of both Rebel and Unionist women, and made Federal soldiers think twice about whether Confederates could simply be talked out of participation in the rebellion.

While it was one thing for Rebel women to avoid Union soldiers on the street, it was quite another for them to invite attention while out in public. And yet Confederates did this often. One of the most common ways was to refuse to walk under the United States flag. In Fredericksburg, one woman went so far as to explain to her child, in front of Federal soldiers, that she had avoided walking underneath the flag because she did not "care for an old dirty rag." Other women told Union troops that they preferred the "southern dust" of the street than walking under "northern rags." Elizabeth Alsop and her friends also preferred to get their dresses dirty instead of walking under the stars and stripes, and so attracted the attention of a Union soldier who called out, "Did you see them 'are gals would not go under a Union flag!'" Clara Solomon managed to attract attention to herself by calling out after passing Federals, "Don't they look like they've got the yellow fever?" "Such looks as were cast at me!" she exulted. On one

⁶⁰September 20, 1863, Kate D. Foster Diary, Duke; Carney, *Kate Carney Diary*, 400; Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 39, 43; Sutherland, ed., *A Very Violent Rebel*, 163.

point ideas of true womanhood agreed: ladies did not call attention to themselves, particularly when out in public, for calling attention to oneself, either in dress, comportment, or conversation, was the province of prostitutes and not true ladies. But Confederate women found occasion to disobey such strictures when adhering to their political sympathies.⁶¹

Behavior in public caused tension for Rebel women between openly avowing Confederate sympathies and adhering to standards of ladylike conduct. Even devoted Rebel Clara Solomon criticized one of her friends for being “very patriotic” and still wearing “a [Confederate] flag,” insisting that she and other women “should not lay ourselves open to insult.” Confederate Sarah Morgan of Baton Rouge perhaps best articulated the tension between supporting the Confederacy and maintaining ladylike composure. One evening, while on her way to a friend’s house with her “[Confederate] flag again flying” on her dress, she had to pass by “fifteen or twenty Federals,” describing that she “felt painful conviction that I was unnecessarily attracting attention . . . I felt everything that is painful and disagreeable . . . I hope it will be a lesson to me to always remember a lady can gain nothing by such displays.” Donning Confederate symbols in the presence of close friends was one thing, but it was quite another when the symbols attracted unwanted attention while out in public.⁶²

Such displays did not go unnoticed by Union soldiers. While stationed at Camp Federal Hill in Baltimore, Charles Brandegee noted that even though civilians “are generally pretty civil and think a great deal of this reg[iment] . . . some of the ladies hold in their dresses so as not to touch “them nasty union soldiers.”” Likewise, Lewis Bayard Smith observed that even though Rebel women flocked to his company’s dress parade, “many ladies” displayed “the secession

⁶¹ July 2, 1862 and July 14, 1862, Diary of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Maxwell Alsop Wynne, Wynne Family Papers, VHS; Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 395; Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women*, 114-117, Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 123-124, 128-130.

⁶² Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 354, 369; Morgan, *The Civil War Diary of a Southern Woman*, 68, see also 69, 129, 158.

emblem . . . in their hats.” In Tennessee, Charles Lutz seemed entirely shocked by how virulent the women behaved, noting that “they are so mad at the union soldiers that they will scarcely look at one of us.” Not only that, “they say that they will not walk under our flag.” Lutz found this behavior entirely unacceptable, and threatened that the Union army could “make them come to terms” or else put them outside of Federal lines.⁶³

Some Confederate women seemed to agree with Union soldiers that Rebels who expressed political opinions walked a fine line between ladylike behavior and conduct that provoked outrage. To Sarah Morgan, “southern women” had “disgraced themselves by their rude, ill mannered behavior,” declaring that she did not “consider the female who would spit in a gentleman’s face merely because he wore the United States button, as a fit associate.” Others advocated caution, as did Clara Solomon when she found out that her female instructors intended to close their school to observe a Confederate fast day, disregarding orders from Union commanders to remain open. “*We* are the captured in a captive city,” Solomon maintained, “and as servile to them as the slave to his master.” Unionist women added their own voices to those opposing the infamous behavior of Confederate women. Julia Chase of Winchester intoned, “when those who consider themselves ladies conduct themselves in [such a] manner all pretensions to ladylike actions are forever gone & [they]. . . will long be remembered for their disgraceful conduct and ridiculous behavior.”⁶⁴

Confederate true women often avoided public displays and instead maintained that appropriate behavior toward the Union army was outward compliance and inward defiance. This was especially true of Rebel women, who used their femininity as a shield so that Federal

⁶³ Charles Branegee to Father, January 18, 1862, Charles Brandegee Correspondence; Lewis Bayard Smith to Mother, August 19, 1862, Lewis Bayard Smith Letterbook; Charles Lutz to Brother, June 15, 1862, Charles Lutz Correspondence; all USAHEC.

⁶⁴ Morgan, *The Civil War Diary of a Southern Woman*, 122, 163; Ashkenazi, ed., *The Civil War Diary of Clara Solomon*, 369; Mahon, ed., *Winchester Divided*, 31-32.

authorities could not detect their espionage activities. Alice Ready's parents behaved kindly to Union soldiers stationed in Murfreesboro, but the family made plans on several occasions for Alice to pass Confederate general John Hunt Morgan information about Federal forces. The Readys felt certain that Alice would avoid suspicion because she was a respectable upper-class lady. Virginians Louise Humphreys Carter and Helen Struan Bernard behaved politely toward Union soldiers and officers but at the same time hid Confederate soldiers in their homes. The most daring among these women were Kate Carney and her mother, who sheltered an escaped Confederate prisoner. The Carney family allowed the man to bathe, shave, and change clothes in their home. Filtering his appearance in this way, he could walk past his former captors without being recognized. Carney admitted that she didn't "like to act deceitfully," but she shrugged this off by observing that "occasions require it, in war time." Confederates capitalized on female stereotypes that assumed that women's innate goodness prevented them from deceiving others. By being polite to the Union army, Confederate women and their families attempted to secure the trust of Union authorities while they secretly aided the Rebel army.⁶⁵

Thanks to warnings from Unionist women, Federals soon learned that seemingly friendly secessionist women had ulterior motives. In Louisville, Kentucky, Josie Underwood made fun of a naive Union officer who spent "time and money on a girl the most arrant rebel in the town." Frances Peter of Lexington exulted when relationships between Union soldiers and Confederate women ended abruptly. When two officers of the 15th Illinois called on a notorious secessionist, Peter delightedly recorded that their commanding officer called them back to camp before they could eat dinner. "Union officers have no business keeping company with the secesh. If we fight

⁶⁵ Ready, *Diary of Alice Ready*, 56; Louise Humphreys Carter Reminiscences, pgs. 9-12 and 13-14, LV; Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 49; Carney, *Kate Carney Diary*, 378-379, 393; see also Maury, "Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury," 81; June 25, 1862, July 14, 1862, August 22, 1862, Diary of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Maxwell Alsop Wynne, VHS.

them on the field we should keep them down at home too.” To loyal women, it was unfathomable that Federal officers would choose to spend time with traitors. Unionist women maintained that such behavior among Union soldiers was foolhardy and bad for morale. As Peter observed, a few careless words were all Confederate women needed to “do a great deal in the way of giving information.” Rebel women might seem harmless to Union soldiers, but loyal women knew better since these very same people had persecuted them under Confederate occupation. Unionist women warned that Confederates’ politeness was a ruse to secure good treatment. Inside, the women remained unrepentant Rebels.⁶⁶

Heeding the warnings of Unionist civilians, Federals began to closely monitor the behavior of Rebel women. What they found was an appallingly brazen pattern of deception. In La Vergne, Tennessee, members of the First Ohio Cavalry fell for the beautiful Dobson sisters. Although both girls appeared quite friendly, there were rumors that they aided Confederate guerrillas. Some officers paid the gossip no mind and accepted the girls’ dinner invitation, only to find they had stumbled into a trap and their less gullible friends had to save them from being turned over to Confederates. In Lexington, Kentucky, John Hunt Morgan’s mother appeared agreeable to Union commanders but hid the fact that she harbored escaped Confederate prisoners and secretly arranged for letters to be sent to her sons. In Missouri, William A. Smith insinuated that the wives of guerrillas brazenly lied about being widows, noting that although their “husbands have been dead two or three years,” that there was “something singular about them”: “a great many of them have babies from one year old down to right bran new ones.” Female civilians in Winchester, Virginia, went so far as to fire on Federal soldiers as they retreated from the city during skirmishes with Confederates. In Tennessee,

⁶⁶ Baird, ed., *Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary*, 181; Peter, *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 82.

Union general George Thomas became so fed up with the conduct of Confederate women that he ordered that no more of them be allowed to pass through his lines. Thomas “consider[ed] [the women] more insinuating and far more dangerous than men.” Enlisted soldier Joseph E. Blake, stationed in Charlestown, Virginia, agreed, stating unequivocally “the wimin are worse, on Secession, than the men.” While the Union army had expected that Confederate women would at least stay on the sidelines, they found that Rebel ladies often took advantage of kindness toward civilian women.⁶⁷

Most shocking still to Union soldiers was that it was upper-class white ladies who betrayed them. In St. Louis, women smuggled medicine, Confederate paraphernalia, and letters. Additionally, the women “[encouraged] their husbands and sons to continue the war; they convey information to them and by every possible contrivance they forward clothing and other support to the rebels.” Federals in Virginia felt so distrustful of elite white women that many believed a widely circulated rumor that a group of ladies from Stag’s Run had formed a company of guerrillas. In Nashville, General Rosecrans’s 14th Army Corps bitterly remembered the duplicity of Confederate women. While pretending to be agreeable, women smuggled goods and information right under soldiers’ noses, boasting to their friends how they had outwitted the Yankees. Comparing the deceptive Nashville residents to prostitutes, the soldiers described the women’s “secret enterprises” which “waited for execution only until darkness.” It was no accident that soldiers used words that implied both desire and passion. Northern troops conceived of the threat of Confederate women in sexual terms, since their unruly actions put them on a level with the sexually promiscuous. Using their sexuality, these conspirators could

⁶⁷ Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 98; Peter, *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 121, 87, 3; *OR*, ser. 1, 10/2:125; William A. Smith to Wife, March 5, 1862, William A. Smith Correspondence, USAHEC. Other respectable ladies posed as friends of the Union army and then gave information to Confederates. *OR*, ser. 1, 15:444; *OR*, ser. 1, 10/2:142; *OR*, ser. 1, 12/3:259; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:601; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:629; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:608; *OR*, ser. 1, 20/2:125; Joseph E. Blake to Sister, March 5, 1862, Joseph E. Blake Correspondence, USAHEC.

lure southern men even deeper into rebellion. By implicitly comparing elite women to prostitutes, the troops justified their ill treatment of deceptive southern women. Women who used their sexuality to dupe Union soldiers defied the standards of true womanhood because their behavior threatened to upset not only gender but also social and political hierarchies. Because of this, men threatened that ladies who refused to act the part would be subject to all the abuses and scorn of common women.⁶⁸

Conclusion

Wartime social interactions between Union soldiers and southern women brought out the country's socioeconomic and racial divisions and revealed the fault lines in genteel behavior. While these standards supposedly took no notice of either race or class, social relationships during the war tell quite a different story. Although Unionist white and black women welcomed soldiers, Federals mainly relied upon them to supply their forces with food and care for the sick. After closer observation, many soldiers found poor white and black southerners' ignorance and uncleanliness to be unappealing, and avoided social contact with them. Instead, Federals preferred seeking out their social equals or even their social betters in order to replicate the easy social relationships they enjoyed at home. But because of shifting attitudes in standards of true womanhood, interactions with middle- and upper class white ladies were not without their problems. White Unionists far preferred men from their home state, and faulted Federals for

⁶⁸ *OR*, ser. 1, 5:319; James H. Bayne to Parents, September 16, 1862, James H. Bayne Correspondence, USAHEC; Curry, *History of the First Regiment*, 100; William D. Bickham, *Rosecrans Campaign with the Fourteenth Army Corps, or the Army of the Cumberland* (Cincinnati: Moore, Wilstach, Keys, 1863), 58, 64, 66, 134; Walter T. Durham, *Nashville: The Occupied City* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 200-201; Gay Gullickson, "La Petroleuse: Representing Revolution," *Feminist Studies* 17, no. 2 (1991), 242, 250, 260-261; Reid Mitchell, *The Vacant Chair: The Northern Soldier Leaves Home* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 90. Gullickson argues that negative female images "represented the violence of revolution" and that the political threat was embodied as "a hideous and fierce but not exactly sexless woman." I see something similar here, as Union soldiers try to make sense of elite women's behavior by comparing them to prostitutes. Although they despise these women's actions, they also imply that the women's unruly behavior signified a heightened sexuality. Gullickson maintains that male opponents of the Paris Commune responded with "fear and considerable fascination" (and possibly even desire and passion) to the women revolutionaries. See also *OR*, ser. 1, 21:29.

spending time with Rebels. Confederate women often refused to associate with Yankees on the basis that it would be a betrayal of their political sympathies. Not only that, but Rebel women often dissembled, pretending to be kind and courteous while surreptitiously aiding Confederates. Such behavior, even on the part of ladies, convinced Union soldiers that they could not depend on women to behave like “true women” during a time of war. Ultimately, the Civil War revealed the contradictions at the heart of genteel standards, revealing that ladies and gentlemen were not morally superior to poor whites and blacks; instead, they were just better at hiding their flaws behind a veneer of good manners and good comportment.

As Federal soldiers and commanders wizened to the duplicity in Confederate women’s conduct, some began to question the very nature of conciliationist policies. In fact, Rebel women’s betrayal seemed to be linked to depredations committed by the Confederate army and Confederate guerrillas, as all parties flouted nineteenth-century rules of civilized warfare as they blurred important boundaries between battlefield and home front, regular and irregular warfare, and civilian versus combatant.

CHAPTER 3

“GRACELESS TRAMPS OF YANKEES”: FORAGING AND CONFISCATION, 1862-1863

Confederate Helen Struan Bernard thought her first interaction with Union soldiers had gone surprisingly well. Although the men showed up at her stately home in Fredericksburg, Virginia unannounced and demanded food, she still found them to be respectful. Bernard’s opinions drastically changed once she realized that they had stolen her bridle and her neighbor’s horse and cart. They had “walked about the place as if it belonged to them,” and she worried that such intrusions would occur daily.

Kentuckian Ellen Wallace, a wealthy slaveowner, found that not even loyalty spared southern women from Yankee requisitions. After two years of occupation, Wallace was fed up with “Lincoln’s soldiers . . . com[ing] to our houses [and] order[ing] dinner and breakfast for a dozen men.” One day, finished with dinner, they ordered Wallace’s overseer to deliver a load of hay to their camp “[without] the slightest remuneration, only a worthless receipt.” In response to Union soldiers’ repeated impositions, Wallace soon transferred her allegiance to the Confederacy.

In De Witt, Arkansas, Union soldiers stole from and verbally abused an enslaved black woman. Recalling his mother’s experience years after the war, Sam Word described how she came upon a Union soldier in her cabin stealing handmade quilts. She chastised the soldier, “Why, you nasty, stinking rascal, you say you come down here to fight for the n[egores], and now you’re stealing from ‘em.” The soldier defended his larceny by saying, “You’re a

goddamned liar. I'm fighting for \$14 a month and the Union.”¹

By the end of 1862, some regiments of the Union army, particularly those in the western theater, had acquired a reputation among southern civilians as thieves and freeloaders. Federal foraging policies that allowed northern troops to steal Helen Struan Bernard’s bridle, Ellen Wallace’s hay, and Sam Word’s mother’s quilts, exacerbated conflicts over soldiers’ duties to civilians and women’s obligations to the army. As the army abandoned conciliation in favor of foraging and confiscation, soldiers began to harness and direct southern civilians’ resources and labor, bringing Union military authority into southern homes and blurring boundaries between military camps and southern intimate space.

Union commanders claimed to be waging a civilized war, and in the nineteenth century this meant protecting noncombatants and affording special treatment to women and children. The volunteers who made up the Union army were expected to exercise manly self-control and to direct their aggression toward Rebel soldiers on the battlefield while respecting southern women and children. Northern policymakers and military leaders found support for these ideas in international law, principally from the work of Emmerich de Vattel, who maintained that as “enemies who make no resistance,” soldiers had a responsibility to protect female noncombatants.² According to the rules of war and codes of middle-class manly behavior, Northern soldiers were to shield southern women and children from war’s severity.

White women needed men’s protection because of their important roles in the management of household labor, supervision of children, and direction of philanthropic activities

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¹ Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 43; August 6, 1864, Ellen Wallace Diary, 1849, 1864-1865, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, KY [hereafter KHS]; Sam Word in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 11:240.

² Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 14-16; Royster, *The Destructive War*, 83; Witt, *Lincoln’s Code*, 16-19, 51, 70-72.

(although the latter was less prominent in the more rural, less reform-minded South).³ Through service to their families, and ultimately to the nation by rearing virtuous citizens, women modeled the self-sacrificing character required by a republic. At the same time, women's inherent virtue removed them from the partisan, fractious world of business and politics. By encouraging male relatives to join the military, providing for soldiers' material needs, and using their household skills to support the nation, women transcended partisan concerns to fulfill their moral obligations to their families, their military, and their country. Through these selfless acts, women showed that the interests of family and nation transcended their own. In this way, women's virtue linked their duty to their family to their obligation to the republic, rendering the two nearly inseparable.⁴

By late 1861, white Rebel women's outspoken support for the Confederacy sparked drastic changes in policy. Instead of civilians who needed Federals' protection, Confederate women seemed to be traitors who needed to be punished.⁵ Depredations against Unionist civilians by Confederate soldiers and guerrillas (aided by Rebel women) encouraged Federal commanders in the western theater to abandon conciliation and to adopt foraging and confiscation.⁶ Under these new policies, civilians who supported the United States government

³ Elizabeth Varon links the decline in Virginia women's charitable works in the 1830s to the rise of abolitionism in the North and pro-slavery sentiment and sectionalism in the South. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted*, 2-4, 40.

⁴ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 6; Kerber, *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies*, xxiii, 10, 11; Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 31, 125; Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood*, 68, 95-99; and Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, 1790-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 203, 217.

⁵ Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 6, 129, 149-150; Royster, *The Destructive War*, 86-87.

⁶ Depredations in the western theater included the Confederate army destroying food and livestock as they retreated; guerrillas robbing civilians of their property; and civilians encouraging the Confederate government to confiscate Unionists' property. Since guerrilla bands often masqueraded as civilians, they could be difficult to catch and prosecute. So the Union army resorted to punishing local civilians for their misbehavior. For the Confederate army and civilians, see Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 81; *OR*, ser. 1, 10/2: 278; Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 88; Jones, *An Artilleryman's Diary*, 116; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 370; Musser, *Soldier Boy*, 91; *OR*, ser. 1, 7:58; *OR*, ser. 1, 6:576; *OR*, ser. 1, 18:895; for guerrillas and civilians, see *OR*, ser. 1, 8:370; *OR*, ser. 1, 8:405; *OR*, ser. 1, 8:515; *OR*, ser. 1, 8:824; Daniel E. Sutherland, *Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 57-58; for

received protection. Enemies, however, risked having their property seized or faced arrest and imprisonment. Although intended primarily to punish Confederates, foraging also allowed Union soldiers to take necessary property from loyal women. These practices heightened conflicts over intimate space. Because southern women believed that soldiers had a duty to protect them at home, many expected to be spared from foraging. But Federal forces insisted that women earn the army's protection by submitting to its authority. This fundamental clash of viewpoints meant that conflicts over personal property were more than just squabbles over women's belongings. Instead, they were battles over rights and authority grounded in intimate space and connected to ideas about manhood and womanhood, the duties of soldiers to civilians, and women's obligations to the state.

Formation and Implementation of Foraging Policy

The Federal army's turn to foraging was symptomatic of growing exasperation with supposed Rebel violations of the rules of war. Not only did ladies refuse to act like ladies, but civilians refused to stay out of the conflict and the Confederate military engaged in a pattern of depredations against noncombatants.⁷ The Confederate army repeatedly disregarded civilian welfare during their military campaigns, even going so far as to destroy noncombatants' food and livestock. In Missouri, bushwhackers and guerrillas aided the Confederate army by preying on Unionist civilians, from destroying land to robbing civilians of their property. Encouraged by the success of these tactics in Missouri, guerrillas, regular soldiers, and Rebel civilians replicated

Confederate and Unionist civilians, see *OR*, ser. 1, 22/2:11; *OR*, ser. 1, 28:881, 893; *OR*, ser. 1, Vol. 23/2:54-55; *OR*, ser. 1, 22/2:36; *OR*, ser. 1, 30/3:15; Hinkley, *A Narrative of Service*, 141; Robert R. Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861-1865* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004), 72-75.

⁷ Union soldiers seemed shocked by two Confederate policies in particular: first, the Rebel draft which disproportionately affected poor families, and Confederate shelling of southern cities and towns before women and children could evacuate. For Federals' opinion of the draft, see Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 238; John H. Shober to Uncle, September 19, 1861, John H. Shober Letter, LV; Betsy (Mrs. E.E. Miller) to Louisa Clark Boddie, April 28, 1862. Boddie Family Papers, MSDAH; see also Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 81. For the Union army's opinion of shelling southern women and children, see *OR*, ser. 1, 15/1:1014; *OR*, ser. 1, 15/1:756.

the persecution of Unionists throughout the Confederacy and Border States. To army commanders it seemed that the Confederate army, Confederate guerrillas, and Confederate civilians worked together to plague Federals on the battlefield and on the home front, and Federals crafted a strong response. In Missouri, General Henry Halleck took action against guerrillas by trying them in military courts, and encouraged other commanders to do the same. But this tactic proved impractical since Union soldiers could barely catch, let alone find witnesses to convict, irregular soldiers.⁸

For these reasons, foraging first emerged as a way to discourage irregulars by punishing the civilians who encouraged them. Federal commanders authorized provost marshals to investigate “wealthy secessionists who render aid, assistance, and encouragement” to irregulars, and then required guilty Rebels to house and support Unionist civilians at their own expense. But it was Major General Joseph Reynolds who first proposed that the Union army punish Tennessee secessionists who had encouraged the Rebel army’s plundering of loyal civilians by redistributing their possessions to destitute neighbors. Reynolds hoped to “send the rebels out of the country, and make safe room for the return of loyal men [so that they would] feel that the country is once [again] in their possession.”⁹ The Army’s fledgling policies demonstrated that conciliation toward civilians now mostly applied to Unionists. Many commanders came to see Confederate noncombatants not in need of rehabilitation but as unrepentant and hostile.

Officially sanctioned by President Abraham Lincoln in July 1862, foraging—the practice of materially supporting the army by seizing civilian property—grew out of the idea that women were obliged to donate their time, labor, and household goods to the war effort. Lincoln ordered military commanders to “seize and use any property, real or person, which may be necessary and

⁸ *OR*, ser. 1, 8:824; Sutherland, *Savage Conflict*, 63, 70-75; James W. Erwin, *Guerrillas in Civil War Missouri* (Mount Pleasant, SC: The History Press, 2012), 37; Witt, *Lincoln’s Code*, 188, 191-192; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:558.

⁹ *OR*, ser. 1, 8:824; *OR*, ser. 1, 8:405; *OR*, ser. 1, 23/2:55-57.

convenient for their several commands for supplies or other military purposes.” Although “plunder[ing] with impunity” would be treated as pillaging and summarily punished, the line between “seiz[ing]” and “plundering” was not clear. In the end, it was up to the discretion of individual officers and quartermaster generals to determine what amounted to rightful foraging and what stepped over the line into marauding.¹⁰

Foraging applied to all southern civilians, but Federals expected white ladies, both loyal and Confederate, to be particularly generous with their possessions. In complying with such a policy, elite white women would reaffirm their status as apolitical caretakers of home and nation. Thus ideas of true womanhood informed women’s expected wartime service—since women were virtuous and impartial, they would privilege country even over family. Women who succored the Federal army deserved the army’s forbearance and protection. General Ormsby M. Mitchel, commander of the defenses of Nashville, said as much in a speech made in Murfreesboro. In no uncertain terms, the general promised that his soldiers would protect civilians if they behaved like citizens loyal to the United States government. He went on to threaten, in words certainly aimed toward Confederate women, that "insults to the soldiers would be summarily punished." In an effort to "keep civilians on the sidelines," Federal forces protected Unionists, chastened secessionists, and tried to keep the rest out of the conflict.¹¹

¹⁰ *OR*, ser. 1, 14:362; Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 15-16, 39-41, 102-105. Grimsley argues that foraging first began under Ulysses S. Grant in the western theater because the army’s supplies occasionally proved inadequate, the Union army observed the effectiveness of the Confederate army’s ability to live off the countryside, and because of a War Department order that encouraged foraging as a way to punish the rebellion.

¹¹ *Diary of Alice Ready*, 59; Attie, *Patriotic Toil*, 3-5; Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War*, 47-48, 61-66, 51. Grimsley argues that it was only in the west that this pragmatic policy manifested itself at this time. In Tennessee, Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell, commander of the Department of the Ohio, favored a conciliatory approach. However, General Mitchel vehemently disagreed and advocated for the more pragmatic approach, which would extend protection only to those citizens who took the oath of loyalty to the United States. For links between confiscation, foraging, and the death of conciliation, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 501-502.

Foraging On the Ground: Union Soldiers and Southern Women

Union commanders found the new policy of holding women responsible for their actions to be effective. General Benjamin Butler instituted the most infamous policy in New Orleans, Louisiana. Recognizing that because of the strictures of true womanhood, no lady would acknowledge a strange man on the street, let alone talk to him, Butler ordered that Louisiana women who insulted Union soldiers be treated like the women they acted like: prostitutes. Butler had the opportunity to enforce his order only two months later when Eugenia Phillips, the wife of a Confederate officer, stood on the balcony of her house laughing and mocking the funeral procession of a Federal officer. In his order regarding her imprisonment, Butler insisted that Phillips deserved to be treated not like a prostitute but like an “uncommon, bad, and dangerous woman, stirring up strife and inciting to riot.” From Ship Island, Mississippi, Private Lafayette Bailey, stationed on the island where Phillips was imprisoned, recorded that he felt her sentence to be just because “she laughed when our men was going to bury a soulger.” Commanders insisted that to receive the protection that they desired, ladies would have to act like ladies, respecting military authorities and conducting themselves in a quiet, respectable manner. If women did not behave this way, the army threatened to treat them as traitors fully subject to the rules of war.¹²

¹² Sherli Leonard, “What Lafayette Bailey’s Letters Lacked in Grammar They More than Made up for in Heartfelt Emotion,” *America’s Civil War*, 11, no. 4 (September 1998); 72-75; Henry Harrison Eby, *Observations of an Illinois Boy in Battle, Camp, and Prisons, 1861-1865* (Mendota, IL: n.p., 1910), 56; *OR*, ser. 1, 53:526; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:422; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:510. Many scholars have covered these incidents in New Orleans, the most recent being Alecia P. Long, “(Mis)Remembering General Order No. 28: Benjamin Butler, the Woman Order, and Historical Memory,” in Whites and Long, 17-32 and McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*, 104-144. While Long focuses on the bluster of Butler’s order, which actually did very little in the way of punishing Confederate women, McCurry argues that the order fit with a larger change in Union policy which held women, even elite white ladies, responsible for their political actions. Both arguments have their merits: while Butler’s order did not result in widespread imprisonment, it signaled to many a change in the way women were treated during a time of war, and most likely deterred other Confederate women from acting in a similar manner.

Although Federal policy sometimes mandated harsh treatment for defiant Confederate ladies, Union soldiers tolerated Rebel women's political sentiments as long as they graciously complied with the Federal army's requests for provisions. James L. Rea of the 13th New York Militia approved of the conduct of secessionist ladies in Baltimore, for even though they were strong Rebels, they treated the soldiers well and brought them "bread and butter and supplied us with all the milk we could use." George Hill of the 16th New York stopped at a house near Catlin Station, Virginia looking for dinner. Although the women appeared "a little alarmed at first," Hill found them to be "quite friendly" as evidenced by the good dinner they cooked up. Even more importantly, the women were "all tired of secession" and "hoped the war would soon end," sentiments which led Hill to believe that "southern Ladies have been grossly slandered by some of our northern papers."¹³ Through their kind treatment of Union soldiers and their recognition of Federal authority over their houses and barns, Confederate women lived up to the ideals of ladylike conduct.

Although Union soldiers knew they had a right to seize and use Rebel property, they understood when Confederate women hesitated to hand over their possessions. While stationed in Tuscumbia, Alabama, the commander of Indiana soldier James A. Price's regiment "issued orders to the citizens that if they did not bring some dinner the next day that he would kill some of their hogs and chickens." Sure enough, the following day—which just happened to be the Fourth of July—civilians sent in their enslaved people with provisions. In Missouri, Illinois volunteer William C. Murray noted that Federal soldiers showed little regard for private property, and would "haul it off without even asking for it. . . it is certainly heart rending to see the amount of property that an army as large as ours will destroy. The next change I get to

¹³ James L. Rea to Mary, July 11, 1861, James L. Rea Correspondence; George Hill, Jr. to Brothers, April 10, 1862, George Hill, Jr. Correspondence; see also December 30, 1862, James A. Price Diary; all USAHEC.

plunder a house I shall take all I can get for if I don't someone else will." Murray seemed ambivalent about how Federals' behavior affected Rebel women, who, when they saw Yankees arriving, "ru[n] through the streets crying, expecting every minute to be killed." When women attempted to protect their property, many soldiers reacted not with anger but with amusement and even respect. In Byhalia, Mississippi, Jenkin Jones recalled a woman who drew a pistol on a soldier in his company to keep him off her property. Other women cried, begged, and even yelled to keep their belongings. Union soldiers did not find these outbursts overly troubling, for it seemed natural that Rebel women would take strong measures to protect their homes against soldiers bent on taking everything. And even if women did put up resistance, soldiers knew that they had the upper hand. So they took what they wanted and heeded civilians' protests when it suited them.¹⁴

What Federals refused to abide were Confederate women who resorted to violence or insults. When war correspondent Zenas Haines and his regiment faced off with a "spunky secesh female" guarding her sweet potatoes with a wooden rake, the soldiers were content to leave her alone. Once she slapped a cavalry officer in the face, the soldiers felt justified in taking her entire crop. Around Louisville, Kentucky, a Confederate tavern owner protested the army's decision to turn her shop into a hospital. Major Samuel Kirkpatrick heard her complaints calmly "until she launched into an unladylike abuse of the Union soldiers." In measured tones, Kirkpatrick informed the woman that, "as long as ladies keep their place and use proper language they are respected, but when they depart from either they are not," and commanded her to leave his quarters. Two young Tennessee ladies who violently threatened Union soldiers when they asked to search their property were charged with "unwomanly bluster." "Unfeminine" behavior

¹⁴ July 3, 1862 and July 4, 1862, James A. Price Diary, USAHEC; Jones, *An Artilleryman's Diary*, 22, 91, 264; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 105.

challenged the army's authority over civilian spaces and soldier notions of traditional gender roles. Confederate women's anger intimated that Union army policies were an unchivalrous attack on white women's domestic spaces, denying that Union soldiers had a right to southern women's property. Commanders who dealt harshly with Rebel women's tirades claimed that military authority over intimate space was one and the same as male authority over the female home front.¹⁵

In contrast, loyal women who willingly and politely complied with the army's demands showed themselves to be worthy citizens who provided for soldiers out of the abundance of their possessions. Large numbers of Unionist women in Tennessee, many of whom desired to distinguish themselves from recalcitrant Confederate neighbors, lavishly provided for the army to prove their loyalty. Chaplain George Bradley lauded the behavior of one woman in Columbia, who made soldiers "welcome to everything she had." Bradley believed this showed her to be "truly loyal" and "noble hearted." Basil Lamb of the 72nd Indiana Infantry described how his company always lived well off the Tennessee countryside for "if the citizens were loyal they could afford to give," expressing the common expectation that loyal women displayed their political sympathies through sharing their material possessions.¹⁶ While true womanhood seemed to grant white women the privileged position of overseeing household labor and participating in benevolent activities, wartime realities revealed that these domains were never really outside male control. By claiming military expediency, Federal officers and enlisted men asserted their right to direct women's household labor and equated compulsory giving with patriotism and womanly virtue.

¹⁵ Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 102; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 29; see also *OR*, ser. 1, 24/1:513; John A. B. Williams and George S. Forbes, *Leaves from a Trooper's Diary*, (Philadelphia: n.p., 1869), 43.

¹⁶ Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 49; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 511; see also Jefferson Whitcomb Diary, 4-5, Jefferson Whitcomb Papers, VHS; Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 60-61.

Although black women's status as laborers excluded them from ideas of true womanhood, Union soldiers still expected them to dutifully provision the Union army. Pennsylvania private Conrad Lewis Diehl noted how he received breakfast while on duty in Munfordville, Kentucky from an "old darky." In Washington, North Carolina, nearly devoid of white inhabitants after the arrival of Union soldiers in the fall of 1862, Zenas Haines described how, soon after landing, hungry Union soldiers "besieged" the homes of black women "[who] were soon driving a good business in supplying the soldiers with hoe-cake."¹⁷ Union soldiers interpreted black women's enthusiastic support and domestic labors as evidence that they could be counted on to supply the army.

But whether it was individual soldiers or entire armies, foragers methodically gathered supplies without regard to loyalty or status. During its spring 1862 invasion of North Alabama, the Army of the Ohio according to Lieutenant Colonel Francis Darr took "everything that could be gathered without absolutely starving the women and children." Madison Bowler and a friend walked right up to the door of a Unionist woman's home in the Louisville, Kentucky area and took "three canteens [of milk] ... a dozen (all they had) of eggs, and . . . half a bushel of very nice biscuit." In Middle Tennessee, Bowler and his men grabbed everything they wanted from civilians, only refraining from pillaging if noncombatants displayed the stars and stripes. Around Arlington, Virginia, George Harvey and a group of African American soldiers took "Grain Hay & every thing else a person can think of" from civilians. The army provisioned itself from the supplies of the loyal and disloyal because they believed it was civilians' duty to support the

¹⁷ "From Carlisle to Murfreesboro: Reminiscences of a Private of Co. L," 12, Conrad Lewis Diehl Memoir, FHS; Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy*, 80; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 92. Whether free or enslaved, it was often black women who labored to feed Union soldiers. White Unionist (and Confederate women) claimed to have "fed" Union soldiers when they did little more than direct their enslaved women to plan, cook, and serve the meal. See November 9, 1862, Margaret Tilston Kemble Nourse Diary, VHS.

army. Under clear orders from the president to take any necessary supplies, soldiers and their officers believed such policies were necessary and thus did not infringe upon private property or the rights of citizens.¹⁸

Women and Foraging Policies

Southern civilians, whether Confederate or Unionist, white or black, slave or free, old or young, often took a much different view of foraging. Noncombatants claimed that the rules of civilized warfare required the Union army to protect people *and* property. By engaging in foraging, Federals abdicated these responsibilities. To southern women, this policy allowed Union soldiers to fill their bellies and stock their tents while civilians suffered.

Confederate women viewed foraging as nothing more or less than thievery. Kate Carney described feeling greatly annoyed by soldiers “stealing from the garden.” In Gallatin, Tennessee, Alice Williamson sarcastically commented how the country was “overrun with [neighborly] Yanks” who paid her family several visits a day to “kil[l] sheep, goats, and chickens.” Over in Nashville, Elizabeth Pendleton Hardin’s neighbor came home one evening to find an entire regiment camped on her yard. The commander greeted her on her front porch demanding “forty or fifty hams for my men.” Elizabeth McGavock Harding of Belle Meade plantation in Nashville observed that although the Union soldiers who swarmed over her property were “generally very polite,” they seemed “totally unconscious that their presence could by any possibility be deemed an intrusion. . . . [they] seem wanting in sensibility.” Rebel women argued that foraging violated necessary boundaries between the battlefield and the home front and displaced white women from their rightful place as domestic managers. Because the army wielded immense authority, civilian women had no choice but to comply with its demands. Foraging left the disbursement of

¹⁸ *OR*, ser. 1, 16/1:603; Foroughi, *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 176, 179; George E. Harvey to Uncle and Frank, July 13, 1863, George E. Harvey Letter, LV; McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 510.

civilian property up to enemy combatants, which often meant soldiers took anything and everything they wanted.¹⁹

White Unionist women believed foraging should only apply to Confederate property. While loyal women, particularly those in Border States, willing contributed to the Union cause, many believed that Federals should first confiscate the possessions of Rebel civilians. Frances Peter of Lexington, Kentucky, felt relieved when Federal forces arrived in her hometown, grateful for a reprieve from Confederate soldiers constantly asking ““Is there any chance of our getting something to eat out here.”” Although Rebels had not respected the rules of war, Peter expected Union soldiers to do so. Much to their chagrin, loyal Border State women found that Union soldiers did not treat them much better than Confederates. Josie Underwood of Louisville, Kentucky felt constantly besieged by Federals “prowling around . . . stealing everything they can carry off from watermelons to chickens and pigs.”²⁰

For sure, some women, particularly those in embattled areas such as Virginia, still preferred to deal with the Federal army. But Unionist women drew a distinction between Federals who asked permission to use their property in exchange for protection—usually officers—and Federals who simply stole their property—usually enlisted men. Ann C. Brandt, a grandmother and guardian of her deceased Confederate surgeon son’s two young children, saw nearly \$5,000 of her grandchildren’s inheritance taken by Union soldiers in summer 1862. This behavior surprised Brandt, who proudly displayed the national colors, “thinking the soldiers would protect [her] because of [her] sentiments.” Although Brandt did receive many guards and

¹⁹ *Kate Carney Diary*, 440; 10 June 10, 1864, Alice Williamson Diary, Duke; *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin*, 39-40; Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, May 11, 1862, William Giles Harding Papers, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee [hereafter VU]; see also Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 43; and *Diary of Alice Ready*, 82.

²⁰ *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 75, 78, 73; *Josie Underwood*, 171, 194-195; see also Claim of Harriet Howard, Baldwin County, Georgia; Claim of Lydia Fishburn, Augusta County, Virginia; Claim of Mary Kane, Caroline County, Virginia, all SCC-NA.

passes from Federals, they also stole her mules, broke open her granary, and treated her quite rudely, as German cavalrymen told her “go away old woman” when she tried to keep some of her horses. Fellow Culpeper resident Jane Allen housed a provost marshal and colonel during the winter of 1863, whom she treated like “a mother” while they referred to her as “grandma.” Although Allen happily provided for these Union soldiers, she felt aggrieved when some Federals slaughtered two of her finest cows. A close relationship with some officers, however, secured her a guard and an order from General John R. Kenly “that the troops were not to disturb people’s property any more.”²¹ When Union soldiers failed to protect the property of loyal civilians, it was more than just an annoyance. While Unionists could understand exceptional circumstances, they resented soldiers who did not accord them the treatment and respect that their political sympathies warranted.

The presence of male relatives and enslaved domestics mitigated foraging’s effects on upper class white women. During the spring and summer of 1862, Margaret Nourse of Warrenton experienced a constant influx of Union soldiers thanks to her proximity to the Shenandoah Valley.²² But her middle-class status and her enslaved cook made her much more welcoming and generous toward the intruders. One Saturday in April she reported that “[Seven] soldiers dined here . . . Ellen cooked for them.” In addition, the presence of Nourse’s husband meant she often had little contact with Federals. When a soldier “cut the throat [of a sheep],” Nourse’s husband paid a visit to the Union commander and “made a stir.” Similarly, Susan P.W.

²¹ Claim of Ann C. Brandt and Claim of Jane L. Allen, Culpeper County, Virginia; both SCC-NA; see also Browning, *Shifting Loyalties*, 155-162.

²² While Federal forces stationed in Virginia were under strict orders from Generals McClellan and McDowell to refrain from foraging, these directives did little to discourage individual soldiers or even entire regiments from taking what they wanted from civilians. Margaret Tilloston Kemble Nourse felt her status as a Unionist and native northerner gave her a special duty to provide for Union soldiers, and also singled her out for more visits from foraging parties. Several studies of military policy and military occupation suggest that foraging occurred less frequently in the eastern theater and among Unionists. Some of my evidence suggests this may not have always been the case. See August 9, 1862, Margaret Tilloston Kemble Nourse Diary, VHS; Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 54; 72-73; Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, 118.

Hall of Culpeper County, Virginia relied on her husband to deal with Union soldiers. After watching General Pope's soldiers take her property, Hall's husband "went to the camp to see about [it] and said he was told they were obliged to have the property for the Army, but that he would be paid for it." Sarah Ford reported that the only person who had seen her property taken was "a colored girl . . . [named] Pocahontas Ford . . . [who] was the only one of the servants left."²³ Although all women experienced great property losses, they were spared having to deal with Union soldiers directly because, due to their status as married slaveowners, they could depend upon their husbands—or order their enslaved men and women—to do the work for them.

Unionist women reacted to the taking of their property during foraging campaigns with a variety of responses, from resignation to anger. Young Amanda Shaw, an orphan who lived with her aunt and uncle, watched "the union forces cutting and hauling . . . timber and rails from my place to the camps in the winter of 1863-4." Shaw made no attempt to stop the soldiers even as they dismantled her inheritance, but instead continued to "wash and sew and cook" for Federals. Mary Payne, a hotel keeper at Culpeper Court House, made no objection when Union soldiers "occupied [her house] as a hospital . . . for six or seven weeks" and even "aided the sick and wounded." Not only that, but Payne purchased the son of an enslaved woman she hired out to help her take care of the hotel, knowing full well that he would eventually "go and leave [her]." When the man did leave in 1863, Payne said that she "d[idn't] blame him, [she] would have run away too" except she would have "run away in the beginning; [she] wouldn't have staid as along as he did." For Unionists in the Old Dominion in 1862 and 1863, property loss became an expected part of war, not something over which to put up a fuss. Loyal women in Border States, however, had a much more difficult time accepting the Union army's foraging. Ellen Wallace of

²³ April 12, 1862 and May 16, 1862; Margaret Tilloston Kemble Nourse Diary, VHS; Claim of Susan P.W. Hall and Claim of Sarah E. Thomas, Culpeper County, Virginia, SCC-NA.

Hopkinsville, Kentucky bore Union soldiers' intrusions with patience for over two years, leaving her enslaved women to do the work. But when soldiers continually "ordere[ed] dinner and breakfast" without paying, Wallace had had enough.²⁴ The impositions of "Lincoln's soldiers" soon caused Wallace to transfer her allegiance to the Confederacy. In Border States, foraging gave elite white Unionist women a sense of shared suffering with their Rebel neighbors. In some cases the policy even strengthened sectional ties as prosperous white women question the ability and willingness of occupying forces and the federal government to safeguard their property. In border areas, foraging caused some loyal women to hope for the restoration of local and state governments, which they believed were more committed to safeguarding them and their possessions.

Little could buffer poor white women from foragers. Mary Latham, a widow and mother of four from Rappahannock County, Virginia, saw her eight sheep slaughtered by Federal troops. Even though Latham entreated the soldiers to leave her one or two as she had children to feed, the soldiers "said their supplies had not come up and they were obliged to have them for food." Martha Bailey of Culpeper County, Virginia, had only been a widow for one week when Union soldiers came to her house and seized a mule, a horse, and a buggy and harness. Bailey lamented how they "harnessed the mule to the buggy and drove off towards the river which was the last I saw or heard of the property. It was the same week my husband died, and I was not in a condition with five young children to look after it and gave it up."²⁵ Poorer white southern women lacked the resources of elite women, including male relatives who could perhaps save

²⁴ Claim of Amanda Shaw and Claim of Mary L. Payne, Culpeper County, Virginia, SCC-NA; August 6, 1864, Ellen Wallace Diary, 1849, 1864-1865, KHS. Margaret Creighton examines similar occurrences during the Gettysburg campaign. See Creighton, "Gettysburg Out of Bounds: Women and Soldiers in the Embattled Borough, 1863," in Whites and Long, 75.

²⁵ Claim of Mary C. Latham, Rappahannock County, Virginia; Claim of Martha Bailey, Culpeper County, Virginia; see also Deposition of Ann Elizabeth King in Claim of Sam King, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, all in SCC-NA.

some property and enslaved people who would deal with Union soldiers directly. Already at a disadvantage due to their meager resources, poor white women could only hope that their personal pleas would move Union soldiers to spare some of their property. Required to deal directly with Union soldiers, poor southern women found foraging to be both more invasive and more financially devastating.



Figure 2. Alfred Waud, *Your Men Bin Stealing My Hogs*—Poor white women had a more difficult time preventing Union soldiers from taking their possessions. Part of the reason may have been the way that Union soldiers viewed them; in this drawing, war correspondent Alfred Waud depicts southern civilian women as shoeless, slovenly, and haggard. The caption also intimates that southern women lacked education (Library of Congress).

Fed up with all the destruction, many white Confederate and Unionist women expected Union army commanders to assign officers to guard their property. Elizabeth McGavock Harding, one of the wealthiest residents of Nashville, applied directly to military governor Andrew Johnson. Although Harding was a Confederate and her husband was imprisoned in Fort Mackinaw, she received a guard because her property was “unprotected” and her husband had “valuable and favorite horses unfit for cavalry purposes.” Laura and Mary Lee, two of Winchester, Virginia’s most notorious secessionists, obtained a guard after Federals tried (and failed) to find a secessionist flag that the women had hidden. Many other wealthy white Confederates, including Robert E. Lee’s wife Mary Randolph Custis Lee, received protection for their property in spite of their political loyalties. Even though the Confiscation Act required commanders to post guards “wherever . . . officers find families peculiarly exposed in their persons or property to marauding,” Union officers almost never posted a guard unless a family requested one. And even if families did ask the nearest officer for a guard, many regimental leaders refused. Often, only families who had the time and resources to travel to Union army headquarters obtained guards. The real-world application of this policy meant that Union officers protected the property of wealthy Confederates while poor southerners tried to guard their meager resources without protection.²⁶

Guards proved no match for the cunning of enslaved black women, who aided foraging efforts to support the Union army and to punish their masters and mistresses. In Montgomery, Alabama, enslaved women secretly provided meals for Union soldiers by having men from the 72nd Indiana come to the kitchen late at night. Two young black women in Georgia not only

²⁶ Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, August 5, 1862, William Giles Harding Papers, VU; *Kate Carney Diary*, 304; Mahon, ed., *Winchester Divided*, 44; James B. Ivy to “My Dear Mrs. Lee,” May 4, 1861, Mary Custis Lee Correspondence, VHS; Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 32. Some Unionist women did have guards on their property. See August 22, 1862, Margaret Tilston Kemble Nourse Diary, VHS; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 73; Claim of Martha Barrett, Bartow County, Georgia, SCC-NA.

pointed Union soldiers in the direction of their owner's sweet potatoes but also helped them to pick the biggest and best. When admonished by their mistress to stop helping, the girls tried to keep from laughing as they replied, "Well, missus, we just have to, for the Yankees make us."²⁷ By complying with Union soldiers' requests for provisions, sometimes more than willingly, bondswomen demonstrated their loyalty to the Union and at the same time undermined their owners' authority.²⁷

Freeborn women of color used foraging as a way to demonstrate their support for the Union army. African American women did not emphasize how much of their property Union soldiers took but instead emphasized their own generosity and kindness. After the Battle of Chancellorsville, Federals used Catherine Alford's home in Spotsylvania County as a hospital. Instead of resenting the burden to her and her husband, Alford emphasized her family's charity toward the wounded. Not only that, Alford juxtaposed her loyalty against that of her neighbors, declaring that she and her husband "were the only family around . . . that would do anything for [the soldiers]."²⁸ Foraging enabled some women of color to portray themselves as sympathetic Union supporters who willingly provided for the army from what little they had. Black women thus claimed status as Unionists and potential citizens, highlighting both their fealty to the Union and performance of domestic tasks, which harkened to white standards of true womanhood.

African American women seemed to understand the necessity of foraging to keep Rebels in line and the army supplied with food. Eveline Morgan of Wedgeboro, North Carolina watched as the Yankees came through after her master had fled, "breaking into things . . . and throw[ing]

²⁷ McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 576; Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 258; Cream Mack in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:26.

²⁸ Testimony of Catherine Alford in Claim of Robert Alford, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, SCC-NA. This way of framing generosity to support claims of citizenship is also evident later in the war. See Claim of Lucy Green of Charles City County, Virginia; Testimony of Mary Brown in Claim of Edmund Brown, Charles City County, Virginia; Deposition of Elizabeth Adkins in Claim of Elias Adkins, Charles City County, Virginia; Claim of Mary Blackburn, Augusta County, Virginia; all SCC-NA.

things around.” Morgan blamed the destruction on the fact that her “old master was a senator; they wanted to git him. They sure did cuss him . . . They was after senators and high-ups like that,” she explained. Mattie Mooreman of Hartford, Kentucky recounted that the one occasion Union soldiers stopped by her owner’s plantation, they targeted the slave quarters and urged the bondspeople to “rise up. Told ‘em to come on in the big house and take what they wanted. Told ‘em to . . . take Master’s silver spoons and Miss’ silk dress. “If they don’t like it, we’ll shot their brains out,” they said.” Angeline Martin felt that she fared better once Federals came to town. Her owners fled the Yankees, leaving her and her parents on the homestead. Martin recalled how the “Yankees come [to her owner’s house] and used it for headquarters . . . They didn’t burn up nothin’ just kill the hogs and chickens and give us plenty.”²⁹ Women of color felt foraging was legitimate when it targeted their rebellious owners while sharing its benefits with enslaved people.

Enslaved women drew a line between Union soldiers who foraged to obtain provisions and punish Confederates and those who deliberately stole from women of color. Josie Martin of Helena, Arkansas clearly remembered being afraid of Union soldiers when she encountered them as a little girl. Martin’s fear stemmed from the fact that the Yankees “found old colored people, went out, took their hog and made them barbecue it . . . They wasn’t so good to Negroes. They was good to their own feelings. They [a]t[e] up all that old couple had to eat in their house . . . and worked the old man and woman nearly to death.” Around Cartersville, Tennessee, Adeline Taylor told her children until the day she died about the Yankees’ arrival on her plantation. Taylor recounted that the soldiers “took axes and bus[t]ed up good furniture. They et up and wasted the rations, then humor up the black folks like they was in their favor when they was

²⁹ Eveline Morgan, Mattie Mooreman, and Angeline Martin, all in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:136, 131, 49.

“ settin’ out wasting their living.” In Huntsville, Alabama, enslaved women welcomed Jenkin Jones and his men onto their plantation until the soldiers helped themselves to their chickens and corn. Enslaved women protested Union soldiers’ plundering of “abandoned” plantations because this foraging further depleted their meager resources.³⁰ In addition, Federals who took food from abandoned plantations capitalized on the fact that black women did not legally own the property left behind. Since the legal owners were often absent, black women had no grounds to claim authority over abandoned possessions. Union soldiers who raided plantations could do so with impunity because black women’s status meant that they did not have domestic authority over the property of southern plantations.

To avoid foragers and to test the possibilities of freedom, black women flocked to Union lines. Bondspeople already subsisted on meager food and clothing allowances which owners cut even further when storehouses were depleted. One black woman in Charlestown, Virginia who gave Wilder Dwight a place to stay for the night told him that Confederates could not even help themselves out, “let alone other folks.” For African American women, the scarcity of food and threat of family separation sometimes made remaining in slavery riskier than escaping to Union lines. By flocking to the Federal army, African American women asserted that the army, as the representative of the federal government, had a duty to provide for them as citizens.³¹

Development of Confiscation

Soon after the implementation of foraging, northern policymakers sanctioned two policies that allowed the Union army to punish Confederates by attacking the institution of

³⁰ Josie Martin and story about Adeline Taylor in account of Henry Nelson, in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10:51, 60, 121, 201; Jones, *An Artilleryman’s Diary*, 170. Megan Kate Nelson alludes to this in *Ruin Nation*, 95, citing Wilder Dwight’s observation of enslaved African Americans left in charge of a plantation house in Winchester, Virginia: “This leaving one kind of property in possession of another kind of property hath in it a certain logical and natural inconsistency.”

³¹ Dwight, *Life and Letters*, 199; Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We*, 97. See also *Josie Underwood’s Civil War Diary*, 179.

slavery. In August 1862, Congress passed a second confiscation act allowing the army to seize the property, slaves included, of belligerent Confederates. The same day, with passage of the Militia Act, Congress authorized African Americans' employment as military laborers and combatants.³² These legal changes meant that even loyal slaveholders could not prevent their enslaved people from running off and seeking employment within Union lines. The message now seemed clear: the conciliatory policy was no more. Additionally, the new legislation gave black women the privileges of contraband status, the guarantee of freedom within Union lines, the ability to work for pay in the Union army, and the opportunity to liberate their families.³³ The Militia Act allowed thousands to serve as nurses, laundresses, cooks, and seamstresses. Additionally, the act allowed black men to serve as soldiers, meaning that black women could now claim the privileges of soldier's wives. In spite of these benefits, the legislation reinforced black women's primary status as laborers. More importantly, enslaved women's ability to find refuge within Union lines depended very much on the disposition of Union commanders and the availability of work.³⁴ The Second Confiscation and Militia Acts thus signified a further intrusion of the federal government into intimate space. Not only did it expand the definition of civilians, it also required white civilians to sacrifice even more valuable property, changes which only further blurred the line between plantations' family settings and business spaces.³⁵

³² Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 75, 78, 80, 85. By midsummer 1862, Grimsley argues, "Soldiers, public opinion, and government had all had a bellyful of conciliation."

³³ Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom: African American Women and Occupation in the Slave South," in Whites and Long, 144; Glymph, "Noncombatant Military Laborers in the Civil War," 26; Silvana R. Siddali, *From Property to Person: Slavery and the Confiscation Acts, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 2005), 50-51.

³⁴ Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom," 144-145; Glymph, "Noncombatant Military Laborers," 28; Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie S. Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*. Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867. (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982), 244, 268-269, 686, 688, 689, 697. Susie King Taylor's wartime service demonstrates many of these themes. Her labor as an educator, laundress, and nurse allowed her to remain with her family throughout the war. See Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*, 8, 11, 15, 21, 34-35, 42, 63.

³⁵ Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 148.

The new confiscation policy empowered commanders to deal sternly with obstinate civilians. Since this often proved time consuming and impractical, generals adhered more to the spirit than to the letter of the law. When guerrillas shot some Union pickets in Missouri, Ulysses S. Grant cleared out the “whole country for six miles” and applied this policy to “all classes and conditions, age and sex.” He singled out women in the policy by declaring that Rebels who aided guerrillas no longer deserved the protection of the Union army and should instead “retire beyond the limits [of the Union army] not to return until authorized.” In Mississippi, Brigadier General Washington Elliott ordered that “any words or actions hostile to the Government” would oblige him to treat civilians as enemies: “The women and children will be ordered beyond our lines, their property seized for the benefit of the United States, and their houses burned.” William Tecumseh Sherman defended such policies in Memphis by pointing out that “if we confine punishment to the exact points of attack we will involve our own friends and not reach the guilty parties . . . [so] I will expel every secession family” in order to stop guerrilla warfare. While these policies were not quite in line with the confiscation act, they did deprive Rebels of their houses, belongings, and enslaved property. By removing the female relatives of irregulars from their homes and destroying their property, commanders unequivocally demonstrated that the military held ultimate authority over southern domestic space.³⁶

Confiscation on the Ground: Southern Women and Union Soldiers

Wealthy Rebels interpreted confiscation as a way for the Federal army to undermine the institution of slavery. Alice Ready believed that Union commanders in Murfreesboro only stopped foraging and confiscating supplies when they had “stolen enough negroes.” Cordelia Lewis Scales of Holly Springs, Mississippi informed an inquiring Yankee that southerners

³⁶ *OR*, ser. 1, 1:225; *OR*, ser. 1, 17:154; *OR*, ser. 1, 13:742; *OR*, ser. 1, 13:748; *OR*, ser. 1, 17/2:288; *OR*, ser. 1, 20/2:74.

referred to the lot of them as “negro thieves.” When the soldier protested, saying that he and his friends were “western men,” Scales retorted that she “judged people by the company they kepted [sic].” Laura Lee of Winchester observed “great numbers” of enslaved people leaving the city in the spring of 1862, including her enslaved man Evan. Lee noted with despair that “it is only young men and boys who [the Yankees] entice off.” By May, Lee lamented that “nine-tenths of the servants are gone,” and in November, Lee and her sister decided it was better to “distur[b] . . . our household” by sending their enslaved women away than to risk the Yankees taking the rest off with them. Rebel women blamed northern abolitionists—and not their own rebellious actions—for disruptions to their household labor. In a word, elite Confederates denied that northern laws, including the Confiscation Act, had any jurisdiction over them or their property.³⁷

Loyal slaveholders, particularly those in the Border States, also deplored this new policy as nothing more or less than “negro stealing.” Frances Peter despised Federals for tampering with slavery and exulted when the army arrested several officers for “running off negroes from their owners.” Kentucky slaveowner Ellen Wallace accused Union soldiers who confiscated her slaves of “tread[ing] down all law and order.”³⁸ This response to confiscation shows how upper- and middle-class white women manipulated the meaning of domestic space in order to protect their property. When bothered by requests to materially provision the army, slaveholding white women defended their authority as household managers and asserted that, whatever the policies of governments and armies, they intended to distribute their possessions as they saw fit. But when the military interfered with slavery, mistresses defended their homes as economic spaces protected by local and state governments. Kentucky slaveholder Elizabeth Minor complained to

³⁷ *Diary of Alice Ready*, 70; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, October 29, 1862, Scales (Cordelia Lewis) Letters, MSDAH; Mahon, ed. *Winchester Divided*, 26, 33, 66; May 18, 1863, Emma Balfour Civil War Diary, MSDAH.

³⁸ *Union Woman*, 82, 86; September 18, 1864, Ellen Wallace Diary, 1849, 1864-1865, KHS; see also Mahon, ed. *Winchester Divided*, 38.

several Union commanders when three of her enslaved men enlisted in the army, arguing that the men had been “induced to enlist . . . not of their own free-will,” and certainly without her permission, which caused her “domestic happiness to be impaired.” Virginian Margaret Nourse declared that confiscation only signified a “war . . . against women and children, for it will personally affect them” by forcing them to do the labor of enslaved men and women.³⁹ Ultimately, the problem with confiscation was that it both encouraged enslaved people to seek freedom and whittled away the authority and property rights of white slaveholding women.

Federals admired bondspeople’s commitment to freedom even as they worried about caring for contrabands. Some soldiers welcomed African Americans to Union lines because their escape harmed Confederates’ ability to make war. Others could not see beyond the logistical nightmare that large numbers of black women and children presented. In some areas of the western theater, the army began to turn away black families. Wisconsin cavalryman Henry S. Eggleston faced such a problem in Helena, Arkansas, when he recognized that it would be “impossible to forage for the immense numbers that were flocking to our camp daily.” So he ordered that no more women or children be admitted within his lines. In Natchez, Mississippi, so many African Americans fled to Union forces that slaveowners were ordered to take black women and children home. Union soldiers’ conflicting attitudes toward African American women would only be exacerbated as emancipation loomed. While some enlisted men encouraged black women to find freedom within Union lines, others worried about how the army would wage war and care for hundreds of noncombatants at the same time. In the minds of some, the Union army could be liberators or it could be warriors. It could not be both.⁴⁰

³⁹ Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 264-265; July 31, 1862, Margaret Tilloston Kemble Nourse Diary, VHS; Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, 116, 120; Browning, *Shifting Loyalties*, 166-172.

⁴⁰ Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 193; Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service*, 320; OR, ser. 1, 13:202; July 4, 1863, Catherine Olivia Foster Diary, MSDAH.

More importantly, black women's freedom raised larger issues of labor, control, and citizenship. Commanders in many western states, particularly in Arkansas and Kentucky, faced more black women and children fleeing to Union lines than the army could handle. To deal with such challenges, commanders turned to policies of relocation, intending to send black women and children north to help meet wartime labor shortages. Two major centers for relocation were St. Louis, Missouri and Cairo, Illinois. Relocation efforts failed to impress Union soldiers such as Illinois volunteer Charles Wright Wills who declared that he would rather see "negroes . . . and a whole crop of grindstones dumped into the Gulf, than have so many of them in [Illinois]." Even Federals who favored emancipation believed that African Americans needed to be closely supervised lest they become a permanently dependent pauper class. In Natchez, commander James B. McPherson advised Union officers to tell African American women that they were free, but encourage them to "remain quietly where they are, as we have no means of providing for them at present." Henry Halleck directed Nathaniel Banks, commanding the Department of the Gulf, to put able-bodied black women to work on leased plantations and to support indigent women and children with all "plantations, houses, funds, and sources of revenue" in the army's control. While confiscation impeded the Confederacy's ability to make war, it also threatened to relocate large numbers of black men and women to the North. The policy created panic among some white Union soldiers, who feared it would result in lower wages and needy citizens, causing them to agree with slaveholding white women about the problematic nature of confiscation.⁴¹

⁴¹ Charles Wright Wills, *Army Life of an Illinois Soldier: Including a Day-by-Day Record of Sherman's March to the Sea*, ed. Mary E. Kellogg (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1996), 106; *OR*, ser. I, 24/3:521; *OR*, ser. I, 26/1:764; Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom," 145-151; see also Leslie Schwalm, "'Overrun with Free Negroes': Emancipation and Wartime Migration in the Upper Midwest," *Civil War History* 50, no. 2 (2004): 145-174; V. Jacques Vogel, *Free but Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), 13-20; 34-35, 60-63; Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Wartime Genesis of Free*

Although confiscation raised thorny issues, many soldiers benefitted from the increased availability of black women workers. Some Union soldiers welcomed them and their families into camp because they washed and cooked for relatively low wages. Stationed in Newbern, North Carolina, Charles Duren enjoyed “sit[ting] down twice a day at a small round table with a nice white cloth to cover it” enjoying the delicious food prepared by Carolina, a formerly enslaved woman. Surgeon Milton T. Carey of Cincinnati informed his wife that his washing was done by “my contraband female Annie who does all my chores in that direction.” Madison Bowler of Minnesota seemed surprised at the industriousness of these women, noting that they washed soldiers’ clothes “quite well.”⁴² The conflicting attitudes of Federals toward African American women—fear and revulsion regarding their illiteracy and skin color combined with elements of pity and a willingness to capitalize on their cheap labor—signified larger problems. Many soldiers viewed black women as laborers first and foremost, and regarded them as lacking white women’s supposedly natural devotion to home and childrearing.⁴³ Yet their numbers threatened to overwhelm the northern economy, making it still harder for white families to earn a living.

Conclusion

The Union army’s turn to foraging and confiscation during 1862 and 1863 ignited a series of conflicts over gender roles, domestic space, and wartime obligations. While the army

Labor: The Upper South. Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 28-29.

⁴² Charles M. Duren to Father and Mother, April 13, 1862, see also May 2, 1862, May 5, 1862, June 16, 1862, Charles M. Duren Papers, EU; Milton T. Carey to Wife, November or December 1862, Milton T. Carey Papers, FHS; Private Richard Prowse to Catherine Julia Prowse, November 7, 1862, Prowse Family Papers, MSDAH; Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 88.

⁴³ Glymph, “Noncombatant Military Laborers,” 28; Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 92; the idea of black women’s “work” as being outside rather than inside the home dates to the mid to late seventeenth-century. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 145. These ideas continued into the postwar period. Leslie Schwalm, ““Sweet Dreams of Freedom”: Freedwomen’s Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina,” in Pippa Holloway, ed., *Other Souths: Diversity and Difference in the U.S. South, Reconstruction to Present* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 20-22.

instituted foraging and confiscation as necessary measures to punish recalcitrant women, they also maintained their right as the military wing of the federal government to use civilian possessions as they saw fit. These new policies ultimately allowed the army to force all southern women, regardless of socioeconomic status, racial background, or political sympathy, to materially support the army. But southern women believed that provisioning violated Federal forces' duty to protect noncombatants. Civilians maintained that these new policies trampled women's right to determine how and when to materially support the army. By neglecting their duty to behave like gentlemen, Federals had seemingly rejected their soldierly obligations to noncombatants. At the root of these conflicts was a profound disagreement over the nature of and authority over intimate space. For their part, southern women—Rebel or Unionist, white or black—asserted that as household managers (or, in the case of enslaved women, domestic laborers), they had sole authority over how the property housed in intimate spaces would be put to best use. The Union army profoundly disagreed, citing their ability as representatives of the federal government to impose Union policies on civilians. Not only that, Federals believed that as the only legitimate military engaged in the conflict, they had historical precedent on their side, giving them the right to command women's wartime labor and to direct it in whatever way would best serve the needs of the army. What is clear from these battles over foraging and confiscation is that by the end of 1862, interactions between Union soldiers and southern women revealed the extent to which the home front had become a field of combat in its own right.

With the advent of emancipation and conscription in 1863, Federals and southern women faced new battles over African American and foreign-born soldiers. These conflicts threatened to further disrupt white southern control over enslaved people and ultimately over intimate space

while at the same time expanding ideas of citizenship and challenging notions of whiteness and the respectable middle-class values of self-control, hard work, and morally upright behavior.

CHAPTER 4

“NEGRO SOLDIERS,” “FOREIGNERS,” AND “BAD WOMEN”: EMANCIPATION, CONSCRIPTION, AND COURT MARTIALS, 1863

New Year’s Day 1863 was the scene of much rejoicing on Port Royal Island, South Carolina. The celebration of African Americans’ freedom was held in the most ironic of settings; in the first state to secede to protect slavery, in a town not seventy miles from where the Civil War began, in a majestic grove of oak trees on a former plantation. Here thousands of Union soldiers and civilians gathered to mark an important victory. As Reverend Doctor William Henry Brisbane, a native South Carolinian and former slaveholder, thundered forth the President’s powerful words that “all persons held as slaves . . . are, and henceforward shall be free,” cheers rang. Soon after, the men of the First South Carolina Volunteers received their own Federal flag and regimental colors. Impressed with the gravity of the moment, the black soldiers broke out into song: “My country ‘Tis of Thee, Sweet Land of Liberty,” and the words rang true for the first time. Afterward, soldiers and civilians gathered for an enormous feast, the centerpiece of which was several whole roasted oxen. Susie King Taylor, a formerly enslaved woman and regimental nurse, admitted that the meal was not “served as tastily or correctly as it would have been at home,” a testament to Yankee ineptitude in preparing southern barbecue. Nevertheless the food was consumed with relish and the day was so beautiful and so joyful that many, Taylor included, dreamt about it for years to come.¹

¹ For the celebration, see “Fort Frederick (c. 1726-c.1758),” <http://www.beaufortcountylibrary.org/htdocs-sirsi/FortFrederick.htm>; J. Brent Morris, “We Are Verily Guilty Concerning our Brother”: The Abolitionist Transformation of Planter William Henry Brisbane,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 111, no. 3 (July-October 2010), 125, 146-150; Looby, ed., *The Complete Civil War Journal and Selected Letters*, 74-78; Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*, 18.



Figure 3. Emancipation Day in South Carolina—During the Emancipation Day celebration on Port Royal Island, soldiers of the First South Carolina Colored Volunteers received two flags, one the United States emblem and the other the unit's first regimental colors—a flag specific to the regiment. The drawing, which shows the rest of the regiment rejoicing in the foreground, demonstrates how emancipation—and the ability to display the regiment's own flag—went a good way toward making African American Union soldiers feel more equal to their white counterparts (Library of Congress).

In 1863, several significant events changed the course of the war—emancipation being only one of them. Two months later, northern lawmakers passed the Enrollment Act, which conscripted thousands into the army and encouraged thousands of others to enlist, many from lower-class and immigrant backgrounds. Additionally, Section 30 of the act gave the Federal army the authority to try Union soldiers for crimes committed against civilians. Black liberation, northern conscription, and common-law court-martials raised questions about citizenship, freedom, and white privilege. Black and immigrant men's military service signified their claim to political power and equal rights, challenging southern slavery, northern segregation, and

immigrants' marginalization. The martial service of "negroes" and "foreigners" caused consternation as both North and South struggled with whether—and how—to expand citizenship.¹ These debates reverberated from the halls of Congress to the headquarters of military commanders and into the homes of white and black southern women, showing that conflicts between Union soldiers and southern civilians over racial hierarchies, citizenship rights, familial control, and labor production primarily occurred in intimate spaces.

Emancipation and conscription created dissension in the Union army. Many white Federals despised black recruits whose mere presence threatened to blur racial boundaries. The draft further fractured the army, dividing it between veterans and conscripts, middle-class gentlemen and lower-class roughs, and native-born Americans and foreigners. Relations between members of the army strained as black and immigrant soldiers' claims to citizenship threatened white men's privileged status, which had its basis in a narrow definition of native-born, Protestant, middle-class respectable masculinity.² The threat of expanded citizenship challenged dominant ideas of masculinity that privileged independence, middle-class morals, and hard work. In so doing, it undermined the army's unity and contributed to a breakdown in discipline as well as in respect for authority.

The liberation of African Americans created animosity between the Union army and white southern civilians. Slaveowning Unionists recognized it as an assault on their property and social status since liberation spurred demands for equal rights and privileges. Southern black men's military service conferred status on black women, who now had income and standing

¹ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 601, 606, 609; Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, 90, 99, 102-111; Eric Foner, *Forever Free: The Story of Emancipation and Reconstruction* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 52-55; Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic*, 86; Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 100.

² McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 600-609; Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 8, 10, 63; Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 5-6, 28, 32, 70, 72-77; Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 169-172; the Civil War gave African Americans and German and Irish immigrants a chance to claim citizenship through wartime service. See Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*.

before the federal government as soldiers' wives. These changes resulted in large numbers of black women and children claiming support from the Union army, which forced commanders to enlarge freedmen's colonies, create new avenues of employment, and establish labor contracts between black women and their former owners.³ Southerners disparaged these changes as federal government attempts to disrupt their labor force and alter southern society. Emancipation and its aftereffects radically transformed southern homes and southern workplaces as soldiers, former slaveowners, and black women struggled over the meaning of freedom.

Federal recruitment, which brought a wide array of social classes into the army, proved particularly polarizing among noncombatants. Upper- and middle-class women resented the authority of rude and rowdy "foreign" soldiers who refused to respect their social betters. Many white women blamed working-class Union soldiers for a perceived increase in harassment and robbery. But even more troubling were the transactions between these Federals and poor southern women over the lowbrow pleasures of drinking and prostitution. Some white and black women, living in penury due to wartime conditions, turned to selling alcohol and their bodies to fend off starvation. Lower-class Federals believed hard drinking and visiting brothels perfectly acceptable displays of manliness and saw no reason that soldierly duties should interfere with these pursuits. But such behavior caused consternation among middle-class southern women and middle-class Union soldiers, who warned of an assault on home and family life.⁴ Elite southerners and moralizing officers worked to control and contain working-class men and women's illicit behavior as a way to reassert "appropriate" and "proper" standards of middle-class behavior.

³ Schwalm, "Between Slavery and Freedom," 138; Frankel, *Freedom's Women*, 35-38, 52.

⁴ Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 70-72; Stansell, *City of Women*, 171-216.

Liquor and bawdy houses proved especially troubling since intoxicated soldiers sometimes robbed, sexually assaulted, and murdered civilian women. Commanders attempted to limit soldiers' access to alcohol, but U.S. judge advocate general Joseph Holt made sure that the 1863 Enrollment Act also included Section 30, which allowed the military to prosecute soldiers for crimes committed against civilians. Previously, soldiers had been tried for crimes of rape and murder under Article of War 99, or the "general article," a vague provision that some commanders were loath to use. Section 30 made clear to military commanders that soldiers could and should be tried for crimes against civilians. In addition, the court-martial process gave noncombatants the ability to charge soldiers with violence. It also allowed black women to charge white men with rape and permitted African-American testimony in court.⁵ But gender, racial, and class stereotypes heavily influenced the proceedings and outcomes of court-martials. Especially troubling was that court-martials pitted the testimony of white Union officers against black enlisted men, poor white women and privileged Union soldiers, and "sexually promiscuous" black women and their white "liberators." These trials, moreover, often favored white elites over poor white and black women and black and immigrant men.⁶

Emancipation, conscription, and court-martials further widened the country's gender, racial, and class divisions, creating strife between Union soldiers and southern civilians. African Americans and lower-class men and women capitalized on these disruptions to push for equality, a quest which threatened to expand ideas of citizenship and freedom to those other than native-born white elites. Some upper- and middle-class northern soldiers and southern women found these changes terrifying, watching in horror as their privilege and authority eroded before their

⁵ Susan Barber and Charles F. Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling': Race, Gender, and Sexual Justice in the Occupied South," in Whites and Long, 49, 54, 55-56.

⁶ Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 59, 60, 62, 64; see also Sommerville, *Rape and Race*, 5-7, 11, 22, 27; and Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 4, 5, 27, 65-66, 146-150, 163, 170-175, 186-194.

eyes. Rather than accept defeat, elite soldiers and women endeavored to protect their power by controlling labor, policing illicit behavior, and meting unequal justice in wartime trials. Ultimately, conflicts over the meanings of liberation, definitions of whiteness, and equality before the law determined who had access to the full rights and privileges of citizens in the postwar world.

Emancipation in the Western Theater

Emancipation caused great dissension in states such as Kentucky and Tennessee, which, while exempted from the proclamation, were often under control of northern commanders and policymakers who supported emancipation as a military expedient. Many of these men were by no means abolitionists, but guerrilla activities, Rebel recalcitrance, and slaveholding Unionists' obstinacy pushed them toward anti-slavery policies as a way to subdue civilians and solve manpower shortages. Extending emancipation in the Border States and Union-occupied areas alienated many more conservative soldiers. While enlisted men and southern noncombatants were forced to accept emancipation, many used their military authority to limit the freedom of African Americans.

Dissension regarding the proclamation began at the highest levels of command. The proclamation applied only to areas not controlled by the Union army, and Union officials at first complied with these orders in hopes of conciliating loyal southerners in the Border States. General Quincy Adams Gillmore explicitly ordered in the fall of 1862 that his men “refuse admission within the lines to . . . contrabands,” a move which earned him favor with loyal Kentucky slaveowners but generated rumors of Confederate sympathies in the North.⁷ Frances Peter interpreted Gillmore’s order as prohibiting African Americans from entering Union camps

⁷ *OR*, ser. 1, 30/2:162, see also 160-161; *OR*, ser. 1, 31/1:723-724, 831-832.

and enlisting as Union soldiers, and she declared her approval of the general's stiff penalties for black men who disobeyed. Noting that "Generals have almost if not more trouble with [abolitionist soldiers] than with the secesh," Peter thought it necessary that Gillmore had arrested "officers . . . [who] ru[n] off negroes."

But by mid-1863, the resurgence of Confederate guerrillas and the army's need for laborers resulted in conflicting orders from Gillmore's replacements. While commander Speed Fry advocated bringing in contraband laborers from other southern states to rebuild railroads so as not to impress the bondsmen of Unionists, commander Jeremiah Boyle received orders from General Ambrose Burnside to impress 8,000 black Kentuckians. Boyle seemed reluctant to carry out the order, especially when notified by General Montgomery Meigs that such a step would be illegal. Boyle complained to Burnside that this lack of clear direction had "impose[d] on . . . me the responsibility" to make a decision. Civilians reacted to the unease this caused, decrying policies that did not "make any difference between Union and rebel."⁸ Although Union commanders in the Border States and Union-occupied areas were under strict instructions to protect slavery, military necessity pushed commanders toward policies that eroded slavery.

Union commanders and policymakers strategically applied emancipation policies in order to punish Confederates. In Tennessee, Federals controlled the state's middle portion by early 1862, but powerful slaveholders in Middle and West Tennessee, combined with challenges from Confederate soldiers and guerrillas in East Tennessee, spurred Military Governor Andrew Johnson to impose harsh policies on civilians. During 1862 and 1863 the army, with Johnson's approval, conscripted thousands of African Americans to build fortifications. The extension of confiscation policies to Tennessee resulted in many black men claiming their freedom, seeking

⁸ *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 85, 96, 151; *OR*, ser. 1, 30/3:23, 64, 81, 92-93, 180-183, 786-787, 810, 942.

work in Nashville and Memphis, and attending freedmen schools run by northern missionaries. Slaveowner Elizabeth McGavock Harding of Nashville, upon receiving an order to supply Federals with “twenty stout, able-bodied negro men,” excoriated confiscation, declaring she was “shocked and appalled by this act of gross injustice and violence,” particularly after Governor Johnson had promised her a guard to protect her property.⁹ Harding consoled herself by remembering that Union enlisted men “almost without exception” condemned interfering with slavery.

Despite such protests, confiscation continued unabated in Tennessee. By 1864, Brigadier General William Whipple declared emancipation a *fait accompli*, as “negroes le[ft] their homes and stroll[ed] over the country uncontrolled.” Whipple lamented that disregard for the policy undermined “the good faith . . . of the Government.” Commanders unwilling to enforce the proclamation’s exceptions encouraged enlisted men to take matters into their own hands. Alice Williamson of Gallatin, Tennessee, no lover of Yankees, nevertheless approved of East Tennessee soldiers stationed in her town because they “ma[d]e the negroes ‘walk a chalk.’” In fact, the soldiers almost sparked a race riot by attacking freedmen’s schools and murdering an African American who supposedly spoke out of turn to a white woman. In Border States and Union occupied areas, civilians and soldiers—whether advocates of liberation, racial control, or perpetual enslavement—butted heads, demonstrating that confiscation and emancipation rarely went unopposed by those in and out of the army.¹⁰

⁹ Alfred Pirtle to “Pa,” May 31, 1862, Alfred Pirtle Letters, FHS; Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, July 27, 1862, William Giles Harding Papers, VU. Soldiers responded to emancipation with mutiny and violence. See Alfred Pirtle to Family, March 1, 1863, Alfred Pirtle Letters, FHS; May 2 and 3, 1864, Alice Williamson Diary, Duke.

¹⁰ Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, July 27, 1862 and August 14, 1862, VU; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 27; OR, ser. 1, 32/2:268; May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, 1864, Alice Williamson Diary, Duke.

Mistresses without Slaves

Unionist and Confederate civilians joined in efforts to limit the opportunities of newly freed African Americans. Whether loyal or Rebel, Border State or Lower South resident, southern civilians decried liberation and its effects on southern society. Female slaveowners engaged in a variety of behaviors designed to undermine emancipation. Some maligned all Federals as abolitionists and labeled all freedpeople as “disloyal,” implying that Union soldiers and former slaves had joined together to assault southern homes. Others mistreated black soldiers and their relatives in hopes that disruptions to freedpeople’s families might coerce them into continuing to labor for their former owners. Whatever their behavior, women slaveholders’ actions after liberation demonstrated that they were entirely unwilling to welcome former bondspeople into white southern society.

Confederates in newly occupied Union areas first tried to deny the reality of liberation. Jessie Clark of Mississippi believed that the Union soldiers who took some of her family’s bondspeople and set the rest free “served [us] badly,” even though the army only did as the proclamation ordered. Many slaveholders refused to believe that the Emancipation Proclamation applied to them. A North Carolina slaveowner raged to Union officer Oscar Lawrence Jackson that her bondspeople insisted they were free. Jackson remarked that the Emancipation Proclamation had “said something to that effect.” The woman replied indignantly that “North Carolina has never agreed to submit to that.” Other women refused to believe that emancipation would result in equality of any kind between white and black southerners. Kate Foster of Natchez, Mississippi could not believe her eyes when a former bondsman tried to sit in the white section at church one Sunday. Rather than recognize the man’s breach of the racial hierarchy, Foster chalked up the incident as a prank played by Union soldiers who intended to “insult”

Natchez's white residents. The Union army might have brought emancipation to southerners' front doors, but Rebels ignored the changes that confronted them. Such denial was strategic. By refusing to acknowledge that emancipation applied to them, Rebels hoped to continue living their lives—and controlling their slaves—as if neither emancipation nor federal infringement on their own liberty had taken place.¹¹

Many Border State Unionists angrily considered emancipation to be nothing short of betrayal by the Union army and the Lincoln administration. Slaveholder Elizabeth Minor complained to several Union commanders that three enslaved men she owned had been allowed to enlist in the army. When local commanders proved unhelpful, Minor wrote to President Lincoln, requesting him to release her property, but received no reply. Frances Peter blamed emancipation on the arrival of "mean" Michigan troops in Lexington, describing the abolitionists as "not near as nice as the Ohio and Indiana boys." Slaveowner Ellen Wallace of Hopkinsville lambasted the Emancipation Proclamation and its illegal enforcement as a "high-handed outrage" inflicted on Kentuckians by Lincoln's "negro administration." Emancipation caused a crisis of faith among loyal Kentuckians. Many began to view the Confederate government more favorably, since it at least respected the racial hierarchy. The reaction of Kentucky Unionists to emancipation demonstrates that for white slaveholders, commitment to slavery trumped Unionist political sympathies. Preserving the Union was all well and good until loyal southerners' enslaved property was endangered. Emancipation signaled an unwarranted intrusion of the federal government into intimate space, since interference with labor practices and business endeavors necessarily entailed interference into the homes of wealthy southern whites. Loyal

¹¹ Jessie K. Clark to Claudia Boddie, September 25, 1863, Clark-Boddie Family Papers, MSDAH; Jackson, *The Colonel's Diary*, 208; July 28 and 30, 1863, Kate Foster Diary, Duke; see also French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 18.

slaveholders' outcry over emancipation signaled their unhappiness with a policy that deprived them of workers and wealth, and threatened to reorder southern society and southern homes.¹²

Emancipation policies caused wailing and gnashing of teeth among Unionists and Confederates. But when slaveholding women considered the policy's effect on their own households, many steadfastly assumed that their slaves would never desert them. Elizabeth McGavock Harding noted that while many of her bondspeople seemed discontented, the grumblings were "nothing of any consequence" and certainly no indication that Belle Meade's enslaved people desired to leave their owners. Harding remarked to her husband that while "many servants have run away from their homes," she assured him "not one of ours has disgraced himself and you by such conduct." Kate Carney seemed only amused, not troubled, when one of her family's enslaved women, Prissy, no longer took pains to hide her joy over Confederate losses and dismay over Union reverses. Tennessee slaveholder Lucy Virginia French found satisfaction in how poorly Federal soldiers behaved toward her bondspeople, believing that their rudeness discouraged the enslaved people from running off to the Yankees.¹³ Slaveowners felt confident that with benevolent oversight and careful provision, their bondspeople would be induced to remain with them instead of running away.¹⁴

In spite of slaveowning women's presumption, enslaved people eventually did leave, and their departure sent many women into a spiral of despair. Mistresses bitterly denounced slaves who deserted their "kind and indulgent" owners as "disloyal" and "ungrateful." Helen Struan

¹² Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 264-265; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 82, 96; December 25, 1863, Ellen Wallace Diary, 1861-1863; September 18, 1864 and January 1, 1865, Ellen Wallace Diary, 1849, 1864-1865, KHS.

¹³ Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, June 3, 1862 and August 25, 1862, VU; *Kate Carney Diary*, 415; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 29-30, 30-31. The same delusions were evident among Maryland slaveholders. One Union army commander wrote his superior that "Nine owners out of ten will insist upon it that their slaves are much attached to them and would not leave them . . . I have yet to see a slave of this kind. If their families could be cared for or taken with them, the whole slave population of Maryland would make its exodus to Washington." Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 214.

¹⁴ Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 99; Edwards, *Scarlett Doesn't Live Here Anymore*, 78-79.

Bernard of Port Royal declared that owners could no longer discipline unruly slaves, “for if the least feeling of discontent is produced, off goes the servant to the Yankees & we have no means of redress.” But she soon realized that it was not only the disaffected and unruly who fled. Bernard’s “faithful Pauline” ran away in 1863, and six months after that, her treasured house slave left with ten others. Bernard claimed to feel relieved, not betrayed, that she had got “rid of so many worthless, complaining, old creatures.” South Carolinian Mary Chesnut watched as the enslaved people of her friends, “faithful” or not, departed in droves. Unionist Frances Peter observed that two young, seemingly loyal slaves of the local preacher lied to their owner about going to a church meeting one evening, only to leave for good. Some slaveowning women tied these departures directly to the Federal army. In McMinnville, Tennessee, Lucy Virginia French found one of her bondsmen, Cooper, missing one summer morning, and immediately assumed he had “gone off with the Yankees.”¹⁵ The departure of enslaved people to Union army camps, especially those whom mistresses felt had been coddled and indulged, belied slaveowners’ insistence that the plantation was held together by familial bonds. As hundreds of African Americans left their owners after emancipation, some mistresses faced the frightening thought that perhaps bondspeople had never really cared for their owners or the institution of slavery. Emancipation revealed the coercion at the center of the plantation household, a coercion that many black southerners eagerly exchanged for freedom.

The Struggle for the Black Family

African Americans’ liberation and military service solidified their claim to full inclusion in the nation. In order to achieve their goal of equal rights, black Americans expanded the

¹⁵ Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 41, 89, 103-104; Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, 402, 407, 467, 793; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 187, 190; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 23; see also Elizabeth McGavock Harding to William Giles Harding, August 5, 1862, VU; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 97-112; Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage*, 102, 134.

meaning of emancipation to include control over their labor and their families. Union military officials, as agents of the federal government, were tasked with working on the front lines to ready African Americans to be productive citizens by legally marrying black men and women, organizing their families into male-headed households, and mandating new systems of free labor. But some white Americans, including Federal soldiers and southern civilians, opposed black Americans' full citizenship. Officers and commanders who opposed emancipation used their authority to separate black families or to ignore reports of abuse. Some evoked the stereotype of the lazy and lascivious black woman to justify restricting African Americans from citizenship. Similarly, Unionists and Confederates used their power as mistresses to control former bondspeople and their families rather than consign themselves to a life without enslaved labor. In their efforts to direct the labor of freedpeople and to punish black soldiers' families, white southern women attempted to reestablish some semblance of a racial hierarchy in their homes. Launching false accusations against black soldiers and mistreating black families, Federal soldiers and former slaveowners rejected freedom and equality in favor of white supremacy.

In the early days of freedom, African Americans envisioned emancipation and citizenship as more than mere freedom from enslavement; it meant reconstructing families and controlling their labor. Rebuilding families entailed reuniting relatives who had been sold or separated by slavery. Spotswood Rice, an African American soldier, counseled his daughters that they would not remain enslaved much longer, even though their owner refused to let them go. Rice called their mistress's refusal to release them unchristian, and he believed that the United States government would eventually reunite him with his children. Black southerners also sought equality through employment, which would give them a modicum of control over their labor. After escaping slavery, Susie King Taylor found less physically demanding employment by

teaching freedmen's schools, laundering clothes, and nursing Union soldiers. African American ideas of freedom reflected the violence of slavery and the notion of political and economic independence which had served as the basis for citizenship since the country's founding. By rebuilding family units and finding work, black Americans undid some of the wrongs of slavery and erased distinctions that had long excluded them from full inclusion in the nation. Once African Americans controlled their households and their labor, they proved themselves independent people capable of bearing the responsibilities of republican citizens.¹⁶

Union military officials interfered in African Americans' domestic matters and labor disputes to create citizens worthy of inclusion in the American body politic. Commanders and chaplains regulated black southerners' domestic affairs in hopes of making stable family units capable of self-supporting and reproduction. Military officials encouraged black men and women to formalize long-term partnerships through legal marriage to promote stability and reduce demand for government assistance. Chaplain James Peet proudly wrote his superior that after legalizing forty-three marriages he witnessed "a very decided improvement in the [freedpeople's] social and domestic feelings . . . it causes them to feel that they are beginning to be regarded and treated as human beings." But being treated like "human beings" brought with it the state's interest in discouraging or prohibiting certain unions. Military chaplains dissuaded single black men from marrying while in the army, and other commanders forbade their soldiers from marrying supposed "common place women of the town." White officers intervened in black men's lives to foster matches beneficial to the state. Unions between black men and supposed prostitutes might disgrace the institution of marriage and degrade the nation's future citizens. Additionally, too many black men with families overly burdened the Union army, which would

¹⁶ Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 689; Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*, 11, 15, 34-35; Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet*, 110, 140, 164-166; Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*, 88-89.

be required to care for soldier's dependents. To encourage black families to flourish, commanders intervened in domestic disputes, ordering black soldiers to support their families by sending money to their wives. They also adjudicated instances of bigamy and infidelity. By regulating marriage, organizing African Americans into family units, and encouraging black men to support their families, Union policymakers and military officials demonstrated the state's special interest in creating stable, productive, and reproductive black families.¹⁷

Although some military commanders took a special interest in black families, others resented African Americans' claims to citizenship and viewed them as unfit for inclusion in the nation. Throughout the war, officers characterized black women who sought refuge with their husbands in camp as indolent, immoral, or both, justifying their expulsion because of their detrimental effect on order and discipline. In Paducah, Kentucky during the summer of 1864, Colonel Stephen Hicks issued special orders requiring all wives and children of black soldiers returned to their owners. Hicks arrested and imprisoned a soldier who refused to enforce the order. The most egregious of these incidences occurred at Camp Nelson, Kentucky, when four hundred black women and children were turned out during the dead of winter. Other commanders in Memphis described black soldiers' wives as "idle, lazy vagrants" who exercised "a very pernicious influence over the colored soldiers of this Post" by interfering with military discipline.¹⁸ Officers who refused to let black men's wives into camp and restricted black men from taking furloughs argued that military discipline and soldier duties took precedence over care for black families. Union commanders' actions demonstrate that white Americans' anxiety over freed black women and children was rooted in concern over their ability to be good citizens. Officers denigrated black families as disrupting military order because they viewed

¹⁷ Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 604, 628, 672, 709, 712; for support payments, see *Ibid.*, 667, 670-671; for instances of infidelity and bigamy, see *Ibid.*, 673.

¹⁸ Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 214, 262-263, 424, 713, 715, 717, 719.

impoverished black women and children as predisposed to laziness and vice; character qualities which might spread to black soldiers. In addition, commanders believed that the presence of black families undermined good discipline. In order to encourage industry, morality, and respect for authority, commanders believed it was necessary to maintain strict separation between family and military life, so they expelled the families of black soldiers from camp ostensibly to control and direct the energies of freedpeople toward productivity, respectability, and obedience.

Control over black men and their families extended to the way in which white Union soldiers conducted recruitment. Since the Militia Act allowed for the recruitment of black men into the army, military officials found southern black men to be the solution to the problem of decreasing volunteer numbers—recruit African Americans to fight, and the numbers northern cities needed to meet Enrollment Act quotas would be reduced. And yet black families repeatedly complained that white officers used coercive tactics to get black men to enlist. While Wisconsin native Madison Bowler declared that he and his company “freed” one thousand African Americans in western Kentucky and most of the men enlisted, others described a different story entirely. Enslaved woman Candis Goodwin declared that Union soldiers went around to the homes of enslaved people under cover of darkness and ordered black men that it was their “civil right” to enlist. Jane Wallis protested to Union authorities that Federals took her invalid husband against his will, leaving her and her three children to fend for themselves. Even white southern women noted these quasi-legal actions. Lucy Virginia French observed that in McMinnville, Tennessee, “the Yanks are taking off all the negro men and putting them in the ranks.” In December 1863, Frances Peter gleefully described how in Louisville “the darkies met with a great mishap”: as their church services let out, Union soldiers lay in wait and “captur[ed] all the men they could lay hands on . . . whom they sent to Camp Nelson to work on the wagon

road.”¹⁹ Forceable conscription of African American men took away two of the essential freedoms of emancipation—the right to freedom of movement and freedom of work.

For their part, southern slaveholders questioned the inclusion of African Americans into the nation by lambasting black men’s masculinity and reasserting domestic authority over black women. During the summer of 1863, emancipation spurred new rumors and reports among southerners that armed freedpeople intended to commit depredations against white women. Confederate Captain W.G. Thompson reported that the famous black regiment, the 54th Massachusetts, intentionally burned the town of Darien, Georgia, to the ground and captured and imprisoned two white women. Reports of the event in southern newspapers accused Federals of unleashing savage black men on southern ladies. In Houston, Texas, Confederate Lieutenant Colonel Samuel A. Roberts reported to his commanding officer a supposed plot among disaffected white and black men to murder all pro-slavery white men, leaving young white women to become the wives of African Americans. Unease about black soldiers caused panic on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where white women hurriedly packed their belongings in response to a rumor that a “negro regiment” would soon overrun the area. Rumors of African American soldiers’ sexual depredations signaled many white people’s concern that they could no longer control black bodies. Allusions to destroyed property and ravished women served to undermine black soldiers’ claims to manly independence and citizenship by questioning their ability to exercise self-control and sexual restraint, the twin pillars of middle-class white male respectability.²⁰

¹⁹ Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 169; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 108; Candis Goodwin in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:18-19; Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 138; *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 177; for the fine balance military recruiters employed between recruitment and outright coercion, see Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, 90, 92-95.

²⁰ *OR*, ser. 1, Vol. 14:318; *Savannah Morning News* June 16, 1863, quoted from *Commonwealth*, July 3 (4:3), 1863. *OR*, ser. 1, 26/2:187; S.G. Clark to Louisa Forbes Boddie, n.d., Clark-Boddie Family Papers, MSDAH; Rosen,

Confederate women weakened African American soldiers' claims to equality by questioning their manliness and authority. Nannie Haskins of Clarksville, Tennessee reacted to the arrival of African American soldiers by deriding the troops for the "very awkward" way they handled their guns. They had only recently been slaves, she sniffed, insinuating that black men handled firearms with difficulty since most southern states prohibited them from owning guns. Many white slaveholding women found it disturbing that black men, who a few months before could not move freely without whites' permission, now had immense authority. In an ironic twist of fate during fall 1864, African American soldiers guarded the perimeters of Clarksville and checked residents' passes. Haskins found the very idea of African American men having control over southern whites to be so insulting that she refused to recognize them, vowing that she "w[ould] not" pass by them. Virginian Louise Humphreys Carter took it as a direct insult when General Benjamin Butler responded to her father's request for a guard by sending three African American soldiers. Carter, who was only used to African Americans waiting on her, found it demeaning to have "a negro soldier following [her] everywhere" and wrote General George McClellan to send "regular U.S. Cavalrymen" and to order Butler to "recall his negroes." White Confederate women found African American soldiers' very presence to be offensive because it signaled that black men wielded authority over white women. In order to combat this, elite women refused to recognize that African American men held any power over them, and even insulted black soldiers' masculinity, in order to reassert their racial and domestic authority.²¹

Terror in the Heart of Freedom, 27, 45-49; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 83. White slaveholders sometimes intentionally spread rumors about the misconduct of black soldiers in order to discredit them. See an instance in Maryland in which slaveholders on the western shore wrote their senator accusing black troops of "harassing . . . plundering . . . [and] abducting." The reports turned out to be exaggerated, if not outright false. Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 213-214.

²¹ Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 55, 76; Louise Humphreys Carter Reminiscences, pages 8-9 and 13, LV; for the importance of firearms to southern masculinity, see Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press,

Former slaveholders reaffirmed their control of the racial hierarchy by punishing the families of black soldiers. All over the south, but principally in Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Kentucky, plantation masters and mistresses severely disciplined black women and children for the disloyalty of former bondsmen. Missouri bushwhackers worked in concert with slaveholders to terrorize freed African Americans so effectively that the freedpeople soon sought refuge in Kansas. Other Missouri slaveholders smuggled the wives and children of black soldiers to Kentucky and then sold them. Everyday forms of abuse also increased. Black women with husbands in the Union army were forced to take on the most difficult chores and faced severe whippings and beatings. Failure to comply with these demands resulted in threats of eviction.²² Slaveholders' mistreatment of black families evidenced how precarious emancipation and freedom could be when freedpeople resided with former owners. Masters and mistresses still wielded great authority, enabling them to punish black women and children for their male relatives' martial service.

Black women used their status as Union soldiers' wives to request army protection, thus extending their claims to citizenship and equality. One Missouri woman of color wrote her recently enlisted husband that she had had "nothing but trouble" since he left, and that her owner refused to take care of her children and did "nothing but quarrel" with her. Her complaint spurred an army inquiry into her owner's conduct. Patsey Leach of Kentucky signed an affidavit claiming that her owner threatened her and then beat her after her husband enlisted, and she requested the army's help in taking custody of her five children still in bondage.²³ Through disputes like these, the homes of white southern slaveholders became one of the primary

1990), 21, 26-27, 29-30, 31-32; Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Honor and Slavery* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 33-36, 125-126, 133-135.

²² Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 228-229, 242-243, 245, 684-685.

²³ Berlin, Reidy, and Rowland, eds., *The Black Military Experience*, 244, 268-269, 686, 688, 689, 697.

battlegrounds in the fight for emancipation and equality. Since black families could now claim the protection of the United States government, the Union army and southern civilians sparred over who had control over black women and children, and whether the federal government could dictate how white southerners treated African Americans within their homes. These battles reveal the extent to which southern domestic space took on increased political significance during the war: while southerners maintained that the Union army had no business telling them how they could treat African Americans, the military asserted that it had a duty to protect black soldiers' dependents.

Congscription and Nativism in the Eastern Theater

By summer 1863, the eastern theater faced its own problems with the changing composition of the army as thousands of northern men joined through conscription or through the threat of conscription. The influx of new recruits led to conflict between seasoned veterans, many of whom were anti-slavery Republicans, and inexperienced substitutes and conscripts, often working-class men who favored Democrats and abhorred abolitionists and African Americans. These new recruits caused even more controversy because of their perceived preference for hard drinking and aggressive behavior, which seemed detrimental to army discipline. The addition of immigrants and lower-class men into the ranks sparked criticism and conflict among soldiers and civilians over appropriate masculine behavior, which included Protestant religious views, moral uprightness, hard work, and self-control, in addition to citizenship and whiteness.²⁴

Seasoned Federals drew stark lines between themselves and the conscripts and substitutes who joined the ranks. Soldiers such as George Patch looked down upon men who entered the

²⁴ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 601, 608-609; Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 70-72; Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic*, 158-159.

ranks “to save having the name of being drafted,” or to collect substitute bounties. Increased association with substitutes and conscripts did not mollify veterans’ feelings of resentment. Henry T. Blanchard, garrisoned in Warrenton, Virginia, was incredulous that two of five substitutes who arrived in camp could not “speak or understand a word of English.” At the root of veterans’ contempt was the idea that many new soldiers had not joined the army for patriotic reasons.²⁵ But soldiers could form bonds with immigrants who showed fighting spirit and ascribed to similar values of manliness, particularly when it came to religious views and moral behavior. The 72nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry had nothing but admiration for German-born private Michael Batterall because of his “devot[ion to] Christianity” and “oppos[ition] to stealing.” In addition, foreign-born Americans received approval when their beliefs about the laziness and inferiority of African Americans matched native-born racist attitudes. Many Federals eventually welcomed immigrant soldiers who conformed to basic ideas of middle-class masculinity. Morality, Protestantism, and an unwavering belief in the superiority of white Americans often ensured the acceptance of immigrants into the ranks of the Union army.²⁶

Nevertheless, native-born Americans believed that immigrants were predisposed to particular character deficiencies, most notably drunkenness and rowdy behavior. These concerns focused intently on Irish soldiers, whom many soldiers regarded as alcoholics. As a result, soldiers and commanders expected widespread inebriation and carousing on holidays, particularly St. Patrick’s Day. But holidays occasionally passed unremarkably, as did St.

²⁵ George H. Patch to Father and Mother, July 25, 1862, George H. Patch Papers, VHS; Jacob S. Winans to Father, May 23, 1862, Jacob S. Winans Letters; Henry T. Blanchard to Parents, August 27, 1863, Henry T. Blanchard Letter; both LV. These tensions were exacerbated by soldiers’ beliefs that many Border State and northern men who refused to join the army were Butternuts, or Confederate sympathizers. Union soldiers stationed in central and western Kentucky frequently referred to adult civilian men as “butternuts,” and approved of the draft’s conscripting of these men into the Union army or pushing them to join the ranks of Confederate guerrillas. At the heart of their criticism was the idea that Butternuts refused service out of unmanly cowardice and self-preservation. See McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 73; OR, ser. 1, 39/1:102.

²⁶ McGee and Jewell, *History of the 72d Indiana*, 261-262; Franz Wilhelm von Schilling to unidentified, June 6, 1862, Franz Wilhelm von Schilling Letterbook, VHS.

Patrick's Day of 1862, when Thomas Darby recorded that he did not see a single drunken soldier. Good behavior on the part of immigrant soldiers defied expectations that these men were, as one soldier put it, the "off-scourings of northern slums . . . dregs of every nation . . . branded felons . . . thieves, burglars, and vagabonds."²⁷ Nevertheless, stereotypes of immigrant soldiers proved persistent. Native-born Americans linked foreign-born soldiers' national origin to inherent vice, and even their good behavior did little to change these perceptions.

Southern White Women and Yankee Immigrants

Southern women readily agreed that immigrant soldiers had a predilection for criminal activity. Both Unionists and Confederates singled out German and Irish soldiers as the least civilized and most insulting Yankees with whom they came in contact. Lizzie Alsop of Fredericksburg railed against foreign soldiers, accusing the "Irish, Dutch, Rogues &c. which compose the Federal Army" of committing "many depredations upon private property," including shooting hogs and commanding forcing enslaved people to do their bidding. Other women noted with unease that the arrival of the Union army increased the presence of foreigners more generally. Southern women perceived northern immigrants as uncontrollable ruffians, convinced that these Federals were more likely than "regular Americans" to steal from and abuse them. Their antipathy toward foreign-born soldiers reflected common attitudes toward immigrants, attitudes which were inseparable from an unwavering belief in the superiority of slave labor over free labor.²⁸ Blaming depredations on immigrant soldiers demonized the Union

²⁷ Thomas F. Darby to Miss Ellen, March 21, 1862, Thomas F. Darby Papers, VHS; Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 334-44; Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City: Doubleday Press, 1953), 25-29; Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 139.

²⁸ For anti-Irish and nativist sentiment, see Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*, 826-827; Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 133; for southerners' belief in the superiority of slave labor to free labor (particularly that of newly-arrived immigrants), see John McCardell, *The Idea of a Southern Nation: Southern Nationalists and Southern Nationalism, 1830-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979), 85-90; Ford, *Deliver Us From Evil*, 532-534.

army *and* northern society, further demonstrating that the superior system of slave labor precluded the migration of criminally inclined immigrants.²⁹

But southerners' deep distrust was mitigated when they discovered that many immigrant men despised abolitionists and Abraham Lincoln. These revelations encouraged moments of understanding—and even material and emotional support—between working-class foreigners and upper-class southern slaveholders. In Virginia, Fanny Churchill Braston Young hosted several immigrant Union soldiers in her home when she found out that they intended to desert the Federal army because they were “tired of the Yankees [and] did not believe in their cause.” Other southerners were more inclined to be hospitable to Irish regiments because they were “democrats” and not “black republicans”—and they found that these soldiers, sympathetic to the Confederate cause and hostile to emancipation, sometimes treated them better as well.³⁰ Racist attitudes and political sympathies created unlikely understandings between slaveholding Confederates and lower-class northern immigrants. A shared commitment to white superiority resulted in upper-class Confederate women being more inclined to welcome Union soldiers, as both groups united around the hope that whichever side won the war would preserve America's racial hierarchy.³¹

²⁹ June 6, 1862, Diary of Elizabeth (Lizzie) Maxwell Alsop Wynne, VHS; Maury, “The Civil War Diary of Betty Herndon Maury,” 75. Unionist and Confederate women in the western theater shared this antipathy toward immigrant soldiers. See *Josie Underwood's Civil War Diary*, 162–163; French, *L. Virginia French's War Journal*, 27. For more general worries about “foreign labor” in the South during the Civil War, see Anne Parker Thom to “friend,” January 18, 1864, Thom Family Papers, VHS; Emma Grisham in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 16:28. Southern Unionists who were born in the North seemed less inclined to view immigrant soldiers with animosity. See James Hoobler, ed., “The Civil War Diary of Louisa Brown Pearl,” *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 38 (September 1979): 319.

³⁰ Fanny Churchill Braston Young Diary, December 5, 1863, Fanny Churchill Braston Young Papers, VHS; Cordelia Lewis Scales to Loulie, January 27, 1863, Cordelia Lewis Scales Letters, MSDAH.

³¹ Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness*, 136, 137, 169, 172–173; Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 43.

The Lowbrow Pleasures of Union Soldiers and Poor Southern Women

Fears of disorderly immigrants signified larger concerns over the behavior of the army and its effect on the war's outcome. Northerners believed that the success of their army depended in part on the moral character of soldiers. Self-control and hard work were no longer simply attributes of the middle-class self-made man, but patriotic virtues to which the entire army should aspire if it hoped to be successful. These new ideas of patriotism and loyalty emphasized manly restraint on the battlefield, in camp, and on the home front, encouraging soldiers to exercise sobriety and sexual restraint.³² These ideals often proved elusive, as temptation waited at every turn for an army of young men far away from home. Poor white and black southern women seized the chance to earn money by selling alcohol to enlisted men; and brothels flourished in garrisoned cities. Impressionable soldiers struggled to resist the temptation to drink heavily and to consort with prostitutes. The reaction of military commanders and upper- and middle-class southern women to rowdy behavior spoke volumes: both detected danger to respectable women and children. Through their efforts to police the behavior of rowdy soldiers and poor women, military commanders and southern women worked in concert to restore order.

Many northerners worried that unmooring young men from the civilizing influence of home and family encouraged vice. Regiments mixed people from different classes and backgrounds, bringing together workingmen, immigrants, and farmers, many of whom were hard drinkers and whose bad examples influenced impressionable young men. While northerners feared that the influence of hard-drinking foreign soldiers corrupted naive youngsters, the reality was that immigrants and native boys willingly engaged in drunkenness and rowdiness.

³² Melinda Lawson argues that during the Civil War, northerners embraced new ideas about loyalty and patriotism. See *Patriotic Fires: Forging a New American Nationalism in the Civil War North* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); for the link between patriotism, loyalty, and sobriety, see Bever, ““War is a Terrible Enemy to Temperance,”” 6.

Celebrations of St. Patrick's Day among Union soldiers in New Orleans in 1863 and among the Irish Brigade in 1864 shared shocking similarities—both began with religious celebrations that then degenerated into debauchery. While more pious soldiers, John Gardner Perry among them, blamed “drunken rows and disturbances” on “substitutes and conscripts,” hardened veterans and native-born soldiers got just as inebriated as anyone else.³³ The truth was that few Federals abstained from drinking. Patriotic ideals equated sobriety with loyalty, but even the most devoted soldiers drank to excess.

Compounding problems of drunkenness was the willingness of poor white and black southern women to illegally sell alcohol to enlisted men. In Lexington, Kentucky, the Union cavalry’s payday led to widespread inebriation thanks to enterprising black women who carried liquor into the camps. Women who peddled fruit and pies frequently brought along a flask or two of whiskey. In camps where alcohol was prohibited, women snuck it in under their skirts. Lower-class women defied prohibitions against alcohol to supplement meager incomes. But middle-class white women and military commanders saw something more pernicious than a simple desire to make money. Many worried that working-class women who supplied alcohol did the secret work of secessionists, hoping to undermine the integrity and fighting spirit of the army.³⁴ Since many Americans now conflated patriotism with sobriety, these women’s actions raised

³³ J. Chandler Gregg, *Life in the Army of the Departments of Virginia, and the Gulf, including Observations in New Orleans, with an Account of the Author's Life and Experience in the Ministry* (Philadelphia: Perkinpine and Higgins, 1866), 86-87; D.P. Conynham, *The Irish Brigade and Its Campaigns: With Some Account of the Corcoran Legion and Sketches of Principal Officers* (New York: William McSorley, 1869), 514; John Gardner Perry, *Letters from a Surgeon of the Civil War*, compiled by Martha Derby Perry (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1906), 100. For ideas about the civilizing influence of the home, see Elaine Frantz Parsons, *Manhood Lost: Fallen Drunkards and Redeeming Women in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003); Ownby, *Subduing Satan*; Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997); Holly Berkley Fletcher, *Gender and the American Temperance Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Bruce Dorsey, *Reforming Men and Women: Gender in the Antebellum City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978).

³⁴ *A Union Woman in Civil War Kentucky*, 90; Jackson, *The Colonel's Diary*, 93, 98; Victoria Bynum argues that poor southern women were more concerned with having an income than with what people thought of their character; subsequently they sold goods, liquor, and sex to both white and black men. See *Unruly Women*, 57.

questions about their political sympathies. And women who sold liquor defied ideas of respectable womanhood in which women were supposed to encourage morally upright behavior when they enabled, rather than discouraged men from, the vice of drunkenness. Supplying soldiers with liquor encouraged drunkenness that might produce military disaster, leading some Americans to question whether women who sold alcohol to soldiers were loyal.

However they obtained their alcohol, drunken soldiers posed a problem to army discipline and to civilian welfare. Military commanders and southern women advocated regulating the use of alcohol and punishing inebriation because of the danger posed by intoxicated soldiers. In Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a drunk Union soldier tried to arrest Kate Carney's friends after they loudly and publicly declared their support for the Confederacy and Jefferson Davis. Carney sent for guards to place the soldier under arrest. Eliza Frances Andrews and her friend Mary Semmes were almost "knocked down" in the street by "two intoxicated Union soldiers" who charged at them while "whooping and yelling with all their might." The problem in occupied areas seemed especially acute. Upon taking control of New Orleans, Benjamin Butler considered his primary responsibilities to be "feed[ing] and protect[ing]" women and children and removing "a whisky-drinking mob" from the city. Colonel R.B. Palmer, in command of a regiment of Missouri Militia, believed that drunken soldiers often inflicted "vengeance on any whom they may choose to look on as personal or political enemies." To both upper-class southern women and Union military commanders, drunkenness threatened respectable society and family life. Intoxicated soldiers might even abuse upper- and middle-class women and many military officials deemed this wholly unacceptable.³⁵

³⁵ *Kate Carney Diary*, 376-377; Andrews, *The War-Time Journal of a Georgia Girl*, 365-366; Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 67-73.

Soldiers' patriotism, linked as it was to self-control, meant that Federal officers and enlisted men were expected to abstain from the twin vices of drunkenness and sexual promiscuity. But just as alcohol flourished wherever Union soldiers appeared, so did brothels. Soon after his arrival in Louisville, Minnesotan Madison Bowler wrote his wife that there were a good many "bad women." Cities where the Union Army was stationed for long periods saw an explosion in prostitution. Nashville's vice district, Smokey Row, was legendary. One soldier wrote that it covered three quarters of a mile, with "house[s] of ill-fame" on either side. The sex trade became so rampant in Nashville and Memphis that Union commanders gave up hope of trying to suppress it. Instead, Lieutenant Colonel George Spaulding required that prostitutes be licensed, medically examined, and taxed to support a separate hospital for their use.³⁶

Middle-class soldiers expressed grave concerns about the ubiquity and character of these "bad women." To Federals, such females "had no thought of dress or decency." Madison Bowler referred to them as "hags." Indiana soldier Elijah Cavins seemed scandalized by the prevalence of prostitutes in Alexandria, Virginia, whose unwomanly assertiveness and "indecent advances" worried him. Middle-class Federals and southern women expressed horror and outrage over the behavior of prostitutes who threatened to diminish men's respect for virtuous women and tarnish the character of respectable ladies. No story better illustrates the problem than the firestorm that resulted from Federal authorities sending two prostitutes along with other Confederate women prisoners to be exchanged at City Point, Virginia. Robert Ould, the agent of exchange, expressed his indignation at the mix-up, telling Lieutenant Colonel William Ludlow of the damage the mistake had caused to "honorable and virtuous women" who had been subjected to "an outrage" that even a state of war did not allow "upon the sanctity of a pure woman's character." Although

³⁶ Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 62 n. 74; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 90; Catherine Clinton, *Public Women and the Confederacy* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999), 25-28.

all of the women were prisoners of war, the case demonstrates that military commanders felt duty-bound to protect even disloyal women from association with prostitutes. The debacle illustrates the double threat posed by “bad women”: their immoral lifestyle tainted respectable white ladies as well as patriotic Union soldiers. In the minds of middle-class Union officers, public women posed a far greater threat to military victory and national patriotism than Rebel women. No matter their political differences, northern commanders and elite southern women agreed that women selling their bodies or flasks of whiskey threatened the purity of southern families and the Union cause. Prostitutes proposed an intimacy outside the bounds of the South’s respectable, intimate spaces.³⁷

Court-Martials and Problems of Discipline

Along with drastic changes in the army’s composition, policymakers handed down new rules of conduct that provided more severe punishments to govern soldiers’ interactions with civilians. Section 30 of the Enrollment Act prescribed the use of military courts to try soldiers who committed crimes against civilians. German American legal expert Francis Lieber’s distillation of the articles of war, which the army adopted as General Orders 100 in April 1863, recommended the death penalty or other severe punishment for those who robbed, sacked, pillaged, killed, maimed, raped, or wounded civilian women. Neither Section 30 nor the Lieber Code, as it came to be called, were aimed at African American and immigrant soldiers. Instead, the policies addressed longstanding problems with Union army discipline in a war where lines between battlefield and home front had become difficult to separate. Even so, court-martials provide a window into nineteenth-century ideas which linked respectability, self-control, and sexual restraint with upper- and middle-class white men and women and associated poverty with

³⁷ Foroughi, ed., *Go If You Think It Your Duty*, 62 n. 74, 73; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 90-91; Elijah Henry Clay Cavins, *The Civil War Letters of Col. Elijah H.C. Cavins, 14th Indiana*, complied by Barbara A. Smith (Owensboro, KY: Cook-McDowell, 1981), 182; *OR*, ser. 2, 5:628.

vice and sexual deviance, traits assumed to be inseparable from the character of poor white and black women and immigrant and African American men.³⁸ While upper- and middle-class white men and women received sympathy because many assumed them to be self-controlled and chaste, working-class men and women were regarded with suspicion, as their rowdy behavior and visibility led many to assume they were also sexually promiscuous. The handling of sexual assault accusations during the latter half of the war revealed that a person's citizenship status, personal character, racial background, and class status heavily influenced trials, sentencing, and conviction.

Elite White Women and Sexual Assault

While the Enrollment Act gave southern women access to military courts, convictions for rape or attempted rape could be hard to obtain. In the nineteenth-century, sexual assault was a very narrowly defined crime that required physical penetration against a woman's consent and proof of physical resistance. In addition, a woman's character was interrogated as much as the actions of the accused. These factors favored the class status and resources of elite white women, whose access to doctors and character witnesses provided the proof needed to convict assailants. When elite white women suffered sexual assault, the privileges of class status made achieving a conviction much easier. Margaret Brooks, the young white wife of a Tennessee planter, was gang raped by three white Union soldiers in her carriage as she returned from Memphis. The next morning, Brooks visited a doctor who examined her and eventually testified at the trial eight

³⁸ E. Susan Barber and Charles F. Ritter, “‘Unlawfully and Against Her Consent’: Sexual Violence and the Military during the American Civil War,” *Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: From the Ancient World to the Era of Human Rights*, ed. Elizabeth D. Heineman (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 206; Barber and Ritter, “Physical Abuse and Rough Handling,” 61; D.H. Dilbeck, “‘The Genesis of This Little Tablet with My Name’: Francis Leiber and the Wartime Origins of General Orders No. 100,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 5, no. 2 (June 2015), 231-232; Clare A. Lyons, *Sex among the Rabble: An Intimate History of Gender and Power in the Age of Revolution, Philadelphia, 1730-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 4; Sharon Block argues that “the identities and relationships of the participants in sexual assault, not the quality of a sexual interaction, most easily defined rape.” See *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 3.

days later. The three soldiers were convicted and executed for the crime. While Brooks still suffered the trauma of sexual violence and the stigma that many in the nineteenth century attached to it, her elite status gave her access to a doctor and ensured a swift trial and the maximum sentence. As a respectable woman, the court-martial believed Margaret Brooks and defended her claims of chastity. It was through no fault of her own that she had been raped.³⁹ Brooks' case illustrates some of the privileges of elite women, who enjoyed the protection of intimate space even when they were not at home. Due to their wealth and status, elite women were given the benefit of the doubt when they made accusations of rape, since no true woman would ever interact, let alone have sexual intercourse, with strange men.

Sexual Violence and Poor White Women

Poor white women faced greater burdens in reporting sexual assault, and were less likely to achieve justice. Many Americans considered poor white women to be sexually promiscuous, an attitude which assumed that because of their poverty, these women might trade sexual favors for money. In addition, ideas of true womanhood supposed that working-class women, unlike their middle- and upper-class counterparts, could not control their innate "passionate," greedy, and manipulative nature. Men accused of rape could argue that lower-class girls were little better than prostitutes or the children they assaulted were "passionate" creatures. Mary Latham, a widow and mother of four from Rappahannock County, Virginia, recounted in her interview with a Southern Claims Commission agent that during the summer of 1863 a squad of Michigan Calvary had "subjected [her] . . . to a brutal assault and outrage on [her] person." Although Latham reported the assault to the cavalry commander, there is no evidence that charges were

³⁹ Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 58-59. Diane Miller Sommerville argues that "Men of means in the South and North appear to have shared a disdain for middling, poorer women that manifested itself in a fundamental indifference to females who suffered sexual assault," and that "white women who accused men of rape could expect to have their backgrounds searched for clues of past sexual indiscretion." Sommerville, *Rape and Race*, 5-7, 11, 22, 27. See also Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 12.

brought against the perpetrators, much less a trial held. In Lookout Valley, Tennessee, Mary Kirksey, another white widow and mother, often had Union soldiers in her home. Kirksey did washing and sewing for the army, even allowing Federals to use her house as a hospital. In May 1864, Private Charles Hunter of the Seventh Kentucky Cavalry sexually assaulted her on two separate occasions. Kirksey reported to the provost marshal that she had been “treated very badly,” testifying that although she had screamed and pleaded with Hunter to stop, he had physically restrained her and continued with the assault. Even though other Union soldiers vouched for Kirksey as a woman of good character, Hunter’s defense was that he assumed that with so many soldiers going in and out of her house, she was a prostitute. To Hunter, a young, poor southern white mother living alone and fraternizing with soldiers marked her as a woman of bad character. Martha Hall and her sisters, who worked as laundresses and cooks for the Union army in Camp Nelson, Kentucky, faced similar accusations.⁴⁰ Poor white women, whether married, widowed, or single, encountered difficulties in defending their character because of their visibility. Working for a living, which brought them into contact with men, led some to doubt their chastity. These issues illustrate the precariousness of poor women’s intimate space: rather than a haven from the world, their homes could easily become places of danger and violation.

African American Women and Sexual Assault

African American women experienced the double oppression of class and race prejudice. Their status as laborers made them more visible and more vulnerable to attack, and widespread assumptions held that they were naturally inclined to sexual promiscuity. African American women faced a much greater burden of proof when they brought charges against white soldiers,

⁴⁰ Claim of Mary C. Latham, Rappahannock County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Trial of Private Charles C. Hunter, NN1921, Record Group 153, Records of the Office of the Judge Advocate General (U.S. Army), National Archives, Washington, D.C. (hereafter JAG); Hunter was sentenced to three years hard labor.

especially officers. Although Union policies allowed black women to bring charges against white assailants and permitted testimony by black witnesses, assumptions about black women's promiscuity and the veracity of African American testimony caused white commanders to doubt their accusations of rape. Union soldiers, many of whom believed the South to be a place degraded by slavery, almost expected African Americans to be sexually licentious. Moral critiques by abolitionists, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, faulted the slave system for the sexual immorality it perpetuated between white men and black women. Federal soldiers, even those with abolitionist views, might well assume that black women were naturally promiscuous. Even before the Federal Army arrived on southern soil, many soldiers believed enslaved black women to be little better than prostitutes.⁴¹

Aware of these assumptions, African American women who brought charges against white Union soldiers carefully constructed their cases. In May 1864, Jenny Green, a young black laundress in the contraband camp at City Point, Virginia, charged Andrew J. Smith with a particularly violent rape during which he threatened to kill her. Although Green had resisted the assault and a black chaplain and a fellow black laundress affirmed her character, her assailant was a former lawyer and a white officer. Despite finding Smith guilty, the court-martial attached a plea for leniency based on Smith's "good character" and his role as a husband and father. In an uncharacteristic move, President Lincoln ordered a review of the sentence, which concluded that Jenny Green had been "caught . . . in an act of shame, and pretended to be ravished." Smith served six months of a ten-year sentence before receiving a presidential pardon. Stereotypes associating black women with promiscuity followed them into freedom. Even though black women now had the ability to charge white men with sexual assault, and other members of their

⁴¹ Walters, *American Reformers*, 82-83; Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 506; Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109; White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?*, 38; Lyons, *Sex Among the Rabble*, 4.

race could testify for them, achieving a conviction and appropriate punishment was difficult. Green's case illustrates the way in which white men used their power to define the act not as rape but as regrettable but consensual sex.⁴² Sexual assault trials' outcomes, and whether charges were brought at all, were profoundly influenced as much by a woman's race and class status as how Union commanders defined rape versus sexual coercion. Distinctions of gender, race, and class often caused military officials to apply justice in an unequal manner.

Recognizing that instances of rape eroded military discipline and undermined relations between the military and civilians, some military commanders took action to protect noncombatants. During a December 1862 court of inquiry into the conduct of General Irvin McDowell around Fredericksburg, Brigadier General Herman Haupt testified that a Union soldier raped the daughter of a white farmer who had given material assistance to the Federal army. Interestingly enough, the prosecutor explicitly referred to the act as an instance of rape, terming the attack as an "ac[t] of violence." Not only was such conduct unlawful, attacks upon southerners friendly to the Union undermined the army's control of occupied areas. Recognizing the critical nature of the situation, McDowell instituted military commissions to try soldiers for abuses against civilians. The punishment for rape, he specified, was "immediate execution by hanging, or by shooting."⁴³ The status of the victim as a loyal, respectable white woman spurred McDowell and other officers in the Army of the Potomac to take swift action to remedy the wrong and ensure such behavior did not happen again. Racial background, class status, and political sympathies influenced Union commanders' decisions to try soldiers for rape.

Military officials responded to the rape of African American women much less promptly and with much more lenient punishments. Brigadier General Don Carlos Buell heard reports of

⁴² Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 63-64; Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 53.

⁴³ *OR*, ser. 1, 15:78; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:52.

“negro women [who] are debauched” while his army was stationed near Huntsville, Alabama, but only described the conduct as “disgracing the army” and “destructive of the public interests.” Buell made no mention of investigating or prosecuting Union soldiers’ assault of African American women. When a court-martial tried the commander responsible, John Basil Turchin, the only charge brought against him was “neglect of duty, to the prejudice of good order and military discipline.” During a sack of Athens, Alabama, Turchin had watched while his soldiers attempted to rape at least two African American women, and succeeded in raping another. No evidence exists that the soldiers who violated the black women were charged. In another instance in Washington, Louisiana, Brigadier General William Dwight, Jr., complained that during a march to New Iberia, the First Brigade sexually assaulted black women “in the presence of white women and children” Dwight referred to the sexual violence as “disgusting scenes” and blamed the assaults on “want of discipline” in the army and the “utter incompetency” of regimental officers.⁴⁴ The comments and actions of these commanders in response to the sexual violation of black women demonstrates the disparate way in which white men responded to sexual assaults of white and black women. While McDowell ordered a military commission to try a white woman’s rapist and took measures to prevent further sexual assaults, neither Buell nor Dwight seemed overly concerned about the rape of black women. In addition, the public nature of black women’s sexual assault reinforced their visibility and vulnerability, highlighting southern racial divisions. While white men attempted to frame the sexual assault of white women as consensual, men who raped black women felt no need to take such precautions.⁴⁵

The prevalence of attitudes that defined the sexual assault of black women as merely seduction or sexual coercion is made plain by an incident in New Orleans. A Union officer in

⁴⁴ *OR*, ser. 1, 16/2:319; *OR*, ser. 1, 16/2:273; *OR*, ser.1, 15:373.

⁴⁵ Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 81, 84.

Benjamin Butler's army drew the ire of the commander because he "enticed" an enslaved girl to his quarters "in direct violation of a general order prohibiting such conduct, and evidently for improper purposes." Butler ordered the officer to release the girl and return her home. But Confederates, particularly the editor of the *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, simply reported the incident as Union soldiers "intermeddling" with slave property. The newspaper complained not about the indignities the young woman suffered but the difficulty to which the enslaved girl's owners were subjected in order to obtain possession of their chattel. The newspaper editor summed up the incident as a lesson regarding "the danger incurred by Federal officers who seek to entice or corrupt the slaves of our people." Neither Butler nor the Confederate editor considered the case an instance of kidnapping and rape. While Butler defined the incident as seduction (a crime related to rape but with much milder penalties), Confederates read the crime as Union soldiers inciting enslaved people to run away.⁴⁶ The conflict demonstrates the obstacles faced by women of color in defining, let alone prosecuting, rape. Often both the Union army and Confederate civilians were wholly unwilling to recognize and prosecute the rape of black women, who both considered, if not promiscuous, at least sexually available.

The unequal justice meted out by Union commanders extended to African American Union soldiers. Although black soldiers were not more likely to be convicted of sexual assault,

⁴⁶ OR, ser. 1, 15:525; "A Warning to Intermeddlers," *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, July 19, 1862. Of all southern states, only Mississippi and Georgia considered rape of an enslaved woman to be a crime. See Sommerville, *Rape and Race*, 64-66; and Rosen, *Terror in the Heart of Freedom*, 10; Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 56. These actions by Union military commanders paralleled northern statutes that at least attempted to treat both blacks and whites equally before the law; see Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 65, 93. Litwack notes that while African Americans could bring cases to court, they faced white judges. Public opinion prevented them from serving on juries, even though they had the legal right to do so. In addition, Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Iowa, and California prevented African Americans from testifying against a white defendant, although Ohio admitted African American testimony beginning in 1849. For rape law in northern states, see M.H. Arnold, "'The Life of a Citizen in the Hands of a Woman': Sexual Assault in New York City, 1790 to 1820," in *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History*, ed. Kathy Piess and Christina Simmons (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1989), 35-56; C.P. Nemeth, "Character Evidence in Rape Trials in Nineteenth-Century New York: Chastity and the Admissibility of Specific Acts," *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, 6, (1980), 214-225; Hal Goldman, "'A Most Detestable Crime': Character, Consent, and Corroboration in Vermont's Rape Law, 1850-1920" *Sex without Consent: Rape and Sexual Coercion in America*, ed. Merril D. Smith (New York: New York University, 2002), 178-203.

they faced much harsher punishments if found guilty of sex crimes. African American Union soldiers indicted for improper conduct could expect to receive the harshest sentence possible if convicted, especially if accused by a white woman. In Asheville, North Carolina, four African American soldiers beat a young white woman's aunt and uncle and then raped her. After they were found guilty, the four men were executed in front of the entire regiment. The swift trial and stiff sentences meted out to the African American soldiers suggests the way in which nineteenth-century Americans viewed black on white rape as more than an act of sexual immorality. The rape of a white woman by a black man signified a larger assault on white authority and the racial hierarchy. The tendency to read insubordination into black-on white rape did not go unnoticed. General Benjamin Butler sharply criticized the difference in punishment meted to white and black rapists, decrying the fact that although Jenny Green's assailant Andrew Smith had only served six months in prison before being pardoned, a black man convicted of the attempted rape of a white woman had been hung in the presence of the regiment. The court-martial system attempted to bring a measure of justice to the southern home front. For the first time, black women could bring charges against their rapists and black civilians could testify in court against a white man. But court-martials also perpetuated inequalities in the American justice system. Commanders doubted the character of poor white women and tended to see instances of white men raping black women as lesser crimes such as seduction or sexual coercion. The greatest continuity between antebellum court trials and Civil War court-martials was the pattern of disproportionately accusing, trying, and sentencing black men for crimes of sexual violence. Inequalities in justice reinforced antebellum racial and gender hierarchies. Nineteenth-century

Americans took for granted that white women would never consent to sexual relationships with black men; therefore, a black man who had sex with a white woman must have committed rape.⁴⁷



Figure 4. Execution of Private William Johnson, 23 Regt., U.S.C.T.—Black soldiers were far more likely than white soldiers to be convicted and executed for crimes of rape, particularly if the victim was a white woman. In this photo, Private William Johnson of the 23rd United States Colored Troops is hung in Petersburg, Virginia as other soldiers look on. There is no record that a court-martial took place (Library of Congress).

Commanders and officers in charge of white men resolutely denied that their men disgraced the service by sexually assaulting civilian women. Although there is much evidence to the contrary, Oscar Lawrence Jackson declared that during Sherman's March through South Carolina, "the persons of women, it is my belief, have very seldom been molested . . . but there were frequent examples of easy virtue." Jackson clearly limited this definition to white women, for he went on to state that "few of our soldiers had connection with blacks, very few." William Babcock Hazen admitted that his commanding officer, General Howard, had found it necessary to "publis[h] an order . . . directing that any soldier found robbing should be tried by a drum-head court-martial and shot if convicted" but nevertheless insisted that "the amount of actual lawlessness was exceedingly small, and *no well-authenticated case of the violation of women*

⁴⁷ Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 63-64; *OR*, ser. 1, 49/2:669; Barber and Ritter, "'Physical Abuse . . . and Rough Handling,'" 63-64; Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 149-151. Sharon Block also notes that African American men were disproportionately charged and executed for rape. See *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America*, 163, 167.

ever came to my knowledge.” In an inquiry of James H. Wilson’s conduct in Virginia, one interrogator questioned the general about allegations in the Richmond *Examiner* that his soldiers had committed wanton destruction of property and perpetrated several rapes. Wilson defended himself, arguing that the journal was “notoriously venal and unscrupulous” in its effort to destroy the Union army’s credibility, and that “rape, wanton insult to women, nor brutal conduct of any kind I am confident can be truthfully charged against my command.”⁴⁸ Commanders and officers had a vested interest in denying that soldiers in their command engaged in sexual assault. Such claims cast military authorities in a bad light and might lead the public to question their ability to control and discipline their men.

Enlisted men’s accounts tell quite a different story. While soldiers’ attitudes toward rape could be shockingly cavalier, many of them documented their fellow soldiers’ trials and executions for sexual violence. Directly contradicting Oscar Lawrence Jackson’s claim that Sherman’s men had refrained from sexual assault, John A. Boon of the 85th Illinois Infantry recorded in a letter to his family in the spring of 1865 that during Sherman’s March through South Carolina, a New York soldier was “court martialed and shot for ravishing a woman and plunging his sword in her.” Illinois soldier Hampton P. Sloane blamed the army’s demoralization for the fact that several of his comrades broke into houses and tried to ravish women while the army was stationed in Franklin, Tennessee. The soldiers were convicted and eventually executed. Massachusetts soldier George Patch, stationed in Stevensburg, Virginia, wrote his parents about the execution of one of his comrades for the “rape . . . [of] an old Widow.” Patch seemed skeptical of the conviction and punishment, arguing that because the soldier had been drunk, he did not “remember any thing about it,” and so he had been tried and convicted “on her [the

⁴⁸Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 191; Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service*, 415-416 [emphasis mine]; *OR*, ser. 1, 15:52.

widow's] testimony," which Patch seemed to consider slender evidence. After recounting the execution, Patch summed up the incident, "thus died a good soldier who would have done the Government more good than many who are now in the service."⁴⁹ Enlisted men commented on rape trials and executions because such proceedings were newsworthy, and many gave their opinions as to why soldiers sexually violated civilian women. While some blamed drinking and demoralization, others may have considered such behavior to be par for the course in what had become a long and brutal war.

Conclusion

Emancipation, conscription, and court-martials plainly revealed the fault lines of gender divisions, racial barriers, and class distinctions in nineteenth-century America. Much was at stake during the third year of the war: African Americans and foreign born soldiers struggled to gain equal footing through martial service while poor white and black southern women attempted to eke out a living while maintaining control over their labor and their bodies. At the heart of the issue were debates over who merited citizenship and how those citizens should behave. African Americans struggled against stereotypes of indolence and sexual promiscuity as both white Union soldiers and white southern civilians sought to discredit their claims to equality by undermining control over their families and their labor. Immigrant soldiers wrestled with attitudes that labeled their hard drinking and tendency to vote Democratic as unpatriotic. Even as commanders attempted to institute a measure of discipline among soldiers by controlling drunkenness, prostitution, and sexual assault, patterns of antebellum justice persisted as upper- and middle-class women claimed the label of respectable ladies while poor white and black women struggled against ideas of their sexual promiscuity, and racial hierarchies consistently

⁴⁹ John A. Bonne to Family, April 3, 1865, John A. Boone Letters; Hampton P. Sloane to Delia, February 11, 1863, Hampton P. Sloane Letters, both USAHEC; George H. Patch to Mother and Father, April 28, 1864, George H. Patch Papers, VHS.

meted harsh punishments to African American men. While 1863 brought immense changes to the Union army, the southern home front, and the United States as a whole, undercurrents of racial and class discrimination remained stubbornly in place.

The problem of discipline continued to plague the army into 1864 and 1865. Even with stronger measures in place to punish soldiers who committed crimes against civilians, inequalities in enforcement and punishment persisted. With the widespread application of raiding policies in 1864, the Union military sanctioned an unprecedented incursion into southern intimate space. Raiding's specific targeting of southern homes gave soldiers almost unprecedented access to southern women, as the policy erased whatever boundaries there had been between battlefield and home front.

CHAPTER 5

“WAR CORRUPTS THE PURE AND INNOCENT”: RAIDING, DESTRUCTION, AND DEPRIVATION, 1864-1865

Although William Tecumseh Sherman’s Christmas gift to President Abraham Lincoln was the capture of Savannah, the city’s residents received the much less welcome present of thousands of hungry Union soldiers bent on pillaging. Savannah’s African American population, many of whom hired out their time or had earned their freedom and thus owned significant property, experienced some of the worst of the destruction.¹ Sarah Ann Black, a free woman of color who enjoyed a comfortable existence prior to the war, watched it vanish within two days. Before the arrival of Union soldiers, Black firmly believed that “[the Yankees] were too good friends of us” to take African Americans’ possessions. But white Union soldiers refused to believe that Black owned her home and property. The soldiers told her that “white people had

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¹ Chatham County had the second-largest number of approved claims by the Southern Claims Commission in the state of Georgia, at 64. Of the claims, 58—over 90 percent—were filed by African Americans. Nearby Liberty County, which also had a large concentration of African Americans, had the most approved claims in the state of Georgia, at 94. However, unlike Liberty County, where many white people left accounts of destruction by Union soldiers, few (if any) white Savannah residents recounted Union soldiers’ destruction of their property. For Savannah’s large wage-earning free black and enslaved population, see Whittington B. Johnson, *Black Savannah: 1788-1864* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1996); Leslie M. Harris and Daina Ramey Berry, “Slave Life in Savannah: Geographies of Autonomy and Control” and Janice L. Sumler-Edmond, “Free Black Life in Savannah,” in *Slavery and Freedom in Savannah*, eds. Leslie M. Harris and Daina Ramey Berry (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 93-123, 124-139.

run off & left [her] to mind it” and Black blamed this attitude for the way in which Federals “lived off us just as if we were the commissary.”¹

The destruction of Sarah Ann Black’s home was part of a larger Union raiding strategy. Adopted in the western theater in 1862, by 1864 this strategy had been elevated to the level of policy and had spread to the eastern theater at the urging of the newly appointed general-in-chief, Ulysses S. Grant. Since emancipation had spurred Confederate guerrilla activity, living off the enemy became more necessary. In this context, many commanders, officers, and enlisted men hardened their attitudes toward southern civilians, viewing them increasingly with hostility and mistrust. Raiding, commanders hoped, would destroy southerners’ will to fight by devastating farmland, railroads, and “war resources,” everything from food and cattle to cotton and clover fields to doors and fences.²

To Confederate women, these policies seemed reminiscent of late 1861-1862 foraging and confiscation campaigns in which the line between taking Rebel property for army use and simple stealing had never been clear. Raiding, however, was not punishment for active participation in the rebellion but retribution directed toward any and all southerners. And while Sherman and other commanders insisted that raiding not become marauding, distinctions between the two were lost on some officers and enlisted men. For white and black Unionist women, perhaps the most unsettling feature of the raids was that soldiers drew few distinctions between loyal or disloyal: all civilians were southerners, and all southerners were to be subdued.

¹ Claim of Sarah Ann Blade [Black], Chatham County, Georgia, SCC-NA. For other African American women left nearly destitute by Union soldiers, see Claim of Celia Boisfeillet; Claim of Rachel Bromfield; Claim of Diana Cummings; Claim of Harriet Dallas; Claim of Elizabeth Geary; Claim of Mary Jess; Claim of Georgianna Kelley; Claim of Judy Rose; Claim of Charlotte Thompson; Claim of Eliza Williams; all SCC-NA. Of the 13 women who filed approved claims in Chatham County, 11 were women of color.

² Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), 487-496; Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 144-145, 162-166; Witt, *Lincoln’s Code*, 277-283; Royster, *Destructive War*, 340-341.

If the war was to be won, southerners needed to feel the power of the northern military and the destruction it could wreak. This new policy further undermined the idea of a separation between battlefield and home front. Loyalty, noncombatant status, and female privilege no longer carried much weight. In the last year of the war, intimate spaces increasingly held “war resources” necessary for northern victory.³

Instead of women’s noncombatant status providing justification for property protection, raiding turned civilian status into a justification for property destruction. This became all too clear not just during Sherman’s March but also as Sheridan campaigned in Virginia and as Union armies quelled Confederate resistance in the western theater. Although raiding occurred in every theater of the war, the policy took different forms in different places. The number of civilians, the amount of guerrilla activity, the presence of stragglers, the mix of loyal versus disloyal noncombatants, and the attitudes of commanders and enlisted men all influenced the character of raiding in each area. In Virginia, a battleground since the war’s beginning, Federals targeted the flourishing Shenandoah Valley region but had less success in areas where much civilian property had already been depleted. In the western theater, issues with Confederate guerrillas and Union stragglers meant raiding was tinged with vengeance, and often degenerated into thievery and even murder. In Georgia and the Carolinas, raiding slowly evolved from a disjointed and inconsistent practice to a policy and a rallying cry, creating a swath of annihilation so terrible it

³ Historians such as Lisa Tendrich Frank and LeeAnn Whites have noted that elite white women viewed Union soldiers’ incursions into their domestic spaces to be a violation of gender norms. I take this one step further by arguing that these elite women believed this to be the case precisely because the government—and military—had taken such pains to protect white women, not only on the basis of their gender, racial, and class privilege, but also to protect intimate space, which represented their privileged status. Frank, *The Civilian War*, 6-7, 8, 27; LeeAnn Whites, ““Corresponding with the Enemy”: Mobilizing the Relational Field of Battle in St. Louis,” *Occupied Women*, 103-116.

would be forever imprinted on American memory.⁴ No matter the location, raiding represented an unprecedented intrusion into the intimate space of southern women. Women left alone by their male relatives, who were assumed to be fighting in the Rebel army, no longer had any control over their possessions. As civilians living in enemy territory, women were simply deemed disloyal or in any case their loyalty did not matter. So long as their possessions might help sustain the Confederate cause, the federal government had the right to seize them.⁵

Raiding in Practice: Virginia, Summer 1864

Eastern theater commanders brought Major General Ulysses S. Grant's "hard war" policies to bear on Virginians. Particularly for cavalry, raiding policies allowed soldiers to travel faster while at the same time demoralizing the enemy. In an official report of his movements in the Shenandoah Valley and Appomattox areas, Major General Philip Sheridan discussed raiding as both a necessity and a humanitarian endeavor. "In these marches," he stated matter-of-factly, "we were obliged to live to a great extent on the country. Forage had to be thus obtained for our horses and provisions for our men, consequently many hardships were necessarily brought on the people." Although couched in the language of necessity, Sheridan tied these "hardships" to war aims, arguing that Virginia men and women "did not care how many [of the youth of the country] were killed or maimed, so long as war did not come to their doors, but as soon as it did come in the shape of loss or property, they earnestly prayed for its termination." Thus Sheridan considered this strategy ultimately humane, stating that "if we can, by reducing [war's]

⁴ For an examination of the historical memory of Sherman's March, see Anne Sarah Rubin, *Through the Heart of Dixie: Sherman's March and American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). For civilians as the target of raiding strategies, see Frank, *The Civilian War*, 4-5.

⁵ *OR*, ser. 1, 42/1:445; *OR*, ser. 1, 39/1:414; *OR*, ser. 1, 36/1:801; William Blair makes the excellent point that Union authorities' harsh treatment of southern civilians failed to spark much of an outcry because northerners viewed them as traitors. See Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 159. This argument builds on gendered studies of Sherman's March, particularly Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, and Frank, *The Civilian War*. By analyzing raiding in the context of larger Federal policy toward civilians, it is apparent that the Federal army treated all southern women, regardless of race, class, or loyalty, as enemies, and waged war on intimate space accordingly.

advocates to poverty, end it quicker, we are on the side of humanity.”⁶ Sheridan’s statements mirrored the reasoning of other commanders on the topic: all southern civilians participated in the rebellion, and all deserved to be brought to surrender by bringing the war to their homes.

Although eastern theater commanders embraced raiding, they attempted to set certain limits on the destruction. Sheridan claimed that his command tolerated “no outrages” against civilians. Confederates disagreed, charging Sheridan and his command with wanton destruction. The Richmond *Examiner* accused Union general and member of Sheridan’s staff James H. Wilson of “stealing not only negroes and horses, but silver plate and clothing.” These claims, which earned Wilson a stern rebuke from Major General George Meade, had little foundation.⁷ Eastern commanders took care to distinguish between living off the land as a war measure and committing wanton atrocities against southern civilians.

Enlisted men showed much less sensitivity to the political sympathies of those they plundered. Many of them relished the chance to live off the land regardless of its destructive effects. Massachusetts soldier Samuel Brooks justified raiding by citing inaccurate reports of starving Confederates. “I know better than that,” he asserted, “far their houses air full,” contrasting Rebels’ abundance with soldiers who “got ought of rations.” George L. Cooley, also of Massachusetts, agreed, citing Hanover Town’s plentiful corn and wheat. “I think the North would have to wait a good while before they could starve the South into submission,” he declared. For enlisted soldiers, raiding seemed to promise a swift end to the war and just punishment for secessionists, in addition to augmenting their meager rations. As West Virginian

⁶ *OR* ser. I, 36/1:801. Historians have paid less attention to the Valley Campaign’s effects on civilians in favor of focusing on politics, battles, and military commanders. See Gary W. Gallagher, “Two Generals and a Valley: Philip H. Sheridan and Jubal A. Early in the Shenandoah,” *The Shenandoah Valley Campaign of 1864*, ed. Gary W. Gallagher (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 14-15.

⁷ *OR* ser. I, 36/1:801; *OR* ser. 1, 40/1:36.

Edward Davis put it, “The people of the valley begin to feel the effect [of] rebellion on ther land for the 2 armeys will nearly disstroy the country entirely.”⁸

While the destruction of private property was forbidden early on in the campaigns, enlisted soldiers engaged in it anyway. Although George L. Cooley acknowledged that he and a friend were “laible to be arrested for leaving the picket line,” the temptation of fresh beef and milk was too much. Others were less successful. Peter Gamache of Massachusetts watched as one poor fellow tried to take a cow that was tied in front of a house. Its owner, a young woman, “rushed out after the two,” and upon catching up, “held out her hand and the soldier meekly handed her the rope.” Other soldiers worked in packs, with the idea that overwhelming numbers would lead to fewer complaints from civilians. New York Cavalryman Henry Carr lived well during the summer of 1864, describing how he and his company had “pleanty to eat.” Carr relished the plunder he and his fellow soldiers rounded up around New Castle, finding “four fine fat lambs and a pig . . . We live pretty fine . . . Guess we take everything that we can find of that kind.” Around Charles City County, Rufus A. Smith of the First Maine Cavalry exemplified the attitudes of soldiers who labeled all civilians as disloyal. Describing how destruction only left “three or four houses remaining on the plantations . . . fence is all destroyed, and the fertile fields taken for parade grounds,” Smith declared that, “upon the whole it looks as if I shouldn’t want to be a rebel nor live in a rebel state.”⁹ Women’s political sympathies were immaterial to these

⁸ Samuel Brooks to “Deair Wife,” May 31, 1864, Samuel Brooks Correspondence; George L. Cooley to Julia, May 29, 1864, George L. Cooley Correspondence; August 25, [1864], Edward Davis Diary; all USAHEC. For conduct by Union officers and enlisted men in the Valley, see William G. Thomas, “Nothing Ought to Astonish Us: Confederate Civilians in the 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign,” in Gallagher, 228-229.

⁹ George L. Cooley to Julia, May 20, 1864, George L. Cooley Correspondence; Sergeant Peter Gamache Memoir, pg. 3 [emphasis in original]; Henry C. Carr, June 8, 1864, Henry C. Carr Diary, USAHEC; Rufus A. Smith to Father and Mother, March 10, 1864, Rufus A. Smith Letters, LV. The overwhelming majority of soldiers made no reference to women, or to civilians at all, in their descriptions of raiding. See George L. Lacey to Parents, June 7, 1864, George L. Lacey Correspondence; January 9 and 12, February 21, and March 4, 1865, Charles Shumway Culver Diary; May 14, 15, 17, 20, 22 and June 21, 1864, Silman Andre Diary; Jasper B. Cheney to Mother, July 19, 1864, Jasper B. Cheney Letters; May 31, June 8, 25, and September 6, 1864, Henry C. Carr Diary; Samuel Brooks

men. If the high command sanctioned bringing war to civilian's homes, then soldiers did just that and more, considering it the price civilians would pay for living in the Confederacy.

Distinguishing between loyal and disloyal only left soldiers' bellies empty and provided sustenance for the enemy army.

The destruction became so intense—and so widespread—that some men began to worry about how civilians would survive. John H. Bevan and the rest of the First Pennsylvania Cavalry helped Prince George County residents “harvest” their wheat by “mass[ing] a brigade of cavalry in a wheat or oat field and in a short time the whole crop is cut down and harvested.” But instead of taking it to its owners’ barns, Bevan and his men “consume[d] it in the field.” By early fall, the amount of destruction meant that some Federals, Samuel Brooks included, were not sure “on what poor folks will live” given how “our boys g[o] out every day fouragen.” While occasionally soldiers voiced concerns, much of the time they merely recorded what they took, making no reference to civilians. The exception was Thomas Campbell of Ohio, an unusually virtuous Federal soldier, who expressed his disbelief at the extent of raiding. In May, Campbell was incredulous that soldiers “stole everything” from a “widow with 2 children.” Later that summer, Campbell came across “a family . . . with 7 small children” who had been “literally strip’d of everything.” By October, Campbell’s regiment was taking up collections for Union families who had lost everything and wished to go north. Female civilians did not simply suffer destruction of their property at the hands of Federal soldiers, for Campbell documented five sexual assaults

to “My Dear Wife,” November 17, 1864, Samuel Brooks Correspondence; Dayton E. Flint to Parents, January 26, 1865, Dayton E. Flint Letters; October 10, 12, 13, 30 and November 8, 1864, Albert H. Artman Diary; August 10, 11, 19, 20, 28, September 1, 14, 15, 18, 15, and October 23, 1864, Allen Baker, Jr. Diary; May 18, 1864, Charles Chapin Diary; all USAHEC.

committed by Sheridan's command in as many months. Perhaps for this reason Campbell noted that many times during the march he saw "nothing but N[egroes]."¹⁰

But even Campbell joined in when raiding targeted secessionists. When camped on land belonging to a Rebel major, Campbell felt no qualms taking a multitude of berries from the family's orchard. In Berryville, Campbell justified the army's culling of 40 acres of corn along with "the usual amount of chicken stealing hog & sheep killing" because "the majority [of civilians] are rebs at heart." Even so, when the army reached Harrisonburg and orders "forbidding pillaging and foraging" were issued, Campbell resented how "we had not been in camp an hour before the boys commenced to bring in" all kinds of forage, noting that "the officers wink at it and take their share." And Campbell was incensed that a Mrs. Hunter, the sister-in-law of a Rebel senator and a woman with no kind words for Federals, had her property protected. "Had it been a poor family," Campbell noted, "Union at that, they might have been rob'd and the house burn'd." He felt it unjust that the poor, rather than "the rich and influential," felt "the weight of the war."¹¹ The army's failure—or refusal—to consider political sympathies while raiding resulted in widespread destruction. And yet soldiers noted that the poor suffered more than the rich, which did little to encourage loyal political sympathies.

Elite white Confederate women only felt their hatred of Federals grow during raiding campaigns. Sheridan's reputation often preceded him, as it did for Lucy Rebecca Buck. While visiting relatives in Loudon County, she heard of no less than six neighbors who had their houses burned, recording later that "the Corps that passed us was Sheridan's." Three weeks later,

¹⁰ John H. Bevan to Sister, July 24, 1864, John H. Bevan Correspondence; Samuel Brooks to "My Dear Wife," September 13, 1864, Samuel Brooks Correspondence; May 23, 1864, August 15, 1864, October 1, 1864, Thomas Campbell Diary; for sexual assaults, see May 29, 1864, June 20, 1864, July 22, 1864, September 7, 1864, for comment on not seeing white women, see July 17, 1864, Thomas Campbell Diary; all USAHEC.

¹¹ May 27, 1864, June 15, 1864, August 11, 1864, September 26, 28, 29, 1864, Thomas Campbell Diary, USAHEC [emphasis in original]. For the uneven treatment of Confederate civilians, particularly the lack of distinctions between elite and poor women, see Thomas, "Nothing Ought to Astonish Us," 228.

Sheridan's men paid her and her family a visit, during which they repeatedly searched the house, stole horses, broke open trunks and desks, and continually demanded food. Referring to the men as "wretch[es]" and "miscreant[s]," Buck viewed their searches for government property and arms as merely a cover to steal "booty, money and the like." Laura Lee of Winchester felt alarmed in the spring of 1864 upon hearing that Union General Hunter was "moving up the Valley, burning and destroying everything his men do not use, so as to leave "nothing for the rebels.'" Although Hunter was eventually relieved of his command, much to Lee's dismay Sheridan soon took over, leaving her once again unsure of her safety. When talk of burning the town circulated, Lee began to "pack up [her] clothes" and "had the silver buried." Even in the face of such threats, Lee considered the Federal soldiers to be "generally quiet and well behaved" even though "some were very rude when we tried to prevent them from taking all the peaches." Although Winchester escaped much of the incendiaryism, its Confederate residents spent an unhappy winter with General Sheridan, who quartered his men in private houses and arrested elite Confederate women. After years of smuggling Confederate letters and supplies for the Rebel army, Lee and her sister were forced south beyond Union lines, a move she characterized as "inhuman" and "cruel." Rather than feeling grateful that they survived the war with some of their property intact and with a roof over their heads, wealthy white Virginian women instead pilloried Union soldiers for failing to respect their gender and racial privilege. Rather than viewing it as an exigency of war, white Confederates viewed raiding as an unprecedented attack on their private, intimate space.¹²

¹² Baer, ed., *Shadows on My Heart*, 292, 294-296, 297; Mahon, ed., *Winchester Divided*, 147, 163, 176, 179, 180, 182-184; for the anger Confederate women felt toward Union soldiers because of raiding in the Valley, see Thomas, "Nothing Ought to Astonish Us," 232-233.

Sheridan's "scored earth" campaign spared no Virginians, particularly making no distinction between loyal or disloyal or black or white. Martha Jane Charity, married to Union soldier and free black man William Charity, found that her status as an African American woman, soldier's wife, and Unionist failed to prevent Federals from taking her property. Charity saw her mule "taken from the stable by the soldiers" and "followed as far as the picket line trying to get him back," all to no avail. Judith Hass, a free woman of color and the widow of a white man, fared no better, and was even threatened with violence if she refused to turn over her property. Hass, who had willingly fulfilled her duties as a loyal woman by giving soldiers food "cheerfully as long as [she] had it in [her house]," found this offered no immunity. During General Hunter's raids through the countryside, a soldier "came [into her kitchen] and told [her] that he wanted [the mare] and said if [she] didn't open the door he would break it open." As with Charity, Hass followed the soldier, "trying to recover [the horse] but failed." To add insult to injury, Federals visited her again the next day and took all her corn, "leaving [her] about three pecks for [her] support, which was all [she] had in the world." Over in Augusta County, free woman of color Mary Blackburn was caring for her sick husband when men of General Hunter's command seized her property. After carrying off her horse, bridle, and saddle, the soldiers came into her house to take her flour and bacon. Perhaps knowing it would do no good, Blackburn's only protest was to tell "one of [the soldiers] I thought he might leave me a little flour."¹³ Even though widely regarded as trustworthy in their political sympathies, black women's precarious situations as widows, soldier's wives, or caretakers of sick relatives did not prevent Federals

¹³ Testimony of Martha Jane Charity in Claim of William Charity, Charles City County, Virginia; Claim of Judith Hass, Campbell County, Virginia; and Claim of Mary Blackburn, Augusta County, Virginia, all SCC-NA. William G. Thomas emphasizes the emancipation of enslaved African Americans and relief of Unionist civilians from Confederate depredations. I build on this work by examining women's political sympathies and the ways in which Union soldiers disregarded these sentiments. See Thomas, "Nothing Ought to Astonish Us," 242-243.

from entering their houses, taking their belongings, and refusing to listen to their pleas for leniency.

Working-class white Virginia women fared little better at the hands of Hunter and Sheridan. Mary Jane Clem of Shenandoah County, a white woman and a Union sympathizer, watched from her house during the summer of 1864 as Union soldiers came to her property, went into her barn, and took her and her sister-in-law's horses. Clem did not even have time to complain. Catharine Fravel, a widow living alone who baked bread and cared for sick Union soldiers, clearly felt her generosity would be enough to protect her from further incursions. When Union cavalry began taking hundreds of pounds of her corn and one of the two pigs she raised "for family use," Fravel protested to a Federal officer. In spite of her pleas and her generosity, the officer told her "they would take it any how" so "he did not interfere to prevent them." Elizabeth Garber of Augusta County, on the other hand, did not sit idly by as Hunter's men tried to take her horses. Instead, she confronted them, only to have them tell her that they wanted them "for artillery." Garber countered these assertions, declaring that she "needed them more than the army did."¹⁴ White women's protests and requests for protection did them no more good than they had for black women. Women's generosity and appeals to soldierly duty no longer spared them from the harsh effects of war: ordered to scorch the earth, Federals had to be deaf to women's pleas.

Loyal women found that soldiers only became bolder as the campaign stretched into late summer and fall. Lydia Fishburn, a loyalist and Augusta resident, was unfortunate enough to receive repeated visits from Union soldiers. Fishburn, a married mother of nine children, watched as General Hunter's soldiers took her horses, and at a later date Sheridan's men took her

¹⁴ Claim of Elizabeth Garber, Augusta County, Virginia; Claim of Mary Jane Clem and Catharine Fravel, Shenandoah County, Virginia, all SCC-NA.

sheep from her yard and then entered her house, removing “pantry stores,” including hundreds of pounds of corn and nearly one hundred pounds of butter. Although she complained about every article taken, the men told her that they “needed the horses for Army purposes, and the corn to feed and also the hay, and the provisions to eat.” Sarah Williams, a widow and resident of Shenandoah County, stressed to Southern Claims Commission officials that she could not even list the amount of property taken by Union soldiers. Williams reported that her property was taken even though she cooked for soldiers whenever they were near her, including “one occasion [where she] cooked for some union cavalry nearly all day the hardest days work I ever did.” The men consumed a bushel of eggs as well as milk, butter, apple butter, and bread. Although Williams complained about how much of her property was taken given how much she had already donated to the cause, the officer “said they would have it.”¹⁵ In the eastern theater, raiding developed from a policy of living off the land regardless of political sympathies or family hardships to taking everything from local families. The protection Federals now offered to white loyalist women was leaving them with a roof over their heads.

¹⁵ Claim of Lydia Fishburn, Augusta County, Virginia; Claim of Sarah R. Williams and Claim of Susannah Bly, Shenandoah County, Virginia; all SCC-NA.



Figure 5. Edwin Forbes, *Bummers [Foragers]*—Foraging parties usually consisted of several soldiers from a particular regiment tasked with heading out into the countryside to round up provisions for army use. Here, war correspondent Edwin Forbes depicts the link between raiding and intimate space, showing a group of Union soldiers visiting the modest farmhouse of women civilians somewhere in Virginia (Library of Virginia).

Soldiers singled out white women suspected to be Confederate sympathizers for general raiding and for complete and utter property destruction. Unionist Elizabeth Mummaw of Frederick County nearly had her house burned after a Rebel neighbor, pretending to be loyal, attempted to goad Federals into incendiaryism with stories of the family's Confederate sympathies. Even though Sheridan's soldiers cleaned her out, Mummaw was simply grateful that it had not been worse. Two Union soldiers guarded Mummaw's property, placed at the home after Federals had taken everything they wanted. The family and friends of Rebel Louise Humphreys Carter were not so fortunate. Fifty years after the war, Carter vividly remembered

the events of that summer. Although her plantation near Bermuda Hundred was spared, she insisted that Sheridan “destroy[ed] every house in his track.” A Union soldier stationed as a guard at her house arrived at her brother’s place just in time “to put out the fire.” The houses of Carter’s neighbors “were laid low.” Carter placed the blame squarely on General Grant’s soldiers, emphasizing that “McClellan . . . would never have allowed this destruction . . . [he] was a gentleman, and . . . Lincoln did not care for his methods of warfare and had him removed.”¹⁶ This late in the war, Sherman’s hardened soldiers, many of whom had seen service in the western theater, had become fed up with civilians who pretended to be loyal in order to spare their property. And so these soldiers took everything, setting “gentlemanly” behavior aside, and reserving its protection only for women whose political sympathies could be verified by Union officers.

Sheridan’s destruction of the Valley, which toward the end embraced a literal scorched earth policy, was complete by winter 1864. Even seasoned Union soldiers accustomed to the army’s devastation of the Old Dominion seemed awed by the sheer amount of damage. Thomas Campbell of Ohio cited the success of Sheridan’s September orders to destroy “all the wheat & barns containing it” in Harrisonburg and Staunton. As a result, “not a stack of wh[e]at or barn . . . [is] left standing” across 25 miles of Virginia countryside. Rather than pointless destruction, Campbell felt the measure justified, since “if left in our rear . . . twould be giving aid & comfort to the rebs,” and so “the innocent suffer with the guilty.” In December, New York cavalryman Henry Dove camped with Sheridan’s men in Snicker’s Gap during a scouting party, and marveled that “Sheridan’s cavalry have burnt everything for about 20 miles this side of the mountains,” including “houses barns grain and all and drove off all the cattle and sheep.” Dove

¹⁶ Claim of Elizabeth Mummaw, Frederick County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Louise Humphreys Carter Reminiscences, pgs 14-15, LV.

admitted that “it looked hard to see every thing burning up,” qualifying this moment of pity by telling his father, “but we could not help it.”¹⁷ For commanders and enlisted men, the language of necessity validated raiding, encouraged raiding, and rationalized raiding throughout the campaign. Viewing the destruction as something that could not be helped removed Federals from direct responsibility and absolved them of blame for instituting policies that disregarded boundaries between battlefield and home front.

The Western Theater: Guerillas, Stragglers, and Rebels, Spring and Summer 1864

Raiding in the western theater differed in tone and character because commanders walked a fine line between punishing rebels and protecting the loyal. Large concentrations of Unionist civilians and a large Union army presence resulted in the army focusing more on subduing guerrillas and protecting civilians from stragglers. Colonel Henry McConnell of Ohio illustrated this balance in a report of his operations in northern middle and east Tennessee, stating that he found “Old Columbus . . . to be the veriest den of thieves and murderers” so he “removed the women and children and burned it.” Even so, McConnell alerted his superiors that civilians in this same area were “bordering upon famine. Families without regard to politics are eaten out and plundered by . . . rangers.” Brigadier General Nathan Kimball showed a similar balance of vengeance and charity in Arkansas, declaring that he intended to “protect . . . all citizens who may be in the country” with the significant caveat that they “stand firm in their allegiance” to the U.S. Government. Kimball ordered an officer stationed in Clarksville, Arkansas to “hang or

¹⁷ September 30, 1864, Thomas Campbell Diary, USAHEC; Henry Dove to Father, December 5, 1864, Henry Dove Letter, LV; for references to burning during the spring, summer, and fall campaigns, see also May 21 23, 26, June 17, 18, July 12, August 16, and October 5, 1864, Thomas Campbell Diary; Andrew J. Lorish to “My dear Brother Sister & Neice,” September 11, 1864, Andrew J. Lorish Letters; Henry H. Houghton Memoirs, n.p.; Samuel Brooks to “Deair Wife,” May 31, 1864, Samuel Brooks Correspondence; September 29 and October 1, 8, 1864, Albert H. Artman Diary; September 17, 27 and October 3, 4, 1864, Allen Baker, Jr. Diary; and Napoleon Bonaparte Hudson to Brother, March 12, 1864, Napoleon Bonaparte Hudson Letters; all USAEHEC. For an attempt to calculate some of the damage done during the Valley Campaign, see Thomas, “Nothing Ought to Astonish Us,” 240-241; records of destruction by southern women and Union soldiers lead to questions about whether or not Union soldiers distinguished between civilians based on their political sympathies. See Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 185.

shoot” guerrillas. According to Kimball, civilians’ personal property “will hurt no one.”¹⁸

Although western theater commanders were the first to employ “scorched earth” policies used by Sherman and Sheridan, even as late as spring 1864 some still recognized the utility in punishing guerrillas directly rather than letting all inhabitants feel the hard hand of war.

Unfortunately, the brutality that commanders sanctioned against guerrillas sometimes leaked over into soldiers’ treatment of women and children. In Mississippi, Colonel William T. Shaw regretted that “men of this command have been guilty of pillaging from private houses articles of no value to the soldiers, but important to every household, such as clothing of women and children.” In response to these outrages, Shaw ordered that “no soldiers shall enter a house occupied by family” and that “nothing is to be taken from private houses . . . except provisions . . . as are necessary for the subsistence of the army.” In Louisiana, commanders found that existing orders prohibiting straggling and pillaging proved ineffective; instead of decreasing, “straggling and pillaging . . . is increasing,” declared Assistant Adjutant-General Frederick Speed. Speed minced no words, referring to the men as “cowards that diminish our ranks” who “content themselves with the plunder of innocent women and children.”¹⁹ The problem was especially difficult in the western theater: large numbers of civilians, many who were assumed to be disloyal, combined with policies which condoned rough treatment of civilians if warranted, hardened veterans toward the plight of southern women and children and gave opportunity to unethical soldiers.

Enlisted men in the western theater had seen enough of the war to doubt anything and everything that civilians told them. While marching through Florida, James McCann Dunn encountered an 80-year-old woman who sought sympathy from Union soldiers since she was old

¹⁸ *OR*, ser. 1, 32/1:156; *OR*, ser. 1, 34/2:705; *OR*, ser. 1, 34/3:180. For guerrilla warfare and its relationship to Union military policy, see Witt, *Lincoln’s Code*, 187-191; 234-237; Blair, *With Malice Toward Some*, 144-145.

¹⁹ *OR*, ser. 1, 32/2:427; *OR*, Ser. 1, 34/4:187; Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 156-157, 160.

and lived alone. Dunn believed that she “lie[d]” in order to get preferential treatment. Once he and his regiment arrived in Louisiana, he displayed a similar lack of empathy for civilians. Although he and his regiment were greeted by “several white women” who “cheered” and “wav[ed] handkerchiefs,” Dunn felt little remorse in leaving the women’s houses “in flames,” since “our fleet was fired upon 2 miles below.” Frederic Henry Kellogg learned well the lessons of raiding taught by Sherman’s army, and once he and his regiment arrived in Alabama he wasted little time putting the training to good use. When rations were slow to come in, Kellogg and his friends found a house belonging to African Americans from which they took “ham . . . meal . . . a jar of honey . . . molasses and some dried apples.” Whether due to a desire for revenge or to satisfy empty bellies, Federal soldiers, particularly late in the war, had no qualms about inflicting hard war tactics on civilians.²⁰

For their part, civilians felt caught between vengeful Federal officers on the one hand and unprincipled stragglers on the other. Alice Williamson of Gallatin bitterly complained about Union commander Eleazar A. Paine’s methods of subduing the local population. Paine threatened—and sometimes even carried through with his threats—to kill male civilians as punishment for Confederate bushwhacking and to set fire to the homes of civilians who harbored guerrillas. Federal abuses struck closer to home when the “yanks” took Williamson’s father’s horse, swearing to her that it was actually a government animal. Nannie Haskins of nearby Clarksville, Tennessee reported the difficulties Federals had in controlling rogue soldiers, some of whom robbed and murdered local civilians. The problem became so acute that Haskins and

²⁰ April 1 and 26, 1865, James McCann Dunn Diary; Frederic Henry Kellogg to Mother, January 29, 1865, Frederic Henry Kellogg Letters; both USAHEC.

her neighbors grew accustomed to it, barely giving the violence “a passing thought.”²¹ The evolution of raiding in the western theater demonstrated the amount of distrust between Union soldiers and southern civilians—whether regular troops or stragglers, Yankees treated women as less than trustworthy. And Federals viewed house burnings and raiding as retribution for white women’s duplicity.

Yet raiding in the western theater was not as consistent or methodical as it was in the eastern theater’s more targeted campaigns. To many white Confederate women, it seemed completely haphazard, as it did to Kate Stone of Madison Parish, Louisiana. Noting the frequent Yankee raids in the region after the fall of Nashville, Stone remarked how some plantations had been “burned by the Yankee bands” while others had “not [been] molested,” attributing the difference to the “temper of the officer in charge.” Those officers who were more “good-natured” might refrain from burning rebel property, yet “most” were “malicious.” But luck also played a role. Stone’s house remained intact, even though Federals who passed through the area in March of 1863 “discussed stopping to raid [it],” but were prevented by an officer who pointed out that there were “only ladies and children” in the home. Lucy Virginia French, situated in Middle Tennessee, never could be quite sure when Federal soldiers would visit her or what they would take. Although her home was well stocked, she nevertheless had “many misgivings surrounded as we are by men who enter anyone’s house at any hour and appropriate . . . anything they choose and you dare not utter a word of protest.” By 1865, French no longer believed that the loss of provisions was the worst that could happen as news of “recent house burnings” circulated in the area. All that she now wished for was to “be assured that we would be allowed to remain in peace in our home,” even though she declared that she would “not be surprised at

²¹ February 19, March 3, April 23, and August 25, 1864, Alice Williamson Diary, Duke; Uffelman, et al., eds., *The Diary of Nannie Haskins Williams*, 71. See also French, *L. Virginia French’s War Journal*, 95-98, 102, 103; Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, 204-210.

any time [to] have our house burned over our heads” and that she “could bare it resolutely.”

Faced with the unpredictability of raiding policies, elite women in the western theater recognized their good fortune if they managed to escape raids and house burnings.²²

Vengeful tactics against Confederate women were particularly acute if the women lived in areas uncontrolled by either the Union or Confederate army. In these contested locations, usually in Deep South regions, civilian women more frequently experienced raids that did not distinguish between war resources and unnecessary destruction. Louisa Forbes Henry, the wife of a Confederate quartermaster, tried to hide from Union soldiers in a cabin in wooded north Alabama. Federals thoroughly searched the property, threatened to burn it, and absconded with the family’s mules, “sow, and a pair of old drawers” belonging to Henry’s husband. In New Albany, Mississippi, Elizabeth Jane Beach, the wife of a doctor and mother of three wrote her parents about a Union army raid during July. In less than twenty four hours the soldiers accomplished an astonishing amount of destruction, thronging the “house, garden, yard & orchard,” taking “corn or fodder, chickens, vegetables, cooking utensils . . . [and] searching my house over & over.” Beach declared that they “tore [her] house all to pieces it would take [her] a week to mess it up like they did,” even going so far as to take all her husband’s clothes and “would have taken [her] dresses if [she] had not fought over them.” After the soldiers left, Beach had “nothing to eat at all” since the soldiers had taken “every solitary thing I had, except one jar of lard and my salt.” Isabelle Wood Johnston, refugeeing in Auburn, Alabama, described the action of Union soldiers during a raid in summer of 1864 as “carnage, thieving, and destruction.” Federals ordered the owner of Johsnton’s boarding house to “bake bread for sixty men” or soldiers would “burn down the house over our heads.” The entire boarding house was soon

²² Anderson, ed., *Brokenburn*, 128, 181; French, *L. Virginia French's War Diary*, 115, 136; Ash, *When the Yankees Came*, 92-93.

“emptied of furniture and clothing,” and in the morning after the Union soldiers finally departed, Johnston was only left with “the clothes on [her] back and the jewelry [she] had secreted about [her] person.”²³ Raiding in the western theater illustrates the ways in which it often descended into pillaging. When civilians’ personal property became war resources, soldiers felt that they had the right to take anything and everything they needed.

Enslaved women also smarted under the arbitrary nature of raiding in the western theater. Some raids, as the one that Carol Graham of El Dorado landing witnessed, were fairly straightforward, with Federal soldiers coming in “droves stealing horses, setting the cotton on fire and taking [something] to eat.” Other soldiers seemed to enjoy destruction for destruction’s sake, as Omelia Thomas’s mother witnessed, when soldiers “took all old master’s stuff” and “th[rew] it out and rode their horses through it when they didn’t want it for th[em]selves.” Avalena McConico witnessed similar destructiveness in Mississippi, when soldiers milked a cow, cut off both of its hindquarters, and then “le[ft] the rest of the cow there.” While some enslaved women, such as Lizzie McCloud, watched as the “Yankees burned up everything Ma[ster] John Williams had,” others insisted that Federals “never bothered the n[egroes’] quarters.” What was most incomprehensible to enslaved women was the way in which Federals treated them, as soldiers seemed to see no discrepancy between commanding their labor, destroying their owner’s property, and then interrogating them as to whether their owners treated them properly. Rosa Simmons recalled one such bizarre occurrence when Union soldiers raided the plantation she lived on in Arkansas’s Cypress Creek. As soldiers drank “the sweet milk and

²³ Louisa Forbes Henry to Ma [Louisa Clark Boddie], March 28, 1864, Boddie Family Papers; Elizabeth Jane Beach to Father and Mother, July 29, 1864, Beach [Elizabeth Jane] Letter [emphasis in original], both MSDAH; Isabelle Wood Johnston, “An eyewitness account of Gen. Lovell H. Rousseau’s raid on Auburn in 1864,” n.d., Isabelle Wood Johnston Narrative, FHS. Contrast these experiences with those of Emilie McKinley of Vicksburg, who after the siege only dealt with soldiers who annoyed her with frequent talk of their political loyalties. Gordon A. Cotton, ed., *From the Pen of a She-Rebel: The Civil War Diary of Emilie Riley McKinley* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 2001), 62, 64, 65.

took all the butter, turkeys and hogs,” the plantation cook warned the men that she would tell her owner about the destruction. Simmons remembered the soldiers chiding the woman by telling her that they were “tryin[g] to free her” and promising that “there wouldn’t be any more hard times after the war.” In spite of their promises, Simmons commented that she “sure ha[d] seen some hard times.” Enslaved African American women seemed to take one lesson away from raiding, and that was that Federal soldiers seemed more interested in destroying rebel property than in ensuring the health and safety of African Americans.²⁴

In spite of the frequent excesses of raiding in the western theater, Federals remained convinced that it was justified on the grounds that civilian loyalty could not be trusted. After a failed expedition from Memphis into Mississippi, Brigadier General Samuel Sturgis blamed the army’s rout on the fact that “our movements and numbers are always known to the enemy because every woman and child is one of them.” Sturgis felt little remorse living off the country during the raid, only pausing at the home of a sick woman to leave her a little corn. Even good behavior did not protect noncombatants in the western theater from vengeful soldiers. Although southwestern Missouri women and children spent 1864 living “quiet[ly] and cultivat[ing] their farms . . . expecting the protection of U.S. troops,” the 15th Kansas Cavalry plundered them of cattle, sheep, oxen, wagons, horses, and “tore the clothing off of women in search of money, and threaten[ed] to burn houses.” In summary, the officer reported, the Kansas soldiers “acted worse than guerrillas.” The balance seemed hard to strike. Later that winter in Fayetteville, Arkansas, Brigadier General Cyrus Bussey found it necessary to admonish Colonel La Rue Harrison for allowing men to “commi[t] the most outrageous excesses, robbing and burning houses

²⁴ Carol Graham, Omelia Thomas, Avalena McConico, Lizzie McCloud, and Rosa Simmons in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 10: 4-5, 9-10, 26, 157-158, 178, 232-233, 301-302; see also 60, 121, 201.

indiscriminately . . . let war be made on guerrillas and not women and children.”²⁵ With a large amount of territory to control and a civilian population with a history of dissembling, Federals in the western theater had difficulty maintaining a consistent, restrained approach in their interactions with women and children. Too often, soldiers raided indiscriminately, seeking vengeance on guerrillas *and* their families, friends, and neighbors, without pausing to consider that some women and children may have been innocent.

Experiments with Raiding: The Atlanta Campaign, Spring-Summer 1864

As with other areas, the attitudes of commanders toward property destruction in Georgia and the Carolinas changed slowly but surely during the course of the war. William Tecumseh Sherman, who first used raiding during the Meridian, Mississippi campaign of late 1862, showed a certain amount of constraint and concern for civilian women and children as late as June 1864. Sherman wrote a fellow commander in Kentucky that it was right and lawful for the military to intervene in order “to protect life and property,” and to make civilians behave or be sent away “where they won’t keep their honest neighbors in fear of danger, robbery, and insult.” His advice included both men and women, for as he put it, “I do not object to men or women having what they call “Southern feelings” . . . but these become a “crime when enlarged to mean love of murder, of war, desolation, famine, and all the horrid attendants of anarchy.”²⁶ Even in the summer 1864, Sherman reasoned that the military should only enter civilians’ domestic spaces to make the community safer for all, particularly the loyal.

Even so, enlisted soldiers remained suspicious about caring for civilians. While stationed in McAfee’s Church, Georgia, John A. Boon of Illinois described how a portion of a regiment was detailed to a nearby town to “get a family. [The soldiers] brought them inside our lines so

²⁵ *OR* ser. 1, 39/1:95, 151; *OR* ser. 1, 41/4:891; *OR* ser. 1, 48/1:1008.

²⁶ *OR* ser. 1, 39/1:135; Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 172-173; for the early examples of Sherman’s raiding tactics, see Royster, *Destructive War*, 324.

we could give them food and keep them from starving.” Boon seemed unhappy about the matter, stating that “whilst the men are in the Rebel army fighting us we are feeding their families.” Iowan Ezra Kidder, stationed in nearby Woodville, Alabama, agreed, declaring there to be no Union people at all in the South, and that the “blasted Rebs will come into our lines and get rations and often give them to the same guerrillas to let them come and kill our boys.” Kidder felt that North Alabama residents only pretended to be loyal because they were starving.²⁷ To Union soldiers, the army’s policy of caring for southern women and children, while noble, tied up military personnel and army resources to aid the female relatives of the men they were fighting.

Union soldiers remedied the high command’s inordinate concern for the property of southern civilians by meting out unsanctioned destruction early in the Atlanta campaign. After Federal forces captured Rome, Georgia in May 1864, soldiers reveled in general pillaging. New Yorker Peter Funk described how Rome’s “residents fled in terror from the Yankees headed by Sherman, whose very name was a dread to them. Many of the houses were pillaged in a short time, some of the soldiers going so far as to set them on fire and ravaging things indiscriminately where . . . it would only cause suffering among the women and little ones.” John Boon took a different view of the destruction, commenting to his wife about how “the boys were soon all over the town . . . I saw them carry off more than one thousand lbs. of tobacco. . . I got five lbs. of good smoking tobacco and . . . also got some good cigars.”²⁸ Although quite different from the raiding that would come later, since Rome was largely depopulated when soldiers committed their destruction, this behavior and soldiers’ reaction to it shows that soldiers were far from

²⁷ John A. Boon to Friends, January 15, 1864, John A. Boon Letters; Ezra Kidder to unidentified, April 10, 1864 and April 14, 1864, Ezra Kidder Letters; both USAHEC.

²⁸ John A. Boon to Friends, May 19, 1864, John A. Boon Letters; May 20, 1864, Peter W. Funk Diary, both USAHEC.

united in their attitudes toward raiding. While some deplored the destruction of homes and the suffering it might cause to women and children, others saw a chance to enjoy worldly pleasures that army life had long denied them.

Although raiding and large scale foraging were not yet sanctioned from above, Union soldiers happily lived off the land in northwestern Georgia. Illinoian John Boon cheerily wrote home about the “good . . . country” between Chattanooga and Rome, and how “the people were well fixed. They were too well fixed and that was what ailed them but they learned a dear lesson.” Frederic Henry Kellogg of the 15th Illinois felt no shame in telling his family about how he shot a hog and then lied to his colonel about it, telling the officer that “we had no meat to eat.” Kellogg admitted to his family that “we did have some meat . . . but I wanted some fresh and I got it too.” Once in Georgia with Sherman’s army, Kellogg continued raiding, even countering his mother’s rebuke of his destruction of rebel property by instructing her “you ought to have been in the rear of the 17th army corps as we were two days. They left nothing in the houses and burnt nearly all the outbuildings and all the fences. We are not half so bad for we only take their corn and bacon and let our horses eat their wheat and oats, sometimes drive off their cattle and kill a pig occasionally.”²⁹ While still enjoying full rations and without orders to live entirely off the land, soldiers had to be sneaky about taking what they wanted. Even so, neither soldier seemed overly concerned about taking private property or stealing from loyal civilians, instead placing the blame on civilians themselves who tempted the soldiers with the overabundance of their possessions.

²⁹ John A. Boon to Friends, May 19, 1864, John A. Boon Letters; Frederic Henry Kellogg to Mother, April 16, 1864 and June 20, 1864, Frederic Henry Kellogg Letters, both USAHEC. Sherman himself said that his primary targets during the Atlanta campaign were cutting off the railroad and destroying Confederate manufacturing rather than confiscating and destroying private property. See Royster, *Destructive War*, 322.

Unsanctioned raiding particularly affected loyal northwestern Georgia women. During and after the Battle of Resaca, Union soldiers swarmed women's houses in Georgia's Gordon County for sustenance. Elizabeth Miller, a widow and mother of six, was unfortunate enough to live right near the battlefield. Miller described how her place was "covered with soldiers" who soon "commenced killing [her] hogs." Even though Miller was a Unionist, widely known for aiding Union men escaping Confederate service, her political sympathies garnered her little relief. Miller complained to Union officers to no avail, as the commanders insisted "they were out of supplies, and were compelled to subsist off the country." Fellow Gordon County resident Eliza Robertson heard a similar excuse from Union soldiers who took her horse, chickens, sweet potatoes, and barrels of flour and syrup. "The troops said they were subsisting entirely off the country, and . . . I think it was so. I know they took everything to eat they could find in the country," Robertson stated. Wealthy plantation owner Anna Skelly fared little better than her less prosperous neighbors. Skelly described in vivid detail how substantial amounts of her property were "taken by soldiers of Genl Sherman's army . . . you never saw such hungry people in your life—they just drove the hens off the roost & ate the same eggs—they drank from pails of milk—we had servants cooking all day baking bread cooking ham & c.—The day after they left we ate boiled corn & had nothing else to eat."³⁰

Although these Gordon County residents faced incursions into their domestic domains by soldiers, all three admitted that Federals treated them "with a good deal of respect," which they attributed to their Union sympathies. Elizabeth Miller went as far as to say that Union soldiers had protected her "other than the taking of my property," perhaps to soften her claim for compensation or as an acknowledgement that even loyal women did not expect their property to

³⁰ Claim of Elizabeth Miller, Claim of Eliza Robertson, and Claim of Anna Skelly, trustee, Gordon County, Georgia; all SCC-NA.

be left untouched. At least in these early days, loyal Georgians took the invasion of Georgia and the introduction of raiding as signs that it was their turn to contribute to the war effort.³¹

Although some women understood the need to donate to the army, Northwestern Georgia civilians also contended that Federal soldiers should not completely clean them out. Bartow County resident Sarah Scott, a Unionist and mother of four, made no complaint to officers taking her property but “felt they should leave me a portion of it, for my family, but they said they could not” because “their army was nearly destitute of rations at that time, and they had orders to take provisions where they could find it.” Not only that, Federals told Scott that it would do her and her family good to have nearly all their possessions taken, because if Union soldiers did not take it, “others would take it.” Martha Barrett, daughter of Nancy Russell, recounted how her elderly mother had to apply to General Hooker to protect her farm from Union soldiers camped nearby. Even with the guard, soldiers took nearly \$3000 worth of her belongings. The elderly Mary McDonald, another Bartow resident, testified that Union soldiers told her that they had “orders to take everything—that they were intending to break down the rebellion.” McDonald had a hard time believing that the possessions of an elderly woman, including one horse, several cows and calves, hogs, oxen, sheep, flour, and salt, were all that critical for Union success. Indeed, McDonald pressed soldiers on whether they actually could use all of the property, and “some of the soldiers . . . said they needed it and some said they did not need it . . . [she didn’t] know whether they needed it or not.” Sarah Crow’s family gave so much of their belongings to Union soldiers that they followed the Union army when it fell back to Chattanooga in the fall.³² By late spring and early summer, Georgia Unionists felt the shortages that accompanied soldiers determined on supplementing rations with the products of their households. Some even felt a

³¹ Claim of Elizabeth Miller, Gordon County, Georgia, SCC-NA.

³² Claim of Sarah Scott, Testimony of Martha Barrett in Claim of Nancy Russell, Claim of Mary McDonald, and Claim of Sarah Crow, all Bartow County, Georgia, SCC-NA.

good deal of resentment toward Federals who raided indiscriminately without considering women's political sympathies or family situations.

Enslaved women in northwestern Georgia felt the satisfaction of seeing their owner's property being stolen and the frustration of Union soldiers taking their own hard-earned possessions. Callie Elder, a Rome County resident and former enslaved woman, remembered how her father had been instructed to hide their owner's "fine stallion" and gold from the Yankees. Elder recalled how the stallion "kept squealin'" until the soldiers found him and the gold. Elder's grandmother thought she had a better hiding place for her money: she hid her ten dollar gold piece in the butter she was churning on the back porch. Nevertheless, the soldiers "poured [th]at buttermilk out right [th]ar on [th]e porch and got grandma's money."³³ Elder's comments highlight the ways in which raiding's invasion of the home spared neither white masters and mistresses or African Americans. All felt the pangs of soldiers taking not only necessary supplies but also the personal possessions of Georgia civilians.

Federal soldiers noticed the effects of the spring raids later that fall. When Sherman's army returned west in October 1864 while pursuing Confederate General John B. Hood, Ohioan William W. Osborn observed the devastated countryside surrounding the Union army camp in Adairsville, Georgia, and declared that the civilians "are in a suffering condition. Nothing to eat only what the soldiers give them." Fellow Ohioan Alfred Wilcox, on the march in nearby Summerville, casually described finding "plenty" of forage in the country. Wilcox also noted the depleted countryside where he saw "no stores that were not deserted and no houses that contained citizens except one and in that the women and children were gathering potatoes to keep them from the soldiers." Wilcox connected the army's foraging to the destitution of

³³ Callie Elder in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:313.

civilians, commenting that “We are taking everything clean. Leaving nothing for the citizens.”³⁴ The heavy foraging in northwestern Georgia had brought the war to southern civilians, but it also caused much suffering among women and children. At least in this instance, raiding made female noncombatants more dependent on the Federal army for provisions—an irony seemingly lost on Union soldiers.

Raiding Intensifies: Atlanta and Beyond, Fall-Winter 1864

Raiding policies took a sudden turn with the capture of Atlanta as Sherman’s determination to destroy the railroad and burn the city necessarily required the evacuation of civilians and the destruction of their property. The difficulties in controlling civilian populations surely influenced his decision to remove civilians from Atlanta. While Sherman defended his orders to Confederate General John B. Hood as “a kindness to these families . . . to remove them now . . . from scenes that women and children should not be exposed to,” Sherman proclaimed to Major General Henry W. Halleck that “We want the houses. . . for military storage and occupation. We want to contract the lines of defenses so as to diminish the garrison.” Although Sherman claimed wartime expediency, his primary concerns proved to be logistics and security. “A civil population calls for provost guards, and absorbs the attention of officers in listening to . . . complaints and . . . grievances . . . that are not military.” In addition, “the residence here of a poor population would compel us . . . to feed them or see them starve under our eyes” and “the . . . families of our enemies would be a . . . means to keep up a correspondence dangerous and hurtful to our cause.”³⁵ Whether friend or foe, civilian women in an urban setting proved an encumbrance that only prolonged the war. By sending these women beyond the lines and thus making them a problem to be dealt with by others, Sherman was free to use his resources to

³⁴ October 14 and 18, 1864, William W. Osborn Diary; October 16 and 19, 1864, Alfred Wilcox Diary; both USAHEC.

³⁵ *OR* ser. 1, 36/1:801; *OR* ser. 1, 36/1:416, *OR* ser. 1, 36/1:414.

subdue the Confederate army rather than attend to the wants and needs of southern women and children.

Enlisted men focused on how well they lived off the land in and around Atlanta, with few references to the women affected by the ransacking. Frederic Henry Kellogg wrote home about obtaining “7 mules 2 horses and all the tobacco we would carrie” in addition to “honey . . . a lot of meal and some flour.” Ohioan Lester Taylor echoed Kellogg’s sentiments, bragging to his family about how the army consumed “200 tons of rations per day, then there is the forage for horses and mules.” William Baugh assured his mother that “We have plenty to eat now. We live well. We get plenty of vegetables and fruit. We get apples, string beans, cucumbers, young potatoes, and plenty of other things.” John Humphrey wrote his wife about how “where ever we stop to fight we take fence rails, log houses, or timber of any kind to build breast works with.”³⁶ None of these soldiers mentioned civilians, as if the property they grabbed belonged to no one.

Soldiers seemed little concerned by the amount of personal property the army destroyed in Atlanta and its environs. Indeed, many soldiers made no reference to the raiding of southern homes that women documented so carefully. Instead, Federals congratulated themselves on treating civilian women much better than the Confederate army had. Wisconsin soldier Burr Murdock reported that “when we came in town the people was badly scared” because “the rebs told them we would burn the town.” But soon civilians warmed up to them, since “we use them a great deal better than their own soldiers did.” Charles Edward Bates commented on the dreadful condition of women and children refugees who “took flight to seek the protection of the

³⁶ Frederic Henry Kellogg to Mother, July 19, 1864 and August 16, 1864, Frederic Henry Kellogg Letters; July 8, 1864, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; both USAHEC; William G. Baugh to Mother, August 6, 1864, William G. Baugh Letters; John Humphrey to Wife, June 18, 1864, John Humphrey Papers; both Emory.

Southern military.” Bates described scenes of “clothing in rags, children by millions, food scarce, almost a famine in fact it was a hard sight.”³⁷

If soldiers and officers did pause to consider raiding’s effects, they highlighted their chivalry as they carried out orders. Union colonel Oscar Lawrence Jackson acknowledged Federal property destruction but minimized the suffering of local civilians. Detailed with three other companies to burn cotton in the Atlanta area, Jackson described finding the commodity “near a dwelling in which was a very sick woman.” Since Jackson “did not wish to bur[n] the building for fear the fire would spread to the dwelling house,” he ordered his men to move the cotton away before setting it on fire. Thomas Speed walked the streets after the army had occupied Atlanta for a few weeks, describing it “a city of deserted houses . . . people of refinement taste and wealth . . . have exiled themselves . . . and left [their homes] to be destroyed by our soldiers.”³⁸ Even though these soldiers acknowledged some of the effects of raiding—property destruction being one—the blame was placed squarely on civilians. Raiding no longer meant that soldiers should refrain from destroying women’s homes. Instead, this destruction became an inevitable part of war.

But destroying Atlanta did affect women civilians, some of whom did not have the luxury of fleeing.³⁹ Soldiers did not wait until civilians evacuated before beginning their demolition: as

³⁷ A survey of the Civil War Times Collection at the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the Civil War Collection at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia yielded few references by enlisted men to raiding or destruction of property around Atlanta. There could be several reasons for this. First, soldiers were busy fighting during the Atlanta campaign. Second, they may have thought these instances unremarkable. Burr Murdock to Sister, September 9, 1864, Murdock Family Tree, USAHEC; Charles Edward Bates to Parents, July 19, 1864, Charles Edward Bates Letter, VHS.

³⁸ Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 151; Thomas Speed to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Spencer Speed, September 13, 1864, Thomas Speed Letter Book, FHS.

³⁹ Most wealthy Georgia residents left once it seemed certain that Confederates could not hold the town. See Sarah ‘Sallie’ Conley Clayton, *Requiem for a Lost City: A Memoir of Civil War Atlanta and the Old South*, ed. Robert Scott Davis, Jr. (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1999), 126-129, 132-135; Robert Manson Myers, ed. *The Children of Pride: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 1191; T.H. Galloway, ed., *Dear Old Roswell: Civil War Letters of the King Family of Roswell, Georgia* (Macon: Mercer

soon as Federals entered the city, they began dismantling women's property. Polly Beadle, a free woman of color, was visiting a friend in early September when her neighbor ran up, exclaiming, "Lord Polly look up!" Beadle rushed home to find Union soldiers demolishing the fence around her house. The soldiers took her "dwelling house, stable, well house & fence to their camp, and made tents of the lumber . . . they took everything we had . . . we had nothing to eat & no house left" after the soldiers finished their work. While the destruction of homes was considered legitimate, since the lumber was used for army purposes, soldiers resorted to pillaging before and after the sack of Atlanta. Saletia Kennedy, who resided on a farm in Cobb County, watched as squads of soldiers repeatedly visited her house for supplies. Even the commissioner of claims admitted that Federals had "plundered the farm." By November, when the army's destruction of Atlanta's railroad was complete, soldiers continued their prelude to the March to the Sea by ransacking the property of Monemia Johnson and her husband. The freeborn African American Johnson filed a claim after the war for a staggering \$2,592. Johnson only received \$246, because the Claims Commission pointed out that much of what Union soldiers took from Johnson was "mere pillage. What was really & properly taken for army use we allow."⁴⁰ Poor white and black southern women, who lacked the means of wealthy white Confederates, faced a Union army that now sanctioned property destruction as a means of warfare. Already economically disadvantaged, these women faced an army with authority to take whatever property it deemed necessary, and one that was no longer allowed to offer them relief on the basis of their gender, race, or socioeconomic status. Poor white and black women suffered because of it.

University Press, 2003), 92. For elite Confederate women's responses to being turned out of Atlanta, see Frank, *Civilian War*, 53-56.

⁴⁰ Claim of Henry and Polly Beadles [*sic*], Claim of Lavenia Mangum, Claim of Saletia A. Kennedy, Fulton County, Georgia; Claim of Monemia Johnson, Cobb County, Georgia, all SCC-NA. The taking of southern property was not always so devastating for poor African American women. Sarah Gray told interviewers how her owner tried to pack up their belongings, including their slaves, to leave the Atlanta area before Sherman arrived. Instead, the party was overtaken by Union soldiers, who took the supplies, arrested the men, and encouraged the former slaves to follow them to Richmond. Sarah Gray in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:79.

The March to the Sea and through the Carolinas, Winter 1864-1865

The destruction of Atlanta complete, the Union army brought raiding in earnest to the residents of Georgia. Raiding now took on a different character, as soldiers would rely on foraging for survival. This became quite clear to Union soldiers once it was announced that the army would travel without relying on supply trains or wagons. As Illinois soldier and native of Germany Johann Heinrich Sudkamp explained, “we only got half rations . . . a three day ration sometimes had to last for 8 to 14 days. Sometimes it had to last 20 days.” Short rations required soldiers to live off the land. While traveling through Georgia, commanders picked two men “to go from place to place and rob and steal and see what they can get. They bring it [the supplies] close to the road where we have to pass. Then every company to which the men belonged . . . put it in their knapsack. If they got quite a lot then their rations would be taken away from them by the government.”⁴¹ By only giving soldiers half rations, the army could move swiftly and force soldiers to live off the land. Hunger proved a powerful motivator for Federals to bring destruction to the countryside.

Although raiding was now officially sanctioned as a war measure, Federal commanders sought to impose limits on the destruction. Brigadier General Giles Smith instructed officers and enlisted men in the 17th Corps to “keep constantly in mind that we are not warring upon women and children.” Foraging parties should “take such articles as are needed” and were forbidden to enter houses or to set fire to “a building or any other property, without orders.” The very next day, Major General J.C. Davis, commanding the 14th Corps, reproved his men for the “increase of straggling and marauding.” “Even in the midst of an enemy’s country,” Davis declared, “the dictates of humanity must at least be observed . . . no good can result . . . from indiscriminate

⁴¹ November 10, 1864, Johann Heinrich Sudkamp Diary, USAHEC.

destruction of property or the burning of the homes of women and children.”⁴² While the march through Georgia brought the war into southern civilians’ homes, some commanders at least attempted to prevent unnecessary destruction.

But regardless of orders, officers often had difficulty controlling rank and file soldiers. While on the march, Oscar Lawrence Jackson reported finding a soldier from another regiment “entering a house where there were women and children, evidently intending to pillage and rob,” a quite reasonable judgment given that the man was “at a bureau throwing out the contents.” Angry that the colonel had discovered him, the cavalryman answered rudely but soon left the house. Jackson stayed behind, “talking to the womenfolks and endeavoring to reassure them.” The commanding officer in Illinois soldier George Glossbrenner’s company did not realize that an Irish soldier named Hogan had stolen a feather bed from the home of an African American family until after the fact. The husband, wife, and child, who lived on their owner’s plantation, were trapped inside when their house broke out in flames. While other soldiers worked to put out the fire, Hogan stole their bed. Perhaps due to his egregious crime, or to the fact that he was Irish, the colonel had Hogan arrested by the provost marshal.⁴³ As some officers tried to enforce orders and explain to female civilians the difference between raiding for supplies and stealing possessions, others turned a blind eye or even participated in the pillaging themselves.

⁴² OR ser. 1, 44:481; OR ser. 1, 44:489; Grimsley, *Hard Hand of War*, 175. Royster argues that Sherman’s primary motivation was to demonstrate to southerners what it was like to live without the protection of a federal government. See Royster, *Destructive War*, 341.

⁴³ Jackson, *The Colonel’s Diary*, 165; November 25, 1864, George F. Glossbrenner Diary, USAHEC. For the behavior of enlisted men during the march, see Royster, *Destructive War*, 342-343; Frank, *Civilian War*, 57-59; Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman’s Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaign* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 76-77. Some historians argue that Sherman’s men treated civilians well, while others argue that Sherman and his commanders did not check soldiers’ destructive behavior as much as they could have. It is undeniable that Sherman and his men destroyed much southern property, and although immense damage was done, it was hardly systematic. See Royster, *Destructive War*, 342; Frank, *Civilian War*, 7-8; Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond*, 72.

From Atlanta to Savannah, Union soldiers exulted in how well they fared. William Baugh claimed that he “never lived so well in my life, as I did the last month,” describing how his company foraged “Honey, molasses, sweet Irish potatoes, pork, veal, mutton, flour & corn meal . . . I am getting fat as butter, living so well.” Baugh did admit, however, that he and his fellow soldiers were able to get so many things because they “foraged them from the people.” Many soldiers simply did not acknowledge the fact that their raids entailed taking provisions from women and children. Alfred Wilcox recorded how he and the men he foraged with found “plenty of forage, chickens, potatoes, pigs and sorghum” in Oxford, without mentioning the farms or homes that supplied such a bounty. A few days later Wilcox summed up the attitude of many soldiers: “It is surprising to see how perfectly ignorant we are that there is anyone else in the country to eat anything or use anything but ourselves. Anything we want we take wherever we find it no matter who owns it . . . The poor lose everything, the rich nearly all,” acknowledging that “of course much suffering must follow in our track.” Wilcox recognized the consequences of raiding. “But war necessarily causes suffering and if we conduct it so as not to hurt anybody we shall not accomplish our purpose. Let the people feel the weight of the war and they will be anxious to have it end.”⁴⁴ Wilcox’s explanation encapsulated why few soldiers mentioned personal interactions during the raids in Georgia: the suffering had become necessary, almost an integral part of the war. In a sense, Georgia civilians, loyal or disloyal, had brought it upon themselves.

Just as enlisted men regarded raiding as a necessary and even natural part of the war, so too did they seem unconcerned about the pillaging and marauding that went on during the march.

⁴⁴ William G. Baugh to Parents, November 7, 1864, and to Sister Lizzie, November 9, 1864, William G. Baugh Letters; November 18 and 26, 1864, see also November 16, 17, 21, and 22, 1864, Alfred Wilcox Diary; see also November 24, 27, and 28, 1864 and December 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15 1864, George F. Glossbrenner Diary; November 27, 1864, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; November 24, 1864, William W. Osborn Diary; John A. Boon to Family, December 17, 1864, John A. Boon Letters; all USAHEC.

These depredations particularly occurred once soldiers arrived in cities and towns. As Sherman's men reached Milledgeville, all hell broke loose. William Osborn recounted how soldiers visited a planter's "beautiful Mansion. And in it was a Nice Piano and beautiful furniture and fine looking Girls—and some of our troops went into the House and broke up the furniture and destroyed the Piano and went as far as to take the Ribbons off of diplomas belonging to the girls who was Graduates of some Institution." Alfred Wilcox blamed the destruction of Louisville on the fact that "there was no guard placed" so stragglers "sacked the town going into every house and taking or destroying every thing they pleased. Some one set a house on fire and it spread . . . and turned several families out of doors."⁴⁵ While neither Osborn nor Wilcox supposedly participated in the stealing, both considered it a natural outgrowth of raiding, only preventable if soldiers were carefully watched.

Local African American women sometimes aided marauding soldiers. Around Oxford, a few women of color instructed Federals where to find good horses in a nearby thicket and even offered to show the soldiers where they were hidden. Lester Dewitt Taylor remarked how local inhabitants "must have thought the Yankees could not hunt under ground, for they have buried gold, silver, clothing, meal," all to no avail since "the negroes often tell us where to dig to find them." Near Fernsbridge, two black women told Union soldiers of an old store and house where white residents had hidden their belongings. Upon investigating, the soldiers found "dishes, 4 gallons of strained honey, [and] very nice dresses and clothes from the store."⁴⁶ Aided by African Americans, soldiers continued to turn raiding into opportunities to steal from white, presumably Confederate, Georgians.

⁴⁵ November 23, 1864, William W. Osborn Diary; November 24 and 28, 1864, Alfred Wilcox Diary; both USAHEC; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 9.

⁴⁶ December 15, 1864, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; November 18 and 27, 1864, Alfred W. Wilcox Diary; see also John A. Boon to Family, December 17, 1864, John A. Boon Letters; all USAHEC.

Partnerships between white Union soldiers and women of color only went so far. Even those who were not outright hostile toward African American women viewed them as an “encumbrance” to the army and tried to discourage them from following Federals. Alfred Wilcox seemed annoyed when out foraging one day in Liberty County only to find that it was useless considering the number of African American women and children flocking to the army. William Osborn and his fellow soldiers were more typical, recording how they stopped at a beautiful plantation and soon commenced roasting peanuts, which Osborn felt no shame in reporting had been stolen from “the N[egroes].”⁴⁷ Raiding’s invasion of domestic space enabled soldiers to treat the civilians they encountered as mere pawns in the larger game of war. Particularly when it came to women of color, soldiers exploited civilians for personal gain and then conveniently overlooked their political sympathies and service.

Enslaved and free black Georgia women remembered the coercive and harsh aspects of their interactions with Sherman’s men. Della Briscoe of Georgia’s Putnam County recalled how Union soldiers had tied her father’s hands behind his back and forced him to show the soldiers where her owner’s mares were hidden. This was after soldiers had “tore up the interior” of the house and eaten all they had wanted from the farm. Julia Cole of Walton County recalled how “[Th]em sojers went in [th]e smokehouses and stores ev[er]ywhere and t[oo]k what [th]ey wanted.” Rachel Adams insisted that Yankees had stolen nearly everything her owner had. “[Th]at didn’t look right, did it?” she tartly observed.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ November 18, 1864 and December 12, 1864, Alfred W. Wilcox Diary; November 23, 1864, William Osborn Diary; both USAHEC; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 16-17. Joseph Glatthaar cites the partnerships between Sherman’s soldiers and African Americans, and does acknowledge some racist attitudes. I build on this work by including the voices of African American women, who often interpreted these interactions differently. See Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond*, 53-65.

⁴⁸ Della Briscoe, Julia Cole, and Rachel Adams in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 12:125, 235, 7.

Once the Union army arrived in Liberty County, a wealthy region with large rice plantations and a sizeable slave population, African American women reported that soldiers took possessions from everyone. Sylvia Baker recalled how she “cooked and worked for [the soldiers] till they went away . . . they went on and took all the property from us, and all the rest on the place. They made no difference they took it all clean from white as well as from the blacks.”

Jane Clem, another Liberty County resident, testified that she “labored” for the nearly \$500 worth of property that Union soldiers took from her. Clem watched soldiers come “right down the field” to her house and “they kept on coming in gangs till they had taken all the property.”

All soldiers said to Linda Jones was “how do you all do” before they began catching her chickens and taking her hogs, corn, and rice. “That was all they said,” Jones stated, “They went on there & took all the property.”⁴⁹ None of the women talked about directly challenging the soldiers who took their property. Perhaps they were afraid to confront white soldiers, or perhaps they realized it would do no good, or perhaps they assumed that the men could not tell the difference between what property belonged to them and what belonged to their owners. The ownership of the property certainly seemed to make little difference to Union soldiers.

When Union soldiers arrived in Savannah, the city’s women of color loudly protested Union soldiers’ incursions into their homes. As either free women or slaves who lived apart from their masters, many had accumulated significant property. Free woman of color Celia Boisfeillet said she “did not have a chance to do anything for the northern army” because “when they came here they helped themselves.” Boisfelleit reproved the soldiers, saying it was “hard to be stripped of everything,” and the men replied by accusing her of “hiding the things for the rebels or some white man.” “They spoke so crass,” Boisfelleit said, that she “did not say anything else.” Rachel

⁴⁹ Claim of Sylvia Baker, Claim of Julia Holmes, and Claim of Cesar and Linda Jones, Liberty County, Georgia; see also Claim of Lydia Baker, Claim of Patsy Campbell, Claim of Eliza James, Claim of Lucy McIver, and Claim of Rachel Norman, Liberty County, Georgia; all SCC-NA.

Bromfield had a similar interaction with soldiers, who told her as they took her property from the house she rented that “it was secession property.” When Bromfield challenged the men to ask her white neighbors who the property belonged to, they made no response “and went on and took it,” even as Union prisoners that Bromfield harbored in her house tried to reason with them.

Although these African American women had a history of showing kindness to imprisoned Union soldiers and Confederate deserters, their visibility as working-class laborers and their skin color marking them as slaves led Union soldiers to believe that they did not own their belongings. In many ways, black women were easy targets for Federals, who felt no obligation to treat them with the courtesy that they occasionally extended to white women.⁵⁰

White Confederate women in Georgia excoriated Sherman’s men for raiding their domestic sanctuaries. Northern born Dolly Lunt Burge, a widow running a plantation in Madison, Georgia, wrote that before she could even claim a guard, “like Demons [the Federals] rush[ed] in.” Even with a guard, Sherman’s men “came up behind [her house] tore down all [her] garden palings, made a road through my back yard & lot field, driving their stock & riding through, tearing down [her] fences & desolating [her] home. Wantonly doing it when there was no necessity for it.” Nevertheless, soldiers did not bother Burge’s house. Liberty County residents could not so easily guard their homes. Under the pretense of searching for weapons, Federals bothered both the Pond and Jones families. At the Pond plantation, Union soldiers first visited the slave cabins before entering the main house, “going through all the rooms . . . [taking] all the silverware and jewelry . . . and everything to eat that could be found.” To their credit, Cornelia Jones Pond noted that the men did not enter her bedroom. Both Mary Sharpe Jones and

⁵⁰ Claim of Celia Boisfeillet and Claim of Rachel Bromfield, Chatham, County, Georgia, SCC-NA; see also Claim of Diana Cummings, Claim of Harriet Dallas, Claim of Elizabeth Geary, Claim of Mary Jess, Claim of Georgianna Kelly, Claim of Judy Rose, Claim of Charlotte Thompson, and Claim of Eliza Williams, Chatham County, Georgia, SCC-NA. For the wartime experience of Savannah’s black women, see Jacqueline Jones, “Wartime Workers, Moneymakers: Black Labor in Civil War-Era Savannah,” in Harris and Ramey-Berry, 140-160.

Mary Jones Mallard also were visited by numerous groups of Union soldiers, who searched their home from top to bottom. Although the soldiers only stole a small gold pen—a victory the women credited to their constant presence—Federals did take nearly all of their food, leaving them only a small sack of meal and some rice “to keep us from starving . . . at other times they told us they meant to starve us to death.” When the women tried to appeal for an officer to guard the property, the soldiers said “they were all officers and would do as they pleased.” White Confederate women viewed these incursions as an assault on their gender, racial, and class privilege. Even this late in the war, many elite Georgia women still expected to receive protection from assaults on their homes; instead, they began to feel war’s severity.⁵¹

Surprisingly, Union soldiers made no mention of the destruction in Georgia’s Liberty and Chatham counties. Alfred Wilcox only reported one interaction with a white woman while in Liberty County with Kilpatrick’s command, and that was with Mrs. Brown, a plantation mistress and wife of a Confederate officer who did not relish playing hostess to Union soldiers. Wilcox commented that the woman was “very shrewd” and “talked to the Genl very sharply.” Some men even went so far as to avow, as did Ohioan Lester Dewitt Taylor, that “all private property as well as public is respected” in Savannah. Continuing their pattern of passing over raiding’s effects on southern women, whether free or enslaved, black or white, soldiers ignored—or remained unaware—of the ways in which Federals transgressed orders intended to prevent them from entering women’s private spaces.⁵²

⁵¹ Christine Jacobson Carter, ed., *The Diary of Dolly Lunt Burge, 1848-1879* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 159-162; Lucinda H. MacKethan, ed., *Recollections of a Southern Daughter: A Memoir by Cornelia Jones Pond of Liberty County* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 71-76; Myers, ed., *The Children of Pride*, 1220-1227. For elite women’s responses to Union soldiers, see Frank, *Civilian War*, 102.

⁵² December 6, 1864, Alfred Wilcox Diary; December 23, 1864, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; both USAHEC; see also William G. Baugh to Parents, December 25, 1864, William G. Baugh Letters, Emory.

If raiding ever wore kid gloves, they came off once Sherman's army entered South Carolina. In fact, Sherman's orders to his men in the "cradle of secession" began to encapsulate ideas about the fairness and necessity of raiding. Sherman ordered General Kilpatrick to "burn all cotton" but "spare dwelling houses that are occupied" and also to "teach your men to be courteous to women" but at the same time to "take all provisions and forage [that] you need." Just a few weeks later, Sherman sent another missive to Kilpatrick, articulating the ideology of raiding. He declared that the Federal army "[has] a perfect war right to the products of the country we overrun . . . let the whole people know that the war is now against them, because their armies . . . do not . . . defend their women and children and prevent us reaching their homes." Acknowledging raiding as a break with ideas of "civilized war," Sherman stated that he "want[ed] the people of the south to realize that fact that they shall not dictate laws of war or peace to us." Sherman's South Carolina orders singled out women's houses as legitimate objects of war. While the same balance of courtesy toward women was imposed—which at this point meant refraining from stealing their personal effects or doing them physical harm—the line between home front and battlefield had officially been erased.⁵³

No one had a better idea of the destruction that awaited South Carolina than enslaved women. Annie Lumpkin, who lived on a plantation near Columbia, described how she and other enslaved people prevented houses from being burned by "stand[ing] by [the] side of [the] road" and entreating Union soldiers "not [to] burn our white folks' house." Surprisingly, the trick worked. Nonetheless, times became difficult for African American women as the Yankees passed through. Rosa Starks remembered that the soldiers took up all of the "wine, rum, and liquor" as well as all the "silver and valuables" and left "one thousand" African American slaves

⁵³ *OR*, ser. 1, 47/2:351; *OR*, ser. 1, 47/2:543.

“cold and hungry.” In Woodward, Josephine Starks remembered that the Yankee destruction resulted in everyone on the place being put on “short rations” after the army left. Winnsboro resident Mary Woodward was incensed by a more personal Yankee thievery, as one soldier “took my lovely beads and put them ‘round his horse’s neck . . . leavin’ me sobbin[g].” “They say you must love your enemies . . . but I never have pray[ed] for [that] Yankee scamp,” Woodward confessed. Harriet Smith, enslaved on a Beaufort County plantation, remembered that Union soldiers “did not spare either white nor black.” Rose Goethe, also in Beaufort, “found [Union soldiers] in my house which they had broken open.” “They cleaned me out entirely,” Goethe remarked.⁵⁴ As soldiers wreaked vengeance on white South Carolinians for their treason, South Carolina’s African Americans also began to feel the war’s privations for the first time. Although few hoped to spare their provisions, Union soldiers’ refusal to differentiate between white and black property angered enslaved black women.

Federals stole just as much from free women of color, but the distance of these women from large plantations owned by white Confederates worked in their favor. While Federals took “every beast” Beaufort County resident Marry Orr owned, in addition to all her corn, they “gave [my clothes] back to me” after she begged for them. Orr complained to an officer, who only told her that she would get pay. Agnes Woodward was subjected to repeated raids by Federals, and took it upon herself to complain to “a gentleman who I judged to be a high officer and begged for protection.” Woodward’s pleas did little good, as the man told her “he could not protect me here, but I would have to go across the river to Beaufort.” Union soldiers took so much of Woodward’s property, even going so far as to take possession of her house, that she and her

⁵⁴ Annie Lumpkin, Rosa Starks, Josephine Starks, and Mary Woodward in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 3:130, 147, 154, 257; Claim of Harriet Smith and Claim of Rose Goethe; see also Claim of Ann Goethe, Beaufort County, South Carolina, all SCC-NA; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 45, 47, 48.

three young daughters had to set out on foot with what they could carry to the contraband camp on Port Royal Island. For Lavinia Cohen, even the presence of her husband did little to stop Yankees from taking her property. The most the soldiers did was to give her husband a receipt for what was taken. It took Union army personnel stationed at Hilton Head Island, to whom Cohen's husband risked his life to give information, to "furnish[h]" Cohen and her family with "some provisions as we had been entirely broke up by the first lot that came through." Free women of color's experiences at the hands of Federals were largely negative, but their ability to prove their political sympathies through their actions sometimes worked in their favor.⁵⁵

White Unionist women in South Carolina, particularly those who were poor and lived in isolated places, fared better at the hands of Federals. Nancy Sandifer of Barnwell County held that she "adhered to the Union cause throughout the war," and even so watched Union soldiers take all of her fowls, destroy her bee hives, and take all of her corn and fodder. And yet Sandifer fared pretty well, since she was able to ask for and obtain a guard, even though the soldier only guarded one room of her house. Ann Mew, an old woman who lived on the Coosawhatchie Swamp, had much of her property taken but felt satisfied that after complaining to the officer in charge, "he protected us personally and prohibited the soldiers from swearing and told them that we were ladies and that they must not take my clothes." Elizabeth Airs of Beaufort County was not so lucky, as she complained to a Union lieutenant about the killing of her hogs "but got no satisfaction," as the soldiers told her "never mind you will get pay for it all." Airs was so frightened at the taking of the property that even years later she had difficulty recalling how many of her possessions were taken. Emeline Condon attempted to plead her case even further, protesting the taking of her horse by holding it by the bridle and refusing to give it up, and yet

⁵⁵ Claim of Mary Orr, Claim of Agnes Woodward, and Claim of Lavinia Cohen, Beaufort County, South Carolina, all SCC-NA.

the soldiers “took [the mare] from [her].” Overwhelmed by the number of soldiers present at her small and isolated homestead, Condon felt too frightened to ask any questions but “only kept crying after my horse and our cattle.” Even though she “followed [the soldiers] some distance,” Condon failed to recover any of her property. As raiding progressed, Unionist women found that their treatment at the hands of Federals was largely determined by the whims of commanders. Obtaining a guard for a portion of one’s dwelling, and keeping soldiers from taking their clothes, were about as much as any of them could hope for.

Union soldiers’ intention to punish elite South Carolinians was quite clear to white Confederate women. Even before soldiers reached Columbia, Aiken resident and elite white Confederate Pauline DeCaradeuc readied herself for Yankee “raids,” describing how she and her family were in “most fearful times,” as the family knew that their wealth and location would make them a target for Federals bent on revenge. For two days, Union soldiers made repeated visits to the DeCaradeuc plantation, calling them “d[amne]d rebels” and demanding “liquor . . . gold . . . [and] silver” and breaking open every “door, drawer, [and] trunk,” smashing mirrors and furniture, and throwing clothing all over the floors. Later that evening, two soldiers came and asked the family’s enslaved people “if there were any young ladies in the house, how old they were & where they slept.” Little spared the DeCaradeucs, as even Pauline’s mother’s entreaties to a Union officer did no good. Although the soldier admitted that he was “disgusted with all this [destruction],” the man walked into another room, “broke open” a trunk, and “began stuffing his pockets.” DeCaradeuc believed the reasoning behind all the destruction was that the soldiers believed that “our boys fired the first gun on Sumter” and that they had to “arrest and

shoot every influential citizen . . . every mover of secession.” By targeting plantations,

Confederate women recognized that Federals sought to bring the war to the state’s elite.⁵⁶

Union soldiers and officers acknowledged that raiding now became even harsher,

particularly since in South Carolina soldiers resorted to a scorched earth campaign. John A. Boon

described the reasoning for the change in tactics as being that “every man in Sherman’s army

wanted to see the state of South Carolina and see it suffer, have it feel the full weight of the war.”

Making South Carolina feel the weight of the war, according to Boon, meant “few of the houses

are left standing, only the chimneys.” In Beaufort, William Babcock Hazen tried to save the

house of an army friend’s female relative, but as soon as the Union guard was removed, the

house was burned. Indeed, enlisted soldiers recorded that they not only lived as well off the land

as they had in Georgia, but also resorted to incendiaryism. Incendiaryism culminated in Columbia,

where William Baugh told his parents that the soldiers “were bound to burn the secession place,

and they done it.” Some soldiers felt no remorse about the destruction. New Yorker Peter W.

Funk admitted that “while it may seem cruel to wage war with fire and sword, who will say that

South Carolina did not deserve all that she got—and more.”⁵⁷

Other soldiers felt less sanguine about the destruction wreaked on Columbia. Illinoian

Thomas Y. Finley contemplated the great leveling of war, stating how “the humble dwelling of

the Peasant and the Eligent mansion of the wealthy are consumed with equal ferocity” by war’s

most destructive agent—fire. George Glossbrenner lamented that Union soldiers had been

intoxicated while in the city, blaming their inebriation for the destruction. “I felt ashamed to see

⁵⁶ Mary D. Robertson, ed., *A Confederate Lady Comes of Age: The Journal of Pauline DeCaradeuc Heyward, 1863-1888* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 61, 65-69. For elite white Confederate women’s understanding that the war now targeted them, see Frank, *Civilian War*, 31.

⁵⁷ John A. Boon to Family, April 3, 1865, John A. Boon Letters, USAHEC; Hazen, *A Narrative of Military Service*, 336, 353; March 12, 1865, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; n.d., Peter W. Funk Diary; both USAHEC; Royster, *Destructive War*, 4-5; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 54-57.

so many men staggering around drunk, some like beasts,” he admitted. Even though the hardened soldier had participated in foraging since the beginning of Sherman’s campaign, the destruction of Columbia went too far. “Never in my life did I see such destruction and so many desolate looking people . . . [who] had hardly a place to go for safety,” Glossbrenner noted, contrasting the behavior of the city’s civilians with Sherman’s soldiers, “a great many” of whom were “too drunk to move at all.” Some men blamed civilians for the presence of alcohol, commenting that it had been foolhardy of them to “hid[e] their liquor” since “to hide anything secure from the army was almost an impossibility.” Even General Sherman himself found civilians at least partially at fault, telling one poor soul that if the citizens “had burned [their] whiskey in place of [their] cotton I might control my men but now I cannot.”⁵⁸ In Columbia, revenge and alcohol proved to be a potent combination, making Sherman’s soldiers more destructive than they had been during the entire campaign.

White women who lived just on the outskirts of Columbia and Charleston evaded much of the incendiaryism, and benefitted from Union soldiers guarding their property. Even so, the women excoriated Federals for “warring on women & children.” Mary Maxcy Leverett, who manned a large plantation just on the outskirts of Columbia, endured one long day of destruction by Union soldiers before one of Sherman’s generals decided to make the house his headquarters. “I was truly glad,” she admitted, for “we would undoubtedly have had the roof burnt over our heads had he not been there.” Leverett was not too exhausted during the day to argue with Union soldiers, rebuking them for their behavior at her house and for the destruction of Columbia. “I pointed to the ruined town,” she described of one exchange, “and asked if this was what they styled ‘civilized warfare’? and told them not a nation in Europe in the nineteenth-century would

⁵⁸ February 16, 1865, Thomas Y. Finley Diary; February 17 and 18, 1865, George F. Glossbrenner Diary; William Tecumseh Sherman qtd. in John A. Boon to Family, April 3, 1865, John A. Boon Letters; USAHEC.

be guilty of such an outrage.” Leverett felt her words did little good, since Sherman’s army was “composed almost wholly of North Western men & they are a regularly educated set of thieves, burglars, robbers & house burners—& are accomplished villains.” Grace Brown Elmore was spared much of the destruction, thanks to a visit by General Sherman himself. Even though her house was not burned and not much besides food was taken, Elmore marveled at the meanness of the Federals, since “even the negroes were not saved, their clothes, their bread, all that they owned was taken.” Elizabeth Smith also obtained a guard for her house in Columbia, and through the soldier’s efforts and some good luck, her possessions and her house were spared. Even so, Smith had little good to say about the man, declaring that “I don’t suppose he ever met ladies before & it seemed a new revelation.” No matter their interaction with Federal soldiers, elite white Confederate women expected that, due to their status as elite and often unprotected white women, enemy soldiers would guard their property—but they still reserved the right to insult them after they did so.⁵⁹

Union soldiers’ behavior changed dramatically once the army entered North Carolina. On the one hand, Sherman and his command issued orders “not to destroy” civilian property “for various reasons.” In addition, officers and enlisted men seemed less inclined to wreak destruction, at least as far as arson was concerned. As John Boon explained, “the state was the last one to secede and then not until she was forced out” and because of these reasons, Boon had not seen “half a dozen houses fired in this state.” Lester Dewitt Taylor seemed encouraged that once the army entered Fayetteville, “there was a large turn out of citizens to view us on our

⁵⁹ Frances Wallace Taylor, Catherine Taylor Mathews, and J. Tracy Power, eds., *The Leverett Letters: Correspondence of a South Carolina Family, 1851-1868* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 389, 390, 391 [emphasis in original]; Marli F. Weiner, ed., *Heritage of Woe: The Civil War Diary of Grace Brown Elmore, 1861-1868* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 102-103; Daniel E. Huger Smith, Alice R. Huger Smith, and Arney R. Childs, eds., *Mason Smith Family Letters, 1860-1868* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1950), 174-177; see also John F. Marszalek, ed., *The Diary of Miss Emma Holmes, 1861-1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 400, 402. Frank notes the gendered and racial privilege that white Confederate women expected to enjoy, even at the hands of Sherman’s soldiers. See Frank, *Civilian War*, 47.

entrance than at any place in Geo[rgia] or S.C." Elliott McKeever was incensed that soldiers destroyed the house of a woman with two young children, going so far as to say that the men "ought to be shot."⁶⁰ Both the presence of Unionists and orders from on high kept Federals a bit more in line in the Tar Heel State.

But better behavior did not mean that soldiers refrained from living off of the land or from unwarranted destruction. John A. Boon, who commented on the decrease in incendiaryism, went to a house that had been burned and found "gold and silver melted together," the amount of which was estimated by "a Negro woman" as being "\$32,000 . . . it is made into rings by some of the boys." Elliott McKeever, who raged at a mother's house being burned to the ground, felt no qualms with going "right on to the corncrib" at a North Carolina house to "get my sack filled. There were two women and some children huddled in the back in the room as I passed but I did not stop." While Lester Dewitt Taylor was encouraged by the presence of Unionists, he and his compatriots ensured that "the territory through which we passed . . . was more than made desolate; we left scarcely nothing except N[egro] huts." Taylor also complained that "supplies were not so plentiful as on our campaign through Geor[gia] this not being so rich a country." Other soldiers agreed. While early on soldier Nathan Gill was able to find "sheep and some beans," by April he commented that although the army sent out foragers, "the country is poor and nothing is gained." None of the men seemed to make a connection between their destructive actions and the wellbeing of North Carolinians.⁶¹ While soldiers tried to go a bit easier on

⁶⁰ John A. Boon to Family, April 3, 1865, John A. Boon Letters; March 12, 1865, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; Elliott B. McKeever Memoirs; all USAHEC; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 75-76.

⁶¹ William G. Baugh to "Beloved Parents," March 14 and March 27, 1865, William G. Baugh Letters, Emory; March 12, 1865, Lester Dewitt Taylor Diary; for foraging in North and South Carolina, see Samuel E. Adams Diary, Nathan Atwood Gill Diary, and Abijah F. Gore Diary, USAHEC; Campbell, *When Sherman Marched North from the Sea*, 78.

Unionist North Carolina, raiding had become ingrained in them. Now, burning houses—rather than starvation—seemed to be the worst that could befall a civilian.

White Unionist women noticed the new leniency of Union soldiers, particularly from commanders. When Mary Carver's property was taken near Fayetteville, she complained directly to General Howard "in his headquarters of [her] destitution" and Howard responded by giving Carver as many provisions "as [she and her] son . . . could carry home." The elderly Abigail Eldridge had a more difficult time obtaining redress. Even though she complained to "the men taking [her] property," she could get "no satisfaction from them," although Eldridge admitted that she was "hard of hearing and could not understand" them. And while "a great many soldiers" were all over her property, taking and using her possessions, Eldridge maintained that she "believe[d] the army had to take it to support from the country." In Johnston County, Jane Royals watched as soldiers "went to the lot and took [her] horse and to the smoke house and took [her] meat." She complained, and later on said that she "suppose[d] it was taken because [the Union soldiers] needed it or they would not have taken it from such a poor lone widow." Sarah Bailey, residing near Raleigh, begged Union soldiers not to take her property, and only received assurances from a Union soldier that "protections would be made to care of [her]." Less wealthy than their South Carolina counterparts, raiding fell much harsher upon North Carolina women, and they had difficulty saving property or obtaining a guard since foraging dictated that Union soldiers must take civilian property.⁶²

Free black women had just as much of their property taken, and their protestations were to no avail. Elsie Drake watched as Union soldiers took not only food but also water buckets, bed quilts, blankets, and shawls. Drake noted that the soldiers "just came in [her] house and took any

⁶² Claim of Mary Carver, Cumberland County, North Carolina; Claim of Abigail Eldridge, Claim of Jane Royals, Johnston County, North Carolina; Claim of Sarah A. Bailey and Claim of Polly Johnson, Wake County, North Carolina, all SCC-NA.

they pleased.” Complaining did Drake no good. Ann Revels was treated much more courteously by Union soldiers, one of whom she described as “gentlemanly” because he told her that he “must have [her property] for his men must be fed and that [she] must not think hard of him for taking it.” The soldiers even asked Revels if she and her daughters wanted a guard, although the man refused to protect anything except for her house.⁶³ Although Union soldiers occasionally offered free black women protection, they still freely took from the women’s possessions with only the promise of one day obtaining a reward.

The ravenous appetites of Union soldiers stood out to enslaved North Carolina women. Tempie Herndon Durham explained simply that Yankees were “all [th]e time hungry,” and many women remembered the soldiers’ penchant for the smoke house, and even that the men would share what they took with African Americans. Fannie Dunn found the entire experience frustrating, because “One Yankee would come along an[d] give us” something to eat “an[d] another would come on behind him an[d] take it.” Women who belonged to more wealthy owners found that Union soldiers treated them contemptuously if the women refused to tell them—or refused to help them find—their owner’s belongings. Yet the most frustrating experience was one of divided loyalties, as enslaved women faced the choice of aiding Union soldiers or bailing out their owners. Whatever their decision, the outcome was often disappointing. Susan High’s mother saved her owner from being killed by Yankees for refusing to disclose where his valuables were located, and was then repaid by being turned out of his house after the war with not even “[th]e wrappin’s o[n] her finger.” As the army quickly moved on and left enslaved women behind, stolen possessions and short rations seemed a small price to pay for learning that they were free. And yet North Carolinian enslaved women faced powerful

⁶³ Claim of Elsie Drake and Claim of Ann Revels, Cumberland County, North Carolina, both SCC-NA.

obstacles—from lack of support from Union armies to recalcitrant owners—in actually achieving freedom.⁶⁴

“War Corrupts the Pure and Innocent”: Surrender, Spring 1865

As Sherman’s march came to a quiet end in North Carolina, raiding continued nearly unabated in Virginia. As Grant and Sheridan pressed the last of Robert E. Lee’s disintegrating Army of Northern Virginia, Union soldiers continued to bring the war to Old Dominion civilians. In Nottoway, Union soldiers heard rumors that Confederate deserters hid in the woods and attacked Federal soldiers; this was all the provocation they needed to not only forage but set “almost every house on fire,” even though their commander admitted that these actions “most likely only punished the innocent.” In the Richmond environs, Federals took particular delight in destroying the plantation of the owner of Libby Prison. Soldier W. W. Parker described how the “fine house was leveled with the ground, [the] nice garden fences torn down, [the] walks taken up. All was perfect desolation.” In addition, the female occupants were held captive within Union lines.⁶⁵

As the war came to a close, soldiers jubilantly dwelt on the subdued character of southern civilians rather than the widespread property destruction. In Winchester, Massachusetts soldier Daniel Worthley noted how the people “all were celebrating our recent victories and their houses were illuminated in great style and I guess that everybody is glad that the war is near an end.” Nathaniel Talbot wrote his family about obtaining quarters in a Rebel colonel’s house the army was guarding, and the distress his wife, a northern woman, experienced. “Says she don’t know what is to become of her she has about 40 thousand dollars in Confederate money but no other

⁶⁴ Tempie Herndon Durham, Louisa Adams, Barbara Haywood, Chaney Lewis, Mary Anderson, Fannie Dunn, Sarah Louise Augustus, Sarah Demro, Lantea Adeline Hinton, and Susan High in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 14:2, 20, 51, 248, 271, 285, 386, 406, 418, 434.

⁶⁵ *OR*, ser. 1, 42/1:445; *OR*, ser. 1, 39/1:414; *OR*, ser. 1, 36/1:801; W. W. Parker to Wife, October 25, 1864, W.W. Parker Letters, LV.

and between the two armys they have about cleaned out everything she has.” Rufus Smith, in camp at Chesterfield Court House, felt that “a Union Soldier could travel through any of the Southern States . . . without being molested. The Whites were all sick of the war . . . and they are now as humble as the blacks are themselves.” By the end of the war, raiding seemed to have delivered what it promised: a subdued and perhaps even repentant southern population, who looked to the end of the war if not with joy, then at least with relief.⁶⁶

For Virginia’s white Unionist women, raiding near the end of the war entailed the loss of almost all their property. Even middle- and upper-class Unionist women who embraced their duty to support the army seemed stunned by the level of destruction. Ellen Carpenter, the sister of a United States Navy officer and an invalid, received no protection from Union soldiers. While the army was encamped on her brother’s plantation in Spotsylvania County, soldiers took food, horses, cattle, sheep, corn, and even cured tobacco from the large farm that employed over twenty people. Carpenter’s status as an upper-class white woman distanced her from dealing with raiding personally: when she heard that soldiers intended to force open the door to the corn house, Carpenter had a slave send out the key. But her status offered little protection. When Carpenter explained that the corn and other food was needed to feed her family and enslaved people, the soldiers appeared unmoved, simply telling her to obtain a quartermaster’s receipt. Although Carpenter’s wealth and slaves distanced her from direct contact with Federal soldiers, raiding by its very nature denied even her authority as an elite white woman over her possessions.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Daniel E. Worthley to Sister, April 8, 1865, Daniel E. Worthley Letter; Nathaniel Howard Talbot to “Dear Ones,” April 10, 1865, Nathaniel Howard Talbot Letters; Rufus A. Smith to Father, May 31, 1865, Rufus A. Smith Letters, all LV.

⁶⁷ Testimony of Ellen Carpenter in Claim of J.N. Carpenter, U.S. Navy, by his wife Mrs. Mary F. Carpenter of Washington D.C., Spotsylvania County, Virginia; see also Testimony of Katherine Couse and Deposition of Ann Couse, Claim of Peter Course, Spotsylvania County, Virginia; Testimony of Harriet McGee and Deposition of

Poor loyal women bitterly resented raiding strategies that drained their meager resources. Octavia New of Charles City did not have time to notice the men who took her horses, pigs, geese, turkeys, and fifteen bushels of potatoes, because she was “cooking for the soldiers” at the time. By March 1865, Lydia Fishburn had already supplied Union soldiers on two other occasions. When Sheridan’s men stopped by her home toward the close of the war, she had nothing left to give them but “pantry stores,” including bacon, butter, lard, sorghum, and vinegar. Although Fishburn complained, it did no good, for the soldiers told her they needed “the provisions to eat.”⁶⁸ For poorer white Unionist women, especially widows, raiding seemingly ignored their straitened circumstances or precarious family situations. This frightening strategy capitalized on women’s obligations to materially support the army but refused to spare even the most worthy. In fact, raiding not only made no distinction between loyal or disloyal, it also made no distinction between middle- and upper-class families, who could spare more of their property, and poor families, who struggled to survive after Union army raids.

African American women ironically cited their experiences with raiding parties as further evidence of their support for the Union army. Free and enslaved women of color in Virginia did not emphasize how much of their property Union soldiers took but instead emphasized their own generosity and kindness. Toward the end of the war, Union soldiers camped on Elizabeth Wingfield’s farm southwest of Petersburg, and General Smith used her house as his headquarters. Instead of regarding this as an imposition, Wingfield stressed her family’s charity toward the army, recounting that she “washed for the Yankee soldiers . . . fed them and took care of the sick and wounded.” Not only that, Wingfield did not complain to Union officers when her

Frances McGee in Claim of Absalom McGee, Spotsylvania County, Virginia; Claim of Ann Goodloe, Albemarle County, Virginia; all SCC-NA.

⁶⁸ Claim of Octavia L. New, Charles City County, Virginia; Claim of Lydia Fishburn, Augusta County, Virginia, both SCC-NA; see also Joan E. Cashin, “Widow in a Swamp: Gender, Unionism, and Literacy in the Occupied South during the Civil War,” in Whites and Long, 171-184.

property was taken, even after soldiers “dug up and used all the vegetables in the garden.”⁶⁹

Raiding enabled some women of color to portray themselves as sympathetic Union supporters who willingly provided for the army from what little they had. Black women thus claimed status as Unionists and potential citizens, highlighting both their fealty to the Union and performance of domestic tasks, which harkened to white standards of true womanhood.

But just as with white Unionist women, not all black women viewed raiding strategies as opportunities for patriotic service; instead, they viewed the whole policy as an assault on their families and their homes. Loyal black women complained of aggressive white Union soldiers and highlighted their own valiant though often futile efforts to protect their property. Victoria Adams, a young enslaved woman, reflected on how Federals treated her and other bondspeople compared to their former owners, declaring that soldiers had “[de]stroyed most everything we had [ex]cept a little vittles; took all [th]e stock and take them wi[th] them. They burned all [th]e buildings [ex]cept [th]e one [th]e massa and missus was livin’ in.” For Adams, the legacy of raiding strategies was simply hunger and exposure to the elements. While her master and mistress still enjoyed the privilege of a roof over their heads, enslaved men and women had no such luxury.⁷⁰ Raiding virtually obliterated any value in loyalty. Union political sympathies did not secure civilian status or the benefits of citizenship to black southerners. In the end, black women’s racial status defined their relationship to the Union army and to the American nation. Military policies still categorized African American women as primarily laborers and property, not as civilians, citizens, women, wives, mothers, or daughters—labels reserved for white women.

⁶⁹ Claim of Elizabeth Wingfield, Dinwiddie County, Virginia; Claim of Lucy Green, Testimony of Mary Brown in Claim of Edmund Brown, and Deposition of Elizabeth Adkins in Claim of Elias Adkins, Charles City County, Virginia; Claim of Mary Blackburn, Augusta County, Virginia; all SCC-NA.

⁷⁰ Victoria Adams in Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 2:12; Deposition of Lucy Green and Testimony of Martha Green in Claim of Lucy Green, Charles City County, Virginia, SCC-NA; Schwalm, *A Hard Fight for We*, 123.

Wartime accounts by both soldiers and civilians tell an entirely different story of raiding practices, a story from which white officers, particularly in postwar accounts, tried to distance themselves. During the last year of the war, soldiers and civilians testified to the ways in which Union soldiers conflated loyal and disloyal southern civilians, and sometimes treated poor black and white women worse than elite Confederate women. Lumping all noncombatant women together as Rebels may have helped Federal forces minimize the necessary but harsh practice of raiding. By justifying such policies as a military necessity against a hostile population, soldiers attempted to ignore their glaring assaults on civilian domestic spaces—spaces which in peacetime, as “civilized” men, they had a duty to protect. Distancing themselves from raiding’s effects allowed these men, particularly those from the middle and upper classes, to believe that they had never warred on women and children, and that the Civil War had been a civilized war, one in which civilians (more than that, fellow Americans) had been protected from war’s severity.

Conclusion

Union military policy toward civilians in the final years of the war embraced expediency at nearly every turn. While early on in the war policymakers had categorized women and their possessions as outside the bounds of war, the Union army then went on to embrace foraging and confiscation, policies which sanctioned military intrusions into intimate space. Raiding strategies, an outgrowth of these early policies, abandoned distinctions between battlefield and home front by labeling civilian property as “war resources.” Yet in practice these policies only worked when officers and enlisted men erased some of white women’s gender and class privileges and disregarded black women’s wartime service. Throughout the war’s final years, commanders and policymakers continually redefined civilians’ obligations to soldiers, military

authority over private property, and the protection owed to southern women. By 1865, military authority over intimate space knew almost no bounds, and protection of civilians was arbitrary, if not nonexistent. All of these actions reflected the United States government's authority over intimate space, as the federal government and its military made a conscious decision to no longer protect intimate space but instead to wage war on it. More fully than any other military policy, raiding illustrates the way in which boundaries separating the battlefield from the home front had always been both artificial and malleable.

CONCLUSION

“ALL HELL SEEMS LOOSE”: MAKING SENSE OF WAR AND THE INTIMATE



Figure 6. Edwin Forbes, *Field Hospital of the 5th Corps (Genl. Warren) at Spotsylvania Court House, Va*—The Civil War brought nearly unimaginable destruction to the homes of southern women. This sketch by war correspondent Edwin Forbes shows the Couse Family property in Spotsylvania County, Virginia on May 12, 1864, about six days after the arrival of the Union army. Both armies raided the family's property extensively for the next two weeks (Library of Congress).

War, like death, is a great leveler, and this fact was not lost on Union soldiers and southern women. It destroyed land and possessions, it killed relatives and friends, it turned people out of their homes. Unionist Katherine Couse felt these effects from her ruined farm in Virginia's heartland. After Federal and Confederate soldiers departed, it seemed more as though

“some great funeral procession,” rather than two armies, “had lately passed through.” Couse was surrounded by “the stillness of death” in the form of countless soldiers, horses, and farm animals buried on her lawn. Virginia had suffered the brunt of the war, and Couse sadly noted that even though her side had won, it did not feel much like a victory. “Great armies,” she observed, “leave ruin [and] desolation in their track.”¹

Deprivation and destruction: these effects of war were visible to the naked eye. But war also inflicted less visible blows to hopes and dreams. It turned Confederates, who had once seen a bright future for their nation, into a people who felt that they had little for which to live. To Caroline Pocahontas Bernard Scott, an elite white Virginian, peace brought nothing but despair. “Our enemies have triumphed, our independence is lost, our hopes have perished, and we and our children are in bondage tenfold worse than before,” she lamented. The future seemed to provide no relief, and Scott envied the Confederate dead who knew not “the wretched fate of those who survive them.” To Scott, this fate seemed to be nothing but “poverty . . . hopelessness . . . [and] enslave[ment],” language which drew on Confederate fears at the very beginning of the war. Being the conquered meant an end not only to freedom but also to its southern attendants: slavery and white supremacy. The southern social order was upended; racial amalgamation and all its horrors awaited former Rebels.²

War dashed more than hopes and dreams: it also destroyed morality and character. It turned “civilized” American men into brutes and fiends, and it debased chaste white women. According to Iowa soldier Charles Musser, war forced people to behave in degraded and immoral ways, turning soldiers into “demons” who “corrupted” innocent civilians. In Musser’s

¹ Elizabeth A. Getz, “Between the Lines: The Diary of a Unionist Woman at the Battle of Spotsylvania Court House,” *Fredericksburg History and Biography* 1 (2002): 69; Testimony of Katherine Couse, Claim of Peter Couse, Spotsylvania County, Virginia, SCC-NA.

² Light, ed., *War at Our Doors*, 120-122.

estimation, these fallen women, facing starvation, were left with no alternative but to slip into prostitution. Over and over, soldiers observed the startling ways that war transformed them from human beings into something entirely unrecognizable. More like animals than men, they destroyed everything and everyone in their path.³

But war leveled more than wealth, aspirations, or morality: it leveled social relationships as well. White soldiers believed that one of war's great benefits was how it seemingly removed distinctions between white and black southerners. A soldier and correspondent for the Nashville *Watchman and Reflector* observed the ways in which war upended the economic and social order:

I have seen the children of once wealthy slaveholders clad in the coarse "negro cloth" which formerly was only used by slaves. I know that once wealthy slaveholding families have been forced to live for months on corn bread and a little bacon—formerly the diet of none but the slave. I know that once wealthy slaveholding ladies are now obliged to work hard for a living; that they are forcibly separated from their husbands; that their children are wrested from them . . . that they are sometimes . . . driven from their homes; that they are occasionally pressed by hunger to save their lives by begging, and (God pity them) by worse; that their little daughters can at some place be seen without shoes and stockings, while the negro children at their sides are comfortably clad; that their word is doubted and their petitions refused when their former slaves are believed and protected; that they are compelled to endure without a word, the insolence of blacks which a few years ago they would have punished by stripes till the blood ran down the culprit's back in streams. I know that wealthy slaveholding ladies have been halted by soldiers once their own slaves, and obliged to show their passes! In truth, there is hardly any humiliation that the negro formerly endured, that the slave holder and his parasites, "the poor white trash," do not now undergo. A negro soldier telling how he had forced his old mistress to stop and show her pass, said, "Halt, is de sweetest word I ever spoke."⁴

For some white soldiers, this all seemed like just retribution for hundreds of years of enslavement. The uplift of African Americans and the laying low of white southerners surely resulted in a new equity in the American nation.

³ Musser, *Soldier Boy*, 149; see also Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs*, 8; Mitchell, *Vacant Chair*, 4, 7-8, 74.

⁴ Nashville *Watchman and Reflector* qtd. in Bradley, *The Star Corps*, 157-158.

War may have leveled, but many felt it did not bring lasting change. Susie King Taylor, a formerly enslaved woman who bravely served the Union army, found herself contrasting the “freed[om] from bondage” and hopes that “the two races could live in unity” that she experienced directly after the war with the situation decades later. “Was the war in vain?” Taylor wondered. “Has it brought freedom, in the full sense of the word, or has it not made our condition more hopeless? . . . there is no redress from a government which promised to protect all under its flag.” Perhaps Taylor had been overly optimistic. By the last year of the war, African American Union soldier and newspaper correspondent George E. Stephens had grown indignant, placing the blame for his personal hardships squarely at the foot of the United States government:

I shall speak hereafter [of] my wrongs, and nothing shall prevent me but double irons or a pistol-ball that shall take me out of the hell I am now suffering: Nearly eighteen months of service-of labor-of humiliation-of danger, and not one dollar. An estimable wife reduced to beggary . . . what can wipe out the wrong and insult this Lincoln despotism has put upon us? . . . Who would have believed that all the newspaper talk of the pay of colored soldiers having been settled by Congress was a base falsehood. There is not the least sign of pay, and there are hints from those in authority that we will not get paid, and will be held to service by the terrors of our own bullets. Seventeen months and upwards! Suppose we had been white? Massachusetts would have inaugurated a rebellion in the East, and we would have been paid. But—Oh, how insulting!—because I am black, they tamper with my rights. How dare I be offered half of the pay of any man, be he white or red.⁵

Stephens, perhaps purposefully, ironically echoed Confederate sentiments when he spoke of “Lincoln despotism,” an oft-repeated phrase used first by secessionists and then Rebels to describe the tyranny the North would unleash upon the South. Unlike Rebels, who used the term to lambast the federal government’s attempt to conquer the South, Stephens and other African Americans used it to fault the federal government’s unequal treatment of people of color. For

⁵ Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp*, 61; Yacavone, ed., *A Voice of Thunder*, 320-321.

Stephens, the true Lincoln despotism was not “enslavement” as white Southerners used it, but enslavement in the sense of continued inequality and racial discrimination. Stephens pointed out the ultimate contradiction of a government that sought to assert its authority over slaveowning whites while at the same time refusing equal pay to black soldiers. To African Americans, it seemed that white Americans considered saving the union and ending slavery to be one thing; racial equality was quite another.

War’s destruction, in all of its many forms, had important implications for interactions between Union soldiers and southern women. The words of the men and women themselves demonstrate this to be true. For many, the war served as a funeral—for their hopes and dreams and plans for the future, for their trust in mankind and its goodness, and for their belief that the United States government would redress the wrongs of racial slavery and racial oppression. The interactions illustrate the ways in which these ordinary people—white, black, and non-native Union soldiers, white Confederate women, white Unionist women, and free and enslaved black women—struggled with the government and its military and with each other to achieve a better future. Most importantly, these conflicts demonstrate that boundaries between federal government and intimate space, between soldier and civilian, and between citizen and non-citizen, were fluid and constantly negotiated. The makeup of the American nation, with its attendant ideas of citizenship, inclusion, freedom, and self-determination, was not set by faraway and impersonal forces but throughout small exchanges between individual Americans during the course of the war. The American people were the nation, and in their wartime interactions they engaged in battles that had far-reaching implications as they sought to determine the boundaries of national inclusion and to redefine national ideals of freedom, liberty, and equality.

Ultimately, soldiers and women felt their relationship to the government most acutely in intimate space. George E. Stephens experienced the bond in his familial relationships, as he blamed his wife's penury on the military's unequal pay. Others faced it in civic inequality, as Susie King Taylor did when she noted the discrepancy between protection for white and black Americans. White Union soldiers observed the relationship in the socioeconomic uplift of black Americans and the character deficiencies of soldiers and southern women. Caroline Scott chronicled it in her affective ties to the Confederate nation and her animosity toward the Union. Some noted it in its most obvious form: in their ruined property, as did Katherine Couse. All of these interactions, then, open windows onto the multifaceted and ever-changing connections between government and intimate space. As seen through exchanges between Union soldiers and southern women, it is clear that the relationship is never easy to define, and in fact takes many forms. One thing, however, is clear: at times governments support and nourish intimate space, while at others—particularly in times of war—they undermine, trample, and destroy it.

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