

MARCHING IN STEP: THE CITADEL AND POST WORLD WAR II AMERICA

by

ALEXANDER STEPHENS MACAULAY, JR

(Under the Direction of James C. Cobb)

ABSTRACT

In 1941, W.J. Cash predicted correctly that “in the coming days and probably soon, [the South] is likely to have to prove its capacity for adjustment far beyond what has been true in the past.” From 1945 to 1995, The Citadel found its “capacity for adjustment” sorely tested, and the school’s attempts to define, defend, and adapt its identity to a nation and region undergoing significant cultural, political, and social change is the subject of my dissertation. Perceived and vigorously marketed as a profoundly southern institution, The Citadel’s post World War II experience speaks to issues of southern distinctiveness and should shed light on the South’s real and imagined relationship with the rest of America. Certain authors have depicted the “Southernization of America” as a relatively recent phenomenon, and for much of its history, the South has been viewed as an island within the United States; a region operating outside the ebb and flow of the American mainstream. In the decades following World War II Citadel personnel bolstered their defense of the school’s value with conveniently selected interpretations of the past and with carefully tailored definitions of citizenship. More often than not, however, these attitudes have reflected rather than stood apart from the political and cultural values of mainstream American society, and tracking The Citadel’s appeal as an American, and not just a southern, institution may well lead one to wonder if the rest of the nation needed “Southernizing” and convince some people to acknowledge the undistilled Americanism of The Citadel.

INDEX WORDS: The Citadel, American South, Post World War II America

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ALEXANDER STEPHENS MACAULAY, JR.

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ALEXANDER STEPHENS MACAULAY, JR.

Major Professor: James C. Cobb

Committee: Emory Thomas
Bryant Simon
Robert A. Pratt
Thomas G. Dyer

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2003

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from Hartwell, Georgia can do this job then surely someone from Walhalla, South Carolina can excel at it.

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INTRODUCTION

In his travel guide to the neo-Confederate South, Tony Horowitz calls The Citadel “arguably the most mummified institution in America.” Numerous observers have echoed Horowitz’s sentiments. Following a tumultuous and frustrating year as the school’s president, an embittered Vice Admiral James Stockdale grumbled “the place is locked in pre-Civil War concrete.” A historian of Charleston and a former professor at The Citadel claims “perhaps more than any other institution of higher education The Citadel best reflects the cultural values of the Old South.” In a recent essay, Timothy Tyson calls the school “perhaps the most hidebound institution in tradition-steeped South Carolina.”¹

While some may find it convenient and even reassuring to depict The Citadel as timeless and immutable, such an assessment fuels distorted views of the South and the United States. In *Stiffed*, Susan Faludi recognizes that “institutions that boast of their insularity, whether convents or military academies, are commonly pictured in the public imagination as static, unchanging abstractions, impervious to the ebb and flow of current events.” She adds though that despite their often purposeful and well cultivated

¹ Tony Horowitz, *Confederates In the Attic: Dispatches From the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 66; *Newsweek*, 1 September 1980, 83; Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris, eds, *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 277; Timothy B. Tyson, “Dynamite and the ‘Silent South’: A Story from the Second Reconstruction in South Carolina,” *Jumpin’ Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, eds. Jane Dailey, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 279-280.

reputations as bulwarks of tradition, places such as The Citadel have “functioned more as a barometer of national anxieties than as a stalwart garrison against them.”²

Dismissing The Citadel as backward and archaic contributes to a one-dimensional assessment of the school’s historical and cultural value and downplays the massive changes that have occurred in the nation and the South since the end of World War II. In 1941, W.J. Cash predicted correctly that “In the coming days and probably soon, [the South] is likely to have to prove its capacity for adjustment far beyond what has been true in the past.” Like the South at large, from 1945 to 1995, The Citadel found its “capacity for adjustment” sorely tested as well.³

The Citadel was perceived and vigorously promoted as a profoundly southern institution. Its post World War II experience speaks to issues of southern cultural distinctiveness and should shed light on the South’s real and imagined relationship with the rest of America. As the college’s alumni, students, and administrators responded to the changes in American society, their reform impulse was tempered by the traditional, regional, and institutional fear that “too much change” would cost the school and its students their unique identity. Challenges to the college’s rules, regulations, and traditions met resistance from those who howled that “The Citadel must not become just another Clemson.”

Frequently, Citadel personnel bolstered their defense of the school’s importance with conveniently selected interpretations of the institution’s, the South’s, and the nation’s past. Fitzhugh Brundage has argued that “If characterizations of southern

² Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1999), 138.

³ W.J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1941, reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 429.

memory are to be meaningful, attention should be given to what kind of history southerners have valued, what in their past they have chosen to remember and forget, how they have disseminated the past they have recalled, and to what uses these memories have been put.” Especially in the South, historical memory has been used to justify and perpetuate serious political, social, and economic inequities. Dissenting voices and narratives face an uphill struggle to override or discredit the “cultural authority of tradition and habit.” Questioning the legitimacy of certain customs and myths often threatens existing social hierarchies and sparks fierce, emotional battles over what it means to be a Southerner and an American. Brundage suggests that in order to create a “southern landscape that may be less alienating to some southerners,” historians must demonstrate “that historical memories are crafted intentionally and for specific reasons.” Doing so, will foster “a greater understanding of how southerners have developed their sense of the past and how it has affected their present and may shape their future.”⁴

The Citadel represents one of many settings where the “willfully recalled and deliberately forgotten past” has weighed heavy upon the present. David W. Blight notes in “Southerners Don’t Lie; They Just Remember Big” that “as a white memory community, southerners (with much northern help) have fashioned their own myths of innocence and victimization.” Blight cites the “moonlight and magnolias” image of the South and the Lost Cause as the most prominent examples of this mythmaking process. A look at The Citadel’s history shows that the veneration of somewhat artificial legends

⁴ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12-14, 16-19, 20.

continued well past the nineteenth century and was used to develop and defend carefully tailored definitions of citizenship.⁵

While much of the impetus for change came from the corps of cadets, most of them also clung to a narrow, exclusionary vision of what it meant to be a “Citadel man.” Several studies of The Citadel have already described the school as “the last bastion of masculinity,” the “very symbol of South Carolina manhood,” and “a repository of antebellum southern male culture.” This last description is telling since many cadets of the post World War II era adhered to a similar code of conduct that made the pre-Civil War South such a volatile region. In *Southern Honor*, Bertram Wyatt-Brown explains how attempts to accommodate brutality with gentility, slavery with liberty, and conformity with independence spurred white male southerners to violent and often erratic behavior. This same tension between individual assertiveness and peer acceptance as well as a desire to maintain rigid racial and gender categories continued to shape many Citadel cadets’ definitions of honorable men well into the latter half of the twentieth century.⁶

At an institution founded in the wake of an 1822 slave revolt, where students still brag about their predecessors firing the first shots of the Civil War, race joined gender as a prime determinant in who qualified as a “Citadel man.” A persistent lack of racial diversity on the college’s campus enabled a large number of cadets to perpetuate a lily-

⁵ David W. Blight, “Southerners Don’t Lie; They Just Remember Big,” in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 349.

⁶ Faludi, *Stiffed*, 136; Judi Addelston and Michael Stirratt, “The Last Bastion of Masculinity: Gender Politics at The Citadel,” in *Men’s Lives*, 4th edition, eds. Michael S. Kimmel and Michael A. Messner (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 205-220; Jim and Sybil Stockdale, *In Love and War: The Story of a Family’s Ordeal and Sacrifice During the Vietnam Years* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 467; Douglas R. Egerton, *He Shall Go Out Free: The Lives of Denmark Vesey* (Madison, Wisconsin: Madison

white assessment of the school's traditions, heritage, and product, hardening their definition of what it meant to be an American, a southerner, and a Citadel man. Uneasy with any challenge to their somewhat self-aggrandizing worldview, many Citadel men resented the 1960s challenges to their physical and intellectual environs, and they spent much of the remaining decades attempting to discredit or ignore many of the issues and changes from that period. Faced with few challenges to these viewpoints within The Citadel's walls, students from throughout the post war era repeated the same arguments over and over whenever they felt compelled to defend themselves and their institution.

More often than not, however, their efforts have reflected rather than stood apart from the dominant political and cultural values of American society. Understanding how Citadel alumni, administrators, and students struggled to remain relevant in the decades following World War II will also expand our knowledge of how issues of race and gender played out in post-war America. In *Where These Memories Grow*, several scholars demonstrate “that those who can create the dominant historical narrative, those who can own the public memory, will achieve political and cultural power.” The Citadel offers one example of how carefully crafted myths and traditions have been used to determine and limit access to American institutions.⁷

Authors such as Peter Applebome depict the “Southernization of America” as a relatively recent phenomenon, and for much of its history, the South has been viewed as an island within the United States; a region operating outside the ebb and flow of the American mainstream. Tracking The Citadel's appeal as an American, and not just a southern, institution may well lead one to ask if the rest of the nation really required

House, 1999), 213-214; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

“Southernizing.” Accordingly, this study should reaffirm Howard Zinn’s characterization of the South as “the *essence* of the nation,” by emphasizing the undistilled Americanism of The Citadel.⁸

The history of The Citadel stretches back to 1822 when Denmark Vesey staged an unsuccessful slave revolt in Charleston, South Carolina. Despite Vesey’s failure, his attempt alarmed white Charlestonians. Rumors abounded that Vesey and his followers planned to “indiscriminately” kill white men, while white women “were to have been reserved to fill their – Haram’s(sic).” Following the mass hanging of the conspirators, one Charlestonian shrieked “Let it never be forgotten, that our Negroes are truly the *Jacobins* of our country, the barbarians who would, IF THEY COULD, become the *DESTROYERS of our race.*” As the hysteria grew, vigilante committees roamed the streets assaulting black people. Law enforcement officials arrested large numbers of slaves or free blacks and locked them in the Workhouse – an edifice where up to twelve prisoners were chained to a rail and forced to march on a treadmill. The treadmill powered two large wheels that ground corn, and should the prisoners’ legs falter, a “cat o’ nine tails” forced them to continue.⁹

These legal and extra-legal forms of racial oppression still did not assuage the citizens’ fears, and they petitioned the state legislature to establish a garrison to “protect and preserve the public property . . . and safety.” The South Carolina General Assembly responded by passing “An Act to Establish a Competent Force to Act as a Municipal

⁷ Blight, “Southerners Don’t Lie,” 349.

⁸ Peter Applebome, *Dixie Rising: How the South is Shaping American Values, Politics, and Culture* (New York: Times Books, 1996); Howard Zinn, *The Southern Mystique* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964), 218, 262.

Guard for the Protection of the City of Charleston and Its Vicinity.” The facility designated to house this guard was named The Citadel. In his biography of Vesey, Douglas Egerton describes the forbidding structure as “the most impressive symbol of racial control” erected after the rebellion.¹⁰

Later, as tensions escalated between the northern and southern states, Governor John Richardson sought to create an institution that would provide military training to the state’s youth as well as offer an education in science and the liberal arts. The South Carolina legislature conceded the “advantages of combining the military duties of the guards at The Citadel with a system of education,” and on December 20, 1842, The Citadel became a military college.¹¹

Less than nineteen years later, Citadel cadets allegedly fired the first shots of the Civil War. Many of the school’s alumni served thereafter with distinction in the Confederate Army. More than two-thirds of the school’s 240 graduates served as officers, including four generals and nineteen colonels. Forty-three Citadel alumni and over two hundred former students died in battle. The current flag of the Corps of Cadets prominently displays nine battle streamers recognizing The Citadel’s contribution to the southern war effort.¹²

Following the war, ironically enough, The Citadel served as headquarters of Lieutenant Colonel Augustus G. Bennett and his Twenty-first United States Colored Regiment. With slavery abolished, black Charlestonians held an Emancipation Day

⁹ Egerton, *Vesey*, 163-168, 204-205, 211-213.

¹⁰ Fraser, *Charleston!*, 203; Oliver James Bond, *The Story of The Citadel* (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1936; reprint, Greenville, South Carolina: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1989), 2-5; Egerton, *Vesey*, 213-214.

¹¹ “A Self Study: The Citadel, 1972,” documents in possession of author, 10, 11; Bond, *Story*, 10, 16, 17.

celebration on the school grounds. In “Celebrating Freedom,” Kathleen Clark lists this event as one of many “local skirmishes” waged throughout the region as blacks and whites presented their versions of the antebellum past and postbellum present. Clark contends that by appropriating symbolically charged landmarks such as The Citadel, African-Americans looked to counter the dual myths of white paternalism and black inferiority. As African-American tradesmen, militia members, teachers, and school children assembled on the Citadel Green and marched proudly through the city’s streets, their actions and demeanor “stressed both the memory of slavery and the evolution of black progress.” African-American efforts to carve out and defend their place in the local and national landscape angered and frightened white Charlestonians who bristled at “[l]iberty loving freedmen . . . bearing war like instruments upon their shoulders, [who] looked terribly patriotic as they formed the line.”¹³

When federal occupation of The Citadel ended in 1879, state legislators delayed reopening the school for financial reasons. Complicating matters further, the postbellum South experienced a generational crisis as Civil War veterans faced a distinct lack of confidence in the region’s “untested” youth. Urbanization, industrialization, New South boosterism, and challenges to the region’s racial mores sparked concerns among veterans that “their successors, soon to take leadership in the society, would fail to understand their achievements . . . and might violate their precedents.” Within this charged social environment, southern colleges stressed their cultural function as much as their

¹² Bond, *Story*, 49-51; Gary R. Baker, *Cadets in Gray* (Columbia: Palmetto Bookworks, 1989), 1, 188-189; Rod Andrew, *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1939-1951* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 36-37.

¹³ Bond, *Story*, 87; Fraser, *Charleston*, 269; Kathleen Clark, “Celebrating Freedom: Emancipation Day Celebrations and African American Memory in the Early Reconstruction South,” in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 111, 117-120, 125.

educational one. Southern progressives defended higher education as an “instrument of material and social control,” while colleges and universities presented themselves as defenders of the region’s political and social institutions¹⁴

As Rod Andrew points out in *Long Gray Lines*, southern proponents of military schools had long couched such institutions’ value in terms of disciplining the region’s youth and insuring their “submission to lawful authority.” During the sectional crisis, military preparedness eclipsed or equaled curbing delinquency as the schools’ primary purpose. Following the Civil War, promoters of military education again couched their arguments in terms of building character and producing respectful, orderly citizens. Andrew argues that “particularly after the Civil War, the South’s Confederate past and the powerful appeal of the Lost Cause made southerners apt to equate military service and martial valor with broader cultural notions of honor, patriotism, civic duty and virtue.” As the imagery and rhetoric of the Lost Cause translated military virtues into civic virtues, “the most compelling and unchallenged tenet was the notion that soldierly virtues were the marks of an honorable man and a worthy citizen.” In *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, Gaines Foster points out that the Lost Cause owed much of its appeal to white Southerners’ attempts to maintain social order and the status quo. Andrew agrees and contends that by invoking the memory of Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee, military schools answered a social as well as cultural need. As a result, the Confederate

¹⁴ Andrew, *Gray Lines*, 38; David Herbert Donald, “A Generation of Defeat,” in *From the Old South to the New: Essays on the Transitional South*, eds. Walter J. Fraser, Jr. and Winfred B. Moore, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwich Press, 1981), 17; Orville Vernon Burton, “The Effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on the Coming of Age of Southern Males, Edgefield County, South Carolina,” in Fraser, et al., *Web of Southern Social Relations*, 204-224; Grantham, *Southern Progressivism*, xvii-xviii, 3, 271-274; Mark Bauman, “Confronting the New South Creed: The Genteel Conservative as Higher Educator,” in *Education and the Rise of the New South*, eds., Ronald K. Goodenow and Arthur O. White (Boston: G.K. Hall and Co., 1981), 100.

exploits of Citadel cadets “were visible and memorable enough to provide them the political capital they needed to survive after the war.”¹⁵

In 1881, a group of Citadel alumni launched a statewide campaign to generate public support for the institution. They besieged newspapers with articles entitled “Results of Military Training on the Bearing, Character and Spirit of the Cadet” and “Military Training Useful Principally in the Formation of Character and the Maintenance of Discipline, and Not to Make Professional Soldiers.” While this focus on character building appealed to legislators and the general public, the backing of influential alumni helped as well. Andrew notes that “as proof of the school’s usefulness, supporters pointed to the large number of Citadel alumni who were then respected leaders in the state.” Following the war, many of the college’s graduates parlayed their Confederate wartime service into political power. Johnson Hagood, class of 1847, and Hugh Thompson, class of 1856, later served as governors of South Carolina. Several other alumni held positions of power at the local, state, and national level. In 1882 with a Citadel graduate sitting in the governor’s chair, the South Carolina General Assembly approved state funding and The Citadel re-opened as a military college. Andrew calls the college’s rebirth “an example of how the legacy of the military school’s Confederate service and the postwar prestige of many of its graduates helped keep the southern military tradition alive.”¹⁶

Over the next four decades, The Citadel expanded its educational programs, and in 1922, the campus was moved from the center of Charleston to a one hundred-acre site

¹⁵ Andrew, *Gray Lines*, 2, 3, 12, 18, 22, 34; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 6-8, 79, 195.

on the banks of the Ashley River. Excitement over the new location soon died as The Citadel languished during the economic crises of the late 1920s. Debts mounted, enrollment plummeted, and buildings deteriorated. Dusty, unpaved campus roads circled an unkempt parade ground. During the day, cadets took classes from overworked and underqualified faculty members. At night, they studied in a library that was “crammed into a dark and dusty barracks room.” Conditions grew so dismal that in 1930, The Citadel’s outgoing president worried that the South Carolina legislature would cut the school’s funding altogether.¹⁷

With this in mind, Citadel officials searched for a new president who would attract students, publicity, and most of all, money to the college. The man they chose, General Charles Pelot Summerall, seemed ideal for the job. The highly decorated World War I veteran brought immediate national attention to The Citadel. A North Carolina newspaper rejoiced that “one of the world’s most distinguished soldiers and leaders . . . will not rust out, but train youth.” Summerall devoted himself to improving the college’s financial status. He cut salaries, fired workers, limited electrical and water use, disconnected phones, and reduced the number of light bulbs in classrooms and the library. He prowled the grounds regularly to ensure everyone followed his directives. In 1932, the *Chicago Tribune* lauded Summerall as a “depression statesman” who proved “that all men of character and purpose . . . can turn the trick.” The article took a jab at those men and women “on the dole” by noting that Citadel cadets “have learned that

¹⁶ “Self Study,” 11; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 269; Bond, *Story*, 87, 92, 94, 98, 100-102, 111; John Rodman Andrew, *Gray Lines*, 36-39.

¹⁷ Fraser, *Charleston!*, 219, 313; “Self Study,” 11-12, I-5; Gary Nichols, “The General as President: Charles P. Summerall and Mark W. Clark as Presidents of The Citadel,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 95 (October 1994): 317, 319; Dennis Dewitt Nicholson, *A History of The Citadel: The Years of Summerall and Clark* (Charleston: The Citadel Print Shop, 1994), 14.

honorable men do not live beyond their means, however limited and they have learned fortitude.”¹⁸

While Summerall’s authoritarian measures helped, The Citadel did not ride out the depression on “character and purpose” alone. New Deal programs, private contributions, and legislative appropriations funded campus improvements that helped attract and house new students. State approved bonds and grants from the Works Progress Administration paid for a new mess hall, a new chapel, a new barracks, and new faculty apartments. Enrollment rose steadily over the next eight years, and one historian remarks that by 1940, “The Citadel had become a vibrant and viable institution.”¹⁹

In March 1943, as The Citadel celebrated its one hundredth birthday, the *Saturday Evening Post* ran an article entitled “The Citadel – An American Epic.” In it, the author, South Carolina native Herbert Ravenel Sass, offered the school’s “militant Americanism” as proof of the country’s strength and patriotism. He lamented that “the great majority of Americans know little or nothing about” The Citadel, because “it would be hard to find a more inspiring demonstration of the basic strength and soundness of the Republic than this military college in Charleston, South Carolina, most loyal of all Southern cities to the memory and ideals of the Confederacy.” Glorifying cadets’ roles in both sundering and serving the Union, Sass announced that Citadel graduates had fought in every major United States conflict since the Civil War and had shown that “a Confederate stronghold can be a hornet’s nest of aggressive and hard hitting Americanism.” He added that in 1943 over a quarter of the student body came from outside the South and that by serving as valiantly in World War II as they had in the Civil War, The Citadel’s “Yanks and Rebs

¹⁸ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 12, 23, 59, 61, 62, 70-74, 84, 85, 87, 93, 97-98, 119-121; Nichols, “General as President,” 314, 315, 319, 320; *Time*, 22 June 1953.

are giving one of the finest exhibitions of Americanism conceivable.” After reconciling the school’s Confederate heritage with its patriotic loyalty to the United States, Sass decided The Citadel’s story “might even be called an American epic.” While some may take issue with Sass’s recapitulation of The Citadel’s glorious past, projecting this “epic” vision forward from 1943 rather than backward demonstrates the poignancy and validity of Sass’s assessment.²⁰

¹⁹ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 22-94, 168, 182, 196-97; Nichols, “General as President,” 320.

²⁰ Herbert Ravenel Sass, “The Citadel – An American Epic,” *Saturday Evening Post*, 20 March 1943, 12, 13, 100, 103.

CHAPTER ONE: “AN AMERICAN EPIC”

As William Chafe notes in *The Unfinished Journey*, “World War II was a turning point in our history.” The United States’ emergence as a political, military, and economic superpower reshaped the lives and worldviews of many Americans. Some welcomed and embraced these changes, while others feared and resisted them. Wartime scarcities and necessities opened doors for African Americans and women, but post-war prosperity and demands for order fueled a backlash against civil rights activists and the symbolism of Rosie the Riveter. Once opened, however, these doors could not be shut completely, and shifting cultural and social expectations left many anxious, uneasy, bitter, and resentful. Horrendous acts of racial violence and rampant concern about moral decay demonstrated certain groups’ acknowledgement of and resistance to a rapidly changing society.¹

The American South presented the dialectic between tradition and change in its starkest forms. Throughout the region, World War II unleashed both the potential for reform and the rhetorical weapons to stifle it. In *Lost Revolutions*, Pete Daniel argues that “rural change, urbanization, science, technology, racism, and popular culture were interlocking revolutionary components that swept through the South after World War II.”

¹ William H. Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America Since World War II*, 4th edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), x, 29, 125, 134; Charles Payne examines the important role played by this earlier generation of civil rights activists in *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). Susan Hartmann outlines the challenges women faced during and after the war in *The Homefront and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982). Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female*

He notes that “the extent of the transformation, at least in defense centers and military posts, was staggering.” Morton Sosna described the entire post World War II South as “an arena where the forces of good and evil, progress and reaction, rapid change and seemingly timeless continuities were about to engage in a battle of near mythical proportions.”²

These battles were much in evidence at The Citadel where cadets, alumni, faculty, and administrators scrambled to keep their institution competitive and relevant. The college’s post war success, and at times survival, depended upon opening the school up to new students, performing new functions, and providing new services. Like most of the South and the nation, people at The Citadel accepted some of these changes with severe reservations, and resisted others by defending, inventing, and distorting certain traditions they viewed as essential to the college’s success.

The college’s trials and eventual resurgence sharpened ideas about whom The Citadel served and how it best served them. During these years of change and reaction, Citadel personnel established the basic purpose and mission of the institution for the next five decades. Reeling and unsure immediately following the war, the college regained its

With the Mass Media (New York: Times Books, 1995), 49, 54; Stephen Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2nd edition (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1996), 72.

² For a broad, but fairly detailed analysis of this see Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995). James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 194, 206, 227; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 419-421; James C. Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 27, 28, 30, 31, 43, 48-49; Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1998), 511; Morton Sosna, “More Important Than the Civil War?: The Impact of World War II on the South,” in *Perspectives on the American South: An Annual Review of Society, Politics, and Culture*, volume 4, eds. James C. Cobb and Charles R. Wilson (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1987), 145, 147-150, 154; Morton Sosna, “The GIs’ South and the North-South Dialogue during World War II,” in *Developing Dixie: Modernization in a Traditional Society*, eds. Winfred B. Moore, Joseph Tripp, and Lyon G. Tyler, Jr. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1988), 322; Pete Daniel, *Lost Revolutions: The South in the 1950s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 1, 7, 9, 16-19, 92.

footing with the help of the federal government, and the corps of cadets quickly found its niche in a society that craved order, stifled criticism, and glorified militarism.

Despite Herbert Sass's proclamation that The Citadel's "thoughts are focused with an absorbed intensity on its vigorous present," the college struggled in the years just before and just after the end of World War II. In 1942, almost 2000 students attended the institution. Due largely to the draft, that number had fallen to four hundred and eighty five by the following year. At the war's end, enrollment had bottomed out at four hundred and twenty seven. School officials again cut salaries and fired workers. Between the 1943 and 1944 school years, the size of The Citadel's faculty shrank from 104 to 32.³

Wartime deprivations and demands forced Citadel officials to overhaul many of the school's policies. The year after the draft claimed almost the entire junior and senior class, The Citadel's governing board, the Board of Visitors, made it possible for students to graduate in three years by dividing the school year into quarters rather than semesters. The most pressing problem and the one with the most far-reaching implications remained the low number of students on campus. Declining enrollments meant declining revenues, and school administrators scrambled for ways to fill The Citadel's barracks, classrooms, and bank accounts.⁴

³ Sass, "American Epic," 12; *The Bulldog*, 11 February 1949, 13 September 1945, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 29 May 1942, document 600, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 June 1948, document 913; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 1 July 1944, document 768; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 June 1945 document 800; President's Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, June 3, 1944, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

⁴ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 16 January 1943, document 600; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 206.

The United States Army came to the school's rescue. In 1942, General Summerall and the Board of Visitors signed a contract with the War Department agreeing to offer army recruits "specialized training along technical lines." Through two main programs, the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and the Specialized Training and Reassignment program (STAR), soldiers received advanced academic and military instruction at The Citadel, and then, based on their performance, either went on to Officer Candidate School or returned to the enlisted ranks. The War Department set the soldiers' curricula and agreed to cover all expenses relating to the programs. At a time when the college was firing teachers by the handful and running low on cash and students, this offer promised to solve The Citadel's immediate problems. Still, several Citadel officials questioned the government's proposal, and their concerns reveal conflicting ideas about The Citadel's purpose, its value, and its constituency.⁵

Some feared that using Citadel facilities to house and train large numbers of actual soldiers would sully the college's academic reputation. School personnel, cadets, faculty, and administrators alike, appreciated The Citadel's mix of military and educational instruction. They worried, however, that with the school's obvious military trappings – cadets in uniforms, parades, inspections, etc. – outsiders would make the "erroneous assumption that the institution exists to prepare men for war." School boosters argued that the military aspects of Citadel life simply complemented its

⁵ Nichols, "General as President," 321; Letter from J.S. Bragdon to Summerall, dated 2 December 1942, General Charles C. Summerall Papers, Box 1, Folder 7, "Army Specialized Training Program, 1942," The Citadel Archives and Museum, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 173-175, 210; Letter from L.B. Clapham to Summerall, dated 16 July 1942, Box 1, Folder 7, Summerall Papers; Letter from Willis S. Fitch to Summerall, dated 27 January 1943, Box 1, Folder 8, "Army Specialized Training Program – January – March 1943," Summerall Papers; War Department Memo No. W145-4-42, Box 1, Folder 7, Summerall Papers; Citadel SCU-3410-Schedule 4, Section A, Box 1, Folder 8, Summerall Papers; Undated letter from C.F. Myers, Jr. to Summerall, Box 1, Folder 6, "Army Specialized Training Program, undated," Summerall Papers.

educational purpose by making “academic training more complete and effective through the development of soldierly virtues.” These virtues included honesty, integrity, discipline, and organization. The college’s proponents boasted that “such virtues woven into the lives of men will produce results for good irrespective of the field in which they are applied.”⁶

The primary objection to implementing ASTP and STAR at The Citadel stemmed from fears about the impact such programs might have on the customs and traditions of the school, and particularly the corps of cadets. School publications aimed at prospective and new cadets cited obedience and discipline as essential components of a Citadel education. The 1942 *Guidon*, a handbook for freshmen written by cadets, defined The Citadel’s mission in part as “To make available to the country young men with alert minds and sound bodies who have been taught high ideals, honor, uprightness, loyalty, and patriotism, who possess that obedience which goes with trained initiative and leadership.” The same publication described the college’s “military code” as “the law of honor and duty, so closely and intimately blended that no violation of its principles, how small soever (sic), can be permitted either with safety or honor and there is no principle inculcated by the code more imperious or necessary than obedience, prompt, immediate and respectful obedience to every command emanating from proper authority.” Explaining “The Citadel Code,” General Summerall wrote that anyone claiming the

⁶ *Bulletin of The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina – Catalogue Issue 1940-1941*, 3, Daniel Library, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina, cited hereafter as *Citadel Catalogue*.

“honor of being a ‘Citadel Man’” must “revere God, love my country, and be loyal to The Citadel.”⁷

Many people feared that non-Citadel personnel lacked this fealty to college customs and that their presence would have a corrosive impact on the discipline and behavior of the corps. In his preliminary outline of how The Citadel would incorporate ASTP into its regular academic routine, Summerall assured the Board of Visitors that his first priority was to preserve The Citadel “system.” He promised that “present regulations and customs would be imposed on the contract cadets and regular cadets alike,” and he drew special attention to the fact that cadets and army trainees would live on opposite ends of the campus. He affirmed the corps’ role as keeper of the college’s traditions and vowed to keep “as large a corps of cadets as is possible under the circumstances.” As thousands of ASTP and STAR recruits swarmed the Charleston campus in mid-1943, the school’s catalogue expressed the ideals of Summerall and the Board clearly and forcefully: “Faced with the added responsibility of growing numbers, the college seeks to preserve in the corps of cadets those ideals and traditions that it has cherished from the beginning, in order that those who enroll for its education and training, who bring to the college the benefits of many backgrounds, may be nevertheless influenced and strengthened by the noble code of The Citadel.”⁸

Despite these claims to uphold sacred school traditions, the 1943/44 school year witnessed a major change in The Citadel system. Over 10,000 soldiers received some sort of specialized training on the school campus, and due to the “unusual circumstances

⁷ 1940 Citadel *Catalogue*, 3; James A. Grimsley, *The Citadel: Educating the Whole Man* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 2; 1942 *Guidon*, 66, Daniel Library, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; 1943 *Guidon*, 31.

with the various types of students on campus,” General Summerall suspended The Citadel’s plebe or fourth-class system.⁹

In a school full of eccentricities and oddities, the fourth-class system remains The Citadel’s most definitive characteristic and the one that links alumni from various years and decades. As it has evolved over the years, the fourth-class system has proven both a source of great pride and a cause for great consternation among Citadel cadets, alumni, and administrators. For much of the school’s history, to varying degrees and with varying emphases, Citadel cadets and alumni credit the fourth-class system with transforming young recruits into “Citadel Men” and with producing graduates far superior to those from other schools. For this reason, unofficial and official efforts to modify the system met stern resistance and sparked nasty, frequently public, battles.¹⁰

On paper, the fourth-class system consists of several regulations, restrictions, and customs designed to test the physical and mental limits of Citadel freshmen, also known as fourthclassmen. Prior to 1943, freshmen had to address upperclassmen as “sir” or “mister.” When outside their room, all plebes had to appear in full uniform. They were required to learn and recite the history of The Citadel and all the school’s cheers and songs. During their first few weeks on campus, fourthclassmen saluted all senior cadet officers. At meals, plebes had to sit without touching the back of their chair and serve all upperclassmen before serving and eating their own food. In the barracks, they had to “square their corners,” turn left and right at ninety degree angles.

⁸ Letter from Summerall to Edward Smith, dated 8 December 1942, Box 1, Folder 7, Summerall Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 16 January 1943, documents 659-661; 1943 Citadel *Catalogue*, 24.

⁹ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 210-212, 215-220.

¹⁰ Pat Conroy’s brutal depiction of this system permeates his novel *The Lords of Discipline*. More recently, Catherine Manegold places the escalating physical violence of plebe year at the center of her study of Shannon Faulkner and The Citadel. Patrick Conroy, *The Lords of Discipline*, second edition (New York:

Among all these rules, the most basic and zealously guarded aspect of the fourth-class system involves “bracing.” Essentially, bracing is an exaggerated and extremely uncomfortable form of attention whereby the cadet pushed his chin into his chest, rotated his forehead straight back, pulled his shoulders back and down, and locked his arms to his sides. Fourthclassmen were required to maintain this posture in the barracks and the mess hall.¹¹

After Summerall’s decision, new *Guidons* replaced “Freshman Regulations” with “A Guide to Your General Conduct and Wellbeing.” Under this new “guide,” the rigid demands of the fourth-class system gave way to a series of hints and suggestions that first year cadets ought to follow. These suggestions included addressing upperclassmen as sir and carrying out orders from senior cadets “with the utmost speed.” Bracing was replaced by the urging to “maintain a correct posture and take pride in your military appearance at all times.” Instead of reciting the school’s history, songs, and cheers on demand, cadets were encouraged to keep abreast of current events and “always yell your best at football games and other contests.” With upperclass control over the plebes relaxed, the authors of the *Guidon* asked new cadets to discipline themselves. They reminded freshmen that “griping only makes matters worse,” and added, “the cadet who continually gripes is seldom popular. Always show a smile: it will make you feel better and make life more livable in general.”¹²

Decrying the loss of “customs which have made the College what it has been for more than a hundred years,” the corps registered their protest through a brief hunger

Bantam Books, 1983); Catherine Manegold, *In Glory’s Shadow: Shannon Faulkner, The Citadel and a Changing America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999).

¹¹ 1942 *Guidon*, 69-70.

¹² 1946 *Guidon*, 54-55.

strike. On a day when the Board of Visitors planned to eat in the mess hall with the cadets, the corps filed in silently, sat down, refused to eat, and then walked out as quietly as they had entered. One cadet wrote a letter to a local newspaper protesting “the abolition of certain traditions and regulations which have connected with our school for the past one hundred years, and . . . proven necessary in the training of an officer measuring up to Citadel standards.” The protest prompted the suspension of about twenty cadets, and while the Board of Visitors later revoked their suspensions, the fourth-class system was not reinstated until after the war.¹³

Despite these controversies, The Citadel’s contract with the War Department sustained the school when it desperately needed outside assistance. Under the proposed deal, the federal government paid the trainees’ book and lab fees, and compensated The Citadel for medical services, use of its classrooms, building upkeep, and all “food supplies and equipment necessary for the maintenance and operation of the college.” Furthermore, the War Department provided the school with enough money to either hire new faculty or to compensate current faculty for teaching extra classes.¹⁴

While the school survived on federal largesse during the last two years of the war, the relationship between The Citadel and the War Department was often a frustrating one. General Summerall badgered army officials to pay their bills on time. By the end of the first month, Summerall warned the commanding general of the Fourth Service Command that without prompt and full payments, the school could not continue to train ASTP

¹³ 1943 and 1946 *Guidon*; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 211-212, 214-219.

¹⁴ “Memorandum RE Proposed Contract for Army Training,” dated 25 February 1943, Box 1, Folder 8, Summerall Papers; “Resolutions Adopted at the meeting of Presidents of Military Colleges, Washington, DC, 1/8/43,” Box 1, Folder 8, Summerall Papers; Undated letter from C.F. Myers, Jr. to Summerall, Box 1, Folder 6, Summerall Papers; “Salaried of Teaching Staff Employed For 1943/1944,” dated 3 June 1943, Box 1, Folder 9, “Army Specialized Training Program, April – December 1943,” Summerall Papers.

inductees. By November, however, The Citadel had received \$495,000 in government checks.¹⁵

The tensions did not end here, however. In a long exchange of bitter and angry letters, Summerall accused the War Department of welshing on their debts and the War Department accused The Citadel of inflating its expense accounts. In April 1944, an exasperated Summerall announced that he would never sign another contract with the federal government. The next month, he ordered the Commandant to bar ASTP trainees from the mess hall, barracks, and all other campus facilities until the War Department paid its bills. When the United States Army severed its contract with The Citadel shortly thereafter, Summerall threatened to sue the Fourth Service Command for the money he claimed it owed. The two sides eventually settled out of court for \$86,700. Despite the acrimonious relationship, ASTP and the STAR program proved a much-needed windfall for The Citadel, filling barracks and classrooms that would have stood empty, and allowing the school to receive a sizable state appropriation from the South Carolina legislature.¹⁶

The Board of Visitors realized The Citadel could not survive without outside help, and in 1944, they agreed to accept “such veterans as may seek admission under the GI

¹⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 February 1944, document 732 and 15 April 1944, document 743; President’s Annual Report for 1945; D.S. McAlister to Summerall, 23 August 1943, Box 1, Folder 9, Summerall Papers; Summerall to Commanding General 4th Service Command, 26 April 1943, 5 June 1943 and 21 August 1943, Box 1, Folder 9, Summerall Papers; “Government Payments,” undated, Box 1, Folder 6, Summerall Papers; William Bryden to Burnet Maybank, 6 November 1943, Box 1, Folder 9, Summerall Papers.

¹⁶ Headquarters Fourth Service Command to Citadel, 25 August 1943, Box 1, Folder 9, Summerall Papers; “Memo to CPS,” no date, Box 1, Folder 6, Summerall Papers; D.S. McAlister to Summerall, 3 and 4 March 1944, Box 1, Folder 8, Summerall Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 April 1944, document 751, 754; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 April 1944, document 745; E.E. Uhl to Summerall, 13 May 1944, Box 1, Folder 10, “Army Specialized Training Program, 1944,” Summerall Papers; Memo to Commandant from Summerall, 13 May 1944, Box 1, Folder 10, Summerall Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1 July 1944, document 767; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 July 1944, document 776; Summerall to J.M. Moorer, 21 June 1944 and to John P. Thomas, 30 October 1944, Box 1, Folder 10, Summerall Papers.

Bill of Rights.” In his study of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, William Link notes that the GI Bill launched a “revolution in higher education” as colleges “underwent a period of sustained expansion in enrollments, faculty and facilities.” The Citadel and other military colleges worried that they would miss out on the GI Bill sponsored boom because “men who have been under fire will not wish to return to the military confinement” of such schools. The Citadel’s solution was to “cooperate with these men and allow them to attend college not as cadets, but as civilian students.”¹⁷

Dramatic post-war growth still bypassed The Citadel for a number of reasons. Physically, the small, confined campus would not permit a vast expansion of school facilities. Even more importantly, Citadel cadets and administrators resented the presence of “an unconventional student body” comprised largely of older, less compliant veterans.¹⁸

In a history of The Citadel published in 1994, the author claims that immediately following World War II, “the influx of students admitted under the GI Bill rejuvenated the college and sped it on the road to greater service.” While the fees paid by veteran students kept the school afloat in the immediate post-war years, this positive evaluation of the civilians’ impact ignores the cadets’ and the administrations’ lack of appreciation for the veterans’ sacrifices and contributions. Citadel personnel depended upon the veterans’ money to pay the bills and improve campus facilities, but they seethed at the civilian students’ supposed indifference to the institution’s traditions and looked forward

¹⁷ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 April 1944, documents 733-736, 743; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 19, document 800; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 August 1945, document 810; *The Bulldog*, 13 September 1945; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 September 1944, document 779; William A. Link, *William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), xii; Frank K. Hyatt to Summerall, 14 May 1945, Box 1, Folder 11, “Association of Military Colleges, 1941-1952,” Summerall Papers; Summerall to Hyatt, 26 May 1945, Summerall Papers.

¹⁸ Link, *William Friday*, 64.

to the day when these “outsiders” would no longer be allowed within The Citadel’s gates.¹⁹

With a great deal of campus space still unoccupied, school officials allowed non-cadet students to live in barracks and eat meals in the mess hall separate from the corps. The first full year of the plan saw a decrease in the number of cadets, but an overall student increase due to the enrollment of two hundred and forty five veterans. In his annual report to the Board of Visitors, Summerall expected both cadet and veteran figures to climb and predicted an enrollment of “near capacity” for the upcoming year. Based on this, he asked the state legislature for \$2,405,000 to fund an ambitious campus beautification and building program. The General Assembly approved only \$350,000 amid rumors that The Citadel “had deteriorated into a second rate college.”²⁰

Stung by these criticisms, The Citadel’s administration relied on the money generated by veteran students to meet its goals. The 1946/47 school year saw cadet enrollment jump to seven hundred and forty-three, while the number of veterans skyrocketed to 1340. As a result, Citadel revenues more than tripled, the size of its faculty more than doubled, and the school began “permanent improvements” to the campus such as construction of a carillon and bell tower next to The Citadel chapel. This financial and structural growth is directly attributable to the enrollment of veteran students, and has prompted one observer to note that “by mid-1946, it was apparent that

¹⁹ *The Bulldog*, 13 September 1945; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 221-222, 225, 226

²⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948, document 913; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 9 June 1945, document 793; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 28 February 1945, document 789; 1946 Annual Report.

the inflow of veteran students could be the bridge over which The Citadel marched towards post-war success.”²¹

As The Citadel marched however, it tried to leave the veterans behind. At colleges such as UNC-Chapel Hill, school officials recognized that older students “grew impatient with the closely supervised traditions of student life” and “wanted their afternoon beers.” While other institutions tried to accommodate these needs, at The Citadel “closely supervised traditions” took precedence over “afternoon beers.” As a condition of their acceptance, the civilians were expected to “conduct themselves in a satisfactory manner in conformity with the character of The Citadel.” Some students found this difficult. In June 1946, the Commandant reported on the various discipline “problems which were being created by the veteran students” living on campus. To remedy these problems, Summerall reserved the right to ban civilian students from the barracks and mess hall “when in his judgment they were not complying with regulations.” The Board of Visitors restated its policy “that as few restrictions as possible be placed upon veteran students attending the college in civilian status” provided they adhere to “the requirements of gentlemanly conduct and good behavior and the recognition of constituted authority.” The Board required all veterans to sign an oath pledging to “obey all regulations or orders” and to “act in an orderly manner and conform to the standards of deportment required at The Citadel.” They warned that failure to do this jeopardized “the continuation of the veteran’s program at The Citadel.” That same year, the Commandant's office selected certain veteran students to monitor their peers’ behavior in the barracks. These measures appeared to work as a few months later,

²¹ Link, *William Friday*, 64; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 June 1947, document 880; 1946 Annual Report; 1947 Annual Report; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 226; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20

Summerall reported that “there seemed to be a much better group of veterans enrolled than previously.” Soon thereafter however, the Board began limiting the number of civilian students admitted “except as veteran students through the Veterans Administration.”²²

Enrollments and revenues continued to rise as 1046 cadets and 1225 veterans enrolled for the 1947/48 school year. That same year, the South Carolina Budget and Control Board appropriated \$500,000 to The Citadel for the building of new faculty apartments, a new laundry, and a new academic building. Twenty-eight new faculty members were hired, and the federal government chipped in to help renovate thirteen classrooms. The largest source of the school’s income, however, continued to come from the fees paid by civilian students attending regular and summer academic sessions.²³

Civilian students’ contributions extended beyond the increased revenues that helped build new buildings and refurbish old ones. Owing primarily to the infusion of veterans’ money and participation, The Citadel “reactivated” the athletic programs it had suspended during the war. In April 1946, The Citadel hired an athletic director and head football coach, and fielded football, basketball, baseball, boxing and golf teams. Over the next few years, tennis, wrestling and track were added to the school’s list of varsity sports.²⁴

June 1947, documents 838, 839, 841.

²² Summerall to Frank Hyatt, dated 26 May 1945, Box 1, Folder 11, Summerall Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 June 1946, document 818-819; 1947 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1949, document 41; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 October 1946, document 825; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 28 December 1946.

²³ *The Bulldog*, 7 February 1947; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 December 1947, document 880; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 243; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 20, document 911; 1948 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 16 October 1948, document 3; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 September 1949, 50-51, 113.

²⁴ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 April 1946, document 815; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 June 1947, document 843; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948, document 909; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1949, document 43; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 June 1951, document 148.

The rising number of students “strained the capacity of the faculty,” but spurred the college to improve the quality and quantity of courses offered at The Citadel. With increased revenues, the school could afford to raise faculty salaries and allow some professors to earn advanced degrees. In the nine years following World War II, the number of teachers with post-graduate degrees increased steadily, and in 1951, the *Wall Street Journal* recognized the scholarly contributions and superior instruction of The Citadel’s Business Department.²⁵

As the college’s academic credentials improved, school administrators worried that the students’ scholarly accomplishments had not kept pace. The 1947/48 school year saw a large number of cadets and an even larger number of civilian students leave school for academic reasons. Summerall complained that “the problem of the backward student is one of the most baffling at the college,” and he urged faculty advisors and senior cadets to offer new students academic and personal guidance. He tried to reduce the teaching loads of department heads so that they could use the extra time to set up tutoring programs for struggling students. By 1950, these initiatives had produced “excellent results,” and over the years, the college and individual departments expanded the one on one instruction received by the students.²⁶

²⁵ John P. Lovell, *Neither Athens Nor Sparta? The American Service Academies in Transformation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 249, 269, 272, 274, 300, 301, 331; Stephen Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 8, 50, 59, 191, 208; *The Bulldog*, 7 March 1947, 21 November 1947, 5 December 1947, 20 November 1952; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 October 1946, document 825; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 2 November 1950, document 118; 17 November 1951, document 205, 206, 208; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 June 1947, document 843; 1948 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 June 1947, document 839; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 June 1951, documents 142-146.

²⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948, documents 838, 903, 905-906, 910, 913; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1949, documents 37, 41, 45; *The Bulldog*, 28 January 1949; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 June 1951, document 147; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 21, document 249.

While non-cadets underwrote The Citadel's resurgence, school personnel resented their presence on campus. The corps had initially welcomed the civilians, but soon there developed "an incipient conflict between the Corps of Cadets and the new wave of veteran students." Overwhelmed by a large number of civilian students who seemed to be taking over the school, the cadets responded by casting themselves as the true defenders of the "noble traditions of The Citadel." Amidst this onslaught of civilian attitudes, behavior, and appearances, the corps latched on to the college's military system as the tradition most worthy of defending.²⁷

Despite the military experience of the veterans attending The Citadel, the corps claimed the non-cadets' lack of loyalty and discipline weakened the rigorous militarism essential to creating "Citadel Men." By defining their value in terms of defending and preserving the high military standards of The Citadel system, the cadets elevated their sense of self worth, excluded civilian veterans from the "proud traditions" of the school, and ignored the veterans' crucial economic, academic, and athletic contributions to the college. A lasting consequence of this development was an increasing militarism and arrogance within the corps of cadets.

The fact that young men with at best minimal connection to the armed services belittled the credentials of wartime veterans offers insight as to how Citadel personnel viewed the purpose and value of a military education. School publications emphasized the institution's duty to prepare men for "civil pursuits by giving them sound education reinforced by the best features of military training." With most of this training administered by the cadet chain of command, the corps determined what constituted the

²⁷ *The Bulldog*, 13 September 1945; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 225.

“best features” of The Citadel’s system. Their decisions bring into sharp relief the differences between military values and militaristic values.²⁸

In *A History of Militarism*, Alfred Vagts describes military values as marked by a “primary concentration of men and materials on winning specific objectives of power . . . It is limited in scope, confined to one function, and scientific in its essential qualities.” On the other hand, militarism “presents a vast array of customs, interests, prestiges, actions and thoughts associated with armies and war.” Vagts contends that by “rejecting the scientific character of the military way, militarism displays the qualities of caste, cult, authority, and belief.” Civilian militarism holds society to a more rigid and proscribed standard of conduct than army militarism. Societal militarism can even hinder military efficiency by binding armies to fruitless or unnecessary conflicts that waste money, lives, and energy.²⁹

The military/militarism distinction strikes at the heart of the tension between the corps of cadets and the veteran students. The civilians on campus had received at least as much military training as the cadets. Still, on the most superficial level, they looked less military than the corps. The veterans dressed differently, grew mustaches, wore sunglasses, had longer hair, and were not subjected to daily formations and formal inspections. For the cadets, uniforms, drill, inspections, and most importantly, the fourth-class system made The Citadel a unique and valuable college.³⁰

Several cadets complained that veterans had it easy. They grumbled about the civilian students crossing the parade ground as the corps drilled. They treated such acts

²⁸ 1940 *Citadel Catalogue*, 3; 1943 *Citadel Catalogue*, 3.

²⁹ Alfred Vagts, *A History of Militarism* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1959), 13, 16, 453

³⁰ *The Bulldog*, 7 February 1947, 25 April 1947, 7 March 1947, 30 May 1947, 17 October 1947, 17 December 1948, 25 February 1949.

as proof of the veterans' disdain for The Citadel's military customs, and they answered these presumed challenges with calls for more rigid regulations and duties. In April 1947, school officials revived the practice of having cadets march to class. A writer for the student newspaper pointed out that the practice had been discontinued due to the large influx of civilian students, and he announced that "the revival of this custom is just one more step towards the restoration of the excellence of the pre-war Citadel."³¹

The fourth-class system was central to this restoration. In June 1946, a reporter for the school newspaper, *The Bulldog*, asked cadets what "traditions or privileges that The Citadel had before the war would you want readopted?" The answers included weekend leave opportunities, longer library hours, and the adoption of a formal honor system. The most common reply recommended the reinstatement of "fourth class restrictions." The respondents saw this as a way to restore "the high standard of discipline for which the corps is well known." In the same issue, another article described the fourth-class system as a way to "preserve in the corps of cadets those ideals and traditions it had cherished from the beginning." Without such a system, the author continued, the college could not build leaders "influenced and strengthened by the noble code of The Citadel."³²

When school officials revived the fourth-class system in the Fall of 1947, cadets, most of whom had not labored under such restrictions, discouraged freshmen from questioning "the principles of a policy which has paid worthy dividends since 1842." The fourth-class system of 1947 was not the same as the one of 1842 or even 1942. The new regulations continued such practices as having plebes address upperclassmen as

³¹ *The Bulldog*, 25 April 1947, 20 June 1947, 16 February 1949, 22 April 1949, 3 December 1949.

³² *The Bulldog*, 13 June 1946.

“mister” or “sir” and restricted their movements on campus. They also required freshmen to brace in the barracks, demanded they memorize school songs and cheers, ordered them to serve upperclassmen at meals, and prohibited “familiarity” between plebes and the rest of the corps. Several of the more demanding regulations from the previous system were missing however. New cadets were not required to sit at rigid attention at meals. Strict rules concerning plebes’ appearance were eliminated with no stated rule demanding that they remain in “complete prescribed uniform” when out of their rooms. Furthermore, college publications contained no hard and fast rules governing how freshmen “reported” to upperclassmen’s rooms.³³

Despite these changes, most of the corps rejoiced at the return of the fourth-class system. The 1947 regulations continued the practice of freshmen living apart from the corps for about the first six weeks of the school year. During this period a select “cadre” of cadets would indoctrinate the new recruits into The Citadel system. Upon completion of this training, the freshmen would report to their respective companies and officially join the corps of cadets. When the cadre period ended in November of 1947, *The Bulldog* exulted “what a wonderful feeling it was to know that now you ‘belonged’ to the finest group of cadets in the world.” Beyond belonging to this group, however, upperclassmen charged freshmen with steeling themselves to instill next year’s recruits with “the value of discipline” and “the importance of obedience.”³⁴

As much of the corps celebrated the restoration of military customs, the Board of Visitors worked to reduce the number of civilians at The Citadel. New regulations required all physically fit, unmarried veterans under the age of twenty six with less than

³³ *The Bulldog*, 17 October 1947; 1949 *Guidon*, 54.

³⁴ *The Bulldog*, 7 November 1947, 4 June 1948, 19 November 1948.

six months service in the armed forces to enroll as freshmen cadets. Men who met the same criteria but had served between six to twelve months in the military had to enter the corps by their sophomore year. Those with one year, but less than two years service had to become a cadet by their junior year. Over the next five years, the number of veteran students fell from 858 to 109. Corresponding figures for the corps saw an increase of 1141 to 1291.³⁵

Vastly outnumbered, veterans countered cadet criticisms through a recurring column in the school newspaper entitled “Clippings From The Ruptured Duck.” The debut article set the tone for those that followed. In it, the author reminded readers that most veterans had faced death and endured grueling wartime struggles. Claiming they just wanted “to lead the normal everyday life,” he noted “it is not exactly practical for men who have mental anguish, war nerves, and other physical handicaps to place themselves under a rigid program of military regulations and discipline.” The Ruptured Duck reversed the charge that veterans had it easier than cadets by reminding the corps “we have been around a bit, and probably have seen more than most of those who are coming to college and who are away from home for the first time.” The author also refuted the “consensus of opinion . . . that the veteran student does not have the proper school spirit” by pointing out that The Citadel’s athletic teams “are dominated by the physical and mental superiority that the veteran is supposed to offer.”³⁶

Later installments blasted away at the cadets’ and administration’s treatment of veterans as bothersome intruders. The author defied those who “feel that the veteran

³⁵ 1948 Annual Report, Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948, 903, 907; 1946 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 21, document 35; 1948 Citadel *Catalogue*; 1953 Annual Report; *The Bulldog*, 19 November 1948, 28 January 1949; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1949, documents 35-36, 40; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 22, document 385.

should conform uniformly to the purpose of The Citadel.” He continued “Of course, these people are not individuals who have seen enough of all parts of the earth, fought at a place where someone fought back, or had anyone drop a bomb on them, even a little bomb.” Addressing Citadel cadets and officials directly, he declared “many people will be much happier here as students . . . when we can be made to feel that we are part of the institution.”³⁷

This last plea fell on deaf ears. While still well below full capacity, corps enrollment had rebounded from the dangerously low levels of the mid-1940s. A reinvigorated corps allowed school officials and cadets to alienate veteran students further. In May 1949, the editor of the student newspaper denied charges of discrimination by a “number of the veteran students [who] feel that they are not receiving the proper news coverage and representation in *The Bulldog*.” The charge held some merit, however, as each *Bulldog* from that year carried detailed updates on events occurring in each cadet company, but only sporadically provided information concerning veteran students. Opinion polls conducted by the newspaper staff printed the ideas of cadets only. At homecoming that year, veteran students and cadets from N Company teamed up to decorate the fourth battalion. Their efforts drew praise from alumni and other campus visitors, and one veteran presented this as evidence of cadets’ and non-cadets’ willingness “to work together and what can be expected of them in the future.” In that same issue, a cadet assessment of the homecoming festivities recognized the “ingenuity” of N Company and gave no credit to the veteran students.³⁸

³⁶ *The Bulldog*, 28 January 1949.

³⁷ *The Bulldog*, 11 February 1949, 25 February 1949.

³⁸ *The Bulldog*, 21 November 1947, 4 June 1948, 7 May 1949, 3 December 1949, 16 December 1949, 10 February 1950, 27 October 1950, 16 February 1951.

Declining civilian student enrollment fueled college officials' hopes of finally ending the veteran program. Even with The Citadel not operating at full capacity, school administrators waited anxiously for the number of veteran students to dwindle and eventually dry out. In 1951, General Summerall noted a sharp drop in veteran student numbers and predicted "it will be very small in the future." That same year, the Board of Visitors banned civilians from living in the barracks. When veteran enrollment actually increased in 1955 and 1956, the Board ended the program by refusing to accept applications from civilians regardless of military service.³⁹

The battles between The Citadel and the veteran students had a lasting effect on the college. With the civilians routed, school personnel continued to define the school's value and purpose in militaristic terms. Rather than use these themes simply to drive out intruders, however, cadets and Citadel boosters used them to carve out their place in the larger society. Citadel Men touted their discipline, loyalty, patriotism, toughness, obedience, and manliness. During the early years of the Cold War, these values and goals meshed perfectly with those of mainstream America. In mirroring the dominant cultural ideals of the nation, this southern institution reinforced its Americanism.

While much of the corps' increasing militarism stemmed from civilian-cadet tensions, this trend also mirrored broader, national shifts. World War II shortened the gap between political, cultural and military concerns, and the Cold War practically merged the two. With current and former military officials advising presidents and corporations, one pundit remarked "the effective focus of government seems to have

³⁹ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," Folder 21, documents 114, 146, 252; 1952 Annual Report; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 227-228; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 October 1956.

shifted from Washington to some place equidistant between Wall Street and West Point.”⁴⁰

In response to those who worried about the militarization of society, one cadet laid out his defense of the “professional soldier” in stark terms. The writer criticized the “masses” and the “uniformed man on the street” for supposedly treating military officers as “moss-backed, short sighted creatures, who are hopelessly behind the times.” Blasting “the intellectuals (and the stupid)” and “would be intellectuals” for stereotyping military officers as “arrogant, warmongering, curt and undemocratic,” he argued that despite the “low pay, insults, apathy,” and political scapegoating, United States officers commit themselves to defending the country at a time “when workers won’t even give their employers ten minutes of their time.” The cadet praised the devotion, hard work and loyalty of military officers and predicts “he’ll still be there when the civilians start the next war.”⁴¹

This uncritical perspective reflects an era when, as Stephen Whitfield notes in *The Culture of the Cold War*, “the military enjoyed tremendous prestige and was largely unchallenged.” The author’s intent and method, however, make it useful, as defenders of The Citadel would adopt the same tone and tactics in the future. The cadet cast him and his school as the besieged victims of an unappreciative and hostile society. He lashes out at “intellectuals” as well as “workers.” He sees the former as devious and irresponsible, while the latter come across as lazy and dishonorable. Caught between these corrosive segments of society, the corps of cadets assumed the burden of defending the country’s

⁴⁰ Richard Polenberg, *War and Society, The United States, 1941-1945* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972); Vagts, *Militarism*, 485; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 62, 65, 66-68, 82; Howard Zinn, *A People’s History of the United States, 1492-Present* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1995), 417, 421; Faludi, *Stiffed*, 19.

⁴¹ *The Bulldog*, 11 February 1949.

best interests. This exaltation of the men who would fight future wars contrasted sharply with the cadets' disdain for those civilians who had already served in combat, and suggested a certain disingenuousness in the corps' defense of its traditions and values.⁴²

The most dramatic and pervasive domestic consequence of the Cold War was what David Cuate refers to as "the Great Fear." As Cold War tensions escalated, Americans began signing loyalty oaths, tracking down Communists, and ferreting out "un-American activities." Democrats and Republicans raced to outdo one another, casting their party as the true defenders of democracy while deriding the other as "Red sympathizers." Popular culture leapt into the fray as Hollywood cranked out a series of films about "The Red Menace," "The Red Snow," and "The Red Danube."⁴³

The Citadel swam along with the current. Not long after World War II, an article in *The Bulldog* declared America the worldwide "champion of democracy," and said the United States "must insure that countries are free to choose their own form of government and have economic stability." This freedom of choice did not find a home on The Citadel campus, however, as General Summerall ordered all "Communistic works purged from the library." In 1947, during the school's annual Religious Emphasis Week, Summerall announced that "the person engaged to conduct the services diverted them to un-American political and economic ideologies, and it was necessary to stop him after the first two talks."⁴⁴

The corps proved just as diligent in uncovering subversives. Commenting on the 1948 presidential campaign, a cadet reported "we know that [Henry Wallace] is being

⁴² Whitfield, *Culture*, 58-59.

⁴³ David Cuate, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978); Charles C. Alexander, *Holding the Line: The Eisenhower Era* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975); Zinn, *People's History*, 416-420; Whitfield, *Culture*, 7, 62-63, 69;

supported by the communists” who hoped the candidate’s “isolationist” program would topple America’s economic and political systems. Of course, the corps of cadets was not a monolithic ideological bloc. One student endorsed Truman’s doomed national health care plan citing “How can people govern themselves, unless they are . . . secure.”⁴⁵

Most cadets toed the line when it came to international affairs, however, as they found room to criticize United States policy only when it failed to intervene aggressively in global affairs. The student newspaper pleaded with military officials to protect Latin American from Soviet threats to “the democratic way of life.” *The Bulldog* also pushed for a heavy United States military presence in Europe to protect “all that our country fought for, and all that we, as a victorious nation are now obligated to uphold.” Almost all cadets supported the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, although they did not do so blindly. One acknowledged that Truman’s policy provided military aid to Greece and Turkey but solicited “very little advice” from either country. He recognized the dangers of devoting unlimited aid to a vaguely defined cause, but defended the action as a “honest and sincere attempt to alleviate the problem.” As for the Marshall Plan, the writer dismissed Soviet accusations of economic imperialism as “fallacious” and compared the plan favorably to the New Deal. Despite any practical or ideological reservations, the writer insisted, all Americans had to support these policies if “peace and harmony” were to prevail.⁴⁶

Cadets styled themselves as the type of citizens America needed in these troubled times. Their egos received an immediate post-war boost when the federal government increased funding to college ROTC programs. The corps regarded this as proof that “as

⁴⁴ *The Bulldog*, 21 February 1947, 9 May 1947; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 230.

⁴⁵ *The Bulldog*, 23 January 1948, 6 February 1948.

members of a senior unit of the ROTC, cadets at The Citadel will form one of the largest assets which the government will possess.” As future leaders of the country where “Christian brotherhood reigns supreme,” the corps listed the various fronts on which the Cold War was fought by boasting that at The Citadel “our moral, mental, social, and military leadership qualities are being developed to the utmost.”⁴⁷

Obedience to authority remained a pillar of the institution’s ideology. As with militarism, this article of faith fit nicely with the national and regional cultural environment. In the United States, paranoia and a sense of complacency accompanied post-World War II prosperity. Memories of war and economic depression lingered in many people’s minds, and this fueled an already strong belief that the United States economic resurgence remained tenuous at best. “Holding the line” became American’s prime concern with this term covering the dual goal of containing communism abroad and preserving the economic and social status quo at home. As more and more Americans treated any criticism of United States policies or traditions as subversive and dangerous, “faith was strengthened in the institutions of authority” and the military, politicians, and corporations were regarded as the most qualified arbiters and defenders of American values.⁴⁸

These cultural developments played no small part in the South’s and The Citadel’s post war recoveries. Southerner’s militarism and dogged defense of tradition has drawn both criticism and praise. In this case, the South benefited from this image. The Citadel certainly profited from it and school personnel played their part to the hilt.

⁴⁶ *The Bulldog*, 21 February 1947, 7 March 1947, 20 June 1947, 21 November 1947, 5 December 1947,

⁴⁷ *The Bulldog* 13 September 1945, 20 June 1947, 17 October 1947, 29 October 1948, 25 February 1948

⁴⁸ Alexander, *Holding the Line*; Zinn, *A People’s History*, 421; Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 7; Edgar, *South Carolina*, xx; Whitfield, *Culture*, 53.

The student newspaper printed an article describing the dangers an unregulated media has posed to military operations from the Civil War through World War II. Probably exaggerating the paper's circulation and importance, the editor assured his "faithful readers that there is no danger of *The Bulldog* letting any valuable military information slip through into our printed sheet." He boasted that faculty advisors pored over each story to determine if they contained any "information whatsoever" that might help "an enemy or potential enemy." Once deemed safe, the story was "then quickly and forcefully released for the benefit of the Corps of Cadets."⁴⁹

Other cadet editorials carried more ominous messages. In June 1948, a cadet warned of the "temptation inherent in a land of plenty, to grow fat and lazy." As an indirect endorsement of the importance of the fourth-class system, he wondered "Can the fairheaded favorites of destiny stay physically tough and mentally sharp." Those who dared criticize The Citadel drew vitriolic responses. An article entitled "Did You Kill Him ? . . ." attacked members of the corps who complained about military regulations at The Citadel. The author shot back that polishing brass and military drilling "instills discipline" and creates "a sense of order and method." He warned the corps that failure to learn the lessons could cost people their lives in times of war. Beyond that, he noted "the ideals for which Americans have fought and died for generations are in your hands. The future of this nation does not belong entirely to the ramrod-backed professional officer. It belongs to the citizen soldier . . . TO YOU."⁵⁰

In some cases, this emphasis on conformity reflected a distinct regional bias. One cadet noted the sizable number of northerners at The Citadel who "while retaining their

⁴⁹ *The Bulldog*, 21 November 1947.

⁵⁰ *The Bulldog*, 4 June 1948, 28 January 1949.

own views as to the War Between the States, respect the traditions of the school to which they voluntarily came.” He warned them, however, that should any of them “under the cover of rank or class, degrade or disrespect the traditions of The Citadel, they should go to a school where the traditions are more to their liking.”⁵¹

Certainly not all cadets felt the same way, but contributions to the paper testify to just how narrow the parameters of debate had grown in the United States at large. A writer for *The Bulldog* preached that “a free nation, free to disagree, free to discuss and free to criticize . . . will eventually triumph over the force of any aggressor.” His contribution to free and open debate, however, consisted of comparing the policies of Democratic and Republican candidates. His critiques of society focused on organized crime, vague “questions of foreign policy,” and ambitious politicians. This list ignored the heated debates raging over civil rights and McCarthyism.⁵²

This silence is important. The post-war, “Greatest Generation” image of a universally confident, prosperous and content America remains a potent national myth. Americans then and now tend to brush aside the ugliness of an era marred by racial violence, political witch-hunts, and urban decay. Many people turned a blind eye to the injustices and inequities of the “American Century.” On the heels of two of the ugliest acts of racial violence in South Carolina’s history and the racially charged presidential campaign of Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats, the editor of *The Bulldog* pleaded with Americans to put aside “sectional or regional,” (not racial) “bias” and “work together.” He accused “rabble rousing” politicians of giving “comfort to our enemies who see a division in our ranks.” Indicating who would get shunted aside in this reconciliation and

⁵¹ *The Bulldog*, 13 June 1946, 11 November 1949, 26 January 1952.

⁵² *The Bulldog*, 27 February 1948, 28 April 1951.

what issues these “rabble rousers” need to hush about, he hedged “Whether or not the poll tax, segregation, fair employment, and anti-lynch laws are constitutional or unconstitutional is not for us to say.”⁵³

The Korean War accelerated the militaristic glorification of The Citadel and its traditions. In October of 1950, The Citadel received its first report that an alumnus had been killed in Korea. Over the next several months, the list grew, and cadets responded by reaffirming their faith in their school and their country. In June 1951, *The Bulldog* reminded the graduating seniors that “The United States is now in the throes of a fight for its very existence,” and charged them with leading the nation to victory, calling it a “definite mistake to sit back and try to analyze the present world situation and search for your reason for fighting a certain government.” Later articles in *The Bulldog* lashed out at anyone who dared question the United State’s Cold War policies. One author warned that Americans must “cease listening to the sweet resounding lies of the ‘Communist Peace Dove’ and prepare to accept the possibility of World War III.”⁵⁴

The cadets’ loyalty to their country paled in comparison to their visceral attachment to their alma mater. Because of their military experience, members of the corps saw themselves as superior to their peers at civilian schools. The student newspaper boasted that “through instruction, exercise, and obedience to army given standards, you are acquiring the materials to build a strong life.” This uniqueness became

⁵³ Kenneth Jackson and Thomas Sugrue destroy the myth of a universally prosperous and unified America in their respective works *Crabgrass Frontier* and *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*. Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Kari Frederickson, “‘The Slowest State’ and ‘Most Backward Community’: Racial Violence in South Carolina and Federal Civil Rights Legislation, 1946-1948,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 98 (April 1997): 177-202; *The Bulldog*, 29 January 1949.

a burdensome source of paranoia for much of the corps. While cadets praised the college's military framework for making them stronger, better Americans, preservation of the system caused them a great deal of anxiety. Quick to point out the many benefits of a military education, Citadel personnel were just as quick to use presumed hostility to the military as a way to stifle criticism coming from within and without The Citadel's gates.⁵⁵

Bulldog editorials shrieked about the dangers posed by anyone who dared criticize the school and its customs. An article from December 1951 claimed "the world over Citadel men are looked upon with respect and envy," but reminded the cadets that it took decades for The Citadel to earn this reputation and "it could be destroyed easily." To prevent this, the author added, "each individual must abide by the regulations and give his undivided cooperation to the making of a better school."⁵⁶

In the Fall of 1952, General Summerall informed a group of graduating seniors that The Citadel had prepared them "to conform to the highest standard of conduct" and instilled them with moral strength, integrity, responsibility, self-reliance, and efficiency. He told them that in return, the cadets owed a deep, uncritical allegiance to their alma mater. The cadets appeared to embrace Summerall's challenge. Shortly after the General's speech, *The Bulldog* editorialized on the "Obligations of Manhood," the central of these being obedience to authority. "If you work for a man, in heaven's name, work for him; speak well of him and stand by the institution he represents . . . if you must growl, condemn, and eternally find fault, resign your position, and when you are on the

⁵⁴ *The Bulldog*, 5 June 1950, 14 October 1950, 11 November 1950, 14 October 1950, 16 February 1951, 8 June 1951, 28 April 1951, 27 October 1951, 14 December 1951, 28 February 1953, 18 April 1953, 9 May 1953.

⁵⁵ *The Bulldog*, 16 March 1951, 10 October 1953.

outside, damn to your heart's content, but as you are a part of the institution, do not condemn it."⁵⁷

Under the headline "The Citadel Speaks," the editor of *The Bulldog* assumed the persona of the college and let The Citadel describe its value to society. The Citadel offered its production of "many good men" as the prime reason for its existence. Despite its sterling record in this regard, the school cast itself as fragile and vulnerable. "I feel that my very existence is in jeopardy, therefore, I feel that I should speak out before I am silenced forever." Many feared admission standards at the school had grown lax. The Citadel despised the "poor quality of manhood" it housed and preferred "a small group of good men than a large group of poor men." The voice of The Citadel chastised underclassmen for wanting privileges "without first either working for them or proving themselves worthy of them." It blasted those who broke the rules, complained about the punishment, and then "ridicule[d] their classmates for carrying out their duties." The Citadel predicted that if cadets abandoned the "intimate qualities" of duty and honor, the institution would crumble. It demanded the corps "be constantly vigilant of that one man who deviated from the true course" and threatened to turn the school into a "degenerated and degraded institution."⁵⁸

"The Citadel Speaks" received rave reviews from cadets and alumni. One fan condemned "the general disregard for duty which is becoming prevalent in the Corps," and he hoped The Citadel's words would convince cadets to appreciate the school's customs and traditions. Another respondent echoed that cadets must "uphold the high

⁵⁶ *The Bulldog*, 14 December 1951, 1 March 1952, 16 March 1951, 21 March 1952, 9 May 1952, 8 November 1952, 19 December 1952, 10 October 1953, 19 October 1953.

⁵⁷ "Remarks of General Summerall at the Graduating Exercises, 12/20/52," Box 6, Folder 8, Summerall Papers; *The Bulldog*, 20 March 1953.

standards” of the past in honor of the men “who have fought and died to keep The Citadel where it is today – in a free country.”⁵⁹

Whether one defined The Citadel’s purpose as producing men of honor, integrity, loyalty, or leadership, the key component of all these remained that The Citadel produced “men.” Citadel personnel tied their school’s uniqueness and worth to its production of men. While the cadet’s almost manic assertion of their masculinity may appear unusual, their gendered conceptions fit nicely with the American mindset. In *Stiffed*, Susan Faludi contends that “The United States came out of World War II with a sense of itself as a *masculine* nation.” A prosperous, aggressive America “claimed an ascendancy over the world, men an ascendancy over the nation, and a male persona of a certain type ascendancy over men.”⁶⁰

School personnel worked hard to convince themselves and others that a Citadel man possessed the qualities Americans prized the most. Engaged in an ideological, economic, military, and moral battle with Communism, Citadel cadets couched their manliness in terms of mental and physical toughness, patriotism and loyalty, strength and integrity. According to Citadel alumni, cadets, and administrators as well as most other Americans these traits were not only desirable, but vital to the country’s success. Furthermore, few people exhibited those characteristics, thus making The Citadel’s purpose unique and all the more valuable. A writer for *The Bulldog* argued that the “soul of the corps” is the “end product: honorable men of training and strength in a world where these qualities are rare and essential.” The 1952 *Guidon* preached “in a world of changing and declining moral values, one trait distinguishes men from one another more

⁵⁸ *The Bulldog*, 25 October 1952.

⁵⁹ *The Bulldog*, 26 November 1952.

clearly than race, creed or color: Honor. Today, more than at any other time in history, the destiny of the world rests in the high hope we take from the honorable men among us.”⁶¹

Insisting that “No country without able men has ever remained at the top for long,” the cadets’ seemed to believe that American greatness depended upon the kind of leadership developed at The Citadel. According to the corps, “the kind of leader you are depends upon the kind of man you are,” and it was The Citadel that produced men with the knowledge, tact, enthusiasm, decisiveness, boldness, and sense of justice found in good leaders. At one point, the student newspaper printed a questionnaire to help cadets determine “What kind of man I am.” The form listed manly traits such as hard working, reliable, honest, physically fit, self-confident, and understanding.⁶²

As part of their efforts to define what sort of men America needed and The Citadel manufactured, cadets also determined what type of women America needed. In an era when “sex roles achieved a new level of polarization,” Citadel students held strong opinions about how women should look, act, and live. These ideals hardly matched reality, but they were shaped by real changes in women’s lifestyles. The corps’ concepts of proper feminine behavior reflected a larger trend whereby Americans expected women to be both helpless and independent, demure and demanding, hard-working and pampered. Most of all, women were expected to defer to men.⁶³

⁶⁰ Faludi, *Stiffed*, 16

⁶¹ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 23; *The Bulldog*, 10 March 1951, 21 March 1952; *The Brigadier*, 10 October 1953, 24 October 1953; 1952 *Guidon*, 42; “Address by General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff US Army,” Box 6, Folder 8, “Summerall, General Speeches, 1952-1953,” Summerall Papers.

⁶² *The Bulldog*, 3 June 1949; 1 March 1952, 14 February 1953; *The Brigadier*, 24 October 1953; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 October 1953, document 288.

⁶³ Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 123.

Despite all the changes wrought by World War II, for women “the unshaken claim of wifedom and family remained.” The restoration of traditional gender roles whereby men worked outside the home and brought home a paycheck while women tended house and raised children took on added importance as the United States sought any edge it had over the Soviet Union. According to Susan Douglas, media images conveyed the message “If the United States was going to fight off contamination from [Communism] then *our* women had to be very different from *their* women.” Not only were American wives and mothers expected to be more attractive than their Soviet counterparts, but “their women worked in masculine jobs and had their kids raised outside the home in state-run child care centers that brainwashed kids to become good little comrades.” As a result, “our kids had to be raised at home by their moms if we were going to remain democratic and free.”⁶⁴

Scholars of this era recognize, however, that “the effort to reinforce traditional norms seemed almost frantic, as though in reality something very different was taking place.” This was certainly the case as dissatisfied, disenchanted housewives found suburbia home to the “feminine mystique” not the American dream. Even the stay-at-home ideal of American womanhood proved false as millions of females continued to attend college and work outside the home. Even with their increased public presence and the obvious dividends it brought to them and their families, working women were still treated with suspicion and relegated to inferior pay and jobs.⁶⁵

At The Citadel, most cadets seemed to take a somewhat condescending attitude towards women. College officials opened summer school to females in 1949 when the

⁶⁴ Hartmann, *Homefront and Beyond*, 163-181; Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 22, 47.

⁶⁵ Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 124-128.

school desperately needed money, but this caused no big stir among the corps. A headline in the school newspaper announced “girls” would take summer classes and added “no living accommodations will be provided on campus for female students.” Later when The Citadel made barracks space available to women attendees, General Summerall informed the Board of Visitors each year that “no women occupied rooms in the barracks.” The best explanation for this general lack of interest is that female summer school students posed no threat to the school’s customs and traditions, especially its military and fourth-class systems. Excluded from these crucial elements of the man-making process, women had no opportunity to prove that they could compete with men in The Citadel’s normal environment. With a female presence limited only to the classroom in an informal summer session, cadets had no reason to fear that these women might withstand the rigors of The Citadel and threaten the school’s underlying purpose and design – the production of men.⁶⁶

This explains in part why Citadel personnel could not fathom their alma mater admitting women. Just three months after reporting that women would attend summer school, the student newspaper printed a photo of three young children, one boy and two girls, dressed in military uniforms and toting rifles. The caption underneath read “Shades of things to come?” and claimed the image evoked “not entirely unpleasant visions of a future corps complete with WAC units.” To underscore the ludicrousness of such an idea, however, the writer followed this observation with a derisive “seriously though . . .” Six years later a lampoon edition of the paper mocked the notion as well with a front page headline “Citadel to turn coed.” Aware on some level of the consequences of

⁶⁶ *The Bulldog*, 11 February 1949, 25 February 1949, 5 June 1950; Letter from Summerall to John P. Thomas, Box 7, Folder 4, “Summer School, 1949,” Summerall Papers, Citadel Archives; Board of Visitors,

allowing women the chance to become “Citadel men,” the corps refused to entertain the idea.⁶⁷

The cadets’ take on the perfect woman mixed large doses of traditional femininity with brief flashes of the actual shifts taking place in American society. Each edition of the student newspaper featured a “Beauty of the Week.” A cadet would nominate a woman for the award, and if chosen, the “winner’s” picture and a brief biographical sketch would appear in the paper. Each installment followed a similar pattern, and the personal information reveals clearly what qualities Citadel students valued in a woman. The column offered stereotypes for all tastes; from “party girls” and “lovelies” to a demure “Southern Belle” who was not only “good looking, but she can sew beautifully and cook those always good southern dishes – and loves a good time.” The selection process betrayed a distinct regional bias as “Southern Belles” and “Good Old Rebels” appeared regularly.⁶⁸

The columns offered some indication of the increased opportunities women enjoyed, but they pushed these qualities to the background and promoted more domesticated examples of feminine behavior. Almost every Beauty attended college, planned to attend college or worked outside the home. Some exhibited an aggressive sexuality by reportedly enjoying “cattin around” and living like “real party girls.” Reflective of the notion that American women should be alluring, dutiful, and non-threatening, however, the write-ups emphasized physical standards of beauty over intellectual or civic accomplishments. Each entry contained a women’s “vital statistics”

"Minutes," 8 June 1951, document 133; 1953 Annual Report.

⁶⁷ *The Bulldog*, 7 May 1949; *The Brigadier*, 7 May 1955.

which the editor defined as her height and weight. Many captions referred to their subjects as “kitten,” “cream queen,” “our baby,” and the “Queen of all our dreams.”⁶⁹

The cadet made no bones about what they considered the most important quality in a woman – her willingness and ability to serve men. One beauty from a nearby college supposedly spent her time studying “when she was not bringing food out here for *him*.” Another was a husband hunting registered nurse “who prefers taking care of electrical engineering majors.” Several Beauties earned special praise for their cooking prowess. With exaggerated nostalgia for the “good ol’ days,” the authors made it seem as if women of their era were free from the burdens of housework. A longing for “one of those rare girls who not only looks good, but cooks that way too” remained a common theme of the column.⁷⁰

While the corps lauded examples of traditional femininity, changes in the fourth-class system reflected the ever strengthening bond between the corps’ manliness and The Citadel’s continued prosperity. These changes also attest to the encroachment of Cold War politics into almost every aspect of American society as during this era a “cult of toughness” took root in American society that equated good citizenship with physical and mental strength. Physical endurance and mental toughness became vital weapons in America’s arsenal as pundits declared that United States citizens must be prepared to undergo grueling hardships in order to prove their ideological and moral superiority. Aggressive attitudes towards masculinity joined with the Citadel’s particular evaluation

⁶⁸ *The Bulldog*, 7 February 1947, 21 February 1947, 7 March 1947, 25 April 1947, 9 May 1947, 30 May 1947, 17 October 1947, 7 November 1947, 21 November 1947, 27 February 1948, 4 June 1948, 27 January 1950, 24 February 1950; *The Brigadier*, 17 April 1954.

⁶⁹ *The Bulldog*, 17 October 1947, 27 February 1948, 4 June 1948, 29 October 1948, 25 February 1949, 11 November 1949, 3 December 1949, 16 December 1949, 8 March 1949, 7 May 1949, 27 January 1950, 24 February 1950, 17 March 1950, 5 May 1950.

of Cold War imperatives to increase the demands upperclassmen placed on freshmen. The progression followed that with strong, tough, American men needed to protect the world, and with The Citadel producing the finest models of American manhood, and with plebe year as the fire that forged Citadel Men, the fourth-class system became the first line of defense against the Soviets.⁷¹

Cadet spokesmen made no mistake that it was the military rigors of a Citadel education that made the school unique and valuable. They informed others that after overcoming the challenges presented by the college, “You will find that wherever you go, you can say with pride, I AM A CITADEL MAN.” One freshman rejoiced that “Behind every regulation, every demerit, there is some lesson to be learned, some purpose to be served. We will be made men!” Another student argued that through all the bracing, shoe shining and brass polishing, “the dross is worn away and the ‘Citadel Man’ emerges . . . erect and firm of step, alert and proud.”⁷²

Charges of hazing accompanied this glorification of The Citadel Man. A very favorable account of The Citadel’s history admitted “any serious study of cadet life since 1937 will convince a discerning researcher that complete elimination of hazing at The Citadel remains Utopian.” Alumni from earlier eras concede that physical violence formed a part of their fourth-class system, but they characterize these acts as more rambunctious than malicious. At some point, however, “the whole place down there got

⁷⁰ *The Bulldog*, 28 January 1949, 17 December 1948, 18 March 1949, 3 June 1949, 27 January 1950, 19 May 1950.

⁷¹ Emilio and Freedman, *Intimate Matters*, 292, 295; Whitfield, *Culture*, 10; Elizabeth Ann Collins, “The Post War Boy Scout Handbooks: Manhood for the Atomic Age,” (M.A. thesis, University of Georgia, 1999), 15; Donald J. Mzorek, “The Cult and the Ritual of Toughness in Cold War America,” in *Ritual and Ceremonies in Popular Culture*, ed. Ray Browne (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980), 178-179, 183-184, 189-190.

mean,” and while the hazing of the 1940s and early 1950s paled in comparison to later years, the ideological justifications for abuses of the fourth-class system grew out of this era.⁷³

Since at least 1943, The Citadel had issued stern warnings against hazing. School officials required all cadets to sign an oath pledging not to “engage in hazing in any form” while at the college. By 1951, the emphasis had shifted from expecting students not to harm freshmen physically to expecting freshmen to distinguish between illegal hazing and necessary “military discipline.” According to *The Guidon* from that year, the latter is enforced “with fairness, constancy, and rigidity,” and must be accepted with the “correct attitude.” The 1950 *Guidon* advised freshmen not to question the tenets of the fourth-class system. “As time passes, you will not only become more clearly aware of their value, but will find yourself continually falling heir to their increased rights.” Somewhat disingenuously given that the system had changed significantly over the past ten years, the authors assured new cadets “you are not being subjected to anything which has not been included in the training of the hundreds who have gone before you.”⁷⁴

An increase in the number of freshmen leaving school shortly after their arrival provides some indication that the fourth-class system had taken on a harder edge. In 1950, one hundred and seventy-nine cadets withdrew from The Citadel, and this statistic drew the attention of school officials. When this trend repeated itself the next year, General Summerall noted the concern of the Board of Visitors in his annual report. He attributed the high attrition to the “inability of those cadets to adjust to military

⁷² Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1948, document 912; *The Bulldog*, 13 September 1945, 3 December 1948, 3 June 1949, 16 December 1949, 7 March 1950, 5 June 1950, 16 February 1951; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 4 November 1953, document 297.

⁷³ Nicholson, *The History of The Citadel*, 140.

discipline,” but his solution involved keeping the freshmen away from the rest of the corps until after the winter break. This remedy appeared to work as the dropout rate soon returned to pre-1950 levels.⁷⁵

As the demands of the fourth-class system ate up more and more of the freshmen’s time, Summerall grew concerned with the poor academic performance of the freshmen class, and he informed the Board, “military training must be adjusted to academic requirements.” Most of the new policies Summerall enacted reduced the interaction between freshmen and upperclassmen with an eye towards minimizing potential hazing situations. He extended the cadre period, had freshmen eat meals separate from the rest of the corps, and limited the amount of time devoted to “drill or military instruction.” He specifically ordered that plebes should use their evenings to study; not to shine shoes, polish brass, or learn “plebe knowledge” per upperclassmen’s demands.⁷⁶

School officials coupled these changes with a harsher attitude towards those who failed to meet the demands of The Citadel. In his contribution to *The Guidon*, the head of the Civil Engineering Department informed freshmen, “if you fail and another man succeeds, the chances are a hundred to one that he is a better man than you. He could take it and you couldn’t.” The Citadel’s president echoed these sentiments. He told new cadets “it has been our experience that some, too weak to make the effort, fall helpless.

⁷⁴ 1943 *Citadel Catalogue*, 50-51; 1951 *Guidon*, 38; 1950 *Guidon*, 55-56.

⁷⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 November 1951, document 166; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 21, document 141, 247, 252.

⁷⁶ *The Bulldog*, 21 March 1952; 1953 *Guidon*, 90.

Our hearts go out more in sorrow than regret, for they have had the best chance of becoming men and leaders and have failed.”⁷⁷

Between 1943 and 1953, The Citadel underwent a great deal of change from the acceptance of civilian veteran students to the abolishing and reinstating of the fourth-class system. School personnel resented some of these developments, deliberately ignored others, and manipulated the significance of still more. This reluctance to accommodate new demands sparked many of the controversies that plagued the college in the decades to come.

The Citadel did not stumble through this era alone. A study of the national military academies saw these institutions “linked at critical junctures to the same myths and the same realities as the rest of America.” The same holds true for The Citadel as the college succumbed to many of the prejudices, biases, and misconceptions that plagued American society. Many popular accounts overlook the darker side of the post-war era. Post-World War II prosperity was not spread evenly and the myth of a universally prosperous and content America masks much of the ugliness of the period.⁷⁸

Nationally, the Second Red Scare helped silence meaningful critiques of America’s foreign and domestic policies. Even as the United States grew into a military and economic superpower, Cold Warriors painted an image of a horrifyingly fragile America, dangerously susceptible to internal subversion, and perilously close to losing its wealth, power, and prestige. This paranoia seeped into the larger society, and the dual myths of American exceptionalism and American weakness muted dissenting voices.

⁷⁷ 1949 *Guidon*, 7; 1953 *Guidon*, 11; “Message of General Summerall to the New Fourth Class,” Box 6, Folder 8, Summerall Papers.

Those who dared question the righteousness of the United States' policies and motives were denounced as ungrateful, traitorous, or both. In this atmosphere, to be an American meant being quiet.⁷⁹

The Citadel learned and taught this lesson well. Joining the august fraternity of Citadel Men required strict “obedience to authority” and “love of order.” Cadets and administrators agreed that success at The Citadel depended “in large measure, on the extent to which you accept and adhere to the Code of The Citadel Man and the ideology of the institution.”⁸⁰

The school boasted of its devotion to democratic principles and offered this as proof of its “American heritage.” Year after year, Citadel *Catalogues* claimed “it is not considered in keeping with the democratic ideals of The Citadel to encourage the formation of exclusive societies or fraternities, membership in which is based on other requirements than individual worth or achievement.” Cadets described their alma mater as a “staunch Citadel of opportunity, an imperturbable Citadel of progressive training. If ever it becomes anything else, it will be when the country has ceased to be a citadel for the democratic way of life.” This statement seems especially ironic at a time when the school and nation denied women and African-Americans equal access to their economic, political, and educational processes.⁸¹

This gloomy prediction also revealed another stratagem used by Citadel personnel to stave off unwanted criticism. Despite its emphasis on manly vigor and strength, the college's boosters repeatedly cast it as delicate, weak, and victimized. Especially in the

⁷⁸ Lovell, *Neither Athens*, 3; Zinn, *A People's History*, 416-417.

⁷⁹ Cuate, *The Great Fear*, 11, 17-22, 540-541.

⁸⁰ 1943 Citadel *Catalogue*, 46; 1951 *Guidon*, 22.

⁸¹ 1944 *Guidon*, 12; 1942 Citadel *Catalogue*, 55; *The Bulldog*, 4 June 1948 (emphasis added).

early years of the Cold War, these claims were forced at best. The Citadel flourished in an era that venerated both the military and the South. Massive military spending and arms build-ups remain a hallmark of this era. In *Media-Made Dixie*, Jack Temple Kirby argues that before 1954 and the Brown decision, the region cashed in on its image as a land of strong, white, macho men to such an extent that the South “became chic.” The Citadel portrayed itself as the epitome of all Kirby lists, and while it may not have become chic, the college certainly did not suffer. These claims of persecution, however, mirrored the cries of white southerners who cast themselves as a tormented minority at the same time their politicians wielded great power, their businessmen prospered in a low wage, non-union environment, and their laws, customs and traditions stifled black activism. As southern Democratic Congressmen worked with conservative Republicans to crush New Deal programs, enact harsh anti-labor laws, block anti-lynching legislation, and preserve the poll tax, they found room to cast the “widely misunderstood and oft maligned” white Southerners as the victims of an “unholy alliance of left-wingers, pseudo-liberals, and radicals as of many hues as Joseph’s coat.”⁸²

The Citadel also seemed characteristically southern in its calculated defense of “tradition,” and its demonstrative assertions of the college’s uniqueness. Just as the small town, agrarian South of the 1930s and early 1940s looked and lived differently from the industrializing, urban “New South” of the post-war era, The Citadel of 1953 was not the same as The Citadel of 1943. The makeup and demands of the student body had changed, but key Citadel officials refused to acknowledge these shifts. At least superficially, the college clung to customs that bore little resemblance to the needs of The

⁸² Zinn, 428, 421; Jack Temple Kirby, *Media-Made Dixie: The South in the American Imagination* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 103, 106; Bartley, *New South*, 80, 95, 104.

Citadel or the society it served. The ouster of the veteran students offers one example of the school limiting its own potential constituency, while the continued prominence of “The Citadel Code” testifies to the narrow vision of Citadel officials. Written by General Summerall, the code appeared largely unmodified in Citadel *Catalogues* and *Guidons* for over three decades. Many of its tenets seemed to come from a Victorian handbook. One ordered cadets “to make friends with refined, cultivated and intellectual people.” Another demanded that Citadel students “refrain from intoxicants, narcotics, licentiousness, profanity, vulgarity, disorder and anything that might subject [them] to reproach or censure within or without the college.” As administrators knew, this last expectation was violated on a daily, probably hourly, basis. Its continued appearance in *The Guidon* reveals a certain naiveté, laziness, or willful ignorance on the Citadel’s part.⁸³

Time after time, Citadel boosters deflected challenges to its rules and regulations by casting them as threats to the school’s vaunted distinctiveness. The 1944 *Guidon* warned that the environment that produced Citadel Men “cannot be modified. It cannot be absorbed. To transfer it is to kill by transplanting what flourishes in its congenial soil. To modify it is to break its symmetry. To absorb it is to lose its peculiar essence.” Just as white southerners bemoaned the threat to the “Southern way of life” in their efforts to sustain segregation, weed out “trouble makers,” and preserve the status quo, Citadel cadets regarded any questioning of the college’s customs and codes as a danger to “The Citadel System.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Bartley, *New South*; Pete Daniel, *Breaking the Land: The Transformation of Cotton, Tobacco, and Rice Cultures Since 1880* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985); Edgar, *South Carolina*, 529-532, 573; 1943 *Guidon*, 31; 1951 *Guidon*.

⁸⁴ 1944 *Guidon*, 12.

Citadel personnel bolstered their arguments by bestowing a sense of timelessness and permanence to certain “traditions.” The most obvious example of this is the cadets’ attitudes towards the fourth-class system. Admirers credited the fourth-class system for developing and nurturing manly traits, and believed the rigors of this system made The Citadel and its graduates superior to other institutions and their alumni. Anointing it as a time-honored, unaltered method of creating Citadel Men, the corps refused to allow anyone to question its benefits or its implementation. The fourth-class system assumed almost mythical status among the corps with each class inventing and adding its own traditions as the years passed.

Clarence Mohr has argued that for most southern colleges and universities, World War II set “in motion forces that would permanently reorder their priorities, remake their institutional culture, and alter their relationship with society at large.” The Citadel had changed significantly since 1943, but school personnel both resisted and resented the corresponding cultural and ideological shifts that Mohr addresses. The principle of unwavering devotion to past traditions, the rigid definitions of moral and honorable behavior, the demands of unquestioning obedience to authority, the exaltation of democratic principles, and the relationship between The Citadel’s uniqueness and its fragility appeared continually in the school’s *Guidons* and *Catalogues*. These public expressions of the school’s mission, purpose, and requirements reflected a persistent and deep seated uneasiness, that often manifested itself in hostility to the changes occurring within The Citadel’s gates.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Clarence L. Mohr, “World War II and the Transformation of Southern Higher Education,” in *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South*, ed. Neil R. McMillen (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1997), 34.

CHAPTER TWO: SOARING WITH THE AMERICAN EAGLE

In June of 1952, Charles Summerall was eighty-five years old and in unsteady health. He had been hospitalized earlier that year, and despite the General's claim to be as "young as I ever was," the Board of Visitors began urging him to retire. Summerall resented this pressure, but agreed to step down as president on March 31, 1953. As he had for much of his twenty-two year tenure at The Citadel, Summerall spent his last days in office lobbying the South Carolina legislature for increased state appropriations to the college.¹

Just like his arrival, Summerall's departure garnered national attention. *Time* magazine remarked that when the General took over at The Citadel "there was not a soldier or cadet in the land who had not heard of him." School officials heaped praise upon the old soldier. Noting that he saw the college through the crises of the 1930s and early 1940s, the Board of Visitors predicted Summerall's accomplishments "will through the years be a guide to hold the sons of The Citadel unerringly to the path of honor, integrity, and patriotism." They arranged for Summerall to live out his retirement on a Citadel- owned estate in Aiken, South Carolina, and in May, the Board renamed the school's chapel the Charles Pelot Summerall Chapel. In his farewell address, the

¹ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 252-253; Nichols, "General as President," 322; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 June 1952, documents 182, 196, 198, 208, 229-230.

outgoing president proclaimed “I have loved The Citadel as I have loved no other institution.”²

College officials started searching for Summerall’s successor before he left office. Their first two choices, General Lucius Clay and General James Van Fleet, declined the offer. On the recommendation of General Clay and with considerable help from South Carolina Governor James Byrnes, the Board of Visitors contacted General Mark Wayne Clark, then commander in chief of the United Nations forces fighting in Korea, and offered him the position. After negotiating an armistice in Korea and consulting with a friend, President Dwight Eisenhower, Clark accepted the job.³

A West Point graduate, Clark had seen limited action as a battalion commander in World War I. During World War II, he had served as General Eisenhower’s top aide, and he later commanded the Fifth Army in North Africa and Italy. His successes in both these theatres won him national and global acclaim. Lauded as “the liberator of Rome,” Clark had received the Distinguished Service Cross from President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill had nicknamed him “the American Eagle.” After the war, he had served as commander in chief of the United States Occupational Forces in Austria. Upon completion of his duties in Korea, Clark retired from the Army on October 31, 1953.⁴

General Clark brought even more publicity and excitement to The Citadel than his predecessor. Upon his return to the United States, New York honored him with a ticker-tape parade. Newspaper and magazine articles praised him as “a defender of America and a battler against tyranny.” Some people considered the General a worthy

² *Time*, 22 June 1953, 43; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 June 1953, documents 235, 240-243; 13 June 1952, 229-230.

³ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 June 1952, documents 182, 230; Nichols, “General as President,” 322-323.

candidate for the Presidency of the United States. When Clark came to Charleston in October 1953, front page headlines in the *News and Courier* blared “CLARK GETS HERO’S ACCLAIM/DUE TO VISIT CITADEL TODAY.” Later that month, the headlines roared “CLARK ACCEPTS PRESIDENCY OF THE CITADEL.”⁵

The Citadel basked in the reflected glory of its new president. *Time* magazine’s report on Clark’s new assignment listed the college’s Civil War past, its illustrious alumni, and its fourth-class system as proof of its vitality and rich heritage. With a theatrical flourish, the author added, “In time, the new president will also be something to remember: His name Mark Clark, General U.S.A.” An article in *The Brigadier*, the newly renamed student newspaper, printed a brief biography of Clark, listing his awards, honors, and accomplishments, and publishing photos of him meeting with presidents, leading his troops, and enjoying a “hero’s welcome in New York.” The piece ended with “All Citadel Men everywhere can be proud of the unselfish devotion to duty shown by General Clark for the same traits of leadership that won military victories for the nation will now be exerted for the betterment of The Citadel.” A Citadel alumnus predicted “As The Citadel grew strong under Summerall it will grow great under General Mark Clark.”⁶

At Clark’s inauguration, the remarks of Secretary of the Army Robert T. Stevens captured the spirit and excitement of the moment. Stevens described The Citadel as “a symbol of the basic strength, determination, and solidarity of the American people,” and he assured the audience that General Clark “brings high integrity and courage” to his new position. Lauding the school for offering “a complete and generous education . . . which

⁴ Nichols, “General as President,” 323-324; *The Brigadier*, 21 November 1953; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 260-261.

⁵ Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 261, 268, 271-272; *The Brigadier*, 3 December 1955.

⁶ *Time*, 2 November 1953; *The Brigadier*, 21 November 1953.

fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all of the offices of a citizen,” Stevens noted that “today, men of The Citadel are providing an impressive measure of the leaven of great leadership, capability, and moral stamina upon which our national strength largely depends.” According to Stevens, American military personnel and Citadel graduates shared many of the same virtues; “loyalty to the American people, to the Government, to constituted civilian authority, and to the principles of truth, justice, and liberty upon which our government is based.” Alluding to a perceived rise in anti-military sentiment following the Korean War, Stevens announced that the day Americans turn against the military is the “day America signs her own death warrant.” He warned listeners that “unless the trend of recent years is reversed and a climate created in which the development of military leadership of the highest type is encouraged” then the prosperity and even existence of the United States remained in jeopardy.⁷

Despite Stevens’ fairly pessimistic assessment, The Citadel thrived during this era, and its popularity stemmed primarily from the conflation of conservative political, social, and cultural ideals that accompanied the United States’ competition with the Soviet Union. As a white, all male, southern military school, The Citadel flourished in a society that privileged social stability, military strength, and masculine vigor. Enrollment rose steadily and cadets listened as national media, prominent businessmen, religious leaders, and influential politicians assured them of the important role Citadel graduates would play in defeating the Red Menace. To many people, the corps of cadets embodied the tenets of “true Americanism” that William Chafe lists as “machismo, patriotism, belief in God, opposition to social agitation, hatred of the Reds.” Citadel boosters cashed in on this image, and by linking the college’s fortunes to those of the nation’s, they

⁷ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 March 1954, documents 328-336.

demonstrated how the careful manipulation of Cold War imperatives benefited certain people and alienated others.⁸

As historians have suggested, calls for order, stability, and strength “suggest profound tensions in post-war America.” In 1954, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision “moved desegregation into the most sensitive zone of white fears,” and as Adam Fairclough points out, the court's decision “mobilized southern whites behind segregation far more effectively than it did southern blacks behind integration.” When Virginia Senator Harry Byrd opened his campaign of “massive resistance,” the majority of white South Carolinians joined Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama in endorsing the policy. In the first three months of 1956, these five states passed at least forty-two statutes designed to block the desegregation of public schools. Citizens Councils and other white supremacist organizations sprung up across the South determined to defend segregation. Many African-American activists hoped the United States’ rivalry with the Soviet Union would shame whites into correcting racial injustices, but segregationists used physical violence, economic intimidation, and shrill cries of “Communism” to stifle civil rights reforms.⁹

⁸ Contrary to Stevens’ concerns about flagging support for the United States military, Howard Zinn contends that the Korean War actually “created the kind of coalition that was needed to sustain a policy of intervention abroad, militarization of the economy at home.” In 1950, the United States earmarked twelve billion dollars out of a total budget of forty billion dollars for military spending. Five years later those figures had risen to forty billion and sixty-two billion respectively. Zinn, *A People’s History*, 420, 428; Peter Stearns, *Be A Man: Males in Modern Society*, 2nd ed (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1990), 89; Whitfield, *Culture of Cold War*, 43.

⁹ John D. Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers), 289, 290, 292-294; C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, 3rd ed. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 251; Bartley, *New South*, 163, 186; Numan V. Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 45, 340; Reed Sarratt, *The Ordeal of Desegregation: The First Decade* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), 34; John G. Sproat, “Firm Flexibility: Perspectives on Desegregation in South Carolina,” in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America*, eds. Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 167.

Challenges to traditional gender roles sparked similar responses. As more and more women entered the work place and attended college, sociologists shrieked that for American families to survive “women must bear and rear children; men must support them.” Filmmakers depicted working women as deviant, dangerous, and “un-American.” Cold War demands cut both ways as conservative commentators politicized the home as the first line of defense against Communism. By casting the American family’s ability to consume as the prime indication of United States superiority, Cold Warriors chained women to their role as mother and wife while elevating their value as consumers and sources of income.¹⁰

Stephen Whitfield notes that despite these inequities, the “United States proclivity for self-righteousness went unchecked.” Fear of subversion spurred demands that Americans maintain a unified front against foreign and domestic Communism. Preserving freedom meant conforming to certain public and private standards. Patriotism meant muting dissent. These conditions allowed citizens to expound on the glories of American democracy while at the same time denying others equal access to the nation’s political, social, and economic institutions.¹¹

The same held true at The Citadel as people from inside and outside the school’s gates heaped praise upon the college, its system, and its graduates. As the college prospered, school officials and cadets exploited The Citadel’s perceived exceptionalism as a means to stifle criticism and weed out dissidents. As the parameters of who deserved

¹⁰ Elaine Tyler May provides an excellent account of the politicization of the American home in *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: BasicBooks, 1988). Susan Douglas, *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female With the Mass Media* (New York: Times Books, 1995), 49, 54; Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 72; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 29, 125, 134.

¹¹ Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 25.

recognition as a Citadel man narrowed, certain customs and traditions took on a harsher edge.

It would be hard to overemphasize the impact of Mark Clark on The Citadel and the corps of cadets during this time. He brought national attention to the institution, which experienced phenomenal physical growth during his tenure. Certainly, cultural trends enhanced The Citadel's reputation, but due in no small part to the General's reputation and influence, the college prospered financially, reached maximum enrollment, and enjoyed a great deal of favorable publicity. Furthermore, Clark saw it as his duty to instill cadets with the same Cold War values he embraced. The school's successes and the General's rhetoric hardened many of the attitudes forged in the 1940s as cadets stood ready to defend their alma mater and country against integrationists, liberals, and communists.

General Summerall's tenure as The Citadel's president had not ended on a high note, and his successor faced considerable challenges. Numerous construction projects remained unfinished and enrollment stood well below full capacity. General Clark began his revitalization efforts by replacing Summerall's administrative staff with younger men of his own choosing. He arranged for active duty army captains to advise cadet companies, and instead of placing retired officers in charge of cadet discipline and training as Summerall had, Clark hired regular Army, active duty colonels to serve as Commandant of Cadets. These changes "secured fresh faces and viewpoints, and [were]

intended to keep cadets, as well as the college, more directly in touch with army doctrine and developments.”¹²

With his people in place, Clark set out to address the major problems facing The Citadel which he listed as “enrollment, athletics and construction.” He saw a successful sports program as a way to boost student morale and draw favorable publicity to the college. The General took a keen interest in football, and after reviewing the team’s prospects for the upcoming year, he concluded “The Citadel had a very sick patient on its hands, and its only hope for recovery was by means of a drastic remedy.” As part of the cure, Clark fired the entire coaching staff and hired a new head coach and assistants. He upped the number of athletic scholarships awarded by The Citadel, urged coaches to keep better track of high school talent, and dropped “powerhouses” such as Georgia Tech and the University of Florida from the team’s schedule. These efforts paid off, as the 1954 squad won five games and gave The Citadel its first winning football season since 1942. Over the next six years, the Board of Visitors noted “a remarkable change has occurred in the morale of all of our athletic teams,” and in 1960, The Citadel football team won its first bowl game by crushing Tennessee Tech in the Tangerine Bowl, 22-0.¹³

Clark achieved similar results when it came to financing new construction projects and completing old ones. In a report to the South Carolina legislature in June 1954, the General asked that the state appropriate \$1,631,649.62 for the college, an increase of \$624,623.62 from the previous year. He justified this jump as necessary to

¹² Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 June 1953, documents 246, 251-252; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 February 1954, document 310; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1954, , document 385; Nichols, “General as President,” 321-326.

¹³ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 December 1954, document 439; *The Brigadier*, 20 January 1954, 9 October 1954, 8 October 1955, 3 December 1955, 26 November 1960; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1956, document 639; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1955, Annual Report, document 466;

repair dilapidated buildings, modernize antiquated equipment, improve educational facilities, and increase the number of on-campus services available to cadets. The General Assembly did not match Clark's request, but they did up the amount of money The Citadel received. In his first year as president, Clark used state funds, private contributions, and student fees to build a new laundry for use by the corps as well as Citadel faculty and their families. In 1955, he oversaw the completion of the Bell Tower and Carillon and began work on affordable on-campus housing for professors. Construction crews rebuilt Lesesne Gate, the main entrance to The Citadel, and made it, according to Clark, "appropriate to the dignity and beauty of the campus." Five years later, cadets ate meals in a refurbished mess hall and sat through religious services in a renovated chapel; both buildings came complete with air conditioning. By 1963, a new library, a new student activities building, a new military science building, and sixty new faculty apartments adorned The Citadel's campus.¹⁴

Clark held a "firm conviction that the cadets at The Citadel should live in the neatest and most attractive surroundings possible," and he devoted much of his energy to improving the day to day lives of the cadets. He believed that as future leaders of America, the corps "must know and expect the best so that when they leave The Citadel, they in turn will expect and demand the best from themselves and their subordinates." With this in mind, Clark approved funding to renovate all four barracks, and in 1955 and 1956, every cadet room received new beds, new mattresses, and new metal closets.

Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3 May 1957, document 758; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 5 June 1959, document 22; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3 June 1960, document 147.

¹⁴ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 June 1954, document 414; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 October 1954, documents 404, 414; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3 June 1955, document 466; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," Folder 24, document 801; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," Folder 23, document 539; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," documents 215-217; Nichols, "General as President," 326-327

During this same period, the corps enjoyed expanded on-campus parking as well as a new canteen, barber shop, post office, student lounge, and outdoor patio.¹⁵

Clark approached all these endeavors with an eye towards attaining maximum enrollment at The Citadel, and it was in this area that he achieved his greatest and most far reaching success. The General added a procurement officer to his administrative staff, and he urged alumni to intensify their recruiting efforts. Convinced that “our cadets are the best salesmen for The Citadel we have,” Clark looked to increase the corps’ public presence, arranging for cadets to appear weekly on a local television program in order to “let the inhabitants of the Charleston area become more familiar with The Citadel.” Reaching beyond the South Carolina Lowcountry, The Citadel’s procurement office sent cadets to speak at high schools across the nation. School officials distributed a recruiting video that played on movie screens and television sets nationwide. Clark monitored the production process closely to insure the filmmakers “present a properly balanced picture of The Citadel, in which academic excellence, broadness of curriculum, and stress on character development, leadership, religious training, and social poise assume their proper roles.”¹⁶

General Clark also used his own celebrity to enhance the college’s reputation. On television shows and in national publications, he described the school and its students in glowing terms. He convinced President Eisenhower to visit the campus in October 1954, and a year later, Clark’s friend Henry Luce published an article on The Citadel in *Life* magazine. The article mixed praise for the institution with adulation for its president.

¹⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1955, documents 458, 466-468; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1956 Annual Report, document 642.

¹⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1954, documents 380-381; 1955 Annual Report; 1956 Annual Report; *The Brigadier*, 27 October 1955, 16 December 1955.

Entitled “Cheers at The Citadel: General Clark Spruces Up a Historic School,” the piece opens with a photo of Clark standing confidently on the quadrangle of one of The Citadel’s barracks while a large group of cadets cheer in the background. The General is featured in nine of the essay’s thirteen photos, and the captions detail how Clark inspired the corps, beautified the campus, and reenergized the school. The writer noted that prior to Clark’s arrival, “The Citadel had lost considerable of its old luster and the cadet corps had lost a measure of its old morale.” The new president stepped in and “intensified spit-and-polish on the campus, brought about a resurgence of athletics, and lifted the spirits of the college’s” student body. The author also credited Clark for leading “The Citadel back into the national limelight” by bringing dignitaries such as Eisenhower to the school.¹⁷

Careful to prevent others from undermining his accomplishments, Clark guarded the school’s image jealously. In 1956, in a move foreshadowing a much more acrimonious dispute over a film adaptation of a book based on The Citadel, Clark and the Board of Visitors refused to allow filming of the movie version of Calder Willingham’s *End Like A Man* on campus. Willingham had attended The Citadel from 1940 to 1941, and his novel deals with life at a southern military college. The book contains strong homoerotic undertones, describes incidents of gruesome hazing, and depicts cadets drinking and gambling in darkened back rooms. The producer, Sam Spiegel asked for Clark’s permission to use the school as the setting, assuring him “they would look to The Citadel for advice on all parts of the production.” He promised to let school officials

¹⁷ *The Brigadier*, 22 October 1954, 3 December 1955; *Time*, 25 April 1955, 19-21; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 December 1954, document 448; *Life*, 28 November 1955, 113-117.

view the movie before its official release and vowed to make “a very wonderful film about The Citadel and Charleston.”¹⁸

Upon scouring the film’s script for anything that depicted The Citadel “in a derogatory and untruthful manner,” Clark, two members of the Board of Visitors, and “a small group of [Clark’s] most intimate staff associates” voted unanimously against allowing Spiegel to film on campus. In a long letter to the producer, Clark objected “to any identification of The Citadel with this script – direct or indirect, specific or vague.” The committee found the film so offensive “that any such identification, however nebulous, would be definitely harmful to a fine military college, which does have national stature, militarily and academically.” Specific complaints included the depiction of “a sordid and sullen barracks life, accented by drinking, gambling and ugliness” with no indication that the corps ever “drills, or attends classes, or cracks a book.” The reviewers regretted that in addition to a bevy of “unsavory” characters, “the only female character in the script is a tramp.” Clark denied that any cadet would associate with such a woman and argued “The Citadel’s social life is famous” with dances attended “not only by the finest young men in Charleston, but by girls of the same high characters (sic).” Keeping with his overall emphasis on enrollment, Clark worried that “the absence of any scenes or incidents portraying the decent – and I assure you normal – aspects of life here” would discourage young men from applying to the college.¹⁹

Student enrollment figures remain the best indicator of Clark’s successful public relations campaign. In June 1955, the number of applicants to the college doubled that of the previous year. That number had doubled again a year later as school officials

¹⁸ Calder Willingham, *End as a Man* (New York: Donald I. Fine, Inc., 1947); *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1956.

prepared for the “largest peacetime freshman class in the history of The Citadel.” By 1958, the corps had reached its full capacity of 2200 men.²⁰

With the problems of construction, athletics and enrollment in hand, Clark turned his attention to other issues. He acknowledged “The Citadel stands or falls fundamentally as an academic institution, not as a military institution, and the academic aspect of college life is therefore of utmost importance and must not be subordinated to the military, athletic or any other aspect.” Even as Citadel-generated revenues rose, Clark lobbied the state legislature for more money in hopes of improving the quality of instruction cadets received. He used this money to hire an academic dean and to attract new and better qualified faculty. He also raised teachers’ salaries, made it easier for them to further their education, and helped obtain funding for their research.²¹

When it came to the student body, Clark endeared himself to the corps by granting them more freedoms, giving them more responsibilities, and promoting them as the college’s main attraction. He formed a Presidential Advisory Committee comprised of the five highest ranking members of the senior class, and he met regularly with this group to hear and address corps’ concerns. Based largely on the committee’s recommendations, Clark authorized the reissue of the cadets’ full dress uniforms, set up recreation rooms in the barracks, and instituted a “come as you are” policy for Citadel

¹⁹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 25 May 1956, documents 620-622

²⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1955, documents 464-465; 1955 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1956, documents 636-637, 639; *The Brigadier*, 8 October 1955, 6 December 1955, 14 April 1956; Nichols, “General as President,” 326-327.

²¹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1954, documents 378, 390, 434; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” *The Brigadier*, 7 May 1955, 22 November 1958, 6 December 1958; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1955, documents 471, 480; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 October 1955, documents 539-540, 541; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 2 June 1956, documents 614; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1956, documents 648-649, 663, 664; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 May 1957, documents 730-731, 745-746; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 19 October 1957, documents 782, 784, 788; 1958 Annual Report; 1959 Annual Report; 1960 Annual Report; Nichols, “General as President,” 332.

pep rallies. He lifted the ban on off campus consumption of alcohol, and he granted each class a set number of weekend and overnight leaves per year. He gave senior cadets more authority by restructuring the college's rank system and requiring all seniors, not just officers, to serve periodically as Officer of the Guard. In a regular column for *The Brigadier*, Clark repeatedly expressed great pride in the corps' patriotism, discipline, character and "honorable conduct."²²

Clark and the student body strengthened their bond further by devising and adopting a formal honor system at the school that grew into and remains an integral part of cadet life. Students take it very seriously and both cadets and Citadel graduates point to it as yet another example of the school's uniqueness and exceptionalism. Therefore, it is worth examining in detail the evolution of the honor system, the debates surrounding its implementation, and its overall meaning to the corps.²³

School personnel had long considered honor an essential component of Citadel men, but since 1925, the school had no official honor code nor any systematic process for dealing with students who lied, cheated, or stole. While many people credited General Clark as the creator of The Citadel's honor system, it was the corps of cadets who actually took the initiative. In February 1953, the student body presented the Board of Visitors with a framework and guidelines for uncovering and punishing dishonorable behavior. Over 70 percent of the entire corps and 93 percent of upperclassmen backed the proposal. Under their plan, peer elected members of the upper three classes, four high

²² Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 June 1954, document 379; *The Brigadier*, 18 December 1953, 27 February 1954, 17 April 1954, 1 May 1954, 11 June 1954, 26 February 1955, 8 October 1955, 22 October 1955, 2 November 1955, 20 March 1981, 14 January 1956, 25 February 1956, 8 December 1956, 15 October 1960, 15 April 1961; 1956 *Catalogue*.

²³ In his novel *The Lords of Discipline*, Pat Conroy, a 1967 graduate of The Citadel, exclaims that "'If [The Citadel], indeed, is something special, then the code is the central fact of that specialness.'" He adds that

ranking seniors, and randomly selected freshmen made up an Honor Committee that would prosecute, defend, and judge students accused of an honor violation. A set group of ten Honor Committee members would serve on an Honor Court that would hear and decide every case. An acquittal required three members of the court to render not guilty verdicts. A guilty verdict meant immediate expulsion.²⁴

The old honor system was abandoned in 1925 “due to a fatal tendency to accumulate too many obligations, to let arrangements become overly rigid, to let the grip of detail become too strong, and to bring within the system offenses not directly related to honor.” In other words, the old honor code was used as a tool to punish cadets for disciplinary infractions such as skipping class, missing formations, breaking barracks, drinking, or not cleaning one’s room. Wary that such conditions might reemerge, the corps asked that the Board couple the reinstatement of an honor system with certain changes to existing college regulations. They hoped their suggestions would foster an atmosphere of trust between the corps and the administration and permit the “prospective system [to] work with maximum success.” The authors of the proposal noted “all the changes have for their objective, the elimination of the temptation to lie, for the current regulations may actually at times be said to encourage lying.” As just one of many examples, the cadets argued that expanded leave privileges would “abolish all falsely procured emergency leaves.” Claiming “the corps of cadets are firmly convinced that certain existing major punishments for breach of regulations are much too severe,” they favored reducing the penalties for missing classes or formations. They asked that juniors

when someone graduates from the school “the code goes with you and the code lives as long as you live.” Pat Conroy, *The Lords of Discipline* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 75.

²⁴ 1949 Guidon; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 256-257; *The Brigadier*, 13 February 1960; Memo to Clark from Leonard B. Smith dated 25 February 1953, RC-6, “Records of President’s Office –

and seniors be permitted to walk across the parade ground that dominated the middle of the campus. They also asked the Board to no longer require students to sign a no-hazing pledge thereby making hazing “solely a violation of military regulations, not the honor code.” The petitioners concluded, “It is not the purpose of this document to bargain for meager privileges, but rather set forth a code of standards that permit a man to live as his honor dictates.”²⁵

The Board made no decision on the cadets’ proposal for the next nine months. In the interim, General Clark took up the students’ cause. He saw the honor system as a way to guarantee that Citadel graduates “will have strength of character as well as intellectual and physical rigor” and asked that their plan be reviewed by the Board as well as faculty, alumni, and student committees. In September 1954, Clark printed and distributed the committees’ revisions to the Board and the corps. The modified Honor Code read simply “a cadet will not lie, cheat or steal nor tolerate those who do.” In the preface to the new manual, Clark allayed students’ fears by assuring them that “the honor system is not a means for disciplining the Corps of Cadets” nor for “discovering violations of regulations.” He predicted, however, that the adoption of the plan would radically change some aspects of cadet life. Practices once regarded as part of a “battle of wits” between cadets and the commandant would constitute honor violations. For example, the code defined lying as “an official statement . . . written or oral made to a commissioned officer of the staff or faculty of the college, a member of the guard on duty, or any cadet required to use the statement as a basis for an official report in any

Publications,” Box 11, File “Honor Code(Miscellaneous 1956, 1958), Citadel Archives; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 June 1953, document 238.

²⁵ “The Proposed Honor System of the Corps of Cadets,” Folder AF Citadel/Honor System, The Citadel Archives; Smith memo.

form. Under this criteria, any AWOL cadet, if caught, would face only demerits or punishment tours so long as he neither told an official nor signed a document saying he was not AWOL.” Clark added though that the corps must “freely and zealously guard the honor of the corps” and vigilantly report any violation as “the honor code is bigger than any individual or any personal friendship.”²⁶

Changes from the original plan allowed only seniors to serve as members of the Honor Committee. Each cadet company would elect an honor representative, and these men, along with the five highest ranking seniors, would serve on a rotating Honor Court and also defend and prosecute cadets accused of honor violations. If 75 percent of the sitting court members found the defendant guilty, there was “only *one* punishment; *withdrawal from The Citadel.*” The authors of the new plan decided that the proceedings of each trial would remain confidential, and school officials would do all they could to help the expelled student continue his education elsewhere. They explained “the system is designed solely to rid the corps of those cadets who lie, cheat or steal. It is not designed to punish them for the rest of their lives.”²⁷

In keeping with his pledge that the fate of the honor system rested with the corps, Clark informed the Board he would not ask them to vote on the proposed plan until three-fourths of the student body had approved it. As the cadets debated whether or not to endorse the plan, their arguments reveal how deeply masculinity factored into their collective identity, and how, when pressed, they quickly and demonstrably asserted Citadel men’s exceptionalism and uniqueness.²⁸

²⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1954, document 359; “Proposed Honor System.”

²⁷ “Proposed Honor System”; Honor Code in RC6, Box 11, File “Honor Code,” Citadel Archives.

²⁸ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 June 1954, document 359; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 9 October 1954, document 404.

Opponents of the system called it unworkable because nothing could persuade a cadet to snitch on his friend or classmate. Others, mostly seniors, complained that the honor code infringed upon the already limited freedoms cadets enjoyed. Editorials and letters in *The Brigadier* answered these complaints forcefully. One correspondent preached “It must be the paramount concern of each and every cadet to see the corps an honorable one, and every person, classmate or not, is not worthy of being harboured (sic), even by his brother, if he violates the trust of his fellow cadets.” He added, “We must believe in this system as we have never believed in anything before . . . for we, the individual cadets of the corps, are the greatest beneficiaries of honor.”²⁹

The most aggressive proponent of the honor system wrapped his argument in notions of manly behavior. After failing to convince 75 percent of the corps to approve the plan, a writer for *The Brigadier* railed against the “slothful ones” who “wanted more privileges, more ways to get away with breaches of regulations.” He attacked those who balked when “called upon for extra effort” that would serve the “common good.” He demanded “we must have the desire to place honor before all else” and a “system of expulsion of undesirable cadets is necessary.” He questioned the collective manhood of the corps by remarking “a man who can maintain his devotion to a cause although the temptation is to heckle, is a good man.” He regretted that “there were not enough men of this type present to carry out the voting of the Honor System.”³⁰

Such arguments eventually won out, for in April 1955, 94.4 percent of the corps voted for a modified version of the proposed honor system to take effect the next school year. One change required all guilty verdicts to be unanimous. Also, a convicted cadet

²⁹ *The Brigadier*, 15 September 1954, 20 November 1954.

³⁰ *The Brigadier*, 5 January 1955.

could appeal the decision to the college president. Reflecting a persistent concern of the corps, the new regulations clearly prohibited “the Honor Code from being used as an investigative tool.” A proviso was added that “no commissioned officer of the staff or faculty, member of the guard, or any cadet in an official position will ask a question which might incriminate a cadet unless the asker has *prima facie* evidence that the cadet has committed a reportable offense.” Following its first full year in effect, the corps made allowances for unintentional violations of the honor code.³¹

The new system assumed an almost deified position among Citadel personnel. It drew national attention to the college, elevated the corps’ sense of self-importance, and fed notions of cadet superiority. One writer for the student newspaper rejoiced that “a greater show of confidence in us by the Board of Visitors, the President, and the faculty of The Citadel than that of giving us the opportunity to adopt the honor system could not have been manifested.” Another cadet claimed the code “increased the esteem of a Citadel graduate” and set him apart from his peers at other colleges. One stated bluntly “The honor system will make you even more of a Citadel man.”³²

Paul Harvey featured The Citadel and its honor code on his syndicated radio program. He called the code “a simple condensation of the ten commandments,” and he applauded the cadets for enforcing it themselves. Turning his praise for The Citadel into a Cold War lesson of right and wrong, Harvey admonished, “If this seems like ‘tattling’ it is only because our own code of morals and ethics has been so corrupted that Americans have come to attach some ‘honor’ to the silent criminal, to the Communist who refuses to name his co-conspirators, who hides behind the Fifth Amendment, and to the jurists and

³¹ *The Brigadier*, 23 April 1955, 4 June 1955; 1955 *Guidon*; 1956 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 June 1955, document 469.

politicians who cover up for their colleagues.” A United States Congressman from Charleston echoed Harvey in a speech before the House of Representatives in which he proclaimed The Citadel and its honor system “excels in making young men from every part of America – better Americans.”³³

While the Board of Visitors thanked Clark for boosting the college’s image and “providing for the physical comforts of the cadets, the instructors, and the administrative staff,” these same accomplishments gave the president a fair amount of leverage over these groups. As president, Clark used his power and influence to tighten his grip on the corps and faculty and determine what kind of American The Citadel produced.³⁴

Clark reserved the right to choose which professors were hired or promoted, and he raised salaries only for those he deemed “deserving personnel.” Clark also opposed tenure for professors because it prevented him from “weeding out” troublemakers. A vocal opponent of school desegregation, he informed potential faculty members, “if you’ve got any ideas on – private ideas – on integration and all that stuff that you want to publish and identify The Citadel [with], we don’t want you. You got any ideas on the military[,] that you don’t like [it], then we don’t want you.” Despite these warnings, Clark conceded “occasionally they’ll get a bum, particularly in the political science end of it.” In 1960, school officials caved to pressure from the Southern Association of Colleges and adopted a “policy of Academic Freedom and Tenure.” For years though, Clark omitted this policy from school regulations. The new guidelines still allowed Citadel officials to revoke tenure for “conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the college, which may include utterances of an unprofessional nature designed to discredit

³² *The Brigadier*, 21 May 1955, 4 June 1955, 8 October 1955; 1955 *Guidon*.

³³ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1958, 13 February 1960.

the college or which are inconsistent with the moral beliefs of the community.” Other offenses included, “membership in or allegiance to organizations which are incompatible with the American way of life.” According to Clark, professors were free to teach whatever they wanted as long as their lessons remained “consistent with the fundamental principles of Americanism.” Not surprisingly, The Citadel had no faculty senate or even an American Association of University Professors chapter while Clark was president.³⁵

Clark employed subtle and not so subtle methods in imposing his ideals on the student body. It was Clark who decided to discontinue the veteran’s program in 1956. That same year, he announced publicly that slots in The Citadel’s summer school were severely limited due to campus construction and faculty shortages. To the Board of Visitors, however, Clark admitted that the previous manner “in which registrations were handled for the summer school were such as to make possible the enrollments of undesirable persons.” Therefore, he issued the press release to discourage such people from applying. In June 1956, the Board passed a resolution requiring all in-state applicants to submit two letters of recommendation from Citadel graduates still living in South Carolina. These letters would help the registrar decide if a prospective cadet “is a person of good moral character, and as a student will be adaptable and will conform to the student life, ethical standards and strict discipline of the college.”³⁶

With applications on the rise, school officials could also afford to be much more demanding of those students they did accept. Concerned about the poor academic

³⁴ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 23, document 1010.

³⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 February 1954, document 309; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 May 1958, document 878; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 February 1957, documents 722, 731; 1958 Annual Report; Nichols, “General as President,” 334-335.

³⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 23, documents 664, 670-671; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 2 June 1956, documents 613-614, 615, 624; 1958 Annual Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 May 1958, document 879.

performance of Citadel freshmen, Clark ordered more rigorous academic criteria be applied. He grumbled “that for a long time, we were perhaps too soft with a small number of students who either through sluggishness or lack of capacity or preparation simply were not able to measure up to minimum academic standards.” He viewed stronger educational requirements as a way to insure the “indolent and shiftless students will have to make way for those who will perform.” By June 1959, Clark reported proudly “we have really cleaned out most of those students who were just hanging on by their teeth, never demonstrating a real industry or desire to measure up to the traditional quality of Citadel men.”³⁷

While culling out the “indolent and the shiftless students,” Clark worked to instill cadets with his Cold War conservatism. Settling into office amidst what David Cuate terms “the high summer of the great fear,” Clark believed wholeheartedly that “being taken for a good American” meant “demonstrating a gut hatred for the commies.” In Charleston, a city he described as “all-American,” Clark found a receptive audience for his views, and he vowed to prepare cadets for the “eventual showdown with communism.” In addition to requiring all freshmen and most seniors to read J. Edgar Hoover’s *Masters of Deceit*, he established the “Greater Issues” lecture series as way to familiarize cadets “with the complex problems of our world today.” Depicted as means to “prepare The Citadel’s students for their roles in later civilian and military life,” the program served mainly to disseminate and promote the arch-conservative views of the college’s president. The first four speeches dealt exclusively with the “Red Peril,” and in one, the “Cardinal of the Cold War,” Francis Spellman discussed the “menace of communism in our land,” pointing out that America’s duties as protector of the free

³⁷ 1960 President’s Report; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 June 1959, document 8.

world increased the need for and value of Citadel graduates. General Matthew Ridgway followed Spellman, warning that the United States armed forces were ill prepared to counter “the continued menace of Communism”^{3839 40}

The apocalyptic musings of Spellman and Ridgway were not rantings from the fringes of society. The speakers and their views reflect a time when American foreign policy was portrayed as part of “a worldwide struggle over the future of freedom.” Clark chose each speaker personally, and he asked well-known, well-respected, and influential political, military, and civic figures to address the corps. As a result, Cadets listened on a monthly and sometimes weekly basis to men such as Billy Graham, Herbert Hoover, Paul Harvey, and General Maxwell Taylor “condemn communism, praise Clark for his patriotic leadership, and commend [the corps’] preparation to defend civilization.”⁴¹

The Greater Issues Series had an almost immediate affect on the corps of cadets. *The Brigadier* expanded its coverage of global events, and student editorials echoed the ideas and sentiments of the latest speaker. Writers for a recurring column entitled “Globally Speaking” reminded students “that there is another world beyond the campus” and criticized those who remained ignorant of the “world’s problems.” Disturbed by America’s declining influence in a destabilized world, cadets warned that “continued complacency could spell disaster for the West” and demanded that the United States eradicate Communism. Echoing Eisenhower’s domino theory, one student called Soviet maneuvering in Vietnam part of “a strategy to realize complete control of Southeast

³⁸ Cuate, *The Great Fear*, 11, 21; Nichols, “General as President,” 324; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 405, 410.

³⁹ Nichols, “General as President,” 327

⁴⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 23, document 648; *The Brigadier*, 20 November 1954, 17 December 1954, 15 January 1955, 21 May 1955; Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 94.

⁴¹ Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 76-77; Cuate, *The Great Fear*, 36; Eric Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1998), 252, 254; *The Brigadier*, 23 April 1955, 8

Asia,” while another described the region as economically and strategically vital in “the global struggle between Communism and the free world.”⁴²

At The Citadel and in America at large, calls for an aggressive foreign policy had dramatic domestic consequences. Maintaining a united front against the Soviets remained a major concern of many Americans, and most cadets felt right at home in an atmosphere in which dissenting views were stifled and nonconformity was suspect. In 1955, the editor of *The Brigadier* went so far as to publish a “Defense of Censorship” in which he called the administration’s control over the paper desirable and necessary. Demanding “the status quo must be maintained,” he decided that the newspaper’s primary function was to “present a unified front and extol the virtues and objectives of The Citadel.”⁴³

Not all cadets agreed with this editor, but they kept their critiques of society within acceptable Cold War limits. One student compared the ongoing House Un-American Activities Committee investigations to Stalin’s purges and ridiculed the public “redemption” of former Communist Party members who named names. A staunch anti-communism colored his analysis as he complained that the trials allowed the most dangerous enemies of the United States to exonerate themselves by turning in their “politically naïve contemporaries.” The victims had “never considered the overthrowing of the United States government or setting up Communist rule,” but those who supposedly did advocate such things “reform” themselves by testifying on “a nationwide

January 1958; Nichols, “General as President,” 327; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 22, document 471.

⁴² *The Brigadier*, 20 November 1954, 17 December 1954, 19 March 1955, 21 May 1955, 27 October 1955, 12 November 1955, December 1955, 16 December 1955, 25 February 1956, 17 March 1956, 28 April 1956, 8 December 1956, 21 December 1956, 1 April 1957, 30 May 1957, 18 December 1958.

radio-television hookup.” Regarding communism a mortal crime, the student reasoned “the commission of a great sin does not give the perpetrator the right to roundly condemn sinners of an infinitely smaller dimension.”⁴⁴

Other members of the corps welcomed the revolutionary activism of students in Poland and Hungary, but balked at home grown radicalism. One student favored a “revolution in the thinking of our cohorts,” but yoked such a transformation to a defense of the status quo. With massive resistance to school desegregation in full swing, he suggested “we might begin by considering our own government – and whether modern interpretation of our Constitution has gone far enough – or too far.”⁴⁵

While cadets found room to level some criticism at the nation and the federal government, they generally closed ranks quickly when evaluating their alma mater. Teaching “prompt, willing obedience to authority” remained a cornerstone of the fourth-class system, and college publications assured cadets “success in the society in which we live demands qualities such as” that. After praising the corps appearance, discipline, and “manly bearing,” the Board of Visitors reminded the senior class that insuring “The Citadel remains true to its traditions and lives up to its national reputation largely depends upon their character, loyalty, wisdom, dignity, self-restraint, and leadership.”⁴⁶

Spurred on by public expressions of “exaggerated masculinity” that accompanied Cold War America’s calls for military preparedness and visceral anti-communism, gender continued to factor heavily into Citadel personnel’s assessment of the school’s traditions and its product. In one of their annual tours of the campus, the Board of

⁴³ Zinn, *People’s History*, 417; Foner, *American Freedom*, 254-255; Victor S. Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Penguin Books, 1980), 28, 29; Cuate. *The Great Fear*, 404-405; *The Brigadier*, 22 May 1954, 11 June 1954, 3 December 1955, 22 October 1956.

⁴⁴ *The Brigadier*, 15 January 1955.

Visitors reported “We were delighted to note that with a Cadet Corps expanded to the limits of our capacity, and with many additions and improvements made in our college plant, the customs and traditions of The Citadel have been preserved.” Prominent among these customs was the “manly bearing” of the students. As the school continued to grow, the Board continued to commend the cadets for “their manly conduct, their devotion to duty, their high moral character, and their outstanding leadership.”⁴⁷

Members of the corps joined in the chorus as one student credited the school’s military system for producing men “with better posture and manners, more maturity, sincerity, and loyalty, and a greater devotion to responsibility.” He then asked, “What goes into the making of the ‘desired man’ if not these traits?” The cadet praised The Citadel’s “treatment which makes men out of boys, thinkers out of misfits, aggressors out of passives, leaders out of followers,” and he declared “no school, on the face of the earth better prepares a man for his future responsibility than does My Citadel.” To cadets who complained that the school’s customs and traditions denied them the “full value of a college education,” he snarled “let him speak and I assure you the authorities will rectify the situation immediately.”⁴⁸

General Clark also played a large role in shaping cadets’ definition of manliness, and, more importantly, their definitions of Citadel men. In articles and speeches he expounded on the qualities and virtues of manly behavior, describing successful Citadel alumni as those who “bore the reputation of solid, well-rounded men; conscientious

⁴⁵ *The Brigadier*, 17 November 1956, 30 May 1957.

⁴⁶ 1956 *Catalogue*; 1959 *Guidon*; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 24, documents 1009, 1010-1011.

⁴⁷ Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 33, 44; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 108, 134; Stearns, *Be a Man!*, 155; Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 54; Elizabeth Ann Collins, “The Post War Boy Scout Handbooks: Manhood for the Atomic Age” M.A. Thesis, University of Georgia, 1999), 15, 89; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” Folder 24, document 1010; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 2 October 1959, document 112.

⁴⁸ *The Brigadier*, 23 January 1954.

students, if not always of Gold Star quality; energetic in extracurricular affairs, usually with a love of camaraderie.” Reminding the corps that The Citadel’s purpose was “turning out well rounded, thoroughly educated men,” Clark eventually coined the term that became the school’s mantra. He described The Citadel’s system as “inextricably tied to our ‘whole man’ concept of education,” a concept “which we emphasize above all else at The Citadel” whereby Citadel cadets are trained “mentally, physically, morally, and militarily.” Clark argued that as a result of this training, “America’s elite manhood comprises our Corps of Cadets,” and with their sense of self-worth tied directly to their image as “whole men,” cadets boasted “here, as in few other American colleges, the aim is to train leaders: leaders of thought and action, leaders of opinion, leaders of men.”⁴⁹

While confident that their school produced men, the cadets differed as to the manufacturing process. Several saw engagement in intellectual and cultural activities as the best way to become “well-rounded” men. A writer for *The Brigadier* rebuked the corps for its anti-intellectualism, regretting that “the thought of the slightest change in the status quo seems to fill everyone with terror.” He attributed this fear to “the thought that some privilege is going to be lost,” but added “by following this line of thought, many new privileges are lost.”⁵⁰

While some viewed intellectual pursuits as essential to the development of whole men, others pushed for a much more stringent mode of production. Many cadets believed “discipline is necessarily a prime quality of the successful leader,” and Cold War cultural trends affected how the cadets trained leaders and instilled discipline. As Stephen Whitfield writes, “in an era that fixed rigidly the distinction between Communist tyranny

⁴⁹ *The Brigadier*, 3 December 1955, 18 May 1957, 6 December 1958, 14 February 1959, 15 April 1961.

⁵⁰ *The Brigadier*, 4 May 1957.

and the free world, and which prescribed that men were men and women were housewives, perhaps one peril seemed, if anything, worse than communism. The overwhelming fear of every parent was that a son would become a sissy.” In nationally syndicated articles entitled “Our Unfit Youth” and “Toughening Our Soft Generation,” well known politicians, pundits, and authors targeted weak, unfit Americans as threats to global and national security. They argued that the country needed strong, aggressive, tough citizens to counter the “softness” and “decadence” brought about by New Deal liberalism. Only men such as these could help America to win “converts around the world and to stand as the champion of world society’s future.”⁵¹

Clark and the corps embraced these theories. Conveniently turning a blind eye to poverty in the United States, one cadet commented, “In a nation where luxuries abound and necessities flow even more abundantly, society tends to be a little on the soft side.” Addressing soldiers at Fort Benning, Clark warned “when the Communist enemy sees weakness, as he has too much in the past, that is when he exploits.” *The Brigadier* ran an article from a North Carolina newspaper announcing “the Army intends to restore toughness to its basic training in the knowledge that in another war the enemy will be tough, cruel and barbarous.”⁵²

Most cadets backed the Army’s contention, and they ratcheted up the intensity of the fourth-class system. Recognizing an opportunity to elevate their social stature and value, Citadel personnel marketed the school as having “as tough a Plebe System as exists anywhere in the United States.” As the student dropout rate increased, however,

⁵¹ *The Brigadier*, 3 December 1955; Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 43; Donald J. Mzorek, “The Cult and the Ritual of Toughness in Cold War America,” in *Ritual and Ceremonies in Popular Culture*, ed. Ray B. Browne (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1980), 178-179, 182, 183-184, 189-190; May, *Homeward Bound*, 10.

Citadel officials began to question the upperclassmen's overzealous implementation of the fourth-class system. In October 1955, General Clark briefed the Board of Visitors on "the hazing situation at The Citadel," and the Board "pledged support to him in his efforts to prevent hazing." Years later, Clark remembered speaking to the corps about "things in the fourth-class system that shouldn't have been there." He mentioned that the cadets on the Presidential Advisory Committee had alerted him of practices "that had no useful purpose at The Citadel" and of "things that were perpetrated on the cadets that they shouldn't have had." Clark informed cadets that he "would not tolerate the upperclassmen interfering with the sleeping, eating, or studying of freshman," and the 1956 edition of The Citadel's *Catalogue* contained a stern condemnation of hazing, claiming "individuals who are obsessed with the idea that beatings and indignities are a part of a student's education" were not wanted at The Citadel.⁵³

Responding to "cries of protest" that characterized Citadel upperclassmen as "sadistic monster[s] taking great joy in using [their] authority over a plebe," cadets defended the trials of freshmen year as "the *only* way in which a group of high school civilian students can be molded into a group of well-disciplined, well-trained cadets in so short a period of time." They appreciated that "It is the Corps who enforces the discipline and creates a class of proud, self-respecting men." Erroneously treating the system as a static institution, the students pleaded that school officials "leave the running of a system as old as the school to the Corps and those who are *competent* to give advice and *constructive* criticism."⁵⁴

⁵² *The Brigadier*, 9 October 1954, 18 May 1957.

⁵³ *The Brigadier*, 9 October 1954, 20 March 1981; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 October 1955, document 515; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 15 October 1955; 1956 *Catalogue*; 1959 *Catalogue*.

⁵⁴ *The Brigadier*, 9 October 1954.

Rigid definitions of “proper” feminine behavior complemented America’s obsession with masculine virility. The acceleration of the Cold War intensified the immediate post-World War II campaign to drive women back into the home, and In *Homeward Bound*, Elaine Tyler May explains how domestic rituals and norms occupied center stage in the United States-Soviet rivalry. Her analysis of the “kitchen debate” between Nikita Khrushchev and Richard Nixon reveals that, at least publicly, the “‘model’ home, with a male breadwinner and full time female homemaker adorned with a wide array of consumer goods, represented the essence of American freedom.” Policymakers and social critics “pointed to traditional gender roles as the best means for Americans to achieve the happiness and security they desired.” To them, the American dream resided in suburban homes where men earned paychecks and women served their families.⁵⁵

The Citadel “Beauties” of this era delivered the same mixed messages as the previous one, whereby college educated, sexually vibrant, gainfully employed women were expected to act as subservient, adorable, gorgeous wives and mothers. Rejoicing that “the Corps’ supply of beautiful women is inexhaustible,” *Brigadier* columnists portrayed their subjects as “110 pounds of pure sweetness” and “102 pounds strategically located over her five foot two inch figger.” Rather than present a biology major as a future doctor, a cadet smirked “*The Brigadier* can’t think of anyone more qualified for teaching Comparative Anatomy.”⁵⁶

Citadel students continued to view co-education as little more than a joke. When Winthrop, an all-female college in Upstate South Carolina, and Clemson University

⁵⁵ *Homeward Bound*, 16, 18, 19, 58, 90.

⁵⁶ *The Brigadier*, 23 January 1954, 27 February 1954, 11 February 1956, 17 March 1956.

dropped their single gender admissions policies, a writer for *The Brigadier* smugly wished both schools luck in their “new ventures.” In regards to Winthrop, he added, “It seems the girls there are a bit restless and need a ‘general perking up’ all the way around.” He offered a “little of our ‘brotherly’ help to remedy their situation.”⁵⁷

An interesting new feature also cropped up around this time, and it testifies to the unassailability of the corps’ manliness. In his study of the South in the 1950s, Pete Daniel claims certain breaches of sexual etiquette actually reinforced white male dominance. According to him, many southerners “flirted with transgressive behavior” by participating in “womanless weddings” and other events that featured white men posing as women or African Americans. For Daniel, these events confirm that “in a society that placed a premium on masculinity and whiteness . . . white men could violate and enforce barriers with impunity.” At The Citadel, the newspaper began profiling cadets in drag as the “Beasts of the Week.” In contrast to the grace, loveliness, and domesticity of the Beauties, the Beasts were grotesque, filthy, and boorish. With names like “Miss Stomach Tuner” and “Thada Belch,” their biographical sketches included much of the same information as the women’s; without photos, one might even have trouble telling the two apart. Instead of being “a real ‘doll,’” one beast was an “enchanted captivating senorita.” One columnist used the term “figger” when describing both a Beast and a Beauty. Congruent with the corps’ racialized concept of beauty, all the featured women were white, while several of the Beasts were caricatures of non-white peoples.⁵⁸

Cadets expressed other racial sentiments less subtly. In the wake of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, Citadel personnel asserted their whiteness as dogmatically

⁵⁷ *The Brigadier*, 20 November 1954.

as they did their manliness. One of the school desegregation cases that would eventually be incorporated into *Brown* originated in Clarendon, South Carolina, and following the Court's ruling, South Carolina Governor James F. Byrnes claimed the right to close the state's schools and formed a fifteen-member committee instructed to devise anti-desegregation strategies. Unofficially, the committee took the name of its chairman, L. Marion Gressette, and one proposal of the Gressette Committee relieved the state of its constitutional obligation to fund public schools.⁵⁹

Byrne's successor, George Bell Timmerman, signed an interposition resolution and an appropriations bill that would close any South Carolina college or university required to admit students by court order. Furthermore, if any school closed for this reason, the state college for blacks would also shut down. According to the chairman of the Gressette Committee, "the people of South Carolina intend to operate their schools in accordance with their own wishes so long as they are allowed to do so. When this right is denied to them, they will close the public schools." Timmerman's belligerent policies angered black South Carolinians, and generated unrest on some college campuses. The University of South Carolina fired two teachers who advocated desegregation, and Furman University banned a student publication for including an article supporting the Supreme Court.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*, 152, 155, 156, 158-159; *The Brigadier*, 24 October 1953, 23 January 1954, 27 February 1954; 11 February 1956, 17 March 1956.

⁵⁹ Woodward, *Jim Crow*, 156-157; Bartley, *Massive Resistance*, 45, 340; John G. Sproat, "Firm Flexibility: Perspectives on Desegregation in South Carolina," in *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America*, eds. Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 167; Sarratt, *Ordeal of Desegregation*, 34; Bartley, *New South*, 163.

⁶⁰ *Charleston News and Courier*, 15 February 1956; Marcia G. Synnott, "Desegregation in South Carolina: Sometime Between Now and Never," in *Looking South: Chapters in the Story of an American Region*, eds. Winfred B. Moore, Jr. and Joseph Tripp (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989): 58; Sarratt, *Ordeal of Desegregation*, 131, 140-141, 186; Bartley, *Massive Resistance*, 75-76, 228, 230-232.

The Citadel's campus witnessed no such discord. Clark made it clear where he stood on the matter, and no one on campus dared challenge his views. The Citadel's administration consisted largely of retired or active military officers from all branches of the armed services, and many of these men based their opinions of blacks on the misconception that African-American soldiers could not "stand the gaff." The integration of the United States Armed Forces had occurred years before, but many "old guard" military officers clung to this distorted view of black troops.⁶¹

Like many of his contemporaries, Clark formed his opinions based on his World War II experience where he had seen members of the black Ninety-second Division wither under a German assault at the Serchio Valley in December of 1944. Clark praised the performances of individual black soldiers, but he questioned the effectiveness of black units. He blamed their deficiencies not on poor training or demoralizing policies, but on their "general reluctance to accept responsibility for the hard routine discipline that is essential in wartime." Clark disagreed with the Supreme Court's attempts to "force indiscriminate racial integration upon the South," and he opposed school desegregation based on his personal evaluation of blacks' military capabilities. He claimed that although "the American Negro is demanding 'equality' in every phase of life

⁶¹ W. Gary Nichols, "The General as President," 331; Lieutenant Colonel T. Nugent Courvoisie, interview by author, tape recording, 4 October 1997. The desegregation of the American military after World War II resulted from political pressure, civil rights activism, and most importantly, the need for efficiency. Since at least World War I, the debilitating effects of a racially segregated army hindered the effectiveness of American troops. Segregation fostered resentment and isolation among black soldiers, and heightened racial tensions. White instructors offered African-American soldiers little practical training, and their attitudes and performance suffered as a result. With Executive Order 9981, Harry Truman banned racial discrimination in the United States military, but it was the Korean War that forced the United States Army to integrate. The massive influx of black and white recruits rendered continued segregation impossible and field commanders could not afford to waste manpower. Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1981); Richard M. Dalfiume, *Desegregation of the U.S. Armed Forces: Fighting on Two Fronts, 1930-1953* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1969); Edward M. Coffman, *The War to End All Wars: The*

. . . the blunt fact is that he has been reluctant to accept full responsibility.” He stood firmly behind “the doctrine of State’s Rights” and believed “problems of this kind should be left for solution to the people who understand them and know best how to solve them.”⁶²

Just as he used Citadel functions as forums for his anti-communism, Clark invited well-known segregationists to speak on campus. In 1955, he bestowed honorary degrees on Governor Timmerman and Marvin Griffin, a Citadel graduate and governor of Georgia. That same year, Griffin delivered a Greater Issues speech in which he called the South America’s “number one section of opportunity” and blared “we set up our school system, we financed our education program, and we intend to operate our schools.” In 1959, Clark honored the arch-segregationist editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, Tom Waring, who “with the advent of the Era of Bewilderment and Strife following the Supreme Court’s segregation decision of May 17, 1954, he became through his editorials, articles, and speeches, one of the nationally known defenders and interpreters of the South.”⁶³

The corps took these messages to heart. In *The Politics of Rage*, Dan Carter explains that among southern whites, “any flexibility, and, particularly, any capitulation in the face of black resistance – was perceived as a sign of weakness that would lead to the total collapse of segregation.” Trained to abhor weakness, Citadel students resolved not to let this happen. One writer for *The Brigadier* compared the Supreme Court to “an

American Military Experience in World War I (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 69-73, 231-233, 314-320.

⁶² Mark W. Clark, *Calculated Risk* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1950), 413-415; Mark W. Clark to Dink R. Rigsby, 13 June 1956, General Mark W. Clark Papers, The Citadel Archives, Daniel Library, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; Clark to Eric F. Goldman, 24 April 1956, Clark Papers; Nichols, “General as President,” 331; *The Brigadier*, 12 May 1956.

irksome, destructive child visiting in our home with his mother.” The students’ angst reached a fever pitch in 1956, the same year Senator Byrd issued the call for massive resistance and Strom Thurmond and other Southern politicians penned the “Southern Manifesto.” After whites rioted to prevent Autherine Lucy from enrolling at the University of Alabama, *The Brigadier* published a long winded diatribe blaming the “integrationists,” not the rioters, for taking “a path of forceful belligerence against fellow citizens.” Denouncing Lucy, the NAACP, and the Supreme Court for fomenting discord, he welcomed “the spirit of resistance which Alabama students displayed against unwarranted interference by the courts in decreeing whom the university must accept as students.” He accused black civil rights activists, not white racists, of causing the “deterioration of race relations that may well cost Negroes in the South more than all the victories in the courts are worth.” Inadvertently making a strong case for federal intervention, the author warned “Alabama, like much of the South, will not willingly accept integration.” He derided integrationists as “abysmally ignorant of the true situation,” and belied the “unwarranted assumption that the Negro wants integration.” He added “you cannot legislate morals, especially preconceived interpretations of them which war with millions of citizens’ views.”⁶⁴

Abandoning the regional perspective, the columnist turned to Cold War issues raised by integration. He bellowed “the present struggle is weakening America” at a “time of world crisis when other nations of the free world look to us for strength.” He reversed field, however, by contending, “Is it not more important what we think of each

⁶³ *The Brigadier*, 21 May 1955; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 April 1955, document 445; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 June 1959, document 47.

other in America, then it is what the rest of the world thinks of us in part or in whole?” Finally, he linked Communism and desegregation by accusing civil rights activists of entering into a “bargain” with the Soviets in order to split “America over an American way of life which has been proven through demonstration to be the best under present conditions.”

That same issue of *The Brigadier* alerted readers to “Dangerous Meddling by the Liberals” in the form of increased federal aid to public schools. Foreshadowing the national politics of George Wallace and Ronald Reagan, the cadet accused unspecified “experts” of not only ruining the American educational system, but for having “almost no faith in the people and almost total faith in government.” While denouncing federal intervention, the student unveiled the ugly racial politics behind his protest. At a time when most Americans and certainly President Eisenhower were, as Robert Weisbrot put it, “reluctant to extend federal authority for any purpose, let alone to upset established racial patterns,” he posed the question, “Does anyone believe for a moment that a federal government dominated by a left-wing, NAACP and other radical interests will give any school its share of the national tax receipts if it is not integrated to the limit?”⁶⁵

Adding fuel to the fire, Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater addressed the corps later that month and affirmed their fear of “‘pseudo-liberals’ acceleration of the recently developed trend whereby the federal government ignores the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution and unnecessarily invades the rights reserved to the states and the people.” The senator labeled this trend “un-American” and the product of socialists’ “subtle, alien

⁶⁴ Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 92; Bartley, *Massive Resistance*, 116, 145-146; *The Brigadier*, 9 February 1957; 25 February 1956.

propaganda.” The corps cheered when Goldwater railed against “the socialization of America” and condemned liberals as a threat to American “freedom.”⁶⁶

Not all cadets feared “big government,” and some appreciated federal aid. However, none stepped forward publicly to support integration. In *The Brigadier*, two students wrote letters to the editor outraged at their peer’s earlier diatribe against federal aid to education. Both accused the editor of “sensationalism,” and one felt “ashamed” of how poorly the editorial reflected on the corps. He recognized public schools’ need for money and howled “editorials should act as a mirror for the Corps, and they should not reflect the opinions and views of the editor or just a few students.” Pointing out inconsistencies in his opponent’s argument and recognizing, but not condemning, the federal government’s dismal support of civil rights, the student argued correctly, “a good number of buildings on our campus are the result of federal aid. Have we been ordered to integrate our school?”⁶⁷

The corps’ overall attitude toward integration revealed just how deeply race factored into the regional identity of many white southerners. Bemoaning the Supreme Court’s efforts to “strike down that which is natural in the South” and accusing the justices of betraying “a marked lack of understanding and sympathy for its problems . . . despite the fact that two so-called ‘Southerners’ sit on that formerly distinguished bench,” one cadet made hatred of integration endemic to all southern whites. One student praised the members of the arch-segregationist Citizens Councils as the only “men of the South who are capable of thinking and reasoning,” and he looked to them for protection from

⁶⁵ Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America’s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990), 12; *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1956.

⁶⁶ *The Brigadier*, 17 March 1956.

⁶⁷ *The Brigadier*, 17 March 1956.

“this onslaught of ‘social legislation’ from a tribunal determined to carry on a policy offensive to many and ruinous to harmonious relations among all people in the South and the nation as well.”⁶⁸

Certain members of the corps demanded such a high level of commitment to segregation that they found many of their fellow South Carolinians wanting. A writer for *The Brigadier* regretted that students across the state had succumbed to “propaganda by subversive organizations” and “swallowed the dangerous and to us obnoxious doctrines of the racial ‘integrationists.’” He suspected these students Reaffirming the exceptional and educational benefits of a rigorous, disciplined environment, the cadet hoped that once his colleagues at other schools “remove themselves from the impractical idealism they acquire in certain ‘arts’ courses and face the realities of life, they will realize that the tried and true practice of segregation is best for this day and age.”⁶⁹

The corps embraced Confederate symbols and icons as part of their urgent desire to block the “ultimate destruction of the Southern pattern of life,” their timing suggesting that white southerners’ ostentatious displays of the Confederate flag stemmed from a desire to maintain segregation rather than a desire to celebrate their Civil War heritage. Upon learning that the Georgia legislature had incorporated the Confederate flag into its state flag, members of the corps asked school officials to acquire one of the new banners immediately. *The Brigadier* applauded the “noble sentiments” of a Peach State politician’s pledge to “uphold what we stood for, do stand for, and will fight for.”⁷⁰

⁶⁸ *The Brigadier*, 28 April 1956; Daniel, *Lost Revolutions*, 248-249; Edgar, *South Carolina*, 524-525.

⁶⁹ *The Brigadier*, 12 May 1956.

⁷⁰ *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1956. In “An Air of Defiance,” John Walker Davis argues persuasively that the “flag change was a symbolic representation of ‘massive resistance’ in Georgia.” John Walker Davis, “An Air of Defiance: Georgia’s Sate Flag Change of 1956,” *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 82 (Summer 1998): 308.

Not content to let their southern neighbors lead the fight, three cadets snuck across campus one night and painted a huge Confederate flag on the water tower overlooking The Citadel grounds. A reporter for *The Brigadier* snickered “college authorities have smiled and promised that until the tank has to be painted, the honorable flag will continue its vigilance atop The Citadel campus.” Calling the painting an act of “love for a cause and lost nation that is kindled within the heart of every true Citadel man,” the writer seized the opportunity to reaffirm the southernness of The Citadel and its graduates.⁷¹

Indicative of the corps’ soaring confidence and elitism, cadets championed The Citadel as the most southern of all Dixie’s schools. According to certain cadets, it was the corps’ conservative social and political bias that made them southern. One student argued that although cadets hailed from all over the country, The Citadel “has never become an amalgamation as have some other southern colleges.” He remarked that at The Citadel, Yankees “tend to become converted, in some degree, to the Southern way of thinking.” He elaborated on what it meant to think southern by announcing “Many other colleges (even Southern colleges) call us ‘conservative old fogies’-we reply by telling them that we are not conservative, but rather reactionary.” He asserted that other schools envied the corps’ “active feeling of loyalty to a departed nation as opposed to their compartmentalized respect for history.” As the standard bearer for all true southerners, the writer concluded proudly, “we will continue to speak forth in these columns from the Southern viewpoint while our liberal friends wrap and twist themselves in a cloak of confused ideals.”⁷²

⁷¹ *The Brigadier*, 6 October 1956.

⁷² *The Brigadier*, 6 October 1956.

While criticizing their peers for selectively interpreting the past, the corps conveniently excised slavery from any discussion of the Confederacy. However, by evoking Confederate icons and the Lost Cause in their defense of segregation, they made it clear that their's was a lily-white view of the southern past and present. The corps' one-sided racial politics tainted their sense of humor as well. A photo from the 1958 yearbook shows a group of cadets, some in uniform others in sweaters and collared shirts, smiling at the camera. A couple of the students are holding up a Confederate flag with a patch attached to it identifying the cadets as members of "Kleen Kut Kompany."⁷³

Contrary to cadets' depiction of The Citadel as a conservative beacon in a liberal fog, the college benefited from a national and regional environment that exalted conservatism, masculinity, and whiteness. At the close of the 1950s, Clark declared "unlike most institutions of higher learning in our country, we approach the vexing educational decade 1960-1970 with equanimity." He boasted that "we have acted to eliminate incompetence from among the existing student body" and urged the corps to help in this endeavor by driving out lazy individuals who deprived "a better man of the chance to get a Citadel education."⁷⁴

As usual, most cadets answered the call of their president. Editorials in *The Brigadier* admonished members of the corps for turning a blind eye to classmates who broke the rules, shirked their responsibilities, and slacked off academically. As the decade ended though, there were indications that the next ten years might be more troublesome than Clark predicted. Greater Issues speakers continued to holler about

⁷³ 1958 *Sphinx*, 165, Citadel Archives.

⁷⁴ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1959; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3 June 1960, 153-154; 1959 Annual Report.

containing communism, building up the military, and defending the free world, but by 1958, Clark found it “more and more difficult to get the kind of speakers we wanted.”⁷⁵

A subtle but perceptible shift occurred in cadets’ attitudes as well. The late 1950s witnessed a brief thawing in the Cold War with Nikita’s Khrushchev taking steps towards “de-Stalinizing” the Soviet Union and with the signing of the 1959 Camp David Accords. That same year, the new author of *The Brigadier*’s “Globally Speaking” column, Tony Motley, abandoned the apocalyptic tones of his predecessors. While Khrushchev applauded the “spirit of Camp David,” Motley commended the premier’s “honesty” and asserted “Mr. Khrushchev has made clear his desire for peace and understanding. He has preached peaceful means, now let him practice them.”⁷⁶

Cadet loosened their ideological shackles on some domestic issues as well. One student wrote a favorable review of a book claiming “in an effort to combat the principles of Communist Russia, we are gradually becoming more and more like that police state.” Closer to home, the corps began to publicly question some of the college’s rules and regulations. The editor of *The Brigadier* penned a satirical protest of the administration’s censorship of the paper. Griping about the number of “nitpicky” regulations under which the corps labored, others sought ways to “increase our rights, privileges, and precious moments of comparative freedom,” Even the Honor System came under greater scrutiny as some cadets worried that the Honor Court handed down guilty verdicts too readily.

While none of these developments qualify The Citadel as a hotbed of youthful

⁷⁵ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1959, 10 October 1959, 21 November 1959, 5 December 1959; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 November 1958, document 117.

⁷⁶ O’Neill, *Coming Apart*, 8; Chester J. Pach, Jr. and Elmo Richardson, *The Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, revised edition (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 208-209, 215; Stephen Ambrose, *Eisenhower: The President*, volume 2 (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 542-544; Whitfield, *Culture of the Cold War*, 205-208; *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1959, 2 May 1959, 10 October 1959.

dissatisfaction and student unrest, they indicate a somewhat more open, more critical attitude among the student body.⁷⁷

For much of the 1950s though, most Citadel students and administrators embraced the dominant ideology and culture of the Cold War. With Mark Clark at the helm, however, the school did more than drift along with the cultural mainstream. It surged forward on waves of chauvinistic, anti-communist, anti-civil rights, and anti-liberal sentiment. The Citadel and its corps of cadets epitomized the era's conservatism, militarism, prosperity, and prejudice. A national climate that nurtured these traits fueled the college's resurgence.

This period in The Citadel's history attests to the far-reaching domestic impact of geo-political concerns. Cold War imperatives colored the students' views on racial equality, gender roles, personal liberties, and the responsibilities of citizenship. Disquieted by international instability, Americans turned to over-simplified evaluations of the world's and the nation's problems. For many, a blind hatred of communism determined the extent of one's patriotism. For most white southerners, a frenzied opposition to integration established one's regional identity. For most Citadel cadets, graduating made one a "whole man." Expressing their identity as Americans, southerners and Citadel Men in such narrow, formulaic terms left the corps ill-prepared to accommodate social change. Whether stressing their patriotism, their southernness, or their manliness, their goal remained preservation of the status quo.

A national and institutional emphasis on the importance of manly leadership as a key to winning the Cold War strengthened many people's belief that Citadel men served

⁷⁷ *The Brigadier*, 17 January 1959, 14 February 1959, 29 October 1960, 24 October 1959, 3 March 1959, 14 March 1959, 18 April 1959, 26 November 1960; 1957 Honor Manual, The Citadel Archives.

a crucial, indeed an essential, role in the country's current and future success. General Clark noted and most students agreed that, in churning out "whole men," The Citadel turned "cadets into the kind of leaders who will insure that America fulfills her destiny." By tying the United States' Cold War superiority to the institution's ability to manufacture men, Citadel cadets, alumni, and administrators equated a threat to the college's manly purpose as a threat to America. Over the next four decades, a large number of Citadel men clung to the notion that "weakening" their alma mater would weaken the nation, and this attitude would have a profound impact on how they responded to certain challenges to the school's "traditions."

Cadets' characterization of "true southerners" proved just as far-reaching. Most endorsed an all-white interpretation of the South's past and present, and their frantic, irrational, and somewhat hysterical defense of segregation reveals how deeply race factored into the regional identity of many white southerners. To much of the corps, being southern had less to do with one's birthplace and hometown than it did with one's political or cultural inclinations. According to the most vocal cadets, all southerners were white, voted conservative, revered the Confederacy, resented the federal government, and, last and most important, despised integration. By these standards, Americans from Oregon to Maine might qualify as southern, but by declaring integration an attack on the southern way of life, the corps confirmed Jim Crow's place at the center of the region's political, social, economic, and cultural existence. Because their national, regional, and institutional identity was determined in large measure by whom they excluded, Citadel administrators and students were plunged into crisis when those on the outside demanded entry.

CHAPTER THREE: BLACK, WHITE, AND GRAY

Growing up in Charleston in the 1920s, J. Arthur Brown would glare angrily at Citadel cadets as they walked past his house. He resented not being allowed to attend the college simply because “my skin was the wrong color,” and he remembers that the sight of three Japanese cadets in Citadel uniforms compounded his frustration since “I only had to travel across town to get to The Citadel while they had to travel half-way around the world.” Even on weekends, Brown could watch Bulldog football games only if he agreed to clean the stadium afterwards. If the home team started losing though, disgruntled stadium officials forced him to leave. These experiences left an indelible impression on him, and decades later, as president of the Charleston branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), he made desegregating the city’s schools and other public facilities his primary goal.¹

In his study of the civil rights movement in Charleston, Stephen O’Neill claims that African-American activism brought more dramatic social change to that city than to the rest of the South because it forced blacks and whites to reevaluate social roles prescribed by over two hundred and fifty years of inequality. Charlestonians witnessed less violence and outright hostility than folks in Birmingham or other cities, and O’Neill credits this to the “lowcountry myth,” a mixture of paternalism and deference that muted

¹ Stephen O’Neill, “From the Shadow of Slavery: The Civil Rights Years in Charleston,” (Ph.D. Diss, University of Virginia, 1994), 151-152; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 411-412; Edmund L. Drago, *Initiative, Paternalism, and Race Relations: Charleston’s Avery Normal Institute* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 240, 272.

racial tensions and often worked more effectively than violence in suppressing black rebelliousness. By 1960, however, the movement had gained a great deal of momentum, and in November of that year, the city's golf course became the first integrated municipal facility in South Carolina. Soon the city began desegregating its bus and train depots, its parks, its libraries, and a handful of restaurants. In the background, Thomas Waring, the arch-segregationist editor of the *Charleston News and Courier*, condemned Brown and the NAACP as the "apostles of race mongrelization and socialism."²

Across the entire state, Jim Crow was under attack from various forces, and at the center of the storm, the debate raged over the desegregation of public schools. South Carolina was one of the last southern states to admit blacks to its public colleges and universities, holding out until January of 1963 when Harvey Gantt enrolled as the first African-American student at Clemson University.³ After witnessing the ugliness at other campuses across the region though, South Carolina's political and business leaders made preserving order and avoiding federal intervention their number one priority. Learning from the University of Mississippi's mistakes, state and university officials devised "probably the most complete and carefully thought out [plan] ever drawn up in the United States to meet the threat of racial violence." Clemson administrators planned Gantt's first day on campus with the "precision of an astronaut shot." Security guards accompanied him wherever he went. Highway patrolmen set up roadblocks and screened everyone

² O'Neill, "Shadow of Slavery," 3, 79-80, 212; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 411-412, 414.

³ For informative studies of the integration of South Carolina's public schools, see Walter Edgar, *South Carolina: A History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 538-540; John G. Sproat, "Firm Flexibility: Perspectives on Desegregation in South Carolina," *New Perspectives on Race and Slavery in America*, eds. Robert H. Abzug and Stephen E. Maizlish (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986), 164-184; Marcia G. Synnott, "Desegregation in South Carolina, 1950-1963: Sometime Between Now and Never," *Looking South: Chapters in the Story of an American Region*, eds. Winfred B. Moore, Jr. and Joseph F. Tripp (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1989), 51-64; Maxie M. Cox, "1963 – The Year of Decision: Desegregation in South Carolina" (Ph.D. Diss., University of South Carolina, 1996).

entering and leaving campus. Students had to wear nametags, and school officials threatened to expel anyone who caused a disturbance. The integration of Clemson passed without incident, and the state of South Carolina earned nationwide approval. The *Saturday Evening Post* published an article about Gantt's enrollment entitled "Integration with Dignity."⁴

A few months later, the University of South Carolina desegregated with the registration of Henri Monteith, Robert Anderson, and James Solomon. According to a recent history of the university, college administrators and members of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) mapped out the students' movements "down to the last detail." Several SLED agents escorted Monteith, Anderson, and Solomon around campus. Others stood watch on every street corner surrounding the university, and still more patrolled the grounds disguised as students. Despite school officials' efforts to monitor student behavior, USC's integration generated more unrest than Gantt's. Prior to the African-American students' arrival, whites burned a cross on campus, hung a black person in effigy, and then marched to the state house grounds. Police dispersed the mob quickly and avoided any violent confrontations.⁵

Later that year, Charleston served as the testing ground for the desegregation of South Carolina's public elementary and secondary schools. In August, federal judge J.

⁴ Walter Edgar, *South Carolina in the Modern Age* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1992), 105, 106; Numan Bartley, *The Rise of Massive Resistance: Race and Politics in the South During the 1950s* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 146, 212, 335; Reed Sarratt, *The Ordeal of Desegregation: The First Decade* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), 34, 173-174; Synnott, "Now and Never," 52, 53, 58-61; Edgar, *South Carolina*, 538-540; George McMillan, "Integration With Dignity," in *Perspectives in South Carolina History: The First 300 Years*, eds. Ernest M. Lander and Robert K. Ackerman (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1973), 381, 382, 385; Earl Black, *Southern Governors and Civil Rights: Racial Segregation as a Campaign Issue in the Second Reconstruction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), 79-80, 83; Edgar, *Modern Age*, 151; Paul W. McNeill, "School Desegregation in South Carolina, 1963-1970" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Kentucky, 1979), 23; Cox, "The Year of Decision," 469; Sproat, "Firm Flexibility," 173-174.

Robert Martin ordered four schools in Charleston to admit African-American students, with countywide desegregation to occur one year later. In September, Rivers High School became South Carolina's first integrated secondary school supposedly "without violence or publicity." Not one to sit idly by, Thomas Waring commented on the relative serenity of the moment, but sneered that a "cancer often eats away while one feels fit and well."⁶

Over the next three years, racial barriers continued to fall. Wofford College and Winthrop College integrated in 1964. Furman University desegregated in 1965, and the College of Charleston admitted African-American students in 1966. Soon thereafter, Senator Marion Gressette dissolved the Segregation Strategy Committee.⁷

In the Fall of 1966, Charles DeLesline Foster enrolled as the first African-American cadet at The Citadel amid little fanfare. The number of black cadets increased over the next ten years, but by 1976, they still constituted scarcely more than one percent of the student body. With the college's unique traditions and military structure, the first African-American students at The Citadel faced challenges far different from their peers at other schools. School officials raised no big row over the physical integration of The Citadel, the big battles over this issue had already been fought. However, many white cadets and officials refused to change their attitudes towards certain practices and traditions that evoked a time when The Citadel served as an institution designed to uphold white's social, political, and economic dominance. Determined to preserve their

⁵ Cox, "Year of Decision," 81-82, 84-84, 93-95; Henry H. Lesesne, *A History of the University of South Carolina* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001), 144-147.

⁶ McNeill, "School Desegregation," 17; Fraser, *Charleston Brown*, 417; Drago, *Initiative*, 275; Sarratt, *Ordeal of Desegregation*, 108-109, 173-174, 218, 254; O'Neill, "Shadow of Slavery," 240, 241.

⁷ O'Neill, "Shadow of Slavery," 238; Cox, "Year of Decision," 63, 130, 139; McNeill, "School Desegregation," 58; Sarratt, *Ordeal of Desegregation*, 218, 256-257; Black, *Southern Governors*, 83, 84.

familiar cultural and ideological environs amidst the changes sweeping the South, they beat back any presumed challenge to their regional and institutional heritage.

Many accounts of school desegregation emphasize the legal, institutional, and bureaucratic efforts to force, block, and accommodate racial integration. Such works tend to place lawyers, judges, and college officials at the center of the drama while pushing the principal actors, the students, to the back of the stage. In response, Thomas G. Dyer has challenged those who study the integration of southern colleges and universities to offer a “fuller comprehension of this complex dynamic in southern history.” He suggests that “the extent to which black students have become a part of institutional life should be studied,” and an examination of how the integration of The Citadel played out in the classroom, the barracks, student functions, and the local community offers valuable insight into the initial successes and long term failures of the civil rights struggle. A handful of cadets, both black and white, were the driving force behind the school’s desegregation as they strove to overcome a recalcitrant and often hostile administration in an attempt to change their alma mater. Viewing the school’s desegregation from this perspective helps explain how durable and insidious forms of racial prejudice convinced many civil rights activists to replace the peaceful protests of Martin Luther King, Jr. with angry demonstrations of “Black Power.”⁸

⁸ Thomas G. Dyer. “Higher Education in the South Since the Civil War: Historiographical Issues and Trends,” in *The Web of Southern Race Relations: Women, Family and Education*, eds Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 132-133. Local, bottom-up accounts of the civil rights movement have invigorated that area of historical inquiry by bringing new ideologies, new perspectives, and new personalities to the fore. See especially Charles Payne’s *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and John Dittmer’s *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994). Examining school desegregation from the viewpoints of black and white students promises similar results.

Mark Clark wished to avoid integrating The Citadel during his presidency, and the General and other school officials often ignored or obscured the college's exclusionary practices. A year after the *Brown* decision, Clark alleged "At The Citadel, you are measured by what you are and what you do, not by any of the more superficial standards of human achievement which we find so often in modern society." In July of 1963, President John F. Kennedy sent a letter to the Board of Visitors asking for the school's help in alleviating the nation's racial strife by encouraging all students to further their education. In their reply, the Board mentioned The Citadel's high student retention rate, but sidestepped the issue of recruiting or admitting African Americans. The Board's chairman ended his response with the disclaimer, "Since I feel we are already fulfilling the President's wishes and are carrying out the extra programs as outlined in this letter, this will be our only report."⁹

While maintaining their opposition to integration, Citadel officials balked at certain forms of segregationist extremism. In 1956, the rising chairman of the Board of Visitors had urged Clark to speak against the Gressette Committee's "drastic proposal" to close any college or university required by court order to admit black pupils. He explained "We don't want to give the impression that we would be willing to admit negroes [sic] to The Citadel lying down, and at the same time we don't want to burn the barn in order to get rid of the rats." With the institution run primarily by military personnel, "a sector of society that habitually recognizes the primacy of authority and law," school officials did not openly defy federal regulations. Months before the passage

⁹ 1955 *Guidon*, 9; Nichols, "General as President," 331; Nicholson, *History of The Citadel*, 348; The Citadel's Board of Visitors "Minutes," 25 October 1963, John Kennedy to David E. McCuen, Jr., letter dated, 12 July 1963, documents 632 and 633; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 October 1963, McCuen to Francis Keppel, 9 August 1963, documents 634 and 635.

of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, The Citadel received an application request from an African-American student at South Carolina State College. At that time, The Citadel did not accept transfer students, and the registrar informed the young man of this policy. When the student replied that he intended to enroll as a freshman, the Board of Visitors declared that his application would “be processed exactly as all applications received from residents of South Carolina regardless of race.” On November 11, General Clark addressed the Board concerning the “application of the Civil Rights Act on ROTC programs,” and four months later, he signed a certificate of compliance.¹⁰

Citadel cadets viewed integration with a mixture of resentment, resignation, and racism. In the wake of Harvey Gantt’s enrollment at Clemson, *The Brigadier* asked cadets their opinions on the desegregation of South Carolina’s public schools. A freshman conceded the inevitability of integration, but insisted that a “peaceful, gradual settlement with time for adjustment is the only answer.” One student disapproved of the Supreme Court’s efforts to “force” social change, while a Charleston native believed segregation should continue “until the Negroe [sic] race has improved its moral standards and its living standards.” Attitudes seemed relatively unchanged a year later when a student’s editorial condemned the pending Civil Rights Act for subverting the American ideals of “private property and self-determination.”¹¹

In Clark’s final years as president, school officials claimed that no black applicants had met the school’s admission standards. Several had requested application materials, a few had completed the initial steps towards applying, and one had been

¹⁰ Morris J. MacGregor, *Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965*, (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1981), 612; *Charleston News and Courier*, 15 February 1956; J.M. Moorer to Clark, 17 February 1956, Clark Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1 April 1964, document

rejected for scoring below the school's minimum requirements on the college entrance exam. Clark did not avoid integration completely, however. His assistant, Colonel Dennis Dewitt Nicholson, Jr., remarked that the General's "final days were complicated when Negro applicants were found qualified for admission to The Citadel Summer School for the first time." According to Nicholson, the enrollment of African Americans in the summer school program went "without incident . . . and was scarcely noticed by the news media."¹²

In 1965, the year Clark retired, The Citadel received six applications from African Americans and approved three of them. Of these three, only Charles Foster enrolled for the upcoming school year. The imminent enrollment of a black cadet piqued the student body's interest, and professors sparked numerous debates by asking cadets their opinions on the college's impending integration. Many worried that Foster would operate as a tool of the NAACP and try to cause trouble on campus. Several doubted that African Americans could withstand the rigors of the fourth class system and worried about the consequences should they quit. Other students welcomed African Americans based on the stereotypical assumption that it would improve the school's athletic program. Most men assumed that the first black student would look "like superman, earn a 4.0, and go on to attend Harvard." A situation peculiar to The Citadel arose over how upperclassmen would address black freshmen. At that time, cadets commonly referred to individual plebes as "boy," and while many wondered how a young, African-American male would respond to this label, most refused to consider abandoning the designation. Several

668; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 November 1964, document 793; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 19 March 1965, document 797.

¹¹ *The Brigadier*, 2 March 1963, 18 April 1964.

¹² Nicholson, *History*, 348-349; *Charleston New and Courier*, 6 September 1964.

students discussed how a black cadet's classmates should react if an establishment refused to serve African-Americans. A majority of them claimed they would walk out, a pledge that would be tested a few years later.¹³

Most school administrators held strong opinions concerning desegregation. One faculty member continued to rail against integration, but "tried to live with it." Many military personnel harbored doubts about the abilities of black servicemen, and they approached integration as a way to lessen the burdens of white troops by producing able African-American soldiers.¹⁴

General Hugh P. Harris followed Mark Clark as the college's twelfth president, and while he did not share his predecessor's stubbornness regarding integration, an emphasis on public opinion and expediency determined his commitment to civil rights. Six months after Foster enrolled, Harris received a letter from Alderman Duncan, a 1927 Citadel graduate, who expressed concern over rumors that the college recruited African-American football players. The thought appalled Duncan who favored "doing away with intercollegiate athletics altogether rather than have Negro players on our teams." He threatened to stop donating money to the institution's athletic department, and he informed Harris that other alumni shared his views. The General replied that The Citadel's ROTC affiliation forced it to sign the compliance agreement, but he denied any attempt to recruit black athletes, assuring Duncan that only one African American

¹³ *Charleston News and Courier*, 13 July 1966; *Charleston Evening Post*, 12 July 1966; Michael Barrett, interview by author, tape recording, 14 January 1998; Scott Madding, interview by author, tape recording, 10 October 1997; Philip Hoffmann, interview by author, tape recording, 29 October 1997; Adolphus Varner, interview by author, tape recording, 20 November 1997; William Jenkinson, interview by author, tape recording, 5 October 1997; Charles Funderburk, interview by author, tape recording, 15 January 1998; Paul Short, interview by author, tape recording, 6 October 1997; Philip Clarkson, interview by author, tape recording, 10 October 1997.

¹⁴ Courvoisie interview; Charles C. Martin, interview by author, tape recording, 24 October 1997, hereafter cited as Martin interview.

attended the school at that time and “there is little indication that any substantial numbers of Negroes will apply to The Citadel in the near future.”¹⁵

Five months after this declaration, General Harris informed the Board of Visitors that the United States Department of Education planned to investigate South Carolina’s colleges to determine if they awarded athletic scholarships on a non-discriminatory basis. According to Harris, The Citadel’s policies had not been questioned. The Board responded by reaffirming the apparently hollow pledge that “The principal of non-discrimination shall apply equally to the recruitment of athletes by the Athletic Department of The Citadel as it does in all other operational phases of the institution.”¹⁶

Despite their misgivings, Citadel authorities wanted Charles Foster to succeed. Mindful of a rising tide of anti-militarism and given General Harris’s preoccupation with preserving the college’s reputation, school administrators sought to avoid any negative publicity. Colonel Nicholson asked local media not to publicize Foster’s arrival, and they respected his wishes. A local television station declined a one hundred twenty-five dollar offer from CBS to interview Foster, and even Thomas Waring remained uncharacteristically quiet. The day after informing the public of Foster’s acceptance, he offered a brief editorial grumbling that “under existing social pressures, racial integration of The Citadel was inevitable,” but predicting that the school would desegregate without any complications.¹⁷

¹⁵ Courvoisie interview; J. Palmer Gaillard to Harris, 12 April 1968, Box 44, Folder 7, Harris Papers; Memo to Harris from Dennis D. Nicholson, no date, Box 50, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Alderman Duncan to Harris, 9 January 1967, Box 44, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Harris to Duncan, 16 January 1967, Box 44, Folder 1, Harris Papers.

¹⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1 June 1967, documents 571- 572.

¹⁷ Memo to Harris from Dennis Nicholson, 14 July 1966, Box 44, File F, Harris Papers; *Charleston News and Courier*, 14 July 1966.

School officials were not so confident. The desegregation of The Citadel occurred during an era when the fourth-class system had grown increasingly abusive, and the precarious status of a lone African-American cadet on campus worried many. Hoping to head off potential controversies, one administrator made the student body aware of the importance of Foster's success. Lieutenant Colonel T. Nugent Courvoisie served as Assistant Commandant of Cadets from 1961 until 1968, and he developed a rapport with the students unlike any person before or since. Cadets nicknamed him "The Boo," and in his first book, Pat Conroy described Courvoisie as the "father of the Corps . . . dutiful and humane, stern and merciful, fierce and infinitely kind." Conroy claims that "had the full destructive energies of the Corps ever been released in a full-scale riot, Mark Clark would have been trampled. Courvoisie could have met the charge head on, issued a command, and stopped two-thousand men in their tracks." Before Charles Foster reported as a freshman, The Boo made it known that he would be checking on him throughout the year. He delivered no specific guidelines or special edicts, but as cadet Philip Hoffmann stated, "Anyone with a modicum of intelligence would have realized that laying a hand on [Foster] would get you a one-way ticket to Clemson."¹⁸

School administrators intervened further when it came to Foster's room assignment. Based on height, Charles Foster would have reported to second battalion, F Company. However, the cadet regimental commander suggested that Courvoisie place Foster in G Company since, at an institution notorious for mental and physical cruelty, the cadets of F-Troop had earned a reputation as the hardest and the nastiest. Golf

¹⁸ Courvoisie interview; David Eubanks, interview by author, tape recording, 10 October 1997; Michael Bozeman, interview by author, tape recording, 19 October 1997; Hoffmann interview; Varner interview; Leon Yonce, interview by author, tape recording, 14 January 1998; David Banner, interview by author, tape recording, 22 January 1998; Madding interview; William Riggs, interview by author, tape recording, 7

Company possessed a strong cadet chain of command, and based on the regimental commander's endorsement, Courvoisie assigned Foster to second battalion, G Company. As a further precaution, school officials selected a northerner, Dave Hooper, from Cherry Hill, New Jersey as Foster's roommate.¹⁹

On September 6, 1966, Charles Foster entered number two barracks as The Citadel's first African-American cadet. Foster lived in Charleston and had graduated from a local high school with honors. When he reported to The Citadel along with six hundred and fifty-eight other freshmen, a headline in *The State* read, "First Negro Signs in at Citadel," and the article described Foster as "a face in a faceless crowd." The *New York Times* announced, "Citadel Enrolls First Negro; Entrance Virtually Unnoticed." As he accompanied his brother across campus, William Foster sensed an undercurrent of resentment, noting "People didn't want him there . . . but they treated him as any other plebe coming into the system."²⁰

The G Company commander, cadet William Riggs, and the cadre platoon leader, cadet Michael Bozeman, placed Foster in a room adjacent to theirs, and throughout that year, they tried to watch over Foster without setting him apart from the other plebes. While several fourthclassmen suspected that The Boo and cadet officers kept a close eye on Foster, they never noticed any special supervision. One admits that he never saw

December 1997; Patrick Conroy, *The Boo* (New York: The Old New York Bookshop Press, 1970; Mockingbird Books, 1993), vi, 13.

¹⁹ George Gray, interview by author, tape recording, 25 November 1997; Jenkinson interview, Varner interview, David Dawson, interview by author, tape recording, 27 January 1998; Henry Kennedy, interview by author, tape recording, 24 October 1997; Courvoisie interview.

²⁰ Charles Foster died in 1986, and his cadet career must be pieced together from interviews with his classmates and other people who knew him. The author spoke with many of Foster's friends and roommates, as well as cadet officers from his freshman year. Charleston *Evening Post*, 12 July 1966; *The Citadel Official Register For the Period September 1966 – September 1967*, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; *The State*, 6 September 1966; *New York Times*, 8 September 1966; Charleston *News and Courier*, 1 December 1996.

anyone looking after Foster; he and others “felt it, we suspected it, but it was not blatant.” A few times Riggs or Bozeman pulled an overly aggressive junior or sophomore away from Foster, but as one of Foster’s classmates recalls, “for the entire freshman year Charlie was one of us and he caught it just the same as we did.”²¹

Still, problems encountered regularly by white cadets took on added importance when they affected Foster. Like most freshmen, Foster contemplated quitting school on more than one occasion. Citadel personnel feared that if Foster left for any reason the federal government would accuse them of non-compliance. Whenever Foster discussed resigning, various members of Golf Company offered counseling and reassurance that plebe year was demanding but ultimately rewarding.²²

Another crisis arose when the company had to assign Foster a new roommate. Hooper and Foster developed an “amicable” relationship, and while Hooper encountered less animosity than Foster, he did achieve a certain notoriety. Hooper and his family received mail praising and condemning him for rooming with The Citadel’s first African-American cadet. Some upperclassmen referred to him as Foster’s “nigger loving roommate,” and they singled him out for extra push-ups and other hardships. Some cadets told Hooper that Foster would live longer with a Yankee roommate, and one individual asked Hooper repeatedly, “Did you kill him yet?” Hooper’s father expressed concern for his son’s welfare to Colonel Courvoisie, and after a personal disagreement between Hooper and Foster, the company assigned Foster another roommate. Company officers screened freshmen and several refused to live with an African-American.

²¹ Bozeman interview; Banner interview; Riggs interview; Gray interview; Yonce interview; Jenkinson interview; Dave Hooper, interview by author, tape recording, 14 October 1997; David McGinnis, interview by author, tape recording, 20 January 1998; Kennedy interview; Dawson interview.

²² Courvoisie interview; Bozeman interview; Yonce interview; Gray interview.

Eventually, Richard Bagnal, a southerner and a member of The Citadel's wrestling team, agreed to live with Foster.²³

Many of Foster's classmates contend that in addition to the efforts of cadet officers, Foster's impressive physical stature, his easy going personality, and the school's demanding lifestyle helped him establish interracial loyalties and friendships. A telling incident occurred after the first week on campus. Henry Kennedy was a G Company freshman from Charleston who decided to go home for the day. Charles Foster opted to spend the day at his parent's house as well, but some upperclassmen refused to allow the two men off campus without proper shirt tucks. Administering a shirt tuck according to Citadel standards required two people. The person who received the shirt tuck first had to unbutton and unzip his pants, and then unfasten the top three buttons of his shirt. While the first cadet pulled the sides of his shirt out to resemble wings, the other cadet stood behind him and ran his hand down the portion of the wing along the classmate's rib cage. The assistant then folded the shirt back tightly, and while the other cadet held the first tuck, he repeated the process on the other side. Finally, the first cadet buckled, buttoned, and zipped his pants back up while the second cadet kept the tuck in place. It took several attempts before Kennedy and Foster met the upperclassmen's approval, and this type of trivial harassment formed an integral part of freshman year at The Citadel. In this instance, however, it forced a black man and a white man to rely on each other in a rather intimate way not found at other institutions. Most whites at other southern colleges ignored the first African-American students, but this did not and could not happen to Charles Foster at The Citadel. Within a week of his arrival, Foster was thrust into a

²³ McGinnis interview; Dawson interview; Hooper interview; Courvoisie interview; Bozeman interview; Bagnal interview; Kennedy interview.

position of interdependence with a white man he had just met. As Foster and his classmates sweated in formation, did push-ups in the barracks, and struggled during long training runs, many white cadets came to view Foster more as another plebe trying to survive the year, than as the man who broke The Citadel's color barrier.²⁴

This acceptance was not universal. Many whites expected Foster to be a Herculean segregation buster and complained when he turned out to resemble an average cadet. Aware of these grumblings, one professor asked his white students to describe the ideal black cadet. After noting their criteria, he pointed out that the cadets wanted Bill Cosby to integrate The Citadel. During inspections, Foster received noticeably more demerits than his white classmates. As he walked to and from class, white cadets shouted racial epithets out their windows. One day, as the G Company freshmen stood in formation, Foster braced in horror as cadets from another company dressed in white sheets and raced towards him screaming and yelling. Dave Hooper remembers that early in the year, a group of freshmen called him into a room and announced their intention to run Foster off. Hooper noticed a homemade noose looped over an exposed pipe in the ceiling and left the room immediately. He never told Foster about the incident, and the cadets never carried out their threat. While the cadets I interviewed agree that the physical abuse Foster endured remained within the limits of The Citadel's plebe system as it then existed, it did exceed that suffered by his peers in both intensity and duration.

²⁴ Riggs interview; Jenkinson interview; Dawson interview; Hoffman interview; Gray interview; Ira Stern, interview by author, tape recording, 30 January 1998; Varner interview; Short interview; Alan Hughes, interview by author, tape recording, 10 October 1997; Richard Bagnal, interview by author, tape recording, 13 January 1998; Thomas Byrd, interview by author, 13 January 1998; Barrett interview; Madding interview; Kennedy interview.

Hooper, for one, admitted that upperclassmen tormented Foster long after the mistreatment of other knobs had decreased²⁵

Foster persevered, and he emerged from his first year with a great deal of confidence and little resentment. He refuted claims that he received extra attention, and when asked about returning as a sophomore, Foster replied “I feel like I’m lucky and I’m part of the school and the military. Sure I’m going back, I wouldn’t miss it.” General Harris congratulated Riggs for the successful completion of Foster’s indoctrination, and he acknowledged “The Citadel is much in your debt for the effective manner in which you handled all the details associated with this matter.”²⁶

As an upperclassman, Foster developed close friendships with a few of his peers. He attended Citadel parties and on one occasion even carried a drunken classmate into the barracks. A former roommate recalls several occasions when he went home with Foster or the two socialized in Charleston. Philip Hoffmann participated in a field training exercise with Foster and the two men shared a foxhole for three days. Hoffmann had not known Foster personally prior to this exercise, but afterwards they spoke on a regular basis. According to Hoffmann, “We had camped together. We had peed on the same bush. Now we were buddies.”²⁷

Foster graduated in May of 1970, and his cadet career appears to parallel that of numerous past, present, and future cadets. He posted average grades and never rose above the rank of private. He survived plebe year, put on weight, harassed freshmen, and

²⁵ Barrett interview; Hoffman interview; Hughes interview; Hooper interview; Dawson interview; Madding interview; Kennedy interview; Courvoisier interview; McGinnis interview; Charleston *News and Courier*, 1 December 1996; Yonce interview; Laurence Moreland, interview by author, 22 October 1997.

²⁶ The Rockland County *Journal-News*, 16 October 1967, Box 44, File G, Harris Papers; Charleston *Evening Post*, 8 June 1967; Letter to Riggs from Harris, 1 June 1967, Box 49, Folder 7, Harris Papers.

²⁷ Short interview; Bagnal interview; Barrett interview; Kennedy interview; Dawson interview; Hughes interview; Hoffman interview.

went to bars. However, Foster's Citadel career actually differed vastly from that of other cadets. One white alumnus described his first day at The Citadel as "walking into Hades itself." Another added, "I was a big hard-nosed football player who could take things in stride and could do push-ups all day long, and [The Citadel] scared me. How would you like to be a black man coming into the place that fired the first shots of the Civil War?" A friend of Foster's commented, "I don't think Charlie was ever comfortable at that place." Though Lieutenant Colonel Courvoisie and Golf Company officers had made it clear that they would keep a close eye on Foster and anyone who attempted to harm him jeopardized his college career, Foster never heard these warnings. A white Charlestonian remembers community members predicting that Foster would fail, and that cadets would "run him out or they'll give him blanket parties." Living in Charleston, Foster probably heard these same comments, and every night he lay in bed, in a room without locks, knowing that some men hated the very idea of a black man in a Citadel uniform. The anxiety he must have felt when he heard footsteps or voices outside his door cannot be measured in push-ups or demerits.²⁸

Foster's and The Citadel's success hinged primarily upon his attitude and actions. Unlike other freshmen, Charles Foster did not have the luxury of quitting. To do so would have validated the belief that African-Americans could not "stand the gaff." His resignation would have stigmatized "his race" and especially the black cadets who followed. A friend of Foster observed that "Charles would have died, but he would not

²⁸ Gray interview; Norman Seabrooks, interview by author, tape recording, 17 October 1997; Kennedy interview; Hoffmann interview.

have given up.” Courvoisie praises Foster for having “the guts to stick it out and that’s what got him through.”²⁹

The uncertainty and constant pressure of Foster’s Citadel experience took its toll. He realized some of his peers were waiting to pounce when he committed the smallest infraction. Foster’s indiscretions drew a great deal of criticism, and while some cadets saw him as “Charlie,” others saw him as “the first black graduate” and expected more. One high school classmate described Foster as “macho” and said he seemed to internalize many of his troubles. Riggs mentions that Foster “didn’t seem outwardly depressed, but he was pretty quiet. There seemed to me like there was a lot of passion within him that we never got to see.” William Foster called The Citadel his brother’s “toughest challenge. He won, but he never got the prize or recognition. But he’s still a Citadel man.”³⁰

During Charles Foster’s sophomore year, Joseph Shine reported to Kilo Company as The Citadel’s second African-American cadet. Shine lived in Charleston, and respected The Citadel’s academic reputation. Also, with the Vietnam War in full swing, he knew that “if I had to go in the military, then I wanted to be an officer.” Shine’s arrival sparked fewer debates than Foster’s, but it still aroused considerable interest. Shine stood five feet eight inches tall and weighed one hundred eighteen pounds; many cadets wondered if he would survive. One upperclassman feared, “they’re going to run this kid out of here in three weeks and the world’s going to come to an end.”³¹

No noticeable procedural or administrative adjustments occurred between the enrollments of Foster and Shine. If anything, school officials took a smaller role in

²⁹ Herbert Legare, interview by author, tape recording, 15 January 1998; Courvoisie interview.

³⁰ Dawson interview; Legare interview; Riggs interview; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 December 1996.

Shine's assimilation into the corps with a personal appearance inspection by General Harris marking the extent of Shine's interaction with Citadel authorities. As for Charles Foster, he introduced himself to Shine early in the school year, but never checked on him with any regularity.³²

Shine does not recall much racial animosity his first few days on campus, but admits that as a freshman, "you're treated lower than dirt anyway." As the year progressed, however, the bigoted attitudes of several cadets subjected him to more physical and psychological harassment than his white classmates encountered. Men in other battalions urged freshmen to alienate Shine and force him to leave. Others yelled racial slurs out their windows as Shine walked by. On several occasions, Shine returned from mess with shins bloodied where an upperclassman had been kicking him underneath the table. One night, some cadets poured fingernail polish remover in the shape of a cross in front of his room. They lit it, knocked on Shine's door, and scurried off.³³

According to Shine, his classmates' attitudes ranged from "supportive" to "outright racists." James Lockridge, an Ohio native, roomed with Shine for almost their entire Citadel career, and the two developed a lasting friendship. Shine benefited also from the fact that several K Company freshmen had come from military backgrounds and

³¹ Hoffmann interview.

³² Shine interview.

³³ *The Brigadier*, 23 September 1967; Joseph Shine, interview by author, tape recording, 20 December 1997; Stern interview; James Cassidy, interview by author, tape recording, 23 January 1998; Funderburk interview; Robert Vogel, interview by author, tape recording, 17 November 1997; Barrett interview; John Reid, interview by author, tape recording, 30 October 1997; James Lockridge, interview by author, tape recording, 26 January 1998; Douglas Rich, interview by author, tape recording, 21 January 1998; Samuel Jones, interview by author, tape recording, 16 November 1997; Reid interview; Joseph Shine, interview for WCSC News, 16 June 1997, Charleston, tape of interview in Shine's possession, hereafter cited as Shine interview for WCSC; *Charleston News and Courier*, 13 March 1987.

had attended integrated high schools. While those who disliked Shine avoided him, he formed close relationships with many of his peers.³⁴

Many of these bonds were forged in the fires of the fourth-class system. Shine struggled physically his freshman year, and when his shortcomings resulted in longer runs or extra “training” sessions, some classmates began questioning his motivation and complaining that he should have prepared himself better for plebe year. A few of these beliefs evolved into the perception that he received preferential treatment. However, rather than abandoning Shine to concentrate on their own survival, several of his classmates helped him meet the upperclassmen’s demands. One cadet noted that Shine “didn’t ask for any mercy from anybody,” and as perceptions of favoritism faded, his classmates rallied to his side. Referring to the trials of the fourth-class system, Shine asserted that “When people feel that you shared that experience with them and you’ve come through that experience with them, then they’re more inclined to accept you into the brotherhood.” Shine’s classmate Larry Gantt put it another way when he noted, “whether you were black or white, you both had the same goal; trying to get through there.” Gantt’s statement rings true for most cadets, but it bears repeating that, in many ways, the plebe experience differed for black and white cadets due largely to the racially charged overtones of the hazing Shine, Foster, and other African American cadets endured. It is doubtful that a white knob had ever been screamed at by Klan clad upperclassmen or had a cross burnt outside his door, but even if one had, the experience would not carry with it the same threatening historical connotations as it would for most

³⁴ Shine interview; Lockridge interview.

African-American cadets. One classmate noticed this, claiming that Shine “went through ten times more than we ever went through, both physically and emotionally.”³⁵

Shine’s energy, sense of humor, and intellect overshadowed his physical shortcomings. He earned academic honors, achieved the rank of cadet captain, served on regimental staff, received an Air Force scholarship and won recognition as an exemplary Air Force ROTC student. In his senior year, an incident at a local bar solidified his standing in the class of 1971. Under the headline “Rights Denied,” the editor of *The Brigadier*, James Lockridge, informed the corps that a local bar had refused to serve Shine because of his race. Earlier that week, Shine had entered Raben’s Tavern with a group of cadets. When he ordered a beer, the proprietor informed Shine that he would not serve him unless he moved to a back room. In response, the group of cadets walked out, and for the rest of the year, many members of the corps carried out an informal boycott of the bar. Lockridge vowed never to return until Raben’s Tavern learned that “black is just as beautiful as white.”³⁶

The incident drew the attention of Citadel alumni as well. A 1969 graduate blasted Lockridge for criticizing an establishment “which has been serving cadets for half a century.” The alumnus endorsed Raben’s as a place “where cadets are served with a smile and treated with special care” and “right or wrong, some people like to have a place where they can drink beer and talk about problems of the times without looking over their shoulder to see if they are offending the person behind them.” Other alumni wrote in

³⁵ Shine interview for WCSC; Fitzgerald interview; Vogel interview; Cassidy interview; Hoffmann interview; Reid interview; Rich interview; Lockridge interview; Funderburk interview; Stern interview; Shine interview; Claude Moore, Jr. interview by author, tape recording, 20 January 1998; Larry Gantt, interview by author, tape recording, 5 February 1998.

³⁶ *Brown*, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; 1971 Sphinx, 134, 143, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina; *The Brigadier*, 2 October 1970; Fitzgerald interview; Lockridge interview; Shine interview.

praising Lockridge and The Citadel. Neill Macaulay, a 1956 graduate, congratulated the cadets for striking “a blow for human decency.” One member of the class of 1971 called Raben’s refusal a “turning point” as the strong show of support by white cadets won over a few men who still harbored prejudices against Shine. Even Shine’s “chief antagonist” left Raben’s with the other cadets and joined in the boycott.³⁷

The graduation of Joseph Shine in May of 1971 marked another milestone in The Citadel’s history. While Charles Foster proved that a black man could survive at The Citadel, Shine proved that a black man could excel there. In a school with no black faculty members and few black administrators, Shine served as a role model for future African-American cadets. His hard work resulted in an exemplary cadet career and helped erode stereotypes. Like Foster, he won the acceptance of many men predisposed to reject him based on his race. This respect did not come suddenly or easily, but growing up in a segregated society, Shine had expected the cadets’ attitudes “to reflect society in general.” Overall, Shine approached his Citadel career believing if “you deal with people honestly and fairly and if they are human beings and can get beyond . . . the color of one’s skin then if they enjoy you as an individual, then they will like you.”³⁸

Shine’s most tangible legacy proved to be the African-American studies group that he helped to found at The Citadel. While many school officials questioned the necessity of such an organization, Shine worked hard to obtain a charter. He overcame the administration’s obstinacy and the Afro-American Studies Club held its first meeting on February 9, 1971. The club was open to all students, and aimed to promote “dialogue between black and white cadets and to introduce features which will promote

³⁷ *The Brigadier*, 23 October 1970, 13 November 1970; Vogel interview.

³⁸ Lockridge interview; Stern interview; Shine interview.

understanding.” As the number of African-American cadets at The Citadel grew, the society provided a forum for black freshmen and upperclassmen to relay shared experiences and to air grievances. In later years, it became a vehicle through which black cadets discussed and sought redress for detrimental school policies. This activism did not endear the group to white cadets or Citadel officials. The members’ suggestions were often ignored as Citadel officials consistently refused to take a proactive role in the school’s integration.³⁹

In September 1968, General Harris alerted the Board of Visitors to a pending civil rights inspection by the federal government and outlined the school’s policies regarding the awarding of scholarships and the recruitment and acceptance of minority students. He documented the number of African-Americans in The Citadel’s Evening and Summer School, and after reviewing HEW reports and civil rights legislation, Harris concluded that The Citadel had fulfilled the federal government’s basic requirements concerning integration. Rather than use the investigation as an opportunity to address and correct flawed policies, the administration delivered a perfunctory assessment of the college’s obligations to its students. This attitude resulted in turmoil and controversy as black enrollment increased. Even moderate efforts to raise the school’s racial awareness faced resistance from various forces within The Citadel, and the black members of the class of 1973 bore the brunt of the backlash.⁴⁰

³⁹ Lockridge interview; Shine interview; Larry Ferguson, interview by author, tape recording, 23 January 1998; *The Brigadier*, 5 February 1971; Shine interview; Patrick Gilliard, interview by author, tape recording, 13 December 1997; Ken Feaster, interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1998; Keith Jones, interview by author, tape recording, 9 January 1998; George Graham, interview by author, tape recording, 28 January 1998; Herbert Legare, interview by author, tape recording, 15 January 1998; Norman Seabrooks, interview by author, tape recording, 17 October 1997; Reginald Sealey, interview by author, tape recording, 18 October 1997, hereafter cited as Sealey interview.

⁴⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 September 1968, documents 14 and 15.

Nine African-American students entered The Citadel in 1969, and six of these eventually graduated. The three who did not resigned as upperclassmen, not during their freshman year.⁴¹ One of the six, Herbert Legare, grew up in Charleston and entertained thoughts of a military career. The Citadel's academic and military reputation appealed to him, and in the summer of 1969, he reported to first battalion, D Company. Norman Seabrooks arrived from Florida as The Citadel's first African-American scholarship athlete. George Graham was a self-described "hot-headed kid" from South Carolina who sought the discipline of a Citadel education. Larry Ferguson was a Charleston native who earned a full academic scholarship to the college. When he reported to Regimental Band Company, he fulfilled his father's wish of having a son integrate The Citadel.⁴²

While The Citadel's fourth-class system intensified the racial abuse some of these men endured, it also helped erode stereotypes held by both black and white cadets. As a freshman, Legare encountered some racial hostility, but overall he spoke positively of his relationships with his classmates whose attitudes seemed to range from acceptance to avoidance. Ferguson was subjected to racial slurs throughout his first year, and in an environment where keeping a low profile is definitely preferable, he would later gain a degree of notoriety as his efforts to heighten the administration's awareness of racial injustices earned him the reputation as a "militant radical." Ferguson remembered that while many of his white classmates avoided or ignored him, a few encouraged and helped

⁴¹ No African-American students graduated in the class of 1972. An African American named Nathaniel Addison entered with the class of 1972, but he resigned prior to graduating. The author was unable to contact these men.

⁴² Legare interview, Seabrooks interview, Graham interview, Ferguson interview.

him. This select group of supportive individuals reminded Ferguson that the entire corps was not against him even if it sometimes seemed that way.⁴³

From the moment George Graham arrived on campus, he “understood one thing early on, there were a lot of people . . . that did not want me there.” White cadets screamed racial epithets at him, and one junior questioned African Americans’ right to come to “his school.” A sophomore required Graham to sleep with a Confederate flag to prove he belonged at The Citadel. Another upperclassman declared Graham “culturally deprived” and made him eat cottage cheese to broaden his experiences. One night, a white cadet burst into Graham’s room and shouted that The Citadel “was built with the blood of his ancestors and the audacity of a nigger to go there was unbelievable to him.” Two upperclassmen approached Graham and claimed the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare assigned them to keep tabs on him. They said if he witnessed any racist acts, he should contact them immediately. Soon afterwards, a cadet walked behind Graham and threatened to run him out of school, but when Graham reported the incident, the two “agents” forced him to run in place, do push-ups, and hold a fourteen-pound rifle out at arms length. Graham fared little better with his roommate as the two men butted heads over who would get the top bunk with both equally determined not to let a black man or white man sleep above him.⁴⁴

Graham had grown up in a predominantly black environment, and both his limited exposure to white people and the racism he encountered made him suspicious of upperclassmen as well as other freshmen. Eventually he understood that his classmates “were just like me, they were having a unique experience. They had never really been

⁴³ Legare interview, Seabrooks interview, Ferguson interview, Kennedy interview.

⁴⁴ Graham interview.

around a black person. I had never really been around a white person in close quarters.” When Graham saw another freshman faint from exhaustion, he broke ranks to help him. While this outraged the training cadre, his classmates noticed and appreciated it. Once white cadets realized that Graham lacked “horns and a tail,” they formed friendships based on character and ability, not skin color. Later that year, when a local bar refused to serve Graham, his white companions walked out.⁴⁵

With increased awareness and knowledge, black and white cadets learned to judge others based on personal qualities rather than racial stereotypes. This shift came gradually however, and throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, black students suffered racial affronts. At a home football game between The Citadel and George Washington University, the opposing team’s African-American quarterback wreaked havoc on The Citadel’s defense. Frustrated white cadets yelled “get the nigger” until their classmates quieted them down. In 1968, a *Brigadier* article blamed the unrest following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. on the opportunist “seeking revenge on ‘whitey’ to whom he owed money”⁴⁶

Offensive articles such as these faded with the increased enrollment of African-American cadets and a heightened activism within the student body. Unhappy with the administration and benefiting from the increased interaction between white and black cadets, the corps worked to improve campus race relations through education and communication. An article in the March 7, 1970, edition of *The Brigadier* asked black cadets, “Is The Citadel Biased?” Describing how African-Americans adjusted to life on an overwhelmingly white campus, the interviewees credited The Citadel’s military

⁴⁵ Legare interview; Seabrooks interview; Ferguson interview; Graham interview.

⁴⁶ Barrett interview; *The Brigadier*, 11 May 1968.

environment and small student body for facilitating the formation of relationships across racial lines.⁴⁷

The initiation of a black studies program and the incorporation of black history into courses taught by the faculty became a major issue for *The Brigadier*. The editor ran an article on a University of South Carolina professor who taught a course entitled “the Negro in American history,” and the newspaper volunteered to gauge the corps’ interest in instituting a black studies group and to see whether the school had sufficient resources to support the endeavor. Declaring that “now is the time to search our own campus for a way to eradicate interracial misunderstandings which thrive on prejudicial ignorance,” the cadets solicited opinions from faculty members and quoted one Citadel professor who stressed that “efforts should be made to get more about the black man into American history courses.”⁴⁸

Outside The Citadel’s gates, cadets denounced the continued racist policies of some of Charleston’s businesses. When forty students from South Carolina State and The Citadel held an informal debate on race and racism, cadets espoused the virtues of communication in alleviating racial tensions. A year later, Citadel cadets served in the South Carolina student legislature that passed a resolution condemning discrimination and urging the state to take a firm stand in support of civil rights.⁴⁹

Meanwhile, Citadel officials plodded forward with a stated goal of “conservative progress” and “change where change is desirable and has been proven necessary.” They tempered this already modest plan by maintaining a “faithful adherence to the standards and the codes that have long sustained this college and its graduates.” In April 1970,

⁴⁷ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970.

⁴⁸ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970, 1 May 1970, 8 May 1970.

HEW officials conducted a civil rights inspection to insure The Citadel's adherence to federal guidelines. The agents evaluated the school's efforts to attract African-American students and involve them in every aspect of Citadel life. They found that black cadets at The Citadel enjoyed many of the same privileges and opportunities as their white peers, but that the school failed to offer African-American students "a feeling of belonging or being a part of the college." The absence of black faculty members and administrators meant that black cadets had few opportunities to discuss sensitive racial matters with a sympathetic older person. Furthermore, the school needed to compensate for the extreme numerical discrepancy between black and white students by enacting "an affirmative action program to begin to disestablish past patterns of racial segregation." The inspectors noted that few pictures of black students appeared in Citadel films, brochures, or other publications, and they suggested addressing this oversight to remedy the enrollment disparities.⁵⁰

General Harris concurred with many of the inspectors' proposals, pointing out that the school had either already implemented the changes or planned to do so in the near future. He claimed the institution awarded financial assistance on a non-discriminatory basis and that school activities remained open to all cadets. When outlining his reply to the Board of Visitors, however, Harris concluded "we should not turn The Citadel into a HEW . . . instrument of social reform." He opposed any measure "to build up the population of any specific ethnic group," and ignoring the cadets' calls for an increased focus on African-American history, he decided that because the report

⁴⁹ *Charleston News and Courier*, 3 February 1969; *The Brigadier*, 1 May 1970.

⁵⁰ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 26 September 1970; "Self-Study," I-7; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 29 May 1970, letter from Dewey E. Dodds to Hugh Harris, 22 April 1970, documents 335-340.

made no mention of black studies, “we should not announce our intent on this at this time.”⁵¹

Certain school-sponsored events offer more evidence that the school had failed to integrate socially. During the school year, the administration held formal tea dances and made attendance mandatory for freshmen. College officials arranged for female students from nearby schools to provide companionship for the awkward and unrefined cadets, and as the freshmen in the class of 1973 ambled in, they realized the school had only invited white women. Since attendance was required, the black cadets spent the entire time standing around and drinking punch in excruciatingly uncomfortable conditions. This oversight left a lasting impression on them. As Norman Seabrooks observed, “You can’t take a young black man in 1969, force him to go to a tea dance and then not have anyone for him to dance with.”⁵²

The scene repeated itself the next year during the knobs’ annual trip to The Citadel beach house. College officials again recruited only white women to accompany the cadets, and when the last female emerged from the bus, several white students recognized their black friends’ uneasiness and abandoned the women in favor of their classmates.⁵³

The freshman class of 1970 entered under a new president, Major General James W. Duckett, but the scarcity of black students at The Citadel made it easier for new personnel to keep making the same mistakes. Only fourteen African-American cadets enrolled over the next two years; in a student body of 1,817, about one percent were

⁵¹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 May 1970, Harris’s “Comments For Board of Visitors on Civil Rights Report,” 2 May 1970, documents 341-342.

⁵² Legare interview; Ferguson interview; Sealey interview; Seabrooks interview.

⁵³ Sealey interview.

black. A few of these cadets came from Charleston, and almost all had grown up in South Carolina. Hometown alumni and the prestige and challenge of a Citadel education attracted some, while others were enticed with scholarships.⁵⁴

As with all cadets, their experiences differed. Ken Feaster played baseball and, years later, he would become the first African-American Citadel graduate to attain the rank of colonel. He remembered encountering little overt racism, but conceded the difficulty of distinguishing racial hatred from freshman abuse. John McDowell recalls a couple of isolated racial confrontations, but for the most part, “we got our company assignments, got our room assignments and we continued to march at that point.” McDowell drew upon his white classmates for support and vice versa, but he does remember kicking a white cadet who uttered a racial slur in his presence.⁵⁵

Reginald Sealey was the first African-American in Hotel Company and even though he felt isolated at times, he depended upon his classmates and they relied on him. Keith Jones followed Sealey as the second black member of Hotel Company, and he recalled a few times when upperclassmen singled him out due to his race. One Friday afternoon, a sophomore entered Jones’s room and ordered him to perform a variety of arduous physical activities. The cadet claimed that he was trying to overcome his animosities towards African Americans, but blamed Sealey and Jones for reinforcing his past prejudices. This confusing monologue ended after an hour, and Jones reported the

⁵⁴ Charleston *News and Courier*, 22 November 1991; *The State*, 22 November 1991; Self-Study,” III-84; Feaster interview; John McDowell, interview by author, tape recording, 21 January 1998; Sealey interview; Keith Jones interview; Gilliard interview.

⁵⁵ Feaster interview; John McDowell, interview by author, tape recording, 21 January 1998.

incident to Sealey. Cadet officers handled the situation within the company, but the offenders received light punishments.⁵⁶

In his first year, Patrick Gilliard faced a terrifying and dangerous situation in Alpha Company. He encountered racial resentment from his first day on campus, but as one of the first black Charlestonians to integrate the city's public schools, he expected such confrontations. One night, a group of cadets pulled Gilliard from his bed and led him to an upperclassman's room. They blindfolded him, put him on top of a chair and tied a noose around his neck. While screaming threats and racial slurs, they looped the noose over an exposed pipe in the ceiling, but left the end unsecured. When they pulled the chair out from under him, Gilliard suffered "the longest second of my life." Rather than report the incident to school authorities, Gilliard told his cousin, a junior cadet in an adjacent company, who contacted other African-American cadets. These men visited the A Company commander and the cadets involved to make sure this incident would not be repeated. Gilliard's assailants were punished, but details of the incident never reached beyond the battalion tactical officer. By keeping the news of this assault at the company and battalion level, Gilliard earned the respect of the cadets in his company, including a few of his tormentors. As freshmen year progressed, Gilliard formed close bonds with his classmates. Later that semester, a group of cadets left a bar in protest after the proprietor refused to serve Gilliard.⁵⁷

In the classroom, the black cadets' relationship with the faculty varied according to the teacher and sometimes according to the subject. Norman Seabrooks appreciated the fact that his professors challenged him and allowed him to question their opinions.

⁵⁶ Sealey interview; Keith Jones interview.

⁵⁷ Keith Jones interview; Patrick Gilliard interview.

On the other hand, some African Americans believed that certain professors held black students to a higher standard while other teachers were outright racist. When George Graham called a professor on the phone to protest a grade, the instructor advised him “not to sound like a black man” because it hurt his chances of changing the professor’s mind. A recurring problem faced by black cadets stemmed from the fact that their classes rarely contained more than one African-American. When Ken Feaster disagreed with a professor’s portrayal of slavery, he neither expected nor received support from other white students.⁵⁸

Black cadets’ attitudes toward Citadel alumni also differed from those of their white peers. Citadel graduates typically maintain fierce loyalties to the school and play large roles in the careers of cadets. They return often for football games or special weekend celebrations and delight in reliving past exploits and telling cadets “how hard it was when I was a knob.” The African-American cadets’ relationship with white alumni lacked this spontaneous camaraderie, but they formed ties with individuals who knew them previously or with whom they shared common experiences. Graham admits that most alumni ignored him, while a hometown alumnus helped Reginald Sealey raise enough money to attend The Citadel.⁵⁹

Outside The Citadel’s gates, the sight of African-American cadets elicited mixed responses from white observers. Joseph Shine noticed some stares, “but no one really approached me one way or the other.” Whatever their reception in the white community, African-American cadets enjoyed heroic status among black Charlestonians. These men

⁵⁸ McDowell interview; Seabrooks interview; Graham interview; Legare interview; Keith Jones interview; Ferguson interview; Sealey interview; Feaster interview.

⁵⁹ McDowell interview; Legare interview; Ferguson interview; Jones interview; Gilliard interview; Graham interview; Feaster interview; Sealey interview.

and women took a great deal of pride in finally seeing African Americans in Citadel uniforms, and they showed their appreciation regularly. Seabrooks remembers fondly that the “black community in Charleston took me under its wing because they wanted to make sure the first black Citadel football player, who was also a good player, did not leave town because he was homesick.” In addition, African-American cadets valued the freedom to relax offered by the black community. In this environment, they could discard their uniforms with little chance of getting caught.⁶⁰

The African-American cadets’ relationship with the black workers on The Citadel campus mirrored their ties with black Charlestonians. Members of the wait staff and other school employees helped the cadets in any way they could. They brought the cadets extra food and asked frequently about their progress. The workers’ kind and appreciative behavior made it especially disturbing when black cadets heard white students utter derogatory racial remarks and behave disrespectfully towards the predominately black janitorial and wait staff.⁶¹

Problems such as these reinforced the African-American cadets’ status as outsiders. While family and friends tried to prepare black cadets for whatever difficulties they might face, once inside The Citadel’s gates, their small number and the institution’s insular nature forced them to rely on one another. Both Foster and Shine introduced themselves to Seabrooks early in his freshman year and offered advice on surviving the fourth class system. Foster also made sure that Legare, Ferguson, and Graham knew his room number, and Shine would stop them periodically on the way to class. Black cadets from the classes of 1973, 1974, and 1975 continued this practice by

⁶⁰ Shine interview; Feaster interview; Graham interview; Legare interview; Feaster interview; Jones interview; Ferguson interview; Seabrooks interview; McDowell interview.

frequently stopping each other on campus to talk to and reassure one another. However, they maintained the proper relationship while gaining the new cadets' trust. John McDowell's acquaintance with Larry Ferguson began when Ferguson "pulled me to the side, read me the riot act," and then offered encouragement. McDowell's introduction to Reginald Sealey also evoked few images of communal harmony. McDowell admits that "I was impressed seeing a black upperclassman on the cadre, and I guess I looked at him a little too long. And he let me know it." While Keith Jones suffered through the cadre's yelling and screaming, Sealey stepped in front of him and Jones thought, "Thank God a black guy." Jones retracted this expression of relief when Sealey continued the abuse. While respecting the rules governing fraternization between upperclassmen and freshmen, black upperclassmen tried "to make The Citadel a place that [African-American freshmen] can come and feel like they have an upperclassmen looking out for them."⁶²

Knowing that the entire school monitored their actions, black cadets pushed each other to excel. George Graham realized that "the black cadets were going to have be twice as good" as white cadets, but they repeatedly met the higher standards. Oftentimes, the military and academic successes of the African-American cadets aroused jealousies among some of their white contemporaries. Even the standard assignment of corporal and sergeant rank drew criticism. However, the cadets proved worthy recipients of the accolades. In addition to earning South Carolina Football Player of the Year honors, Norman Seabrooks served as captain of the football team and attained the rank of cadet officer. Reginald Sealey helped train incoming freshman, and as a senior, he commanded

⁶¹ Seabrooks interview; Shine interview; Gilliard interview; Feaster interview; Legare interview.

a platoon. As a cadet sergeant, his squad won The Citadel's drill competition. George Graham was third battalion adjutant, and twice made the Commandant's Distinguished Service List. Two of Graham's more impressive and revealing accomplishments were his election to The Citadel's Honor Committee and his selection as a Summerall Guard; both are peer elected groups steeped in Citadel tradition.⁶³

In 1971, a controversy erupted that tested the strength of African-American cadets collectively and individually. At an institution that prided itself on firing the first shots of the Civil War, "Dixie" and the Confederate battle flag played large roles in everyday life. "Dixie" served as The Citadel's unofficial fight song, and the waving of the Confederate flag and the playing of "Dixie" figured prominently in sporting events. Members of the Afro-American Society pointed to the "discomfort black cadets felt every time the school band struck up 'Dixie,'" and as freshmen, many African-Americans sang the song out of fear. As they grew more accustomed to Citadel life and their relationships with other cadets, they refused to sing. Seabrooks disliked hearing "Dixie" as a fight song, and he would sit down or walk away when he heard the tune. While captain of the football team, he would leave the locker room early and step on the field before the band started playing.⁶⁴

These silent protests angered many white students, but those closest to the black cadets tried to sympathize. In return, Seabrooks and the other black cadets recognized the white cadets' affection for the tune, although it frustrated them when whites refused to acknowledge that black and white southerners drew from different historical

⁶² Graham interview; Keith Jones interview; Feaster interview; Legare interview; Shine interview; McDowell interview; Gilliard interview; Sealey interview; Seabrooks interview; Ferguson interview.

experiences. When it came to “Dixie,” Seabrooks tried to explain, “There is never going to be a place where I am going to be comfortable hearing it, or singing it, or feeling good about it.”⁶⁵

Each cadet encountered resistance for his decision not to sing or play the song, but Larry Ferguson’s refusal attracted the most attention and drew the most severe backlash. As a freshman in the Regimental Band, Ferguson played “Dixie” for fear of upperclass retribution. As a sophomore, he shared his discomfort over the song with some of his black classmates, and resolved to quit playing the tune regardless of the consequences. The group agreed that “once [Ferguson] made his personal decision not to play, all of us supported him in that.”⁶⁶

Ferguson’s protest infuriated white cadets and school officials. White students asked their black classmates “What’s Ferguson’s problem?” The band director threatened to kick him out of the company, and some school officials warned him that he could lose his scholarship. Ferguson’s duties as president of the Afro-American Society combined with his stance against the school’s fight song solidified his reputation as a “troublemaker.” Ferguson received a company transfer, but his reputation followed him. Facing constant criticism and harassment, he contemplated leaving, but his family and friends convinced him to stay.⁶⁷

Before the “Dixie” controversy died out, the black cadets found themselves embroiled in another, more intense, struggle over the Confederate battle flag. On

⁶³ Seabrooks interview; Ferguson interview; Reginald Sealey, interview by author, tape recording, 2 February 1998; Graham interview; McDowell interview; Gilliard interview; Legare interview; Keith Jones interview; Feaster interview; 1973 *Sphinx*, 285, 300; 1974 *Sphinx*, 323.

⁶⁴ Gilliard interview; Seabrooks interview.

⁶⁵ Graham interview; Seabrooks interview.

⁶⁶ Ferguson interview; Graham interview.

⁶⁷ Ferguson interview; Graham interview; Seabrooks interview; Kennedy interview.

numerous occasions, the Afro-American Society had requested that school officials ban the waving of the flag at Citadel football games. When these pleas went unheeded, the cadets took matters into their own hands.⁶⁸

Prior to the Illinois State football game, the black cadets constructed their own banner featuring a black fist crushing a Confederate flag. Members of the Afro-American Society often brought children from a local orphanage to football games, and because they sat with the children, the black cadets faced the rest of the corps. When The Citadel scored and the white cadets began waving the battle flag, the black cadets hoisted their banner. Displaying a remarkable flair for understatement, Graham admitted that their flag “excited some problems.” Ferguson describes their action “as something that was totally reactionary to the situation that we felt we were involved in.”⁶⁹

Some white members of the corps reacted with more restraint than might be expected. In an article for *The Brigadier*, one cadet outlined his opposition to the black cadets’ behavior. Upon first seeing their banner, he expressed outrage “at the obvious abuse of our heritage.” After giving the matter more thought, however, the author confessed that the flag did not remind him of the Civil War, but of the fact that The Citadel had scored and general leave might be extended until two a.m. He claimed the flag symbolized his pride in The Citadel, and he hoped that future shows of protest would not “visibly abuse the South, but . . . show the spirit which binds our institution and strengthens our future.”⁷⁰

While a few white cadets tried to sympathize with the black cadets’ plight, others reacted vindictively. Due to Ferguson’s earlier notoriety, white cadets singled him out.

⁶⁸ Keith Jones interview; Graham interview; Feaster interview; Ferguson interview.

⁶⁹ Graham interview; Ferguson interview; Jones interview; *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1971.

He and his roommate returned one night to find their room trashed, racial threats painted on the walls, their books shredded, and a doll hung from the ceiling by a noose. An inquiry failed to uncover the culprits, and the incident drew the black cadets closer. They believed that “if they could do Ferguson the way they did him, then we weren’t far behind.”⁷¹

Soon after the Illinois State game, General Duckett upset many white cadets by banning the waving of all flags at Citadel athletic events. Their denunciations of this decision reveal that although the makeup of the corps had changed, many cadets’ image of the ideal Citadel man had not. One white cadet cried “The Confederate flag must return to being the symbol of the spirit of The Citadel Man and the Corps of Cadets.” He called the flag a symbol of the “American way” and echoing Richard Nixon, urged the “great silent majority of cadets” to refuse to allow “a proud tradition to be suppressed by the wishes of a few.” The author cited the thirty-nine Citadel graduates who died “for a cause in which they dearly believed; states rights and the Southern way of life, not slavery as so many are led to believe.” Other white students expressed similar opinions with one announcing “our history lies in the South and in the Confederacy, and we should be proud of that for the simple reason that Citadel cadets fought for what they felt was right and were not ashamed of it.” Several cadets coupled this vision of the Confederacy with a lily white assessment of the flag’s meaning and impact. Ignoring the opinions of Seabrooks and other black students, one claimed the banner “instills a great deal of pride in the Corps of Cadets,” while another argued that “the Confederate Flag has become a symbol of the spirit of the Corps, not a symbol of prejudice or oppression as some people

⁷⁰ *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1971.

⁷¹ Graham interview; Legare interview; Ferguson interview.

would tend to believe.” Certainly, not all white cadets felt this way as evidenced by a letter two seniors wrote to the to *The Brigadier* following a home football game in which they blasted the corps and members of the Band for antagonizing the other team’s African-American players and cheerleaders by repeatedly playing and singing “Dixie.”⁷²

Letters from those outside The Citadel convey just how adamantly some people refused to consider the black cadets’ viewpoint. Calling the ban “nonsense,” a 1937 alumnus declared that black cadets “should accept the traditions of The Citadel as they have developed over the years.” The General Micah Jenkins Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans called the waving of the flag at football games “a long standing corps’ tradition,” adding The Citadel has “much to be proud of and thankful for – and nothing to be ashamed of or to hide.”⁷³

In 1972, a committee of Citadel faculty and administrators conducted a comprehensive examination of the college and found that black cadets took issue with many aspects of Citadel life beyond a preoccupation with the “Confederate Legend.” Their grievances included the college’s reluctance to recruit black students, the barbers’ inability to cut black cadets’ hair properly, the absence of black speakers at Citadel functions, the belief that many racial incidents went unpunished, and the faculty’s tendency to overlook African Americans’ contributions to American history. These problems contributed to a sense of neglect and a lack of belonging among African-American cadets.⁷⁴

⁷² *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1971, 29 September 1972, 8 December 1972, 5 October 1973, 22 February 1974.

⁷³ *The Brigadier*, 2 February 1973, 19 April 1974.

⁷⁴ “Self-Study,” VII-29, VII-30, VII-31.

Several of the examiners' responses to these concerns come across as hostile. Regarding the complaint about the "Confederate Legend," the panel claimed that society's "current preoccupation with the influence of slavery is responsible for the extreme unpopularity of anything associated with the Confederacy." They questioned the Confederate flag's use as a "football standard," but ended the discussion with "neither the black nor white cadet can presume to sit in judgment upon the past, nor can he expect the school to repudiate its heritage." The study dismissed the indictment of the school's recruiting policies quickly, saying "there is no evidence that blacks are neglected in the recruiting program," but at the same time acknowledging that "blacks show some reluctance to come to The Citadel as cadets." It attributed the complaint about the barbers to a corps wide disgruntlement with short hair. The reviewers conceded the need for more African-American guest lecturers, but advised that the speaker's expertise should not be limited to the "narrow, however important, field" of civil rights. They recommended that professors emphasize the social and cultural contributions of African Americans without "distorting their subject."⁷⁵

The portion of the study dealing with campus race relations concluded, "it is currently fashionable among blacks – young blacks in particular – to become dissenters. While this circumstance may be perfectly understandable, it is not necessarily a positive influence." With this in mind, the committee treated most of the black students' requests as pleas for special treatment, particularly their proposal that an African American serve on The Citadel's Presidential Advisory Committee. The panel rejected this idea with the argument that "absolute equality [should] prevail with regard to race; special favors should be granted neither to blacks nor whites." Black cadets might have responded that

⁷⁵ Ibid., VII-30, VII-31.

placing an African American on the Committee would have provided the school with a new and much-needed perspective on their feelings and ideas and that they did not ask for special treatment, merely a voice.⁷⁶

A close examination of The Citadel's integration reveals how white apathy, resentment, and stubbornness thwarted the promise of desegregation. With the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision of 1954, the United States Supreme Court had looked to broaden African-Americans' economic and social opportunities while at the same time lessen racial prejudices by bringing whites and blacks into closer contact. As J. Harvie Wilkinson points out in *From Brown to Bakke*, the Justices hoped their ruling would establish a foundation where young whites "would come to see blacks as classmates, as peers, and as friends. And blacks in turn would learn not to bow the head and doff the hat, but to compete in terms of equality and respect." Reed Sarratt acknowledges, however, that the Court's decision "changed the law, but it did not change the thoughts and feelings of vast numbers of white Southerners." Integration did not mean acceptance and it certainly did not guarantee equality. At The Citadel, school officials regarded integration simply as the enrollment and retention of African-American students, and by taking no responsibility for ushering blacks into the "institutional life" of the college, they allowed racism to fester within the student body and eventually erupt as overt exhibitions of racial hostility.⁷⁷

Still, The Citadel provided a unique testing ground for the theory that school desegregation could bring blacks and whites physically, socially, and ideologically

⁷⁶ Ibid., VII-30, VII-31.

⁷⁷ Numan Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), 159; J. Harvie Wilkinson, III, *From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration, 1954-1978*

closer. It could be argued that the institution's all-male environment lessened racial tensions, while, at the same time, the pervasive emphasis on manliness heightened the frustrations of black cadets. Writer W.J. Cash placed white women at the center of the white South's "proto-dorian ideal," and from the Populist movement to blacks' struggles for voting rights to school desegregation, white male southerners vowed to protect "their women" from black men. At tea dances, the presence of white women exacerbated racial divisions, but during the rest of the year the absence of females eliminated a potential source of strife.⁷⁸

Prior to integrating, Citadel personnel had yoked the college's value to its production of men. While it could be argued that whiteness was a presumed attribute of Citadel men, this was not stated explicitly. Many cadets and administrators opposed desegregation, but the admission of black men posed no direct challenge to the school's primary purpose. Along these same lines, a common refrain among civil rights activists was that segregation had emasculated African-American males. Echoing the sentiments from his famous eulogy for Malcolm X, Ossie Davis attributed the slain civil rights leader's popularity to the fact that "*Malcolm was a man!*" and that he had inspired other black males to assert their own bold, aggressive masculinity. Attending The Citadel offered black cadets an opportunity to do the same, since, according to college brochures, officials, and students, graduating from the school affirmed one's manhood. These same

(New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 42; C. Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, 3rd edition (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), 251; Sarratt, *Ordeal of Desegregation*, viii.
⁷⁸ Bartley, *The New South*, 159; Wilkinson, *From Brown to Bakke*, 42, 44; W.J. Cash, *The Mind of The South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1941; reprint, New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 85-87, 115-17, 170; James C. Cobb, *The Most Southern Place on Earth: The Mississippi Delta and the Roots of Regional Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 238; Feaster interview.

promises must have made it especially grating to African-Americans when their acceptance into The Citadel “brotherhood” was qualified at best.⁷⁹

Certainly, the military environment and physical rigors of the fourth-class system increased the threat of violent racial confrontations. While those familiar with The Citadel may dismiss some of the hazing that black cadets suffered as “part of the system,” many of the attacks betray a decidedly racist edge. The men who ran at Foster dressed in sheets, the burning cross on Shine’s door, and the mock lynching of Patrick Gilliard were not merely byproducts of an impartial fourth class system designed to test the limits of these new plebes. They were historically specific acts of racial terror rooted in the region’s not too distant past.

On the other hand, however, certain tribulations helped erode racial barriers and prompted the reevaluation of racist attitudes founded on stereotypes and unfamiliarity. While the first African-American students at Clemson, the University of South Carolina, the University of Georgia, and the service academies faced nearly complete ostracism from their white classmates, The Citadel thrust blacks and whites into a hostile environment that forced them to work together to survive. The endless number of shirt tucks, inspections, “sweat parties,” and training runs eroded racial barriers, prompted the reevaluation of certain racial attitudes, and provided the cadets with common experiences upon which relationships based on trust and ability, not skin color, could be built.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Malcolm X, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, as told to Alex Haley (New York: Ballantine Books, 1973), 457-460

⁸⁰ Daniel *Lost Revolutions*, 274; Henry Flipper, West Point’s first African-American cadet, recorded his experiences in *The Colored Cadet at West Point: Autobiography of Lieutenant Henry Ossian Flipper* (New York: Homer Lee and Company, 1878; reprint, New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1968). Briefer accounts may be found in Stephen Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1966), 231-34; Thomas J. Fleming, *West Point: The Men and Times of the United States Military Academy* (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc.), 213-27. Jack Sweetman, *The United States Naval Academy: An Illustrated History* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1979), 104-105;

Benefiting from this interaction and facing an obstinate and indifferent administration, certain members of the corps displayed the leadership lacking among Citadel officials by challenging outdated and unfair policies. While other state schools developed elaborate plans to insure that they desegregated peacefully, responsibility for The Citadel's integration fell largely upon the young college students themselves. Bill Riggs understood that "there are a lot of arguments some people have about giving young men and women at that age such responsibility over the lives of others. But to me, that is what The [Citadel] system is about, to give that opportunity."⁸¹

While African-American cadets formed meaningful relationships with several of their white peers, Citadel authorities fostered a sense of isolation among black students by taking a reactive rather than proactive approach to integration. Many Citadel graduates commend school officials for not making a big production out of the college's integration with one alumnus claiming that "it was so uneventful and so unremarkable that it almost doesn't make a very interesting story." Another remarked that the "school was still so white, nobody noticed," and both these statements reveal the source of much of the black cadets' frustrations and angst. For them, the integration of The Citadel was interesting, remarkable, and, in many cases, disconcerting. By failing to impress upon white cadets the social and cultural significance of integration, Citadel administrators made the black cadets' journey that much harder. A classmate of Joseph Shine rated school officials' performance as "damn poor," noting the student body "was not

Riggs interview; Robert A. Pratt, *We Shall Not Be Moved: The Desegregation of the University of Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 115; Lesesne, *University of South Carolina*, 147-148; Cox, "Year of Decision," 43-44.

⁸¹ Riggs interview.

sensitized to what desegregation would bring.” Keith Jones agreed, adding “You need to know you don’t say certain things to certain people.”⁸²

From its inception, The Citadel had been geared to serve the needs of white society, and as the makeup of the student body changed the school needed to reevaluate its procedures and adapt to a rapidly changing society, for its own sake as well as that of its students. From the outset, however, college officials neglected the fundamental needs of black men, made few allowances for cultural differences between black and white students, and let the minimum requirements of the federal government determine their commitment to integration. A large number of white cadets continued to act in the “traditional” ways with which they were comfortable and secure, regardless of the opinions and misgivings of the newest members of the so-called “Citadel family.” As a result, instead of developing intellectual and emotional attachments to their alma mater, many black cadets found themselves alienated and relegated to the school’s periphery.

Years later, many African-American alumni admit that they never felt truly welcome or a part of The Citadel. George Graham remembered “Whites were part of this big community, and blacks were standing at the door knocking, saying please let me in, please let me in.” Charlayne Hunter-Gault, one of the first African Americans to attend the University of Georgia, articulated the frustrations of several African-American Citadel alumni when, referring to her own alma mater, she remarked, “I don’t think I will ever make peace with that institution until black students and professors there are as comfortable as whites are.” Over the next few decades, Citadel officials made few steps

⁸² Gray interview; Hoffmann interview; Barrett interview; Fitzgerald interview; Lockridge interview; Gantt interview; Cassidy interview; Kennedy interview; Rich interview; Bagnal interview; Vogel interview; Jones interview; Legare interview; Short interview; Banner interview; Jenkinson interview; Riggs interview; Bozeman interview.

in this direction, thereby reassuring many people that the idealized Citadel man remained as white as ever.⁸³

⁸³ Seabrooks interview; Keith Jones interview; Legare interview; Feaster interview; Ferguson interview; Graham interview; Pratt, *Moved*, 156, 120-122.

CHAPTER FOUR: “AN OASIS OF ORDER”

A few hours before dawn in the spring of 1970, a car passed through Lesesne Gate and entered The Citadel. The driver was a former cadet who had resigned earlier in the school year for personal reasons. The young man still lived in the Charleston area, however, and kept in close contact with his cadet friends. Beside him sat a stack of papers with *The Vigil* emblazoned across the top of each sheet. For several months, the former cadet and two of his friends from the senior class had collaborated and produced *The Vigil*, an underground publication exposing the injustices, inequities, and censorship that plagued The Citadel's campus.

After passing the guardhouse, the vehicle turned right onto the Avenue of Remembrance, so named in honor of American soldiers who had died while serving their country. Then, as now, first year cadets had to walk in the gutters along the Avenue, a tradition that not only reminded freshmen of their lowly position among the cadet corps, but reminded all cadets of the sacrifices made by United States servicemen.

After passing the library and Summerall Chapel, the car stopped at the intersection of Jenkins Avenue and the Avenue of Remembrance. On the right stood Mark Clark Hall, the relatively new student activities building, and across the street sat Jenkins Hall. The latter building contained the Commandant's Office and the offices of the active duty military personnel who taught ROTC courses and oversaw the operations of the eighteen cadet companies. By 1970, many cadets frequently and blatantly

challenged the wisdom and authority of this “tyrannical” oligarchy of majors, colonels, and captains.

After reaching the end of Jenkins Avenue, the driver turned left and passed in front of the four barracks which housed the corps of cadets. The driver stopped in front of each battalion, reached over into the passenger seat, and quietly unloaded the third and last installment of *The Vigil*. When the cadets awoke for the 6:30 breakfast formation, they would take copies of the unauthorized publication and read allegations about the regular student newspaper’s reluctance to defend students’ interests and the administration’s one-sided and distorted evaluations of events occurring outside The Citadel’s gates. They would see complaints about the poor quality of mess hall food and the double standard between cadet officers and cadet privates. The intrigue, rebelliousness, and mystery surrounding *The Vigil* fascinated many cadets, and they welcomed each edition. These same qualities appalled cadet officers and the more militarily inclined members of the corps. They saw the publication as seditious, tendentious, and inappropriate for the structured, orderly environment of a military college. School officials agreed, and pledged to uncover and expel *The Vigil*’s irresponsible publishers.¹

Student unrest and underground newspapers had come late to The Citadel. Propelled by rebellious and idealistic youth, student uprisings, anti-war rallies, and civil rights protests marked the 1960s as a time when “politics, normally practiced in the legislature and the courtrooms, moved dramatically to the streets.” For many scholars and certainly for those involved in the student movement, the Vietnam War defined the

decade. Protest marches, massive demonstrations, and violent confrontations between police and student “radicals” remain some of the most vivid images of the era.²

Most general histories of the era focus on what Kenneth Heineman terms the “elite schools” of Berkeley, Michigan, and Columbia. This emphasis is understandable since the student movement originated at these universities and the “elite” students exemplified the movement at its idealistic best and its destructive worst. However, in *Campus Wars*, Heineman argues persuasively for examining student behavior at smaller state universities and colleges. While the dramatic showdowns at larger universities attracted the media and continues to fascinate scholars and students alike, Heineman believes “it is vital to study institutions where the majority of students and faculty were either prowar or apathetic – a more perfect mirror of American society in the 1960s.” Shifting the emphasis away from the more radical students reminds readers that not all activists seized buildings, called for revolution, or rioted in the streets.³

The regional popularity of Merle Haggard’s “Fightin Side of Me” and “Okie From Muskogee” frames many people’s perceptions of the South during this era, and except for the civil rights movement, southern colleges and universities are often left out of discussions about campus unrest. While numerous authors have demonstrated the

¹ The author used information from the student newspaper and administrative proceedings to recreate this scenario. The information from these sources will be examined, presented, and cited more fully in the pages to follow.

² Milton Viorst, *Fire in the Streets: America in the 1960s* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 93; Charles DeBenedetti and Charles Catfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 408.

³ Kenneth Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 5, 80-81, 150-151. Numerous historians have discussed the media’s tendency to present militant, outrageous, anti-war radicals as representative of the peace movement, and Todd Gitlin offers one of best analyses of the media’s role in the unraveling of the student movement. However, Gitlin also recognizes the students’ contributions to their own negative image. The recklessness and idealism that spawns student movements leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and distortion. In many cases, when the media called for more radical stances and behavior,

impact young black southerners had on the anti-war movement and the student movement, few of them acknowledge that many young white southerners were also swept up in the political ferment of the period, and not just as opponents of “peaceniks” and “integrationists.” This historiographical gap has helped perpetuate a somewhat simplistic view of 1960s politics, and a closer examination of student discord at The Citadel and other southern colleges highlights the regional distinctiveness of their protests while at the same time challenges common misconceptions of the period.⁴

As a military college, The Citadel placed students, the dynamic bulk of the anti-war movement, in a disciplined, structured, and hierarchical environment that personified what many of their dissenting peers opposed. Up to this point in the school’s post World War II history, being a Citadel man meant following orders, conforming to societal standards, and exhibiting an uncompromising patriotism. While some cadets clung to these tenets, others worried that a decade shaped by youthful protest might pass without their participating in some way, and they offered alternative assessments of what qualities good Citadel men and good Americans possess. For Citadel students and administrators alike, the upheavals of the 1960s forced an institution devoted to maintaining discipline

students obliged. *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and the Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

⁴ Melton McLaurin, “Country Music and the Vietnam War,” in *Perspectives on the American South: An Annual Review of Society, Politics and Culture*, volume 3, eds. James C. Cobb and Charles R. Wilson (New York: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers, 1985), 145, 146, 148-149, 153, 155-156, 158; James C. Cobb, “From Muskogee to Luckenbach: Country Music and the Southernization of America,” in *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 82; David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994), 199; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto: Bantam Books, 1987), 26; Allen Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1984), 312; Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945-1990* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 197-200; Tom Hayden, *Reunion: A Memoir* (New York: Random House, 1988), 31-33; Zinn, *People’s History*, 474-475; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 322-323. Sara Evans’s *Personal Politics* is one of the few works that demonstrates how involvement in the civil rights movement and the New Left helped radicalize young southern whites. Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Root’s of Women’s Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Knopf, 1979).

and order to deal with unrest and change. A study of how they adapted, adjusted, and reacted to an era youthful rebelliousness offers valuable insight into the momentum and nature of the student movement as well as the anti-war movement.⁵

While president of The Citadel, Mark Clark afforded students little opportunity to formulate or express dissenting viewpoints. He made certain that through “constant and respectful display of the Stars and Stripes on campus, through patriotic music, through the chaplain’s sermons, through my talks to the Corps, through our Greater Issues Speeches and through military instruction,” the “atmosphere on The Citadel campus is calculated to renew constantly a feeling of patriotism among cadets.” Clark merged patriotism and anti-communism, and the speakers he invited to address the corps never questioned the United States’ commitment to combating all forms of Soviet encroachment. Informing cadets that “Red China has the third largest Air Force and more men in arms than the United States and Great Britain combined,” Hawaii Congressman Daniel K. Inouye announced that “The time has come to put the welfare of the nation above the welfare of the individual.” Secretary of the Army Elvis J. Stahr outlined the Soviet Union’s plans for world conquest and received thunderous applause after assuring his audience that the United States Army would oppose the communist threat wherever it arose.⁶

The vast majority of the corps took these messages to heart. Boasting that their college president had “seen the ugly face of communism at close range,” many assumed

⁵ Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest Against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), xii.

⁶ Nichols, “The General as President,” 327, 329-330; *The Brigadier*, 13 February 1960, 27 February 1960, 15 October 1960, 15 December 1961.

an almost fanatical anti-communist stance. Editorials in the student newspaper implored United States officials to take a stronger stand against Soviet aggression, and one student blasted the American government's "poor leadership" and "timid foreign policy." After the Bay of Pigs fiasco, one cadet criticized John F. Kennedy's "half hearted" efforts in Cuba, but praised the President for sending more military advisors to South Vietnam. Under the headline "Practice Can Make Perfect," he argued that increased military intervention in not only Vietnam, but also Laos, Cambodia, and Berlin might prevent the United States from "losing the Free World yard by yard, village by village, country by country."⁷

The sizable and lucrative military presence in the surrounding community contributed to the cadets' conservatism. In 1940, Charleston voters had elected Mendel Rivers to Congress for the first of sixteen consecutive terms. Beginning in the 1950s, Rivers used his position on the House Armed Services Committee to bring money, jobs, and military bases to the South Carolina Lowcountry. Between 1960 and 1966 alone, the number of military personnel living in or near Charleston jumped from 13,500 to 21,500. During that same span, the number of area civilians employed by the armed services leapt from 6,500 to 11,500.⁸

Government expenditures in Charleston rose in proportion to Rivers' seniority and to the United States' involvement in Vietnam. Historian Walter J. Fraser argues "that by the late 1960s, the Charleston area was a microcosm of what President Eisenhower called the military-industrial complex." Commenting on the number of bases in the Lowcountry, one congressman joked, "If Rivers puts anything else [down there] the

⁷ *The Brigadier*, 16 January 1960, 4 November 1961, 18 November 1961, 16 April 1963.

⁸ Nichols, "The General as President," 324; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 405, 410, 418.

whole place will sink.” By 1970, the military and related industries comprised forty percent of the city’s payroll and pumped about two hundred million dollars annually into the local economy.⁹

Immersed in the teachings and terminology of the Cold War, cadets found protest rallies and student anti-war demonstrations difficult to fathom. In November 1960, well over half the corps watched a FBI film on the “Communist inspired riots” outside a meeting of the House Un-American Activities Committee in San Francisco. Outraged over student opposition to ROTC, a Citadel undergraduate listed the declining popularity of the military as “one of the most alarming signs of the decay of the spirit and character of the youth of America today.” General Clark echoed these sentiments and cast the corps as a bulwark against the “deterioration of American youth.” On the floor of Congress, Representative Rivers lauded the cadets’ patriotism and discipline. The Commandant of Cadets reminded the corps that despite its fading appeal, a military education instilled students with the “moral fiber” needed to keep America strong.¹⁰

Assured of their own importance, many cadets commended their seemingly misguided colleagues for at least taking an interest in national affairs. In other cases, they accused the media of exaggerating the extent of the protest and of focusing too heavily on liberal student organizations. Cadet pundits argued correctly that conservative ideals reigned on most college campuses, and they pointed to a rally in New York in which four thousand youths turned out in support of Barry Goldwater as evidence of the “rebirth of conservatism.”¹¹

⁹ Fraser, *Charleston!*, 410, 418, 419.

¹⁰ *The Brigadier*, 13 February 1960, 27 February 1960, 15 October 1960, 12 November 1960, 15 April 1961, 15 December 1961.

¹¹ *The Brigadier*, 18 March 1961, 20 May 1961.

This feeling of consensus began to fade following the Cuban Missile Crisis, however. Reporters for *The Brigadier* welcomed Kennedy's strong stand as long overdue, and one writer encouraged the student body to prepare for war. As the events that distressed students from Columbia to Berkeley invigorated cadets, many members of the corps began to distance themselves from their civilian peers. They cast The Citadel as a bastion of patriotism and morality and condemned their rebellious colleagues as "weak willed and more than willing to go along for a joy ride." Enthusiastic alumni praised the cadets' rejection of the "filth of the big coed colleges [and] the immature element of questioning and doubting and non-conforming."¹²

The cadets' perceived isolation developed into a siege mentality as the student newspaper attacked critics of the United States military and claimed that without "men like MacArthur . . . the left will have a free hand to hack away at our republic." In late 1963, an article in *The Brigadier* published the results of a survey conducted by the National Review asking college students nationwide, "If the United States should find itself in such a position that all other alternatives were closed save world war with the Soviet Union, would you favor a) war, or b) surrender?" Taking some liberties with the question's wording, the reporter announced that at one school 46 percent chose "unconditional surrender," while on another campus, 49 percent "preferred slavery to liberty, if a struggle was involved." Faced with these statistics, the author deplored the sad state of his generation and declared the United States must continue fighting these internal as well as external enemies.¹³

¹² Gitlin, *Years of Hope*, 89-90, 117; William O' Neill, *Coming Apart: an informal history of the 1960s* (New York: Quadrangle, 1971), 65; *The Brigadier*, 19 May 1962, 3 November 1962, 9 November 1963, 18 April 1964, 16 May 1964, 31 October 1964.

¹³ *The Brigadier*, 3 November 1962, 9 November 1963.

By mid-decade, the cadets' disdain for dissent and protest collided with the increased militancy and exposure of the anti-war movement. Angered at LBJ's escalation of the air and ground war in Vietnam, teachers and students held teach-ins on over one hundred campuses. Protest rallies in Washington, DC, New York, and Oakland drew crowds numbering in the tens of thousands. Citadel students wanted no part of these demonstrations. When the organizers of the International Days of Protest sent The Citadel a letter asking how they planned to contribute to the nationwide anti-war rally, *The Brigadier* responded to this "not-too-flattering request" with a massive rebuttal entitled "Vietnam Survey: Why the Protests are Wrong." The cadets described Southeast Asia as "a current scene of communist aggression and the free world's struggle to stop it." They warned that if the United States failed in Vietnam, then Thailand, the Philippines, Japan, and Australia would succumb to Soviet rule. They equated United States withdrawal with appeasement and repeated Johnson's claim that "Our honor and word are at stake in Vietnam."¹⁴

Numerous others factors drove the wedge between the corps and the anti-war demonstrators deeper. The rising anti-militarism of the 1960s contributed to a sharp drop in applicants, and General Harris warned the Board of Visitors that "the roof is coming down faster than many realize." Many South Carolinians had begun to question the necessity of a state-supported military college, and Harris looked for ways to attract more students and enhance the college's reputation. During his presidency, The Citadel had launched a graduate program, had begun accepting transfer students, had readmitted veteran students, and had allowed women to attend evening classes. These initiatives

¹⁴Zaroulis, *Who Spoke Up?*, 38-42, 51, 54,56,63-64; Matusow, *Unraveling of America*, 320, 318; DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 110-111, 123, 162; *The Brigadier*, 6 November 1965, 4 December

troubled many alumni who feared that too much tinkering would transform The Citadel from a “man’s college” into a “boy’s school.” Others scolded Harris for catering to the demands of “outsiders” and setting the school on the road to “decadence.” Charlestonian Alice Beckett argued that the enrollment of non-cadets devalued a Citadel education since the corps could start “cheating and rubbing elbows with Communists like at the University.” These concerns fueled rumors that the school planned to abandon its military traditions, admit females into the cadet corps, and discard the plebe system.¹⁵

While he never planned to abolish the fourth-class system, General Harris worried that hazing at The Citadel had gotten out of hand, complaining that such behavior hurt enrollment, damaged public relations, and weakened the college’s chances of receiving federal grants. In meetings with the Commandant of Cadets, Harris suggested numerous modifications to the corps’ training methods with one plan dividing the plebes into three groups: the “normal” or strongest” ones who seemed to adjust well, those who have potential but required extra guidance, and those “who are simply misfits.” The last two classifications would receive special training from a select group of upperclassmen. In his annual address to the training cadre on August 31, 1966, the Commandant reminded the upperclassmen that The Citadel’s goal was to build men, not “wreck them,” and he demanded that each freshman get “a well balanced meal three times a day, that he is

1965.

¹⁵ *The Brigadier*, 28 November 1964, 18 March 1967, 13 May 1967; “Self Study,” I-9, I-10; *Charleston Evening Post*, 12 March 1968; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 22 March 1968, documents 736-741; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 25 November 1969, documents 213, 219, 220; “A Self Study: The Citadel, 1972,” 17, III-83, III-20, III-21, III-23, III-24, documents in possession of author; *Charleston News and Courier*, 12 March 1968, 12 November 1968; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1967, documents 541-544; Alice Beckett to Harris, 29 September 1965, Box 41, Folder 5, Harris Papers; 1972 *Catalogue*, 210; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 21 March 1969, document 122; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1970, document 319.

given the opportunity to get a full nights rest from Taps to Reveille and that he is not harassed just for the sake of harassment.”¹⁶

As Harris suspected and others would soon discover, the fourth-class system had indeed grown increasingly brutal by the early to mid 1960s. In *The Lords of Discipline*, Pat Conroy, a 1967 Citadel graduate, recounted the horrors of freshman year at The Citadel in gruesome detail. In his latest work, *My Losing Season*, Conroy describes the plebe system he endured as “mind-numbing, savage, unrelenting, and base.” Many people associated with The Citadel dismiss the novelist’s accounts as literary hyperbole, and Conroy himself accepts the skepticism of older graduates who saw no similarities between their freshman year and the one he describes. He explains, however, that “over a period of time, the system had evolved into the extreme form of mob violence my classmates and I experienced.”¹⁷

While it cannot be determined with precise accuracy when and why this evolution took place, it seems worthwhile to explore a few possibilities. It is possible that explicit and implicit directives from Citadel officials encouraged or at least condoned cadet aggressiveness. Conroy remembers General Clark boasting “that the school would have the toughest plebe system in the world,” adding “I personally attest that he succeeded admirably.” The 1963 Citadel *Catalogue* lauded the fourth-class system’s method of producing “young men with alert minds and sound bodies, who have been taught high ideals, honor, integrity, loyalty, and patriotism.” This assessment carried the rather

¹⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1 October 1965, documents 177-180; Harris to Reuben H. Tucker, 19 November 1965, Box 50, Folder 2, General Hugh P. Harris Papers, The Citadel Archives and Museum; Memo to Tucker from Harris, 27 September 1965, Box 50, File T, Harris Papers; Memo to Tucker from Harris, 11 November 1965, Box 50, File T, Harris Papers; Memo to Tucker from Harris 27 September 1967, Box 50, Folder 2, Harris Papers. Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 6 January 1967, documents 464, 468-476; “Commandant’s address to cadre,” 31 August 1966, Box 50, Folder 2, Harris Papers.

ominous message that “these personal qualities must be deeply ingrained in order that neither time nor trouble will erase them from his personality.”¹⁸

Clark’s emphasis on toughness fit nicely with his mission of graduating citizen-soldiers ready to combat anyone who “threatens the American way of life.” Echoing their president, many members of the corps hoped that “every Citadel man can put aside foolish and selfish ideas concerning his personal well being and show the ungrateful collegiate Americans that in this country still live men who believe it is a privilege to defend their nation.” With Vietnam looming over the heads of most Citadel graduates, many cadets might have seen plebe year as a way to prove their patriotism by preparing men for the gruesome realities of a strange and discouraging war.¹⁹

In addition to an increased focus on toughness, masculinity, and military preparedness, changes in the fourth-class system also represent a unique reaction by Citadel personnel to the social and political turmoil of the era. General Harris suggested as much when he presented the corps as “the cream of American manhood” and quoted the cadet regimental commander’s pledge that The Citadel “will continue to stand proudly apart from the permissiveness and decadence that surround us.” By the mid 1960s, Citadel cadets found interesting ways to distance themselves from the rising number of “college students who resent the military’s encroachment on their personal lives.” For example, as more and more Americans challenged traditional mores by wearing their hair longer and shaggier, Citadel freshmen began sporting “baldy” or “knob” haircuts. While previous classes had received a “buzz” cut during their first week

¹⁷ Pat Conroy, *The Lords of Discipline* (New York: Bantam Books, 1982), 127-206; Pat Conroy, *My Losing Season* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 98, 100.

¹⁸ Conroy, *Losing Season*, 100; 1963 *Citadel Catalogue*, 40-41.

¹⁹ *The Brigadier*, 15 October 1960.

on campus, this new “tradition” required freshmen to have their scalps shaved practically bare. Due to the fourthclassmen’s shorn appearance, upperclassmen began referring to plebes as “knobs,” and several alumni from earlier eras remember their shock upon seeing the new haircuts for the first time.²⁰

Pushing freshmen to their physical and emotional limits became another presumed remedy for societal decadence, and by 1968, General Harris had uncovered “impressive evidence” that hazing under the fourth-class system had spiraled out of control. Numerous “quite bitter” parents wrote him letters outraged at the treatment their sons had endured. While labeling these problems an area of “severe concern,” Harris waffled as to who to blame for the system’s deficiencies. Speaking before a class of incoming freshmen, the General announced “the only harm to The Citadel that I know is being done is by about 5 percent who came here, cannot cope, and then go home and start rationalizing their weaknesses to mama.” At least privately, however, Harris realized much of the trouble stemmed from abusive practices that had become accepted aspects of plebe year. In May 1968, he informed the Board of Visitors “we must consider refinement or elimination of features which normal, intelligent, open-minded parents cannot accept.” Without such changes, he warned, “we cannot attract the outstanding students we want.”²¹

²⁰ Harris to Dr. Horace Greeley, 2 May 1969, Box 44, Folder 7, Harris Papers; Memo from Association of Military Colleges and Schools of the United States, Box 48, Folder 2, Harris Papers; L.H. Jennings to Harris, Box 46, Folder 3, Harris Papers; Catherine Manegold, *In Glory’s Shadow: Shannon Faulkner, The Citadel, and a Changing America*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 121; *The Brigadier*, 15 October 1960.

²¹ “Report to the President and Board of Visitors The Citadel By the Special Advisory Committee on the Fourth Class System,” (hereafter referred to as the “Whitmire Report” The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina, 9; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 May 1968, document 8; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 January 1968, document 728; Manegold, *Glory’s Shadow*, 83.

With this in mind, school officials convened a panel “to review all aspects of the Fourth class-system and the Manual relating thereto.” James Whitmire, a United States Air Force Colonel, Citadel graduate, and member of the college’s ROTC department, served as chairman, and the so-called Whitmire Report mixed specific and general analyses of the fourth-class system’s strengths, weaknesses, and overall purpose. The makeup of the committee left no room for critics to denounce their findings as the work of “outsiders” who did not appreciate The Citadel’s traditions. The group consisted of two Citadel alumni, three faculty members, two members of the Commandant’s Office and ten cadets. This combination met the approval of General Harris who had demanded that cadets play a major role in this evaluation since they have “frequently, enthusiastically, and unanimously reaffirmed their complete support and insistence that the System be continued as the very best way and means of ‘bringing up’ the incomparable ‘Citadel Man.’” As part of their research, committee members spoke with alumni of “all vintages,” interviewed parents of “past, present and future cadets,” and solicited the opinions of “cadets with specialized and intelligent interests in the future of The Citadel and the type of ‘Citadel Man’ to be produced.”²²

As the above statements indicate, the Whitmire Report not only laid out in no uncertain terms how deeply rooted concepts of masculinity factored into most cadets’ sense of their own and their college’s worth, but it also underscored the fourth-class system’s central importance to the school’s overarching goal – the building of men. Calling the plebe system the “fundamental cornerstone of the Military College’s Operation,” the authors announced that it should be “designed, tailored and geared to serve the unique purposes and traditions of The Citadel.” They decided that among these

²² Whitmire Report, 1, 4, 10.

purposes and traditions, “the development of the unique and highly valuable ‘Citadel Man’ is a matter of first importance.”²³

While confident of the fourth-class system’s importance to The Citadel, the panelists agreed that accusations of hazing had marred the college’s image “in the eyes of the public, the taxpayer, the academicians, the military, the alumni, and, most importantly, the high school student.” Without going into detail, the committee reported that “present abuses of the system generate unproductive physical demands and mental anxieties clearly not conducive to a Plebe’s proper academic achievement.” They found that due largely to upperclassmen harassment, few freshmen received enough to eat, got an adequate amount of sleep, or found time to study without interruption. They uncovered “significant and extensive abuses” that they believed had almost overwhelmed “many of the admirable and positive advantages which can be expected to accrue to a consistent, mature, and well defined System for Plebe Training.” The authors pushed for “a reorientation away from having the toughest plebe system in the country” to one in which knobs would face “a difficult, arduous, challenging and meaningful first year,” not an “impossible one.”²⁴

The bulk of the Whitmire Report dealt with abstract theories about better educating the corps as to the purpose and meaning of plebe training. Encouraging cadets to take a “positive approach to a training situation,” the committee suggested that by remaining “meticulous in appearance,” avoiding vulgar language, and minding their manners, upperclassmen could “train and correct the Fourth classmen in such a way as to inspire him to a greater effort without using harsh or tyrannical treatment.” Convinced

²³ Whitmire Report, 7, 9, 12, 42, 43, 51.

²⁴ Whitmire Report, 1, 2, 3, 9, 11, 12, 40, 41- 44, 47.

that the “capabilities of the young men who comprise the Corps of Cadets are boundless,” they expected the student body to “respond magnificently if they are made to understand the belief, the faith, the great trust being placed in their hands as a group responsible for the proper training of the newcomers to the school.” The authors placed even “greater trust and authority” in the rising senior class, challenging all firstclassmen to keep a close watch over plebe training and suggesting that seniors form cadet boards of review that would investigate allegations of hazing.²⁵

General Harris did not evince this same reverence for the corps’ abilities, and he offered an interesting take on cadets’ attitudes towards the plebe system. Some people advocated replacing knob training with more traditional forms of military instruction, but when pressed on this issue, Harris responded “I find in my discussions with the cadets, they do not yet fully understand what the correct relationship is between an officer and an enlisted man and consequently it is nebulous to them for me to try to substitute at this time a firm, courteous, correct, strict military relationship as a substitute for the Fourth-class system.” Combined with the opinions expressed in the Whitmire Report, this assessment cast plebe year as a time to evaluate potential Citadel men, and not a period of formalized military training. With cadets more concerned with determining who belonged at The Citadel than with who could lead a company into battle, the fourth-class system devolved into the ritualistic abuse that tormented students, parents, and school officials.²⁶

The Whitmire Report quit theorizing on the building of whole men and the “boundless capabilities” of the corps when it came to reevaluating the practice of

²⁵ Whitmire Report, 12-13, 14-16, 20, 23-27, 46-47 (emphasis in original).

²⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 May 1968, document 12.

“dropping” freshmen for push-ups and regulating student behavior in the mess hall. By singling these two areas out for closer scrutiny, the reviewers exposed the most common methods cadets used for weeding out the “weak.” The use of “on-the-spot push-ups” as a form of punishment had emerged towards the end of Mark Clark’s tenure, and by 1968, it represented not only the “one feature which is most severely criticized by those whom [the committee] solicited reviews,” but also the privilege cadets guarded most jealously. The 1966 *Fourth Class System Manual* restricted the number of push-ups upperclassmen could demand of freshmen at certain times, but these guidelines set no limits on how many times a freshman could be dropped in succession nor how long it should take to complete the exercise. Many upperclassmen drove freshmen to physical exhaustion by having them pound out repeated sets of push-ups, while others achieved similar results by exaggerating the cadence so that it might take fifteen minutes to complete fifteen repetitions. To remedy this, the Whitmire Report proposed the punishment be performed on “the open galleries and quadrangles of the barracks,” and the repetitions follow a “normal cadence” with “no extended periods in the leaning rest position.” In addition, upperclassmen could not assign freshmen more than fifteen push-ups every fifteen minutes, and fourthclassmen were expected to “promptly inform any Upperclassmen of the point when he is in fact not eligible for additional push-up repetitions during a given period.”²⁷

At least one member of the panel demanded more drastic changes. Major C.A. Medberry, a Chemistry professor and 1944 graduate of Texas A&M, wanted the use of push-ups as “on-the-spot correction” banned, declaring their only purpose was to achieve

²⁷ 1966 *Fourth Class System Manual*, Whitmire Report, Tab A, 9-10; Whitmire Report, 19 (emphasis in original).

“discipline through fear.” He pointed out the relative newness of the “tradition,” and concluded “from what I have seen and heard, that this practice is not one designed to help with the overall objectives of training a fourth classmen so much as it is to gratify a need to feel important and powerful in upperclassmen.”²⁸

The incessant harassment of freshmen at meal times posed another big problem for the reviewers. They learned that many knobs “find it impossible to eat at all during the lunch period” and noted that “every adult who testified before our committee, including cadets’ parents, coaches of the athletic department and the school’s public relations officer, all of these expressed the need for eating times to be pleasant periods, instead of times of horror for the freshmen.” As part of their training, freshmen were expected to memorize and recite, verbatim, facts about the college’s history, the names of all cadet officers, and wordy, scripted responses to inane questions. By constantly ordering freshmen to recount this “knob knowledge,” many upperclassmen prevented plebes from eating. As a result, the Whitmire Report recommended not only limiting such information “to specific source documents i.e. *The Guidon* and the front page of the newspapers,” but also eliminating any type of recitations in the mess hall. This modification, however, would “not preclude Plebes from voluntarily participating in discussions of major news events if properly authorized” by certain upperclassmen. Two members found these measures inadequate. Donald Bunch, a 1948 Citadel graduate, argued that the proposed revisions left room for a knob to “legally have his time infringed upon in such a way as to leave no room for him to eat his meal.” He realized that upperclassmen could still “correct or discipline a freshmen cadet,” thus keeping him bracing for the entire period. Bunch suggested leaving the plebe system “at the doors of

²⁸ Whitmire Report, Tab B, 2-4.

the mess hall” because “all cadets, well-rounded as well as poorly adjusted, are entitled to three uninterrupted meals a day in a relaxed atmosphere.” Major Medberry agreed and pushed for specific provisions prohibiting “any possibility of a fourth-classmen being required to ‘brace’ or sit up without eating at any time after the blessing.” He asserted that “the harassment of an individual is certainly without military value,” and that school administrators must rein in not only “overzealous and unscrupulous” upperclassmen, but also the freshman who wants “to make it appear that he ‘really has it tough but he is man enough to take it.”²⁹

In May 1968, General Harris delivered copies of the Whitmire Report to the Board of Visitors for their review. After deliberating and meeting with various cadets and members of the Commandant’s department, Harris and the Board accepted most of the committee’s recommendations. They commissioned a “complete rewrite” of the college’s *Fourth Class System Manual* to include “simple, clear, concise and well organized instructions” that would eliminate “gross misinterpretation and improper application.” Almost every passage from the Whitmire Report pertaining to the importance, purpose and uniqueness of the fourth-class system found its way into the new manual. The publication preached the necessity of positive leadership and demanded that every freshman receive adequate sleep, nourishment, and study time. Harris reinforced these provisions by threatening to expel any cadet who denied a freshman “any right, privilege or advantage to which he is legally entitled.”³⁰

²⁹ Whitmire Report, 18, 45; Whitmire Report, Tab B (emphasis in original).

³⁰ Whitmire Report, 17-18, 49, General Order, No. 1, 1 July 1968; 1969 *Fourth Class System Manual*, passim, RC 6 Records of President’s Office, Box 5, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

The manual placed responsibility for the system squarely on the shoulders of the senior class. A firstclassman was assigned to each mess table to insure that everyone ate “complete meals.” Sophomores’ interaction with freshmen was limited so as to “reduce greatly major abuses to the intent and spirit of the System” and to allow thirdclassmen the opportunity to “observe the manner in which mature and experience[d] Seniors effectively supervise the plebes.” To give senior cadets a vested interest in a plebe’s well-being and to provide knobs with a “friend in the corps” who could help them adjust academically, militarily, and socially to Citadel life, Harris reinstated the detail system whereby freshmen were assigned to a senior “sponsor” for whom they would run errands and perform other duties. Worried that others might view this arrangement as a form of servitude, however, Harris stipulated that seniors assign their charges no tasks “distasteful to normal human relationships.”³¹

For all their efforts, the authors of the Whitmire Report succeeded only in temporarily curbing hazing at The Citadel. Ignoring a recommendation of the Whitmire committee, school officials made no effort to monitor how well or how poorly the revised fourth-class system functioned. Had they done so, Citadel administrators would have discovered that the new push-up and mess hall polices were largely ineffectual in protecting freshmen. Without proper supervision, the use of excessive push-ups as a form of punishment continued unabated. The wording of the 1969 *Fourth Class System Manual* allowed cadets to abuse this practice without technically violating school rules. The new regulations left out the Whitmire Committee’s suggestion that push-ups be

³¹ Whitmire Report, 28-31, 34, 35, 1969 *Manual*, 6-7, 8-9; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 May 1968, 10, 12

performed at a “normal cadence” and thus the custom of drawing the repetitions out for extended lengths of time endured.³²

As for the mess hall, the concerns expressed in the minority reports proved prescient. Dismissing the proposal that cadets “not be required to recite on any item during the meal,” school officials decided “fourthclassmen may be required to discuss current events in a mature and serious matter” as long as these discussions do not “interfere with the meals of the fourthclassmen.” As school officials discovered later, by taking a broad definition of “current events,” upperclassmen devised new ways to prevent plebes from eating at meal times.³³

While struggling to corral rowdy upperclassmen, Harris and the Board of Visitors looked for ways to bolster the college’s standing. The anti-war movement tarnished The Citadel’s luster, but the war itself offered school officials ample opportunity to polish the institution’s image, as local, state and national publications praised the battlefield heroics of Citadel alumni in Vietnam. The Board of Visitors recognized the benefits of these reports, and they held frequent ceremonies honoring those graduates killed or wounded in the war. Whenever an alumnus died, The Citadel played echo taps, and this remains a vivid memory of cadets from that era. One former student recalled, “The most haunting thing for me at The Citadel was when a Citadel cadet died in Vietnam. That night, when it was announced, they did echo taps. I’ll never forget that as long as I live.”³⁴

³² Whitmire Report, 49; 1969 *Manual*, 10.

³³ Whitmire Report, Tab A, 3 (emphasis in original); 1969 *Manual*, 6-7.

³⁴ *The Brigadier*, 3 November 1962, 10 April 1965, 15 May 1965; *Charleston Evening Post*, 23 September 1967; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 26 May 1966, document 308; *Time* 80, no. 17 (26 October 1962): 40; Barrett interview; Kennedy interview; Lockridge interview; Hoffmann interview; Riggs interview; Rich interview; Cassidy interview. Between 1963 and 1976, sixty-seven Citadel alumni died in Vietnam; forty-three of these deaths came between 1966 and 1969. “The Citadel War Record - Vietnam Casualties,” The Citadel Archives and Museum.

The dedications of campus memorials, the unveiling of portraits, and the playing of echo taps strengthened the ties between the corps and United States' servicemen in Vietnam. Hearing frequent reports of their friends dying overseas, most cadets despised anti-draft demonstrations. To them, such actions represented an unlawful, irresponsible, treasonous shirking of duty. Referring to protestors who burned their draft notices, one cadet screamed "this is not our generation. These people do not represent us." He called them traitors and regretted that "the American fighting man is dying so that these bearded, draft dodging, dope addicted, Communist-inspired, pseudo-intellectuals have the liberty and sanctuary" to disparage America.³⁵

While heightening their disgust for anti-war demonstrators, the corps' empathy for American soldiers opened the door for a wider critique of the war. In *The Shako*, a literary magazine containing poems, short stories, and essays written by cadets, a student poet lamented that "10,000 men may die before the sunrise/ and leave a million children wondering." This discontent eventually spilled over into cadets' assessments of their college as the corps began to criticize Citadel administrators and challenge school policies. Unlike his predecessor, Harris sought to loosen the administrative reins on the cadets, and his hands off approach allowed for more dissent among the student body. Cadets began complaining publicly about old furniture in the barracks and stringent uniform regulations. Others questioned the administration's tendency to stress military duties over academic ones. To protest what they saw as nitpicky regulations, one group of cadets painted an image of Mickey Mouse on the water tower overlooking the campus. This admittedly limited rebelliousness fostered a certain degree of ideological tolerance

³⁵ Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 140; DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 195; Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 47, 54, 58, 112-114; *The Brigadier*, 2 May 1964, 6 November 1965, 4 December 1965, 26

within the corps. A few students defended Americans' right to protest and warned that outlawing dissent because it might damage the United States' position in Vietnam "is one of the most dangerous courses that we could take."³⁶

However, with state policymakers calling The Citadel "a luxury our state cannot afford," legislative threats to cut the school's funding quelled the corps' burgeoning unrest. Taking their cue from members of the Board of Visitors who blamed the school's woes on "outside forces," the besieged cadets saw the anti-war movement as an assault on themselves and their institution. When the Teacher's Committee for Peace and the Inter-University Committee for Debate on Foreign Policy mailed *The Brigadier* a letter arguing that the US government had deliberately misinformed the public about Vietnam, the paper called the committees' claims insulting to those serving in Vietnam, and wondered, "if honor is the most cherished principle of the cadet's life" what motivated those who opposed the war. In *The Shako*, a poet heard "democracy dying" over "the protests of cowards," while an essayist ridiculed those who protested while "soldiers died for their right to shirk."³⁷

Local newspapers fed the cadets' angst. The *Charleston News and Courier* served as the cadets' primary window to outside events, and the newspaper displayed a vehement pro-war, anti-protest bias. Editorials cast United States intervention in Vietnam as a defense of democracy while daily headlines juxtaposed massive Viet Cong casualties with minimal American losses. The paper published devastating critiques of

February 1966, 29 April 1967, 2 March 1968.

³⁶ Harris to Reuben H. Tucker, 19 November 1965, Box 50, Folder 2, Harris Papers; *The Brigadier*, 26 February 1966, 12 April 1966, 8 October 1966, 13 January 1967, 25 February 1967; *The Shako*, Fall 1966 edition.

³⁷ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 6 January 1967, documents 468-476; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 March 1967, documents 541-544; *The Brigadier*, 22 October 1966, 3 December 1966, 18 March 1967, 8

peace marches and the counterculture describing violent confrontations in Washington, DC and Oakland as the work of “rampaging anti-war demonstrators.” A seven-article examination of the Hippie movement described them as childish, dirty, rude, obscene, surly, and blasphemous.³⁸

The cadets’ frustration climaxed in November 1967, when under the caption “No Hippies,” an exasperated cadet cried that “the recent round of anti-war, anti-draft, anti-military, in fact, just about anti-everything demonstrations puts into a glaring light not only the growing disenchantment with the Vietnam War, but also sheds a most unfavorable light on the younger generation.” He denounced the protestors as “neither intellectual nor American,” and urged the government to crack down on these members of society.³⁹

The rage of “No Hippies” startled many members of the corps and sparked responses from outside The Citadel. Taking exception with the author’s definition of un-American behavior, non-cadet Richard Saunders defended the protestors as uniquely American in exercising their right to freedom of speech. Citadel student Don Pomeroy pleaded for moderation between “the fanatical stance of the true hippie” and the close-minded “nationalist who sets Victorian imperialistic sanctions above all else.” He urged both sides to tone down their rhetoric and search for common ground. Allen M. Beiner answered Saunders’ editorial and foreshadowed a shift in cadet opinion. He conceded the right to dissent, but he believed legal protest fell short of destroying draft cards and

April 1967, 29 April 1967, 23 September 1967; *Charleston News and Courier*, 13 May 1967, 12 January 1968; *The Shako*, 30 May 1967.

³⁸ *Charleston News and Courier*, 3 October 1967, 21 October 1967, 26 October 1967 through 1 November 1967, 11 November 1967, 25 November 1967, 15 January 1968, 31 January 1968; DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 198.

³⁹ *The Brigadier*, 4 November 1967, 9 December 1967.

burning the flag. More importantly, Beiner reaffirmed his support of the war, but questioned the United States government's commitment to winning it.⁴⁰

The Tet Offensive validated Beiner's concerns. Indeed, for most of the student body, Tet raised concerns over who was running the war. Many cadets accused politicians of hamstringing the military. The 1968 yearbook honored alumni killed overseas and denounced "the protests of dissenters and promises of politicians."⁴¹

Later that year, when an article in *Time* magazine reported that shrinking enrollments in military colleges across the nation had forced many schools to abandon or soften their military requirements, members of the corps reassured themselves that regimentation and discipline "tempered and adjusted to today's world can and does fill a place in the American educational system." Throughout 1968, school administrators cultivated the institution's image as an island of patriotic stability amidst a sea of chaos. Harris received letters from throughout the region praising The Citadel for maintaining order on its campus. One correspondent claimed the "college stands out like a bright beacon" in troubled times. In Florida, a rotary-club member bragged that "one of those fine cadets can take care of five hippies." Parents congratulated Harris for pursuing true educational goals which counteract the "hippie, Drop-out, Campus Riot, city riot-torn America we have today." When colleagues at other schools sought advice on how to avoid campus unrest, Harris replied smugly that "a disciplined environment" kept The Citadel unmarred by protest.⁴²

⁴⁰ *The Brigadier*, 18 November 1967, 9 December 1967.

⁴¹ *Charleston News and Courier*, 15 January 1968, 25 January 1968, 27 January 1968, 31 January 1968; *The Brigadier*, 13 January 1968, 2 March 1968, 6 April 1968; 1968 *Sphinx*, The Citadel Archives and Museum.

⁴² Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 186; Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 149, 153, 156, 200; Matusow, *Unraveling of America*, 390, 391; *The Brigadier*, 13 January 1968, 2 March 1968, 6 April 1968; *Time* 91, no. 13, (March 29, 1968): 56; Robert Daniel to Citadel Alumni, 22 August 1968, Box 44, Folder 1, Harris

By the end of the school year, however, articles appeared in *The Brigadier* that denoted a shift in the corps' attitudes towards student and anti-war protestors. Tom Brown, an assistant editor on the upcoming staff, contributed a column on "The Right of Dissenting Opinions." Quoting Voltaire and drawing analogies to Socrates and Jesus, he defended the right to question "antiquated, university regulations, oppressive governments, students' rights and civil rights." In that same issue, the newspaper editor established the framework for dissent at The Citadel. He acknowledged the benefits of constructive criticism, but urged cadets "do not go too far. And never let those College Joes' knock [The Citadel]." ⁴³

With this in mind, several members of the corps adopted certain aspects of the student movement compatible with their situation at a military college. Reminiscent of the Berkeley slogan "I am a student. Do not spindle, tear, or mutilate," an editorial in *The Brigadier* reminded school officials of students' individuality and their importance to the institution. Some argued for a reduced focus on the military and an increase in liberal arts courses. Tom Brown rendered a light-hearted, humorous evaluation of the Yippies without criticizing, ridiculing, or dismissing their views. Still, old grudges died hard. For many cadets, SDS retained the stigma of "draft dodgers," and in contrast to Brown's moderate tones, one student described the organization as bent on destroying society. ⁴⁴

Papers; L.H. Jennings to Harris, 9 January 1968, Box 46, Folder 3, Harris Papers; Walter Albrecht to Harris, 7 June 1968, Box 41, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Harris to Kenneth E. Wacker, 29 April 1968, Box 50, Folder 7, Harris Papers; Martha Sweeney to Harris, 12 September 1968, Box 43, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Connie Hoffman to Harris, 21 May 1968, Box 44, Folder 7, Harris Papers; Harris to Gail Gideon, 1 May 1968, Box 4, Folder 7, Harris Papers; Peter Sammartino to Harris, 9 May 1968, Box 41, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Harris to Dr. V.R. Easterling, 6 August 1968, Box 44, Folder 3, Harris Papers; Thomas Davis to Harris, 3 September 1968, Box 44, Folder 1, Harris Papers; L.H. Jennings to John Holliday, 24 June 1968, Box 44, Folder 4, Harris Papers; "Faculty Coffee Klatch," 8 April 1968, Box 49, Folder 4; Memo to James Duckett, 8 July 1968, Box 49, Folder 4, Harris Papers.

⁴³ *The Brigadier*, 11 May 1968.

⁴⁴ *The Brigadier*, 19 October 1968, 9 November 1968, 19 April 1969, 10 May 1969; *The Shako*, Spring 1969.

Even moderate dissent worried school officials and they cracked down on divergent or controversial opinions. When the administration refused to allow Brown to publish a cartoon picture of the Biblical figure Samson being taunted by calls of “Fag” and “Long-Hair Freak,” censorship of *The Brigadier* became an issue. While the earlier editorial staff described the newspaper as “the epitome of a free and uncensored press,” this was not the case in late 1968. General Harris’s assistant, Colonel Dennis Nicholson, had to approve each edition of *The Brigadier* and he admitted removing passages he deemed “extremely detrimental” to the institution. Senior Arthur von Keller complained to General Harris that “no criticism of any sort is allowed in any student publication.” Eventually, the administration allowed the newspaper to run the cartoon, but Brown resigned his post as assistant editor due to Nicholson’s excessive censorship.⁴⁵

General Harris’s self-proclaimed “oasis of order” proved to be a mirage during the 1969-1970 school year. Wishing to “radically change the ultra-conservative *Brigadier* of the past,” the paper’s new editor-in-chief, Jim Lockridge, encouraged students and faculty to submit articles criticizing and evaluating school policies. He broadened the paper’s coverage of outside events, and tried to strike a balance within a school “military in its structure,” but “primarily academic in its nature.” Hoping to stir responses to a “rising social revolution” that had already begun to ebb, he urged the corps to think critically of the government, society, and especially The Citadel.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ *The Brigadier*, 13 January 1968, 8 March 1969; D.D. Nicholson to R.L. Bergmann, 9 November 1968, Box 41, Folder 9, Harris Papers; Arthur von Keller to Harris, no date, Box 46, Folder 4, Harris Papers (emphasis in original).

⁴⁶ Harris to Arthur von Keller, 2 June 1969, Box 46, folder 3, Harris Papers; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1970, document 319; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 21 March 1969, document 122; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 25 November 1969, document 205; *The Brigadier*, 13 September 1969, 11 October 1969, 14 February 1970, 7 March 1970, 17 April 1970, 24 April 1970, 11 December 1970; Memo to James Duckett from James Whitmire, 15 August 1969, Box 41, Folder 14, Harris Papers; Lockridge interview.

Many cadets heeded Lockridge's call. Several complained bitterly about the school's haircut policy. Others lobbied for new uniform requirements, longer furloughs, and televisions in the barracks. The cadets' lingering siege mentality tempered their protests, however, as cadets sought to improve their college without damaging its reputation. They regarded changes in the uniform policy, requests for appliances in the barracks, and decreased administrative intervention as positive goals, but treated gripes about mandatory chapel attendance, drill, and Friday afternoon parades as threats to The Citadel's uniqueness and therefore its value. The cadets realized that "None of us wants our school to become another Clemson," and they urged each other to keep this in mind the next time they muttered "I hate this place."⁴⁷

In an effort to stem cadet unruliness, Harris mixed tough talk with minor concessions. He pledged to consider student's requests, while at the same time reasserting his authority as the school's president. A desire to attract more students factored heavily into Harris's willingness to revise certain policies, but he did make some changes. He reduced the number of Saturday inspections, shortened drill periods, and looked to attract a more diverse group of Greater Issues speakers. He allowed upperclassmen to wear coats and ties rather than uniforms when off campus, and he increased the number of furloughs. At the same time, Harris reminded the corps of the threats posed by an anti-militaristic society and liberal legislators, emphasizing the cadets' obligation to preserve the school's image. He promised to listen to complaints made through the proper channels, but indicating his disapproval of *The Brigadier's*

⁴⁷ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1970, 7 March 1970, 11 December 1970.

newest staff, he told cadets that proposals printed in the student newspaper would get a slow response⁴⁸

The administration agreed to limit its censorship of the student newspaper, but this failed to satisfy all cadets. Early in his senior year, Tom Brown and two friends began publishing the underground sheet *The Vigil*. Claiming to bring “to the surface the suppressed bitterness of a liberal minority,” it blasted the administration’s control of *The Brigadier* and wailed about the poor quality of mess hall food. Not all students appreciated this subterranean critique of their institution, and they answered *The Vigil* with a conservative underground paper called *Common Sense*. This use of an underground newspaper to defend the establishment against another underground newspaper underscored the student schizophrenia at The Citadel generated by the tumult of the 1960s.⁴⁹

In the duel between *Common Sense* and *The Vigil*, the latter enjoyed greater popularity among the student body. Most cadets viewed *Common Sense* as a right wing “propaganda rag,” and some wondered if school officials had sponsored its publication. After three editions, however, *The Vigil* disappeared when school officials threatened to uncover and expel the “small minority activist group in the cadet corps.”⁵⁰

When the cadets found time to discuss Vietnam, many softened their position on the war and the protestors. Many accepted that the conflict in Southeast Asia was not the result of a “plot for world-wide communist expansion,” and some even called the war “futile.” *The Brigadier* printed cartoons ridiculing the United States government’s heavy

⁴⁸ “Faculty Coffee Klatch,” 8 April 1968, Box 49, Folder 4, Harris Papers; Harris to George Lott, 28 April 1969, Box 47, Folder 1, Harris Papers; Harris to Horace Greeley, Jr., 2 May 1969, Box 44, Folder 7, Harris Papers; “Talking Papers for Discussion Topics on Monday Morning Program,” Box 48, Folder 3, Harris Papers; “Speak to All Students,” 12 September 1969, Box 36, Harris Papers.

handedness in stifling dissent. In November, the Charleston *Evening Post* asked students from The Citadel, the College of Charleston, and nearby Baptist College for their opinions on the Spring Mobilization Committee's upcoming rally in Washington, DC. All three condemned the protestors' actions, but only The Citadel spokesman conceded the activists' right to dissent. Another cadet opposed the goals of the fall Moratorium, but respected this effort at legal, responsible protest. Reportedly, one Citadel student even participated in this nation-wide event by wearing a black armband on the designated day.⁵¹

In the midst of this growing unrest at The Citadel, the shootings at Kent State on May 4, 1970 shocked the nation. Students at forty-four colleges engaged in some sort of demonstration, and other schools shut down for days and even semesters. In an attempt to commiserate with those at other schools, Jim Lockridge printed an unauthorized copy of *The Brigadier* devoted entirely to Kent State. The front page featured a giant fist slamming down on the body of a bleeding student.⁵²

The paper recorded a wide spectrum of reactions among the corps. In contrast to calls for sober reflection and open-minded tolerance, Doug Nelson compared student protests to Nazi book burnings and declared "To hell with tradition and down with sedition." Several cadets cheered the deaths of "four long hairs," while others reminded their classmates that cadets and "long hairs" shared common bonds as students. Most cadets sympathized with the National Guardsmen, but events closer to home muted the cadets' indictment of the protestors. Students at the University of South Carolina clashed

⁴⁹ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970.

⁵⁰ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 March 1970, document 311.

⁵¹ Charleston *Evening Post*, 8 November 1969; Anne Cote to Harris, no date, Box 47, Folder 1, Harris Papers; *The Brigadier*, 21 March 1970, 11 April 1970, 24 April 1970, 8 May 1970, 15 May 1970.

with police and the National Guard on May 11, and some state legislators demanded harsh punishments for the demonstrators. One politician proposed to “annihilate” the offenders. Students at The Citadel undoubtedly had friends at USC and proposals to “annihilate” them bothered many. Even General Harris questioned the “legality or wisdom” of a bill introduced by State Representative James Cuttino to stem “leftist and communist activities” in South Carolina’s colleges and universities. Cadets themselves wanted a break from the turmoil and called for a stable medium between violent protest and heavy-handed repression.⁵³

While cadet activism declined after May 1970, the corps did not return to its staunchly conservative ways. Drug use became a problem, and in November three cadets were arrested and expelled for selling amphetamines. Rather than condemn this illegal activity, students argued that because school rules banned coffee makers in the barracks, students used speed to study for exams or prepare for inspections. In the same issue that reported the bust, *The Brigadier* staff ran an article describing a “Marijuana High.”⁵⁴

Anti-authoritarian attitudes crippled corps unity and confounded school officials. Students bemoaned the supposed double standard separating cadet officers and cadet privates when it came to granting special leaves and handing out demerits. Alumni commented on the students’ low morale, lack of discipline, and ragged appearance. The administration issued more punishments, which accelerated the corps’ slide. With increasing regularity, cadets grew their hair longer, refused to salute officers, and resisted

⁵² Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 256; DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 279-280; *The Brigadier*, 15 May 1970; Lockridge interview.

⁵³ *The Brigadier*, 8 May 1970, 15 May 1970; *Charleston News and Courier*, 12 May 1970, 13 May 1970, 14 May 1970; James Cuttino to Harris, 25 May 1970, Box 42, Folder 2, Harris Papers; Harris to Cuttino, 27 May 1970, Box 42, Folder 2, Harris Papers.

most aspects of the military. The problems reached such proportions that it generated tension between The Citadel's president and the Board of Visitors. Neither of them knew how to stop the spread of this cancerous apathy, and their frustration led to accusations of incompetence and obtuseness.⁵⁵

As the national "anti-war movement gave way to a pervasive anti-war mood," The Citadel followed suit. Even General Harris hoped for an "honorable end to this undeclared, half-executed, and now unwanted war." For the first time, cadets acknowledged the existence of a credibility gap and launched sustained critiques of the United States government and its role in Vietnam. One embittered young man pointed out that, despite all the protests, politicians ignored the rallies, schools repaired damaged buildings, and friends of his died in a far-off land. Faced with these results, the cadet announced that American society was "going to hell."⁵⁶

While the rebelliousness of Citadel cadets was limited and brief, it was not inconsequential. The fact that students attending a military college with deep roots in a region often noted for its patriotism found aspects of the anti-war movement compatible with their ideals of citizenship and duty reveals the ideological malleability and broad appeal of the protestors' message. Intrigued by the energy of the protestors, certain

⁵⁴ *The Brigadier*, 13 November 1970, "Self-Study," II-7; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 December 1970, document 608; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 18 March 1971, document 684; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 September 1970, document 1.

⁵⁵ *The Brigadier*, 23 October 1970, 25 February 1972; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 September 1971, document 2; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 February 1971, document 681; "Self-Study," III-7, VII-27; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 March 1972, document 88; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 12 February 1971, document 657; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 31 January 1972, document 60; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 February 1972, document 74; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 March 1972, document 80; Board of Visitor, "Minutes," 9 December 1972, document 400; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 10 February 1973, document 746.

members of the corps opened themselves up to new ideas and tried to promote cadet activism. Youthful rebelliousness and exuberance appealed to these cadets, but so did the military ideals of duty, honor, and country. The corps vacillated between defending students' right to dissent and defending their school against outside dissenters, but eventually many cadets realized that questioning the war, challenging school officials, and criticizing school policies did not necessarily constitute a treasonous attack on America or American GIs.

The unrest that crept onto The Citadel's campus corresponds with Rod Andrew's identification of a distinct "southern military tradition" that "combined elements of militarism" with "a heritage of individualism, personal autonomy, and rebellion *against* authority." This tradition encouraged Citadel students to embrace anti-authoritarian and non-conformist attitudes, but reject calls for revolution. Ideologically opposed to the most extreme and visible elements of the anti-war movement and the New Left, many Citadel students nonetheless challenged authority and worked to reform their campus, more so than their country.⁵⁷

An emphasis on and a redefinition of manliness and manly behavior also linked many Citadel cadets to their Leftist colleagues. The 1960s saw less overt assertions on the part of Citadel officials and cadets on what it meant to be a man. Part of this probably stems from the fact that most cadets spent their energy defending United States soldiers and martial values, people and ideals they associated exclusively with men and masculinity. Implicitly, however, many cadets rejected the previous era's description of

⁵⁶ DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 300, 317; Harris to Frank Pace, 29 April 1971, Box 49, Folder 1, Harris Papers; *The Brigadier*, 1 October 1971, 29 October 1971, 13 October 1972, 17 March 1972, 24 March 1972, 28 April 1972; *The Shako*, Winter 1971.

⁵⁷ Andrew, *Long Gray Lines*, 2, 3, 4, 7 (emphasis in original).

how Citadel men were supposed to think and act. Reflective of the early Cold War's emphasis on conformity and conservatism, good Citadel men, and by extension good Americans, of the 1940s and 1950s were expected to fit in, acquiesce, obey. During the 1960s, however, as the Cold War consensus crumbled, men now rebelled, agitated, and questioned authority. Many cadets followed suit, and while doing so, they regarded themselves as no less manly than other alumni. Citadel students' chauvinism as well as their rebelliousness corresponded with many members of the New Left's own views on proper gender roles as elements of both groups seemed convinced that waging war and protesting war were practices best left to men.⁵⁸

Situating The Citadel and southern schools in this larger national context complicates the traditional chronology of the era and testifies to the durability and momentum of student activism. According to most scholars, 1968 marked the end of 1960s liberalism with SDS fragmenting and the Weatherpeople waging war in the streets. However, as the New Left imploded, students at The Citadel and other southern institutions began protesting college regulations, questioning authority, and adopting countercultural modes of dress and behavior.⁵⁹

The extent and volatility of cadet protest paled in comparison to that of their peers in other parts of the country, but as Clarence Mohr observes, the behavior of young southerners was "measured . . . by a different and less permissive social yardstick." Paul

⁵⁸ Evans, *Personal Politics*; Gitlin, *Days of Hope*, 364-371.

⁵⁹ Maurice Isserman, "You Don't Need a Weatherman but a Postman Can be Helpful: Thoughts on the History of SDS and the Antiwar Movement," in *Give Peace a Chance: Exploring the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*, eds., Melvin Small and William D. Hoover (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1992), 31; Matusow, *Unraveling of America*, 334-335, 390-391; Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 149, 200; Gitlin, *Years of Hope*, 420; O'Neill, *Coming Apart*, 302-303; Paul Conkin, *Gone With the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 625-630; Clarence Mohr and Joseph E. Gordon, *Tulane: The Emergence of a Modern University, The University of Georgia: A*

Conkin and others also appreciate the importance of community in shaping and evaluating southern student movements. In his history of Vanderbilt University, Conkin argues that viewed within a regional context, the actions of many southern students in the late 1960s “seemed almost revolutionary.” The relative conservatism of these “revolutionary” young people exposes the artificiality of pitting “lawless radicals” against “the silent majority” and suggests that the era’s social and political battle lines were not as polarized as many attest. Interestingly enough, the arc of student protest at The Citadel coincided with the rising anti-war sentiment of many United States soldiers and veterans. Howard Zinn insists that a broad range of Americans supported the anti-war movement, and historians continue to revise the popular image of the 1960s protestor as a stoned, unkempt, student radical cursing the American government while waving a Viet Cong flag. With this in mind, scholars may find it beneficial to pay more attention to smaller colleges and universities, not just in the North or in the West, but also in the South.⁶⁰

Bicentennial History, 1785-1985 1945-1980 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 269-270, 305; Thomas G. Dyer, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 347-352

⁶⁰ Mohr, *Tulane*, 192; Conkin, *Gone With the Ivy*, 613, 625; Dyer, *Georgia*, 347-349, 350; William J. Billingsley, *Communists on Campus: Race, Politics, and the Public University in Sixties North Carolina* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1999), x, xii; John Hennen, “Struggle For Recognition: The Marshall University Students for a Democratic Society and the Red Scare in Huntington, 1965-1969,” *West Virginia History*, volume 52 (1993): 127-147; Zinn, *People’s History*, 476-478, 487, 526.

CHAPTER FIVE: AN EPITAPH FOR THE CITADEL, 1970-1975

Political scandals, military defeat, rising inflation, and oil crises marked the 1970s as a time of “confusion, frustration and a widespread feeling that America had lost its direction.” An already pessimistic and frustrated populace grew increasingly jaded and self-involved as proof of the nation’s declining global stature mounted and accounts of governmental wrongdoing surfaced with alarming regularity. While the nation’s fortunes fell, the South’s economic and cultural status rose as more and more citizens looked to the emerging Sunbelt for guidance, stability, and proof that the country would recover. In *The Selling of the South*, James C. Cobb wrote, “the inclination to forgive, forget and even applaud the South was reinforced by the disillusioning experiences of Vietnam and Watergate.” For the most part, however, this belief in the redemptive qualities of Dixie revealed more about national anxieties than it did about life in the former Confederacy.¹

Following one of the most tumultuous eras in American history, the mainstream media celebrated its version of southern culture through television shows such as *The Waltons*, *Sheriff Lobo*, *The Dukes of Hazard*, and *Hee Haw*. As images of rustic simplicity and hillbilly hi-jinks warmed viewers’ hearts and television screens, Tennessee lawman Buford Pusser sated a national craving for law and order. Ignoring the genre’s edgier themes of alcoholism, infidelity, and murder, Richard Nixon applauded country

¹ Zinn, *People’s History*, 529, 538, 545, 553; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 430, 446-447, 454; James C. Cobb, *Redefining Southern Culture: Mind and Identity in the Modern South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1999), 71, 78, 82; James C. Cobb, *The Selling of the South: The Southern Crusade for Industrial Development, 1936-1980* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 183-184.

music for strengthening America by renewing family and religious values. *Southern Living* cropped up on coffee tables from Maine to California, and the *Saturday Review* anointed the South as “the new America.” Good ol’ boy” replaced “redneck” as the embodiment of the white male South, and *Time* magazine gushed that these southerners possess “innate wisdom, an instinct about people and an unwavering loyalty that makes him the one friend you would turn to.” In 1976, Jimmy Carter capitalized on this sentiment, and rode his image as an honest, clean living, hard working, Georgia peanut farmer to the White House. While Peter Applebome casts Carter’s election as evidence of a “still quirky, but no longer menacing, domesticated South of hot cornbread, fried catfish, Jack Daniels, and racial peace,” Jack Temple Kirby hits closer to the mark by recognizing that Carter “personified the resurgence of the *white* South.” Kirby ought to have added a gender distinction as well, since the numerous tributes to southern culture conveyed a decidedly masculine as well as a decidedly pale version of the region’s supposedly glorious present and the nation’s promising future.²

Southern elites benefited handsomely from the nation’s “discovery of the admirable, adorable South.” Cobb notes that “as the region began to shed its benighted reputation, it also held out the prospect of relaxed life-styles and lower living costs to an increasing number of Americans willing to forgive the Sunbelt South for its past transgressions and overlook its enduring deficiencies.” Money, jobs, and people flowed Southward, but like Dixie’s cultural resurgence, the fruits of this economic growth were

² Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 430; Cobb, *Redefining*, 71, 78, 82, 84; Cobb, *Selling of the South*, 179-180, 183, 184, 185-186, 192-193; James C. Cobb, “An Epitaph for the North: Reflections on the Politics of Regional and national Identity at the Millennium,” *The Journal of Southern History* 66 (February 2000): 7; Applebome, *Dixie Rising*, 329; Jack Temple Kirby, *The Countercultural South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press), 68, 71-73; Kirby, *Media-Made*, 134-141, 147-151, 154, 164, 168, 170-171 (emphasis added).

limited to a select few. Southern political and economic leaders courted industrial growth, and while they made some concessions when it came to expanding social services, improving public transportation, and tempering their opposition to racial integration, they adhered to a “philosophy of development that insured restricted growth and confirmed rather than threatened power relationships.” As a result, despite the glorification of southern living, southerners in general fared poorly in national quality of life indices. A prime reason for this disappointing showing was the “New South development tradition” of virulent anti-unionism which attracted labor intensive, low wage industries and repelled better paying, unionized plants or companies. Sunbelt boosters went to great lengths to assure employers and workers alike that all “good” southerners despised unions, and one historian has remarked that “By the end of the 1970s, anti-unionism had supplanted racism as the South’s most respectable prejudice.”³

Other discussions of southern traditions betrayed an even more frantic tone, as the South’s urban, suburban, and industrial expansion prompted many pundits to mourn the “Americanization of Dixie.” In 1971, *Esquire* magazine announced “the South is over,” and went on to discuss how “the Cracker crumbled.” John Egerton lamented that in its rush “to rejoin the Union,” the South had become “indistinguishable from the North and East and West.” He cringed as an “on-the-make South, its views nationalized, its virtues evaporating if not already dissipated, is coming back to the Mother Country.” Taking a somewhat rosy look at America’s past, Egerton listed the region’s newly nationalized vices as urbanization, industrialization, poverty, and discrimination. He attached special significance to this last characteristic, arguing that the “one thing that above all else made

³ Cobb, *Selling of the South*, 107-108, 123, 135, 179-180, 184, 185-186, 192-193, 251, 255-260, 264, 267-268; Fraser, *Charleston!*, 425. By 1976, South Carolina had the lowest percentage of unionized workers in

the South different – the way its white majority treated its black minority – is no longer very different from the way it is done in the rest of America.”⁴

Certainly not everyone agreed with *Esquire* or Egerton. In *The Enduring South*, John Shelton Reed described a region whose inhabitants exhibited more violent, religious, and provincial tendencies than people who lived in other parts of the country. Taking into account that the number of economically prosperous, college educated, southern suburbanites hewed closely to national standards, Reed still found those living below the Mason-Dixon Line more likely than other Americans to shoot their neighbor and then pray for forgiveness.⁵

These next two chapters buttress Reed’s conclusions regarding southerners’, particularly white southerners’, inclinations to violence and provincialism, but they also show how these traits fed into the regional obsession that spawned his and Egerton’s works – a fear of change. Unable to resist certain pressures, Citadel administrators and cadets worried about tradition and labored to differentiate between “good” and “bad” change. Refusing to alter certain practices, but more than willing to abandon others, their highly selective and factually flawed defenses of The Citadel’s heritage reveal how, in the wake of the 1960s, appeals to tradition often served more as a justification for continued inequities than as a principled honoring of the past.

In many ways, Citadel personnel suffered from the same anxieties about the present and future as the country at large. However, while a lingering societal anti-militarism left school administrators scrambling to fill the barracks, the national backlash

the South. Cobb, *Selling of the South*, 259.

⁴ John Shelton Reed, *The Enduring South: Subcultural Persistence in Mass Society* (Lexington, Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1972), 2-3; John Egerton, *The Americanization of Dixie: The Southernization of America*, (New York: Harper’s Magazine Press, 1974), 17, 19, 22, 24.

to the social and cultural reforms of the previous decade boded well for certain members of The Citadel family, and, just as it had in the 1940s and 1950s, the college would eventually cash in on its image as a white, southern, masculine institution. In contrast to this earlier era, however, school officials in the 1970s could not expect the same level of obedience from their budding Citadel men as the 1960s legacy of youthful unrest proved more durable than its calls for social justice and equality.

In their “Statement of Role and Scope” for the 1970s, The Citadel’s Board of Visitors boasted that by resisting pressures for “rapid expansion, for lowered admission standards, for response to militant demands for special treatment and unique curricula, and for the modification of time honored rules of behavior,” The Citadel had emerged from the 1960s “as a strong, mature institution with roots deep in a distinguished past, with an unshaken set of standards.” The 1971 *Citadel Catalogue* provided a more accurate indication of the school’s present condition, however, for unlike in the past, that year’s edition contained no “good signs for the future.”⁶

As schools across America struggled “in an era of energy shortages, runaway inflation, of recurrent recessions, of diminished federal support for higher education, of a declining college-age population,” low enrollments hit The Citadel especially hard and raised serious questions about the institution’s overall purpose, value, and obligations. In 1969, the Board of Visitors recognized that “The Citadel finds its traditional functions seriously endangered by steadily falling undergraduate applications,” and they struggled in vain to attract more students. Playing on the emotions of a disillusioned public,

⁵ Reed, *Enduring South*, 84-85.

⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 December 1970, document 612; 1971 *Citadel Catalogue*.

college publications highlighted the honor system's "unique contribution to the overall educational process" and promoted The Citadel as "one of the few schools in our country that pays attention to the development of a sense of honor and duty as part of the education of a young man."⁷

Another common theme ran through much of the literature sent to prospective cadets, one that had played a large role in the school's past and would play an even larger one in the years to come. High school students across America opened letters from The Citadel demanding to know "Are you man enough to accept a challenge" and "red blooded enough to venture into a system of education that is unique?" The reader learned that The Citadel offered "men of all races . . . a keen sense of 'belonging' in the unique fellowship of the Corps" and educated "men for peace" in an environment where "each man stands on his own merit." Correspondence to accepted applicants bore much the same message, assuring teenagers that "becoming a member of The Citadel's *corps d'elite* will make you the man you've always desired to be." Each letter emphasized the importance of the college's "male environment" in preserving The Citadel's reputation as a "disciplined college in an undisciplined age."⁸

The number of cadets continued to drop, however, and an emerging local threat upped the pressure on Citadel administrators to fill the barracks and classrooms. In 1968, the South Carolina General Assembly had debated whether or not to add the College of Charleston to its list of state supported colleges and universities. This proposal alarmed Citadel personnel for two reasons – they resented new competition for already limited

⁷ Conkin, *Ivy*, 582; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 7 October 1969, document 205; *The Brigadier*, 25 September 1970, 19 March 1971; 1970 Citadel *Catalogue*, 41-42; President's Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1971/72, 409, 418, The Citadel Archives and Museum, Charleston, South Carolina.

⁸ 1972 President's Report, 422, 444, 445 (emphasis in original).

state funds, and they construed the institution's conversion to public status as the first step towards consolidating all Charleston area colleges into one university. The Citadel's enrollment difficulties exacerbated both these concerns because state legislators were not likely to maintain their financial and political support of a college that consistently operated at well below its peak capacity.⁹

The Board of Visitors formed a "long range Academic Planning Committee" to study the situation, and the committee's final report drew a mixed response. They had little trouble convincing the Board that by expanding its graduate program, The Citadel could demonstrate a willingness "to serve the needs of the Lowcountry" and boost its overall image. Their second proposal, however, touched off a debate that raged for the next five years. In it, they presented the Board with a choice, "to have a good corps of cadets by getting rid of the dead wood – in the hope that the community will give its support; or to utilize the faculty and facilities to the fullest to attract students and reduce the corps." Given the "present feeling against the military" and "the immediate need for educational opportunity in the local area," they favored opening the school up to civilian "day students," warning "If we do not assume these responsibilities, somebody else certainly will do so."¹⁰

⁹ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 March 1970, document 325; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 August 1970, document 354; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 12 December 1970, document 648; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 December 1970, document 614; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 18 March 1971, document 694, 695; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 February 1972; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 18 January 1974, document 332. A desperate Board of Visitors informed the South Carolina Higher Education Commission that should the two schools merge, they were "prepared and willing to take over administration of the College of Charleston in furtherance of higher education in the Coastal Area of South Carolina." Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 2 March 1968, document 732; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 15 March 1968, document 733.

¹⁰ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 November 1969, documents 212, 213, 215-216; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 December 1969, documents 223, 226; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 December 1970, documents 613; *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970

Opponents of the measure feared that allowing large numbers of civilian student to take classes alongside cadets would lead to the eventual dissolution of the college's military structure. The economic and political benefits of increasing the college's service and value to the state trumped their concerns, however, and the Board agreed to "actively participate with other state-supported colleges in the Charleston area by utilizing its faculty and facilities, by initiating new programs to accommodate the needs of the citizens of this state, and in other ways it can be of service to a cooperative effort." As part of this effort, the Board authorized the enrollment of a limited number of "special students" for the 1970-71 school year. These students consisted of fifth year Citadel seniors who chose not to remain in the corps of cadets, juniors and seniors from other colleges who wanted to take classes that The Citadel offered but their schools did not, third year attendees of The Citadel's evening program who wanted to attend day classes, and junior college transfers.¹¹

While most of these specifications came straight from the academic committee's report, the Board deemed it necessary to tweak the original proposals a bit in order to "protect" the corps. The first modification stipulated that other than fifth year seniors, no Citadel cadet could transfer into the civilian program. The second set of changes is more revealing, for while extolling their commitment to the citizens of South Carolina, the Board narrowed their definition of citizenship by stressing that only "evening male students" and "junior and senior male students" could take classes with cadets.¹²

¹¹ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 November 1969, documents 208, 210; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 November 1969, documents 215-216; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 December 1969, document 223; *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970.

¹² Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 December 1969, document 223-226 (emphasis in original).

At least one Board member viewed these reservations as potentially “disastrous.” A month before the South Carolina legislature shifted the College of Charleston from private to public status, James Timmerman briefed his colleagues on the primary issues vexing Citadel administrators; “the pressure for general-purpose, state-supported college education in Charleston” and the “apparent decline in interest by young men in all-male military colleges.” Of the two, he saw the former as the most urgent since “the specter of a permanent, aggressive, growing competitor within the same city presents The Citadel with certain difficulties that will not disappear, but that will likely become more acute as time passes.” Faced with such a threat, Timmerman called it foolish to ban women from Citadel classrooms, predicting that if school officials “retreat behind our gates and refuse to have anything to do with other institutions” then “many small, slow changes will undoubtedly be forced upon [The Citadel] by events outside the control of the college or its Board.” Warning that “an unreasonable insistence on maintaining absolutely the status quo might well jeopardize the essentials of military education that The Citadel is now trying to protect,” Timmerman urged the Board and other school officials to “separate carefully the important essentials of military education from the trivia,” and he placed mandatory drill and ROTC training for an all-male uniformed corps of cadets in his “essential” column while ascribing non-essential status to all-male classes taught by uniformed faculty.¹³

Most professors at The Citadel sided with Timmerman as the Faculty Council and the college’s AAUP chapter petitioned the Board to accept female students into the day program and to make faculty uniform requirements optional. Puzzled by the “big objection to women students,” one professor wondered “As long as the barracks remain

¹³ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1970, 320-321 (emphasis in original).

segregated, what could possibly be wrong with women in classes?” Certain that females posed a grave threat to The Citadel’s most cherished traditions, the Board’s chairman responded simply, “This is a military college and it will remain so.” The Board also refused to alter faculty dress requirements because “teachers would probably start wearing turtle necks, beads, etc.”¹⁴

While most college officials fought any attempt to “de-militarize” The Citadel, practicality forced them to make some concessions. When a motion to allow civilians to take engineering and physics courses at The Citadel came before the Board, proponents of the plan defended it as a sure fire way to increase the school’s revenue and popularity because the College of Charleston did not offer majors in either subject. To bolster their case, they pointed out that admitting these students would not disrupt campus owing to the fact that “because of the severe demands of these academic fields, the student majors are likely to be conservative and fully occupied in their courses.” When the opponents of the measure deemed it an “opening wedge, a foot in the door to ‘civilianize’ the college,” their counterparts shot back “If our educational activities are limited to cadets only, decreasing enrollments are almost certain to involve decreasing financial reports and the eventual phasing out of the corps of cadets.” Eventually the two sides compromised, allowing only juniors and seniors to take engineering and science courses during the day.¹⁵

The Board’s halting acceptance of certain changes put them in a precarious position as outside pressures to attract more students intensified. In January 1972, a “blue ribbon” panel appointed by the governor completed its review of South Carolina’s

¹⁴ *The Brigadier* 17 April 1970, 1 May 1970, 8 May 1970

¹⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 May 1970.

public colleges and universities, and their report, published and endorsed by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, sent shockwaves across The Citadel's campus. The committee decided that by accepting 1000 to 1500 more students per year, The Citadel could better "utilize existing facilities and administrative staff" and save \$750,000 annually. Essentially, these figures would require The Citadel to expand its civilian programs since even if the corps' numbers rebounded, total student enrollment would still fall well shy of the suggested optimum capacity. Pulled between conflicting internal and external demands, one Board member observed that the institution stood at "another crossroads in its long history and development."¹⁶

To help them choose which path to take, the Board asked Citadel faculty, staff, and students to help them decide whether or not to allow more civilian students, especially female civilian students, to enter the day program. Civilians already taking classes at The Citadel advocated admitting "all qualified male students," while the school's AAUP branch resubmitted its request that "The Citadel accept qualified day students, both men and women, for full participation in the college's academic program and related activities."¹⁷

Others condemned both these measures, calling the existing day program corrosive and unnecessary. A history professor mocked those who considered civilian students "a panacea to cover all the ills of sliding enrollment," and he urged Citadel administrators to focus exclusively on meeting and expanding the corps' capacity. In direct response to his colleagues' recommendations, he maintained that admitting women

¹⁶ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 31 January 1972, documents 66-67; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 March 1972, document 109, 131.

¹⁷ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 31 January 1972, documents 54-59; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 March 1972, documents 111, 115, 117.

would destroy The Citadel not save it. Tying the institution's value and appeal to its all male barracks and classrooms, he predicted that if the college abandoned its single sex system, applications would dry up and the corps would wither away.¹⁸

Most cadets expressed similar views, although they saw the situation as much more urgent. Aware that the school risked losing a great deal of financial and political support should it ignore the Budget and Control Board's directives, cadet Harry Rivers evaluated two of the most widely considered options – increase the size of the corps by lowering admission standards or accept more day students. He opposed both measures, viewing the latter as the “ultimate defeat” of The Citadel. Instead, Rivers pushed for a vigorous public relations drive, insisting that few people would consider cutting the school's funding upon learning that it “shall produce the bulk of intelligent leadership for the state of South Carolina.”¹⁹

Others were not so optimistic, and their protests expose the extent to which many people's defense of the college's traditions and purpose depended upon gendered assessments of men and women's proper social spheres. Casting military service as an absolutely masculine realm, completely incompatible with a female's exclusively civilian capabilities and sensibilities, several cadets advanced the somewhat circular argument that efforts to “civilianize” the college would lead to the admission of women and that the admission of women would “demilitarize” and ultimately destroy the school. When the corps learned of the push to make faculty uniform requirements optional, a reporter for *The Brigadier* asked an English professor if such a change foreshadowed the hiring of female teachers. Another student objected to the faculty's request, warning “if The

¹⁸ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 119-125.

¹⁹ *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1972.

Citadel is civilianized, its role as a military college is doomed.” He connected such initiatives to a larger attempt by “liberal forces in education, in the guise of progress and enrollment growth, [who] are trying to do away with the old traditions and today’s unique educational institutions i.e. Winthrop and The Citadel.” Tellingly, the author referred to the former as a “girl’s school” and the latter as a “military college.”²⁰

With the college in its “death throes,” cadet Gordon Bell announced that should The Citadel accept 1000 more students including “co-eds, then they better find 1001 new students, because the day they bring girls into my once military college is the day before I leave.” He argued that allowing more women to attend The Citadel's evening program posed no problem so long as they remained separate “from the strictly military life and background of cadets and veterans.” Believing that The Citadel’s “military reputation” set it apart from other schools, Bell predicted that if college officials chose to “de-emphasize our military status,” presumably by admitting women, the institution would soon become just “another small liberal arts school with an ROTC program.” A cartoon accompanied Bell’s article showing the Grim Reaper about to shove a shackled, kneeling cadet into an open grave. The doomed man’s headstone read, “South Carolina Corps of Cadets, 1942-197? . . . A proud body pierced through the heart while yet in its infancy. An honorable future denied.”²¹

Citing “the preservation of the Military College is the primary consideration,” the Board voted against any significant expansion of the college’s civilian programs. They agreed that the general admission of day students would serve as the “opening gambit in this blue print for disaster” since “the courts could not and would not accept any arbitrary

²⁰ *The Brigadier*, 17 April 1970, 16 March 1973.

²¹ *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1972.

limitations such as the sex, home residence, or educational major of the applicants.” Still needing to address the concerns raised by the Budget and Control Board however, the Board reaffirmed that “a limited number of day students of an appropriate type should be admitted,” and they authorized The Citadel’s evening college to begin granting undergraduate degrees.²²

Even these relatively minor concessions raised the hackles of Citadel traditionalists. Two recent graduates howled that “bringing in larger numbers of civilian students - even at night- is contributing to the further decline of the corps” and would inevitably lead to the “demise of the South Carolina Military Academy.” Upset that their alma mater had become a “half-assed military college” by enabling “civilians, women, etc. to become Citadel graduates,” they argued that “In trying to ‘serve the community,’ we are rapidly destroying our ability to serve the community and nation in a way that few other schools have done – to turn out Citadel men who have an unequalled record of service and leadership.”²³

Many of the complaints about undeserving “outsiders” masquerading as “Citadel Men” echoed the corps’ earlier complaints about veteran students, and sure enough, the changes occurring at The Citadel revived tensions between the two groups. However, with most cadets aware that the money generated by the school’s “peripheral programs” kept the school afloat during this time, the rivalry centered not around the veterans’ presence on campus, but with their right to bear the mark of true Citadel men – The Citadel ring. Most Citadel cadets and alumni treat their class rings with a reverence bordering on idol worship. Pat Conroy opens *The Lords of Discipline* with “I wear the

²² Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 95, 100.

²³ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 March 1974, documents 352, 357(emphasis in original).

ring,” a phrase he later called “the best line I have ever written and the best English sentence I am capable of writing.” Seniors count the days until they receive their rings in a formal ceremony held in Summerall Chapel, and some graduates wear them on the ring finger of their left hands, often over their wedding bands, as a symbol of their loyalty to and affection for The Citadel. Each edition of *The Guidon* listed the ring’s many unique qualities, emphasizing that it is the “heaviest all-gold college ring in the United States, for it contains from 5 to 10 percent more gold than any other.” Most importantly, the ring “denotes not a member of a certain class, but the true Citadel man.”²⁴

On Valentine’s Day 1970, cadet Jim Herritage fired the first shot in the war of the ring when he wrote an editorial for *The Brigadier* entitled “A Matter of Pride.” In it, Herritage alerted readers to the “introduction of a new program which will allow civilian day students to infiltrate our campus and eventually pass themselves off as ‘Citadel Men’ with their unearned Citadel ring.” He resurrected the old argument that “To those who graduate from The Citadel without tasting of a year long ‘Plebe System,’ cold morning formations, inspections, parades, and confinements, their Citadel rings are unearned symbols of achievement to which they have absolutely no right.” He fumed that “lowering the standards of achievement” and allowing “pseudo-Citadel men” to wear the ring devalued the cadets’ accomplishments, and he insisted that the privilege belong only to the “corps d’elite.”²⁵

Herritage’s comments unleashed a torrent of responses. One cadet deemed the ring “inappropriate for ‘outsiders,’” adding, “We cadets are uniquely proud of the corps,

²⁴ Conroy, *Lords*, 1; Quote from Pat Conroy’s Commencement address at The Citadel on May 12, 2001, <http://citadel.edu/pao/addresses/conroy.htm>; *The Brigadier*, 16 February 1973; 1972 President’s Report, 317; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 February 1972, document 253; 1952 *Guidon*, 54-55.

²⁵ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1970.

and our pride is embodied in *our* class ring.” Two Citadel graduates assumed that “allowing veterans and civilian students to qualify as ‘Citadel Men’ via the ‘backdoor route’ without having gone through a ‘plebe system’ and military training must surely gall any alumnus who has earned his ring the hard way.” They maintained that such a practice “violates the ideals and code of ethics The Citadel has always stood for AND BECOME MOST FAMOUS FOR.”²⁶

On the other side, a Citadel professor connected Herritage’s protest to the “provincialism that is rapidly strangling this institution as an effective entity in higher education in South Carolina.” One veteran resented “being told that I reduce anyone’s reputation by my presence.” Reminding cadets of both their military service and their vital financial contribution to the college, most veterans found themselves “just as capable of upholding the values of the Corps of Cadets as anyone.” Some veterans did not find the corps’ values worth defending as they criticized the cadets’ lack of “leadership qualities” and their tendency to “rule by punishment.”²⁷

On April 23, 1971, *The Brigadier* printed one editorial and fifteen letters to the editor from well over 100 members of the corps arguing that only cadets should receive a Citadel ring. While some emphasized the veteran’s “outsider” status by opposing “the devaluation of the ring through wear by increased numbers of non-cadets,” the arguments of numerous other cadets demonstrate how much of their own identity depended upon The Citadel’s ability to build, not just men, but a special breed of men, one that was superior to those who had not gone through The Citadel’s system. The highest ranking junior on campus explained that “For a four year period cadets are trained, disciplined,

²⁶ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970, 21 March 1970 (emphasis in original); Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1970, document 313.

and educated in the tradition of Citadel Men,” and only those who had “withstood the demands of both cadet military and academic systems deserve the ring.” Almost all the letters stressed that “any man that has not been faced with the challenges of the fourth-class system and met it, any man who has not been confined only to the life of a Citadel cadet, cannot call themselves whole ‘Citadel Men.’” Another cadet commended the veterans for their past service, but concluded “the Corps wishes to be branded with a ring of gold” that indicated to others that “through a regimented four year system [they were] molded, as if by a blacksmith’s hands, into Citadel Men.”²⁸

Not surprisingly then, it was only when women qualified to wear the ring that Citadel officials acted. Four years after Herritage’s article first appeared, the Association of Citadel Men authorized a separate ring to be worn by graduates of the college’s civilian programs. This resolution came as more and more women earned Citadel diplomas from the school’s evening college, and *The Brigadier* confirmed the primary impetus for the change when it reported that the new “ring was first considered after the Corps expressed dissatisfaction with sharing their ring with non-cadets and especially female night students.”²⁹

The tensions generated by low enrollment and shifting societal expectations were not peculiar to The Citadel. National publications such as *Time* and *US News and World Report* featured articles on the changes taking place at the service academies and all-male military boarding schools as a result of “the recession, the permissiveness of modern parents and public irascibility over the Vietnam War.” They reported that these developments had forced many schools to close, while others sought a “more relaxed

²⁷ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970, 20 November 1970, 12 May 1971.

²⁸ *The Brigadier*, 23 April 1971.

atmosphere inside the classroom and out” by cracking down on hazing, broadening their curricula, and courting student opinions on certain policy issues. *Time* revealed that one college had “even gone so far as to turn co-ed.” Institutional spokespeople defended these “more lenient regimes” as necessary adaptations to changing cultural and societal demands and pointed to the positive results of lower attrition rates, larger student bodies, and rising grade point averages. On the other hand, opponents of such changes wondered “how much can a military academy relax and still remain military?”³⁰

Many members of the corps of cadets harbored similar reservations. While almost unanimous in their disdain for civilian students, the corps’ opinions varied as to whether the school had become too easy or too hard, too lax or too obtrusive, too accommodating or too rigid. Either way, pundits feared the imminent “demise of The Citadel” and the “death of the corps” and offered a wide range of cures for the college’s ills. Several cadets pleaded with their colleagues to abandon the belief that “no matter what one does – The Citadel isn’t going to change,” arguing that challenging “archaic rules and practices” might “save our school from the decay of sitting still in a fast-changing world.” Others grumbled that The Citadel no longer produced graduates who could “take command and lead men effectively in the defense of our nation” because the school “stifles the overall development of the student by placing in effect ridiculous regulations which serve no purpose beyond needlessly harassing cadets.” Disturbed by the “severe degeneration of school pride,” many asked for “a realignment of priorities . . . and some measure of concern for the people who pay to go to school here.” Upset that the “already wide gap between the school and other institutions has grown wider,”

²⁹ *The Brigadier*, 15 February 1974.

³⁰ *US News and World Report*, 9 November 1970, 47-48; *Time*, 6 September 1971, 35.

proponents of change railed against Citadel officials' "quest for absolute subjection to an authority that sometimes seems unjust and hypocritical," and they favored making the college less "needlessly painful" and "a little more enjoyable for those who attend and a little more attractive for those who may think of coming here."³¹

Other cadets took a different view, questioning the benefits of "change for the sake of change." A reporter for *The Brigadier* cast the debate in all or nothing terms when he asked the Commandant "How do you feel about change at The Citadel? Should we change or resist?" One frustrated student barked, "Change! This is supposedly the answer to every existing problem of The Citadel," and he warned that relaxing the college's regulations would cost the school its unique military rigor.³²

Such opinions remained in the minority, however, as cadets issued a slew of demands that they believed would invigorate the corps and strengthen the school. Cadets clamored for more diverse Greater Issues Speakers and an end to annoying "Mickey Mouse" regulations such as mandatory chapel attendance. One student suggested that cadets be allowed to hang "posters, rugs, curtains, and lamps" in their rooms, while another revolted against a "dictatorship" that played only classical music in the mess hall, demanding, "Give us Funk, Crosby, Stills and Nash, The Who." Several cadets accused school officials of placing military duties above academic pursuits, and others asked that students be allowed to submit formal evaluations of their professors.³³

The most urgent requests, however, suggested a certain fickleness when it came to preserving or abandoning certain traditions. In an era of discos, flashy suits, and

³¹ *The Brigadier*, 7 March 1970, 5 February 1971, 12 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 8 October 1971, 10 December 1971.

³² *The Brigadier*, 23 October 1970, 19 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 20 April 1973.

feathered hair, more and more Citadel cadets, just as they had with the student movement, began noticing and taking exception to how drastically their lifestyle differed from that of their peers. They complained loudly about the school's strict haircut policy and about the fact that they had to wear uniforms while off campus. The timing of this is important for amidst apocalyptic projections of The Citadel's demilitarization, a large percentage of the corps was not only willing to discard venerable Citadel customs as "archaic" remnants of "obsolescent traditionalism," they were, in a sense, seeking permission to shed the most visible trappings of their military affiliation. In 1970, the Board of Visitors had authorized the wearing of a "blazer uniform" during specified leave times. The ensemble consisted of a blue coat bearing The Citadel's crest, gray slacks, and a specially designed tie. Less than a year later, while demanding that the faculty wear uniforms, the cadets pushed for and received greater freedom in determining how often they could wear this outfit rather than the traditional Citadel uniform. One cadet downplayed the significance of their requests, maintaining, "The Citadel man has been noted for being different for what he is, not how he looks or because his hair is shorter."³⁴

Uneasy with these developments, Citadel alumni flooded General Duckett's office with complaints that their alma mater had grown "soft." Compelled to reassert his authority on campus, General Duckett assembled all cadets in The Citadel's field house for an impromptu presidential address. Looking out at his audience, the General smirked "some of you have more hair on your mind than I have on my head" and mentioned "I

³³ *The Brigadier*, 1 May 1970, 11 December 1970, 12 February 1971, 19 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 4 February 1972, 3 March 1972, 23 February 1973, 22 February 1974

³⁴ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1970, 7 March 1970, 6 November 1970, 11 December 1970, 5 February 1971, 12 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 19 March 1971, 2 April 1971, 15 October 1971, 4 February 1972, 17 February 1972, 6 October 1972, 19 April 1974; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 12 December 1970, document 608; President's Report to the Board of Visitors 1973/74, 44.

have always thought that a Citadel man wanted to be identified as a Citadel man, and not, heaven forbid, to be mistaken for an ordinary college or university student.” To those who disagreed, he snapped “the solution is simple – transfer.” Nevertheless, to discredit accounts that the President and the Commandant ignored cadets’ viewpoints, Duckett outlined a new, less stringent haircut policy for both freshmen and upperclassmen.³⁵

He then chastised the students for their overall “sloppy” appearance, reminding them that their behavior and attitude had a direct bearing on the college’s future. He announced that the administration needed their support to help “us keep up the flow of good men into the corps,” and should they abdicate this responsibility, The Citadel might well follow the lead of other military colleges who admitted civilian students only to “have either lost the corps or found it pushed in a corner as a kind of third cousin with bad breath.” Should the cadets rise to the challenge, however, the college could continue “to foster patriotism and love of God and country and make no apology to anyone for it.”³⁶

Duckett’s speech did little to alleviate the corps’ morale problem. Torn between cadet calls for “relaxed disciplinary standards” and alumni’s “strong demands” to “reduce cadet privileges, further restrict free time, and in general restore rigidity of discipline,” the General leaned towards the latter. When the Board of Visitors ordered the “laxness and permissiveness started by the previous administration’s must be stopped,” Duckett clamped down on cadet conduct. School officials strengthened “the hand of the both the President and the Board of Visitors” by increasing the number of offenses punishable by expulsion. As further proof of the administration’s growing concern with a corps-wide

³⁵ *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 5 March 1971; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 February 1971, documents 673-675; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 25 February 1971, document 681.

disdain for authority, two of the new regulations covered “disobedience” to school officials and “calling another cadet to personal account for having corrected or reported him while in the discharge of duty.” Armed with these new directives, Duckett reported back to the Board that the punishments for the 1971/72 school year were “excessive both in numbers and severity.”³⁷

These actions did not sit well with the corps. The senior class president blamed Duckett’s inconsistent behavior for the student body’s malaise. The editor of *The Brigadier* found it impossible to reconcile “a presidential promise to eliminate the ‘Mickey Mouse’ side of The Citadel” with “a visible crackdown on enforcement of antiquated rules and regulations.” He wondered what would happen if “The Citadel is ever taken to a Federal Court on civil liberties violations (mandatory chapel, weekend leave policy, etc) and the judge was not a Citadel graduate?” He noted that “contrary to local popular belief, Federal laws and statutes supercede all state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and attitudes” and implored those who “hold Citadel tradition heavier in the balance than individual liberty, minority rights and protection of dissent” to replace their mantra of “love it or leave it” with “let’s fix it.”³⁸

By the end of the school year, frustrated cadets began blatantly defying school authorities. In March 1972, cadet officers refused to attend a scheduled meeting with the Commandant. That same month, the cadet Regimental Commander stood before the Board of Visitors and voiced the student body’s dissatisfaction with what they considered

³⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 February 1971, 675-680.

³⁷ *The Brigadier*, 26 February 1971, 17 September 1971; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 September 1971, document 1, 2, 5, 6; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 January 1972, document 60; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 February 1972, document 74, 75; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 80-82; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 23 September 1972, document 316; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 9 December 1972, document 400; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 February 1973, document 746; 1972 President’s Report, 316.

an ineffectual president, overly detailed duties, and excessive administrative control over the corps. A few weeks before graduation, the current and rising members of The Citadel's Honor Court threatened to resign after General Duckett reversed one of the former group's decisions. After meeting with the President, the cadets withdrew their resignation lest the honor system "become another facet of school life not sufficiently controlled by the cadets." Their reasoning reflected many cadets' growing apprehension that due to the Commandant's office increasing involvement in student affairs, "Everyday the Corps loses a little piece of identity and a little bit more of 'esprit de corps' goes with it."³⁹

Changes in the fourth-class system factored into almost every debate occurring at The Citadel during this period. Some alumni believed it had gotten too easy and thus diminished their alma mater's "product." Other graduates feared it had grown too harsh and damaged the college's reputation. High ranking administrators worried that rumored and confirmed abuses of the system contributed to the school's enrollment woes. Most cadets regarded any tampering with "their" system as further evidence of how school officials' heavy-handedness would eventually destroy The Citadel.

Soon after assuming office, as part of his pledge to "eliminate rules that cannot be proven to add measurably to the making of a Citadel Man," General Duckett, ended the practice of dropping freshmen for push-ups, a move that sparked a fierce and somewhat unusual reaction from the corps. In an emergency meeting of the Presidential Advisory Committee, the committee members decided that the General's order raised two crucial questions – who runs the corps and is "The Citadel primarily an academic institution or

³⁸ *The Brigadier*, 2 April 1971, 30 April 1971, 17 September 1971.

³⁹ *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1971, 10 December 1971, 17 March 1972, 24 March 1972, 5 May 1972, 8

primarily a military school?” The impetus for the first question seems obvious, but the second one implied that regardless of whether students wore uniforms, drilled, or stood inspections, The Citadel’s military status depended upon an upperclassmen’s ability to make a plebe do push-ups. Duckett replied that “academics come before military always,” and as for who runs the corps, he maintained that all Citadel personnel had a hand in student affairs. As proof of this, he met with the cadets, listened to their objections, and reinstated the push-up policy, albeit on a limited basis with an eye toward “long range gradual reduction.”⁴⁰

This time frame turned out to be more immediate than Duckett planned. By February 1971, the General had again outlawed push-ups because “upperclassmen abused the rules.” In an interview with *The Brigadier*, Duckett explained his decision, citing his firm belief “that you don’t train someone through harassment.” While utilization of proper training techniques had some impact on Duckett’s action, the school’s declining enrollment figures entered into the equation as well. In his annual report to the Board of Visitors in June 1972, Duckett characterized the past school year as “one of contrasts, of substantial gains in many areas, and of disconcerting setbacks in others.” That previous August, he had welcomed a large incoming freshmen class and hoped that “we had successfully reversed the anti-military and anti-discipline sentiments” of the previous era. These hopes faded as Duckett watched the increase in students evaporate due to “our excessive losses of fourth year men.” The process repeated itself the next year, and Duckett recognized the immediate as well as long term implications of this trend, positing “that the bitterness we detected among fourthclassmen who withdrew last year may have

September 1972; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, document 80.

discouraged some applicants from enrolling this fall.” With this in mind, he noted that ending push-ups and “no longer requiring the ‘knob cut’ after the initial in-processing unit” had been a “great morale boost” for freshmen.⁴¹

Most upperclass cadets could not have cared less about plebe morale. Barred from punishing freshmen physically, they heaped demerits and tours upon them. This proved less than rewarding, however, and upperclassmen dismissed the present fourth-class system as “worthless,” grumbling first year cadets “do not endure enough to be proud of their plebe year.” The editor of *The Brigadier* grouched that Duckett’s initiatives had bred a freshmen class that “lacked discipline and motivation” and who “neither act nor look like freshmen in the past.”⁴²

Others connected the plebe year modifications to the more general problem of corps-wide apathy. An editorial writer for *The Brigadier* surmised “The whole problem starts at the beginning – the fourth-class system.” While easing up on freshmen might keep them from quitting, he argued, “it doesn’t instill as much class pride, or even school pride for that matter.” Editor Ralph Towell agreed that the “morale and discipline of the entire corps has suffered” from the dilution of the fourth-class system. Calling the system the “backbone of the corps,” he lashed out at those administrators and faculty members who presumably wished to eliminate plebe year altogether. He absolved the corps of any fault, recognizing “there have been some abuses,” but very few “have actually been damaging to the freshmen.” He believed that “if anything, the system

⁴⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 February 1971, documents 673-680; President’s Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1970/1971, 47; *The Brigadier*, 13 November 1970, 20 November 1970.

⁴¹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 March 1971, document 676; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 February 1972, document 253; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, document 87; 1972 President’s Report, 316, 361; *The Brigadier*, 17 September 1971, 22 September 1972.

⁴² *The Brigadier*, 1 May 1970, 29 October 1971, 10 December 1971.

should be made tougher and at the same time more meaningful” so that all cadets might learn to deal with adversity while improving their physical fitness.⁴³

A handful of cadets took their objections a step further, adding the abolition of push-ups to the long list of terminal diseases afflicting The Citadel. One cadet called it hypocritical for Duckett to venerate “the whole Citadel Man,” but then abolish “an integral part of the training of the whole men.” One senior alleged The Citadel “is dying before me” due in large part to the “relaxing of the plebe system.”⁴⁴

While cadets complained that the fourth-class system no longer posed a challenge for freshmen, school officials worried that they had not done enough to curtail hazing. In November 1971, the Faculty Council sent a memo to General Duckett alerting him to the “serious and potentially dangerous” problem of “physical hazing at The Citadel.” In February 1972, the Board of Visitors cited abuses of the fourth-class system as one of four “problem areas,” and a comprehensive study of the college found that almost all professors believed “the fourth-class system seems to be practiced at The Citadel chiefly to determine how much physical and mental abuse an incoming student can take.” Even Governor John West received a letter from an outraged parent describing the physical and mental harassment occurring at The Citadel. With the school losing about 20 percent of the freshmen class every year, General Duckett conceded that “in concept, the fourth-class system is a superb vehicle for providing leadership training for young men, but in practice, the abuses appear to have grown to the point” where they cost The Citadel much-needed students. Eventually, Duckett grew “weary of mailing apologies to the

⁴³ *The Brigadier*, 3 March 1972, 5 May 1972.

⁴⁴ *The Brigadier*, 12 February 1971, 26 February 1971, 19 November 1971.

parents of the victims of the abuses,” and he and the Board authorized another formal evaluation of the fourth-class system and its purpose at The Citadel.⁴⁵

This new Fourth Class System Review Committee consisted of six cadets from the upper three classes, the school’s chaplain, the Athletic Director, three members of the Commandant’s office, an Associate Dean, and the Director of Admissions. From the start, the panelists made it clear that they recognized and appreciated the purported goals of the fourth-class system. They considered it “essential to the moulding of character,” “intimately related to the existence of The Citadel as a Military College,” and “the very indispensable basis of The Citadel Man concept.” With 72 percent of the corps convinced that plebe year would “make me a better individual,” the committee members described the fourth-class system as the “mortar holding the Corps together and distinguishing it from other” student bodies, predicting that without it, the corps of cadets “would wither to death in short order.”⁴⁶

At the same time, however, the committee realized that abuses of the fourth-class system threatened the livelihood of the very institution it supposedly enhanced. As proof that plebe training was “not working as programmed or desired,” they submitted survey results showing that many of the students who left The Citadel were not malcontents who resented or disliked military discipline. On the contrary, interviews with former cadets and their parents indicated that initially these young men were drawn to The Citadel’s reputation for academic, martial, and physical rigor. They quit, however, after being

⁴⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11 February, document 25; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, document 158; 1972 “Self-Study,” VII-6; “Fourth Class System Review Committee – Record of Events, 13 December 1971” in RC6, Box 5, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Office of the President – Fourth Class System Review Folder, The Citadel Archives and Museum, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; Faculty Council Memo to Duckett, 23 November 1971 in RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 98, 121, 151-152

denied adequate food and rest and “because they were physically hazed . . . all three of which are direct violations of the regulations governing the fourth-class system.”

Concerned that allowing The Citadel “to drift along as we do now” could also lead to the “death of the Corps,” the reviewers warned that “either the lack of genuine, managed reform of the System at this juncture, or insensitive misdirected reform, coupled with poor management would ultimately and before long, destroy the mystique, utility and validity of The Citadel Man concept.” In all, the review committee hoped that by “revitalizing the fourth-class system” their proposals would boost student morale and help overcome the “prevailing apathy of spirit or antipathy toward the administration within the Corps.”⁴⁷

Like the 1969 Whitmire Report, the 1972 study uncovered “substantial areas of abuses” including lack of food, sleep, and study time as well as physical hazing and “degradation of the individual.” The committee reported that the earlier reforms had done little to curb hazing due to a combination of lax enforcement and faulty reasoning. For example, only six of the Whitmire Report’s twenty-two major recommendations were still in effect three years later. Very few cadets had copies of the *Fourth-Class System Manual*, while those who did viewed the publication with “disdain.” Despite rules prohibiting such behavior, upperclassmen still harassed plebes during the three hour block set aside as Evening Study Period (ESP). Directly refuting a crucial pillar of the

⁴⁶ The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 159-162, 163, 164, 166.

⁴⁷ The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 176, 181-182, 188, 192, 206(emphasis in original).

Whitmire Report, the 1972 committee revealed “that the idea that the First Class is responsible for, and controls the fourth-class system, is a myth.”⁴⁸

The reviewers urged school officials to define and impress upon all cadets the purpose and importance of plebe year. In their opinion, an effective fourth-class system should “promote comradeship, builds confidence and realistic optimism, leads to a feeling of inner fullness within the individual, and a sense of his purpose in life. These, we think, are the basis of the ‘whole man,’ which, ideally, is in turn the basis of The Citadel Man.” They added that once the “mission of training fourthclassmen is properly presented” and cadets understand these expectations, school officials must give the corps “authority – real authority – to do the job.” Driving their point home, the panel repeated, “we trust implicitly, the good judgment and sense of the Corps. As ever.”⁴⁹

Intent on changing cadets' attitudes towards plebe year, the committee suggested only a few specific modifications to the current system. Again underscoring the general ineffectuality of the Whitmire Report, the proposals focused on push-ups and the mess hall. The reviewers confirmed that almost all cadets despised the ban on physical punishment, but they also found that the practice had not ceased, it had simply moved “underground” or more accurately, behind closed doors. More disturbingly, some cadets “used the abolishment as good reason to fashion more cruel ‘correctives’” such as “breast plate beatings.”⁵⁰ Rather than cracking down on such behavior, the committee decided that it would be best to appease cadets by reinstating the push-up policy on a “limited

⁴⁸ Fourth Class System Review Committee Record of Events for 25 October 1971 and 1 November 1971, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 167, 170-171, 172, 195, 197.

⁴⁹ The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 168-169, 177-179(emphasis in original).

⁵⁰ Breast plates are convex pieces of brass about the size of an adult’s fist that cadets attached to their uniform when “under arms” during inspections or parade. Upperclassmen would often pound on the plates with their fist or rifle butt while freshmen were wearing them.

trial basis.” Under their plan, freshmen could not be dropped after the middle of October, and only junior and senior students on the training cadre could administer the punishment. Furthermore, a plebe could only perform fifteen repetitions every fifteen minutes, “without deviations such as extended ‘holds,’” and upperclassmen could require “no more than sixty push-ups per day per man in any case.” As a further precaution, “plebes would be honor bound” to stop once they reached the sixty push-up limit.⁵¹

Meal times remained “the major source of routine abuse,” and although the 1972 Committee found the Whitmire Report’s minority opinions on the issue particularly enlightening, they did not consider enacting them. Instead they advocated regulating mess hall behavior in stages, lifting restrictions and granting privileges with an eye towards “gradually ‘easing off’ on freshmen as the year progressed.” They were adamant that all cadets should receive adequate nourishment, and suggested warning the corps “that continuation of the ‘family style’ mess is contingent upon proving the value of that option.”⁵²

With the only real change being the restoration of push-ups, the new fourth-class system did not differ significantly from the old one. However, convinced that “only the cadets can resolve some of the more serious problems which have developed over a period of many years,” the Commandant, Colonel William Crabbe, Jr., gave them more responsibility for policing their ranks, instructing tactical officers “to spend as much time as possible away from the companies and to act only in an advisory capacity.” *The Brigadier* celebrated the upcoming “year of change,” and upperclassmen welcomed the

⁵¹ The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 168-169, 184-185.

⁵² The Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 168-169, 186, 195, 198.

chance to “let the corps run the corps.” Even the Board of Visitors expected the 1972/73 school term “to be a watershed in the overall revitalization of the corps.”⁵³

Such accolades proved premature as the hazing of freshmen continued to drive away students. With the corps “once again turned over to cadets,” almost 19 percent of the freshmen class quit during the 1973/74 school year. Most had left by October, just over a month into the first semester. The 1972 Fourth Class System Review Committee monitored plebe training for the next two years, and during this period, the committee’s chairman, Citadel Athletic Director Eddie Teague, witnessed a great deal of improvement, but admitted that several issues addressed in both the 1969 and 1972 reviews remained unresolved. In a memo to General Duckett, Teague reiterated that the “fourth-class system is and should be a major factor in the development of the character of Citadel Men,” but urged school leaders to discredit the “faulty concept that a tough system must be a harsh demeaning one.”⁵⁴

Other committee members regretted that the “tradition of a cadet not reporting the improper behavior of another of the same or higher class is still a serious problem” with freshmen accepting hazing as “part of the game” and looking forward to when “their turn would come.” In private interviews and anonymous surveys, several cadets broke their code of silence and rattled off a litany of violations, ranging from vandalism – scratching brass belt buckles, scuffing shoes, trashing rooms – to physical assaults – “kicks in the shins,” “beatings with broom, sword, fists (on chest),” hanging from exposed pipes in

⁵³ Charleston *News and Courier*, 19 August 1972; *The Brigadier*, 8 September 1972, 15 September 1972, 29 September 1972, 13 October 1972; President’s Annual Report to the Board of Visitors 1972/73; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 February 1972, 254-256.

⁵⁴ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 October 1975, document 787; *The Brigadier*, 20 April 1973, 28 February 1975; RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73, The Citadel Archives and Museum, The Citadel,

cadet rooms, “shaving cream up noses, stuck with swords, knives thrown at feet, jabbed in ribs with towel hook, kicking.” Older torments endured as well including sweat parties and “holding push-up position for fifteen minutes.”⁵⁵

Most cadets ignored the rules governing Evening Study Period as almost every freshman admitted that they spent most evenings preparing for inspections, working on company projects, or being harassed by upperclassmen. Citadel faculty member Judson Spence toured Band Company one night and reported that “on four or five occasions during a three and a half hour visit,” upperclassmen burst into plebes’ rooms then withdrew upon seeing him. Several parents threatened to withdraw their sons from The Citadel if the violations continued.⁵⁶

Almost all knobs claimed they were not getting enough to eat with one calling meal times “the worst thing a freshmen has to go through.” This disturbed many members of the committee and outraged one who “hoped that upperclassmen will be made fully aware of the fact that the use of rank to hog food is diametrically opposed to armed forces policy and tradition that has existed since colonial days.” While the

Charleston, South Carolina; Memo from Eddie Teague to Duckett, “Special Report in Fourth Class System, School Year, 1973-1974,” RC6 Records of President’s Office, Box 5.

⁵⁵ RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73; Memo from Judson Spence to Chairman, Fourth Class System Review Committee, 27 March 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo from Edward Teague to Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Malmquist, 12 September 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo to Members of Fourth Class System Review Committee from Teague, 9 May 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder.

⁵⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1972, documents 84, 86; RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73; Memo from Eddie Teague to Duckett, “Special Report in Fourth Class System, School Year, 1973-1974,” RC6 Records of President’s Office, Box 5; Memo to Fourth Class System Review Committee, 5 November 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo to Teague from J.R. Wilkinson, 7 September 1972, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo to Teague from Spence, 5 November 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo to Teague from Wilkinson, 24 October 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder;

Whitmire Report led to the banning of “knob knowledge” as a means of denying freshmen food, upperclassmen now relied upon “mess facts” to keep plebes from eating. Mess facts drew their “quasi-official status” from the *Fourth Class System Manual’s* requirement that freshmen be able to “discuss current events in a mature and serious manner.” Stretching the definition of current events, upperclassmen ordered freshmen to tell jokes and ask or answer obscure questions that may or may not have pertained to The Citadel. The amount of food a knob ate depended upon his ability to amuse, stump, or otherwise satisfy the upperclassmen at his table, and one parent complained to Teague that her son spent more time researching trivia than studying. Despite their recent invention, mess facts had become a “deeply ingrained part of cadet life,” and most upperclassmen denied that the interrogations had become “excessive,” retorting that there were “no plebes in the Corps who are starving.”⁵⁷

Several officials discovered other disturbing events not mentioned in either the Whitmire Report or the 1972 review. Sometime between final exams and commencement came “Recognition Day,” a twenty-four hour frenzy of abuse that constituted plebes’ final hurdle in their quest to become upperclassmen. On this day, cadets hung blankets over the entrances to each barracks so that outsiders could not see freshmen being beaten with belts and brooms, being doused with water and passing out

Memo to Duckett from Teague, 13 November 1973, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder.

⁵⁷ RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73; Memo to General Seignious from the Fourth Class System Review Committee, Subject – Mess Facts, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo to Fourth Class System Review Committee from Teague, 5 March 1974, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder; Memo entitled “Subject Mess Facts” dated 2 December 1974, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Major H.B. Alexander Folder; 27 March 1973 Record of Events, RC6, Records of the Commandant’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class System Review Folder.

due to over exertion. When the ordeal ended, upperclassmen lined up, shook hands with each knob in their company, and welcomed them into the corps.⁵⁸

Numerous administrators and faculty members questioned the wisdom, benefits, and legality of Recognition Day, insisting that the “the relatively new ‘tradition’ of beating the hell out of plebes should be brought within the limits of the law, fair play, respectable conduct becoming of future officers, and much older and more admirable Citadel ‘traditions.’” Since few school officials had actually witnessed the year end ritual, however, they relied heavily on the experiences and advice of cadets when deciding what course of action to take. A junior reported that “no one in any companies I observed was harmed in any way beyond what was expected,” and he defended Recognition Day as “something that a freshman will never forget and on the whole is something of an accomplishment and not a barbaric act.” Besides, he continued, company and battalion commanders let knobs decide whether or not they wanted to participate so “no one has any reason to gripe.”⁵⁹

A cadet from third battalion told a different story after witnessing freshmen being “beaten much too severely.” The cadet commander of fourth battalion limited Recognition Day activities to fifteen minutes and allowed upperclassmen to wield only brooms and black canvas belts since these weapons “do not cause any cuts, only a bruise.” The second battalion commander also imposed a fifteen minute time limit, but as a possible alternative to the existing practice, he singled out E Company’s ceremony of yelling at freshmen and dropping them for push-ups, followed by a “very inspiring speech” speech from the cadet company commander explaining that “a leader and a man

⁵⁸ RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73

is not molded by defenseless beating.” Several cadets hoped this presaged “the beginning of a meaningful and humane tradition and the destruction of a senseless brutal one.”⁶⁰

General Duckett accepted almost all the committee’s findings and resolved to stamp out the abuses they uncovered. He pleaded with upperclassmen to change their attitudes towards plebe training, admonishing them to “*start* bragging about your college, your Corps, your class, your company” and “*stop* bragging about how tough it is – you know you do this only to show how tough you are.” He instructed the cadre to “maintain a strict but sympathetic outlook” and deal with freshmen in a “humane and dignified manner,” adding “regardless of any injustices or absurdities that may have been inflicted on you, I insist that you do not pass these same errors on to the new class.” He condemned the “immature” practice of deciding “I don’t like the way [a knob] parts his hair, the way he stands, the blubbery look he has or what have you, so I hereby dedicate myself to ridding the corps of him.” According to the General, such an attitude indicated that The Citadel’s system “can work only with those who come to us fully qualified to graduate” and ran counter to the school’s mission of turning a “weakling” into a hearty Citadel cadet. Duckett tried to boost the confidence of incoming plebes by challenging traditional conceptions of Citadel exceptionalism, alerting freshmen “that of the tens of thousands of young men who have preceded you, most have succeeded and few have failed.”⁶¹

A few students not only embraced Duckett’s message, but urged him to do more. Cadet John Squires hoped that by rendering cadet “ordeals meaningful rather than merely

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

painful” and by “pushing men to physical limits rather than beating them unnecessarily,” the corps would “greatly aid the school in its struggle to survive through the difficult years to come.”⁶²

In a long editorial for *The Brigadier*, cadet John Chase alerted readers that although “hazing does not seem as bad a problem as in the past,” violations of the fourth-class system were “still widespread.” Reluctant to discuss publicly what many of his peers considered a taboo subject, he nonetheless called the hazing of freshmen sadistic, unethical, immoral, and contrary “to every glorified belief on the subject of rights of the individual that we Americans have developed in the past two hundred years.” He hated that most freshmen refused to report hazing violations because they either accepted the “propaganda that it is to his ‘honor’ to take the abuse to truly have ‘been through’ a plebe year” or because they knew of other knobs who had been run out of school for the “cowardly” act of turning in their assailant. Questioning the unspoken beliefs of many, Chase asked “is it the purpose of our plebe system to force freshmen to endure these physical and mental punishments in order to make them better men?” If so, he concluded, then this philosophy should appear in all Citadel publications, brochures, and pamphlets. Finally, he beseeched that year’s freshmen, “if no one else’s does, your class could change things.”⁶³

A few other students joined in, railing against the “brutality and, yes, sadism, in general by significant members of the Corps.” Leery of the claim that hazing constituted “an old traditional part of the Corps,” the editor of *The Brigadier* informed readers that if

⁶¹ Memo to Duckett from Fourth Class System Review Committee, 7 June 1973, RC6, Records of the President’s Office, Box 5, Fourth Class Review Committee Report to the President For the Academic Year, 1972-73; *The Brigadier*, 22 September 1972, 3 November 1972, 25 January 1974; 1973 *Guidon*, 34.

⁶² *The Brigadier*, 16 February 1973.

they talked to Citadel alumni from the 1950s, they would learn that back then “things were strict and that the college turned out dozens of fine classes without the physical abuse that has been so popular in recent years.” The editor and others demanded to know “when are cadets going to stop these STUPID hazing traditions.” Rather than treating a harsh plebe system as the source of the institution’s strength, they argued that the “elimination of brutality at The Citadel may well determine the survival of the school as an elite military college,” and they did not want to see the college “ruined by people with sadistic ideas.”⁶⁴

Of course, not all cadets saw eye to eye on this issue. One cadet chastised Chase and the others for “hanging our dirty laundry out to the world,” accusing them of “magnifying” the severity and frequency of hazing at The Citadel and giving the “fake impression that things here are badly wrong.” Cadet Ralph Towell criticized administrators for violating the “purposes and ideals of The Citadel” by catering to “apathetic and unmotivated individuals” who diminished the “quality of the Corps.” Towell believed that The Citadel’s military aspects, in particular the fourth-class system, gave the school its unique value, and as a result, he suggested Citadel officials not lower, but “raise our standards to create even more of a challenge to those who are willing to accept it and recognize its worth.”⁶⁵

The protests of students, however, paled in comparison to the furor raised by Citadel alumni. In March 1974, two recent graduates working in The Citadel’s procurement office addressed the Board of Visitors at length about the “critical enrollment situation” at the college, and their diagnosis of The Citadel’s ills mirrored

⁶³ *The Brigadier*, 27 April 1973.

⁶⁴ *The Brigadier*, 27 April 1973, 4 May 1973, 17 May 1974.

many Americans' concerns about the nation at large. Their fears that the school's present image "is not the traditional one," paralleled societal uneasiness with the United States' declining global stature in the wake of Vietnam and the OPEC oil embargo. Just as few Americans could imagine how a superpower could lose to an army of third world guerillas or how a once thriving nation had become so dependant on foreign oil, the Citadel alumni remarked, "a decade ago it would have been unconceivable to suggest that the State legislature would consider actions that would civilianize The Citadel and corrupt an educational institution that has been successful as the Corps in producing leaders and successful men in every field. Friend and alumni reaction would have been too violent."⁶⁶

Reflective of the wider backlash to social activism, the two men agreed that "The Corps' decay of integrity began" in the mid-1960s, when, in an effort to attract more students, "irresolute" Citadel administrators catered to the whims of "outsiders" and started "adulterating, changing and weakening the demands of our system" in the name of "progress." They regretted that by succumbing to the "loss of values of society at large" and allowing cadets to follow an ideology where "'do your own thing' is the watchword . . . our military discipline, our standard of conduct, and integrity all have become a sorry façade." Over the past few years, the two men had witnessed "a rush to give away and demilitarize the Corps" as evidenced by the "unnecessary extension of civilian clothes privileges," an "incredible leave system" that made it possible for cadets to leave town

⁶⁵ *The Brigadier*, 8 December 1972, 17 May 1974,

⁶⁶ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 15 March 1974, document 367.

almost every weekend, and “the complete elimination of the rigor and ordeal of the Plebe System with a consequent loss of class solidarity and pride in accomplishment.”⁶⁷

The two men pointed out that “South Carolina still remains a state with respect for traditional values” and as such, “there remains a market for a tough demanding and rewarding military college.” However, they believed that “The Citadel can only justify its existence by being a very special world within itself,” and they saw “more leadership and less concessions” as the way to rescue an institution and a society where “integrity, excellence, and discipline have lost their meaning.” As part of this plan, they demanded Citadel leaders return to “the values, policies and traditions of Generals Summerall and Clark which are among the most important assets a young man could be associated with.”⁶⁸

The chairman of the Board of Visitors contributed his own views on “how to attract sufficient young men who will accept our way of life.” Convinced that “The strength of The Citadel lies in its history and tradition” and that “In today’s free wheeling times, the standards, the rules and regulations, and the very system of academic-military education seem to be anachronisms,” he shouted, “If these are anachronisms so are the American flag, the American democratic process, and the American system in which each individual is free to strive for what he considers success.” He indicated that the rest of the country had strayed from these values when he presented The Citadel’s regional identity as a liability, predicting that “as a deep-South institution” beholden “to principles

⁶⁷ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 March 1974, documents 350-351, 352, 353, 361, 367, 364.

⁶⁸ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 March 1974, documents 349, 352, 353, 358, 365 (emphasis in original).

that have limited appeal to liberal news media, we are not likely to gain national attention.”⁶⁹

The testimonies of these men reflect a pervasive American uneasiness with change, and reveal how this uneasiness shaped people’s views of The Citadel, the South, and the nation. Such unqualified glorifications of Summerall, Clark, and the rest of the so-called “Greatest Generation” glossed over the prejudices, injustices, and inequities that marred these eras and implicitly endorsed The Citadel’s and the United States’ exclusionist practices. Citadel boosters treated challenges to the status quo and efforts to expand the school’s constituency as an assault on “traditional values,” and in a sense, the fight to keep civilian day students out of The Citadel was waged to protect the corps from a supposedly decadent society that had abandoned these values. Many Citadel men based their institution’s strength and appeal on a clouded, nostalgic longing for a supposedly less complicated pre-1960s America when old social and political hierarchies held firm, before African Americans, women, and students questioned the relevancy of and reasoning behind such values.

Such notions demonstrate that for many, The Citadel’s as well as the South’s distinctiveness rested not on the belief that the institution and region were unique within America, but that they were uniquely American. By praising the supposed glories of an earlier America as well as The Citadel’s antebellum past, the college’s boosters linked their appeals to a desire to secure white male societal dominance. In doing so, they projected a heavily gendered, implicitly racialized assessment of the traits “good” Citadel men possessed, an assessment that resonated with a large segment of the United States population.

⁶⁹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 January 1974, document 38.

CHAPTER SIX: THE SPIRIT OF '76

As The Citadel limped into the second half of the 1970s, General Duckett resigned as the college's president. He did so partly because he had already served longer than he had intended, but also because the presidential candidate school officials had coveted since the end of General Harris' term had finally become available. Lieutenant General George M. Seignious had graduated from The Citadel in 1942 and embarked on an illustrious military and diplomatic career. He served as the military advisor to the Paris Peace Talks in 1968, and since 1972, had held a position with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. State and school officials celebrated General Seignious' homecoming, expressing great faith in his ability to restore the college's strength. At the General's inauguration, South Carolina Governor John Edwards lauded the new president as one of "those who refuse to be swayed by the shouting of those who would destroy America" and as one of the "leaders who follow the ideals of the country more closely." When Seignious stepped to the podium, he introduced what was to be a major theme of his presidency, making it clear what type of people he thought America needed by pledging to "enlighten, guide and inspire for the state and the nation, worthy leaders of tomorrow – Men of learning/Men of integrity/Men of patriotism/Men of self-reliance."¹

Under its new president, The Citadel began to emerge from the doldrums of the previous ten years, and while the General deserves some credit for this, larger social and

¹ *The State*, 26 January 1974; *Columbia Record*, 1 March 1975; *The Brigadier*, 24 January 1974, 6 December 1974, 2 May 1975.

political trends factored heavily into the college's resurgence. For example, Seignious turned the patriotic fervor accompanying the country's bicentennial to the school's advantage, launching a very successful "Spirit of '76" fund raising campaign that established scholarships for "patriotic, worthy young men." An even bigger boon came when the Miss USA pageant was held in Charleston and Citadel cadets appeared on the program as escorts for the contestants. When over seventy million viewers tuned in, the Board of Visitors called the event more valuable than a "million dollars worth of publicity."²

The corps' participation in the Miss USA pageant accentuated the three pillars upon which much of their identity rested- conspicuous patriotism, unassailable masculinity, and quaint southernness. As mentioned earlier, by the mid 1970s, these three traits fed into the image of the "South as the new America"; a land of conservative, hard working, patriotic, God fearing, good ol' boys. While Citadel personnel did not discourage such perceptions, they portrayed themselves and their region not so much as a new America, but as the supposedly idyllic old America of Summerall and Clark. To their way of thinking, the South was not going to lead the nation forward in the direction of change, but pull it back to a time when young people minded their elders and before women, African Americans, and other minority groups upset the status quo. This mindset mirrored a national animus towards the cultural and social reforms of the 1960s, and prompted a 1975 Citadel graduate to assert that, "in these days of doubt, these days

² President's Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1975/76, 13, 52; President's Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1977/78, 67; President's Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1976/77, 68; *The Brigadier*, 6 December 1974, 27 October 1974; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 January 1976; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 14 April 1977, document 382; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 16 February 1979, document 247.

when the very foundations of civilization are being torn asunder, The Citadel clearly stands as a last stalwart, one of the last legions defending what we hold to be precious.”³

In a nation experiencing a distinct lack of faith in its elected leaders, Americans seized upon the South as a land of honor and integrity that could restore the country’s pride and reputation. This image contrasted sharply with the dominant image of the white South during the civil rights movement, but in a post-Vietnam, post-Watergate society, citizens yearning for stability projected their expectations onto the region. Most southerners savored and promoted their image as unswerving paragons of virtue, but at The Citadel, the cadets took this to another level, presenting themselves as the last best hope for a morally bankrupt nation.

While always an important element of the “whole man,” the cultivation of honor moved to the center of the Citadel experience during this period. A passage in *The Guidon* intoned, “In our society today, honor has become an even more treasured asset as we witness politicians and other respected leaders participating in less than honorable activities.” One student appreciated that “here we are teaching honor while we watch the rest of the world entangle itself in a host of dishonorable events.” Without institutions such as The Citadel, he warned, “we must be prepared to see the world crumble beneath our feet, for certainly man cannot exist without trustful relationships and communication.” A series of widely publicized cheating scandals at the national service academies inflated the corps’ ego. The 1977 *Guidon* informed new recruits that even

³ *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1976.

though “at many other institutions, honor systems have not worked . . . honor is here at The Citadel.”⁴

One student’s concept of honor resembled the rigid code of conduct that went a long way toward muting dissent in the antebellum South. Cadet Frederick Whittle opined that while students at other colleges “probably have meager interest in such long suppressed ideals as discipline, honor, humility, courtesy, morality, and pursuit of excellence,” The Citadel’s cultivation of these traits “separates us from the rest as we rise above the empty halls of deteriorating and mediocre standards.” While boasting of his humility, Whittle exulted that because “The Citadel requires of her cadets discipline, and honor,” the college stood as “the symbol of moral strength and character that it is today.” In order to preserve The Citadel’s reputation, he encouraged all cadets and alumni to remain “ever watchful to insure that this institution does not compromise one fiber of her character in the name of false progress or even equality.”⁵

Seignious and The Citadel’s promise to transform each knob into “a man of learning, a man of integrity, a man of patriotism, a man of self-reliance” appealed to more and more young Americans as the decade progressed. The number of applicants boomed between 1976 and 1979, but filling the barracks did not end The Citadel’s difficulties. Drawing on his diplomatic background, General Seignious labored to turn his alma mater into “a focal point for international affairs in this area.” He invited foreign dignitaries to campus and hosted symposiums on international relations. He also championed a

⁴ *The Brigadier*, 31 January 1975, 14 March 1975, 12 September 1975, 17 September 1976, 25 March 1977; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 September 1976, documents 255-260; 1975 Annual Report, 47; Rick Atkinson, *The Long Gray Line* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989), 397-400; John P. Lovell, *Neither Athens Nor Sparta: The American Service Academies in Transition* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1979), 229, 225-226, 266-267; 1975 *Guidon*, 28; 1977 *Guidon*, 28; 1978 *Guidon*, 28.

⁵ Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor; The Brigadier*, 14 September 1979.

program in place before he arrived in which The Citadel accepted members of the Iranian Royal Navy into the corps of cadets. After four years of academic and military instruction, these students were expected to return home and train new recruits utilizing the methods they learned abroad.⁶

While the number of Iranian cadets never exceeded one hundred, their presence caused a great deal of commotion on campus. On the surface, it appeared that the “Iranian problem” at The Citadel stemmed primarily from cultural differences between American and Middle Eastern cadets, differences exacerbated by the unique demands of the fourth-class system. While some native born students tried to explain that Iranians “were raised in a society where it is considered degrading to empty other people’s trash, or to sweep their floors, or to submit to the fourth-class system,” others wanted nothing to do with such excuses, blaming the “great deal of antipathy directed at Iranian students” on the foreign cadets own laziness and recalcitrance. Indicative of a certain hostility to a multi-cultural environment, one student insisted “conformity is the basis of the fourth-class system,” and “if it is the objective of the Iranian student program to receive the benefits of the system here at The Citadel, then they must conform to the system.” School officials sought to defuse the situation by requiring incoming Iranian cadets to complete a summer training program designed to teach them the “customs and nature” of American and Citadel life, a thought that appalled at least one student who called it an

⁶ 1976 *Guidon*, 18; 1977 *Guidon*, 17; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 January 1974, documents 175-179; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 16 May 1975, documents 673, 674; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 July 1975, document 686, 687, 694; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 September 1975, documents 701, 703, 704, 732; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 October 1975, documents 787-788, 793; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 9 January 1976, documents 31, 33; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 September 1977, document 437; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 28 February 1975, documents 659, 668; 1977 Annual Report, 7, 13; 1978 Annual Report; 1979 Annual Report, 8; President’s Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1980/81, 34-35; *The Brigadier*, 13 September 1974, 12 September 1975, 23 April 1976, 10 September 1976; *Columbia Record*, 5 May 1975; 1976 Annual Report, 18; 1977 Annual Report, 23.

“inexcusable atrocity” to Americanize descendants of “one of the oldest surviving civilizations . . . a society always noted for its learned men, its artists and its philosophers and poets.”⁷

For his part, Seignious wanted to expand the program, contending that students from “nations that our country has explicit interests in trade and international affairs and security matters” would benefit from a Citadel education. He argued that accepting students from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Brazil, and Venezuela would strengthen the United States’ global standing and broaden the educational experience of both foreign and American cadets. Several cadets noticed that Seignious listed “primarily oil-producing countries for his source of international students,” and while some acknowledged the “awesome economic power of the oil cartel,” they accused their president of “playing politics” with their alma mater. They questioned Seignious’ scholarly rationalizations for the program, citing the “glaring omission that the General’s list excluded Japan, West Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and Great Britain.” Assuming that Middle Eastern countries offered little more than fossil fuels, one student “hoped that in addition to consideration of the economical situation of the world, countries known for art, literature, scientific technology, and international diversity would also receive consideration.”⁸

This line of reasoning points to a larger issue fueling the tensions within the corps of cadets. If Vietnam punctured the nation’s aura of invincibility, the OPEC oil embargo and, later, the Iran hostage crisis deflated it entirely. In his history of the 1970s, Peter Carroll called the former event arguably “the most revolutionary shift of world power in the twentieth century.” With this in mind, the attitudes of many American cadets

⁷ *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 January 1978; *The Brigadier*, 8 February 1974, 15 February 1974, 26 September 1975, 16 April 1976, 23 April 1976, 17 September 1976; 1976 Annual Report, 39.

reflected the nation's uneasiness over the United States' declining global power and influence. At The Citadel, this translated into a fear that Iranian cadets would soon take over the institution. One observer remarked that the "Persians have formed their own subculture. The ground floor of Mark Clark Hall, where they like to congregate, has been dubbed the Iranian Embassy." A cartoon in *The Brigadier* showed a visiting Sheik standing in the middle of second battalion whispering to a cadet, "Some day, my son, this will all be yours."⁹

Possibly to compensate for the United State's obvious dependence on foreign resources, many Citadel personnel lauded the country's supposed moral, cultural, and intellectual superiority. Based on his belief that Middle Easterners lacked American discipline, dedication, and professionalism, Lieutenant J.W. Glass of The Citadel's Naval ROTC Department asserted that "the average Iranian at The Citadel, with its military flavor and its academic rigors, is just not likely to succeed." Despite frustrations that "if I teach at the level of the Americans – and that's my job – then I lose most of the Iranians," Glass followed orders, calling his own misgivings "negligible" when compared to the "political reasons" for the program.¹⁰

Other faculty members disagreed with Glass's assessment, calling Iranian cadets "extremely conscientious and well prepared." One professor found the "fact that they survived at all is remarkable" since "Persians were not accustomed to Americans leaning within inches of their faces and shouting 'You're nothing but a camel driver.'" Another

⁸ *The Brigadier*, 31 January 1975, 14 February 1975.

⁹ Peter Carroll, *It Seemed Like Nothing Happened: The Tragedy and Promise of America in the 1970s* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982), 117-118; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 January 1978; *The Brigadier*, 17 October 1976, 16 April 1976, 8 October 1976; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 5 April 1975, document 668.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

teacher criticized school officials for not accommodating the needs of foreign students, dismissing the argument that no one at The Citadel should receive “special” treatment by noting that Iranian cadets “require supplemental help” and if “The Citadel accepts them, they have an obligation to do a little more.”¹¹

Such viewpoints remained in the minority, however, and as America’s troubles in the Middle East intensified, the controversy over Iranian students spilled beyond The Citadel’s gates. Until 1977, the Iranian government paid each of their cadets a monthly allowance of \$1100, and according to one professor, the students “quickly found out what money can do in America.” With memories of long gas lines still fresh in people’s minds, local Charlestonians were outraged that Iranian cadets were “buying expensive cars and renting off campus apartments with their living stipends.” Contrary to other arguments that Iranians inherently lacked discipline, General Seignious hinted that United States’ culture had corrupted these young men, explaining that “removed from the constraints of their own culture and environment and immersed in our society, there were bound to be some excesses.” The Citadel’s head of Naval ROTC agreed that rather than resisting American values, the students demonstrated “a great attraction for the American way of life and particularly its leisure time activities,” concluding “maybe we Americanized the Iranians too much.”¹²

With irate South Carolinians demanding to know “why should one penny of my tax money be used for the education of a student from an oil-rich country which participated in an oil boycott against the United States just a few years ago,” state Representative and Citadel graduate John Bradley took a stand against supplying “direct

¹¹ *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 January 1978.

¹² *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 January 1978; *The State*, 4 January 1979.

foreign aid” to Iran by using The Citadel as a “base for training a large number” of their soldiers. When Seignious tried to impress upon legislators the diplomatic importance of the program, arguing “our oil interests in the Persian Gulf are paramount,” Bradley shot back, “I don’t understand about the Persian Gulf and I don’t want to.” Most Citadel graduates in the General Assembly backed Seignious, calling Bradley’s crusade “potentially very dangerous to the school, the nation, and the world.” A legislator who attended The Citadel with some Iranian cadets spoke positively of his experience, pleading to his colleagues, “don’t put up a roadblock to that kind of brotherhood.”¹³

Tired of the scrutiny, the Board of Visitors set out to reduce the number of Iranian students on campus. In November 1979, after Iranian militants in Tehran took sixty United States citizens hostage, President Jimmy Carter took the matter out of the Board’s hands by ordering the deportation of all Iranian diplomats. Since they held diplomatic visas, this decision applied to the Iranian cadets, and with “deep reluctance” D.D. Nicholson broke the news to the students. In his farewell address, Nicholson thanked them for their “constructive” contribution to Citadel life and hoped that their experiences had been “rewarding.”¹⁴

A less publicized minority on campus endured many of the same affronts as Iranians. In both word and deed, several white cadets continued to exhibit a startling insensitivity to the concerns of their African-American colleagues. On an overwhelmingly white campus, Citadel personnel had made little headway in raising the

¹³ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1978, document 70-72; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 March 1978, document 1978; *The State*, 23 February 1978, 1 March 1978, 2 March 1978, 13 April 1978, 14 April 1978; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 January 1978.

¹⁴ *Columbia Record*, 8 April 1980, 9 April 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1978, document 63; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 April 1977, document 388; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 31 March 1978, documents 86-87; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 January 1979, document 223; Board of Visitors,

cultural awareness of those who felt no need to consider the negative connotations of their behavior as they brazenly made light of past abuses and promoted derogatory racial stereotypes. In the 1977 yearbook, the white seniors in T Company posed as Ku Klux Klan members surrounding a black classmate. They smiled for the camera as one held a noose around their “victim’s” neck, another aimed a toy pistol at his head, and yet another brandished a knife. In February 1978, an African-American cadet won the honor of serving as the “rear guide” for the Summerall Guards. As the title indicates, the rear guide anchored the platoon, a fact that prompted an artist for *The Brigadier* to quip “It may be a breakthrough . . . But he’s still riding in the back.”¹⁵

Fed up with these indignities, cadet Eddie Lee Bracey, Jr. called the cartoon “unforgivable” and catalogued other “disturbing” caricatures from the past, including depictions of black laundry workers as gorillas, mess hall employees as “tribeswomen with bones in their hair,” and a black tactical officer gleefully discovering a watermelon under a bed. To those who wondered, he said attitudes such as these were “why blacks sit together at ball games.” Bracey added that “when the school that is supposed to be developing men for leadership demeans its own,” perhaps the members of that institution should reevaluate its priorities and attitudes. After receiving Bracy’s letter, the editorial staff of *The Brigadier* apologized only for the original cartoon’s ambiguity, claiming they printed it with “the intent to applaud him.”¹⁶

Students and administrators left no room for ambiguity when it came to defending the all-male corps of cadets. As part of the school’s recruiting efforts, the admissions

“Minutes,” 16 February 1979, document 247; 1979 Annual Report, 74; John Dumbrell, *The Carter Presidency: A Re-evaluation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 7, 171.

¹⁵ *The Brigadier*, 19 April 1974, 14 November 1975, 24 September 1976, 17 February 1978 (emphasis in original), 21 March 1980; 1977 *Sphinx*, 138.

office sent out mailers promoting the college as a place where “Manhood Meets Mastery.” From his earliest days as president, Seignious harped on the notion that a “loyalty to the fundamental characteristics of manhood” made The Citadel distinctive from and superior to other colleges and universities.¹⁷

The idea that fundamental characteristics of manhood actually existed was exactly what the women’s liberation movement of the late 1960s and 1970’s challenged, and even though The Citadel’s masculinity obsessed administrators’, students’, and alumni’s disdain for feminism might be expected to far outstrip that of other Americans, their attitudes and arguments echoed many of those advanced in society at large. In their quest for equal treatment and opportunity in both public and private life, feminists threatened existing social hierarchies that protected the power of white males by insisting on a “radical reexamination of what it meant to be male and female in America.” Many people viewed the passage and ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) as a major step towards achieving these goals, and drawing attention to the commonalties between The Citadel’s explicit desire to exclude women and influential Americans’ campaign to defeat the ERA illustrates the extent to which gender categories and definitions shaped and determined power relationships within United States society.¹⁸

As Donald Mathews and Jane Sheron DeHart explain in *Sex, Gender and the Politics of the ERA*, the amendment provoked a severe, “apocalyptic” response from its opponents, who distorted the legislation’s purpose in an effort to preserve patriarchal control of the nation’s political, cultural, and economic systems. Rising to the “defense

¹⁶ *The Brigadier*, 17 March 1978.

¹⁷ 1980 Annual Report; *The Brigadier*, 6 December 1974.

of traditionalist views of womanhood” and guided in part by misgivings about federally sanctioned equality, North Carolina Senator Sam Ervin led the congressional charge against the ERA. According to Mathews and DeHart, Ervin’s cry that the ERA would “destroy all the laws that made distinctions between men and women” ignored clear indications that the amendment “would not affect legislation in which the biological sex of the parties was relevant.” Unconcerned with such details, Ervin and others remained convinced that its passage would leave women at the mercy of sexual predators, convince men to abandon their families, and require males and females to share restrooms.¹⁹

Cadet Sidney Wise ran down a similar list of outrages when he defined the ERA as “the straw that would break America’s back.” Wise predicted that by “weakening family ties,” the amendment would not only promote “social disruption, unhappiness, and increasing rates of divorce and desertion,” it “may also lead to increased rates of alcoholism, suicide and possibly sexual deviation.” Wise joined millions of others who supported the “admirable” goal of equal employment opportunities for women, but worried about the “implications” of allowing the amendment to become a “tool of the Supreme Court,” a court that “has been known to find meanings and powers in Constitutional amendments undreamt of by the Congresses that proposed them and the states that ratified them.”²⁰

National opponents of the ERA and especially the media focused on female opposition to the women’s movement to the extent that the debate appeared to be a “catfight” between “the simpering, sheltered wife and mother on the one side and the

¹⁸ David Farber, *The Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1994), 241; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 432; Donald Mathews and Jane Sherron DeHart, *Sex, Gender and the Politics of ERA: A State and the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 211.

¹⁹ Mathews and DeHart, *Sex*, 45-47, 48, 49, 218.

ambitious independent outspoken bitch on the other.” Pundits narrowed the field further by privileging sound bites from women activists who equated female support for the ERA with a desire to “become a man.” Wise employed similar tactics when he argued “the worth of the ERA is placed in doubt by the fact that most women do not want it. They ask if they should be denied their right to be a woman just to satisfy a small number of disillusioned women who proclaim their rights in a ‘Bitch Manifesto’ (that’s what *they* call it).” That same edition of *The Brigadier* contained a cartoon of an overweight, frumpy, cigarette smoking woman holding a placard declaring “We Want Freedom N.O.W.” In the corner of the frame, a man looked on, mumbling “and they call us pigs.”²¹

While worried about the feminist movement’s impact on society at large, few cadets worried about its possible affect on The Citadel until 1975 when President Gerald Ford signed a bill requiring the service academies to admit women. Soon after Ford’s order, General Seignious assured cadets and alumni alike that although “we could have a problem” should women want to enter The Citadel’s veteran program, federal law protected the all-male admissions policy regarding the corps of cadets. With the ERA winding its way through the ratification process, however, he added that should the amendment pass, “our chances in denying entry by females would be much less.”²²

The next few years were tense ones for The Citadel as the thought of a coeducational corps haunted school officials and cadets. During this time, Citadel personnel honed the series of arguments they would present whenever they felt the need

²⁰ *The Brigadier*, 23 March 1973.

²¹ Douglas, *Where the Girls Are*, 232-233, 242-244; Farber, *Great Dreams*, 257; *The Brigadier*, 23 March 1973, 13 April 1973 (emphasis in original).

to defend the school's admissions requirements. One line of reasoning cast coeducation as a violation of the rights of young men to attend an all-male military college. Not only that, Seignious and others condemned the ERA as a threat to all single-sex institutions, one that could cost women at nearby Converse and Columbia College "many special rights they have now."²³

Many Citadel students and alumni dreaded the "drastic effect" coeducation would have on the college financially. One cadet complained that "unlike the wealthy well-endowed private schools such as Notre Dame, Harvard, Duke and Vanderbilt, The Citadel never had a 'robber baron' dump his riches into it." He saw this as a boon however, since the school could resist the "ruinous progress" of admitting women "because we have neither the facilities for females nor the money to acquire them." General Seignious also cast The Citadel as an unduly oppressed, underprivileged urchin and regretted that the few "women who would attend The Citadel would warrant the conversion of various facilities and programs which would be required to cater to the women's needs."²⁴

The most emotional pleas hinged upon the assumption that The Citadel could not function as a coeducational institution. Seignious spoke for most alumni and students when he explained, "the life and role of the cadet and the military college cannot be altered fundamentally without fundamentally altering The Citadel and what it's been since it was created in 1842." Although he never clarified what these fundamental aspects were, the only Citadel tradition that had remained unaltered since 1842 was its all

²² Jeanne Holm, Jeanne, *Women in the Military: An Unfinished Revolution* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), 305; *The Brigadier*, 17 October 1975, 14 November 1975, 19 November 1976.

²³ *The Brigadier*, 20 February 1976, 4 March 1977; *Columbia Record*, 21 January 1976.

²⁴ *The Brigadier*, 4 March 1977, 16 March 1979.

male corps of cadets. One student broached the issue directly, declaring the “admission of women to the South Carolina Corps of Cadets would in the least severely alter the proud tradition of The Citadel and rush the disintegration of the college.” Another hoped man building process itself might stave off coeducation, warning “we must avoid making the fourth-class system too easy, for the ever present threat of women at The Citadel looms not far beyond our gates.”²⁵

While the ERA represented a potential menace, the Charleston chapter of the National Organization of Women (NOW) posed a direct challenge to The Citadel’s single sex policies. In June 1976, NOW members convinced the Charleston City Council to withhold its annual \$10,000 contribution to The Citadel’s athletic scholarship fund as proof that sexual discrimination had “no place in 1976.” NOW’s success unleashed the fury of Citadel cadets and administrators. General Seignious dug in his heels, vowing to preserve the all-male corps of cadets and informing the council “if the city of Charleston doesn’t feel it’s a worthy institution, then you shouldn’t support it.”²⁶

Utilizing all the previously mentioned arguments for upholding the college’s traditions, a student demonized the women’s movement and martyred The Citadel. He cast NOW as a “highly organized group” of “irate” and “clamorous ladies” led by “zealous and self-righteous individuals who believe with something approaching religious fervor that their’s is a mission to eradicate sexual discrimination wherever in their opinion it’s to be found.” In his estimation, these activists tended to run “roughshod over the rights of others” as evidenced by their attack on “the favorite liberal whipping boy,” a “military college run by a conservative military administration.” The cadet

²⁵ Jane Mansbridge, *Why We Lost the ERA* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 86; Mathews and DeHart, *Sex*, 71; *The Brigadier*, 6 December 1974, 13 February 1976, 21 October 1977.

thanked NOW and its spokeswomen Conni Ackerman, though, for offering a “sober reminder” to all who supported the “time-honored concept of an all-male Corps of Cadets that there exists beyond the walls of our college an organization which is willing to patiently snipe away at us until it achieves its goal of destroying our system.” Repeatedly referring to NOW as a group of misguided “outsiders” who “couldn’t care less about our proud heritage,” he dismissed claims that The Citadel could admit women “while continuing to function in the same admirable way it has for so many years without losing a step in the process,” asking “what kind of girl would result from a system designed to build tough men?”²⁷

In addition to depicting NOW as a cabal of heartless shrews intent on trampling cadets’ rights, *The Brigadier* included a staged photo of a young, attractive woman saluting while dressed in a Citadel uniform. The line “Here’s one woman on campus no one objects to” appeared underneath the picture. The contrasting of ill-tempered feminist “outsiders” with a pretty, non-threatening female “cadet,” exemplified not only American society’s proclivity for viewing the women’s movement in Manichean terms, it typified men’s assumed role as arbiters of acceptable and unacceptable behavior.²⁸

Clamorous Citadel backers raised enough of a row to convince the city council to reverse their decision and restore the \$10,000 contribution. This did not quell the controversy though. In February 1976, Conni Ackerman visited The Citadel’s campus to debate history professor John Coussons on the merits of the school’s learning environment. Before a packed house of cadets, Ackerman went first, praising The Citadel as a “very, very unique institution” whose system of “training and discipline”

²⁶ *The Brigadier*, 30 January 1976; *Columbia Record*, 2 February 1976.

²⁷ *The Brigadier*, 13 February 1976.

would benefit “some women.” She believed males and females needed lessons in “respecting authority and learning assertiveness, and learning how to express yourself, and learning how to get ahead, and learning how to take it rough.” She recognized the college’s long line of distinguished graduates and contended that “the same kind of experience” that produced these men “should be available to women if they want to come here.”²⁹

In his rebuttal, Coussons’ summarized the arguments made by Dr. S.I. Hayakawa, a linguist and former President of San Francisco State University, who argued that “throughout history boys have had to pass a test to prove their masculinity.” This tradition had waned, however, as responsibility for raising and educating young males fell mainly to mothers and female teachers. With fathers exerting less of a “required masculine influence on the growing boy,” The Citadel filled the void by “stretching a boy to his limit of endurance in order for him to reach his potential.” Coussons conceded that some women could also benefit from such a challenge, but since “the test would have to be vastly different,” he could not fathom “how girls could come to The Citadel, don the uniform of a cadet, and function in the Cadet Corps without basically altering the nature of the corps.” Furthermore, he denied that “by not being allowed to do so, it is a denial of their constitutional rights.”³⁰

Ackerman acknowledged the physiological differences between men and women, but argued that by establishing “comparable” standards for females they would be “essentially exerting themselves as much as the men.” Not surprisingly, this drew a heated response from the crowd. A reporter covering the debate for *The Brigadier*

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ *The Brigadier*, 13 February 1976, 27 February 1976.

remarked wryly, “The cadets in the audience did not seem to agree with her.” Indeed, Ackerman failed to win many converts at The Citadel. A month after her appearance, a cadet referred to her as “Ms. Ackerson” since “the suffix man is sexist and as Conni is presently on an emasculating sexist rampage.”³¹

With more attention being paid to the sexual composition of the corps of cadets, *The Brigadier* staff surveyed the student body to find out “How does The Citadel’s isolated environment affect cadets’ attitudes towards sex and girls in general?” Two respondents claimed The Citadel has helped them “accept and appreciate women,” but the vast majority echoed the sentiments of one student who smirked, “Citadel guys may sometimes treat women like sex objects, but they love it.” Some cadets appeared especially defensive about their all-male surroundings, with one denying that Citadel people “hate women” and another proclaiming “I believe the question of cadets being gay because of this is ridiculous.”³²

Despite all the turmoil, The Citadel had yet to face a concerted challenge to its admission policies. NOW’s protest merely delayed the city council’s final decision, and Conni Ackerman never again spoke on campus. In his study of women in the United States Armed Forces, Brian Mitchell notes that “the very year that saw the first perfumed plebe enter West Point also saw the ERA sitting dead in the water.” Confident that the college had weathered the storm, D.D. Nicholson exulted, “during a period when other colleges were espousing permissiveness in the ways of drugs and coeds, The Citadel

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *The Brigadier*, 27 February 1976, 19 March 1976.

³² *The Brigadier*, 20 February 1976, 23 April 1976; *The State*, 7 May 1975.

stuck to its principles. Now the national psychology has turned and everybody has come to The Citadel point of view.”³³

In 1977, however, *Brigadier* editor Peter J. Campbell raised a dissenting voice to the chorus denouncing coeducation. He challenged the “questionable position” that the ERA would abolish all single gender colleges saying the amendment would not apply to all public and private institutions. As for complaints that women would “weaken the corps,” he argued just the opposite, claiming coeducation “would create a challenge for the Corps” and allow cadets to “prove their worth” under the inevitable public scrutiny. To those who believed women could not “handle the physical aspects of Citadel life,” he replied that no one would know that for sure until a female attempted it, repeating “if the time does come, however, when women are admitted, it should be looked on as a challenge, instead of something to be feared.”³⁴

While the admission of women remained a future concern, the means by which The Citadel built men continued to generate problems. In his inaugural address, General Seignious vowed that “The Citadel will remain a military college – emphasizing integrity and character and that American form of leadership that seeks the willing response of subordinates – not relying on the crutch of brutal or demeaning authoritarianism.” Like his predecessor, Seignious worried that the fourth-class system hindered the college’s recruiting, especially since “word has gotten to the high school students of South Carolina that the discipline [at The Citadel] was on the severe side.” While he questioned the accuracy of such rumors, he admitted that “the image persists that there is hazing, brutality, and that there’s not an opportunity to eat, not an opportunity to sleep, and not

³³ Brian Mitchell, *Women in the Military: Flirting With Disaster* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishers, 1998), 33; *Columbia Record*, 21 January 1976.

many young Americans want to face that.” Seignious resolved to “make sure there are no excesses” within the plebe system, and in the first two years of his presidency, the freshmen attrition rate dropped from 11.4 percent to 5.7 percent. By 1976, however, hazing was again on the rise. In February, the school’s chaplain delivered a sermon before Seignious and the corps, condemning the indignities upperclassmen inflicted on knobs. Less than a month into the 1976/77 school year, over 10 percent of the freshmen class had quit, and while Seignious promised to “remedy the situation,” events in a small New Jersey suburb intensified the demand for such a cure.³⁵

At four AM on November 28, 1976 in Montvale, New Jersey, Harry De La Roche, Jr., a Citadel freshman home for Thanksgiving break, flagged down a police car screaming “They’re all dead!” The officer followed De La Roche the few blocks to his parent’s house where they found the murdered remains of the young man’s mother, father, and youngest brother. Harry De La Roche, Sr. and his wife Mary Jane had been shot twice in the head. Their son Eric died after “much struggle” having been shot three times and then bludgeoned to death. Hours later, investigators would discover the body of fifteen year old Ronnie De La Roche stuffed in a trunk in the attic. Soon thereafter, Harry De La Roche, Jr. was charged with killing his family.³⁶

News of the slayings appeared in the *New York Times* as well as South Carolina newspapers, and almost every article connected De La Roche to The Citadel. The initial coverage in South Carolina’s *State* newspaper noted that although no motive had been

³⁴ *The Brigadier*, 25 March 1977, 19 March 1976.

³⁵ *The Brigadier*, 6 September 1974, 6 December 1974, 20 February 1976, 17 September 1976, 8 October 1976; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 October 1975, document 787; *Columbia Record*, 7 August 1974; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 September 1976, document 80

³⁶ *The State*, 29 November 1976, 6 January 1978; *New York Times*, 29 November 1976; *Columbia Record*, 29 November 1976, 6 December 1976, 16 January 1978, 27 November 1978; *The Brigadier*, 18 November 1977.

offered, “friends of the suspect reportedly said he was unhappy with the military school he was attending.” It took two years for De La Roche to stand trial, and in the interim, his story garnered increased attention. When the case finally made it to court, the *New York Times* printed daily synopses of the proceedings. Readers in Charleston remained especially attentive as they realized that The Citadel and its fourth-class system would become “an alleged conspirator as the New Jersey tragedy unfolded.”³⁷

Less than two weeks after the murder, a writer for *The Brigadier* announced “De La Roche to blame Citadel” and indicated that the former cadet planned to “plead temporary insanity caused by his treatment at The Citadel.” The article quoted New Jersey area newspapers that De La Roche ate only “grits, water, and one-half of a lima bean for thirty days.” An alumni living in Charlotte, North Carolina called D.D. Nicholson and relayed the details of a newscast he had just seen on the case. Nicholson’s notes from the conversation read, “the physical and mental torture was horrendous; hazing far exceeding that of any of the U.S. military academies. Northern boys going down there are still expected to fight the Civil War.”³⁸

Two detectives investigating the murder visited campus and uncovered no evidence that De La Roche had been “unjustly treated at The Citadel,” but the young man told a different story. He recalled doing push-ups until his “arms would give out” and claimed to have passed out one time after being kicked in the groin. According to the defendant, “meal times were the toughest,” and he rarely got enough to eat. In addition

³⁷ *Columbia Record*, 25 October 1977, 24 November 1977, 3 January 1978, 5 January 1978; *New York Times*, 1 December 1976, 2 December 1976, 4 December 1976; 14 December 1976, 25 October 1977, 4 January 1978; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 February 1978; *The State*, 29 November 1976, 25 October 1977, 3 January 1978.

³⁸ *The State*, 30 November 1976, 2 December 1976, 1 January 1978; *New York Times*, 29 November 1976, 30 November 1976, 5 January 1978; *The Brigadier*, 10 December 1976.

to upperclassmen throwing him “around for kicks,” he alleged that one night, an unknown assailant burst into his room, threw a blanket over his head, sliced his leg open with a knife and poured nail polish remover in the wound.³⁹

By all accounts, De La Roche was a less than ideal cadet who made low grades and had few friends. He had even lied to Citadel officials about his mother having terminal cancer in order to leave early for Thanksgiving break. He had decided soon into the first semester not to return to The Citadel, but was reluctant to tell his father, who he said “loathed quitters” and would never forgive him for resigning. A series of letters De La Roche, Sr. wrote to his son during that one semester seemed to come right out of *The Guidon* and helps explain, in part, a source of the young man’s apprehension. The elder De La Roche drove his son to “prove the guys wrong who said that you wouldn’t make it at The Citadel” and advised him “don’t let the upperclassmen get to you. They are supposed to weed out the weak ones.” He reminded him “Citadel grads are looked up to,” and upon finishing, “your career and entire life would be made.” Conversely, should he become one of “the boys who didn’t have the guts to stick it out . . . you would end up being nothing.”⁴⁰

In a signed confession made to the police and later read into evidence, Harry De La Roche, Jr. described the events of November 28, 1976. After a night of drinking and smoking pot, De La Roche returned home about three AM and began pacing his bedroom floor, clutching his father’s .22 pistol. Deciding “it was the only way I could get out of going to The Citadel,” he entered his parent’s bedroom, stood next to his sleeping father,

³⁹ *The Brigadier*, 10 December 1976; *The State*, 15 January 1978; Roberta Roesch and Harry De La Roche, Jr, *Anyone’s Son: A True Story* (Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, Inc., 1979), 75-76, 77-78.

murmured “‘I can’t go back’ closed my eyes and pulled the trigger.” He shot his mother “right then and there,” and before his brothers fully realized what had happened, he walked in their room and shot Ron once and Eric twice. Eric continued breathing so De La Roche shot him again and then hit him twice over the head with the pistol butt.⁴¹

De La Roche later recanted his confession, entering not guilty pleas to three of the murders and pleading guilty by reason of temporary insanity to the remaining charge. He testified that his brother Ron had committed the murders and that he had killed Ron in an act of rage and self-defense. This scenario seemed doubtful anyway, but on the last day of the trial, the defense shocked the courtroom by pleading guilty to all four murders. In doing so, they joined the prosecution in indicting The Citadel as an accomplice in the slayings. Prosecuting attorney Richard Salkin dismissed De La Roche’s story about Ron as part of a “game,” and he argued from the start that the defendant had committed the murders in part because he “despised the hazing and harassment” he endured at The Citadel. The defense took the argument much further, contending that “the pressure of returning to the ‘private hell’ De La Roche lived at The Citadel, forced him over the edge of sanity.” A psychiatrist testified that the young man “could not bring himself to return to the school because of the physical abuse he suffered in hazing rituals,” but he also “felt his father would devalue him and make him feel worthless” should he quit. In his closing argument, De La Roche’s attorney described, the “clock ticks and its almost time to

⁴⁰ *New York Times*, 30 November 1976; *The State*, 1 January 1978, 3 January 1978, 4 January 1978, 5 January 1978, 18 January 1978; *The Brigadier*, 18 November 1977; Roesch, *Anyone’s*, 80-81, 84-100; *Columbia Record*, 5 January 1978, 6 January 1978, 10 January 1978, 13 January 1978, 16 January 1978.

⁴¹ Roesch, *Anyone’s*, 142, 144, 239; *The State*, 25 October 1977, 14 January 1978; *New York Times*, 7 January 1978, 27 January 1978; *Columbia Record*, 3 January 1978.

return to his hell. The pressure cooker builds” until “he finally screams out ‘I can’t go back’ and then Harry starts firing the weapon and his family is gone.”⁴²

De La Roche received four concurrent life sentences, but as his trial ended, The Citadel’s continued. D.D. Nicholson again took center stage, grouching that, “We were on trial simply because the defense – in the absence of a better case – decided to place the blame on his environment.” Calling the strategy of blaming “the environment and society for whatever problems an individual may have” a “weird manifestation of American psychology,” he announced that school officials would not modify The Citadel system just because “one person fails.” As if unaware of the changes that had occurred in American society in the past one hundred and thirty years, he offered the rather jarring defense that “the system was deliberately contrived in 1842, by some very profound thinkers as the best environment for a young man to learn.” In another puzzling statement, he turned the murder trial into a point of pride for The Citadel, boasting “If this had been a University of South Carolina student, no one would have thought anything about the school,” but since “we hold ourselves up as the paragon of many things . . . we would expect to get more blame.”⁴³

In contrast to Nicholson’s cockiness, many others realized that the publicity had “tarnished The Citadel in the eyes of the nation.” A few weeks after the trial had ended, Citadel representatives encountered a great deal of hostility on a recruiting trip through the New York and New Jersey area. In New Jersey, a young man spit at them, while in

⁴² *New York Times*, 8 January 1977, 6 January 1978, 10 January 1978, 14 January 1978, 19 January 1978, 20 January 1978, 25 January 1978, 26 January 1978, 27 January 1978; *Columbia Record*, 6 January 1978, 10 January 1978, 16 January 1978, 27 January 1978; *The State*, 24 January 1978, 26 January 1978, 27 January, 1978; Roesch, *Anyone’s*, 259; *The Brigadier*, 18 November 1977.

⁴³ *New York Times*, 27 January 1978; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 February 1978; *The State*, 2 February 1978; 1979 Annual Report, 76.

New York an elderly women took her umbrella and swept all the brochures off their table. Whereas previously, New Jersey represented the fifth largest recruiting base for The Citadel, in the first six months of 1978, the number of applicants from the state dropped by 50 percent.⁴⁴

In the wake of the murders, school officials increased the number of “leadership classes” cadets had to attend and emphasized “positive” motivational techniques, discouraging upperclassmen from screaming at knobs or relying on push-ups as an immediate form of punishment. Viewing hazing as a byproduct of the corps' general disdain for military discipline, General Seignious, Commandant of Cadets Colonel John Gibler, and Assistant Commandant Lieutenant Colonel Harvey Dick cracked down on cadet behavior, monitoring the corps closely at football games, chastising cadets for meeting dates in the school library during Evening Study Period, banning the selling of food in the barracks, and insuring that the punishments they doled out were administered correctly.⁴⁵

Many Citadel students blasted “King George” and his “foolish” lackeys for coddling freshmen and persecuting upperclassmen, but despite such protests, the changes continued, some of which the corps approved and some they abhorred. The ones they deemed compatible with The Citadel’s traditions involved relaxing the military requirements on upperclassmen, such as allowing them to skip morning breakfast formations and permitting seniors to wear civilian coats and ties, not Citadel blazers,

⁴⁴ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 September 1977, documents 439, 442; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 28 January 1977, document 327; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 March 1977, document 353; *The Brigadier*, 10 December 1976, 18 November 1977; *Charleston News and Courier*, 11 February 1978.

⁴⁵ *The Brigadier*, 8 October 1976, 6 May 1977, 9 September 1977, 16 September 1977, 23 September 1977, 7 October 1977, 20 January 1978, 8 September 1978; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 April 1977, document 387; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 9 December 1977, document 509; 1977 Annual Report, 44-45; 1978 Annual Report, 57; 1979 Annual Report, 65.

while off campus. At the same time, the Commandant's Department reduced the number of overnight passes allotted to each class, limited juniors' and seniors' opportunities to wear the blazer uniform and cut three hours from upperclassmen's Sunday leave time. While the new breakfast and uniform policies raised no stir, cadets bristled at the "rapidity" of the other changes. One cadet turned the most common argument for preserving the fourth-class system on its head when he criticized the Commandant's office for being "in touch with the Corps of 1842" and "trying to revert us back to the 'Old Corps' of the fifties." It seems that when it came to inconveniencing upperclassmen, old corps traditions were archaic and unreasonable, but when it came to abusing freshmen, dubious old corps traditions were sacrosanct.⁴⁶

General Seignious did not stick around to debate the characteristics of good and bad change. On March 1, 1979, at the behest of President Carter, he left The Citadel to assume the directorship of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Following "the most comprehensive search for the ideal president for The Citadel that has ever been conducted," the Board of Visitors named United States Naval Academy graduate and Vietnam War hero Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale the colleges' fifteenth president.⁴⁷

At the time, Stockdale was the most highly decorated officer in the United States Navy having earned the Congressional Medal of Honor for organizing resistance efforts during his torturous seven-and-a-half years in a Vietnamese prisoner-of-war camp. The

⁴⁶ *The Brigadier*, 9 September 1977, 16 September 1977, 23 September 1977, 7 October 1977, 21 October 1977, 3 February 1978, 10 February 1978, 28 April 1978, 8 September 1978, 15 September 1978, 22 September 1978, 10 November 1978, 11 September 1981; RC6 Box 5, Records of President's Office, "Study of Cadet Time Management."

⁴⁷ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 October 1978, documents 184-185; *The Brigadier*, 27 April 1979; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 April 1979, document 269.

Admiral seemed to take greater pride in his intellectual achievements than his military accolades, however. He had published numerous scholarly articles, and prior to taking over at The Citadel, had served as the president of the Naval War College, where drawing on his wartime experience, he taught a class on the importance of maintaining one's morality under harsh conditions. He planned to teach a similar course at his new post.⁴⁸

The corps welcomed their new president as a “man of outstanding credentials” who would bring to The Citadel a “wealth of fine guidance and leadership through years of distinguished experience.” A reporter for *The Brigadier* exalted him as “the answer to our call” and raved that as The Citadel “steams headlong into the worldly waves of permissiveness and decaying morality” the Admiral would provide the school with the necessary “leadership, strength of character and moral fortitude.”⁴⁹

For his part, Stockdale called his new job the “culmination of a dream as I become a professional educator for the rest of my life.” Considering The Citadel “a good old school [that] had gone through the wringer during the 1960s and had come out with a shattered academic profile,” he assumed the Board hired him to rebuild the school's educational reputation. In his introduction to the 1979 *Guidon* he emphasized a cadet's intellectual growth more than his military and physical development. When speaking before the corps, Stockdale “stressed the goal of academic excellence” and pointed out that great leaders exhibited compassion and appreciated that “all men are not products of the same mold.”⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 May 1979, document 280; *The Brigadier*, 27 April 1979.

⁴⁹ *The Brigadier*, 27 April 1979, 11 May 1979.

⁵⁰ *Columbia Record*, 26 April 1979, 30 April 1979, 29 August 1979; 1979 *Guidon*, 17; Jim and Sybil Stockdale, *In Love and War: The Story of a Family's Ordeal and Sacrifice During the Vietnam Years* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1990), 461, 466, 475 (emphasis in original).

Stockdale passed the crucial litmus test of many Citadel men when he publicly affirmed that “the school should resist trends and pressure to open its doors to women,” but what went on behind those doors brought the Admiral into direct conflict with the Board of Visitors, the corps of cadets, and a very vocal segment of Citadel alumni. During his initial introduction to the Board before becoming president, Stockdale grew uneasy with the members’ preoccupation with his attitude towards The Citadel’s plebe system. Several confided in him “we like to think of plebe year at The Citadel as being the toughest of any school in the country,” and an astonished Stockdale finally came to realize that the fourth-class system had been “blown up in the minds of mature men to be *the* prime status symbol” of the school. Despite this revelation, Stockdale misjudged how deeply the fourth-class system and concepts of masculinity penetrated into almost every aspect of Citadel life. Concerned initially with bridging the “gap between the academic and military elements within the college,” his efforts to do so brought him face to face with the harshness of plebe year, and a desire to stamp out hazing consumed his presidency.⁵¹

Stockdale figured out soon enough “that there was something mean and out of control about the regime I had just inherited.” While rummaging through some of the correspondence General Seignious had left behind, Stockdale came across several letters from angry parents concerning the hazing of freshmen. One father, a Naval Academy graduate, called the torments his son endured a “disgrace,” saying that harassment and sleep deprivation had transformed the young man “from a level headed optimistic, aggressive individual to a fatigued, irrational, confused and bitter one.” Demanding that

⁵¹ Charleston *News and Courier*, 5 February 1980; *Columbia Record*, 31 May 1979; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 October 1979, document 313; *The Brigadier*, 1 February 1980; Stockdale, *In Love and War*,

someone be held accountable, the parent roared, “Don’t blame it on the ‘system,’ for if you do, then the system be damned.”⁵²

Stockdale also unearthed several memos from Dr. George Mood, The Citadel’s surgeon, addressed to General Seignious and the Commandant. In them, Mood alerted the two men to the “inhumane” and “discourteous” treatment of freshmen such as denying them food and exerting them to the point of exhaustion by forcing them to run up and down the barracks stairs.⁵³

Stockdale witnessed first hand the result of such harassment when over fifty fourthclassmen had quit by September. Stockdale made it clear that “too many freshmen are subjected to excessive physical punishment,” and like those before him, he responded by stepping up the enforcement of existing regulations. Unlike his predecessors, he kept the pressure up year round and coupled this watchfulness with initiatives of his own. For instance, he no longer required knobs to walk in the gutter on the Avenue of Remembrance and discontinued plebe training on especially hot days.⁵⁴

Initially, much of the corps lauded Stockdale’s “admirable” goal of reducing hazing. *The Brigadier* printed a cartoon mocking alumni who strutted around blustering “Back when I was a knob . . . “ The editor defended the changes as necessary to “prepare today’s cadet for a constantly changing society.” The editorial carried an unintended warning, however, as the author repeated the mantra that for “137 years, consistent practices, repetitious systems, strict routines, and the concept of tradition have enabled

462-464, 468.

⁵² Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 470-471.

⁵³ Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 471; “The Mood Report – Enclosure 3” in the David S. McAlister Papers, Box 1, A1987.4, The Citadel Archives and Museum, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina (hereafter cited as Mood Report).

⁵⁴ *The State*, 24 August 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 November 1979, document 320; *The Brigadier*, 7 September 1979, 28 September 1979, 22 February 1980.

The Citadel to remain one of the unique educational institutions of America” and “drastic unfounded changes should always be prevented.” Another cadet hinted more directly at what constituted “drastic change” when he encouraged classmates to humor alumni who prattled on about the “old corps” because “when you graduate, you will share with that alumnus something only a Citadel graduate can understand and that is being a Citadel Man.” As Stockdale tinkered with the machinery of producing whole men, many people saw him paving the way for women.⁵⁵

Indeed, before Stockdale’s first semester at The Citadel ended, most cadets had turned on him. One student claimed the Admiral had made a mockery of The Citadel, turning it into an institution where freshmen “laugh” and “upperclassmen cry.” In December, every cadet officer marched to Jenkins Hall and presented the Commandant with a list of grievances, demanding the restoration of full leave privileges, more lenient uniform policies, and more control over the fourth-class system. By coupling their concern over “drastic changes in the fourth-class system” with demands for fewer military restrictions, the students’ protests seem to indicate that cadets had more invested in The Citadel’s ability to produce men than its instilling of martial values. Of course, as mentioned previously, many Citadel men saw military training and service as exclusively masculine endeavors, but as hinted at earlier in this chapter, with feminism and the women’s movement making some headway against societal assumptions concerning men and women’s abilities and “proper” place in society, more and more cadets latched onto the institution’s manly purpose and, more specifically, the fourth-class system’s ability

⁵⁵ *The Brigadier*, 2 November 1979, 16 November 1979, 8 February 1980.

to fulfill this purpose, as crucial not only to the college's preservation, but also to their own identity as Citadel men.⁵⁶

Conversations outside The Citadel's gates most likely intensified the cadets' objections to Stockdale's measures. In an interview with the *Charleston News and Courier*, D.D. Nicholson sought to clear up what he saw as several misconceptions about the college. He made the wholly inaccurate assertion that "We'll take anyone who wants to develop the ability to be a leader in any field," but it was his evaluation of the fourth-class system that angered many readers. Nicholson regretted the negative publicity The Citadel received when a plebe quit, since, according to his calculations, the school lost ten applicants every time someone resigned because "what does he tell the people at home? That he's not tough? If he washes out, he's going to go home and tell war stories about how bad the knob system is." Confident that "any average young man can, with considerable ease, get through the first year at The Citadel," he estimated that "those who drop out really aren't giving it a fight."⁵⁷

Several people took offense at Nicholson's explanation of why certain cadets "washed out." Charlestonian Mary Ann Restivo wrote a letter to the *News and Courier* refuting Nicholson's assessment, claiming it was common knowledge that freshmen were nearly "starved to death." Restivo said she learned of the torments knobs suffered from her husband and two nephews who had quit The Citadel during their plebe years. Evoking unpleasant memories, she ordered Nicholson and the Board of Visitors to "wake up" and do something before another De La Roche "tragedy" occurred. The aunt of a former cadet who had just resigned seconded Restivo's remarks. She described her

⁵⁶ *The Brigadier*, 12 October 1979, 16 November 1979, 7 December 1979, 22 February 1980, 21 March 1980, 28 March 1980.

nephew as eminently qualified to attend The Citadel having received numerous JROTC and academic awards. He viewed his enrollment as “a lifetime dream come true,” but returned home a month later “twenty pounds lighter and very depressed.” She never blamed her nephew’s withdrawal on excessive hazing, but she hinted as much by proclaiming he “was equal to any honorable challenge given.”⁵⁸

Citadel supporters swarmed to the institution’s defense, praising the school and attacking its critics. Almost every rebuttal maligned the women’s letters as the works of ignorant outsiders or malcontented failures. One response stated flatly, “the letters appear to be attempts to justify the failure of husbands, sons and nephews not being able to take the system.” Another decided that those who wanted to change it, “either do not understand The Citadel or could not successfully complete the fourth-class system.” One “knew of no graduate who condemns the system,” while several others made the true but hardly praiseworthy assertion that “no cadet has ever starved to death because of upper-class harassment.” Another author noted that the complaints came from “females and females naturally tend to be compassionate.”⁵⁹

Affirmations of the college’s manly purpose cropped up frequently with one Citadel proponent announcing, “I feel that a ‘man’ that has got the ‘whatever’ to get through The Citadel will be a leader of men and a leader of the community.” Conversely, “a ‘boy’ that does not have that ‘whatever’ and drops out and goes on to the College of Charleston or Baptist College will turn out to be a good music director, a good high school teacher, or a good bookkeeper.” Another reminded Charlestonians, “The Citadel is not a Sunday school picnic. Its function is to build men and to mold leaders by

⁵⁷ *Charleston News and Courier*, 8 October 1979.

⁵⁸ *Charleston News and Courier*, 15 October 1979, 21 October 1979.

teaching them to react, think and function under pressure.” A woman from nearby Summerville repeated, “let’s face it, it separates the men from the boys.”⁶⁰

Not ones to let others fight their battles for them, members of the corps penned their own massive rebuttals to the accusations. Two seniors ridiculed Restivo’s “ignorance of the system” and scoffed that her evidence came from family members “who are perfect examples of the many weak minded Americans of today’s society.” Chalking up such “attacks” to “jealousy on the part of many individuals who did not attend The Citadel or could not make it,” they asked how a supposedly “unbearable” institution could “boast such a long line of distinguished graduates?” *The Brigadier* editor, Frederick J. Whittle, engaged in a bit of yellow journalism when he wrote an editorial under the headline, “Ignorant Public Rallies Unjust Cause.” Unconcerned with whether or not two letters constituted a rally, Whittle implored his peers “do not let the unfounded, totally irresponsible letters of ‘bleeding heart’ women cause you to question the true purpose of ‘Knob Year,’” developing “those qualities essential to a good leader.”

61

Stockdale himself favored an immediate restructuring of plebe year, but the protests of cadets and members of his staff convinced him “not to go in like a white knight on a horse, but to get some expert advice.” As a result, he and the Board of Visitors commissioned the third major review of The Citadel’s plebe system in ten years. Unlike previous studies, however, the panel they assembled consisted entirely of current and future Citadel alumni. They selected one graduate from each decade stretching back to the 1920s and added a senior cadet set to graduate with the class of 1980. Years later,

⁵⁹ Charleston *News and Courier*, 25 October 1979.

⁶⁰ Charleston *News and Courier*, 25 October 1979, 28 October 1979.

Stockdale traced his undoing back to his and the committee's efforts to reform The Citadel's "test of manhood that the bulk of the voting public, to say nothing of the radical elements of the alumni, swore was a key to state pride."⁶²

Frank P. Mood, Citadel class of 1960, chaired the group, and page one of the "Mood Report" confirmed that "over the period of the past several years, it has become increasingly apparent to those sensitive to the traditions of The Citadel that the nature of the fourth-class system was undergoing a gradual and undesirable change." The committee found that while "real abuses, viciousness, were relatively unusual," other "milder, but unacceptable excesses were fairly widespread." They defined many of the corps' practices as "instant traditions," which, according to Mood, "were not in the system until five or ten years ago." A list of these "time-honored" traditions included "sweat parties, excessive push-ups, devious ways to get around excessive exercise rules, constant demand for recitation of mess facts with resultant interference of eating, racking (mass punishment, etc.)"⁶³

The report highlighted the 30 percent attrition rate among Citadel freshmen and contained a letter from the Commandant of Cadets describing plebe year as "less a training program than a hazing session," adding "the physical abuse seems to be the most dangerous."⁶⁴ A detailed memo sent to the committee by Dr. George Mood informed the committee that "over the past twelve years I have been recurrently shocked by the abuses of what is called the fourth-class system." Dr. Mood admitted to cringing "every year when August rolls around, knowing we'll have numerous freshmen leaving The Citadel

⁶¹ *The Brigadier*, 26 October 1979.

⁶² *Charleston News and Courier*, 8 April 1980; Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 474, 484; Mood Report, Enclosure-7.

⁶³ Mood Report, 1, 2; *The State*, 13 April 1980.

with nothing good to say about the school,” and he relayed stories of freshmen being carried into the infirmary on stretchers due to “overdoses of pushups or sweat parties.” He singled out the corps’ behavior in the mess hall as “the most ridiculous and most difficult part of the system for me to accept,” since after denying freshmen food, upperclassmen expect them “to function as fully fueled machines.” He found it infuriating that the system’s “so-called tradition is extracted from the experiences of the preceding one or two years,” and concluded that although “I sincerely believe that The Citadel is an outstanding college and that we do graduate outstanding patriots and leaders,” when parents learned what their sons had gone through, “I feel ashamed for our school and its so called system.”⁶⁵

Like the other reports, the 1979 review recognized the fourth-class system as “a critical part of the ‘whole man’ concept and is much of what makes The Citadel a unique institution.” However, the Mood Committee labored to recast cadets’ definition of manly behavior by making compassion and gentility, not toughness, the measure of a Citadel man. In interviews with Citadel students and graduates, the reviewers sensed a fear that the fourth-class system “would be emasculated by some of the changes which the committee is contemplating.” Their subjects intimated that toughness” was “the objective of the system in and of itself, that there is no higher purpose. They conclude in solemn terms that any planned reduction of this severity for its own sake would spell the death knell of this college as we know it.”⁶⁶

The Mood Report declared in no uncertain terms that “this Committee does not accept this analysis or prediction.” They championed a fourth-class system “conducted

⁶⁴ Mood Report, 3, Enclosures 1 and 4.

⁶⁵ Mood Report, 6, Enclosure 3.

by gentlemen for gentlemen,” determining that “to accept arrogance, crudeness, demeaning conduct and language in the name of tradition is shortsighted.” Believing the corps had “strayed from the line of gentlemanly toughness into a series of immature sophomoric routines which miss the mark by any measure of leadership development,” they endeavored to create a fourth-class system that would instill “integrity, honesty, compassion – in short, all the qualities of a gentleman.” Certain that “any good educational system” required “respect for the essential worth and dignity of the individual,” they agreed that the fourth-class system should be “demanding and rigorous but should be predicated on individual interest, respect and goodwill.”⁶⁷

As for their specific recommendations, the alumni found it “noteworthy that many of our Committee’s findings have been found before.” Indeed, they restated earlier suggestions that Citadel alumni and cadets quit disseminating “misleading and overglamorized” depictions of cadet life, that tactical officers assume a larger role in the “everyday operations of the corps,” that sophomores undergo a “cooling off” period before receiving rank, and that all “prescribed study periods and sleep periods” remain “absolutely free from fourth-class system activities.” In addition to these common pleas, they suggested ending the fourth-class system in March in order to allow freshmen to better concentrate on final exams and discontinuing such “indignities” as “baldy haircuts.”⁶⁸

The review committee’s most important recommendations addressed the recurring problems of excessive physical harassment and malnourishment of knobs. The Mood Report came down hard on “racking,” which it defined as “the resort to physical means

⁶⁶ Mood Report, 1, 2, 3, 11 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁷ Mood Report, 1, 2, 7, 11 (emphasis in original).

by upperclassmen to punish fourthclassmen for indiscretions, inadequacies, or fourth-class system violations.” These punishments ranged from push-ups to “running in place, running up and down stairways, etc.” The panel discovered that the line between “racking and hazing can be very fuzzy indeed,” and they advocated replacing this “unwanted and unmonitored aberration” of the fourth-class system with a formalized, mandatory physical fitness program geared toward each individual’s strengths and weaknesses. Their solution for meal time misconduct was simple and direct, “eliminate the fourth-class system activities in the mess hall with the exception of instruction in good manners.”⁶⁹

While the earlier fourth-class system reviews had languished in obscurity both on and off The Citadel campus, the Mood Report suffered from overexposure. With controversy already brewing around Stockdale’s brief tenure in Charleston, state newspapers took an interest in the committee’s findings, and when they began leaking news of the study, “the resulting commotion echoed across the state.” While the Admiral played almost no role in the Mood Committee’s investigation, opponents of the measures derided them as part of the “Stockdale Plan.” In one of its initial reports, the *State* newspaper indicted “lax” school officials for allowing the fourth-class system to spin out of control and commented, “Vice Admiral James B. Stockdale has made it clear changes are coming to The Citadel.”⁷⁰

As the news spread, many people’s impression of The Citadel’s president shifted from that of a “provisionally okay outsider” to a “meddler into what was Citadel insider business.” One state senator suggested the General Assembly cut the institution's funding

⁶⁸ Mood Report, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7-9 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁹ Mood Report, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9.

as long as Stockdale sought “to change the school from the toughest military college in America to just another Annapolis.” Former Commandant of Cadets and Citadel graduate Walt Clark “wholeheartedly and deeply” applauded many of the reforms, but he spoke for many alumni who worried that certain initiatives “smack far too much of being akin to the U.S. Service Academies.” The corps of cadets took the bait as well, accusing Stockdale and his staff of “outsiders” of trying to ruin their school. Despite the backgrounds of the Mood Report’s authors, the editor of *The Brigadier*, apparently unaware that the Board of Visitors was still solvent, complained that “only Citadel men, none of whom presently hold high positions within the administration . . . can comprehend and appreciate the benefits that exist in the present fourth-class system.” A cartoon in that same edition showed Stockdale sitting behind his desk, furiously copying rules from the “USNA Catalogue” into The Citadel guidebook.⁷¹

Media reports fanned the flames by highlighting some of the more controversial measures, exaggerating the extent of others, and presenting all the recommendations as accepted policies rather than proposals. An article in the *Charleston News and Courier* mentioned the plan’s overall goal of “eliminating hazing,” but focused on two suggestions the Board later rejected, ending the plebe system early and no longer requiring knob haircuts. The *Columbia Record* reported that not only were Citadel barbers going to quit shaving plebes’ heads, but that school officials had outlawed any “punishment of freshmen by upperclassmen.”⁷²

⁷⁰ Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 473-474, 477, 483, 484; *The State*, 13 April 1980.

⁷¹ Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 467, 473, *The State*, 13 April 1980; *Charleston News and Courier*, 17 May 1980; *The Brigadier*, 11 April 1980.

⁷² *Charleston News and Courier*, 18 April 1980; *Columbia Record*, 2 April 1980; *The Brigadier*, 11 April 1980; *The State*, 2 April 1980.

A muddled interpretation of racking compounded many people's anxieties. Apparently, a large number of Citadel men believed the term applied not just to physical punishment, but to even the most mundane aspects of Citadel life. For example, one student eulogized aspects of Citadel life not even mentioned in the Mood Report. He preached, "All the shoe shining, brass polishing, hat delinting, and shirt tucking that we were forced to perform has made us conscious of our personal appearance; all the corner squaring, running in the barracks, the popping off that we were compelled to do has made us realize that everyone else is watching our conduct." Many Citadel cadets and alumni howled that the "changes would soften the military college," until "only the shell will remain and like a corpse which houses no soul, [The Citadel] will cease living it will merely exist." With the college having cheated death earlier in the decade, the grim reaper returned to campus as yet another drawing of The Citadel's headstone appeared in *The Brigadier*, this time bearing the epitaph, "crippled and consumed by those who would destroy her."⁷³

Many believed that even if the Mood Report did not kill The Citadel, it would still leave the institution susceptible to the deadly toxin of coeducation. Cries that when "you take away the fourth-class system, you take away The Citadel" went hand in hand with the complaint that, "they might as well make it a girl's school now." Laying bare their belief that a tough plebe year served as the school's best defense against a sexually integrated corps, many alumni were convinced that the proposed reforms "open the door for the admission of women students." State Representative John Bradley went so far as to introduce legislation requiring the college to drop its single sex policies, arguing "if the

⁷³ *The Brigadier*, 11 April 1980, 18 April 1980, 14 November 1980; *The State*, 13 April 1980; *Charleston News and Courier*, 17 April 1980.

fourth-class system is going to be abolished at The Citadel, it would be economically impractical to prevent women from attending.”⁷⁴

Stockdale fought back, refuting that the suggested modifications “will eliminate the unique challenges of a military college.” He explained that the “traditions” many people defended were foreign to older Citadel graduates and that “the only thing being tampered with is the modern innovations on the basic theme.” He found the violence of the current fourth-class system “debilitating toward the intellectual side of life,” and with over half of all freshmen posting below average GPAs, he refused “to sponsor a system that makes it impossible for an ambitious boy to put his best foot forward when planning his life.” Evoking his Vietnam record, he reminded his critics that he understood “as well as anybody what the plebe year can do for you,” but clarified “what I’m dealing with is cruelty and I’ve got to act.”⁷⁵

While Stockdale appeared to lead the fight, he resented having “to take the gas for what somebody else wants me to do.” He informed *The State* that while he endorsed the Mood Report’s findings, the final decision rested with the Board of Visitors. Speaking before that body, the Admiral predicted, “If you saw how our current Regulations Book had to be changed to incorporate these recommendations, you would laugh.” He pointed out that with the exception of ending racking and taming mess hall antics, “there were almost no changes,” the “key will be enforcement.”⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 467; *Columbia Record*, 2 April 1980; *The State*, 11 April 1980; *The Brigadier*, 18 April 1980.

⁷⁵ *Charleston News and Courier*, 8 April 1980, 17 April 1980; *The State*, 8 April 1980, 12 April 1980, 13 April 1980; Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 464; *Columbia Record*, 8 April 1980.

⁷⁶ *The State*, 8 April 1980, 13 April 1980, 17 April 1980; *Charleston News and Courier*, 19 August 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 May 1980, document 401 (emphasis in original).

A few Board members worried that Stockdale was “attempting to change too many traditions at The Citadel too quickly,” and when the group dug its feet on approving the Mood Report, Stockdale threatened to resign. Whether or not this ultimatum factored into their decision, the Board eventually accepted nineteen of the report’s twenty-one proposals, refusing to shorten plebe year or abolish knob haircuts. In a public statement, they insisted that the “direction of these recommendations is consistent with the traditions of the college and in no way abolishes the fourth-class system as a rigorous and demanding training program.” Addressing the “apparent misunderstanding among cadets, alumni, and the public at large about the nature and scope” of the findings, they assured “all concerned that the recommendations do not substantially modify or change the fourth-class system, but serve to eliminate inequities, real and potential.” They outlined the new mess hall policy whereby freshmen would “eat in a relaxed atmosphere” and clarified that the “elimination of unmonitored ‘racking’ in no way affects the traditional concept of ‘bracing’ familiar to generations of cadets.” After announcing the ruling, the Board’s chairman, William “Buddy” Prioleau, confirmed “It will still be the toughest system in the country.”⁷⁷

Admiral Stockdale never got to see how well or how poorly the new fourth-class system functioned. On the same day they voted on the Mood Report, the Board delayed action on the findings of an administrative reorganization plan conducted at the president’s behest and with their approval. Stockdale hoped the report, filed by Price-Waterhouse, would convince the Board of Visitors to restructure The Citadel’s admissions department and improve their chances of attracting more qualified students to

⁷⁷ Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 486; *Charleston News and Courier*, 17 April 1980, 19 August 1980; *New York Times*, 9 April 1980; *The State*, 4 April 1980, 17 April 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 June

campus. Specifically, Stockdale suspected that the “incessantly featured parade ground motif was seen as a little bit corny by some of the real bright and vigorous kids out there,” and he wanted an admissions office “run by an “educator who knows how modern colleges fill their classrooms with bright people.” At that time, the ubiquitous D.D. Nicholson served as The Citadel’s Vice-President for Development which included public relations and “recruiting.” A beloved figure among Citadel alumni and cadets, Nicholson had earned the moniker “Mr. Citadel” for his tireless boosterism and unswerving loyalty to the college. When the Price-Waterhouse package suggested assigning student procurement duties to the Dean of Academics, Nicholson rallied Citadel graduates to his side in an effort to “save his turf.” The Association of Citadel Men “made very clear its concern over how at least one member of Admiral Stockdale’s staff would fare in the reorganization,” and when the Board declined to accept the plan immediately, Stockdale scribbled on a note pad “I hereby resign my office as President of The Citadel.” His resignation came a week before his formal inauguration.⁷⁸

The suddenness of Stockdale’s actions shocked the Board of Visitors. Prioleau called it a “terrific loss . . . but we respect his decision.” To reporters, an embittered Stockdale announced, “I’ve resigned and the reason is very simple. I’m just tired of hassling with the Board of Visitors over every change in the status quo I’ve tried to make.” He fumed that the Board considered every one of his efforts to improve the school a “threat to the traditions of The Citadel.” In the end, Stockdale grumbled, “the

1980, document 422-424; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 16 April 1980, document 383-385

⁷⁸ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 16 April 1980, document 385; Stockdale, *In Love and War*, 475-476, 486-488; *Charleston News and Courier*, 17 May 1980, 19 August 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 23 August 1980, documents 450-452.

forces of the status quo were marshaled and they won.” In a parting shot, he sneered “the place is locked in pre-Civil War concrete.”⁷⁹

The Board of Visitors named Major General James A. Grimsley, a 1942 Citadel graduate and the college’s former Vice-President for Admissions and Finance, the interim president, and Grimsley promised to restore “calm and stability” by getting “the focus of the college out of the headlines and into the classroom and parade grounds.” Given the tumult of the previous eleven months, however, the new fourth-class system regulations occupied the minds of most Citadel personnel. School officials placed an “increased emphasis” on “enforcing cadet regulations and insuring timely disciplinary action against the cadets guilty of violations.” Plebe attrition remained about “average,” and most Citadel officials, tactical officers and even Dr. Mood agreed that the “treatment of freshmen is improved over last year and the year before.” Grimsley spoke with several of the freshmen who quit and concluded, “not a one was physically or psychologically maltreated, and I could not have said that last year.” Exuding an air of confidence as the school year opened, the Board of Visitors welcomed the ABC television show *20/20* to campus to see for themselves if The Citadel is “as tough, and more importantly, as effective as we claim it to be.”⁸⁰

Alumni flooded the campus with letters denouncing the changes to the fourth-class system and echoing many of the misconceptions surrounding the Mood Report.

One proclaimed, “I am not ashamed of anything that happened within the barracks

⁷⁹ *Charleston News and Courier*, 19 August 1980; *The State*, 19 August 1980, 20 August 1980; *Columbia Record*, 19 August 1980; *The Brigadier*, 15 September 1980.

⁸⁰ *The State*, 24 August 1980, 26 August 1980, 6 September 1980; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 23 August 1980, documents 450-452; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 May 1980, document 392-393; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 August 1980, document 436, 437, 440; President’s Annual Report to the Board of Visitors, 1980/81, 35, 73; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 September 1980, document 462.

concerning the fourth-class system and have nothing to hide.” He felt The Citadel was under siege from an “ignorant, ill informed public” that had naively accepted “exaggerated propaganda.” Again expressing a decided ignorance of who conducted the review, he mused no one could “really comprehend the institution and the fourth-class system unless he has been through it or associated with it,” and he hoped “the recent changes brought about by Vice Admiral Stockdale” would keep Citadel officials cognizant of “our own vulnerability to outsiders and to public opinion.”⁸¹

A 1978 graduate took Stockdale’s “pre-civil war concrete” jab as a compliment, boasting that because of these moorings, The Citadel “has stood the test of time and held the mark of excellence for over 138 years.” He promoted Citadel Men as the “finest on the market,” crediting their success to the “arduous training of the fourth-class system.” He not only regarded racking as the “best reinforcer for teaching self-discipline,” he labeled it the “life’s blood” of The Citadel. Informed that the system “has almost been eliminated,” he beseeched school officials, “do not be influenced by the non-ring wearers” supposedly ruining the school.⁸²

While some Citadel students appreciated that the modified plebe system tested the “leadership ability of the cadet chain of command as well as the freshmen’s ability to follow,” others scoffed that plebe year had become a “joke,” and without fear of retribution, knobs “strive for nothing, they learn nothing, and they will be nothing.” Viewing a harsh first year as the source of The Citadel’s uniqueness and value, they lamented “what in the past has been a school for only the strong of mind and body has now become an institution for anyone who will shear his locks and wear pants with

⁸¹ *The Brigadier*, 5 September 1980, 14 November 1980.

⁸² *The Brigadier*, 21 November 1980.

stripes.” A drawing in *The Brigadier* showed the ghost of Confederate General and Citadel alumni Elison Capers rising from his grave, moaning “Bring Back the Rack.” The artist overlooked the fact that Capers would have been absolutely unfamiliar with the concept of racking.⁸³

For the most part, however, it seemed that a large percentage of the corps took a measured view of the Mood Report and even Admiral Stockdale. A freshman was grateful “they toned it down some but didn’t totally get rid of it.” A group of seniors remarked “actually we’ve just gotten rid of the Mickey Mouse aspect of the school.” The editor of *The Brigadier* understood that “a responsible alumni committee with much more hindsight than the class of 1981 made the recommendations which parented the present fourth-class system, and we must respect their decisions.” Recognizing that “all of the physical changes that have taken place were made with the school’s best interest in mind,” he thanked school officials for helping “us place our priorities in proper order” by stressing The Citadel’s academic duties over its military ones. He even extended this sentiment towards Admiral Stockdale, who “if for nothing else, he should be remembered for re-emphasizing the mission of a military college – providing a disciplined education.”⁸⁴

Several cadets reserved some venom for the relatively recent graduates who continued to wail about the “death of The Citadel.” One student advised his colleagues, “the next time you’re afraid The Citadel is about to crumble to the ground because of too many changes, go talk to an ‘old timer’ . . . you will probably learn that making changes to Citadel ‘traditions’ is not only inevitable, it is usually for the best.” Two weeks prior

⁸³ *The Brigadier*, 5 September 1980, 12 September 1980, 14 November 1980, 21 November 1980, 5 December 1980, 30 January 1981.

to the 1981 commencement ceremonies, a junior informed members of the outgoing class that they could soon begin huffing “‘Back when I was in the Corps’ . . . or ‘The Corps has gone to _____!’ and will start writing ‘Letters to the Editor’ about how proud [they were] to wear dress grays in the ninety degree Charleston weather.”⁸⁵

School officials breathed a sigh of relief that The Citadel had weathered the storm and emerged seemingly as strong as ever. Applications increased almost 50 percent for the upcoming school year, and with General Grimsley at the helm, Prioleau rejoiced, “we are unified now in a way we haven’t been for more than a year.” The Board of Visitors and cadets alike praised Grimsley for bringing “optimism to a chaotic corps,” and it seemed that the president drew much of his appeal from the fact that he was a Citadel man who would protect the college’s traditions. As interim president, he cemented his relationship with the Board by scrapping the Price-Waterhouse reorganization plan and submitting a new one that contained “no major changes.” At the same meeting Grimsley introduced his administrative blueprint, the Board surprised no one by removing his interim status and appointing him the sixteenth president of The Citadel. Soon thereafter, he began dismantling several of the Mood Committee’s initiatives, reinstating push-ups as “an immediate form” of disciplining freshmen.⁸⁶

According to Bruce Schulman and others, the 1970s “Sunbelt boom ignited a cultural revival - the strongest reassertion of southern cultural identity since the Civil

⁸⁴ *The Brigadier*, 5 December 1980; *The State*, 24 August 1980.

⁸⁵ *The Brigadier*, 14 November 1980, 1 May 1981.

⁸⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 December 1980, documents 485, 487, 503-5074; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 September 1980, documents 460, 462; 1981 Presidents Report, 35; *The Brigadier*, 11 April 1980, 5 September 1980, 30 January 1981, 20 February 1981; *Columbia Record*, 25 September 1980; *The State*, 6 September 1980, 6 December 1980, 7 December 1980.

War.” A certain mania accompanied this resurgence as many southerners and most of those affiliated with The Citadel both benefited from the “Southernization of America” and fretted over the “Americanization of the South.” On the one hand, the school's and the region's supporters latched on to and cashed in on a national celebration of an exaggerated white, male southern culture characterized by honest, rugged, hard working Americans. In this sense, the corps' hazing rituals reflected a national fascination with the overblown masculinity of the South.

On the other hand, the numerous references to the death of The Citadel reflected many southerners' larger anxieties over the changes that accompanied the rise of the industry driven Sunbelt South. More than willing to abandon the region's rural, agrarian roots in order to attract multi-national corporations, regional boosters used self-serving appeals to tradition as a bludgeon to beat back threats to societal and economic power relationships. Just as appeals to southern distinctiveness went a long way towards keeping Dixie's workforce unorganized and underpaid, Citadel personnel used selective interpretations of the college's heritage, tradition, and uniqueness to justify exclusionist policies.⁸⁷

Especially when it came to tampering with the traditions of the fourth-class system, cries of “too much change, too fast” reverberated across campus. Commenting on the resistance he faced when he tried to rein in the abuses of plebe year, Admiral Stockdale exclaimed, “You would have thought I was tampering with America,” and in the minds of many cadets and the Board of Visitors, he was. For decades, Citadel backers had staked the institution's reputation on its ability to produce the type of citizens

⁸⁷ Bruce Schulman, *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 2001), 114.

the country needed. For them as with many other Americans, citizenship was synonymous with manliness. The Citadel's 1979 "mission statement" listed the school's objectives in general neutral terms, declaring that the "environment and philosophy of the college stress, along with academic proficiency, the qualities of duty, honor, patriotism, and integrity." In adding "as one of the last two state supported military colleges with these objectives, The Citadel has a national reputation," the authors implied that the successful inculcation of these virtues depended upon preserving an all-male corps of cadets.⁸⁸

By the late 1970s, with debates over women's rights flaring up in legislative halls and private homes nationwide and with more and more people no longer recognizing rigid gender distinctions, plebe year at The Citadel became not just a method of building men, but a justification for excluding women. With the college's worth yoked to its single sex environment, a palatable fear of coeducation explains, in part, why Citadel men reacted so fiercely to the Mood Report. A few months after Admiral Stockdale resigned, the 1980 *Guidon* stated explicitly that "although there will be changes and modifications, the overall goal of The Citadel will continue to be that of producing men of learning, integrity and patriotism." Since nothing inherently prevented women from being as forthright and patriotic as men, the physicality of the fourth-class system served as both a prime tool for manufacturing such men and denying women admission.⁸⁹

Many merged The Citadel's all-male tradition with the fourth-class system by casting the latter as timeless and immutable, when in reality, only the former had remained constant since the school's inception. Others evinced a traditionally "southern"

⁸⁸ *Newsweek*, 1 September 1980; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 5 January 1979, document 231.

⁸⁹ 1980 *Guidon*.

propensity to disparage challenges to the status quo as the work of ignorant, hostile, "outsiders." Such indictments echoed charges leveled at civil rights workers and union organizers, and it is important to note that just as Citadel men supported and instigated several of the reviled reforms, many home grown activists spurred and championed the broader protest movements aimed at eliminating the region's social, political, and economic disparities.

Despite their dubious authenticity, shrieks of outsider interference resonated with most Citadel cadets, alumni, and administrators. In his description of the college for the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Walter Fraser, a former professor at The Citadel, provided a succinct summation of the school's standing and attitude at the dawning of the 1980s. He intimated that Stockdale's failure "to minimize hazing, to change the school's 'macho' image, to attract scholarly students and to reorganize the command structure" stemmed largely from his inability to overcome the fact that he was "neither a graduate of the institution nor a southerner." Fraser's entry concluded that when General Grimsley, "a native South Carolinian and Citadel graduate" stepped in promising "no changes," he fulfilled "the wish of the board of visitors, the students and most of the faculty."⁹⁰

⁹⁰ *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, Charles Reagan Wilson, and William Ferris, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 277-278.

CHAPTER SEVEN: REAGAN'S AMERICA, GRIMSLEY'S CITADEL

Haynes Johnson has observed that after years of economic, political, and social malaise, when he came to the White House in 1980, Ronald Reagan filled “a public need for reassurance” by promising to restore American strength and vitality. Using military spending and patriotic rhetoric to sell his “anti-tax; anti-communism; anti-government” panacea for the nation’s woes, his plan to “redeem America” included gutting welfare programs, crippling the Civil Rights Commission, demonizing affirmative action, and lavishing billions of dollars on defense. Focusing attention on the “evil empire” of the Soviet Union, Reagan presented the military as the “sole exception to the evil of government” and decided that national defense “merited unlimited support.”¹

According to Johnson, Reagan’s ideology “perfectly matched the temper of his times.” Johnson adds that even as the President’s policies wrecked the economy, produced legions of unemployed workers, and created armies of homeless people, perhaps the “greatest of all was his impact on political attitudes characterized by its small-mindedness and even at times by its meanness.” Nowhere is this more evident than in Reagan’s racial politics, where he reaped tremendous political rewards by “pitting white male Americans against the ‘special interests’ and pleadings of African-Americans.” In this political and social atmosphere, the South of Georgia’s Lewis Grizzard, “a place of hot cornbread, fried catfish, and Jack Daniels, but one where people

¹ Haynes Johnson, *Sleepwalking Through History: American in the Reagan Years* (New York: Anchor Books, 1991), 32-33, 36, 67, 92, 139, 140, 157; Chafe, *Unfinished Journey*, 461-463, 471, 476- 477.

still thought the wrong side had won the war, liberals were the enemy, Elvis was King, and the rebel flag was still worth flying,” had captured the imaginations of Americans nationwide. With national leaders now defending state’s rights, rolling back the accomplishments of the civil rights movement, and espousing thinly veiled racist arguments against welfare, bussing, and affirmative action, Hodding Carter noted, “It’s a new America, Ronald Reagan’s America, and at times it smells a lot like the old Mississippi.”²

The jingoism, conservatism, racism, and sexism of the 1980s evoked images of an older America, not just Mississippi, and events at The Citadel again reflected broader national trends and attitudes. Just as Reagan’s patriotic platitudes and appeals to family values carried with them an implicit condemnation of the cultural, social, and sexual reform movements of the 1960s, key Citadel officials used the post-*Brown*, pre-integration “golden years” of past president Mark Clark’s tenure as their template for reviving school spirit and prestige, often exhibiting the same prejudices, arrogance, and stubbornness that marred Reagan’s America as well as Clark’s Citadel. Not surprisingly then, campus race relations deteriorated and seemed to bottom out in October 1986 when the hazing of a black cadet dragged the uglier aspects of Citadel life into the national spotlight. Most importantly, the incident and its aftermath exposed the problems generated by the lack of diversity on The Citadel’s campus. With but a few examples,

² Johnson, *Sleepwalking*, 14, 166, 181-184, 254, 348, 375, 418, 425-426, 449, 455, 456, 454; Cobb, *Redefining*, 71; Applebome, *Dixie Rising*, 7, 329, 339; Kenneth O’Reilly, *Nixon’s Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics From Washington to Clinton* (New York: Free Press, 1995), 358-361, 366, 370, 373, 376. Citadel graduate Pat Conroy offered a pointed and public critique of Grizzard’s worldview. In 1988, Grizzard paid for an ad celebrating the firing of an Atlanta newspaper editor that included a caustic apology “to those who enjoy exhaustive series on what’s doing in Africa.” In response, Conroy called Grizzard “a syphilis germ before they invented penicillin,” and blared, “Your South is the one I loathe, Lewis.” In regards to Grizzard’s apology, Conroy offered to “translate this in our shared southern vernacular. You wrote it in code, but the translation is this: Atlanta doesn’t care if niggers starve.”

the college's ethnic homogeneity had bred an ideological homogeneity that left Citadel cadets and officials unable or unwilling to recognize and deal with the racial problems that had been festering for the past two decades. The debate took on a particularly "southern" bent as confrontations erupted over the corps' prominent display of Confederate symbols. Almost to a man, whites at The Citadel clung tenaciously to a one-sided image of the South's past, refusing to accept a less noble, but more inclusive, depiction of their southern heritage.³

Despite rising tuition costs, The Citadel's enrollment soared during the 1980s. In 1983, the school received over 2000 applications, the highest number ever until the record was broken the next year, a fact that prompted the chairman of the Board of Visitors, "Buddy" Prioleau, to boast that "in light of the college's experiences, The Citadel enrollment picture is quite unusual – we are oversubscribed while others are begging for students." Increased competition for a limited number of slots meant that the college registrar could be more selective, and sure enough, the average SAT and academic credentials of each incoming class either matched or surpassed those of the previous ones. By mid-decade, the college had regained its national reputation, repeatedly receiving high marks in *US News and World Report's* annual ranking of the nation's best colleges and universities.⁴

³ *The State*, 13 December 1986, 12 January 1987, 14 January 1987; *The Atlanta Constitution*, 7 January 1987; *Jet*, 1 December 1986, 15 December 1986, 22 December 1986, 23 March 1987.

⁴ *The State*, 6 June 1981, 19 September 1981, 28 July 1982, 28 March 1987; *Columbia Record*, 1 April 1980; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 30 October 1981, document 186; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 December 1981, document 197; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 10 September 1982, document 317; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 18 March 1983, document 356; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 March 1983, document 366; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 May 1983, document 370; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 30 March 1984, document 427; Board of Visitors "Minutes," 13 May 1983, document 370, Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 10 February 1984, document 418; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 14 September 1984,

While a few observers attributed this boom to “the well known unique character of the college,” the trend actually revealed that The Citadel was marching in step with the American mainstream. With conservative pundits hailing the “return of old-fashioned patriotism,” Citadel spokesman D.D. Nicholson crowed that “the national philosophy is turning back to The Citadel’s philosophy,” a shift that boded well for some and ill for others. Various media outlets reported on the rising prestige and popularity of military schools across the country. Some of the most flattering articles focused on southern institutions in particular, emphasizing and lauding their subjects’ manliness as well as their whiteness. A June 1985 article in *Esquire* offered a Dunning-esque analysis of Reconstruction and celebrated white southerners’ fascination with and affinity for martial values, asserting that generations of southern males willingly endured hardships and deprivations out of respect for their Civil War ancestors who spent Reconstruction “under the fist of the conqueror.” The author of the piece theorized that a fear of having lost “power so completely once” drove these southerners to become especially “brutal politicians and good soldiers” lest they lose power again. Certainly, women and African Americans played no part in this national or regional reading of the past or present, an omission that merely reinforced what many already whites believed were “attributes associated with The Citadel.”⁵

document 469; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 28 June 1985, document 6; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 March 1985, document 529; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 May 1987, document 299; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 7 February 1986, document 79; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 March 1988, document 216; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 17 March 1989, document 78; 1981 and 1982 Annual Reports, RC6, “Records of President’s Office – Publications,” Box 9, “Annual Reports of The Citadel,” The Citadel Archives and Museum; *The Brigadier*, 9 September 1983, 6 December 1985, 5 September 1986, 27 March 1987, 9 September 1988, 14 October 1988, 21 October 1988.

⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 March 1983, document 357; *The State*, 6 February 1983, 3 November 1986; *US News and World Report*, 12 September 1983, 59-62; *Esquire*, June 1985, 98-100; *Southern Living*, April 1981, 146, 149; *The Brigadier*, 19 November 1982, 30 September 1983, 9 November 1984.

For the most part, General Grimsley, The Citadel's new president, emulated Mark Clark's approach to instilling cadets with the proper Citadel attributes, harping on many of the same themes as his predecessor and aping many of the former president's practices. He stressed the sanctity of the school's honor code and once a year had *The Brigadier* reprint Clark's essay, "Return to Honor." In order to restore the corps's high military standards, Grimsley began "clamping down" on military rules and regulations, reducing leave privileges, enforcing strict uniform requirements, making it harder for students to skip certain formations, and no longer granting cadets a set number of excused class cuts.⁶

However, in his efforts to reestablish Clark's emphasis on military discipline, Grimsley could not count on the same degree of corps-wide obedience enjoyed by his predecessor because most members of a post-1960s corps of cadets felt no obligation to accept the supposed wisdom of authority figures. A vast majority of the student body characterized Grimsley's measures as not only unfair, "stupid and senseless," but also "terrifying." When school officials banned "crowd surfing" at football games, one student called the decree "an insensitive intrusion on campus morale by stuffy old men." Some of the cadets' protests inadvertently raised issues that most Citadel men did not want to address. For example, arguing that "change is inevitable," one student asked school officials yet again to eliminate off campus uniform requirements. He reasoned that since most cadets would not enter the military following graduation and that the "purpose of The Citadel, indeed of any college, is to prepare its students for a career . . .

⁶ *The Brigadier*, 20 March 1981, 19 April 1983, 30 September 1983, 30 October 1983, 17 February 1984, 23 March 1984, 7 September 1984, 14 September 1984, 15 February 1985, 5 September 1986, 23 September 1988, 21 October 1988; *The State*, 6 December 1980, 6 February 1983; *Columbia Record*, 29

for life,” allowing students to wear civilian clothes would help them “cope with, and fit into, everyday society life.” Of course, this argument could be extended to make a case for the admission of female cadets since all Citadel alumni, military or civilian, would have to work with and in many cases work for women.⁷

No cadet made this connection at the time however since, much like in the 1960s, the corps’ protests centered largely on campus reform and thus, in the 1980s, remained compatible with their overall social and political conservatism. As a result, while many students bucked Grimsley’s procedural initiatives, they embraced the ideological themes of his presidency. Grimsley renewed the corps’ focus on the “whole man” concept, expounding regularly on the “hallmark of a successful man,” the “development of the ‘physical man,’” and The Citadel’s proficiency at developing “‘whole men’ with all that term connotes.” He identified these paragons of masculinity as those who had been “educated academically, physically, militarily, spiritually, patriotically, and honorably,” and not surprisingly, he believed that “no other education could be as rewarding” as the one offered by his alma mater since “the exceptional demands placed on a Citadel cadet are more than compensated for by the ultimate result- a Citadel Man.”⁸

June 1985; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 February 1981, document 4; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 April 1981, document 29; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 March 1984, document 435.

⁷ *The Brigadier*, 11 September 1981, 16 October 1981, 20 November 1981, 11 December 1981, 29 January 1982, 12 February 1982, 19 February 1982, 4 February 1983, 25 February 1983, 7 October 1983, 7 September 1984, 14 September 1984, 28 September 1984, 5 October 1984, 16 November 1984, 15 February 1985, 15 March 1985, 19 April 1985, 13 September 1985, 27 September 1985, 4 October 1985, 25 October 1985, 14 March 1986, 2 May 1986, 12 September 1986, 26 September 1986, 3 October 1986, 10 October 1986, 24 October 1986, 14 November 1986, 11 December 1987, 12 February 1988, 19 February 1988, 15 April 1988, 29 April 1988; *The State*, 19 January 1985.

⁸ *The Brigadier*, 27 September 1985, 18 October 1985, Commencement 1986, 20 March 1987; “President’s Spot,” 9 November 1982, 31 January 1984, 13 March 1984, 11 September 1984, 4 December 1984, 15 February 1985, 1 September 1986, 12 May 1988, Grimsley, James A, President, The Citadel, 1980-1989 Papers 1981-2001, File, “President’s Spot, 1982-1989, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; 1982 *Guidon*, 17; 1983 *Guidon*, 17; 1986 *Guidon*, 19; 1987 *Guidon*, 19; *Charleston Evening Post*, 2 September 1980.

The Board of Visitors joined in the chorus when they set cultivating “awareness of the essential role that the military environment of The Citadel plays in educating the ‘whole man’” as one of their goals for the next ten years. Apparently, they succeeded as far as the corps of cadets was concerned as student publications contained numerous tributes to The Citadel and its reputation for building men. The 1981 edition of the *Guidon* defined the “The Citadel system” as one that “matures, refines, trains and schools the totality of a young man’s being” and wished new cadets luck as they “begin the infinitely rewarding task of aspiring to attain that coveted title of *Citadel Man*.” Alumni got into the act as well, with a Citadel graduate from Union, South Carolina paying for billboards advertising his alma mater as a place where parents “Send Us a Boy – We’ll Send You a Man.”⁹

Despite these repeated glorifications of manliness, Citadel boosters frequently listed their presumably masculine attributes in gender-neutral terms. Most echoed Grimsley’s assertion that “the teaching of The Citadel for love of county, patriotism, honor, courage, loyalty, and devotion to duty have been hallmarks for its graduates.” With nothing inherently rendering females incapable of patriotic, honorable, or courageous behavior, the 1980s witnessed an acceleration of the trend whereby Citadel personnel linked the college’s ability to produce men primarily to their success at excluding women. In 1982, the Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors warned of the “possibility that competent authority might at some time direct the admission of females into the corps” and urged the Board to develop an “effective plan to counter any movement toward requiring admission of females into the corps.” The chairman of the

⁹ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 18 September 1981, documents 168-177; *The Brigadier*, 1985 Commencement, 22 November 1985, 21 February 1986; 1981 *Guidon*, 15, 16, 18 (emphasis in original);

Board of Visitors heeded this advice, noting that “the federal academies have gone downhill” since accepting women. The corps generally evinced similar attitudes albeit with more vehemence than their elders as one student demanded that The Citadel remain a “fortress of *Masculinity*.”¹⁰

With this in mind, most cadets disapproved of women who either challenged male authority or violated what they considered proper gender norms. When a lampoon edition of *The Brigadier* announced “Corps to go co-ed,” the fictional female enrollees were depicted as unhygienic and unfeminine, bearing a strong resemblance to “early Cro-Magnon Man.” In 1982, a student vilified a recently hired female professor for imposing “her views on feminist domination on those she ‘teaches.’” A year later, the same faculty member outraged several members of the corps when she ordered a cadet to remove a poster she deemed offensive from the walls of an academic building. One young man boasted that the pictures hanging in the barracks made the poster she saw seem tame, adding if she “cannot stand the heat of the all-male Military Monastery, she should find employment in another kitchen.”¹¹

Such attitudes left cadets ill-equipped to handle some of the changes occurring outside The Citadel’s walls. One student despaired for the future of America when he saw a photo of a twelve-year-old girl playing middle school football. Disappointed to find out that the picture was not of an “extremely effeminate boy” and that instead of being “crunched by the clotheslining right arm of some twelve year old male linebacker,” the female quarterback had thrown for two touchdowns and run for another, the author

The State, 5 July 1982.

¹⁰ James A. Grimsley, *The Citadel: Educating the Whole Man* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 12; Minutes of the Advisory Committee to the Board to Visitors, 15-16 October 1982, document 3; *The State*, 19 March 1983; *The Brigadier*, 22 November 1985 (emphasis in original).

viewed her success as “an end to all that I had believed in for the past twenty-one years.” Begging for someone to “save us,” he longed for the “good old days when a woman knew her place in the sporting world.” Nostalgic for “sweaty little cheerleaders” who gleefully congratulated their male heroes and clueless mothers who cheered for the wrong team until their husbands corrected them, he grumbled, “now you have your Chris Everts, your Dorothy Hamils, and those women body builders.” Uncomfortable with the popularity and prowess of female athletes, he feared that they would soon dominate the sports world, pleading “Oh don’t let it happen! It was so perfect.”¹²

At an institution populated predominantly by males of similar cultural, social, and ideological bents, no one stepped forward to challenge this man’s view of a “perfect” society. While some cadets complained that uniform policies left Citadel graduates unprepared for civilian life, the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and narrow parameters of proper societal behavior proved a greater hindrance to the students’ ability to adjust to and interact in a diverse society. For example, although several women who attended the College of Charleston found most cadets “honest and considerate,” many had also met many others who were unable to “control themselves in the presence of other women” and who tended to treat females “as sex objects or as something on which to release their frustrations.” Unconcerned with the opinions of “outsiders,” most cadets responded to this information with “I don’t really care what they think.”¹³

While Citadel personnel’s macho worldview went largely unchallenged throughout the 1980s, the same cannot be said for many of their highly selective, unquestionably white interpretations of the school’s and the South’s past and present.

¹¹ *The Brigadier*, 29 January 1982, 21 January 1983, 3 December 1982, 25 March 1983, 6 December 1985.

¹² *The Brigadier*, 19 February 1982.

With applications rolling in, Citadel officials exercised greater control over whom they admitted, but fostering campus diversity ranked low on their list of priorities. From 1980 to 1985, African-American students never comprised more than five percent of a cadet corps that was ninety three percent white. Furthermore, at the beginning of the decade, the college had no black professors, no black administrators, and no black professional staff members.¹⁴

White cadets appeared oblivious to the startling homogeneity of their closed environment. In a forced effort to tease out some diversity within the corps, one student expressed amazement “that a system of patternized behavior can group together individuals stemming from such different sociocultural backgrounds, with both mingling and clashing values, and produce a body of men, a corps, that functions as true brothers in search of a common goal: to become Citadel Men.”¹⁵

Black cadets took a different view of the corps’ supposed diversity. One student remarked “you’re a black spot in a white crowd, and you can’t hide,” while another agreed, adding, “with the ratio of whites to blacks there, some people show you clearly they don’t like you because you’re black.” Seeing the college as a microcosm of America, one cadet asserted, “you have to live and die in a white society,” and “if you can make it at The Citadel, you’ve proven you can make it in white society.”¹⁶

When college officials made it a point to attract more African-American students to The Citadel’s campus, they often did so only at the prodding of state and federal

¹³ *The Brigadier*, 29 January 1982, 2 February 1982, 21 January 1983.

¹⁴ *The Brigadier*, 2 November 1984; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 September 1980, document 461; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 10 February 1984, document 418; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 September 1984, document 469; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 6 September 1985, documents 20-23; *The State*, 31 May 1981.

¹⁵ *The Brigadier*, 25 February 1983, 25 March 1983, 8 April 1983, 3 February 1984, 16 March 1984.

¹⁶ *The State*, 31 May 1981.

authorities, and even then they tried to do so with minimal effort on their part, making almost no changes to the traditions and practices that had bothered numerous black students since the school's initial integration. In 1981, as proof of their "commitment" to affirmative action, the Board of Visitors hired one black Air Force officer to help recruit minority students. In later years, school officials asked African-American alumni, preachers at black churches, and black cadets to step up their recruiting efforts. Meanwhile, their contribution to the campaign consisted largely of distributing brochures "illustrated to appeal to blacks," and the attitudes of certain administrators indicated a superficial commitment at best to promoting racial diversity. One in particular demanded that the school not lower its standards to fill "quotas," while D.D. Nicholson admitted "We haven't made much of an effort to go out and fill this place with black students because that would be inequitable."¹⁷

Given the intransigence of school leaders, the lack of racial diversity on the Board of Visitors drew more attention than the absence of minorities in the corps of cadets. In 1979, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) conducted an examination of South Carolina's colleges and universities to check the state's overall progress in dismantling its "dual system of education." As many people predicted, the Palmetto State fared poorly as the HEW agents discovered that none of the eleven colleges they visited met federal desegregation requirements. Investigators found that the educational and social climates at South Carolina's public universities "encourage

¹⁷ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 5 June 1981; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 19 March 1982, document 278; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 14 May 1982, document 295; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 10 June 1983, document 375; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 18 February 1983, document 337; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 November 1984, document 493; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 8 February 1985, document 505; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 15 March 1985, document 519; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 10 May 1985, document 2; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 6 September 1985, documents, 17, 23; Advisory Committee Minutes, 15-16 October 1982, document 4; *The State*, 31 May 1981.

students to enroll at institutions on the basis of their racial identity” to the extent that the state’s “traditionally white” schools boasted ninety percent white student bodies and the enrollment at “traditionally black” colleges, such as South Carolina State, remained almost ninety-eight percent African American. Department officials threatened to withhold over seventy-five million dollars in federal funding should South Carolina not take steps to eradicate “the vestiges of unconstitutional segregation,” giving state officials sixty days to devise a viable desegregation plan.¹⁸

While Citadel administrators voiced no opposition to the use of “incentive scholarships” and other initiatives designed to entice black students and faculty to white colleges, a major battle ensued over the HEW’s contention that “the low representation of blacks on governing boards of the institutions has precipitated the racial identities of the schools.” Part of the hastily assembled “South Carolina Plan for Equity and Equal Opportunity in the Public Colleges and Universities” included a proviso reconfiguring the method by which all school trustees were chosen with each member either elected by the General Assembly or appointed by the governor. At the time, state law mandated that all members of The Citadel’s Board of Visitors had to be graduates of the college, but this new proposal carried no such stipulation, and the current members of the Board opposed any plan that might require them to share power with someone who did not appreciate the “traditions and uniqueness” of the college.¹⁹

In April 1981, the Board unanimously rejected the entire nineteen and half million dollar desegregation package based solely on their objection to the trustee measure.

¹⁸ *The State*, 23 December 1978, 27 December 1978; *Columbia Record*, 3 January 1979, 5 January 1979, 6 August 1979, 7 January 1981, 8 January 1981, 16 January 1981, 26 January 1981.

¹⁹ *Columbia Record*, 30 April 1980, 7 January 1981, 3 March 1981, 1 July 1981, 3 July 1981, 25 July 1981; *The State*, 8 January 1981, 6 March 1981.

Prioleau tried to explain “we are not opposing this from any racial standpoint,” but “the virtues of honor and integrity are emphasized daily at The Citadel,” and to endorse “a major policy change in the composition of our board which we do not approve of, this would violate our honor and integrity.” To counter those who might accuse them of racially discriminatory behavior, the Chairman laid out a telling definition of racial integration in which “color doesn’t have a thing to do with it.” Displaying a mindset that that would come back to haunt them in a few years, Prioleau and other school personnel believed that a college with a two percent African-American student population was the “most integrated school in the state” because “we are the only school where everyone wears the same clothes, eats the same food, lives in the same room.”²⁰

Not everyone agreed that The Citadel was leading South Carolina down the path of racial progress. When the Office of Civil Rights announced that it would not approve the state’s desegregation plan unless every school signed it, an editorial in *The State* newspaper blared, “Only Citadel Stands in Schoolhouse Door.” Several high ranking state officials warned that the Board of Visitors’ decision could cost South Carolina millions of dollars and lead to numerous federal law suits. Should this happen, many politicians decided that The Citadel ought to “face federal wrath – and the loss of federal money – alone.” State Senator Harry Chapman favored adding a rider to the 1982 budget stipulating that if South Carolina lost federal funds because of any school’s refusal to sign the desegregation plan, then those responsible must reimburse the state.²¹

²⁰ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 April 1981, documents 40-41; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 May 1981, documents, 44-45; *The State*, 30 April 1980, 24 June 1981; *Columbia Record*, 15 May 1981, 11 June 1981.

²¹ *Columbia Record*, 15 May 1981, 9 June 1981, 11 June 1981; *The State*, 18 June 1981, 26 June 1981, 8 May 1981, 10 May 1981, 12 May 1981, 7 May 1982, 19 June 1982.

In late June, the Board of Visitors signed an amended plan, one that committed the college “to a good faith effort to effectuate the goal of increasing black representation on its governing board,” but did not require them to make any changes in their trustee requirements. Still, with this last signature in place, Governor Riley and the South Carolina Attorney General quickly approved the entire report and two weeks later HEW officials did the same.²²

The fight did not end there, however, as many South Carolinians resented the fact that The Citadel’s special alumni stipulation “disfranchises 99.9 percent of the population.” After meeting with officials from the federal Department of Education, members of South Carolina’s Commission on Higher Education (CHE) drafted a plan to enact legislation that would quickly and effectively desegregate every college’s governing board. In their initial “position paper,” the CHE singled out Citadel supporters as the primary opponents to their goal, and sure enough, Citadel graduates proved extremely effective at beating back challenges to their way of doing things. School alumni serving on both the Senate Education Committee and the CHE kept proposals bottled up in committees, but when one of the bills eventually made it to a vote, one observer noted “it looked like a Citadel pep rally in the state Senate chamber with about one hundred alumni cheering speakers opposing a change in the structure of the school’s trustees.”²³

In an effort to reach some sort of compromise, the CHE devised a milder desegregation method that allowed the governor to add one member to the governing

²² *Columbia Record*, 29 June 1981; *The State*, 29 June 1981, 30 June 1981, 18 July 1981.

²³ *The State*, 8 May 1981, 10 May 1981, 31 May 1982, 18 February 1982, 25 February 1982, 5 November 1982, 3 December 1982, 5 February 1983; *Columbia Record*, 26 July 1982, 7 February 1983, 30 August 1983.

body of every South Carolina college. When Citadel officials again demanded that their appointee be a graduate of the college, a member of the commission suggested that since no other public institution asked permission to “exclude two and half million citizens of this state” perhaps The Citadel “should become a private college and start paying its own bills.” Legislators and CHE members finally gave in, however, and passed a version of the bill upholding The Citadel’s alumni restriction. This bothered many, and the United States Department of Education (DOE) informed the CHE that “since blacks were barred from admission for many years and few blacks have enrolled since the era of (court ordered) desegregation, the requirement that all members of the board who are not *ex officio* be alumni screens out many otherwise eligible blacks and perpetuates the racial identity of the board.” George James, the new chairman of the Board of Visitors, called the DOE’s objections “garbage,” but lost in the discussion was the fact that a group of men who had repeatedly refused to make any allowances for the needs of non-white or foreign cadets demanded and received preferential treatment due to their school’s “special needs and programs.”²⁴

While the debate over opening up membership on the Board of Visitors was framed in the context of racial diversification, Citadel officials saw themselves fighting what they considered a much more important, although not unrelated, battle – preserving the college’s single sex environment. When they argued “the very nature of this institution requires that it be governed by persons familiar with its background, its traditions, its mission,” the foremost mission in their minds was the production of Citadel men, and they used such arguments to prevent women from undergoing, participating in,

²⁴ *The State*, 18 February 1982, 5 November 1982, 6 November 1982, 3 December 1982, 19 January 1983, 27 January 1983, 5 February 1983, 21 April 1983, 12 May 1983, 2 July 1983, 30 August 1983; *Columbia*

and therefore gaining a “proper” understanding of the vaunted Citadel system. D.D. Nicholson verbalized the thoughts of many Citadel cadets and alumni when he predicted that “the first vote a board with non-alumni would take would probably be to accept women,” a move Prioleau warned “would pull down what The Citadel stands for.” A cadet described the thought of allowing anyone to serve on the Board of Visitors as “comical and perhaps absurd,” finding it “incredible” that a female might actually qualify for membership on The Citadel’s controlling body. The president of the Association of Citadel Men called any such change “the beginning of the end of The Citadel as we know it” for “we could have a Board of Visitors with no Citadel Men on it, but with all probability some female members.” This desire to preserve the most precious and long lasting of the school’s traditions helps explain the intensity with which most Citadel personnel fought the desegregation plan, but it also shows how one form of discrimination feeds into another since the school’s policy denied all women and the vast majority of African-American men a role in developing institutional policies.²⁵

Nonetheless, with the legislation finally in place, Governor Riley wasted no time appointing eight African Americans and two women to the governing bodies of nine of the state’s public colleges and universities, naming Alonzo Nesmith, a twenty-six year old 1979 graduate of The Citadel, to the Board of Visitors. That same year, the Board reported that representatives from the Office of Civil Rights had visited campus and left “with a favorable opinion of Citadel actions in the Civil Rights area.” Later evaluations were not near as positive, however, as South Carolina colleges in general and The Citadel in particular made “little measurable progress” in meeting their desegregation goals. By

Record, 7 February 1983, 20 April 1983, 30 August 1983, 7 October 1983, 26 January 1983, 20 April 1983.

1985, ten out of the state's twelve public colleges had fallen well short of the minority recruitment standards they set for themselves, and at The Citadel, the number of non-white students had actually decreased over the past four years. Fred Sheheen, the chairman of the CHE, expressed his dissatisfaction with these figures, taking a jab at The Citadel by citing "change-resistant organizational structure alumni, which too often defend the status quo" as a major "force which may counter any affirmative action plan, desegregation plan, or equal opportunity plan in the country." The next year, Citadel officials and cadets would suffer the consequences of their dogged efforts to prevent or at least impede any meaningful diversification of the college's cultural, social, or intellectual environment.²⁶

When Alonzo Nesmith took his seat on the Board of Visitors, it appeared as though The Citadel had emerged from the turmoil surrounding South Carolina's desegregation plan stronger than ever. In his annual report for the 1985/86 school year, General Grimsley predicted "this year will be recorded in the annals of The Citadel as one in which the future of the college has been assured." To back up this claim, he cited the "continued revitalization of the Corps of Cadets and the unprecedented number of quality applicants for admission; the surge in alumni enthusiasm and support world wide; and the solid national media recognition." This last boon pleased Grimsley the most as he saw fit to repeat that "there were no negative aspects to publicity connected with The Citadel." This public relations coup proved short lived, however, as early in the

²⁵ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 14 May 1981, documents 44-45; *The State*, 16 May 1981, 31 May 1981, 6 November 1982; *Columbia Record*, 29 June 1981; *The Brigadier*, 26 February 1982.

²⁶ *The State*, 8 July 1983, 2 March 1984, 2 July 1983, 25 July 1983, 16 August 1984, 27 September 1984, 2 July 1986; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 September 1983, document 386; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 November 1983, document 404; *Columbia Record*, 30 August 1983, 7 October 1983, 17 June 1985, 4 October 1985.

upcoming school year, the hazing of a black Citadel cadet drew the critical eyes of the nation to Charleston.²⁷

At around 12:45 AM on October 23, 1986, five white cadets, Maurice Bostic, Paul Koss, Jimmy Biggerstaff, Jeffrey Plumley, and Steve Webb, took a break from studying and began discussing the behavior and attitude of Kevin Nesmith, a freshman in their company and the younger brother of the newest member of the Board of Visitors. The five juniors decided that that Nesmith was not “pulling his weight,” and as a means of motivating the “notoriously slack knob,” Webb suggested that they dress up as Ku Klux Klansmen and pay Nesmith an early morning visit. They all went to their rooms to get into costume, but unbeknownst to the rest of the group, Plumley returned with a small, slightly singed, paper cross. About one AM, the cadets, clad in white sheets and wearing towels over their heads so as to “give the appearance of Klansmen,” assembled outside Nesmith’s room and then entered chanting “Nesmith get your shit together.” Their entry awoke Nesmith’s roommate, Michael Mendoza, who leapt out of bed, threatening to “beat every one of your asses.” Mendoza swung at one of the intruders, and his roommate woke up just as the five men scampered out the door. Before they escaped, however, Plumley dropped his paper cross on a piece of furniture, and Mendoza knocked the hat and towel off Koss’s head. The whole encounter lasted approximately ninety seconds, but when the two freshmen saw the singed cross, they considered it a “serious incident.” Mendoza decided they should notify school officials, including his roommate’s brother, and they took what evidence they had to a couple of upperclassmen for safekeeping. The towel had Koss’s name and social security number sewed on it, and

²⁷ *The State*, 10 September 1983; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 14 March 1986, document 87; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 June 1986, documents 130, 133, 134, 141; Advisory Committee Minutes, April 11-

with him clearly implicated, cadet and college officials began tracking down his accomplices. By 11:44 PM the next day, the other four cadets had confessed.²⁸

News of the hazing spread quickly, and over the next few days, General Grimsley held a series of meetings with cadets, faculty, and members of the press “to present all the facts in the case; to tamp down rumors; and to relieve tension.” On October 24, he spoke with all African-American cadets, assuring them that he would investigate the matter thoroughly. A few days later, he addressed the entire corps, exhorting them to “work toward relieving any pressures that may rest” within the student body. On October 27, he held a news conference in which he called the hazing an “aberration and is not an indication of the status of our relations between black and white cadets.” He corrected earlier reports that the five upperclassmen had shouted racial slurs at Nesmith, adding “I would like to write it off as a prank that got out of hand, but the college has too much at stake to write this off.” Announcing that he would not “tolerate any action that is divisive to the corps of cadets,” a promise he would later fail to keep, he assembled a panel to “review the alleged problem of racial discrimination at The Citadel” and vowed to take “appropriate action” based on their findings.²⁹

While the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Justice Department, the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED), the Air Force, and the Army sent representatives to investigate the assault, most school officials and white cadets responded to the uproar by denying that The Citadel had any racial problems whatsoever.

12, documents 1, 7; Charleston *Evening Post*, 14 January 1987; *Washington Post*, 29 November 1986.

²⁸ *The State*, 11 November 1986, 12 December 1986, 22 January 1987; “A Report on Hazing/Race Relations At The Citadel,” January 16, 1987, documents in possession of author, hereafter cited as “Hazing Report,” 3-4, 5.

²⁹ “Through the Sallyport,” December 1986 in AF Racial Incident 1986, The Citadel Archives and Museum, The Citadel, Charleston, South Carolina; Charleston *News and Courier*, 28 October 1986, 29 October 1986; *The State*, 25 October 1986, 28 October 1986, 29 October 1986; Hazing Report, 7.

Grimsley met frequently with alumni groups to counter “scare headlines,” proclaiming “in my judgment, after my detailed review of all facts, this was not a racially motivated incident.” Several white cadets cast the pre-“Nesmith incident” Citadel as a racial utopia, an analysis that overlooked decades of protests by black cadets dating back to the college’s initial integration. One white student regretted that the controversy had caused some of his colleagues to begin focusing on “the distinction of color,” driving a wedge between “brothers who until the past month had forgotten there were differences between people.” This student’s lament begs the question that if the corps indeed had no “memories of prejudices, of racial injustices, of times that have long passed,” why did the five students choose to masquerade as the South’s foremost practitioners of racial terrorism in an attempt to “motivate” an African-American cadet? Of course, no one at The Citadel was socially “color blind” as the young man suggested, but the prevalence of such indefensible claims indicates that the overwhelming whiteness of the cadets’ environment allowed a fair number of them to remain willfully ignorant as to the obviously offensive nature of comments and acts they deemed harmless. For example, one student described the hazing as simply a manifestation of the corps’ “sarcastic humor,” akin to “jokes about people’s girlfriends, about their families, about their cars.”³⁰

This is not to say that black cadets had not and did not try to alert whites to the racial implications of certain remarks, behavior, or “jokes.” Earlier chapters have shown that African-American students expressed their opinions in a variety of ways, from letters to *The Brigadier* to waving homemade banners at football games. Having already alerted

³⁰ *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986; *Jet*, 22 December 1986; *The State*, 4 December 1986, 14 January 1987, 22 January 1987, 31 January 1987, 14 October 1987; *Charleston News and Courier*, 28 October 1986, 9 November 1986; *New York Times*, 23 November 1986; *The Brigadier*, 14 November 1986, 8 December 1986; “Sallyport”, 2; *Columbia Record*, 13 March 1987.

the regimental commander to white cadets' brazen use of racial slurs, most black cadets refused to characterize the Nesmith incident as a benign prank or an innocuous aspect of the fourth-class system. A senior believed the hazing "was somewhat racially motivated. There was a bit too much symbolism to be anything else." Numerous other African-American cadets denied that the events represented an "aberration," as one student recalled returning to his room and finding a burnt cross made out of popsicle sticks laying on his bed. A few others remembered upperclassmen telling them "I hate black people. I don't want you in my school and I'll do anything I can to run you out." A member of the Afro-American Society viewed the five white's act as the product of an "adamantly depraved insensitivity," while the president of the organization stated that racism "is a disease in the corps and all we have to do is face it."³¹

Despite hopes that punishing the five cadets would resolve the controversy, the sentence handed down by Grimsley and the Board of Visitors magnified certain negative perceptions of the college. On November 1, General Grimsley announced that the five cadets would walk one hundred and ninety-five tours and had been placed on probation, facing expulsion should they commit another offense in their remaining two years at The Citadel. The chairman of the Board of Visitors confirmed that "the punishment accorded these cadets is very severe," finding it necessary to reiterate that The Citadel "does not have a racial problem." Nesmith's assailants apologized to him privately and issued a public apology to "The Citadel community," regretting that "our thoughtlessness has generated opinions of our school that are simply unjustified by the reality of the relations between the races on our campus." They described their act as "arrogant and improper,"

³¹ *The Brigadier*, 10 November 1986; *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986, 29 November 1986; *New York Times*, 23 November 1986; West 57th, "The Citadel: Marching in Place," executive producer, Andrew

adding “we turned an inappropriate practice into a condemnable one by thoughtlessly choosing theatrics that are offensive to all persons of good will.” For his part, Grimsley called the matter “closed,” reaffirming yet again that The Citadel had no “major racial problems” and encouraging cadets to remain “sensitive to each others needs, backgrounds, and customs.”³²

However, as soon as Grimsley issued this proclamation, voices from inside and outside The Citadel began disputing claims that the matter had been resolved to everyone’s satisfaction. Cadet Calvin Robinson wrote a letter to *The Brigadier* on behalf of the Afro-American Society, expressing their “heartfelt outrage and disgust with the outcome of this sordid, despicable affair.” He argued that by making it possible for “the five racists” to eventually graduate, school officials had rendered the “intolerable tolerable and the immoral moral” and predicted that “just as these types of incidences have occurred in the past (however major or minor) they will now continue in the future.” Alonzo Nesmith called the hazing an “act of terrorism” and demanded that the young men be expelled for their “hideous” and “arrogant” behavior. With most black cadets “totally frustrated” by Grimsley’s decision, Kevin Nesmith asked the General to reconsider the punishment, calling the “dishonorable, premeditated, and racially motivated” assault the “epitome of arrogant ignorance, racism, and offensiveness.” Grimsley declined the request, and in mid-November, the younger Nesmith left The

Lack, produced by Peter Michaelis, CBS News; CBS.

³² *The State*, 1 November 1986; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 November 1986, documents 249-250; undated newspaper clipping in author’s possession; *Charleston News and Courier*, 1 November 1986; “President’s Spot,” 3 November 1986, 19 November 1987.

Citadel alleging that other cadets “terrorized” him, calling him a “troublemaker” and blaming him for the negative publicity the school was receiving.³³

A group of eight ministers from local African-American churches joined the fray, deeming the punishment “tantamount to executive endorsement of this heinous act” and an insult to the black community’s “dignity as human beings.” When they informed General Grimsley of black Charlestonians’ concerns with the negative “racial attitude on campus,” the school’s president responded that most people he spoke with supported his action, an assertion that prompted one minister to note, “evidently he hadn’t talked to the black community.”³⁴

The South Carolina NAACP joined with the clergymen, demanding that Grimsley resign as the college’s president. Urging South Carolinians to “correct the injustices that exist behind the walls of this last bastion of the Old South,” the branch’s chairman, Dr. William Gibson, catalogued “the history of bad treatment of blacks” at the college and asked state lawmakers to take a closer look at why so few African Americans attended The Citadel.³⁵

The national NAACP’s executive director, Benjamin Hooks, viewed the harassment of Nesmith as “a replay of an old Civil War movie,” attributing the act to either “sheer ignorance or racism,” noting that “one is about as bad as the other.” Jesse Jackson came to Charleston and spoke at a local church, imploring every “decent South Carolinian” to denounce the five students’ behavior. Flanked by seven black cadets,

³³ *The Brigadier*, 10 November 1986; *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986; Hazing Report, 6, 11; *The State*, 28 October 1986, 9 November 1986, 13 November 1986, 15 November 1986; *Charleston Post and Courier*, 9 November 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 14 November 1986; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 8 November 1986, document 249; *Jet*, 1 December 1986; *Columbia Record*, 8 January 1987.

³⁴ Hazing Report, 11-12; *The State*, 11 November 1986, 18 November 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 11 November 1986, 12 November 1986.

Jackson challenged “The Citadel to do justice [and] get your house in order,” telling his audience to “pray for Kevin, but have pity on the five” for “if they can’t respect people of color, they can’t make it in the world.”³⁶

This intense public glare brought to light examples of past cadet transgressions which stoked the protestors’ anger. In December 1986, the NAACP filed an \$880,000 lawsuit against General Grimsley and the Board of Visitors accusing them of condoning “racially discriminatory conduct” and fostering “a pervasive atmosphere of overt racial bigotry and harassment.” In making the plaintiff’s case, William Gibson pointed to the “repeated displays of racist symbols and stereotypes” in cadet publications, such as photos from the 1977, 1981, and 1982 *Sphinxes* depicting cadets posing with swastikas, dressed in Klan garb, or staging mock lynchings. Gibson condemned these pictures as examples of “insensitivity at its worst” and presented them as evidence that the “administration’s feelings and thoughts permeated that campus. And they are the ones that allow this type of racism to continue.” Citadel officials answered these charges, saying that while “we are not proud of the photographs . . . we do not practice censorship here,” but encourage cadets to use “common sense and propriety in dealing with sensitive matters.”³⁷

The Citadel’s most vocal critics offered more substantive ways to erode “the atmosphere of insensitivity and negativism” hanging over the corps, ranging from hiring black professors to prohibiting the playing of Dixie and the waving of the Confederate

³⁵ *The State*, 12 November 1986, 15 November 1986, 16 November 1986, 12 January 1987, 13 November 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 28 October 1986, 16 November 1986, 24 November 1986.

³⁶ *The State*, 18 November 1986, 9 December 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 18 November 1986, 24 November 1986.

³⁷ *Columbia Record*, 12 January 1987, 1 April 1987, 7 March 1987; *The State*, 18 November 1986, 30 November 1986, 19 December 1986, 6 January 1987, 24 February 1987, 6 March 1987; *Jet*, 15 December 1986, 12.

flag at school sponsored events to more actively recruiting African-American students. While Citadel administrators had been hearing these same suggestions for years, one of the protestors' official demands indicate some recognition on their part that The Citadel's problems stemmed from more than just an underrepresented minority presence on campus.³⁸

Rather than bifurcate the struggle for racial and sexual equality, the NAACP and the Charlestonian clergymen merged the two, with one group threatening to challenge the legality of The Citadel's all-male admissions policies and another suggesting that accepting women might help mitigate some of the damage done to the college's reputation. Despite their method of persuasion, members of both groups appreciated that discriminatory behavior against one group of people contributed to the marginalization of others by perpetuating a stagnant intellectual and cultural environment that allowed the majority to ignore or discredit the voices and opinions of those on the fringes. In The Citadel's case in particular, they understood that the exclusion of women eliminated a potentially dramatic challenge to many white cadets' worldview thus making it easier for these students to dismiss ideas or interpretations that may differ from their own. Frank Portee, the spokesperson for Charleston's black community during this period, listed The Citadel's policies on Dixie, the Confederate flag, and women as "things that would contribute to an incident" like the hazing of Kevin Nesmith. A Citadel cadet inadvertently exposed the link between The Citadel's lack of diversity and the corps' narrow-minded views on race and gender when he denounced the NAACP's questioning of the school's single sex traditions as an attempt to undermine "The Citadel and its high ideals." Whether one associated these "high ideals" with the Confederacy, as most white

³⁸ *The State*, 24 November 1986; Hazing Report, 12-13, 15-16.

Citadel cadets, alumni, and administrators did, or with the building of men, as almost all Citadel cadets, alumni, and administrators did, the inescapable impression is that a Citadel education served primarily to exalt the presumably unassailable virtues of white manhood.³⁹

While Citadel officials never considered allowing women into the corps of cadets, General Grimsley did meet with ministers to discuss several of their requests, and by late November, the two had reached an “accord.” As part of the agreement, the clergymen conceded that the students’ punishment “adequately addressed the offense” and that “total expulsion would remove these five cadets from experiences which their own development and maturity requires in a multi-racial society.” In response, the General agreed to set up a racial advisory committee comprised of Citadel alumni, school administrators, and black leaders from across South Carolina to monitor race relations at the college. The chances of this panel bridging racial divides seemed slim, however, for when Portee and others told reporters that they planned to put discussions of Dixie, the Confederate flag, and the admission of women at the top of their agenda, Grimsley replied curtly, “I’m not making any changes.”⁴⁰

The General’s comment echoed the sentiments of many Citadel supporters who countered any criticism of the school with attacks on the protestors, the media, and Kevin Nesmith himself. To be sure, Grimsley, the five cadets and The Citadel endured their share of criticism. Several South Carolinians condemned school officials’ “gutless” and “tepid” response to the incident. Others blasted the actions of the five “back-water

³⁹ *The State*, 18 November 1986, 23 November 1986, 24 November 1986, 1 December 1986; Hazing Report, 12-13, 15-16.

⁴⁰ Hazing Report, 16; *The State*, 21 November 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 21 November 1986; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1987, documents 295-297.

reactionaries” and informed those who wished to characterize the hazing as a prank that “from the perspective of oppressed blacks, the Klan and its trappings were and are consummate terror and evil incarnate.” An African-American man from Charleston explained that “from Reconstruction through the 1960s, blacks were threatened, emasculated, and killed by the KKK. Many of us can still hear the findings of the all-white juries reading the verdict – ‘killed by a person or persons unknown’ as the killers were being congratulated by the jurors.” A native Charlestonian maintained that unless school officials addressed the lack of diversity among the corps and the faculty, “racism will haunt The Citadel,” and its graduates would find themselves unprepared for life in a multicultural society.⁴¹

However, most of the public responses to the Nesmith incident praised General Grimsley and the Board of Visitors for their handling of the matter. One particularly exuberant correspondent claimed that “The Citadel has been revealed as representing the best of Southern traditions and not the worst.” By turning a mock-up of the Ku Klux Klan’s brand of racial terror from a negative into a positive, many white South Carolinians made it clear that they had no intention of reevaluating the racial implications of their traditions. An editorial writer for *The State* asserted that The Citadel had “nothing to apologize for” and pointed to cadets’ role in turning back the Star of the West as a prime example of the college’s dedicated service to South Carolina “as the molders of good soldiers and good citizens.”⁴²

⁴¹ *The State*, 28 October 1986, 31 October 1986, 1 November 1986, 17 November 1986, 20 November 1986, 6 December 1986, 7 December 1986, 12 December 1986, 24 December 1986; *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 January 1987; *Charleston News and Courier*, 11 November 1986, 13 November 1986, 15 November 1986, 18 November 1986; Hazing Report, 13.

⁴² *The State*, 4 November 1986; *Greenville News*, 23 November 1986; *Florence Morning News*, 16 November 1986.

Subsequent editorials in the *Charleston News and Courier* suggested that the “five misguided youths” might have accidentally dressed as Klansmen, and in their “unwitting use of the symbols of racial hatred, revealed that their minds have been tainted by prejudices which have no place in today’s South.” The problem with this argument lies not only in the fact that the incident took place in “today’s South,” but also in the realization that five white students, at a school some lauded as “a leader in the battle against racism,” felt completely comfortable entering a black man’s room wearing the “symbols of racial hatred.” Cadets Mendoza and Nesmith certainly found something disturbing about this, and they would probably have questioned one editor’s refusal to take the “imaginary” racial problems at The Citadel “seriously.”⁴³

Again, this selective amnesia towards the South’s history of racial oppression enabled many people to treat the five white cadets’ act as a “practical joke” that the media and protestors had “blown out of proportion.” While many editorial writers disavowed the “infantile judgment” and “ignorance” of Nesmith’s tormentors, they devoted more ink to lambasting the “professional racists of the NAACP” for “causing more trouble for everyone than all the incidents that have ever happened on the campus.” School officials welcomed this view, claiming that “the problem was exacerbated by the over-reaction of some who were influenced more by their own interests.” Several commentators refused to believe that the “little racial incident” brought already existing tensions to the surface, choosing instead to grumble that “the hype raised by those events has polarized and segregated the cadets on The Citadel campus.” A local woman “thought we as Charlestonians and Americans had long passed those anxious days of black versus white, protest marches and labor disputes,” but rather than acknowledging

⁴³ *Charleston News and Courier*, 19 November 1986, 26 November 1986.

that racial divisions still existed or even blaming the white cadets for evoking the nasty images of those “anxious days,” she directed her angst at the NAACP.⁴⁴

Many Citadel backers framed their indictments of the protestors’ “civil rights era rhetoric” within a larger critique of affirmative action. An editorial in the *Greenville News* hoped that the controversy surrounding The Citadel would not lead college administrators to adopt “quotas, softened admission standards for blacks and preferential treatment.” This assessment of both African Americans’ abilities as well as policies designed to help overcome the legacy of segregation reflected the racial climate of Ronald Reagan’s America and made it even more disturbing when General Grimsley vowed to return Citadel life to “normal” following the “cessation of inflammatory actions and rhetoric by certain of those on the outside.”⁴⁵

Just as the method of loudly discrediting the views of outsiders proved effective in undermining the 1979 Mood Report’s conclusions regarding the fourth-class system, repudiating a “bunch of outside racist fanatics” went a long way not only toward preserving the normal campus environment that gave rise to the five cadets’ “prank,” but also to insuring that The Citadel’s “traditions” remained predominantly white as well as masculine. An absolute faith in the college’s unique mission to produce “Citadel Men” factored heavily into arguments that “The Citadel is a closed society which is fully capable of handling problems such as this.” A 1959 graduate of the school demanded that the media “get off The Citadel’s back unless they really know what The Citadel is all

⁴⁴ *The State*, 31 October 1986, 17 November 1986, 21 November 1986, 23 November 1986, 30 November 1986, 1 December 1986, 8 December 1986, 12 December 1986, 27 January 1987, 28 January 1987, 14 March 1987, 15 March 1987; *Columbia Record*, 13 March 1987; *Charleston News and Courier*, 13 November 1986, 14 November 1986, 15 November 1986, 18 November 1986, 19 November 1986, 20 November 1986, 21 November 1986, 26 November 1986; *The Brigadier*, 8 December 1986; *Florence Morning News*, 16 November 1986; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1987, document 297.

⁴⁵ *Charleston News and Courier*, 13 November 1986; *Greenville News*, 23 November 1986; “Sallyport,” 2

about – making men out of boys.” Another alumnus contextualized the events of October 23 as part of “a system of discipline, instruction and training to turn boys into men – ‘Citadel Men.’” A writer for *The State* accepted the notion that only those familiar with the intricate nature of The Citadel’s system “understand where disciplining ends and abuse begins, but it may not be so clear to an untrained eye.” The sister of a cadet boasted that her brother and his classmates “were hosed down, lined up and beaten about the buttocks until he was black and blue and literally could not sit down,” yet “he was strong enough and determined enough to take whatever was dished out to him by upperclassmen.”⁴⁶

Implicit in this woman’s argument and in the arguments advanced by several other people was that Kevin Nesmith had not been “man enough” to make it at The Citadel. One Charlestonian declared that the “clear message was the boy is a quitter, that he could not withstand the discipline and training necessary to earn the right to be a Citadel Man.” Possibly aware that many white South Carolinians, to say nothing of the majority of white Citadel alumni, were willing to overlook their culpability in the whole affair, cadets Steve Webb and Jeffrey Plumley struck a decidedly less contrite tone than they had months earlier, as they told a reporter for *The State* that Nesmith entered The Citadel “knowing full well the practices and procedures” of the corps and thus “did assume the risk of being subjected to a certain amount of harassment that might help him to become a man.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Charleston *News and Courier*, 13 November 1986, 14 November 1986, 18 November 1986, 20 November 1986, 21 November 1986, 24 November 1986, 26 November 1986; *The State*, 17 November 1986, 20 November 1986, 23 November 1986, 1 December 1986, 26 December 1986, 27 January 1987, 28 January 1987; *The Brigadier*, 8 December 1986.

⁴⁷ *The Brigadier*, 8 December 1986, 23 January 1987; *The State*, 17 November 1986, 29 November 1986, 25 March 1987; Charleston *News and Courier*, 13 November 1986, 15 November 1986, 20 November 1986, 21 November 1986, 26 November 1986.

These challenges to Kevin Nesmith's masculinity illuminate the unique as well as important role race and gender played in shaping the identity of many Citadel men. For one, claims that the attack on Nesmith served as an opportunity for him to prove his manliness turns on its head the argument put forth by numerous scholars that white vigilantes used violence as a means of emasculating rather than empowering African-American males. In addition, the pervasive institutional emphasis on manliness enabled many white cadets and administrators to ignore the obvious tensions that existed among Citadel cadets and alumni. In denying that their alma mater had no racial problems, whites convinced themselves that the masculine bonds of the Citadel "brotherhood" subsumed any divisions arising from the college's overwhelmingly white environment and traditions. Since the school's initial integration, however, African-American cadets realized that their acceptance into The Citadel's fraternity was incomplete as long as many on campus failed to appreciate and, in some cases, exhibited a hostility towards the cultural differences between black and white cadets. Not surprisingly then, African-American students at The Citadel in 1986 grew increasingly frustrated when others refused to acknowledge not only the validity of their views and grievances, but also the racial connotations of their peers' behavior. A month after the news of the Nesmith incident broke, Kenneth Gordon, the president of The Citadel's Afro-American Society, sent a letter to the *News and Courier* informing them that he was "fed up with the speculations, opinions, and views" of those filling a "desperate need to justify this abhorrent act," asking "if there is no problem, as many people seem to believe, why do black cadets feel that there is?"⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: Gender, Race and Class in the Making of the Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 164-165; Gail Bederman,

School officials' response to the findings of two investigations of the Nesmith incident in particular and the campus race relations at The Citadel further exposed the shallowness of their commitment to promoting ethnic diversity and indicate that their attitudes towards integration had changed little since the 1960s. For the most part, they continued to believe that the mere presence of non-whites in the student body fulfilled their obligation to achieving racial equality, refusing to alter certain customs and attitudes that tended to alienate and discourage the relatively few minority students who did attend the college.

The first evaluation, conducted by the South Carolina Human Affairs Commission at the behest of the governor, dispelled many of the rumors surrounding the hazing, attributing much of the controversy to a "failure in communication" between Citadel officials and the black community when it came to the severity of the sentence handed down by General Grimsley and the Board of Visitors. The report placed much of the blame for this on Citadel officials' "marked insensitivity to (or ignorance of) community concerns," but confirmed that the awarding of one hundred and ninety five tours and the accompanying "months of grueling public penance" were "the most severe punishment ever handed out by the school to any cadet(s)" short of expulsion.⁴⁹

Through interviews with almost every African-American cadet at The Citadel, the commission discovered that while racially motivated hazing was "not a widespread

Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 2-5, 20, 47, 59; Glenda 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), 63-64, 82-87; Stephen Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 2, 4, 41-42, 94-96; Bryant Simon, *A Fabric of Defeat: The Politics of South Carolina Millhands, 1910-1948* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 20-26, 31-35; *Charleston News and Courier*, 26 November 1986.

⁴⁹ Hazing Report, 9, 10, 14; *The State*, 16 November 1986, 22 November 1986, 23 November 1986, 9 December 1986, 12 December 1986; *Charleston News and Courier*, 22 November 1986.

problem,” the use of racial slurs and the telling of offensive ethnic jokes “were not uncommon,” reporting that many “white cadets feel that saying bad things to blacks is funny.” Connecting this trend to the events of October 23, the commissioners pointed out that “when white people get so bold as to do something like that, joking or not, something is wrong.” The cadet regimental commander from that year tried to offer some excuse for white cadets’ callousness, explaining that most cadets had “grown up at the end of the civil rights movement and were ignorant of it,” adding “Martin Luther King, Jr. is to me something I’ve seen on a videotape.” This explanation not only highlighted where The Citadel had fallen short as an institution of higher education, but at a college whose students and administrators consistently evoked the glory of their forebears, it also demonstrated whose ancestors and whose accomplishments they deemed worthy of preserving and commemorating.⁵⁰

The Human Affairs Commission suggested that school officials compensate for the fact that “The Citadel is an overwhelmingly white environment” lacking both “ethnic diversity and cultural sensitivity” by offering mandatory “human relations” courses designed to broaden cadets’ views and “make students sensitive to the backgrounds and beliefs of other races.” However, the authors of the report realized that Citadel leaders ought to reevaluate their attitudes as well, pointing out that the school ranked last among South Carolina colleges in a “recent comparison of affirmative action progress.” Again, calls for increasing the number of African-American students on campus, hiring professors and administrators who “could serve as black role models at the school,” and finding ways to overcome African-American cadets’ “feeling of exclusion” were not

⁵⁰ Charleston *News and Courier*, 23 November 1986; *The State*, 12 December 1986; Hazing Report, 14, 20, 22; *Columbia Record*, 12 January 1987; *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986.

new, but they remained necessary so long as Citadel officials decided not to listen. For example, as a justification for their belief that whites at The Citadel “seem culturally insensitive” to their needs, black students referred interviewers to the school’s barbers’ inability to cut their hair properly, a complaint made almost fifteen years ago by the first African Americans who enrolled at the institution.⁵¹

An internal investigation conducted by Citadel faculty and staff members took a much more sanguine view of corps-wide race relations, but reached many of the same conclusions as the Human Affairs Commission. Reinforcing the role of gender identifications in obscuring ethnic divisions, the investigators determined that “The Citadel has established a record of positive racial and religious openness of which it can be proud,” reaching this conclusion based on the widely expressed cadet opinion that “the fourth-class system established bonds among classmates that ignored racial or religious differences.” Therefore, with a deep appreciation for the “the colleges’ commitment to excellence, its emphasis on the ‘whole man,’ its insistence that integrity, responsibility, and self-discipline are goals intertwined with the pursuit of intellectual competence,” they devised several ways “to make what is good better.”⁵²

Paying due notice to the lack of African-American students, faculty and administrators at The Citadel, the examiners decided that “the most pervasive concern is best summarized under the heading of ‘insensitivity,’” most notably white cadets’ propensity for making offensive comments about subjects “which the perpetrator has limited (if any) knowledge.” According to the report, some students even went so far as

⁵¹ Hazing Report, 19, 20, 23, 26-30; *The State*, 12 January 1987, 17 January 1987; *Columbia Record*, 12 January 1987; *The Brigadier*, 14 November 1986.

⁵² “Report of the Special Board of Inquiry to Review Racial Climate at The Citadel,” documents in possession of author, cited hereafter as “Citadel Report,” 2-3, 4, 5; *Columbia Record*, 19 February 1987

to require freshmen to tell racist jokes as “mess facts.” The panelists agreed with those students who believed that “The Citadel was ‘too white,’” and as a result, “inappropriate stereotypes were often the extent of a cadet’s knowledge about persons of other races or cultures.” As part of their solution, the committee members seconded the Human Affairs Commission’s call for “awareness training which focuses on helping cadets be cognizant of the multi-cultural society in which we live.”⁵³

Upon reviewing and distributing copies of each report, General Grimsley held a press conference reminding reporters that “at the time of the incident, I stated unequivocally that The Citadel has no major racial problems” then announcing that, in his opinion, both studies “reach that same conclusion.” Nevertheless, Grimsley accepted many of the inquiries’ suggestions such as mandatory sensitivity training, greater “vigilance” regarding the fourth-class system, continued efforts to meet the “college’s goals in its Affirmative Action Plan,” and increased attention to public perceptions of the college.⁵⁴

School officials enjoyed mixed results in these endeavors, improving their standing in the black community by increasing the amount of money and number of contracts they awarded to minority owned businesses and by staging a series of public ceremonies honoring African-American citizens from all walks of life.⁵⁵ They fared

⁵³ *Columbia Record*, 19 February 1987, 13 March 1987; Citadel Report, pg 5-6, 10, 12, 13.

⁵⁴ “Statement by: MGen James A. Grimsley, Jr. USA Ret.,” dated 18 February 1987 in “The Citadel AF Racial Incident 1986” Citadel Archives and Museum; *The State*, 18 February 1987, 19 February 1987, 27 June 1987; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 26 June 1987, documents 377, 378.

⁵⁵ In the five months following October 23, Citadel administrators invited economist Walter Williams to campus as part of the Greater Issues Lecture Series, welcomed the chairman of the NAACP to address a meeting of the Afro-American society, held a parade in recognition of a black cadet’s winning of the Palmetto Award, and named Charleston police chief Reuben Greenberg an honorary graduate of The Citadel. *The Brigadier*, 27 March 1987, Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 January 1987, document 274; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 30 October 1987, document 23; *The State*, 1 February 1987.

poorly, however, when it came to the more substantive and more difficult goal of diversifying the college's faculty and student body. While the negative publicity did not hurt The Citadel's overall enrollment, the number of minority applicants for the 1987/88 school year dropped sharply. Some tried to downplay the significance of this dip, but The Citadel's Dean of Undergraduate Studies admitted, "there's no way to deny that the incident, and the fact that it continues to surface, is going to hamper our capacity to recruit." Other factors hindered them as well since the addition of one African-American admissions officer failed to make up for the loss of the school's most valuable public relations resources – black cadets, black parents, and black preachers. While the president of the Afro-American Society wrote letters encouraging potential black applicants to visit the school, other African-American students declined to help, with one explaining, "The Citadel has offered me great returns, but it's the small differences that may make me refuse to endorse" the institution. Evidence of these "small differences" are reflected in the somewhat arrogant refusal of Citadel officials to accept any responsibility for the problems on campus. Absolving anyone connected with The Citadel for the school's negative public image, the chairman of the Board of Visitors remarked that "black leaders have recognized that the rancor and exaggerated charges stemming from this incident have caused a serious drop in black applicants and they must now counter this trend." According to the President of the Association of Citadel Men, alumni were more concerned that "as a result of recent events, academic and military standards would be lowered to enhance recruiting" than with the school's dismal record of hiring black faculty and attracting black students.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 22 April 1988, document 255; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 9 September 1988, document 97; Annual Reports from 1988-1990; *The State*, 5 February 1987, 21 March 1987;

In 1988, the school hired two African-American teachers, bringing the total number of black professors to three, but despite “considerable effort to employ blacks and other minorities,” The Citadel’s director of personnel complained that qualified African-American candidates either found better paying jobs elsewhere or considered the South Carolina Lowcountry a less than “attractive location.” The views expressed by an anonymous faculty member in an article for *The Brigadier* suggested another reason for the low number of black professors at The Citadel. The source resented requests that he “be aggressive in recruiting a black,” contending “the best qualified should be chosen otherwise that would be discrimination.”⁵⁷

As part of Grimsley’s pledge to foster a “greater sensitivity to black cadets,” school officials assembled a fourteen member “race relations advisory committee” to “monitor racial matters on campus,” made “Human Relations Training” a regular aspect of all ROTC courses, and enrolled the college in a state-wide “Role Model Project” designed to help black and white students “assess their perceptions about minorities on a predominantly white campus.” Despite these efforts, most whites at The Citadel remained indifferent or hostile to African Americans’ concerns as evidenced by the most enduring legacy of the Nesmith incident, the intense battle over white cadets’ waving of the Confederate Battle Flag and the continued playing of Dixie. The public debate over these practices showed not only the limits of tolerance at The Citadel, but testified to how deeply many white southerners allowed their sterilized version of the past to shape their image of the present. White Citadel cadets and administrators venerated the college’s traditions and heritage, but only so long as they could interpret these things in ways that

Washington Post, 21 November 1986; Hazing Report, 20, 21; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1987, document 275; Advisory Committee Minutes, March 27-28, 1987, document 2.

made them feel comfortable, secure, and important. Casting themselves and their institution as the caretakers and beneficiaries of a southern culture built upon the memory of heroic Confederate soldiers, bucolic plantations, and glorious lost causes, they attempted to repress those who pointed out that their inheritance included Klansmen, slavery, and Jim Crow. The debate over these issues offers further proof of the ideological and cultural rift separating black and white cadets and also demonstrates how the lack of diversity at The Citadel bred contempt for divergent viewpoints.⁵⁸

In interviews conducted by the State Human Affairs Commission, almost every black cadet they spoke to expressed uneasiness with the “perceptions and images associated with the school’s ‘Old South’ traditions,” traditions which to them “summoned a history and heritage of pain and abuse.” One African-American student exclaimed, “no black person I know wishes they were in ‘the land of cotton,’” while others wished white cadets would “get rid of the Confederate flags and put the Civil War to rest.” Black members of the corps waged non-verbal protests as well, sitting down when the band played Dixie at football games and waving large American flags whenever whites brandished their Confederate ones.⁵⁹

Although a fair number of white cadets commiserated with them, deciding that “if these symbols are offensive to part of the corps, then their use should be discontinued in the interest of corps unity,” black cadets found more support from the “many blacks in the community [who] see that flag as The Citadel’s senseless reluctance to change.”

James Clyburn, the chairman of the state’s Human Affairs Commission, hoped that once

⁵⁷ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 29 January 1988, documents 143, 215; *The Brigadier*, 8 December 1986.

⁵⁸ *The State*, 13 December 1986, 21 March 1987, 27 June 1987; *The Brigadier*, 19 February 1987, 30 October 1987.

South Carolinians “recognize white and black people have some basic cultural differences,” they might “take a serious look at the symbolism behind displaying the flag at the college and atop the State House.” In the meantime, however, he asked Citadel leaders to “establish less offensive ways of showing school spirit.”⁶⁰

Even this fairly mild suggestion drew a heated response from state and school officials who called it a “repudiation of our heritage” and “abhorrent to the vast majority of South Carolinians.” Continuing with their selective use of the pronoun “our,” they presented the Confederate flag and Dixie as a symbol of “our regional pride, our heritage, and also our hospitality,” defending its display as the “embodiment of the southern spirit” and “recognition of the effort and sacrifice that was made by many in this state in an earlier time.” Despite these objections, The Citadel’s race relation’s committee asserted that the college’s “tradition of moral leadership does not permit the ignoring of the negative feelings of the black cadets,” and they offered a variety of steps college officials might take such as “create greater awareness of the symbolic connotations of ‘Dixie’ and the Confederate flag to blacks,” substitute the official and more “appropriate” Citadel flag at school events, and “reduce the prominence of ‘Dixie’” by replacing it with another fight song and by not playing it after every weekly parade.⁶¹

While Grimsley hoped that cadets would “gain a greater perception of the sensitivity involved in race relations,” he did not seem that concerned about modifying his own views or those of other vocal white alumni. A couple of outraged Citadel

⁵⁹ Hazing Report, 19; Citadel Report, 7; *Columbia Record*, 12 January 1987; *The State*, 11 November 1986, 13 November 1986, 12 January 1987, 17 January 1987; *Charleston News and Courier*, 16 November 1986.

⁶⁰ Citadel Report, 7; *Charleston Evening Post*, 12 January 1987; *The State*, 17 January 1987, 6 February 1987; Hazing Report, 20; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 20 March 1987, document 297; *Columbia Record*, 19 February 1987; *Jet*, 23 March 1987.

⁶¹ *Charleston News and Courier*, 21 January 1987; *The Brigadier*, 20 April 1987; *The State*, 16 November 1987; Citadel Report 11

graduates called the African-American students' protests at football games "a personal affront to The Citadel and to its heritage," deciding "cadets who cannot accept this are the racists." When an alumni group in Washington, DC asked General Grimsley if all the negative publicity would affect "Citadel traditions," the school's president assured them, "I have no intention of doing away with the fourth class system . . . there will be no women admitted to The Citadel . . . and we will still play 'Dixie.'" While several students and alumni found the battle flag and Dixie "demeaning" and "insulting," Grimsley described them as "symbols that reflect characteristics in which Citadel men of all generations take pride – honor, gallantry, sacrifice, duty, and dedication to cause." When asked to curtail the waving of the flag at athletic events, the school's president and the Board of Visitors pointed out that "The Citadel does not fly the Confederate flag," and while Grimsley could and did ban crowd surfing at football games, the General said he was unable to stop individual cadets from waving banners. The chairman of the Board of Visitors agreed, and both men expressed confidence in the corps' ability to "consider it, understand it, and decide what they want to do about it."⁶²

When the cadets' responded in ways they did not approve, however, school officials again reasserted their authority on campus. In November 1987, a white cadet was "written up" for violating a "verbal policy" issued by cadet regimental commander Keller Kissam allowing members of the corps to wave the Confederate flag only when the band played Dixie. When a couple of state senators wrote Grimsley protesting this "contemptuous act," the General intervened, rescinded the punishment, and assured

⁶² *The State*, 17 January 1987, 19 February 1987; *The Brigadier*, 20 February 1987; Grimsley statement dated 18 February 1987 in "The Citadel AF Racial Incident 1986"; *Columbia Record*, 19 February 1987, 13 March 1987; "Sallyport," 2; *Charleston News and Courier*, 15 November 1986; Board of Visitors,

legislators “the policy on the Confederate flag will be in consonance with the applicable state statutes.”⁶³

With school and state officials leaping to defend cadets’ right to fly the flag and standing by silently while those who refuse to sing Dixie were vilified, it is no wonder most white cadets flunked their lessons on accepting “varying possible perceptions of symbolic materials.” Indeed, many white students clung to a past and a present that simply did not exist, covering their eyes and ears to anything that might lead them to question their opinions of their region and their school. Rather than face their own racialized view of the past, most fell back on the assertion that “the [corps] is grey” and those who saw otherwise should leave “before the cancer spreads.” When a white cadet asked a black cadet “What’s it with Dixie,” the latter responded, “I don’t want the old times. They weren’t good times for my people, picking cotton.” When the white student demanded, “What do you mean ‘my people,’” his opponent informed him, “My people were slaves, brought here against their will, whipped, chained . . . I don’t want to go back.” The chronicler of this exchange remarked that the white cadet “seemed unmoved.” While admitting that Dixie “like any other song, means what an individual wants it to mean,” an editorial writer for *The Brigadier* dismissed any interpretation that clashed with his own, asserting “we can all sing ‘Dixie’ together with a sense of pride in the South of today.” Pleading “we should not turn our backs on the past,” he proposed to do just that, deciding “we must focus on the good things.” Again deeming himself and those who thought like him the final arbiters of southern culture, he proclaimed “no one should be offended by ‘Dixie’ being played in today’s society, especially at The Citadel

“Minutes,” 20 March 1987, document 297; *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986; *Charleston Post and Courier*, 9 November 1986.

in 1987, where cadets are brothers regardless of their backgrounds or their likes and dislikes.”⁶⁴

With white cadets boasting that they had weathered the attacks on the “values and traditions of our school” to emerge as a “model of class and corps unity,” black students thought otherwise, saying as long as their colleagues flew Confederate flags and sang Dixie, “there will be a feeling of division among the Corps, whether or not it is outwardly displayed.” Cadet Jon Thomas offered his opinion on the matter, recognizing that while some treat the banner and the song as symbols of “southern pride and heritage . . . we cannot escape the reality that the flag and the singing of Dixie does carry racial overtones in our society, regardless if it is done out of pride and school spirit.” Hoping that appeals to the bond among Citadel men might serve to bridge rather than mask racial divides, Thomas asserted that as long as “we belong to an illustrious fraternity which prides itself on a strong brotherhood regardless of race, religion or creed, then we should try to eliminate the things which may offend and isolate a fellow brother.” In conclusion, he predicted that “the settlement and the opening of dialogue on this issue will not only make the racial atmosphere more comfortable for all, but will also enable black cadets and athletes to feel respected, accepted and truly a part of this strong bond which makes us Citadel men.”⁶⁵

When General Grimsley retired in May 1989, his successor, Air Force Lieutenant General Claudius E. Watts, III, a 1958 graduate of The Citadel, inherited an outwardly thriving institution, but one wracked by internal divisions. Under Watts, The Citadel

⁶³ *The Brigadier*, 30 September 1988; *Columbia Record*, 5 November 1987, *The State*, 5 November 1987

⁶⁴ Citadel Report, 10, 12; *The Brigadier*, 30 January 1987, 30 September 1988, 21 October 1988; *Washington Post*, 21 November 1986; Advisory Committee Minutes, 27-28 March 1987, document 2.

⁶⁵ *The Brigadier*, 11 May 1989, 13 October 1989, 17 November 1989.

continued to earn high marks in *US News and World Report's* yearly evaluations, and the number of African-American applicants to the school rose slightly over the next four years. Watts kept a close watch on minority recruitment, announcing publicly in 1990 that black enrollment had reached its highest level ever, but stressing privately the need to improve these numbers and strengthen ties with the black community.⁶⁶

Despite Watts' best efforts to downplay the issue, tensions over Dixie and the Confederate flag dominated the first few years of his presidency. Before the 1989/90 school year, Charleston County Councilman Robert Ford asked Watts to "suspend" the playing of Dixie and the waving of the flag when The Citadel played South Carolina State in football later that year. Ford understood "that this practice is a long-time tradition at all Citadel football games, but I fear many will interpret it as a personal attack on and a blatant disrespect to the black community." With Watts responding simply, "The Citadel will continue to do what we've always done," Charleston Senator Glenn McConnell assailed Ford's request, claiming "'Dixie' has nothing to do with race . . . it is a song that invokes good feelings."⁶⁷

On September 9, tourists attending the first parade of the school year witnessed history when, for the first time in about ten years, The Citadel Band did not end the ceremony by playing Dixie. The next day, the front page of the *News and Courier* screamed "No Dixie," and when asked about his decision not to play the song, Watts responded simply, "We didn't play it. That's it." While the school's president tried to

⁶⁶ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 27 January 1986, document 58; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 24 June 1995, document 80; *The Brigadier*, 11 May 1989, 21 September 1990, 2 October 1992; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 19 April 1991, document 643; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 November 1991, document 70; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 August 1995, document 191; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 19 March 1993, document 57; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 May 1993, document 67; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 13 May 1994, document 137.

⁶⁷ *Charleston News and Courier*, 22 August 1989; *The Brigadier*, 3 November 1989.

downplay the non-event, South Carolinians kept their eyes on Charleston that Saturday when The Citadel played Wofford. Following the game, confusion reigned as to whether or not the band played Dixie every time the Bulldogs scored. Some reported that they only heard the song once, when it could have been played “at least seven times.” Watts again tried to defuse the situation, telling reporters he had “no comment. I’m not refusing to answer, I’m just telling you I have no comment.” Not satisfied with this response, Senator McConnell demanded “some clarification of the school’s policy,” wanting to know if the military college is “silently acquiescing or silently retreating from using the flag and ‘Dixie’ at any time.”⁶⁸

McConnell must have breathed a sigh of relief the next weekend when Dixie rang out from The Citadel’s parade ground and echoed through the football stadium. A reporter for the *News and Courier* polled fans about their attitudes toward the song with most calling it a part of “our tradition” and grumbling “I don’t think they should take that from us.” Continuing with the “us versus them” dichotomy, one observer, apparently unaware of the decades of protests surrounding the symbols, thought “if they had any real anger about it or resentment, they would have said something about it before now.”⁶⁹

A few days later, Hurricane Hugo ripped through Charleston, and while the storm toppled buildings and trees, it did not disperse the ill winds swirling around The Citadel’s campus. Not two months into Watts’ tenure, a reporter for *The Brigadier* detected a mix of “melancholy and anger” within the corps over the administration’s “lack of response and indecision” concerning Dixie. Most white cadets repeated arguments that the song and the flag “should forever be held dear as reminders of our proud history as men of

⁶⁸ Charleston *News and Courier*, 9 September 1989, 12 September 1989.

⁶⁹ Charleston *News and Courier*, 16 September 1989, 17 September 1989.

honor and duty,” and although a handful of cadets and school administrators tried to offer the flag Citadel cadets fought under during the Civil War as an alternative to the Confederate battle flag, almost no one took to the new banner. Describing the cadets’ waving of the Confederate flag as the “most identifiable tradition” of this “commemorative institution of the South,” one student asserted correctly that The Citadel “was originally established for the protection of Charleston,” but he neglected to point out more specifically that The Citadel was built to protect white Charlestonians from rebellious slaves.⁷⁰

Race relations at The Citadel worsened over the next few years, and in 1991, faced with mounting charges of racial discrimination by cadets and faculty alike, Watts asked the school’s Race Relations Advisory Committee to come up with ways of “generating an awareness and sensitivity” to racial matters. Not surprisingly, the committee found that Dixie and the Confederate flag loomed as the largest “unresolved issues” on campus. Admitting that “there is no legitimate tie between the Confederate Flag and the Corps of Cadets,” the panelists suggested that school officials bar any cadet not acting in an official capacity from carrying a flag into the football stadium. As for Dixie, they decided it should be played only on special occasions such as Homecoming or Corps Day and that Citadel administrators needed to come up with a “non-controversial” fight song. While some of Watts’ advisors pushed him to “bite the bullet” and accept the committee’s proposals, others worried about the backlash to such a decision and suggested he “not make precipitous changes.” This same range of opinions could be found within the corps as members of the Presidential Advisory Council

⁷⁰ *The Brigadier*, 6 October 1989, 13 October 1989, 20 October 1989, 6 November 1989, 3 November 1989, 10 November 1989, 17 November 1989; *Charleston News and Courier*, 19 June 1990.

endorsed the panel's conclusions, but other cadets called such moves a violation of free speech. In the end, the Board rejected both the committee's proposals, but Watts pledged that Dixie would not be played in a "taunting" manner.⁷¹

Soon after this decision had been made, an incident in the barracks gave pause to those who maintained that Dixie represented "simply a symbol of reverence for the courage of our forefathers." In August 1992, after refusing to obey an upperclassman's order that he sing the song, a black freshman returned to his room and found a miniature noose hanging from his bunk. Citadel authorities immediately called state officials in to investigate, but the culprit was never apprehended. Fear of a mounting public backlash to the racial and other controversies surrounding the college convinced the Board to reverse its earlier decision, however, and in October, school officials recognized the need for a new fight song and banned all unofficial flags from The Citadel's football stadium.⁷²

A few years later two more racist confrontations caused an even greater stir on campus, coming at a time when the college was facing intense scrutiny due to its all-male admissions policies. In February 1995, one black cadet found "die niger(sic)" scrawled on the wall of his room, while another turned in an intra-campus letter addressed to him, filled with racial slurs and threats. General Watts, the Commandant of Cadets, and other school officials launched "massive efforts to find the perpetrator(s)," asking SLED and the FBI to assist them in their search. Watts mailed letters to Citadel students, faculty,

⁷¹ *The Brigadier*, 1991 Issue Four, 13 March 1992; *The State*, 6 October 1991, 20 October 1991, 12 September 1992; *Charleston News and Courier*, 8 October 1991, 9 October 1991, 5 March 1992; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 October 1991, document 45; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 17 August 1992, documents 287, 288, 295- 298, 300, 303; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 September 1992, document 247; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 25 June 1993, document 102; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 24 June 1994, documents 186, 288; Advisory Committee Minutes, 3-4 April 1992, documents 78, 79, 81-82.

⁷² Advisory Committee Minutes, 3-4 April 1992, 81-82; *Charleston News and Courier*, 25 August 1992, 30 October 1992; *The Brigadier*, 16 October 1992; *The State*, 25 August 1992; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 16 October 1992, document 368.

staff, parents of cadets, and “friends of The Citadel family” asking for help in uncovering the offenders. School officials’ forceful response to the racial incidents of the early 1990s reflect not only General Watts’ stated commitment to improving The Citadel’s racial image, but also a fear of losing supporters that they desperately needed to prevail in the fight against admitting women. In a speech before the entire corps, Watts denounced “intolerance and racism” and again confirmed the link between the internal and external struggles enveloping the school by informing cadets that “displays of racial intolerance play into the hands of those who” currently sought “to destroy the Corps of Cadets as it has existed for 152 years.”⁷³

In *Nixon’s Piano*, Kenneth O’ Reilly comments that when Ronald Reagan addressed black organizations and audiences, his “message seemed to be ‘I don’t care,’” and O’Reilly offered this indifference as further proof that the former president had “little time for black people in general or in the particular case.”⁷⁴ Such an assessment applies equally to the men running The Citadel in the 1980s. Even when confronted with the fairly obvious consequences of their limited commitment to promoting cultural diversity, Citadel officials avoided making the hard decisions, paying lip service to the “needs of black cadets,” but doing very little to meet or even acknowledge these needs. More concerned with preserving the college’s “traditions” than with fixing the deep seated problems caused by these traditions, Citadel officials begged off the stickier issues of increasing minorities’ presence on campus or considering the multiple meanings of certain “time-honored” customs. Unwilling to acknowledge the impact, or at times even

⁷³ *The Brigadier*, 10 February 1995; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 January 1995, documents 1, 2, 24, 30.

the occurrence, of centuries of racial injustice, General Grimsley and others took few steps towards making The Citadel more appealing to minority students, thus fostering a campus environment ripe for antisocial outbursts.

Certainly, The Citadel's military structure and regional identification heightened tensions on campus. As discussed in earlier chapters, the fourth-class system offered numerous opportunities for, as one man put it, "little bigots to become big bigots – bigots with power."⁷⁵ In addition, debates over Dixie and the Confederate Battle flag tend to grow especially heated South of the Mason-Dixon line. However, it was not so much The Citadel's military or southern environment that led to the harassment of Kevin Nesmith as it was the lack of any cultural or intellectual awareness that might have caused the five white cadets to rethink their plan before bursting into a black man's room dressed as Klansmen. Little seemed to have changed at the school in the twenty years since a group of similarly clad white upperclassmen charged at the only African-American cadet, most cadets were still white and most apparently knew or cared little about racial injustice. However, indicating that times had changed a bit, a vocal segment of the southern population now publicly condemned such acts as unacceptable or at least distasteful. By the end of the 1980s, a number of black cadets, many of them southerners, were loudly condemning the subtle and not so subtle indignities they regularly suffered. One wonders if Nesmith would have slept without interruption on October 23, 1986 if, over the years, there had been more such voices on campus offering white cadets another lens through which to view the past as well as the present.

⁷⁴ O'Reilly, *Nixon's Piano*, 358.

⁷⁵ West 57th, "Marching in Place."

While many whites at The Citadel, students as well as administrators, conceded, albeit grudgingly, that a group of cadets dressed as Klansmen “might” have racial overtones, they refused to believe that the symbol adopted by actual members of the Klan and other hate groups could also evoke negative feelings and imagery. The corps’ overall ethnic homogeneity allowed whites to talk of “our” traditions and heritage without having to take a hard look at the historical meaning behind the images they evoked. The overwhelming whiteness of the entire campus made it easier for whites to determine whose pasts they privileged, which memories they venerated. With few people around to challenge their views and assumptions, most whites at The Citadel continued to cast the idyllic “Citadel Man” in their own image, drowning out those who struggled to advance more inclusive, but less admirable interpretations of their “southern heritage,”

The Citadel’s all-male environment added another element to the school’s racial controversies. Some saw a link between college personnel’s exclusion of women and their apparent disregard for African-Americans, realizing that by insulating themselves from divergent viewpoints, many whites at The Citadel found it easier to disparage or ignore the opinions and viewpoints of “outsiders.” Certainly, Grimsley and others employed just such tactics in order to avoid altering certain traditions. In his initial response to suggestions that the school deemphasize Dixie and the Confederate flag, the General had asserted, “We must not take any action that will arbitrarily diminish our heritage, but we will be conscious at the same time of the bonds which hold all Citadel men together – white and black.” In the first part of this statement, the “our” to which Grimsley refers consisted primarily of white cadets and alumni. However, in the second half of the sentence, he touched on an attitude shared by most Citadel graduates. Amidst

the controversy over Dixie and the flag, cadets on both sides of the issue hoped that the fraternal bond among Citadel men trumped any racially contrived allegiances or commitments. In the year following the Nesmith incident, a cadet reminded his colleagues, “The most important concept of the ring is the fact that those who wear it are Citadel Men.” Several years later, with campus racial tensions at their peak, a survey conducted by *The Brigadier* found whites and blacks split on a variety of subjects, but when asked if “the Corps should be a unified brotherhood,” ninety eight percent of white cadets and ninety five percent of black cadets answered yes, making this “the only response that both groups overwhelmingly agreed upon.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Grimsley statement dated 18 February 1987 in “The Citadel AF Racial Incident 1986”; *Columbia Record*, 19 February 1987; *The Brigadier*, 1987 Commencement, 9 October 1987, 18 March 1988, 22 November 1991.

CHAPTER EIGHT: SAVE THE MALES

For decades, Citadel men had fiercely protected the “time honored traditions” that they believed had gone unaltered since the college’s founding in 1842. Most notably, vocal segments of the cadet and alumni population had cast the college’s method of building men, the fourth-class system, as static, immutable, and sacred. Whenever someone questioned the process or sought to modify it, legions of them howled that any such tampering would compromise the institution’s proven ability to produce successful, prosperous, and powerful leaders of men. With their identity and reputation dependent upon their school’s presumably masculine purpose, many Citadel students and alumni reacted strongly when the one tradition that had truly endured since 1842, an all-male South Carolina Corps of Cadets, came under attack in the 1990s. They struggled to articulate just how their single sex college environment made them better men, but just as shifts in the nature and purpose of the fourth-class system reflected changing societal definitions of manliness and femininity, many of their arguments not only exposed the artificiality and inconsistency of gender constructions, they also revealed how mainstream assessments of acceptable masculine behavior constricted males’ lifestyles as well. While the final outcome of this drama testified to the untenability of arguments based on blanket assumptions about the differing physical and emotional capabilities of men and women, the sense of urgency that drove such arguments reveals the primacy and

power of gendered assumptions in shaping people's views of themselves and the world in which they live.¹

The Citadel entered the fight to keep women out of the corps of cadets already reeling from a swarm of negative publicity concerning tales of cadet brutality and racism. These reports probably factored into the slumping enrollment figures that worried Citadel officials, but the greater damage seemed to fall on The Citadel's standing among South Carolinians. While the college enjoyed a great deal of public support following the "Nesmith incident" a few years earlier, by the early 1990s, with the school fending off "allegations of hazing, allegations of racism, allegations of improper Honor Committee functioning, and the perception of problems between the athletes and the rest of the corps," many people seemed to have lost faith in The Citadel's method of building men, a development that did not bode well for school officials in their efforts to exclude women.²

As usual, when the school's president attempted to rein in the upperclassmen, students eulogized the "whole man," with one remarking, "I wouldn't be too surprised if our tradition of an all male school is soon lost." Early in the 1991/92 school year, the

¹ As most people know, during this same period, Virginia Military Institute (VMI) was waging an almost identical battle to preserve its all male admissions policies. VMI waged a longer, more publicized court battle, and Citadel officials watched developments in the VMI case with great interest since representatives from the two schools offered similar arguments in regards to the legality and benefits of their single sex systems. It was the Supreme Court ruling in regards to VMI that convinced Citadel officials to accept female applicants, and so given the obvious parallels between the two trials, I will quote from decisions handed down by lower courts in the VMI case to articulate arguments made and endorsed by Citadel supporters.

² Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 2 February 1990, document 84; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 19 April 1991, documents 598, 645; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 6 September 1991, documents, 2, 4; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 November 1991, document 69; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 26 June 1992, document 181; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 24 June 1994, documents 177, 213; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 20 August 1995, documents 165-183; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 October 1991, document 52.

highly publicized hazing and subsequent withdrawal of four Citadel athletes undermined the institution's all-male tradition more than any so-called "weakening" of the fourth-class system. One of the knobs, Brian Alewine, suffered a bruised lung and a bruised kidney after being beaten by an unknown assailant or assailants in the barracks. A football player, Karl Brozowski, resigned and then filed criminal charges against his upperclass antagonist.³

When news of these stories broke, media from across the country descended on Charleston. Reporters for the *New Yorker* and *Sports Illustrated* wrote full-length articles on The Citadel's "record of violence and cruelty." *Sports Illustrated*'s Rick Reilly described an institution where the "night is cleaved by mysterious screams" and nightmarish sophomores roamed the barracks with "hell in [their] eyes." Editorials in the *Charleston News and Courier* and the *Post and Courier*, usually two stalwart defenders of The Citadel and its cadets, declared "there is obviously something wrong" at the school and reminded readers that "abuse of power, earned or unearned, is the act of a coward." A writer for *The State* took a jab at the Board of Visitors saying the group now "probably wishes it had deferred to Admiral Stockdale's prudent ideas for reform." Alumni joined in as well, with a graduate from the 1950s hoping his "quiet, but courageous" brethren "who helped win the last four wars, would let the school know it has a duty to bring about discipline without cruelty."⁴

³ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3 November 1989, document 53; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 27 April 1990, document 259; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 June 1991, documents 734, 758; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 2 October 1993, documents 193, 198; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 6 September 1991, document 15; *Charleston Post and Courier*, 16 October 1991; *The Brigadier*, 15 September 1989, 13 October 1989, 10 November 1989, Issue Three 1991; *The State*, 6 October 1991, 26 October 1991; *Charleston News and Courier*, 18 October 1991.

⁴ *The State*, 21 May 1991, 4 October 1991, 13 October 1991, 20 October 1991, 26 November 1992; Susan Faludi, "The Naked Citadel," *The New Yorker*, September 1994, 69; Rick Reilly, "What is The Citadel?"

Watts and the Board responded to these criticisms by adopting a series of reforms put forth by yet another fourth-class system review committee. The changes included no push-ups in the barracks, replacing knobs' "Hell Night" with a "dignified, challenging, introduction to the fourth-class system," stricter enforcement of the rules governing Evening Study Period, and no unsupervised sophomore interaction with freshmen. Most alumni accepted these reforms silently, but vocal members of the corps accused the administration of pandering to "irresponsible media attention" brought about by those "not willing to make the sacrifices and do what it takes" to become Citadel men. They believed the new plebe regulations would "ruin our school" because the "life of the Corps has been sucked out completely out." One student groaned, "The Citadel amazingly survived through the 1960s and 1970s, but the products of those misguided generations are finally getting to us."⁵

These developments set the stage for the struggle that dominated the 1990s. In spring of 1989, Citadel officials learned that the United States Justice Department had threatened a lawsuit against VMI on the grounds that the college's all male admissions policy violated the Fourteenth Amendment and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. William Risher, the chairman of the Board of Visitors, admitted that The Citadel was "very interested" in the case, but added, "we're staying as far away from it as possible." This

Sports Illustrated, Issue 11, September 14, 1992, 73-79; *Charleston News and Courier*, 3 October 1991; *Charleston Post and Courier*, 6 October 1991.

⁵ *The State*, 9 December 1991, 5 October 1992, 17 August 1993; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 October 1991, document 45; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 January 1992, documents 3-5, 7; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 31 January 1992, document 11; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 1 September 1992, documents 283-286; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 28 August 1992, document 243; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 24 June 1994, document 181; 1993 Citadel "Self-Study," viii-17-18, documents in author's possession; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 3-4 April 1992, document 79; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 4 October 1992, document 52; *The Brigadier*, 1 November 1991, 17 January 1992, 7 February 1992, 13 March 1992, 18 September 1992, 2 October 1992, 16 October 1992, 30 October 1992, 1 November 1992, 11 December 1992, 19 February 1993, 19 March 1993.

distance closed rapidly in February 1990 when The Citadel's admissions office rejected an application from a female student. Less than a month later, the Justice Department sent a letter to The Citadel informing school officials that they had received "written complaints" from women "who are interested in attending The Citadel but believe they are ineligible to do so because The Citadel allegedly admits only males to its daytime undergraduate programs." Should this be the case, the letter concluded, the policy "may constitute unlawful discrimination on the basis of sex."⁶

Initial reactions to this news indicated that public support for The Citadel had waned considerably over the years. An editorial in *The State* blared "Citadel tradition guards gutless all male policy." Other pundits urged the "grand old bastion of male chauvinism" to accept the inevitable, and one cartoonist compared The Citadel's stance to "another Lost Cause" of a hundred and thirty years ago. One Citadel graduate informed South Carolinians that a large number of his peers opposed "the immoral exclusion of women" and "don't want to see" their alma mater "remain stagnant in an ever-changing world to become a resented bastion."⁷

A bill floating around the South Carolina General Assembly hinted that the college had lost some of its allure among that body as well. Sarah Manly, a representative from Greenville, sponsored legislation decreeing "no persons shall be excluded from any public school in the state on account of race, creed, color, gender or national origin." Manly's bill never made it out of committee, but only by a narrow six to five vote. When she tried to attach the resolution as a rider to the state budget, she lost

⁶ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 April 1989, document 108; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 11 May 1989, document 117; *The Brigadier*, 8 September 1989, 16 March 1990; *The State*, 12 May 1989, 13 July 1989, 21 July 1989, 2 February 1990; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 21 April 1989, documents 95, 96-97; 1989 Annual Report.

by a significantly wider sixty-eight to twenty-nine margin, indicating that although some legislators and many citizens agreed that the “outdated regime of white male dominance” ought to “discard old ways that have evolved beyond tradition into prejudice and discrimination,” the college and its backers still commanded a great deal of support from the state’s traditional power structure.⁸

Another public relations disaster ensued when Citadel officials abruptly discontinued its veterans program rather than admit three women who had sued for permission to take day classes with cadets. This decision came on the heels of the first Gulf War in which female American soldiers earned national recognition for their service and heroism. Patricia Johnson, Elizabeth Lacy, and Angela Chapman all sought engineering degrees, and, at the time, The Citadel’s day program was the only one in the Charleston vicinity offering accredited courses in their area of interest. The lawyer for the three women found it incredible that his clients “are eligible to fight for our country. They are eligible to go to war . . . and yet they are not able to get into The Citadel.” Patricia Johnson spat, “I served my country for twelve years and get out and this is the kind of thanks I get from something that calls itself a military school.”⁹

The Board of Visitors justified their decision, explaining that they had a “fiduciary duty to protect the primary mission of The Citadel,” a mission they defined as educating “male undergraduate students as members of the South Carolina Corps of Cadets,” adding, the “cadet lifestyle, including the single-sex admissions policy, is an

⁷ *The State*, 18 February 1990, 8 March 1990, 7 March 1991, 13 May 1991.

⁸ *The Brigadier*, 10 April 1991, 14 February 1992; *The State*, 15 March 1991, 16 March 1991, 23 March 1991, 24 March 1991, 18 June 1991, 19 June 1991; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 1 February 1990, document 541, 543, Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15 March 1991, document 546; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 21 June 1991, document 791,

⁹ *New York Times*, 27 June 1996; *The Brigadier*, 28 August 1992, 16 October 1992; *The State*, 20 June 1992, 5 October 1992, 14 December 1992, 20 September 1993.

essential aspect of the educational program.” Addressing the legal issues that led to the demise of the veteran’s program, The Citadel’s attorney explained that under the current arrangement, the college’s all male admissions policies were legal due to a special exemption granted single-sex colleges under the 1972 Education Amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. However, the amendment “does not recognize a separation between policies of class participation in the admission policies of the specific college,” and should school officials admit females into the day program, The Citadel would then be considered a coeducational institution and have to either admit females into the cadet corps or lose federal funding.¹⁰

On a more esoteric level, the Board believed that allowing women to attend classes with cadets “would destroy the values and uniqueness of the institution,” since the “distracting and disruptive” presence of women “would become a major factor in the daily life of cadets, both in the barracks and in the classroom, displacing to a considerable degree the present concentration of the cadets on their military, physical, and academic performance,” leading to an “inevitable relaxation of the requirements now imposed on male cadets.” This contention, along with the claim that male veterans posed no threat to the “single gender character or the military character of the Day Program,” revealed that many Citadel officials refused to acknowledge that not only had women not diminished the quality of the United States Armed Forces, they had demonstrated the same high “military character” as their male counterparts.¹¹

¹⁰ *The State*, 5 October 1992; *The Brigadier*, 11 December 1992; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 September 1992, documents 245-246.

¹¹ *The Brigadier*, 18 September 1992; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 3 September 1992, documents 245-246; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 11-12 September 1992, document 365.

The abrupt termination of the veteran's program drew virulent criticism from those within and without The Citadel's walls as many sympathized with the seventy-eight male veterans who found themselves expelled from school. Two of the former students sued The Citadel in an effort to force school officials to readmit them. A newspaper editorial offered the Board's decision as proof that Citadel officials reacted irrationally to "even modest reforms," while one South Carolinian compared the move to that of a "wild animal who will eat its young to avoid starvation." Citadel faculty members issued a statement demanding that the school "honor the moral contract a college assumes when it admits a student" and reinstate those already enrolled in day classes. A handful of cadets even chastised administrators for their "apparent lack of concern" for and "shameless abandonment" of the veterans.¹²

While the names of the three female veterans who first demanded entry into The Citadel's classrooms remain unknown to most people, Shannon Faulkner became famous, or infamous, for her attempts to enter the long gray line of the corps of cadets. Late in 1992, Faulkner sent an application and copies of her high school transcript to The Citadel's admissions office, carefully omitting or deleting any reference to her sex. She was accepted for the upcoming school year, but when school officials found out she was a woman, they quickly reversed their decision. Citadel spokesman Rick Mill admitted "were it not for The Citadel's male only policy, Ms. Faulkner might very well be suitable for admission." However, he added that by submitting "masterfully altered" documentation, she had violated the school's honor code and "there is no place in our day program or evening college for anyone cloaked in subterfuge," an accusation what would

¹² Manegold, *Glory's Shadow*, 143; *The State*, 5 September 1992, 6 September 1992, 10 September 1992, 26 November 1992, 16 December 1992; Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 7 November 1992, document 414,

hound Faulkner for the next three years. Undeterred, in early 1993, Faulkner filed a lawsuit against The Citadel, claiming that its male only policy violated her civil rights and telling reporters that in years to come, “every girl that walks through those gates will know they can because of me.”¹³

In most respects, the public debate over The Citadel versus Shannon Faulkner mirrored the legal arguments made by attorneys in both the Virginia and South Carolina cases. The largest difference seemed to be one of emphasis, for while the American Civil Liberties Union, who had intervened on Faulkner’s behalf, and the Justice Department, who tried the VMI case, questioned the legality of a publicly funded institution denying women access to its facilities, this argument played only a relatively minor role in their overall strategy. On the other hand, many South Carolinians seized upon this seemingly cut and dried issue of state and “federally funded discrimination.” Representative Manly noted, “there are many people, male and female, who don’t think their tax money ought to go to support an all-male institution.” Others found it “unconscionable” that “The Citadel has declared war on women who only wish to utilize the taxes paid by their parents and themselves to receive an education at the college of their choice.” A couple of influential Citadel alumni agreed as Pat Conroy declared that “women should not be taxed for an education they are denied,” and United States Senator Ernest “Fritz” Hollings maintained, “you cannot have government supported programs, with tax support, without the right of every race, color, creed, and sex to utilize the program.”¹⁴

429; *The Brigadier*, 18 September 1992.

¹³ *The Brigadier*, 5 March 1993, 3 September 1993; *The State*, 13 August 1993, 26 August 1993, 21 January 1994, 3 March 1994, 14 March 1994.

¹⁴ *The State*, 8 March 1990, 23 March 1990, 18 June 1991, 19 June 1991, 7 July 1991, 7 August 1991, 26 August 1991, 13 September 1991, 14 September 1991, 26 October 1992, 26 November 1992, 1 June 1993, 4 August 1993, 26 November 1993, 24 January 1994, 23 July 1994, 13 August 1995; *The Brigadier*, 5 September 1995.

For some, including one of Shannon Faulkner's attorneys, the solution to this problem seemed straightforward; The Citadel could either admit women or become a private institution. One commentator explained the constitutional viability of single sex private colleges, pointing out that the Fourteenth Amendment "does not now, and never has, dictated or governed admission policies of privately supported colleges not operated by the public sector," but courts have ruled that "public institutions have a constitutional obligation to provide equal educational opportunity to men and women, absent an 'exceedingly persuasive justification.'" In support of this argument, the author cited the recent ruling from the Fourth United States Circuit Court of Appeals that VMI could avoid coeducation by becoming a private institution. One South Carolinian spelled it out bluntly when she challenged "those of you who want to keep The Citadel a males-only school to get your hands out my pocket. Buy the place and support it yourselves."¹⁵

Aware that The Citadel could not afford to convert to private status, the school's proponents cast the fight as one over the benefits and legality of any brand of single-sex education, public or private. One man argued that "implementing the remorseless argument of denying public funds for single-gender education will not only destroy" The Citadel, but all private, all-female colleges such as South Carolina's Columbia College and Converse College that also received "some form of federal or state funding in order to survive." When someone pointed out that The Citadel received five times as much state money as the other two schools, The Citadel's backers accused them of quibbling

¹⁵ *The State*, 9 April 1989, 5 October 1992, 26 October 1992, 26 November 1992, 13 January 1994, 4 August 1994; *The Brigadier*, 14 February 1994, 21 February 1994.

over the price, asking “how many public dollars does it take to render single-sex education unacceptable?”¹⁶

Convinced that “as The Citadel and VMI admission policies go, so must all single-gender ‘private’ educational institutions follow,” the military college’s boosters positioned themselves as the defenders of every American’s right to receive a single-sex education. In this scenario, Citadel cadets became only the most immediate victims of Shannon Faulkner’s callous disregard for all students’ freedom to choose what kind of school they attended. With several cadets threatening, “I won’t go back if we have to admit females. I didn’t choose a coed education,” many in South Carolina assumed that Faulkner was the only female who would ever want to attend The Citadel and wondered “is the right of one woman more important than the rights of 1,960 young men who choose to attend a military style college without women?” One Citadel student reasoned, “I do want a single gender education and The Citadel is my only choice in the state to get it. As an individual and taxpayer of the state and federal government, I demand the same thing [Shannon Faulkner] does: equal access.”¹⁷

In addition to co-opting the rhetoric of freedom and individual rights for their side, Citadel supporters cast their stance as a principled defense of “diversity in education.” While some found that “being a military college is diversity enough,” cadets, alumni, and school officials countered, “if you make all colleges co-ed, there’s no diversity.” While in the past, most Citadel men had demanded their peers conform to

¹⁶ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 13 May 1994, document 148; *The Brigadier*, 18 March 1994, 21 October 1994, 14 March 1995; *The State*, 13 November 1992, 21 August 1993, 24 August 1993, 28 September 1993, 15 May 1994; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15-16 April 1994, document 83.

¹⁷ *The Brigadier*, 3 September 1993, 8 October 1993, 15 October 1993, 18 March 1994, 2 May 1994, 21 October 1994, 18 November 1994, 10 February 1995, 14 March 1995, 5 September 1995; *The State*, 8

certain institutional and societal standards, they demonized the “Justice Department’s senseless rush to conformity” and sighed, “why has society got to homogenize everything?” In 1991, a United States District Court in Virginia validated this line of reasoning, finding that while VMI discriminated against women, “the discrimination is not invidious but rather to promote a legitimate state interest – diversity in education.”¹⁸

Again, arguments about freedom of choice, diversity in education, and “legitimate” discrimination supplemented the primary focus of The Citadel’s defenders, the idea that the battle “is not The Citadel versus Shannon Faulkner. It is The Citadel versus an educational concept,” specifically one questioning “the value of a single-gender education.” They argued that on the most basic level, single sex environments “freed [students] from playing the ‘mating game’” and other distractions. They quoted an expert witness from the VMI case who explained that by limiting “opportunity for routine association with members of the opposite sex” schools such as VMI, The Citadel, Wellesley and Randolph Macon “narrow the range of developmental tasks a student confronts in the interest of enhancing development of selected characteristics.” The result, supposedly bore out by the success rate of the aforementioned school’s alumni was a more confident, civic minded, and prosperous member of society.¹⁹

Several of The Citadel and VMI’s critics conceded the benefits of single sex education. When asked by a federal judge whether or not she thought “that single-gender

November 1992, 22 August 1993, 26 August 1993, 10 February 1994, 28 May 1994, 13 August 1995, Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15-16 April 1994, document 69.

¹⁸ *The Brigadier*, 18 March 1994, 2 May 1994, 14 March 1995; *The State*, 18 February 1990, 18 June 1991, 5 July 1991, 7 July 1991, 5 October 1992, 14 October 1992, 30 October 1992, 27 May 1993, 28 May 1993, 24 August 1993, 5 December 1993, 29 January 1994, 3 March 1994; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15-16 April 1994, document 97.

¹⁹ *The State*, 3 March 1990, 8 June 1993, 13 January 1994, 13 March 1994, 17 May 1994, 18 June 1994, 12 August 1995, 13 August 1995; *The Brigadier*, 4 February 1994, 27 January 1995, 14 March 1995; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15-16 April 1994, document 82, 100.

education per se, violates the Fourteenth Amendment,” an attorney for the United States Justice Department answered flatly, “no your honor, we don’t.” For many of them, the issue boiled down to the fact that neither The Citadel nor VMI offered “persuasive justification for keeping women out” and that neither South Carolina nor Virginia offered women an equal opportunity to obtain a military education on par with those offered by VMI and The Citadel.²⁰

Bearing this in mind, both sides assembled panels of experts arguing for and against the notion that men and women learn differently or “have different educational needs which validate the offering of different types of state-funded programs on the basis of sex.” At the heart of this argument lay The Citadel and VMI’s “adversative” training methods. VMI’s attorneys called several witnesses who testified that males learn best in “an atmosphere of adversativeness or ritual combat in which the teacher is a disciplinarian and a worthy competitor,” while “females tend to thrive in a cooperative atmosphere in which the teacher is emotionally connected with the students.” In other words, “men had to be challenged and cowed, while women required gentle encouragement.” An editorial by Citadel graduate Kenneth McKenzie, Jr. exposed the problematic nature of such blanket evaluations of individual abilities. While discussing the “well researched differences in male and female socialization,” McKenzie pointed out that “many – not all – young males respond well to an adversative single gender environment” and “by the same token, a more supportive single-gender educational environment is beneficial for many – not all – young women.” These qualified assessments of who might benefit from the adversative method are important because

²⁰ Philippa Strum, *Women in the Barracks: The VMI Case and Equal Rights* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 140, 193.

The Citadel and VMI were excluding not just some, but *all* women on the belief that their system of education was not suitable for females. Also, with his use of the term socialization, McKenzie indicated that these presumed differences between men and women were not fixed, but instead that gender roles were taught and, in some measure, imposed on members of society.²¹

The attorneys prosecuting The Citadel and VMI raised precisely these same issues. One of Shannon Faulkner's lawyers, Val Vojdik, argued that the "underlying assumption that a military education is not appropriate for women is offensive and denigrating to all women." Lawyers representing the Justice Department presented their own expert witnesses who dismissed "fixed notions concerning the roles and abilities of males and females" in order to convince the judge that "the fact that many or even most women wouldn't be able to comply with the current requirements cannot be a justification for keeping out those women who can comply with them."²²

The lower courts accepted VMI's and The Citadel's arguments that men and women learned differently and that the latter would not benefit from each school's adversative methods. According to a judge in the VMI case, "it all traces back to maleness, physical vigor, the ability to withstand adversity, the ability to withstand invasions of privacy." In October 1992, a panel of judges from the Fourth United States Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the "question of a woman's ability to perform and endure the physical training in VMI's program," "the physiological differences between men and women," problems that may arise from "cross-sexual confrontations," and certain unstated "psychological" differences compelled them to uphold VMI's all-male

²¹ Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 15-16 April 1994, document 84, 96; *The State*, 21 June 1994, 31 July 1994; Strum, *Women*, 211.

admissions standards. They did find, however, that the school's policy violated the Fourteenth Amendment, although only because the "Commonwealth of Virginia offers the unique benefits of VMI's type of education and training to men and not to women." Accepting the argument that "VMI's male-only admissions policy is in furtherance of a state policy of 'diversity,'" the court found "the explanation of how the policy is furthered by affording a unique educational benefit only to males is lacking." With this in mind, the judges now gave VMI three options: admit women, become a private institution, or convince the state to fund "parallel institutions or parallel programs" for women.²³

While Citadel backers had earlier decried the threat posed to men's "freedom of choice" to attend an all-male, public, military college, many now took up the court's challenge and championed the state's obligation to "expand choices for female citizens" by filling a "demand for women's single gender baccalaureate degree granting institutions – either adversative or supportive." As their guiding principle for meeting this need, however, they embraced the court's message that these parallel programs need not be identical but merely "substantially comparable," since, according to the appellate court, the Fourteenth Amendment allows states to "treat different classes of persons in a different way" and, in this case, a "gender classification is justified by acknowledged differences." As a result, Citadel and other state officials followed VMI's and Virginia's lead and looked to set up a "military leadership" program at an all-women's college that

²² Strum, *Women*, 192, 223-224, 232, 235; *The State*, 17 June 1994, 21 May 1995.

²³ *The State*, 6 October 1992; Strum, *Women*, 194-195, 196.

would meet the “educational needs of most women” by focusing on “cooperative confidence” rather than presumably character-building individual stress.²⁴

While Citadel officials cast around for a school willing to implement such a program, the South Carolina legislature passed a resolution, pledging “to begin the process of providing single-gender opportunities for women” and appropriated \$3.4 million to fund the project. The Board of Visitors raised five million dollars as seed money for the project and set aside another \$1.6 million for “contingency funds.” When Sandra Thomas, the president of Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina offered the use of her campus and facilities, General Watts applauded her “bold move” that “will enable the young women of our state to have greater opportunity to experience the unique benefits of a single-gender education.”²⁵

Strong legislative backing of the fledgling South Carolina Women’s Leadership Institute (WLI) proved that The Citadel still enjoyed a great deal of support from the state’s political power structure, but at the same time, this realization rubbed numerous people the wrong way. A few state officials called the legislature’s decision “ludicrous” and “absurd.” Several politicians and private citizens agreed with an editorial writer for *The State* who asked, “At a time when the General Assembly is cutting millions from higher education, is it rational to take on an expensive new leadership program at a

²⁴ *The State*, 21 September 1992, 30 October 1992, 16 November 1992, 25 May 1993, 28 September 1993, 19 November 1993, 6 December 1993, 10 February 1994, 14 February 1994, 2 April 1994, 20 May 1994, 24 May 1994, 11 June 1994, 21 June 1994, 24 July 1994, 3 August 1994, 20 September 1994, 19 November 1994, 13 May 1995; *The Brigadier*, 22 November 1993, 28 January 1994, 10 February 1995; Strum, *Women*, 173; Advisory Committee to the Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 15-16 April 1994, document 98-100.

²⁵ Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 January 1995, document 40; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 May 1995, document 67; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 5 October 1994, document 370; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 24 June 1995, documents 145, 147; *The State*, 25 May 1993, 27 May 1993, 15 September 1993, 20 November 1993, 18 May 1994, 19 May 1994, 20 May 1994, 28 April 1995, 10 May 1995, 18 May

private college?” Interestingly enough, The Citadel’s critics used the college’s lobbying success to bolster their claims that all citizens should be allowed access to the school’s obviously powerful alumni network. One pundit pointed out the benefits of attending The Citadel had “very little to do with education” and “instead have very much to do with wealth, power, and the ability of those who have it now to determine who will have it later.” After watching in “amazement” as the state donated millions of dollars to Converse, a woman from Lexington, South Carolina remarked, “no wonder Shannon Faulkner wants the opportunity to be a part of this power structure.” On some level, at least, the Board of Visitors validated these claims as they stressed “the importance of our alumni groups interfacing with WLI graduates and eventual graduates so that they are made to feel a part of The Citadel network.”²⁶

After touring the Converse campus and reviewing the WLI curricula, which included eight semesters of specialized physical education, ROTC training, leadership seminars, and math courses, Val Vojdik called the program about as similar to The Citadel as the “Girl Scouts.” Faulkner herself explained, “if I wanted to go to Converse, I would have applied there two and a half years ago,” and in court, her attorneys argued that providing women with a “half-baked Citadel” served only to “reinforce stereotypes that women aren’t athletic and make them feel inferior.” One man explained that “federal judges have made it clear . . . that woman must be offered equal opportunity” and “its unimaginable that a program patched together in a few months, a program, that

1995, 19 May 1995, 20 May 1995, 21 May 1995, 25 July 1995, 19 August 1995; *New York Times*, 27 June 1996.

²⁶ *The State*, 30 October 1992, 28 May 1993, 26 August 1993, 27 August 1993, 26 November 1993, 29 January 1994, 11 June 1994, 24 July 1994, 5 October 1994, 18 April 1995, 5 May 1995, 6 May 1995, 9 May 1995, 19 May 1995, 21 May 1995, 27 May 1994, 3 June 1995, 22 June 1995; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 2 September 1995, document 227; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 27 October 1995, documents 291-292.

has not been reviewed in court, a program that so far has only fourteen students, could be considered a fair offering for our state's female college students." A junior attending Converse issued a provocative assessment of the WLI program, concluding, "Basically, what they've said is 'Ladies, you can get on the bus of education, but you've got to sit in the back.'"27

Comparisons of Shannon Faulkner's struggle to the fight against racial segregation sparked emotional and interesting responses from a wide variety of sources. One South Carolinian asked, "has the financial catastrophe of 'separate but equal' faded that far from the minds of our elected officials," and one state Senator voted against allocating millions to Converse because "I don't believe in funding segregation." Syndicated columnist James Kilpatrick regretted that The Citadel controversy evoked memories of "all the prejudice, all the passion, all the injustice of another age," while one Faulkner supporter could not "remember anyone rallying to defend the last school that segregated African Americans in the name of diversity." The executive director of the South Carolina ACLU pointed out that the idea that "men and women learn differently" echoed arguments employed thirty years earlier to keep South Carolina's schools all-white. Vocal defenders of The Citadel fueled such comparisons by promising to fight for "some fundamental beliefs present in our society," including "the freedom of choice in associating with and not associating with, whomever one chooses."28

In a survey of "opinion shapers of the general African-American community" conducted at Citadel officials' behest, the respondents repeated critiques made following

²⁷ *The State*, 5 October 1992, 27 May 1993, 29 January 1994, 29 March 1994, 17 May 1994, 26 May 1994, 28 April 1995, 5 May 1995, 6 May 1995, 7 May 1995, 20 May 1995, 25 May 1995, 6 July 1995, 13 July 1995, 27 July 1995, 22 October 1995; *New York Times*, 27 June 1996.

the Nesmith incident in regards to the mutually reinforcing nature of racial and gender discrimination. Most based their negative perception of the school on the belief that it “resists diversification” and had a “long history of being an exclusive white male institution.” In discussing the Board of Visitors unanimous decision to continue the fight to exclude women, one person tried to imagine how much pressure the lone African-American member of the Board was under and “how many black people he had to explain himself to.”²⁹

Numerous references to the power of The Citadel’s “brotherhood” might have provided some answer to why some black alumni denied any similarities between Shannon Faulkner and Charles Foster. Several of The Citadel’s defenders cited biological and other “legitimate differences between the sexes” that would require Faulkner “to be housed in separate facilities, given less strenuous training and accept special treatment in just about all activities.” With no “relevant differences between the races,” however, some argued that “The Citadel lowered not one standard when blacks broke the color barrier.” Such a contention left out the fact that while The Citadel did not have to lower any standards when African Americans entered the corps, many people opposed integration based on the assumption that standards would have to be lowered. As late as 1987, several vocal alumni and administrators opposed affirmative action on the grounds that the college would have to make special concessions to increase the number of black students in the corps.³⁰

²⁸ *The State*, 15 August 1993, 26 September 1993, 2 October 1993, 5 January 1994, 29 January 1994, 10 February 1994, 3 March 1994, 30 May 1994, 9 May 1995, 19 May 1995, 14 June 1995.

²⁹ “A perception analysis of The Citadel from select traditional and nontraditional African-American community leaders of South Carolina” conducted by Sunrise Enterprise of Columbia, Inc, documents in author’s possession.

³⁰ *The State*, 6 July 1995; *The Brigadier*, 18 March 1994, 14 April 1995, 27 June 1995.

Some African-American cadets and alumni empathized with Faulkner's efforts. Joe Shine found it hard not to feel some connection to "a person who is breaking new ground," and based on his cadet experience, he predicted that the fourth-class system would facilitate "bonding among members" of any class, regardless of race or sex. Junior Von Mickle approached Shannon Faulkner on The Citadel's campus one day, shook her hand and replied, "At one time, blacks were considered to be inferior to whites. That's no longer considered true. Women used to be considered inferior to men. That's no longer true. It's time for a woman at The Citadel." Several other African-American cadets disagreed, however, and their objections not only revealed how deeply concepts of manliness factored into the individual and collective identity of most cadets, but also how much they had invested in The Citadel as the proving ground for their masculine self-worth. Some black students argued "you can't compare the feminist movement, the gay movement to that of the African-American movement" because "our forefathers helped build this nation with their blood, sweat and tears." By devaluing and even denying the contributions and sacrifices made by those considered less manly, such an assessment testifies to how deeply certain students' sense of entitlement and accomplishment was tied to their masculine image.³¹

This emphasis on manly accomplishments and service relates directly to people's attitude to the crucible in which Citadel Men were formed - the fourth-class system. Many Citadel supporters believed wholeheartedly that allowing women into the corps of cadets would change or "soften" the plebe system, and as they had contended for decades, any such modification to this "tradition" would "destroy the foundation of the

³¹ *The State*, 18 February 1990, 13 June 1993, 5 December 1993, 13 January 1994; *The Brigadier*, 2 May 1994.

institution.” The epitaphs from the 1970s resurfaced as cadets mourned the “Corpse of Cadets” and began looking around for a “horse drawn carriage” to cart away the college’s remains. A woman implored school officials to keep females out lest they “water down that which makes you great.”³²

As before, however, such fears incorrectly depict The Citadel’s fourth-class system as static and treat trivialities as absolutely vital components of Citadel graduates’ success. In this case, these misconceptions fueled a heated and very public debate over whether Shannon Faulkner should have had her head shaved during her freshmen year. Most people decided that she should, arguing that the ritual symbolized the traditional egalitarianism of the plebe experience. Such claims obscured the fact that Citadel graduates from the 1940s and 1950s never had their heads shaved and no one had questioned their manly credentials.³³

A large portion of those who opposed Shannon Faulkner based their objections on societal mores concerning the proper “relationship between the sexes.” Adhering to rigid absolutes about male and female behavior, supporters of both VMI and The Citadel believed some unalterable aspect of the female psyche or possibly their genetic makeup left them unable to muster the “male dominant attitude of fierceness” necessary not only

³² *The State*, 31 March 1990, 16 November 1992, 26 August 1993, 28 September 1993, 5 December 1993, 15 May 1994, 11 June 1994, 13 June 1994, 23 July 1994, 6 July 1995, 25 July 1995; *The Brigadier*, 16 February 1990, 5 October 1990, 13 November 1992, 28 January 1993, 3 September 1993, 4 March 1994, 7 October 1994.

³³ *The Brigadier*, 1 November 1991, 23 April 1993; *The State*, 27 June 1989, 8 February 1990, 25 March 1990, 1 April 1991, 11 August 1991, 28 September 1993, 6 December 1993, 13 January 1994, 4 February 1994, 28 June 1994, 29 June 1994, 1 July 1994, 16 July 1994, 2 August 1994, 3 August 1994, 4 August 1994, 5 August 1994, 6 August 1994, 8 August 1994, 11 August 1994, 18 August 1994, 11 May 1995, 2 June 1995, 8 June 1995; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 22 November 1993, document 286.

to survive, but to also administer the adversative learning method employed by both schools.³⁴

As these evaluations indicate, preserving The Citadel and VMI's "much harsher ritual discipline and utterly . . . masculine environment" carried larger social implications. In defending "a system which has consistently produced *men* capable of enduring the harassment, bullying and humiliations the real world has to offer," many revived the theory that men and women ought to occupy separate social spheres, with men best suited for life in the "real world" of politics, business and military service. The idea that The Citadel "is no place for a lady" fed off notions expressed by Sallie Baldwin, a Charlestonian who launched the "Save the Male" bumper sticker campaign, that men are "bred in society to be protectors." Indeed, etiquette classes at The Citadel taught cadets that women "must be sheltered and protected not only from the elements and physical harm, but also from embarrassment, crudity, or coarseness of any sort."³⁵

With The Citadel's purpose yoked to rigid social definitions of what it meant to be a man or a woman, several people struggled with the idea of why Shannon Faulkner apparently wanted to become a man. One female commentator questioned Faulkner's motives, asserting that despite her own numerous academic and civic accomplishments, "never once have I felt the need to be anything but a woman." Another asked how could Faulkner remain "a woman when she's doing push-ups with three hundred other men," and although both letters were written in support of The Citadel's case, they ended up challenging it by accepting that "men" and "women," as they and many others used the

³⁴ Board of Visitors, "Minutes," 22 November 1993, document 286; Strum, *Women*, 148, 164, 168, 183, 193; *The Brigadier*, 18 March 1994; *The State*, 31 July 1994.

³⁵ *The State*, 8 June 1991, 19 November 1992, 21 November 1992, 26 November 1992, 8 August 1994, 18 May 1994; Strum, *Women*, 238; Faludi, "Naked," 71-72.

terms, were not biological classifications, but socially constructed identities. This does not mean, however, that intangible masculine and feminine qualities were not as real to some people as anatomical attributes. While gender categories appear fluid in theory, they remained absolutely rigid in the minds of some. The idea that Faulkner's desire to attend The Citadel marked her as wanting to become a man indicated that some saw no difference between a medical sex change and a breach of socially proscribed gender roles.³⁶

Discerning what exclusively masculine qualities Citadel men possessed, however, proved much more difficult than simply asserting their manhood. Indeed, while alumni praised their alma mater for helping students "fully develop their masculine characteristics," the characteristics they listed remained gender neutral. Most Citadel men supported the views of a 1993 graduate who explained that "The Citadel cadet system is soaked in traditions such as honor, country, self-discipline, appreciation of freedom, fear of God, and desire for truth and honesty," adding, "all of the aforementioned are ideals to be sought after when shaping a man." No doubt, numerous people accepted his conclusion, with many finding these same qualities desirable in women as well. For several of The Citadel's male defenders, with their tendency to focus on men's accomplishments and potential while excluding those of women, perhaps the major reason females could not become "Citadel Men" was because the school produced "leaders" and few of them could fathom taking orders from a female.³⁷

While The Citadel's graduates exalted their own virtues, the college's critics argued that the institution's environment instilled its subjects with far less praiseworthy

³⁶ Faludi, "Naked," 73; *The Brigadier*, 3 September 1993; *The State*, 14 December 1993, 8 August 1994,

attributes. Many pointed to past incidents regarding the hazing of athletes and Kevin Nesmith as evidence that The Citadel's "climate of cruelty" bred sadism and racism. Sallie Baldwin and others praised The Citadel for teaching young men "how to treat women with respect" and Norman Doucet claimed "we appreciate [women] more because they are not here," but others believed this exclusion fostered chauvinistic and misogynistic attitudes. When Faulkner's attorneys asked "approximately how many times over your four years did you hear the word 'woman' used as a way of tearing a cadet down," Ronald Vergnolle, a 1991 graduate of The Citadel, answered, "It was an everyday part, every moment, every hour part of life there" and "if the term 'woman' was used, then that would be a welcome relief" since "the majority of the language, in my experience, was gutter slang for women" and homosexuals. According to Vergnolle, upperclassmen consistently insulted freshmen and each other by accusing them of being "either a faggott, a queer or weak as a woman." Other cadets bore out Vergnolle charges, with one warning his colleagues that unless they checked the "rather disturbing" degree of chauvinism within the corps, "The Citadel is going to continue to turn out men who are not fully capable of coexisting with women on a professional basis."³⁸

Of course, most Citadel backers discounted such claims, believing instead that the mere "presence" of woman in the classroom or the barracks would destroy the school. Besides the previously stated arguments calling females a "distraction," many offered a far more intriguing analysis of how women would compromise The Citadel's ability to build men. Contrary to the notion that the college's system spawned crude, loutish

³⁷ Faludi, "Naked," 70; *The State*, 26 January 1994, 21 June 1994; *Newsday*, 27 June 1996; *The Brigadier*, 9 March 1990, 15 October 1993, 10 October 1996; 1994 *Guidon*, 5.

behavior and attitudes, several students claimed that The Citadel allowed them to establish intimate bonds with their cadet brothers. When referring to the barracks as “a place where a man can be a man,” several cadets felt most free to express themselves in the communal showers. One cadet explained that, especially as freshmen, “we are in the showers, it’s very intimate. We’re one mass, naked together, and it makes us closer . . . You’re shaved, you’re naked, you’re afraid together. You can cry.” Another continued, “I know it’s all trivial but all of us in one shower, it’s like we’re all one, we’re all the same, and – I don’t know – you feel like you’re exposed, but you feel safe . . . I just can’t explain it, but when they take that away it’s over. This place will be ruined.” One summed it up succinctly, “With no women, we can hug each other.” The irony lies in the fact that these students believed that by shutting out the judgmental eyes of the outside world, their closed, all-male environment helped them become men by giving them the freedom and security to be more intimate and sensitive, what some might deem more feminine.³⁹

Of course, despite all these arguments, The Citadel and VMI eventually lost their cases. While Shannon Faulkner’s extremely brief cadet career was well documented, the final act came a year after she quit, when the Supreme Court found VMI’s all-male admissions policy unconstitutional. Ruth Bader Ginsburg wrote the final decision, and in it, she explained that “neither the goal of producing citizen soldiers, nor VMI’s implementing methodology is inherently unsuitable for women,” and while “physical

³⁸ *The State*, 18 February 1990, 25 March 1990, 15 April 1990, 8 October 1991, 13 November 1992, 10 June 1993, 21 May 1994, 23 May 1994, 7 July 1994; Faludi, “Naked,” 67-68, 70-72; *The Brigadier*, 21 April 1989, 9 March 1990, 24 April 1992, 5 September 1995; Faludi, *Stiffed*, 114.

³⁹ *The State*, 5 October 1992, 19 November 1993, 5 December 1993, 15 May 1994, 17 May 1994, 13 June 1994, 8 August 1994; Board of Visitors, “Minutes,” 12 April 1993, document 65; *The Brigadier*, 28 January 1993, 4 February 1994, 18 March 1994; Strum, *Women*, 50, 147, 150, 160, 161; Faludi, “Naked,” 65, 69, 79, 80; Faludi, *Stiffed*, 126.

differences between men and women . . . are enduring,” they “remain cause for celebration, but not for denigration of the members of either sex or for artificial constraints on an individual’s opportunity.” Finally, she concluded that stereotypical assumptions about “what is appropriate for most women, no longer justify denying opportunity to women whose talent and capacity place them outside the average description.”⁴⁰

Almost immediately following the Supreme Court’s ruling, The Citadel’s Board of Visitors, in what the group’s chairman called the “biggest, hardest decision” the body had ever made during his tenure, voted unanimously to eliminate an applicant’s sex as an admission requirement. Val Vojdik praised the “speed and graciousness” with which the Board acted, and she appreciated that “from now on they will be committed to building the whole person.” South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond spoke for many when he hoped that the admission of women to The Citadel would “mark the beginning of a proud new tradition at this very fine military institution.” A classmate of Charles Foster, the first African-American graduate, agreed, asserting that “The Citadel will not only survive the admission of female cadets, but will eventually be recognized as having become a better school for having admitted women.”⁴¹

The fight to bring The Citadel “into the twentieth century” by admitting women into the corps of cadets reflected the post World War II struggles and anxieties that plagued not only a large portion of the college’s students and alumni, but also a sizable

⁴⁰ Strum, *Women*, 269, 275, 286, 287, 289, 290, 293, 294; *The State*, 17 June 1995, 6 August 1995, 9 August 1995, 13 August 1995, 15 August 1995, 16 August 1995, 17 August 1995, 18 August 1995, 19 August 1995, 20 August 1995,

number of southerners and Americans. The changes that swept across the South and the nation in the decades following 1945 invigorated some, frustrated others, and frightened even more. Despite appearances, the concerns of the latter two groups were more complex than just an absolute fear of any and all change. As one commentator put it, “People are mad about the world changing” because “they feel like they don’t have a lot of control about it changing.”⁴²

This lack or loss of control made many uneasy, and while some people regretted that The Citadel was out of touch with modern society, others were grateful. For them, The Citadel seemed to offer stability and order in “our ever-changing world.” This attitude stemmed in large measure from a nostalgic longing for “better days,” which the college embodied. For many, the coeducation of The Citadel marked not only the college’s downfall, but the imminent demise of American society, a society whose greatness, according to one cadet, rivaled that of all other “civilized societies” that had “been constructed and organized with an emphasis on male dominance.” Another student described “Faulkner and her legal army” as committed to destroying “the values established by men who laid the cornerstone of our country.” What these arguments amounted to was a fear among white males that they no longer enjoyed unassailable privileges in society. One cadet voiced the concerns of many when he grumbled, “I have the worst chance in society of getting a job because I’m a white male and that’s the major difference between me and my father.”⁴³

⁴¹ *New York Times*, 27 June 1996, 29 June 1996; *Charleston Post and Courier*, 29 June 1996; *The State*, 14 March 1994, 23 July 1994.

⁴² *The State*, 14 September 1991, 8 August 1991, 20 January 1994, 12 August 1995.

⁴³ *The State*, 17 March 1990, 19 July 1992, 13 November 1992; *The Brigadier*, 13 March 1992, 18 March 1994; Faludi, “Naked,” 75-76.

For many, the presumably dismal prospects for white males were the legacy of the social upheavals of the 1960s. It was during this decade that the country's so called decline in "moral values and ethics" had supposedly begun. Tellingly, it was also a time period in which more and more people questioned and challenged the beliefs and practices that many Americans and most especially, the defenders of The Citadel's particular "traditions," held dear. From the veneration of the South's Confederate past to the rigid definitions of proper male and female behavior, The Citadel's decidedly white, exclusively male traditions were no longer viewed as sacred, and a large number of cadets, to say nothing of a substantial portion of the American populace, spent the ensuing decades trying to recover or at least retain certain aspects of the world they had lost.

In this sense, The Citadel offered young white men an environment where they felt safe, comfortable, and appreciated – an ostensibly unchanging setting, insulated from those who would point out that what some cadets referred to as the "age-old, tried and true values which have been the cornerstone for this republic" and their college, grew, as a woman from South Carolina noted, from an era when "women could not vote and blacks were enslaved." Within The Citadel's walls, they could state without much fear of contradiction that *men* built their nation and *men* should lead it. Not only that, they could sing "Dixie," wave the Confederate flag, and pay tribute to a southern heritage that did not include slavery and Jim Crow, thus freeing them of any responsibility for the legacy of such past injustices. While some found this appealing, it left many Citadel students,

alumni, and administrators ill-equipped to deal with the changes occurring inside and outside the institution's gates.⁴⁴

Certainly, a Citadel education in and of itself did not spawn these all too American interpretations of the nation and the South's past, but the lack of ethnic, cultural, racial and gender diversity and the limited exposure to dissenting viewpoints, did allow certain ideals to flourish unchallenged. The homogeneity of The Citadel's campus fostered a consistently narrow view of the college's, the region's, and the country's history and nurtured hostility toward unpopular or unfamiliar views. Once they became entrenched, it proved difficult to disabuse cadets of their restrictive notions, not only of what it meant to be a good Citadel man, but also to be a good southerner and a good American. The struggles over "Dixie" and the Confederate flag indicated that many Citadel people saw a lily white perception of the past as a key component in the first two categories, while the exclusively masculine emphasis on who built the country and who was best suited to lead and defend it, marked manliness as an essential ingredient in the makeup of all three paragons. With the Supreme Court recently handing down an essentially split decision on the value and importance of affirmative action, The Citadel's post-World War II history offers a window into, if not the value of a multi-cultural learning environment, then the perils of a non-diverse one.

As W.J. Cash put it, by "exhibiting within itself a remarkable homogeneity," the corps of cadets often took a distinctly southern approach to propagating the image of an ideal Citadel graduate, and by extension an ideal southerner and American, as a white male. They seized upon a distorted "moonlight and magnolias" view of the past and

⁴⁴ *The Brigadier*, 21 October 1994; *The State*, 18 February 1990, 23 March 1990, 30 April 1991, 7 July 1991, 28 May 1993.

parlayed this idyllic vision into a noble defense of the South's heritage and tradition. In this context, the battles over Confederate imagery and the ability of women to withstand The Citadel system took on a larger meaning as part of a struggle for inclusion in the past as well as the present. One Citadel backer called The Citadel and VMI "institutions unique to the South, remnants of Southern chivalry, and holdovers from a proud cultural heritage nearly disemboweled by the War Between the States." He argued that these schools "instill and cultivate in their cadets what were once commonly referred to as the virtues of Southern manhood – honor, chivalry, and devotion to God, state and family." Unfortunately, he appeared to see no place for either black men or women in the "proud cultural heritage" of the antebellum South.⁴⁵

Especially in The Citadel's case, such selective and highly emotional assessments of the South's past proved popular with those who wished to block certain changes in the present, feeding off notions that, to use John Shelton Reed's phrasing, "hundreds of thousands of 'meddlers' are conspiring to undermine the South's institutions and the 'Southern way of life.'" Indeed, many attributed both Shannon Faulkner's lawsuit and the drive to remove the Confederate flag from the top of the South Carolina State House to a "massive invasion of people from the North telling us what to do, telling us what flag to fly, how institutions will be run." In the end, what many people feared was that these assaults on the South's "traditions" would eventually result in the loss of the region's distinctive qualities, a fear shared by many Citadel personnel as it applied to their institution.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Cash, *Mind*, xlvi; *The Brigadier*, 23 April 1993; *The State*, 2 April 1991, 8 August 1994.

⁴⁶ Reed, *Enduring South*, 88-89; Sheldon Hackney, "Southern Violence," *American Historical Review* 74 (February 1969): 924-925; *The State*, 10 February 1994, 8 August 1994.

Throughout the school's history, Citadel boosters had cast the school's value in terms of its uniqueness and the peculiar value of its contribution to society. In the post war period, many Citadel boosters latched onto the production of "whole men" or "Citadel men" as the key to the college's value and distinctiveness. Again, this fit nicely with the school's regional setting as several historians have pointed out the important role gender has played in shaping southern identity, politics, and culture. Glenda Gilmore calls the South "hypergendered" in that "the differences between male and female roles was especially sharp and these accentuated roles functioned in a variety of ways to define not only gender relations, but class, politics, and racial controls as well." Gilmore's observation is clearly affirmed by the many Citadel graduates who invested a great deal of themselves in the "whole man" concept, enjoying the prestige, recognition, and sense of accomplishment that came with a Citadel ring and diploma. In a sense, the struggle to defend the school's exclusion of women was also a struggle to preserve a "defining feature" of not only The Citadel but of the region.⁴⁷

As we have seen, despite their emphasis on manly virtues, even The Citadel's most ardent supporters could never quite articulate what exclusively masculine qualities the school cultivated. Indeed, the experience of The Citadel reinforces the notion that what it means to "be a man" is both historically and contextually contingent, shaped primarily by current societal standards and developments. For example, in the 1950s, Citadel men were expected to conform to lawful authority, but during the 1960s, Citadel men were expected to and did question the supposed wisdom of the school's acknowledged leadership. Permutations in the fourth-class system, many of them

⁴⁷ Glenda Gilmore, "Gender and *Origins of the New South*," *Journal of Southern History* 67 (November 2001): 771; Jack Temple Kirby, *The Countercultural South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 3;

spearheaded by Citadel graduates, attest to the fact that not even all Citadel men fit into the same mold and that no one universal formula could be applied to “making” them.

Like the South in many ways, The Citadel has been cast as both the repository for all the nation’s historic ills or as a shining example of what does, or once did, make America great. Since the admission of women, Citadel officials have surprised a lot of people by making what seems to be a good faith effort to administer to the needs of all cadets.⁴⁸ Hopefully, this effort will continue and, unlike many contemporary southerners, Citadel officials will not fall prey to what one observer called the “continuing inclination to congratulate ourselves for not being as bad as were, rather than concern ourselves with becoming better than we are.”⁴⁹ At the very least, this evaluation of The Citadel’s experience should convince readers of the need to discard stereotypes, value diversity, and construct more inclusive definitions of what it means to be a southerner and an American.

The State, 21 June 1994.

⁴⁸ In 1998, The Citadel’s current president Major General John S. Grinalds (USMC) curtailed the number of times the school’s band played Dixie at school functions. Grinalds explained his decision with “for me, it is a matter of public responsibility and personal honor. Public responsibility because I am responsible for the patriotic stance of our institution and the solidarity of the Corps of Cadets. Personal honor because many of friends and comrades-in-arms sacrificed life and limb to preserve the freedom provided by the Constitution. In 2000, the Board of Visitors unanimously approved a motion initiated by The Citadel’s African-American Society allowing Grinalds final say in when and where Dixie is played. *Charleston News and Courier*, 6 December 1998, 16 April 2000. On December 3, 1999, the Board of Visitors sent a resolution to the South Carolina General Assembly, the governor and “all other interested parties,” urging them to remove “the Confederate battle flag from the dome of the State House and according it appropriate display as part of the history of this State.” *The State*, 10 December 1999.

⁴⁹ James C. Cobb, “An Epitaph for the North: Reflections on the Politics of Regional and National Identity at the Millennium,” *The Journal of Southern History* 66 (February 2000): 24.

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