

MASTERS OF FATE: EFFICACY AND EMOTION IN THE CIVIL WAR SOUTH

by

KYLE NICHOLAS OSBORN

(Under the direction of John C. Inscoe)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation uses social-cognitive theory to analyze the emotions of white Southerners as they experienced secession and the Civil War. It argues that white Southerners showcased two major personality types of high-efficacy and low-efficacy during this timeframe. It furthermore suggests that that each personality type heavily influenced how individual Southerners envisioned secession, their Northern enemy, and the necessary level of brutality in waging the war for Southern independence.

INDEX WORDS: Civil War, secession, Old South, emotions history, social-cognitive theory.

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KYLE N. OSBORN

B.A., EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, 2004

M.A., EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, 2007

M.A.T., EAST TENNSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, 2007

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KYLE NICHOLAS OSBORN

Major Professor: John C. Inscoe

Committee: Stephen Berry  
James C. Cobb  
Laura Mason

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso  
Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
August 2013

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of Inscoe students who have contributed so tremendously (and will contribute more) to the fields of Appalachian and Southern history. If I ever become half the scholar Dr. Inscoe is, I will consider myself a wild success. If errors in fact or interpretation appear in my dissertation, they are of course mine, and mine alone.

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## INTRODUCTION: THE MASTERS OF FATE

Southern blood was running hot by March 1861. From Montgomery, Alabama, a group of elites passed the time in a hotel parlor by pondering their impending conflict with the North. The conversation inevitably turned to attacks against the Yankee character, which was supposedly epitomized by President Abraham Lincoln despite his Kentucky birth and Illinois residence. The recently-inaugurated Republican was, according to one woman, emblematic of the "kind who are always at corner stores sitting on boxes, whittling sticks, and telling stories as funny as they are vulgar." Another man opined that any future civil war would end promptly once Yankee pockets felt the slightest financial pinch. At this point, a woman of Northern nativity among the group objected to the string of banalities cast against her regional homeland. "Yankees are no more mean and stingy than you are," she protested, and "people at the North are as good as people at the South." The congregants apologized and sat silently as the Northern defender continued her plea. But under that silence stewed fiery wrath, at least in the heart of Mary Chestnut. "If I were at the North I should expect them to belabour us and should hold my



tongue," she recalled bitterly. For "we are divorced, North and South, because we hated each other so."<sup>1</sup>

While Chestnut's remark resonates with the power of cold finality, it was not the emotional experience of all Southerners as they severed their ties with the national Union. From Mississippi, Ann Lewis Hardeman felt far more trepidation than rancor. "This day the president elect [Lincoln] is to be inaugurated," she somberly recorded in her diary on the fourth day of March, "no one knows what a day may bring forth - O that God may make our cause His own." Hardeman had been wrestling with tortured anxiety for months. Weeks earlier she had learned from her nephew that sectional "war with all its horrors was *inevitable!*," and Yankee invasion imminent. "I cannot describe my feelings," she wrote in helpless refrain, "Lord have mercy upon me and sustain me in time of sore trial and danger - 'thou O God art my only refuge.'" Why did Chestnut and Hardeman react with such disparate emotions to secession and the prospect of war? How did these emotions impact their visions of their newly refashioned Northern antagonists? How would these sentiments shape the war to follow? These are the major questions this study seeks to address.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Diary Entry of 14 March 1861, in Ben Ames Williams, ed., *A Diary from Dixie by Mary Boykin Chestnut* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Diary Entries of 4 March 1861, and 9 February 1861, in Ann Lewis Hardeman Diary, in Michael O'Brien, ed., *An Evening when Alone: Four Journals of Single Women in the South, 1827-1867* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 322, 319.

This dissertation will argue that these divergent reactions of anger and anxiety (probably the two most dominant Southern sentiments during the sectional conflict) corresponded with entrenched personalities developed during the antebellum era; and that these dual personalities proved highly influential in both *how* Southerners embraced secession, and then how they demanded the Civil War be fought. While most scholars, including historians, have used the term "personality" without giving it much explicit thought or analysis, seeing it as something ethereal and indefinable, psychologists have long analyzed the concept with rigor and precision. For example, psychologist Richard Ryckman defines personality as an individual's "dynamic and organized set of characteristics . . . that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations, and behaviors in various settings." In other words, personality is the patterns and consistencies shown in one's thoughts, actions, and emotions over time, the propensity for a person to react to a dramatic event like Lincoln's election with passive fright as opposed to fiery indignation.<sup>3</sup>

But, of course, the real question becomes - what creates personality? What factors help explain *why* Southerners were inclined to react as they did in 1861? Here, social psychology

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<sup>3</sup> Richard M. Ryckman, *Theories of Personality* (Belmont, CA: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2008), 4; While no historian has dealt explicitly with personality theory per se, historian Peter N. Stearns advocated for something similar with his theorization for "behavioral history." See Stearns, ed., *American Behavioral History: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 1-16.

provides insight through its focus on social factors like cultural learning and life experience, treating personality as a learned (and historical) phenomenon rather than the manifestation of inborn traits or characteristics. According to the bellwether theories of Albert Bandura, the most prominent social psychologist dedicated to the topic, the key to personality formation lies in a person's "efficacy expectations," meaning the perceived degree to which people can successfully manipulate and control their circumstances to attain favorable outcomes. In brief, according to Bandura's theories, individuals with high-efficacy expectations tend to attack challenging situations with confidence and aggression (and show less tolerance for obstructions to their "best laid schemes"), while their low-efficacy counterparts consistently shy away from scenarios they deem beyond their competency to master. The former comes from a place of psychological empowerment and a locus of self control, the latter from a sense of powerlessness in the face of immovable destiny. Self-efficacy permeates one's personality and their worldview, informing how people react to novel events and new experiences; secession serves as but a highly momentous historical example.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the most accessible summary of Bandura's theories of personality and self-efficacy can be found in Albert Bandura, "Exercise of Personal and Collective Efficacy in Changing Societies," in Albert Bandura, ed., *Self-Efficacy in Changing Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1-45.

Using Bandura's terminology, high-efficacy Southerners tended to react to perceived Yankee aggression with head-on ferocity during the secession crisis and Civil War, their emotions dominated by a righteous indignation gearing them for action. The intensity of that anger reached such fever pitch that it shattered the previous emotional standards of Southern culture (an issue to be addressed in Chapter 3). It took relatively little prodding or moral justification for these seceding Southerners to separate from and eventually mobilize against a hated Yankee foe. Their low-efficacy counterparts, however, reacted to the process of disunion with passive fright and anxiety, with many naturally ascribing to what this study calls the doctrine of "providential fatalism," a perspective that envisioned the coming of the Civil War as operating beyond anyone's true control, certainly beyond their own. Such a depiction helped low-efficacy Southerners acquiesce in secession as they drifted along the vortex of disunion and in some cases into the Confederate military ranks. The personalities also provoked different visions of the war: the fury of high-efficacy translating into vengeful desires for vast destruction, the fatalism of low-efficacy more focused on merely surviving the violent creation of Confederate nationhood.

Personality by no means determined one's political stance or ideology regarding secession itself. Anger and hatred were

clearly not unique to those favoring disunion, for there were scores of rancorous Unionists raging against the cotton nabobs and many "reluctant Confederates" who spoke furiously at being forced to abandon their middle ground. Nor were these personalities akin to psychological straight-jackets corralling individuals down predetermined pathways, as many Southerners drifted between the two personality types over time, and most showcased some characteristics from both. They instead represent the extremes of a broad spectrum along which individuals ranged but rarely reached in full. Yet one is struck by the consistent emotional reactions of anger and anxiety on the part of white Southerners as they confronted the hardships of antebellum life, the challenges of secession, and ultimately the crucible of armed conflict. From an emotional perspective, there appear to have been two antebellum Souths, two roads to disunion, and two Confederate wars.<sup>5</sup>

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While psychological theories on personality abound, the social cognitive approach presents historians with intriguing, if untapped, potential. Unlike many of his predecessors, Bandura argued that efficacy development owed largely to an

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<sup>5</sup> East Tennessee's William "Parson" Brownlow would serve as an excellent example of a bitterly rancorous Unionist. He even renamed his Knoxville-based newspaper the *Whig and Rebel Ventilator* during the war years. For an outdated biography of Brownlow that nonetheless illuminates his angry persona as polemical editor, see E. Merton Coulter, *William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1971).

individual's social-cultural background. And yet, escaping environmental determinism, Bandura's theory also provides bountiful space for individual subjectivity - the fact that some people can simply develop high or low-efficacy in apparent defiance of objective reality. The audacity of South Carolina's secessionists in December 1860 (their state being "too small for a republic and too large for an insane asylum," as one of its sober-minded inhabitants assessed it) might suggest one collective example. Finally, efficacy can be modified in accordance to social transformations or individual determination, meaning Bandura's schema thus depicts personality as a non-biological phenomenon striking a sound balance between social background and human agency.<sup>6</sup>

Indeed, though perhaps a strange fit at first glance, the Old South provides a fertile atmosphere for the study of personality difference. The region's palpable split in efficacy expectations can probably be identified in most societies over time, including our own (the setting from which, of course, Bandura's studies were gleaned). But because the modernizing Old South was undergoing dramatic transformation in the late antebellum era with the influx of railroad construction, market

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<sup>6</sup> The statement on South Carolina's secession came from Unionist James L. Petigru. As quoted in Sally Edwards, *The Man who Said No* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1970), 65. Bandura's theories are often applied in the fields of education and occupational management, usually with the conscious intent of helping teachers and employers better develop high-efficacy students and workers. Thus, high-efficacy is often interpreted as the ideal or correct personality type. This study will, however, take a much more ambivalent view in regards to the moral supremacy of either high or low-efficacy, as both personalities have moral benefits and drawbacks in my vision.

penetration, and increased government activism, all the while still manacled to an antiquated slave system, the divergence between the high and low-efficacy outlooks stood particularly vast and dramatic. Southern newspapers could tout the transatlantic telegraph as the conqueror of time and space or boldly proclaim cotton as king, but they also reported of yellow-fever epidemics their readers could not escape, runaway slaves they could not recapture, and a rising Republican Party they could not nullify. Theirs was a world of both mastery and servitude, of self-determination and mystifying destiny.<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the Civil War is tragically suited for an analysis of emotional transformation. All military conflicts undoubtedly transform the souls of the civilians and soldiers involved, but relatively few large-scale wars have pitted combatants who harbored as many sentimental ties as those that tugged on the common heartstrings of Northerners and Southerners. In an internecine struggle and slaughter in the truest sense, Confederates and Unionists shared the same religions, language, and eighty years of national history before the sinews were abruptly snapped in 1861. It should not be surprising, then, if the Civil War's passions burned more

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<sup>7</sup> On the subject of Southern modernization in the 1850s, see J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society: Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), and Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

intensely and with greater moral and emotional dissonance than is typically true of warfare.

This dissertation analyzes the private writings of roughly one hundred white Southerners during the Civil War era. This list includes men and women, old and young, civilians and soldiers, and it touches all eleven states that would become the Confederacy. While this collection lacks the size and scope of a definitive sample, it nonetheless provides a clear pattern in regards to Southern personality at least among a certain segment of the region's population. A greater number of diaries and sets of correspondence may add muscle to its conclusions, but the study's overall pattern would probably change little by expanding the number of sources tapped.

Rather than taking a biographical approach (with the exception of Chapter 3), I have decided to arrange the personality types into binary collectives. While this style of organization no doubt exaggerates the polarity of Southern personality and distorts the nuances and change in individual psyches over time, my aim is to illustrate the very real divergence and general consistency in emotional styles that my sources have displayed. It must be admitted that many historical voices are missing from this account. I have deliberately avoided prominent political and military leaders as well as active Unionists; and owing to the relative dearth of



qualitative sources for poorer whites and African Americans both slave and free, this study maintains a strict focus on privileged whites hailing from the upper stratum of the slaveholding ranks. While personality and emotional variances evident among the Southern subaltern would surely provide tremendous historical value, they remain well beyond the scope and competency of this dissertation.

This is not a study of ideology in the sense of ascertaining a coherent Southern worldview regarding Northern society, the "Black" Republicans, or their mudsill constituents. It will not examine the politics of secession, or ask why white Southerners embraced their respective loyalties during the Civil War. Instead, this dissertation seeks to examine the emotional styles (or personalities) white Southerners displayed as they experienced revolution and armed conflict, and the psychological undercurrents that help explain the origins of those styles. Nor is this a study of popular theology, though it must acknowledge the fact that so many white Southerners identified with, and were ultimately molded by, Protestant Christianity. One of the major arguments of this dissertation is that low-efficacy Southerners ascribed to a philosophy of "providential fatalism" to find emotional solace when cast into the whirlwinds of war. This term refers to the straightforward belief that life's outcomes are determined by impersonal/divine forces more

than by one's own human agency. With so much hinging on this term, both of its components warrant greater definition and discussion.<sup>8</sup>

Probably no individual has ever embraced the all-encompassing fatalism famously described by metaphysician Richard Taylor, the conviction that a person can determine her or his future is as utterly foolhardy and pointless as trying to remold the past. But as philosopher Robert C. Solomon described in more realistic terms, people transcending the lines of culture and history have consistently embraced the simple notion "that what happens (or has happened) in some sense *has* to (or had to) happen." Used to explain everything from the assassination of kings to first-time encounters with future spouses, this interpretation of fatalism has retained its explanatory power because it bypasses the troubling questions attached to life's myriad complexities, contingencies, and unforeseen results; the vexations attached to explaining causation, in other words. Odious to most historians because of its untrendy de-emphasis of human agency and repugnant on

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<sup>8</sup> Emotions history is a relatively new field of study that has exploded in recent years. For a solid review of its historiography, see the introduction provided in Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006). For two examples of emotions history that deal with the Civil War South, see Stephen W. Berry II, *All That Makes a Man: Love and Ambition in the Civil War South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Michael W. Woods, "The Heart of the Sectional Conflict: Emotions, Politics, and the Coming of the Civil War" (PhD diss., University of South Carolina, 2012). There are several excellent works on secession that cannot be fully cited in this footnote. For two of the most prominent and influential works, see William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Secessionists Triumphant* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

ethical grounds through its debasement of moral accountability, the proclivity fatalism warrants serious historical analysis because of its persistent influence over popular thought. And however much it may offend modern sensibilities, it has provided emotional comfort to many of its adherents over time. It was a mindset, we shall see, that white Southerners could easily adapt from their antebellum lives to grapple with the coming of secession and the Civil War.<sup>9</sup>

Stretching back to the writings of Aristotle, there is, of course, nothing inherently religious or Christian about fatalism. A God-fearing Union soldier could write of his brother's battlefield death in 1861: "His was set by the Almighty Man. He was due to die . . . I think our time is all set when we shall die and before we want to die, and it makes no difference where we are." But an outspoken atheist like Texas's Gideon Linsecum could echo these sentiments virtually verbatim. "I know that someday or other I shall die, at some place. That place is now existing, and [I] cannot die at two places," he explained in an 1860 letter justifying his decision to maintain his hazardous frontier abode. For "until that place and the someday meets, I need not feel any anxiety as to what can be

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<sup>9</sup> Richard Taylor, "Fatalism," *The Philosophic Review*, 71, No. 1 (1962): 56-66; Robert C. Solomon, "On Fate and Fatalism," *Philosophy East and West*, 53, No. 4 (2003): 434-454. As an undergraduate student, writer David Foster Wallace crafted a stinging critique of Taylor's essay that largely undermined its metaphysical logic. See Wallace, "Richard Taylor's 'Fatalism' and the Semantics of Physical Modality," in *Fate, Time, and Language: An Essay on Free Will*, ed. Steven M. Cahn and Maureen Eckert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 141-216.

done to me by the numerous Indians, the assassin, or relentless disease." This "irrefutable philosophy," Lincecum claimed, bestowed the serenity without having to succumb to the fanaticism espoused by the "ranting devotees" of religion. Lincecum would prove himself far from a low-efficacy Southerner, and his message above was more of an agnostic taunt than earnest philosophy. But his logic was straightforward enough. Indeed, some providential fatalists did not believe in providence at all, but they merely used the concept as a convenient language to express a sense of general helplessness or inefficacy.<sup>10</sup>

But since antebellum Southerners often refused to demarcate a strict boundary separating the secular from the sacred, so the concept of fatalism often grew entangled with the theology of "providence" - traditionally defined as God's wisdom, care, and guidance. In its most popular usages in the Civil War South, "providence" can perhaps best be divided into three major categories. First, there was *heroic* providentialism, the civil religious faith that God had chosen one's nation as a blessed people. It was the brand of brazen theology that Americans intoned when proclaiming that the Almighty had endowed their country with a special destiny of righteousness and power, a mantle that Southern leaders worked to usurp in 1861. At a more

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<sup>10</sup> As quoted in James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 65; Gideon Lincecum to Daniel Boone Moore, 2 April 1860, in Jerry Bryan Lincecum, Edward Hake Phillips, Peggy A. Redshaw, eds., *Gideon Lincecum's Sword: Civil War Letters from the Texas Home Front* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2001), 32.

personal level, there was *living* providentialism. As historian Steven Woodworth explained it (without using that terminology), the true doctrine of providence preached that Christians must live righteously to ensure that God would arrange events for their well-being, while their waywardness risked divine punishment. Like so many of his era, Alabama planter James Mallory attributed a devastating 1850 frost that ravaged the local wheat crop to the Lord's "chastisement for our disobedience." Or as a Louisiana soldier would later explain as 1864 dawned: "I am one who believes that God is with us and will carry us through safe if we will only prove ourselves worthy of the cause and freedom for which we are fighting."<sup>11</sup>

Heroic providence was often attached to the high-efficacy perspective, as it required an extreme confidence in one's country and its collective faith. Living providence proved more ambiguous, however, straddling the chasm of fate and free-will; for a Southerner could scarcely ensure his fellows followed the

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<sup>11</sup> Diary Entry of 1 January 1850, in Grady McWhiney, Warner O. Moore Jr., and Robert F. Pace, eds., *Fear God and Walk Humbly: The Agricultural Journal of James Mallory, 1843-1877* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), 115; Reuben Allen Pierson to William H. Pierson, 30 January 1860, in Thomas W. Curter and T. Michael Parrish, eds., *Brothers in Gray: The Civil War Letters of the Pierson Family* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 226. For an in-depth analysis of the concept of providence among Civil War Americans that especially stresses the theology's versatility, see George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). I have invented, and thus have ahistorically imposed, the terms "heroic providence," "living providence," and "providential fatalism." Nonetheless, for a work that analyzes what I deem heroic providence, see Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007). For a work that differentiates between living providence and providential fatalism, see Steven W. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On: The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2001), especially pages 34-37. And for a work focused especially on providential fatalism, see Lewis O. Saum, *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980).

righteous path. But for many Southerners not finely attuned to its theological nuances and less confident in their ability to influence the Almighty, providence could become fatalism plain and simple. Here, God's intentions were inscrutable, His judgments mysterious, and the outcomes of life contingent on heavenly forces beyond individual control. As a Confederate soldier wrote his wife: "Remember that my life is as safe on the Battle field as it is here" at home, for "God and God alone decrees the death of his children. When he orders me to appear it matters little where I am or under what circumstances." This was the third category - providential fatalism.<sup>12</sup>

This study hopes to shed new light on a region, according to the historical literature at least, that seems besieged by a split-personality. The low-efficacy Southerner corresponds well with the fixed, hierarchical vision of the Old South depicted by historians like Eugene Genovese and Bertram Wyatt-Brown with their emphasis on the region's social paternalism and anti-bourgeois culture. Though it seemingly clashed with his portrayal of the region as a perpetual frontier, even W. J. Cash argued that antebellum Southerners embraced a Calvinist creed in regards to human agency before the Civil War; that God stood as the "imperious master of a puppet-show" in the mind of the white South that helped absolve the sin of slaveholding. On the other

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<sup>12</sup> As quoted in Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 160.

hand, the high-efficacy personality correlates strongly with the liberal, socially fluid ethos described by historians like James Oakes, John Inscoe, and Jonathan Wells. In short, this study shows an evolving region with personalities both in and out of the modernizing Atlantic world.<sup>13</sup>

This dissertation also holds significance for the burgeoning field of emotions history, to which the study of personality is deeply attached. Scholars have successfully eradicated the long-held assumption that emotions somehow contradict logical thought, sweeping individuals down irrational chasms of anger, hatred, or fear. In recent years, emotions scholars have dedicated their work to two identifiable trends: the first, in analyzing how emotions amplify political ideology and help construct political communities founded upon shared sentiments; the second in analyzing a society's emotional standards or "emotional regimes," and ultimately how those standards can be changed over time. While providing fresh and

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<sup>13</sup> W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Vintage, 1991), 81. Though not an historian by training, Cash's account, originally published in 1941, has had a tremendous influence over academic scholarship on the region. The debate over the Old South's relationship to the larger western world is long and ongoing. Eugene Genovese has argued that the South was basically anti-modern in its socio-economic foundations and thus anti-bourgeois in its cultural perspective. See especially Genovese, *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1988). Historians focusing on Southern honor also highlight the region's anti-modern or anti-liberal character. For the classic account, see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). Wyatt-Brown dealt specifically with fatalism especially on pages 29-32. More recently, historians have emphasized the liberal and capitalistic perspective of slaveholding Southerners. See James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders* (New York: Norton, 1998). John Inscoe showed how an acquisitive perspective was embraced even by the slaveholders of Appalachian North Carolina. See Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989). And for the South's incipient middle class, see Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

illuminating studies of political history, the first approach can treat emotions as barely discernible from the ideologies they enhance. Thus, this study follows the second approach as it demonstrates how Southern personalities underwent both change and continuity amid the traumas of the 1860s. Yet it resists the argument often made by its practitioners who contend that true emotional freedom requires the destruction of virtually all social restrictions or regulations. Like "ideology" or "discourse," human emotions are inherently ambivalent in their moral dimensions. They can serve to champion justice and freedom, as when Harriet Beecher Stowe empathetically pleaded for the humanity of American slaves, or they can serve to fuel enmity and the willingness to kill, as was the case for thousands of soldiers during the Civil War.<sup>14</sup>

This dissertation is divided into two sections, with the first three chapters dedicated to the coming of secession and the final two covering the war years. Looking first at the private travelogues and correspondence of antebellum Southerners venturing into Northern territory, Chapter 1 argues that

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<sup>14</sup> For an excellent example of the first approach, see Michael E. Woods, "The Indignation of Freedom-Loving People: The Caning of Charles Sumner and the Emotion of Antebellum Politics," *Journal of Social History*, 44, no. 3 (Spring 2011). Woods has also provided a crushing critique of how historians attached to the so-called "blundering generation" school of Civil War causation misapplied emotions in their studies. See the introduction to Woods, "The Heart of the Sectional Conflict." The most prominent example of the second approach is probably William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001). A sophisticated and highly theoretical account that combines elements of anthropology, history, and, psychology, Reddy clearly argued that the fewer emotional restrictions the better when it came to emotional freedom.



Southern impressions of Yankee society were subject to far greater individual variation than has previously been granted. Rarely did travelers echo the polarizing hatred voiced by partisan fire-eaters and pro-slavery polemicists who blasted the "mudsill" degradation of Northern free society, though their utterances are still often treated as representative of general Southern attitudes. In short, hatred and hostility were not the inevitable or natural emotional experience of sectionalism even as the United States lurched into its climactic final decade of regional strife. The ferocious enmity (for high-efficacy secessionists at least) that exploded in 1860 and 1861 was largely unprecedented and brought along a host of moral dilemmas.

Chapter 2 delves into the split-personality of the Old South by first analyzing the typical socio-cultural factors that pushed white Southerners toward attitudes of high or low-efficacy. The chapter shows that, uniquely, the Old South offered enough experiential diversity to foster a particularly dramatic divergence in "efficacy expectations." It then shows those personalities carried over into the secessionist winter of 1860-1861. Chapter 3 concentrates more intensely on emotions history by analyzing the psychological transformations of three Southern women during the traumatic years of 1859 to 1862. This chapter argues that the Old South had developed a restrictive

"emotional regime" that greatly hindered the ability of elite Southern women to express the unfeminine sentiments of anger and indignation. Many Southern women used the passionate political culture of secession to seize greater emotional freedom, however, echoing and then appropriating the anger bellowing from their political leaders. This transformation proved partially liberating in terms of individual emotionality, but also it darkened the overall horizons of Southern culture.

In the dissertation's second section, Chapters 4 and 5 follow Southern personalities as they marched into the Civil War. I suggest that the Old South's split personality manifested itself into two separable Confederate wars - a war of hateful determination fought with high-efficacy on the one hand, and a struggle of enduring fatalism waged with low-efficacy on the other. Herein lies the second major relevance this study seeks to bring to the historiography of the Civil War South. The personality bifurcation may provide a contextual backdrop helping to explain why Civil War historians have alternatively seen the conflict as both a highly "destructive war," and a war with clear "limits to the destruction." High-efficacy Southerners entered 1861 with a profound sense of enmity, poised to become the "diehard rebels" likeliest to seek a war of vengeance, even extermination, against a dehumanized Yankee foe. Fatalistic in outlook, however, low-efficacy Southerners were

usually less intent on blaming Northerners at an individual level for instigating the conflict (an interpretation which would emphasize human agency). And as will be shown in Chapter 5, they tended to maintain a greater sense of humanity, even empathy, with respect to their Yankee counterparts, "those people," in the famous words of General Robert E. Lee, with whom they found themselves fighting.<sup>15</sup>

Personality theory may help to explain, in other words, why some soldiers entered the fray with the emotional perspective of Frank Winston, posted at Harpers Ferry, Virginia in early June 1861. Believing that the Northern Republicans sought the creation of a "great central power" that would forever vanquish Southern rights, Winston described the ghastly hatred accompanying his desire to destroy these machinations with violence. He was "terrified at the joy" he felt from the prospect of fighting and killing Northern soldiers, he explained in a letter to his parents, "it was unchristian - almost fiendish." And yet other Confederate soldiers like South Carolina's Milton Leverett (roughly the same age as Winston) were simply amazed by how far the forces of fate had driven

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<sup>15</sup> For depictions of the Civil War as particularly hateful and destructive in character, see Charles Royster, *The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson and the Americans* (New York: Vintage, 1993) and extended with Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006); For a look at the Southern culture of inevitability that inspired the most fanatical Confederate soldiers, see Jason Phillips, *Diehard Rebels: The Confederate Culture of Invincibility* (Athens, University of Georgia Press, 2007). And for the other side of the debate, see Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), and especially Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007).

them, seeking neither blame nor vengeance. "If any one had told me a year ago that I would have joined a volunteer company in the Confederate State Service . . . I would have looked on him, her or it as little better than a madman," he wrote from his station on the South Carolina coast in July 1861. How, he wondered, did find himself guarding Port Royal, armed to the teeth, and decked in Confederate gray? It was "perfectly mysterious," he mused, "I don't understand it" at all.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Frank Winston to John Winston, 4 June 1861, in Nathaniel Winston Taylor Collection, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University; Milton Leverett to Charles Edward Leverett, 29 July 1861, Frances W. Taylor, Catherine T. Matthews, and J. Tracy Power, eds., *Leverett Letters, Correspondence of a South Carolina Family, 1851-1868* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2000), 96.

## CHAPTER 1 - THEIR NORTHS: ANTEBELLUM SOUTHERN TRAVELERS AND SECTIONAL IDENTITY

"The Creator has beautified the face of this Union with sectional features," William L. Yancey declared in 1855. Nullifying geographical complexity and political nuance in the process, the Alabama radical proclaimed that the sectional divergence superseded "all minor subdivisions." There was only "the North and the South," he asserted. For American sectionalism was forged by the design of God and nature, the North made into a "region of frost, ribbed with ice and granite," the South left to bask in the "generous bosom" of the sun. It inevitably followed that the regions' inhabitants should display contrasting characteristics reflective of their settings - the Northern Yankees being a "cool, calculating, enterprising, selfish, and grasping" people, while Southerners were "ardent, brave and magnanimous, more disposed to give than to accumulate." One year later, a Georgia newspaper editor rehashed Yancey's dichotomy in far harsher tones, dismissing Northern society as but a mere conglomerate of "greasy mechanics, filthy operatives, small-fisted farmers, and moon-struck theorists." Such seemed the crystallizing stereotypes of the Yankee North in Southern eyes by the 1850s - a cold,

calculating, and fanatical people, their region useful only for the importation of ice to cool Southern drinks, as one Georgia stated in 1854, with the ice serving as a "fit emblem" for Northern "hearts and manners."<sup>1</sup>

Notions of regional polarization had long festered in American imaginations. Their *Magna Carta* was probably Thomas Jefferson's famous 1785 letter to the Marquis de Chastellux, in which he described Northerners as "cool, sober, laborious . . . chicaning, superstitious and hypocritical," among other things. Yet they were not a peculiarly Southern invention. As sectional tensions were awakened by the political controversies surrounding the War of 1812 and Missouri's push for statehood with slavery, the image of a country split between Yankees and Cavaliers began resonating with increased power for Americans on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line. As early as 1817, for instance, Massachusetts's Ebenezer Kellogg recognized "the fullest specimen of a Carolinian" in a Southern traveler he encountered in New York. He was a man of "genteel manners, good education, and serious sentiment," Kellogg observed, but also "profane and well versed in the fashionable vices" that included swearing, drinking, and bragging openly of his mistress back home. Increasingly attached to the anti-slavery movement by the

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<sup>1</sup> As quoted in Phillips, *Diehard Rebels*, 43-44; Muscogee [GA] *Herald*, as quoted in Kenneth M. Stampp, ed., *The Causes of the Civil War* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1959), 180; Richard D. Arnold to Ellen Arnold, 23 June 1854, in Richard H. Shryock, ed., *Selections from the Letters of Richard D. Arnold, M.D.* (Baltimore: S.N., 1928), 67.

1850s, Northern writers depicted the slaveholding South as mired in economic backwardness and social barbarism. With the heart of the nation's publishing industry at their backs, acid-penned travel writers in their vanguard, and Republicans dominating their statehouses, Northerners played a pivotal role in reifying the sectional divide.<sup>2</sup>

But by the 1850s, however, Southern radicals began pushing the images of sectional polarization toward their logical conclusion. In part, they began depicting the moral failings of Northern society in clear retaliation against the abolitionist barrage. Yankee civilization, they claimed, had spawned a society beset by industrialization, urbanization, and immigration, features whittling away the region's social cohesion and moral fiber, unleashing an onslaught of poverty, hunger, and crime. The image provided a bleak contrast to the bucolic South of paternalist imagination, with its agrarian plantations, herrenvolk democracy, and humane system of racial hierarchy (a mythical image that attracted many beleaguered

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<sup>2</sup> Diary Entry of 19 November 1817, in Ebenezer Kellogg Diary, Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Georgia Libraries, hereafter cited as HAR; While Southerners are often seen as the main instigators of the sectional conflict, several historians have emphasized the role played by Northerners in both romanticizing and ostracizing the South as a unique and distinctive region. See Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2000); Joseph Conforti, *Imagining New England: Explorations of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially pages 9-33. On the role played by literary figures in creating the North-South dichotomy, see William R. Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: G. Braziller, 1961); Jennifer Rae Greeson, *Our South: Geographic Fantasy and the Rise of National Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

Northerners as well). Like rotten weeds sprouting forth from a poisoned soil, the North was producing all kinds of strange reform movements, everything from women's rights, to egalitarian communes, to abolitionism. Worse still, Northerners desired to imperialize the South with their misguided schemes through the aggressively anti-Southern Republican Party. As Virginia's George Fitzhugh quipped in his 1854 book, subtitled "*The Failure of Free Society*," Yankee reformers and abolitionists sought to "starve our laborers, multiply crime, riots and pauperism, in order . . . to try the experiment of Mormonism, Socialism, or Communism" in the South. It made perfect sense for Southerners to sever their ties with the Yankees, the secessionists would claim in 1860 and 1861, for the region harbored an alien culture producing an increasingly hostile populace.<sup>3</sup>

Yet for all their bombast, it still remains unclear whether most antebellum Southerners embraced the regional stereotypes crafted by their polemicists and political leaders. Unsurprisingly, few white Southerners pontificated on sectional differences in their diaries or private letters. Thus, probably the best barometer for assessing (at least elite) opinion on sectional distinctiveness comes from Southern travel accounts, occasions which forced individuals to face the realities of

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<sup>3</sup> As quoted in Cobb, *Away Down South*, 10; William Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South; Or, the Failure of Free Society* (New York: B. Franklin, 1965), 65.



Northern society clashing with their preconceptions. Thousands of white Southerners traveled North during the antebellum era - for business pursuits, to attend the country's most prestigious universities, for health and recreation, or simply to experience cities like Philadelphia, Boston, and New York. While exact numbers remain uncertain, Northern journalist Thomas Kettell estimated in 1860 that 50,000 Southerners annually made the Northern trek (the corresponding subset of Northerners who journeyed South was significantly smaller). Fortunately for historians, many of these Southern travelers went to some length in describing their journeys, leaving behind firsthand reflections on sectional identity difficult to find elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

Did travel generally confirm a sense of sectional alienation and hostility? Most historians have certainly thought so, led by John Hope Franklin who argued that Southern travelers even deserved "blame" for contributing to the overall climate of sectional rancor. But that tells only part of the story - usually the one coming from public figures seeking to mold Southern opinion. If we see popular culture more as a battlefield of individual voices, in this case a fracas fought between those seeking to establish an "official" Southern vision

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Pretence Kettell, *Southern Travel and Northern Profits* (New York: G.W. & J.A. Wood, 1860). Kettel was a Northern Democrat who worried of the financial cost of disunion. Thus his estimates may have erred on the side of aggrandizement. Georgian Joseph A. Turner estimated in 1857 that 200,000 Southerners traveled North each year, 100,000 to New York City alone. Turner, *The Cotton Planter's Manual* (New York: C.M. Saxton and Co., 1857); On the costs of antebellum travel, see Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*, 26.

of the North (i.e. the Southern polemicists) and those seeking their own personal goals and interests with the region (i.e. the average Southern traveler), a more nuanced story emerges that shows a range of attitudes and opinions. Aided by dramatic events like John Brown's raid and the election of Abraham Lincoln, those individuals seeking to demonize Northern society eventually won the battle by 1861, and their victory helped catapult the South off the secessionist cliff. But for most of the antebellum era, Southern travelers depicted myriad Northern landscapes molded to suit their individual expectations, goals, and desires, rather than merely repeating the mantras of polemical creation. In particular, they neglected to replicate the supposed failings and foreignness of Northern society evident in terms of race, class, and gender, topics much lambasted by both the pro-slavery ideologues and the Southern press. Even a relatively small sampling of private travelogues suggests that Southerners were not nearly as alienated from Northern society as the rhetoric of leaders like Yancey would have us believe.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, John Hope Franklin, *Southern Odyssey: Travelers in the Antebellum North* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976); Michael O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order: Intellectual Life and the American South, 1810-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), especially pages 27-51. Both Franklin and O'Brien argued that antebellum travel produced greater hostility than understanding between Northerners and Southerners. Jonathan D. Wells argued that many "middle-class" Southern travelers came away with a more ambivalent impression of Northern society, criticizing aspects like Northern urban squalor but praising features like the region's public education system. Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*, 28; Daniel Kilbride has emphasized the creation of a nascent American aristocratic class in the city of Philadelphia among wealthy

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Southerners crossed the Mason-Dixon line with plenty of sectional preconceptions in tow. Having been in Boston but a few hours in 1857, Georgia's Shadrach Winkler already believed the city's residents were proving "themselves to be what they really are - the most uncourteous, inhospitable set in the United States." The next day Winkler deemed the Bostonian women the "ugliest set" his eyes had ever seen, and their male counterparts as "fit associates for the Negroes whom they endearingly call Brothers and Sisters." He even proclaimed the city's famed clam chowder was "nasty enough to make a Dog vomit." In a dynamic described by an annoyed Mark Twain observing his fellow American tourists fall over each other in their praise of Palestine (completely unwarranted in Twain's estimate), the great "authors write pictures and frame rhapsodies," and then the "lesser men follow and see with the author's eyes instead of their own." Twain was noting a dynamic post-modern scholars might refer to as "the will to dominate," the desire to reduce a foreign place into a preconceived image. But this dynamic transpired only to a degree - for Southern preconceptions and the willingness to cast those preconceptions aside often varied according to the individual traveler. Hence,

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Northerners and elite Southern visitors that in many ways transcended sectional lines. See Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy: Southern Planters in Antebellum Philadelphia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006).

while Southerners may have journeyed with “their verdicts” on Northern society already pre-determined, as Twain suggested, those judgments were by no means uniform in content, nor carbon-copies of the regional myth-makers. Southerners brought baggage of many different sorts and brought home some unexpected souvenirs.<sup>6</sup>

That was true despite the fact that Southerners were usually drawn to the same handful of destinations, a tendency that makes it possible to sketch a standard travel itinerary. Agnes Richardson’s travel journal during the summer of 1859 provides a useful example. Leaving her home state of South Carolina in July, Richardson ventured overland through North Carolina and Virginia, stopping first at some of the Old Dominion’s famous health resorts nestled in the Appalachian Mountains. Bypassing Washington D.C. for the moment, she arrived in Baltimore by the beginning of September; from there she took a steamboat to New York City (where she attended a sermon delivered by South Carolina’s own James H. Thornwell), another steamer up the Hudson River, passing through Albany, Troy, and Saratoga, before eventually arriving at Niagara Falls. Richardson and her party then crossed into Canada for a little

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<sup>6</sup> Diary Entry of 31 January 1857, 1 February 1857, and 7 February 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler Jr. Diary, Georgia Historical Society, hereafter cited as GHS; Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (Seven Treasures Publications, 2009), 218. On the difference between the “will to understand for purposes of coexistence and humanistic enlargement of horizons,” and “the will to dominate for the purposes of control and external dominion,” see Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), xix.

over a week in late September, cruising across the St. Lawrence River and spending a couple of days in Montreal. Back in the United States, she finished her tour at breakneck pace, hitting Lowell, Boston, Cambridge, and Springfield in Massachusetts, New York City once more, then Philadelphia and Washington D.C. before departing for home on the sixth of October.<sup>7</sup>

With overlapping itineraries, a handful of common criticisms unsurprisingly echoed across Southern travel accounts. Perhaps most consistently, Southerners decried the chaotic bustle of the big Northern cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. However unfairly, the great urban hubs of the Northeast were seen as somehow epitomizing Yankee life, shrouding their populace in a haze of anonymity and blurring the hierarchical barriers of race, class, and gender. Mississippi's Henry Craft described a motley but lonely crowd passing through Philadelphia's Chestnut Street in 1848, gazing for hours at the circulation of "men, women, & children, black & white, the rich and gay & flaunting & proud & vain - the poor & miserable . . . and every other class & quality, occupation, degree & phase of humanity." Richmond merchant Mann Valentine compared the pedestrians of New York City to "a thousand ants moving to & fro," but never stopping "to exchange a passing word . . . or

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<sup>7</sup> Travel Journal of Agnes McDowell Richardson, in John Smythe Richardson Papers, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, hereafter cited as SCL.

make the usual inquiry of their friends." Valentine had seen horses in the streets of Richmond greet each other with greater cordiality, he wrote, yet "N. York people are beasts of burthen [sic] without courtesy, animals destitute of all the beautiful instincts of Eden."<sup>8</sup>

But this was not the only interpretation of Northern city life. No great admirer of the Yankees by any means, Georgia's Richard Arnold was bedazzled by the bright lights of Broadway when visiting New York City for the first time in 1860. "Never was my eyesight greeted with a more striking scene than that presented by the streets of N. York," he wrote, "almost every store and restaurant and all the places of public amusement had private lights . . . the effect was almost fairy like." Tired of the local gossip-mongers in her home town of Savannah, Mary Telfair actually found the relative anonymity of Northern cities a liberating breath of fresh air. As she wrote a Northern friend in 1840, the "freedom from restraint, the consciousness of our actions not being commented on and our remarks repeated, gives a sort of independence to our movements" lacking back home. And despite their griping, Southerners routinely flocked to the cultural amenities provided by Northern cities - the

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<sup>8</sup> Diary Entry of 28 April 1848, in Henry Craft Diary, Stephen W. Berry II, ed., *Princes of Cotton: Sour Diaries of Young Men in the South, 1848-1860* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 436; As quoted in Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), 90.

theatres, museums, and marketplaces - often noting how their Southern counterparts paled in comparison.<sup>9</sup>

While public critics never tired of highlighting the specter of urban poverty and crime, Southern travelers usually had to purposely seek out neighborhoods like New York City's notorious Five Points to find real-life resemblances to polemical lore. Tucked away in their elite boarding houses or universities, most Southern travelers either failed to notice or neglected to comment on the urban squalor that supposedly plagued Northern society. The Northern tour seemed to create the overly-sanitized impression reminiscent of modern interstates described by Michael Harrington, in which the poverty of the "other America" stayed secluded from the wayfarer's view. Only an eccentric handful (then and now) specifically sought out destitute neighborhoods, eccentrics like Harvard law student Shadrach Winkler in 1857. For the aggrieved Georgian, his "slumming" forays to Boston's North Street, the "twin brother of Old Five Points in New York," provided a sense of masculine adventure as he journeyed into the Yankee heart of darkness "without any weapons save those which Nature had given me." And like an armchair anthropologist from the metropole gazing upon colonial savagery, they reinforced his deeply held

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<sup>9</sup> Richard D. Arnold to E.N. Cosens, 25 September 1860, in Shyrock, *Selections from the Letters of Richard D. Arnold*, 98; Mary Telfair to Mary Few, 26 January 1840, in Betty Wood, ed., *Mary Telfair to Mary Few: Selected Letters, 1820-1844* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007), 198.

anti-Northern biases. True to form, the neighborhood showcased "human nature in its lowest . . . state," with children from ages three to twelve smoking and dipping tobacco, their constant stream of cursing being "sufficiently strong to make the basest" observer cringe in horror. Another young Harvard student, Tennessee's Randal McGavock, journeyed to New York City's infamous Bowery in 1848 with similar purposes in mind. There he observed "some of the roughest specimens of nature in the shape of humans" imaginable, with fights breaking out among the rabble just "about every three minutes."<sup>10</sup>

There was more than mere North-bashing at work here, however, for both Winkler and McGavock seemed to actually relish the forbidden freedom afforded by escaping the boundaries of polite society. As historian George Chauncey explained in analyzing the slumming adventures of middle class men into neighborhoods like the Bowery a few decades later, these expeditions provided a chance to explore bourgeois fantasies (often sexual) in "a subordinate social world." Certainly, Winkler and McGavock stole illicit delight in gazing at the female working class with their alternative standards of appearance and conduct. Attending a low-brow production at Boston's National Theatre, Winkler was both disgusted and

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<sup>10</sup> Diary Entry of 29 March 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler Jr. Diary, GHS; Diary Entry of 1 August 1848, in Herschel Gower and Jack Allen, eds., *Pen and Sword: The Life and Journals of Randal W. McGavock* (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1959), 140.



titillated by the sight of two "beautiful actresses" on stage who were but "fourteen and seventeen years of age," and yet smoked cigars and cursed with discomfoting ease. And in a moment of extreme self-disclosure, McGavock even wrote of journeying to the interior of Boston to "call a woman," a clear reference to prostitution. These journeys, then, were not dissimilar to the sexual power dynamics of male slaveholders exploiting the subordinate world of the slave quarters back home.<sup>11</sup>

But very few Southerners embarked on slumming adventures (or at least recorded their exploits in diaries and letters), and most men and women made no mention of urban poverty at all. More typical was the description of North Carolina's Lucy Wooster, temporarily residing in Philadelphia while her husband received medical treatment for his eyesight in 1844. Writing to a relative back home in Wilmington, Wooster lauded the neighborhood of her boardinghouse for its orderliness and beauty. Her fellow boarders were mostly young men of genteel manners and high class standing, young doctors or medical students from Philadelphia's renowned medical schools (which drew their share of Southerners). And the local children were

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<sup>11</sup>Diary Entries of 29 March 1857, and 14 March 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler Jr. Diary, GHS; Diary Entry of 8 December 1848, in Gower and Allen, *Pen and Sword*, 165. George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Book, 1994), 42. Chancey was discussing how bourgeois "slummers" were transgressing the boundaries of heterosexuality later in the nineteenth century, yet the general class dimensions he described hold true for Winkler and McGavock.

both healthy and happy; in fact they looked "so fain and clean" when compared to their counterparts back in North Carolina. "In the evening when all the children are out rolling their hoops and jumping the rope," she wrote whimsically, "the street looks absolutely beautiful."<sup>12</sup>

A similar dynamic was at play when Southerners made the conscious decision to seek out abolitionist speakers. Representing a miniscule percentage of the Northern population even in relative strongholds like Massachusetts, the anti-slavery firebrands seemed to attract the same personalities (fiery young men) as the urban slums. Again, Winkler provides a solid, albeit extreme example, as he seemed to receive perverse joy from scouring the streets of Boston for evidence of its reputed extremism. He attended an anti-slavery lecture from William Lloyd Garrison in 1858, for example, and "just as one might have expected" the episode was choked-full of anti-Southern fanaticism. Winkler also happily reported that Garrison's oratorical prowess had been greatly exaggerated by his sycophantic followers, and that half the audience bolted before he finished his anti-slavery harangue. In February, after attending a staged production of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Dred*, he even toured an anti-slavery wax museum that depicted

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<sup>12</sup> Lucy Wright Wooster to Anne Empie Wooster, 16 April 1844, in Wooster Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, hereafter cited as SHC.

scenes from Southern slavery. The most inflammatory exhibit featured a slave woman stripped to the waist and cradling her infant child; the pair being flogged by a slave driver while their vile-looking master grinned in the background. For a proto-Southern nationalist like Winkler, these examples of abolitionist extremism helped reify the image of a hostile, alien Northern "other" from which Winkler could sharpen his own sense of Southern identity. He was purposely building a self-made straw-man, a "negative reference point" in scholarly terms, to satisfy his own understanding of the North-South binary. This was simply not the mission of most his fellow travelers.<sup>13</sup>

Wayfaring Southerners seemed more interested in dodging the abolitionists altogether, a feat that could be accomplished with relative ease. The exception proving the rule, Anna King of St. Simons, Georgia was one of the few Southern travelers who unwillingly found herself cornered and accosted by a Northerner hostile to slavery. Stopping in New Haven, Connecticut in 1852, King was duped into spending an evening with a local abolitionist minister named George Perkins. Over dinner, Perkins unexpectedly launched into a virtual inquisition against King, demanding to know the living conditions and religious state of her slaves back home in Georgia. But after escaping

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<sup>13</sup> Diary Entry of 17 March 1848, in Gower and Allen, *Pen and Sword*, 114; Diary Entries of 3 May 1857, and 14 February 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler, Jr. *Diary*, GHS; See Grant, *North Over South*, 35.

his clutches, King realized that the New Haven populace shared neither Perkins's anti-slavery opinions nor his imperious manner. He was "*perfectly mad* on the subject" of slavery, an apologetic local citizen assured her afterwards, and throughout his ministerial career had proven himself a "perfect tyrant over the people of his church - and is *loved* by no one." King even enjoyed a pleasant carriage ride with Samuel Perkins, the brother of the offending abolitionist, who possessed all his sibling's "*fine qualities . . . without any of his peculiarities.*" Anna King's unpleasant incident was extremely rare, for the travelogues of many Southerners make no mention of abolitionist encounters.<sup>14</sup>

Like King, other Southerners had experiences that actually highlighted anti-slavery's lack of popular appeal above the Mason-Dixon line. In a dramatic example, South Carolina's Frederick Leverett (yet another Harvard student) happened to be in Boston in 1851 and witnessed firsthand the controversy surrounding the capture of fugitive slave Thomas Sims. The local anti-slavery protest to the Sims case flashed across Southern headlines, infuriating many a Dixie editor who deemed the apparent Northern antipathy to the Fugitive Slave Act a vile repudiation of the Compromise of 1850. But Leverett was able to

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<sup>14</sup> Anna Matilda Page King to Hannah Matilda King, 25 August 1852, in Melanie Pavich-Lindsay, ed., *Anna: The Letters of a St. Simons Plantation Mistress, 1817-1859* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002), 190-192.

report home that authorities had successfully captured the Georgian runaway, that he would be returned to his Southern master, and that the popular "opinion of the abolitionists [in] Massachusetts has been eternally disgraced." Others were pleasantly surprised by how Northern speakers proved far less fanatical than their reputations suggested. Attending a church service conducted by noted reformer Henry Ward Beecher while staying in New York City in 1857, South Carolina's Thaddeus Boinest reported in his diary a sermon completely clean of anti-slavery content. Beecher's benign topic, he reported with Whiggish approval, was on the deleterious impact of "publick amusement."<sup>15</sup>

The living conditions of African Americans in the North also failed to garner much attention among non-polemical travelers. The image of destitute blacks struggling in Northern freedom emerged into one of the favorite tropes of the pro-slavery arsenal, confirming black helplessness, Yankee savagery, and abolitionist hypocrisy in one fell-swoop. In his fictional account, *Major Jones Sketches of Travel*, Southern humorist William Thompson depicted Philadelphia's African American population as "pore, miserable, sickly-lookin creators," covered in "rags and dirt, livin in houses and cellars without hardly

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<sup>15</sup> Diary Entry of 17 March 1848, in Gower and Allen, *Pen and Sword*, 114; Frederick Leverett to Milton Leverett, 12 April 1851, in Taylor, et al, *Leverett Letters*, 6; Diary Entry of 24 May 1857, in Thaddeus Street Boinest Diary, SCL.

any furniture" and no windows. Even the meanest slave masters in the South provided better living conditions for their slaves, Major Jones reported. A future opponent of secession but no friend of Yankee society, East Tennessee's William Brownlow painted a similar portrait of Philadelphia's African Americans in an editorial appearing in his Knoxville-based newspaper. Visiting the city in 1856, Brownlow denounced the sight of white abolitionists worshipping "in churches costing ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS, while in the very shadows of their steeples, the . . . free negroes are reduced to the lowest degree of poverty." "Naked and starving," the city's free blacks were reportedly forced to beg and steal for their very survival.<sup>16</sup>

With African Americans comprising such a small sliver of the overall Northern population (less than 5% in the cities of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston) Southern travelers were not likely to report on the living conditions of Northern blacks. In fact, South Carolina's Jane North was enviously struck by the absence of a sizable black presence in the environs surrounding Philadelphia. "There were no idle dirty negroes to cumber the land, and pain the eyes," she reported in 1852, just "fertile, abundant, & well cultivated" farms and villages populated by diligent white citizens. And fellow South Carolinian Andrew

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<sup>16</sup> William Tappan Thompson, *Major Jones Sketches of Travel in His Tour from Georgia to Canada* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1971), 103-104; Knoxville [TN] *Whig*, 1 March 1856.

Moore gleaned a similar impression from his stay at New York City's plush Fifth Avenue Hotel. "It is seldom that I see a negro here," he explained to his mother in 1860, for "all the servants are white." Moore found the situation of having non-black attendees awkward at first, but he was soon ordering men "as white as myself to black my boots with perfect unconcern." In fact, Moore had grown to prefer white servants, he explained, for they proved "quite as obedient; much quicker, and more trusty" than their African American counterparts. Overall, it was certainly rare for a traveling Southerner to venture into African American enclaves and see the living conditions of free blacks firsthand.<sup>17</sup>

Gender issues, on other hand, were far more visible to the Southern eye. In the public realm, Southern critics took delight lambasting the North's nascent women's rights movement as the work of foppish men and de-sexed women, yet another supposed sign of the region's cultural degradation. In 1851, for instance, a Georgia newspaper printed a fanciful anecdote predicting the future gender relations of Massachusetts by the end of the decade. It featured a white couple whose midnight slumber was interrupted when a frantic caller came to their

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<sup>17</sup> Diary Entries of 17 August 1852, and 25 August 1852, in Jane Carolina North Journal, in Michael O'Brien, *An Evening when Alone: Four Journals of Single Women in the South, 1827-1867* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), 193, 201; Andrew Charles More to Nancy Montgomery Moore, 13 June 1860, in Tom Moore Craig, ed., *Upcountry South Carolina Goes to War: Letters of Anderson, Brockman, and Moore Families, 1853-1865* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2009), 36.

doorstep. After the husband refused to investigate the clamor (thereby shirking his masculine duty as protector of the household) the wife, a professional physician, was told of a local African American patient who desperately needed her attention. Leaving her husband and infant child behind, she headed for the man's residence at once. She stayed by her patient's bedside for the entire night delivering a thorough physical examination that very much violated racial mores North and South, explaining that she cared not how "her husband and baby make out, for he has as much right to take care of it as I have." When the doctor finally returned home in the early morning hours, she discovered her husband cradling their baby in his arms and wearing her "petticoat, frock, and apron" to symbolize his obvious emasculation. Upon being asked about his attire, the husband explained that he desired "to learn the art of being nurse, even wet nurse if possible." Lacking in subtlety, the outlandish piece painted a portrait of Northern gender relations that stood patriarchal and racial standards squarely on their heads.<sup>18</sup>

Certainly nothing as dramatic as gender reversal appeared in private travelogues, yet because they were more far more visible than the abolitionists and the urban slums, the apparent peculiarities of Northern men and women sometimes did

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<sup>18</sup> *Columbus* [GA] Enquirer, 15 April 1851.



invite commentary by Southerners. Many echoed the clichéd lament of Georgia's Charles C. Jones Jr. in 1852, who found Northern women unpleasantly frigid in their social intercourse. "You cannot blame them," he explained to his mother from Princeton, for the Northern climate was "so cold that the external air has the tendency to chill the blood, which nature intended to flow fully and freely through the veins." And Northern men, lacking the bravado of their Southern brethren, often appeared bookish and overly urbane. Nearing the extreme, North Carolina's Stephen Ramseur believed his Northern classmates at West Point had been "trained from the cradle to apply their minds to their books" rather than to seek action and adventure, a feature that explained the Yankees' apparent academic superiority but apparent lack of physical vigor. The disproportionately high dismissal rate of Southern cadets was actually a badge of masculine honor in Ramseur's eyes, for "as free and independent . . . Sons of the South" they refused to cower to authorities like the docile Yankees. But while such banalities may have lent support to the false confidence of the summer of 1861, in which Southern men deemed themselves ten times superior to their Yankee antagonists, these clichés came nowhere near the extremism of the polemicists.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Charles C. Jones, Jr. to Mary Jones, 8 January 1852, in Robert Mason Myers, ed., *A Georgian at Princeton* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 297-298; Stephen Dodson Ramseur to Jacob Abel Ramseur, 2 February

In 1827, Virginia's Elizabeth Ruffin produced one of the few travel accounts almost overtly dedicated to analyzing Northern womanhood, providing a perspective as unique and singular as Winkler's obsession with Boston's fanatical underbelly. By the time of her Northern tour in 1827, the brilliant Ruffin had grown to deeply resent the narrow confines of Southern womanhood. She particularly detested how her gender was deemed lacking in the "mental capacities" necessary for serious intellectual pursuits, making men alone capable to seek "*fame, honor . . . and perpetual profit.*" The discrepancy was especially frustrating since Ruffin could see the social acclaim being bestowed upon her promising half-brother Edmund (technically, her legal guardian), the future agricultural and political writer who would someday live and die in his quest to secure a Southern Confederacy. "Oh! the disadvantage we labor under in not possessing the agreeable independence with men," she thundered, while "all the superiority, authority and freedom in all things should by partial nature all be thrown in their scale."<sup>20</sup>

The embodiment of a Southern traveler imposing her own agenda on Northern society, Ruffin carried her grievances across

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1856, and Stephen Dodson Ramseur to David Schenck, 27 October 1855, in, in George G. Kundhal, ed., *The Bravest of the Brave: The Correspondence of Stephen Dodson Ramseur* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 34, 31.

<sup>20</sup> Diary Entries of 16 February 1827, 10 February 1827, and 11 February 1827, in Elizabeth Ruffin Journal, in O'Brien, *An Evening when Alone*, 64, 60, 61. Michael O'Brien provides a brief but informative biographical sketch of Ruffin and an analysis of her journal in the introduction *An Evening when Alone*.

the Mason-Dixon line in 1827. She was fascinated by the apparent autonomy enjoyed by Philadelphia's female populace. At one of the city's largest marketplaces, Ruffin observed Yankee women conducting the entire business process from start to finish, personally hand-crafting their merchandise and then selling the wares to an endless stream of customers. She had never before seen "such indefatigable creatures," estimating that Philadelphia's female population was responsible for two-thirds of the city's entire commerce. And gender roles seemed to be far different from those found in Virginia. When one entered the city's stores "women are only to be seen," she reported, for females managed "all matter . . . exclusively." As for the men, "they are things of naught, negative, unconcerned, insignificant, and seem to have no part or lot in the matter." Ruffin had apparently found a desired counterpoint to Virginia's restrictive patriarchy in the streets and shops of Philadelphia (not the goal of the polemicists by any means). But, just as her extreme antipathy to Southern patriarchy proved rare for her time and place, so too was Ruffin's interest in analyzing the status of Northern women.<sup>21</sup>

Two Northern stereotypes did seem to regularly cross the gaze of Southern travelers - European immigrants and the heavy-handed Yankee "sharpers." Large groups of Irish and German

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<sup>21</sup> Diary Entries of 31 July 1827, 4 August 1827, in *Ibid*, 75, 78.

migrants often appeared at transportation sites like ports and railroad depots, and they often served Southerners as waiters and personal servants. Unaccustomed to encountering immigrants back home, Southerners could not resist but compare their plight to that of Southern slaves. From New York City, Georgia's Mary Jones described the "scores of immigrants" freshly arrived "from the *vaterland*" in 1851. The women were bare-headed with the exception of thick-woolen shawls worn "without any reference to taste," their red jackets and blue petticoats created "a grotesque and fanciful look," and the families carried boxes and worn down barrels "as would be found in our Negro houses of the most ordinary kind." Like South Carolina's Grace Elmore, many Southerners (Andrew Moore an exception) detested how white servants performed the menial tasks normally reserved for black chattels in the South. This was the closest most Southerners ever came to encountering the infamous white "wage-slaves" of polemical legend. Indeed, Elmore believed the degradation of Palmetto slaves paled in comparison to the "servility" imposed on Northern white servants, even describing one exhausted Irish maid who actually fell asleep while in the midst of cleaning her hotel chambers.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Mary Jones to Rev. Charles C. Jones, 17 July 1851, and Charles C. Jones Jr., to Rev. Charles C. Jones, 19 July 1851, in Myers, *A Georgia at Princeton*, 205, 207; Diary Entry of 19 November 1860, in Grace Brown Elmore Diary, SCL.

While the dirty and disheveled immigrant came to epitomize the foreignness of Northern society by the 1850s, the notorious Yankee peddler had long represented the region's penchant for materialistic swindle. Even a Massachusetts traveler conceded that Northern merchants, a common sight in Southern communities during the antebellum years, gravely damaged the "honor of the Yankee character" after watching some operate in coastal Georgia. It was no surprise, then, that Southerners felt beleaguered by sharper machinations when confronted by them on their home turf. "I never enter a store unless I cannot help it," explained an exasperated Anna King writing from New England in 1852, for the "Yankee shopkeepers will tell you fifty lies in selling even as many pins."<sup>23</sup>

While such complaints on the part of Southern travelers corresponded with the image of the North as a foreign, materialistic civilization, it is important to note that these were not uniquely *Southern* critiques. Americans from both sections feared and detested many of the novel features of the mid-nineteenth century that were developing most profoundly in the North, with the Yankee sharper standing as a scapegoat symbol for new market capitalism run amuck. Americans looked ambivalently upon the changes wrought by greater connections to

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<sup>23</sup> Diary Entry of 1 January 1818, in Ebenezer Kellogg Diary, HAR; Anna Matilda Page King to Hannah Matilda King, 30 July 1852, 12 September 1852, in Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 175, 194.

the global economy, the "revolutions" in industry, communications, and travel, the acceleration of urbanization and immigration, and the proliferation of a new class structure. The most eloquent of these critics was probably Massachusetts's own Henry David Thoreau, who famously lamented the train whistle disturbing his solitude at Walden Pond and resented how men had "become the tools of their tools." Even Harriet Beecher Stowe blasted the worst features of Yankee materialism in her creation of arch-villain Simon Legree, the transplanted New Englander who became the most sadistic of slavemasters in his quest for soulless profit. The elite-leaning Whig Party, for years popular throughout the country, was largely dedicated to controlling and improving the most distressing features of antebellum society (with a heavy dose of nativism thrown in), championing reforms like temperance, public education, and publicly-funded internal improvement projects. To a certain extent, then, these critical Southerners were speaking as elite Americans, weary of American problems. We "as a *nation* are too devoted to money making," wrote the well-traveled and Whig-leaning Mary Telfair as she reflected on the recent economic Panic of 1837, and all Americans greatly "needed a check to that all absorbing spirit of the times."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Barnes and Noble Classics, 2003), 33; Mary Telfair to Mary Few, 25 April 1837, in Wood, *Mary Telfair to Mary Few*, 169. For an interpretation of the Whig Party pushing reform

Southerners further acknowledged that many of the worst features of Yankee civilization could be found right at home in Southern cities. "Epidemics, riots, crimes, abuses of all sorts" was how Thomas Wharton described his hometown of New Orleans in 1854, a city noted for its deadly lack of sanitation and its pestering conflict between the native and immigrant populations. It was a perfect "Sodom of sin and iniquity," one Georgian native pronounced. But it was not just the Crescent City. Alabama's Thomas Hobbs criticized humble Huntsville, the closest town of respectable size, for subscribing to an "aristocratic" ethos reminiscent of Yankee society. A sizable portion of the town's 2,000 inhabitants considered wealth the sole "criterion of [social] worth," he complained, allowing the lowliest of money-grubbers to "gain admittance among the upper" echelons of society. And as historian Gregg Kimball has shown, the citizens of antebellum Richmond had grown increasingly concerned that their city was being "Yankee-ified" through its growing business connections to the North, the rise of an immigrant population, and the influx of Yankee merchants (including one Luther Libby for whom the notorious Libby prison would be named). Richmond residents even feared the city might

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efforts to forward the interests of the burgeoning bourgeoisie born of the market economy, see Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). For an interpretation that depicts the Whigs as more earnest reformers seeking to improve American society, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). Yet both historians see the Whig Party as a response to the transformations of American society that were being felt in the early to mid-nineteenth century.

eventually become a haven of abolitionist activity. It was cities and their penchant for boorish graft that many Southerners seemed to fear, not Northern society per se.<sup>25</sup>

In fact, the clearest and harshest examples of "othering" that appeared in Southern travelogues came when elites toured unfamiliar areas of the own region. After spending a few days in Milledgeville to promote the work of the Central Medical Society, for instance, Savannah's Richard Arnold concluded that "no two people separated by the barrier of a different language are more radically dissimilar than the low and up country people of" Georgia. Every night the dinner bell launched a veritable cavalcade where everyone devoured their meals "as if he wins a wager depending on eating in a short time," he described disgustedly. Even the state's elected officials defaced their office by sitting inside "with their hats on," and then "lounging about the fires, chewing, spitting, and smoking" the night away. Many Southerners echoed the dismissive tone of a North Carolina traveler who criticized the mountain populace of Southern Appalachia. Traveling through his state's majestic western counties in 1854, Basil Thomasson noted "rusty cabins whose inmates looked as though they knew little of the cleansing

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<sup>25</sup> Diary Entry of 4 October 1854, in Samuel Wilson Jr., ed. *Queen of the South: The Journal of Thomas K. Wharton* (New Orleans: Historic New Orleans Collection, 1999), 48; Maria Bryan to Julia Ann Bryan Cumming, 15 April 1833, in Carol Bleser, ed., *Tokens of Affection: The Letters of a Planter's Daughter in the Old South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 151; Diary Entry of 28 April 1847, in Faye Acton Axford, ed., *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1976), 66; See Kimball, *American City, Southern Place*.



effects of cold water," their detachment from larger society resulting in general degradation and ignorance. And, one of the lowcountry elites, Jane North of South Carolina wrote disdainfully of northern Virginia when she traveled across the state before embarking upon a Northern tour in 1852. She described the preacher of Richmond's esteemed St. Paul's Church as "ridiculous in style" and "no better than some of our back country preachers," while nearby Charlottesville appeared even worse when several "desperate specimens" descended on the village for court week, filling the town with "all sorts of queer, hard visage people." At dinner, she was shocked to receive ice cream, which she deemed "a gleam of civilization in the midst of barbarism." North was never so critical in describing the Northern populations she would encounter thereafter.<sup>26</sup>

And when cast in a more progressive light, not all Southerners instantly shrieked at the sight of 'Yankee values," even into the 1850s. In 1858, adopted Alabamian Josiah Gorgas made an intriguing criticism of Benjamin Franklin's famous autobiography, reevaluating a book he had once cherished during

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<sup>26</sup> Richard D. Arnold to Mrs. Arnold, 6 December 1837, in *Selections from the Letters of Richard D. Arnold*, 16; Diary Entry of 27 February 1854, in Paul D. Escott, ed., *North Carolina Yeoman, The Diary of Basil Armstrong Thomasson, 1853-1862* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1993), 42; Diary Entries of 3 August 1851, and 4 August 1851, in Jane Caroline North Journal, in O'Brien, *An Evening When Alone*, 156, 158. David Hsuing has shown how Southern travelers were integral in the creation of early Appalachian stereotypes. See Hsuing, *Two Worlds in the Tennessee Mountains: Exploring the Origins of Appalachian Stereotypes* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1997); For a work that shows how Appalachian areas were highly connected to the larger economic, social, and cultural trends of the antebellum South, see Inscoe, *Mountain Masters*.

his Boston boyhood. Re-reading the work twenty-five years later, however, the Southern man decided there was littered throughout Franklin's "life too much of the sense of worldly success," for "nearly all his maxims" and "many of his precepts" were deeply tinctured with an acquisitive creed. Franklin's character was not "not brave, open, [or] generous," Gorgas wrote in Yancey-like phraseology, but overly "correct, disciplined, self-restrained." Yet in a striking parallel, Basil Thomasson (ten years Gorgas's junior) had the opposite reaction after reading Franklin's autobiography for the first time in 1860. "I think every young person in the world should read that book," he wrote enthusiastically in his diary, only wishing he had encountered the arch-Yankee's wisdom during his formative years. "Procure a copy without delay and read it carefully," he instructed some would-be reader, "then be industrious, honest, and frugal all the days of life."<sup>27</sup>

Since many Southern travelers hailed from the planter class, Southern patricians usually forged natural connections with their fellow Northern elites. As historian Daniel Kilbride has shown, elite Americans from both sections embraced the ethos of "practical republicanism" during the antebellum years, celebrating the creation of institutions such as prisons,

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<sup>27</sup> Diary Entry of 15 March 1858, in Sarah W. Wiggins, ed., *The Journals of Josiah Gorgas, 1857-1878* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995); Diary Entry of 28 October 1860, in Escott, *North Carolina Yeoman*, 290. For a similar analysis of Gorgas's take on Ben Franklin's autobiography, see Berry, *All that Makes a Man*, 34-35.

workhouses, and asylums intended both to uplift and control the "urban rabble" wrought from modern society. Southern travelers of all political leanings flocked to these sites with amazing regularity. For example, South Carolina's Thaddeus Boinest visited New York City's hodgepodge of reform institutions situated on Randall's Island in 1857, which included an orphanage for "children of inebrates," a workhouse, an almshouse, a penitentiary, and a "lunatic asylum." Sometimes by actually paying admission, visitors were allowed to tour these reform institutions and even converse with their administrators, blurring the lines between reform institution and tourist spectacle. In 1846 Thomas Hobbs paid to explore the Moyamensing prison in Philadelphia, where he praised its fully-stocked library and a work-program that instructed inmates how to manufacture toys. Shadrach Winkler was "astonished" by a Boston jail for its "cleanliness, the beauty of its arrangements & the fine looking prisoners," some looking "as fine as almost any gentlemen" on a respectable street. True, these institutions highlighted examples of Northern failure when viewed in a certain light (serving criminals, orphans, and the poor), but Southern reactions to these benevolent projects proved overwhelmingly positive.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy*, 131. Kilbride also makes the point that elite antebellum Americans from both sections held large cities in suspicion, considering them havens of crime, poverty, and ill morals. For more on the

Even the progressive nature of Northern industry stirred Southern imaginations at times. In 1827 Virginia's Elizabeth Ruffin stood in awe of the "wonderful" textile factory she visited near Glens Falls, New York, witnessing Southern cotton "converted into cloth by magic almost." Like many of her fellow travelers in the three decades to come, Ruffin made no mention of the infamous "wage slaves" that were allegedly an inevitable component of the industrial system. Nor did Northern factories seem inherently inclined to ravage the landscape with pollution or squalor. Many Southerners flocked in particular to Lowell, Massachusetts because of its relative proximity to Boston, the fame of its regimented labor system, and its massive industrial output (in 1860 the city operated more spindles than all the future states of the Confederacy combined). Impressed by its mighty textile looms and the disciplined labor, Caroline North wished her fellow South Carolinians would follow in Massachusetts's economic footsteps. While silent on the all-female workforce, North lauded the community's efforts to maintain an orderly and attractive image, especially Lowell's beautification efforts that included the creation of parks and a central promenade. It all proved a far cry from a scene of

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connections forged between elite Americans of the "leisure class" during the antebellum era transcending sectional lines, see Thomas A. Chambers, *Drinking the Waters: Creating an American Leisure Class at the Nineteenth Century Mineral Springs* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2002); Diary Entry of 28 May 1857, in Thaddeus Street Boinest Papers, SCL; Diary Entries of 19 March 1846, and 28 March 1846, in Axford, *Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*, 41, 42; Diary Entry of 31 August 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler Jr. Diary, GHS.

demonic factories, rancid rivers and skies, and broken-down mudsills "toiling as so many slaves," as one pro-slavery zealot claimed.<sup>29</sup>

Between their sojourns in the large cities, Southerners inevitably passed through miles of farmsteads and small towns that dominated the Northern landscape, sites that belied the image of a predominantly-urbanized region. From the summit of Prospect Rock near Allentown, Pennsylvania, Anna King beheld an agrarian landscape that bordered on the bucolic, with no traces of cities or factories marring her panorama. "Viewing the beautiful scenery - we could see for miles around," she wrote, with "every spot in perfect cultivation . . . here & there dotted with the tops of the highest trees." The Northern hamlets nestled far away from the great metropolitan centers received almost universal praise from travelling Southerners as well, often deeming them superior to their Southern counterparts. Though its placid social life bored him, even the uncharitable Shadrach Winkler sang the praises of Brighton, Massachusetts in 1857, explaining how "like all northern villages" it was "tastefully laid out and beautified by extremely neat wooden buildings." In 1848 Mississippi's Henry Craft also revealed his preference for Northern villages after

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<sup>29</sup> Diary Entry of 20 August 1827, in Elizabeth Ruffin Journal, O'Brien, *An Evening when Alone*, 87; Diary Entry of 25 September 1852, in Jane Caroline North Journal, O'Brien, *An Evening when Alone*, 218-219; Athens [GA] *Banner*, 9 October 1840. Industrial figures come from Stephen J. Goldfarb, "A Note on Limits to the Growth of the Cotton-Textile Industry in the Old South," *Journal of Southern History* 48 (1982), 545.

returning home to Holly Springs after completing his studies at Princeton University. "The town looked old and decayed and scattered and uncomfortable after coming from the north," Craft discovered, before assuring himself the negative impression would wear away with time.<sup>30</sup>

Ultimately, for individuals predisposed to lament their experiences and discover a hostile civilization above the Mason-Dixon, a Northern tour sharpened their Southern identity. Attending Princeton University (a school noted for being Southern-friendly) during the tumultuous presidential election of 1856, Virginia's Telfair Hodgson seemed to make the conscious decision to reject Northern authors during the month of August. Reading William Grayson's "The Hireling and the Slave," for instance, the defensive Southerner praised the South Carolinian's poetics but more importantly the "good descriptions of the negroes" contained therein, surely a comforting antidote to the anti-Southern rhetoric of Republican campaigners. And the normally reserved Thomas Hobbs may also have released some of his pent-up Southern partisanship after inhaling some laughing gas sold on the streets of Philadelphia in 1846. Hobbs reported losing control of his actions almost immediately under the influence of the ethereal intoxicant. Nevertheless, he

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<sup>30</sup> Diary Entry of 17 August 1852, in Jane Caroline North Journal, *An Evening when Alone*, 193; Diary Entries of 4 April 1857, and 11 August 1857, in Shadrach Nicholas Winkler Jr. Diary, GHS; Diary Entry of 25 June 1848, in Henry Craft Journal, in Berry, *Princes of Cotton*, 451.

recalled "crying out Hurrah for North Alabama! God save North Alabama!" at the top of his lungs. Sickened by the spectacle of white domestic servants toiling in greater servility than Southern slaves, and alienated by the raucous pro-Lincoln Wide Awakes during the lead-up to the 1860 presidential election, Southerners like Grace Elmore spoke of how the "trip North has made me more in love than ever with the South and its ways." But these were Southerners who probably had their verdicts decided long before they enrolled in their Yankee schools or planned their Northern expeditions; their Northern experiences did not themselves seem to greatly impact their image or sentiments toward the region.<sup>31</sup>

Yet, the tour could foster feelings of patriotism and national unity as well, especially since Southern travelers flocked to sites associated with American nationalism. Cities like Philadelphia, New York, Saratoga, and Boston offered a treasure-trove of monuments and landmarks harkening back to the country's Revolutionary heritage, sites that attracted Southern travelers with the magnetic force of a romanticized collective past. Following the Continental Army's historical footsteps across the Massachusetts landscape in 1857, South Carolina's James Ward Hopkins personally stood "under the tree where Gen

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<sup>31</sup>Diary Entry of 19 November 1860, in Grace Brown Elmore Diary, SCL; Diary Entry of 19 August 1856, in Telfair Hodgson Diary, HAR; Diary Entry of 3 February 1846, in Axford, *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*, 35.

Washington first took command of the Army," visited the general's hallowed headquarters, and finished his day with a journey to the Bunker Hill monument. Furthermore, Southern travelers almost always made the requisite stopover in Washington D.C., visiting the National Congress and usually attending the orations of legislators hailing from all across the Union. Indeed, had secession been stifled by the voices of compromise in 1860 and 1861, future historians no doubt would have emphasized how the nationalist sinews fostered by antebellum travel had played a significant role in preserving Unionist sentiment.<sup>32</sup>

Instead Americans like Thomas Hobbs, Stephen Ramseur, and Randal McGavock would fight and die battling over their sectional lines; Shadrach Winkler expired of natural causes before the Civil War broke out. And so the hateful diatribes of men like William Yancey resonate with haunting prescience, leading historians to discern the faint echoes of artillery fire in their cataloging of sectional stereotypes. Certainly by the late 1850s, those stereotypes were growing ever more outlandish. An 1857 editorial from the *Southern Literary Messenger* lampooned the Yankees as "cowardly, thievish, [and] superstitious,"

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<sup>32</sup> Diary of James Ward Hopkins Journal, SCL.



showcasing all the worse "traits of the Negro" and none of the better, while standing "more in need of a master."<sup>33</sup>

Even through the jaundiced eyes of hindsight, however, private Southern travelogues themselves scarcely predict the coming of secession and civil war. It was only with John Brown's raid and subsequent Northern martyrdom in 1859 (his Northern support greatly exaggerated by the Southern press) and Abraham Lincoln's landslide Northern victory in November 1860 (his positions and platform tremendously misconstrued), that Southern popular opinion probably began to even approach the hateful imagery of the North as a land of filthy mechanics and moon-struck fanatics. As Georgia's Mary Telfair had acknowledged back in 1834, one's regional identity largely owed to the accident of birth anyway. "I feel no inclination to become permanently a New Englander," she explained after touring the North in 1834. "But if my lot had been cast in it I believe I should not have been a stranger to *local attachment*." New Jersey's Charles Haven echoed this sentiment in an 1860 letter to his South Carolinian nephew, who had just returned from touring the Garden State. "It would gratify me at this very moment to step in to your Mothers parlor to see the light of her countenance and exchange a glance of affectionate interest with

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<sup>33</sup> As quoted in Berry, *All that Makes a Man*, 23-24. For an literary analysis that argues that antebellum Northerners and Southerners began envisioning each other as distinct races, see Ritchie Devon Watson, Jr., *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

her and my venerated Nephew," he wrote longingly. But he acknowledged that the political intrusions of sectionalism had made this a pleasure "not likely ever to be enjoyed by me." For New Jersey "is my Monumental bound as you know and South Carolina can only be enjoyed by me memoriter & by its agreeable souvenirs sent here occasionally." Southern travel accounts show many things, but an irrepressible conflict based on hatred and hostility was not clearly one of them.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Mary Telfair to Mary Few, 20 August 1834 in Wood, *Mary Telfair to Mary Few*, 146; Charles Chauncey Haven to Milton Leverett, 10 July 1860, in Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 88. Of course, the larger debate over Civil War causation, specifically whether the conflict stemmed from the miscalculations and machinations of political leaders or from a deeply-rooted social and ideological divide that proved nearly irrepressible, has been long and contentious. The leading proponent of the former view, with which this chapter largely sides, is Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Norton, 1978), and updated with *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

## CHAPTER 2 - THE SPILT PERSONALITY OF THE SECEDING SOUTH

One might assume, as Mary Chestnut declared, that secession transpired under a shroud of hatred, that enmity dominated the emotional experience leading the South toward Civil War. Some seceding Southerners did proceed with scorching indignation, leaving a bounty of hateful quips and diatribes for historians searching for pithy evidence of sectional rage. From the halls of Congress in December 1860, Georgia Senator Alfred Iverson proclaimed the existence of "an enmity between the northern and southern people that is deep and enduring," virtually impossible to eradicate. The two sides hated each other so intensely, more "than ever the English people hated the French," he believed, that they had become "enemies" as much as if they were already "hostile states." Like many of her region, South Carolina's Grace Elmore heaped her scorn on the shoulders of Abraham Lincoln as a symbol of sectional hostility. Touring New York City during the presidential campaign of 1860, Elmore deemed the Illinois Republican a "'long-legged,' 'long-jawed,' . . . Orangoutang. " If the "rail-splitter" was indeed elected president by the Northern people, "twill be because he is the representative of [their] enmity to the South" and nothing more,

she asserted in her diary, promising it would prove "the last insult this Yankee nation [shall] seek to put upon the downtrodden South." Based on these snippets, one could soundly agree with, and even broaden, an English reporter's 1860 assessment that the hateful rivalry of Turk versus Greek was mere child's play compared "to the animosity evinced by the 'gentry' of South Carolina for the 'rabble' of the North."<sup>1</sup>

And as Elmore's bellicosity suggested, many of these wrathful Southerners, fully blaming Northern aggression for causing the secession crisis, demanded the destruction of their Yankee foes even before the battles began. Just weeks after Lincoln's election, Georgia's Richard Arnold was already warning a Northern friend that Southerners would fight a "war to the knife, and the knife to the handle" before submitting to Black Republican rule. After Fort Sumter's fall and Lincoln's call for volunteers to crush the Southern rebellion in April, the Savannah doctor thundered that the Northern people were "treacherous, vindictive, malignant, hating us in their heart of hearts, now showing it at last in their threats of rapine, murder, lust, and incendiarism." Southern men must fight to the death to prevent their "women [from being] subjected to the brutal passions of the ruffian hordes of the over populous

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<sup>1</sup>As quoted in Stamp, *The Causes of the Civil War*, 181; Diary Entry of 18 October 1860, in Grace Brown Elmore Diary, SCL; As quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 234.

cities of the North." That same month, Texan Gideon Lincecum was already calling for Confederate authorities to unveil the black flag in their defense against the Yankee marauders. It was a "horrible necessity to slaughter a nation of lunatics," he confessed, but the Northern mission to subdue the South was so "diabolical" in its design, that the blue-coated invader "positively does not deserve quarter in battle." Such passionate sound and fury catalyzed pro-secessionist sentiment, pushed Southern men to mobilize for the Confederate cause, and convinced Southern women to surrender their husbands and sons upon the altar of national independence. It also promised a dark and destructive war ahead.<sup>2</sup>

But in voices more subdued and in statements far less eye-catching, many white Southerners reacted to the secession crisis not with anger, but with a bewildered sense of fear and trepidation. As Mississippi's Mahala Roach wrote the day she learned of Lincoln's election: "I don't know not what we Southerners will do; or where to find safety;" the only true refuge can be found "in the God who rules and governs us all." Augustus Benners struck a similar note in describing how Lincoln's election had evoked a "distressing gloom and sadness that pervades all classes" of society in his section of Alabama.

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Arnold to William C. Lowber, 7 December 1860, and Richard Arnold to Mrs. A.E. Brown, 11 May 1861, in Shryock, *Selections from the Letters of Richard A. Arnold, M.D.*, 98-99, 103; Gideon Lincecum to G. J. Durham, 27 May 1861, and Gideon Lincecum to G. W. Campbell, 29 November 1861, in Lincecum et al, *Gideon Lincecum's Sword*, 119, 139.

Southerners employed the full lexicon of disorientation during the winter of 1860-1861, using terms like "petrified," "paralyzed," and "hypnotized" to describe their emotional state. Anger and hatred undoubtedly held a significant place during the secession crisis. But for many white Southerners there was mostly fear, anxiety, and sadness, sentiments all catalyzed by a profound sense of helplessness as events transpired.<sup>3</sup>

Instead of casting furious blame, Southerners like Roach and Benners saw the sectional crisis transpiring in a more impersonal fashion, their immediate goal becoming the search for solace not vengeance as they were dragged along an uncertain trajectory. Many began to weave their individual plights into narratives of providential fatalism. More explicit than most, Mississippi's Letitia Walton conceded that on the surface, it seemed "foolish for intelligent beings to involve their country in civil war." Yet, she believed that God had destined the conflict to occur, that the entire episode was "fulfilling some of the prophecies of the Bible," and that "the Lord's will must be done." Like many in the upper South, Virginia's Maria Fleet worried that a civil war would bring the bloodshed to her very doorstep either in the guise of Yankee invaders or by fomenting slave insurrection. Fleet wondered how God could "allow so much

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<sup>3</sup> Diary Entry of 14 November 1860, Mahala Roach Diary, in Roach and Eggleston Family Papers, SHC; Diary Entry of 16 January 1861, in Glenn Linden and Virginia Linden, eds., *Disunion, War, Defeat, and Recovery in Alabama: The Journal of Augustus Benners, 1850-1885* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2007), 57-58.

misery to befall this once happy land?" Sifting through the Book of Revelation for answers, specifically seeking "to find out where this commotion was foretold," she was struck by verse 19:6; "'Alleluia, for the Lord omnipotent reigneth' . . . It did more to comfort me that anything else could," she explained to her son.<sup>4</sup>

This chapter argues that these dominant reactions of hatred and fear represent contrasting personality types (or variances on a personality spectrum) that were molded amid the shifting milieu of the antebellum years. The Old South was undergoing a sweeping transformation by the 1850s that had cast collective self-efficacy in limbo, combining modern notions of empowerment and self-determination with antiquated conceptions of helpless fatalism. Mid-nineteenth century Southerners could bellow such activist agendas as scientific agriculture, educational reform, and the trans-continental railroad, and yet whisper of the unyielding realities of drought, disease, and potential slave revolt. It was this polarizing socio-cultural atmosphere, added with the unquantifiable dynamics of individual subjectivity, which helped breed a schizophrenic South in regard to personality difference. Characterized by fiery determination

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<sup>4</sup> Letitia Watkins to Mary Watkins, 24 April 1861, in E. Grey Dimond and Herman Hattaway, eds., *Letters from Forest Place: A Plantation Family's Correspondence, 1846-1881* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 1993), 223; Maria Louisa Wacker Fleet to Alexander Frederick Fleet, 20 May 1860, and 29 April, 1860, in Betsy Fleet and John D. P. Fuller, eds., *Green Mount: A Virginia Plantation Family during the Civil War* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1964), 55-56, 52-53.

and fearful resignation, these respective outlooks on agency and fate naturally informed the emotional reactions of seceding Southerners when the crisis of Union erupted. And they proved highly influential in the kind of struggle Southerners envisioned waging to secure their nationhood.

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Albert Bandura has theorized that self-efficacy is acquired through four main channels, all of which, when historically translated, pertain to the setting of the antebellum South. First, and most profoundly, personality is molded by "mastery accomplishments," the lived experiences of success and failure. Next, self-efficacy is developed through "vicarious experiences," or the impressions gleaned from observing people succeed or fail in various endeavors. Here, Bandura suggested that individuals are most powerfully impacted by observing role models with whom they share similar backgrounds and ability levels, a feature that places a premium on watching parents and older siblings. Third, efficacy expectations are inculcated through "verbal persuasion," the explicit pleadings of parents, teachers, ministers, or peers. And lastly, in a shorter-term phenomenon, a person's self-efficacy is temporarily impacted by fluctuations in one's emotional or physical state. In other words, if a person believes her emotional or physical equilibrium has been disrupted to the point of impairing her



judgment or physical prowess, that person will lose confidence in her overall competency.<sup>5</sup>

In terms of environment, Bandura further argued that certain social-cultural settings are conducive to generating different levels of self-efficacy. To be sure, the process of efficacy construction remains highly subjective, which explains the dramatic variations even among individuals of similar backgrounds, ability levels, and "objective" track records. Indeed, Bandura suggested that people showcasing exceptionally robust efficacy expectations, particularly social activists and reformers, often greatly overestimate their ability to successfully remold society. One thinks of Anne Moody, perhaps, the young African American woman of incredibly high self-confidence who left her hometown of Woodville, Mississippi to join the Civil Rights movement in the 1960s. But, as her classical autobiography made clear, Moody was the exception that proved the rule. Her socio-cultural environment in the Jim Crow South had fostered a collective sense of helplessness among the African Americans living under its shadow, a sentiment that greatly hindered their willingness to demand social reform. As one of Moody's relatives explained, white segregationists "had set things up making it almost impossible for the Negro" to

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<sup>5</sup> Bandura, "Exercise of Personal and Collective Efficacy in Changing Societies," especially pages 3-5.

succeed. If not unconquerable, the impact of environment remained extremely vital.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the Old South's split personality can be correlated with a number of socio-cultural elements and factors. Low-efficacy Southerners were often rural-based agriculturalists (like most Southerners), who seemed relatively settled in their geographic locale and general financial standing. They disproportionately belonged to the generation born before 1830 and thus could vividly remember the struggles of the cotton economy before the unprecedented boom years of the 1850s. These Southerners also proved more colloquial in perspective, less inclined to embrace the agency-inducing print culture pouring in from Northern and European publishers or to travel beyond the boundaries of their region or country. Meanwhile, the high-efficacy Southerners tended to be younger and more urban-based. While numbering more merchants and professionals, their agricultural column included the more aggressive variety of planter (or would-be planter) constantly on the lookout for improving his financial standing. Showcasing a greater cosmopolitanism, they embraced the world of Victorian literature and eagerly travelled beyond Southern borders. A dearth of qualitative sources from beyond the circle of educated elites makes "class," both in terms of economic standing and cultural

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<sup>6</sup> Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (New York: Bantam Dell, 1968), 226.

consciousness, a difficult variable to fully distinguish. Still, the high-efficacy personality seemed to correspond with the more bourgeois-minded Southerner described by James Oakes, and more recently with the nascent "middle class" depicted by Jonathan Wells.<sup>7</sup>

A life dedicated to agriculture could easily encourage a fatalistic perspective, placing Southerners subject to the whims of weather, pestilence, and distant market forces. As one true believer explained, it was "God that sent you children, made the potatoes runt out well, put the blight upon the orchard trees, and caused the roan mare to die." Farming was easily the dominant experience of life and labor for white Southerners. By 1860 the region accounted for less than 10 percent of the country's manufactured goods and yet was producing 75 percent of the *world's* raw cotton supply. And for every successful planter, hundreds of Southern farmers toiled to merely scrape out sustenance or perhaps a small market surplus to provide for his family. For Southerners mired in their dependency to the annual yields of their lands, U.B. Phillips's assessment that the distinctiveness of Southern life all began with the weather would have struck home with unquestioned logic. Despite the legendary imagery of the steel-eyed planter epitomized by William Faulkner's mythical Thomas Sutpen (marching into

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<sup>7</sup> See James Oakes, *The Ruling Race*; and Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*.

Jefferson, Mississippi with a gang of slaves, a French architect, and a burning ambition to bust his way into the planter elite), many Southern planters (and Sutpen himself eventually) fully realized the limits of their agency.<sup>8</sup>

The Old South's un-salubrious living conditions had a similar impact. Lacking the contemporary world's nearly messianic faith in medical science, and the sanitation practices and medical knowledge upon which that faith has been founded, Southerners cowered under the constant shadow of disease and death. This was especially true in the deeper South, as epidemics plagued the bayous and estuaries lining the coasts and rivers. Mahala Roach described the helpless anxiety besieging the citizens of Vicksburg in 1853, for example, as they charted a particularly vicious yellow fever epidemic ascending the Mississippi River Valley. Everyone seemed "frightened almost to death," she noted, as if hunted by "some deadly foe" lurking on the horizon, all wondering if they would become its next victim. They had good reason to fear: ten percent the population of New Orleans was wiped out by the outbreak. Southerners with the financial means could take precautions to stave off sickness and disease. Some secluded their families in isolated country retreats (as Roach did with her children in 1853); others fled

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<sup>8</sup>As quoted in Rable, *God's Chosen People*, 24; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1929); William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

for the countryside for the healthier climate of the Northern states, the so-called "promised land of health," a cynical doctor quipped. But not everyone had the resources, the physical prowess, or even the will to take such precautions, and Southerners spoke with a haunted helplessness as they watched epidemics take the lives of friends, family, and strangers, killing blacks and whites alike, indiscriminately invading the "houses of the rich and the houses of the poor." Mississippi's Caroline Seabury had seen both of her parents and six siblings die of disease in less than a decade. She recalled spending those "dark years" mired in dreadful expectation, "watching and waiting for the next blow, which could so plainly be foretold and never failed to visit us."<sup>9</sup>

Often lacking access to professional medical facilities and before the advent of hospices, antebellum Southerners often watched the process of death operate under their very roofs, a "vicarious experience" both tragic and yet commonplace. In 1851 Alabama cotton planter Phillip Pitts watched his father suffer and eventually expire from a torturous stomach ailment that bloated his bowels to twice their normal size. Only making his

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<sup>9</sup> Diary Entries of 15 August 1853, and 23 June 1853, in Mahala Roach Diary, The Eggleston and Roach Papers, SHC; Richard D. Arnold to H. M. McAllister, 8 September 1844, in Shryock, *Selections from the Letters of Richard A. Arnold*, 24; Diary Entry of 30 August 1858, in Wilson Jr. et al., *Queen of the South*, 176-177; Diary Entry of 4 July 1857 in Suzanne L. Bunkers, ed., *The Diary of Caroline Seabury, 1854-1863* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), 50. For an account of the 1853 yellow fever outbreak, see John Duffy, *Sword of Pestilence: The New Orleans Yellow Fever Outbreak of 1853* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1966). For a collection of essays that provide a general account of disease and medical care in the Old South, see Ronald L. Numbers, and Todd L. Savitt, *Science and Medicine in the Old South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989).

condition more miserable, his doctors applied a number of medical concoctions that included quinine, mercury, camphor, and laudanum, none of which proved even partially effective in reversing his father's decline or easing his pain. Pitts recorded that on several occasions when friends and family gathered by his bedside during those final days, his father spoke about the helpless nature of the human condition. "People could not always control things as they liked," he muttered repeatedly, "but all things work together for good to them that love God." It was a lesson that the humble-minded Pitts well understood, for his diary maintained a melancholic but tranquil tone, absorbing with stoic calm the coming of sickness and poor harvests, and eventually even secession and civil war. "Lincoln elected President of the United States . . . great commotion on account of the same at the South," he would report succinctly and without wrath in November 1860. His tone barely changed when reporting the tragic deaths of first his brother at the battle of Manassas, and then his son John at Gaines Mill in 1862. "He was killed about sun down," Pitts somberly recorded on the latter occasion, "he was just 19 Years and one day old - He was born on 26<sup>th</sup> June 1843 and was killed on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1862." Through both secession and personal tragedy, anger and hatred never echoed from Pitts's pen.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Diary Entries of August 1850, November 1860, and June 1862, in Phillip Henry Pitts Papers, SHC.

Furthermore, with frighteningly high rates of infant and child mortality, Southern parents of all social backgrounds understood all too well their limited powers to protect their young. A Southern family was tremendously fortunate if all their children safely reached adulthood, as 20 percent of Louisiana's children died before reaching the age of five, for one example. And for women, the experience of pregnancy was fraught with unpredictable dangers for both mother and child that cut across class lines. In one extreme example, the ten pregnancies of South Carolina's Elizabeth Perry (in the span of ten years of marriage) resulted in four live births, four miscarriages, and two stillbirths. Adding to the sense of helplessness, death could strike with virtually no warning. From their family's plantation on St. Simons Island, Anna King watched her son Butler collapse and die within the span of six horrifying hours in 1859. "Now all is grief & our only consolation is that it is the hand of God - that has inflicted the blow," she wrote her family in a well-worn Southern mantra. "All these crosses and disappointments do not come by chance," she pleaded, but were in fact "ordered by a wise Providence."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Anna Matilda Page King to Georgia Page King, 30 July 1859, in Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 369, 404; For statistics on child mortality, see Sally G. McMillen, *Motherhood in the Old South: Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Infant Rearing* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 195-196. Though shockingly high by modern standards, Southern infant and child mortality rates were not significantly higher than their antebellum Northern counterparts. Also see Lynn V. Kennedy, *Born Southern: Childbirth, Motherhood, and Social Networks in the Old South* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 2010).

The most peculiar feature of antebellum Southern life, the experience of slaveholding, provided a more ambivalent impact on the self-efficacy of white Southerners. Stretching back to the Founding Fathers, Americans had long feared how the dreadful self-empowerment inherent in the holding of slaves might beget a culture of "unremitting despotism," particularly by inculcating the habits of tyranny into American youth. The power of slaveholders to wield virtual control over the life and death of their chattels could indeed provide a horrifying twist to Bandura's "mastery experience." In a scene replicated on plantations throughout the South, an intoxicating sense of power described the satisfaction a young Harry St. John Dixon received from watching his father angrily whip and overpower an obstinate slave. As his father pounded the elderly and crippled man (who had consistently refused to "do anything but what suits him") into submission, Harry laughed aloud, to the horror of his siblings. White Southerners of the slaveholding ranks could thus manipulate their mastery to affirm a sense of empowerment and self-efficacy.<sup>12</sup>

And yet, the perpetual power struggles involved in slave management could work in the opposite direction. Many slaveholders grudgingly acknowledged their lack of absolute mastery over their slaves, plagued constantly by the "everyday

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<sup>12</sup> Diary of 9 June 1860, in Harry St. John Dixon Diary, in Berry, *Princes of Cotton*.



resistance" of their supposedly docile chattels. As unconvincing and unsympathetic as they might sound to modern ears, white Southerners even complained of feeling trapped by their region's "peculiar institution," of having to "hold the wolf by the ears" in the famous lament of Thomas Jefferson. Georgia's Jehu Carter, for instance, cursed the institution after an intense verbal conflict with some of his slaves in 1857, almost wishing that "the Great Atlantic could . . . have rolled its proud waves between us and Africa" and stopped the Atlantic slave trade from polluting the South. Yet Carter resigned himself to the fate of slaveholder with a submission to providence, citing his unswerving faith that "the Lord knoweth what is best for us" and assigned one's station accordingly. Southerners could potentially follow the bold course of men like W. P. Johnston, who decided in 1839 that he stood unsuited "to exercise authority over slaves" and thus could "never be a Planter." He would sell his Southern lands and his bondspeople, he pledged, to begin life anew as a doctor or an independent "squatter" somewhere out West. But Johnston's course was extreme, and since it was difficult to imagine gaining wealth and power without the vehicle of slave ownership, few Southerners followed in his footsteps.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Diary Entry for 26 May 1857, in Jehu Neal Carter Papers, GHS; W. P. Johnston to George J. Kollock, 7 January 1839, in George J. Kollock Family Papers, HAR.

Even participatory politics could rouse feelings of low-efficacy. For women, denied the ballot or viable entry into the sphere of public discourse (apart from some well-noted indirect routes), the world of politics operated almost entirely beyond their control. And despite the Jacksonian era's elevation of the common man, many Southern men felt their ballots were powerless against a chaotic system marred by corruption, demagoguery, and backroom wire-pullers. From Alabama in 1844, Thomas Hubbard Hobbs mocked the naivete of a group of German immigrants as they eagerly rushed to the polls acting as if the entire "welfare of the whole country depended solely on their votes!" Cynical for a young man of just under twenty years old, Hobbs was convinced that corruption thoroughly infested the electoral process and that political campaigns only manufactured false hatreds among the American populace. As he overheard members of the Whig Party celebrate their presidential victory in 1840 (the much ballyhooed "log cabin and hard cider" campaign), the Democratic Hobbs muttered against the "rabble . . . hallooing and whopping and firing as if an important victory had been won over our most inveterate enemy," as if somehow their banner's success had thwarted a vile threat to the Republic.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Diary Entries of 21 November 1840, 5 August, 1844, and 12 October 1844, in Axford, *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*, 14, 17, 4-5; For a work that questions the traditional depiction of popular enthusiasm and faith in

This sense of political inefficacy could allow Southerners to absorb the often chaotic dynamics of antebellum partisanship. Such was the case with South Carolina's crotchety David Gavin, a planter born in 1811 who filled the pages of his diary with diatribes against the evils of "democracy," (which he alternatively defined as universal male suffrage, "mobocracy," "hubuggery," and once even the "Imp of Darkness"). Gavin believed that democratic government had foolishly handed political power to men lacking in landed property, men who inevitably voted according to self-interest rather than republican virtue. He even refused to celebrate the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in 1856 because he rejected a "freedom which allows every bankrupt, swindler, thief and scoundrel, traitor and seller of his votes to be placed on an equality with myself." Long ago, South Carolina and the nation at large had embraced democracy, Gavin decided, and so the country's descent into decadence and ruin became unavoidable.<sup>15</sup>

Crankier than most, Gavin's republican beliefs were not without precedent among Southern elites. But his unswerving disdain for democracy provided a fate-driven narrative that helped him absorb the political crises of the 1850s. He showed

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antebellum America's political system, see Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *Rude Republic: Americans and their Politics in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

<sup>15</sup> Diary Entry of 4 July 1856, in David Gavin Diary, SHC. For an analysis of Gavin as embracing a nascent bourgeois or middle class perspective, see Frank Towers, "Navigating 'The Muddy Stream of Party Politics': Sectional Politics and the Southern Bourgeoisie," in Jonathan Daniel Wells and Jennifer R. Green, eds., *The Southern Middle Class in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011).

remarkable calm in response to John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry in 1859, for instance, a stark contrast to the mass-hysteria that swept across the Southern states. Gavin sounded almost annoyed when reporting how Brown's attack dominated the conversations of his neighbors, "as if they have reason to expect any thing else" from a mobocratic government where the "majority of the officers are elected by the people, alias mob." Popular governments inherently succumb to the rule of "bullies, scoundrels, and intriguers and murderers," he railed, and therefore "mobs, insurrections, and conspiracies" like Brown's were the inevitable byproduct. After the would-be insurgent's execution, Gavin predicted that much like Mexico, the United States would descend into a state of quasi-anarchy marred by periodic coups and civil wars. "There is entirely too much democracy alias Mob-oc-cracy," he sighed, providing too little protection for "persons or property."<sup>16</sup>

Surprisingly, gender proved ambivalent as well - this despite the deprecating pedestal upon which Southern ladies of the elite classes were hoisted. On the one hand, the very confines of Southern womanhood created a fatalism of gender that even the most brazen belle could not fully escape. In a conversation probably repeated throughout Southern households, Georgia's Sarah Alexander tried to reconcile her reluctant

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<sup>16</sup> Diary Entries of 18 November 1859, 2 December 1859, and 7 December 1859, in David Gavin Diary, SHC.

daughter Harriet to her future station as housewife. "I, too . . . have felt that sense of distaste for the common and ignoble occupations" of domestic life, the matriarch began, once believing her own "strengths and energies, moral and intellectual, might be worthy a higher sphere of action." But Sarah had somehow made peace with domesticity, and now so must her daughter, reminding Harriet that it was the Almighty who assigned "our sphere of duty and action in life." As Mrs. Alexander began to hint, Southern women could achieve their own version of domestic success. Whether their families subscribed to a patriarchal or Victorian ethos (or some combination thereof), "success" for elite Southern women consisted in ably performing the roles of dutiful housewife and nurturing mother, avenues by which women could gain a sense of self-worth and self-efficacy.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, low-efficacy for Southern women often derived not from the simple reality of their gender, but from a self-perceived failure to tightrope the lofty heights of their culture's domestic ideals. The diary of Mississippi's Mahala Roach in the 1850s provides a case in point, as she described her longstanding and losing battle with anger, an emotion deemed unsuitable for the domestic sphere (an issue to be discussed in

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<sup>17</sup> Sarah Alexander to Harriet Alexander, 1847, in Marion Alexander Boggs, ed., *The Alexander Letters, 1787-1900* (Savannah: Privately Printed for G.J. Baldwin, 1910), 101.

greater depth in the next chapter). In August 1853, she etched a strongly Victorian anecdote on the topic of anger management into the pages of her diary. "When inclined to give an angry answer," the piece advised, seek the guidance of prayer, retain "a cheerful view of everything, and encourage hope." "Speak kindly to the servants and praise them for little things when you can," it continued, and "be very gentle with the younger ones." Yet, all too often, Roach's journal became a guilt-stricken testament describing her inability to properly discipline her emotions and behavior. "Gave Tom three hard slaps today for" accidentally hurting his sister, "was heartily sorry for it afterwards," read a typical lament. In another, "got angry with my dear little Sophy, for some slight thing . . . got vexed with Nora, and slap'd her for a trifle." "I do feel so sorry and ashamed for these outbreaks of temper," she admitted," and "would give worlds to conquer it!" After yet another day spent "scolding" her family a few weeks later, Roach recognized that her angry outbursts were unacceptable for a woman of her social standing, shamefully deeming herself a "perfect virago."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Diary Entries of 15 August 1853, 4 January 1853, 17, January 1854, 17 April 1860, 28 November 1860, and 11 December 1860, in Mahala Roach Diary, in Roach and Eggleston Family Papers, SHC. For Southern women of the yeoman and working classes whose households often served as the site of economic production, there was perhaps greater opportunity for the development of high-efficacy as women served as vital contributors to a family's livelihood. Yet such opportunities were far less common for elite Southern women.

Men failing in the role of masterly patriarch could also experience a similar letdown. An otherwise successful yeoman farmer who owned ten slaves and 450 acres of land in upcountry South Carolina by 1860, David Harris lamented the constant bickering that marred his marriage and that ultimately colored his diary with melancholic sorrow and regret. After spending the day separated from his wife in December 1860, he wrote of how all men desire "a sweet lovely & confiding woman for a constant friend and companion," and that any man preferring permanent bachelorhood "deserves to be called an abolitionist, and like them they should end their worthless, unhappy lives on a tree." But Harris struggled through a troubled marriage that failed to reach his own domestic ideals, a failure that derived largely, he believed, from his inability to control his temper. "Let the time [of death] come when it may," Harris wrote on his 39<sup>th</sup> birthday after one such episode, "I can leave this world with as little remorse of conscience as any person, with the exceptions of some (many) hasty words spoken in unguarded moments to my dear wife." A growing distance crept into the marriage over time, with Harris surrendering into moments of "most pleasant" solitude by retiring to bed early in evening, specifically to escape his marital hardships. "This I regret," he wrote, "but how to help it I do not know." Mrs. Harris "frequently gets cross," and it made "her more so to tell her of

it." Self-perceived failures on the domestic front (and believing their uncontrolled emotions majorly to blame), both Roach and Harris would record anxiety and eventual resignation during the secession crisis to come.<sup>19</sup>

Of course, the major difference for women was stark - they had fewer alternative channels in which to compensate for their domestic "failures," barred from most public outlets garnering social acclaim. As Thomas R. Dew explained, the "insurmountable barrier" of gender prevented women from following their ambitions "into the [military] field, into politics, or any of the regular professions," all of which remained mastery experiences for men alone. Nevertheless, there were some options for educated women. One example came in the female immersion into print culture, Southern women being their region's chief consumers of novels and periodicals in the antebellum era. While novel reading might seem a passive or purely escapist enterprise, it could also serve to empower the reader with a sense of agency. As historian Drew Faust argued, female novel readers could vicariously transport themselves into the world of print to refine and experiment with the creation of new self-identities. A protagonist's experiences and personal triumphs could become the reader's own, in other words, a

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<sup>19</sup> Diary Entries of 2 December 1860, 6 July 1860, and 10 February 1862, in Philip N. Racine, ed., *Piedmont Farmer: The Journals of David Golightly Harris, 1855-1870* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), 164, 146, 227-228.



dynamic fulfilling Bandura's "vicarious experiences." And thereafter, educated Southern women could refine identities in the pages of their diaries and private letters, in the process creating some of the most compelling prose of the antebellum South. Not without coincidence many of most confident (and mercurially tempered) Southern women proved avid readers and powerful private writers, figures like Elizabeth Ruffin, Ella Thomas, Grace Elmore, and Mary Chestnut.<sup>20</sup>

Depending on the exact message a Christian follower came away with, Southern religion could also provoke low-efficacy. While the Second Great Awakening fostered a perfectionist spirit that catalyzed a wave of reform movements across the North (leading Ralph Waldo Emerson to famously enshrine "Man the Reformer" in 1841), Southern religious leaders had learned to accommodate their doctrines to preserve the hierarchy of their region's society. Thus, instead of pushing antebellum followers toward the quest for continuous personal and social improvement, Southern evangelicalism tended to reinforce a world view that minimized human agency in the face of heavenly design, a type of anti-efficacy "verbal persuasion" thundering down from the

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<sup>20</sup> Thomas Roderick Dew, "Dissertation on the Characteristic Differences Between the Sexes, and on the Position and Influence of Woman on Society, No. III," *Literary Messenger*, August 1835; Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 155-157. For an example of how women's boarding schools created served as a social alcove for identity construction and efficacy formation for young white women of the planter class, see Anya Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters: Young Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

pulpit. For instance, South Carolina's John Shurley vividly recalled a sermon he attended in 1848 dealing with the subject of "Divine Providence" and God's omniscient mastery over human affairs. The preacher had "clearly shewed that God ruled over all things," and "that whatever might be the evil machinations of men, He managed them in such a way as to carry out his own determinations." But providentialism was no mere hegemonic tool serving the interests of patriarchy alone, for Southerners used the simple but comforting theology to find meaning amid their troubled everyday lives. It was a belief that consoled Shurley after the death of his infant child in 1862, for example. "Mysterious are the ways of Providence," he painfully wrote in a prayer repeated by thousands of antebellum Americans. The death of his one-year old son was a horrifically "sore affliction," but he prayed he could muster the strength to submissively bow to "God's righteous will," to find peace in this dreadful but divine fate.<sup>21</sup>

High-efficacy Southerners could speak despairingly of the providential fatalism exhibited by their humbler peers. One such critic was Margaret Erwin, a Mississippian of remarkable energy and worldly experience who once verbally jousting with

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<sup>21</sup> Diary Entries of 2 January 1848, and n.d., 1862, in John Rucker Shurley Diary, SCL. On Southern evangelicalism's accommodation with social hierarchy, see Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (New York: Knopf, 1997); For an account of American religion during the Civil War era that focuses on the prevalence of providential attitudes among antebellum Americans, see Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*; and Lewis O. Saum, *The Popular Mood of Pre-Civil War America*.

Harriet Beecher Stowe in New York City and eventually liberated her own slaves in 1858. And befitting a high-efficacy personality, she gave little credence to the concept of an omniscient deity. "I am but a wary believer in God's eye being on the sparrow," she explained, for "I have seen too much of vanity and avarice and deluded humanity to believe that Anyone has their omnipotent eyes walling around on each and every one of us." But Erwin was exceptional. Many Southerners clung to their fatalistic faith in providence even as their personal turmoil reached tragic proportions, individuals like Augustus Benners who watched seven of his twelve children die during early childhood. After the death of a second son in 1860, the grief-stricken father found consolation in his belief that God had spared the child a "world of sin and sorrow," and so he concluded that from the "eye of reason we should not weep for him." When a third son died four months later, Benners began to murmur against his family's sorrowful fate. "I grieved more than I ought to," he confessed in his diary, yet he still mustered the strength to write that "God's will be done - I know it for the best - both for him and us." He never turned toward anger, nor looked to blame any worldly agent for his family's misfortune.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Margaret Johnson Erwin to Carrie, 1855, in John Seymour Erwin, ed., *Like Some Green Laurel: Letters of Margaret Johnson Erwin, 1821-1863* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), 82; Diary Entries of 27 October

It would be wrong, of course, to think of the Old South as thoroughly dominated by a helpless passivity. Many antebellum Southerners, particularly the wealthy, could find plenty of opportunities to establish high-efficacy. Some planters conquered small financial empires among the Mississippi wilds through ruthless determination, fueling an infamous bravado that would even proclaim cotton as king of the Atlantic economy. For those with milder ambitions, Southern men could pursue college educations, develop professional careers, and perhaps even seek publication for their literary or scholarly prose. And certainly, many Southern men believed that voting was no meaningless act nullified by the inherent corruptions of Election Day, especially those Southerners who managed to thrust themselves into office. Despite the South's general phobia for the notorious "isms" attached to Yankee society, the region did develop a small cadre of social reformers, those quintessentially Victorian examples of high self-efficacy. Whether it was Joseph E. Brown's support for temperance or Edmund Ruffin's passion for agricultural reform, the South was not without its band of improvers who believed they wielded the power to change society for the better. And finally, there were the infamous Southern filibusters who sought to manifest American destiny in various Latin American locales. The careers

of figures like Mississippi's John A. Quitman and Tennessee's William Walker attest to the reckless, even tragic, self-belief of some Southern men.

Perhaps the most striking and consistent predictor of high-efficacy related to generation, with the Southerners coming of age in the 1850s taking a vastly more confident perspective than that of their parents. Whether it was the college students of Virginia seeking to reverse the Old Dominion's decline, the scions of the planter class looking to conquer *éclat* amid the narrowing confines of social ossification, or the Southern nationalists determined to protect their region from Northern aggression, there was something distinctly efficacious about the "last generation" of Southern men and women. This fiery outlook was personified by Stephen Dodson Ramseur, a young West Point cadet in the late 1850s. "I am young and strong . . . willing to attempt most anything," the North Carolinian boasted emblematically in 1858, thundering a tone foreign to men like Augustus Benners and Phillip Pitts. Confident in his ability to garner riches and fame, Ramseur anticipated winning a "big reputation" not because "I expect Fortune to court me," he explained, but because I am determined to "court Fortune!" Fittingly, Ramseur denounced in violent anger the obstacles that threatened his path. He blasted the "cowardice & cruelty" of the anti-slavery forces in the "bleeding" territory of Kansas in

1856, for instance, and salivated at the thought of wreaking their destruction. "Would to God! I had the power, I would punish them," he steamed to a friend, fantasizing himself commanding a legion charged with annihilating the "Republican hell-hounds" and cutting "them down like grass before the mower's scythe." A classic Yankee-hating proto-nationalist, Ramseur would soon prove himself one of the most enthusiastic and effective Confederate officers in the Army of Northern Virginia, rising to the rank of major general at the age of twenty-six before being killed at the battle of Cedar Creek in late 1864.<sup>23</sup>

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And so with the outbreak of the secession crisis in November 1860, some Southerners spoke of vanquishing a hated Yankee foe, or girding their loins for a "war to the knife." These were the personalities accustomed to success and self-determination, to pushing aside challenges that upset their "best laid schemes." Yet many others - men and women like Mahala Roach and Augustus Benners - created narratives of

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<sup>23</sup> Stephen Dodson Ramseur to David Schenck, 20 November 1858, and 13 September 1856 in Kundhal, *The Bravest of the Brave*, 59-60, 40-41; for a biography of Ramseur, see Gary W. Gallagher, *Stephen Dodson Ramseur: Lee's Gallant General* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). Several historians have pointed to the unique features of the generation of Southerners reaching adulthood in the 1850s. For examples, see Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War: How Popular Will, Nationalism, and Military Strategy Could Not Stave off Defeat* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), especially pages 96-107; Berry, *All that Makes a Man*, especially pages 17-44; Peter S. Carmichael, *The Last Generation: Young Virginians in Peace, War, and Reunion* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

providential fatalism to help them understand and eventually reconcile with the reality of disunion.

Fatalism could, and often did, surface in purely secular forms during the secession crisis. Many Southerners allowed their allegiances to be ultimately determined by the actions of their home states, for instance, creating a fatalism of *vox populi* in which one's fellow voters and legislators played the role of providence. Countless Confederates echoed Robert E. Lee's famous resignation that once Virginia left the Union, he felt compelled to support his "native State with my sword, and if need be with my life." Louisiana's David Pierson (showing a far different personality from his brother Reuben) explained how the people's will had persuaded him to finally embrace the disunionist bandwagon in 1861, eventually enlisting in the Confederate Army. Pleading the right of every free citizen to follow "his judgment and honest conviction," Pierson had originally stood loyal to the national Union when the secession crisis first erupted, fearing the waves of violence that would inevitably crest in disunion's wake. But by early 1861, the question was settled - Louisiana voters had (narrowly) decided for secession in the state's January referendum, and the Bayou State officially abandoned the Union shortly before the end of the month. "A majority of the free people of the South have through the ballot box" championed independence, he explained to

his father, leaving David only two alternatives: he could either "take up arms against the South or in her defense." Pierson inevitably took the latter course, and he served the Confederacy until its dying days in May 1865.<sup>24</sup>

Here, one can discern the repeated pantheons to "duty" voiced by so many Civil War soldiers, North and South, to justify their decision to enlist for war. Men who decided that "no man now has a right to stay at home," as a middle-aged planter from Tennessee explained to his wife, for "duty, patriotism, and, aye, honor calls" one to the field. Or more humbly, in the statements of young men like Alabama's Isaac Ulmer, who explained to his father that it was simply his "duty" to enlist and stand beside him "in the battle field." The sense of obligation was only intensified by the simple but profound fact that Southern men saw their homeland fall under the shadow of Union invasion. "I thought it unbecoming me to play citizen in war" when Northerners threatened the hearth and homestead, Thomas Hobbs explained in his diary. As historian James McPherson has shown, for Confederate soldiers the terms "duty" and "honor" were often used interchangeably, both relating to the expectations and demands of Victorian masculinity. What options did Southern men truly have when war exploded in 1861?

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<sup>24</sup>As quoted in Alan T. Nolan, *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 36; David Pierson to William H. Pierson, 22 April 1861, in Curter and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*, 13-14.



They could find ways to avoid military service if they desperately desired – and many Southern men did through exemptions and occasionally desertion. But most Confederate men of military age (roughly three-fourths in fact) ended up in the Confederate ranks, in part pushed by the fate-driven forces of duty and honor. “How can you ask me to remain at home an idle spectator,” an Alabama soldier wrote to his wife with less than zealous enthusiasm, for “my honor, my duty, my reputation & that of my dear little darling boy” demanded his service.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, low-efficacy and high-efficacy Southerners (the latter more inclined to trumpet the odes of fighting for glorious independence and to foil despotic tyranny) often marched together in the ranks of the Confederate gray. But a peek at where the Old South’s two personalities could lead was sometimes evident very early on. Having just turned thirty years old in March 1861 and an instructor at Columbia, South Carolina’s Arsenal Academy, John B. Patrick already felt his life heading toward failure. While committing no “great error” during his 29<sup>th</sup> year, he believed himself no nearer the ultimate

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<sup>25</sup>As quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 24; Isaac Barton Ulmer to Dear Father, 15 May 1861, in Isaac Barton Ulmer Papers, SHC; Diary Entry of 6 June 1861, in Axford, *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*, 236. McPherson argued that duty and honor came from ideological conviction not fatalism in motivating men to fight in the Civil War. His emphasis on ideological conviction has proven extremely influential. See, for example, Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007). Focusing on the Confederacy, Gary Gallagher shares this view regarding Southern men, pointing out that roughly 80 percent of Confederate men of military age fought for the Confederacy, and roughly one-third of the men mobilized were killed. See Gary W. Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 28-29; for a work that emphasizes how Southern masculinity pushed Southern men to fight, see Berry, *All that Makes a Man*.

goal of becoming more "useful to my fellow men." Fittingly, days before Fort Sumter was fired upon in April 1861, Patrick watched a legion of young troops depart for the probable seat of war amidst thunderous fanfare. But he felt no upsurge of martial spirit himself, nor some vindictive urge to inflict harm on Northerners and ravage their homeland. Instead, Patrick voiced a melancholic lament as he witnessed the separations of "wives and children, parents and friends," all perhaps making their final farewells. When Sumter fell soon afterwards, Patrick duly celebrated the Confederate victory, but also the fact that nobody had been killed or wounded in the melee (he was unaware that two Union privates were mortally wounded during the surrender ceremony). "None were killed or wounded on either side in the battle of Fort Sumter," he sighed with relief, "nothing but the interposition of Providence could have saved them all."<sup>26</sup>

A few months later, Mississippi's William Nugent (a man already planning to use the war as "a stepping stone to higher places") experienced a vastly different sensation while witnessing a military parade of recently organized Confederate troops. "A kind of vindictive spirit" seemed to overwhelm him, he told his wife, beckoning him into Confederate service and demanding the violent destruction of his yet unseen Yankee foe.

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<sup>26</sup>Diary Entries of "March," 9 April 1861, and 14 April 1861, in John B. Patrick Diary, 1861-1865, SCL.

"I feel that I would like to shoot a Yankee," he explained, fully realizing his desire was not "in harmony with the Spirit of Christianity, that teaches us to love our enemies & do good to them." Nonetheless, Nugent concluded that Yankee aggression had provoked the military conflict, and thus the Yankees should "suffer for this fratricidal war" they had ignited. Let the Northern fields be "desolated, her cities laid to waste, " he thundered, "and the treasures of her citizens dissipated in the vain attempt to subjugate a free people." For Nugent at least, a destructive war had already begun.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> William L. Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent, 19 July 1861, and 19 August 1861, in William M. Cash and Lucy S. Howorth, eds., *My Dear Nellie: The Civil War Letters of William L. Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi), 42, 46.

### **CHAPTER 3 - AN EMOTIONAL REBELLION: THE COMING OF THE CIVIL WAR AS A DOUBLE REVOLUTION FOR CONFEDERATE WOMEN**

Secessionist leaders worked hard to cultivate the emotion of anger after Abraham Lincoln won the presidency in 1860. From Milledgeville, Georgia, just days after the election, Thomas R. Cobb delivered a passionate harangue, beseeching his state's voters to pull the trigger on disunion in the upcoming January election for delegates to a state convention on secession. By chance, his speech contained most of the factors a cognitive psychologist would credit for evoking the emotion of anger. First, Cobb made clear that the Republican triumph spelled grave danger for white Georgians of all social stripes. He spoke ominously of Northern instigators descending on the state and warned how local "gangs of slaves" were already revolting against their masters, "declaring themselves free by virtue of Lincoln's election." Second, the presidential contest itself was clearly illegitimate, he claimed, the results of which no white Southerner should be forced to respect. True, Lincoln had technically won a legitimate election, but the mere fact that five Northern states allowed for black suffrage violated the very spirit of the constitution. "Our slaves are stolen from our midst," Cobb thundered in reference to the

trampled Fugitive Slave Law, and then they vote "at Northern ballot boxes to select rulers for you and me."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the aggrieved Georgian knew exactly where to place blame for the crisis besieging the white South. It was the "cruel hand of Northern aggression," having grown during the course of the nineteenth century from a small band of abolitionist fanatics into a triumphant electoral majority. He even compared the rise of Northern anti-slavery to Islamic jihad, with the white South standing symbolically as the beleaguered but morally righteous defenders of Christendom. "The bloody Crescent of the false prophet never ceased to behold the gory victims which Islam claimed," Cobb bellowed with sky-high theatrics, "until on many a battle-field the redemption in blood came to the rescue of the children of Faith." Thus, like their crusading counterparts, if white Southerners would only unite under the banners of secession and independence, they could confront the Northern menace from a position of strength. Shedding the shackles of party, a unified South held the power to avenge the Republican outrage and secure an honorable, separate nationhood. Combining the elements of threat, illegitimacy, blame, and agency, Cobb's speech seemed tailor-made to evoke Southern rancor. And perhaps it contributed, in

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<sup>1</sup> Speech of T.R.R. Cobb, 12 November 1860, in William W. Freehling and Craig M. Simpson, eds., *Secession Debated: Georgia's Showdown in 1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 7-11.

some unquantifiable measure, to the secessionists' narrow victory in Georgia's January election, a result which all but ensured the disunionist tidal wave would engulf the entire deep South before Lincoln even stepped foot into the White House.<sup>2</sup>

If the aim of Cobb and his secessionist cohorts was to provoke Southern anger, they achieved their goal and then some. All across the region, Cobb's indignation was being echoed in utterances of blood-soaked enmity (among the high-efficacy followers at least). And in a shocking rejection of Southern gender norms, women added their voices to the malicious choir heaping scorn on the "faithless . . . godless herd" residing above the Mason-Dixon line. "We women are as much roused as any one," a young Georgian assured her brother in late November, before asking if there was any word in the English language he detested "as much as the word 'Yankee'?" She only wished Southern women could join the fight "along with the men," promising to kill the first Yankee invader that intruded her gaze with the "most intense satisfaction." Unsure how the hatred had even penetrated her psyche, Virginia's Elizabeth Hardin recalled believing that the "Yankees politically and personally were an abomination" by the time of the secession

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<sup>2</sup> Speech of T.R.R. Cobb, in Freehling and Simpson, *Secession Debated*, 14, 21 6; With the passage of the Georgia Platform pledging conditional allegiance to the national Union, Georgia's political leadership played a pivotal role in crushing the nascent secession movement of 1850. The state's decision to secede in January 1861 is often seen as an important turning point for the victory of disunion in the deep South. For instance, see William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*.

crisis, never doubting their desire but merely their ability to ravage the South. Even Northern expatriate Amelia Lines blamed Lincoln supporters for threatening to unleash a deluge of "crime famine and pestilence" across her adopted home state of Georgia. After attending a speech of Thomas Cobb in late November, Lines deemed the apostle of immediate secession a "true man and a Christian," his passionate words resonating with wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

For secessionist leaders, the emotions of anger and hatred served political purposes. They helped Southerners disentangle their loyalties from the national Union and prepare for separation, and eventually war, against a people they had only known as fellow citizens. Of course, not all seceding Southerners broke away from the Union with anger; and certainly, a disdain for the Yankees could not ensure a pro-secessionist stance. It would take much more than a denigrated and despised Northern counterpoint to provide adequate scaffolding for the construction of Southern/Confederate nationalism. But it certainly helped. Anger and hatred made the differences and disagreements separating South and North seem ever more irreconcilable, helping nudge an explosive (but arguably compromisable) political crisis into an irrepressible one. As

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<sup>3</sup> Unidentified to "Dear Cousin," 29 June 1861, in Champion Family Papers, HAR; "Affectionate Sister" to George J. Kollock, 20 November 1860, in George J. Kollock Family Papers, HAR; C. Glenn Clift, ed., *The Private War of Lizzie Hardin* (Louisville: The Kentucky Historical Society, 1963), 1-4; Diary Entries of 20 November 1860, and 22 November 1860, in Thomas Dyer, ed., *To Raise Myself a Little: The Diaries and Letters of Jennie, a Georgian Teacher, 1851-1886* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981), 169-170.

Mary Chestnut famously announced with cold finality in March 1861, "we are divorced North and South, because we hated each other so."<sup>4</sup>

By unleashing a campaign of intense indignation during their revolt against the Federal Union, however, secessionist leaders did much more than rally support for disunion - they simultaneously dethroned their culture's "emotional regime" that had long suppressed female anger. Emboldened by the fervor accompanying the drive towards disunion, Southern women gave voice to their hatred for all things Yankee. But the furious "emotives" that began surfacing in the private writings of Southern women should not be dismissed as simple declarations of regional and then national loyalty, parroting their brothers and husbands. Nor should they be seen merely as mutations of fear. More subversively, the indignation ignited by secession gave Southern women the opportunity to grasp for greater emotional freedom, to express the allegedly unwomanly and unchristian sentiments of anger and hate. With sectional enmity ringing from their political grandstands and blazing across Southern periodicals, anger became an acceptable emotion to air, and

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<sup>4</sup>Diary Entry of 14 March 1861, in Williams, *A Diary from Dixie*, 20. Several scholars have emphasized how negative reference points play pivotal roles in the construction of nationalist sentiment. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2000); James C. Cobb argues that Southern nationalism found basis in little more than a common Southern/Confederate antagonism to the North. See Cobb, *Away Down South*, especially 34-66; Though likewise fueled by anger in many cases, Southern Unionists remain beyond this chapter's scope.



Southern women quickly seized the newly freed emotional space their political culture had unleashed.

This newfound emotional freedom had important consequences. First, riding the emotional momentum, Southern women catapulted themselves into the realm of political discussion, using the sentiment as partial cover for their transgression. All across the region diaries and letters angrily spoke of Black Republicans, slave insurrection, and the necessity of severing ties with the Union. As a fired-up Ada Bacot protested in January 1861, "has not every woman a right to express her opinions on such subjects . . . in private if not in public." Second, once Southern women wielded the power to express anger more openly in their letters and diaries (and sometimes in the flesh as well), some turned their scorn against Confederate authorities when the war effort went sour. Some women like Tennessee's Cora Ready went much further, using their anger to question the general dependence of Southern womanhood itself. Thus, the emotional freedom gained during the coming of the Civil War sheds new light on the unprecedented protests of Confederate women, a dynamic detected by several historians including Drew Faust and Stephanie McCurry. But, while emotionally liberating, the process of dethroning the Old South's emotional regime greatly darkened the perspectives of its female citizenry, and by extension Southern society as a

whole. They began speaking with accents of blood-soaked enmity as they vented their hatreds against their Northern (and even internal) enemies, contagion-like sentiments that condoned, even demanded violence to destroy the threats these antagonists posed. Once kindled by revolution and the onset of war, these dark emotions were nearly impossible to extinguish.<sup>5</sup>

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For a topic that most people consider a natural aspect of everyday life, emotions have become the subject of intense re-conceptualization among scholars. Casting aside the older interpretation of emotions as biological functions that remain more or less static over time and culture, psychologists have revolutionized the conceptual basis by attaching emotions to cognition. According to their theories, emotions develop from cognitive appraisal processes in which a person reacts to a situation through a series of automated evaluations, which then trigger emotions preparing an individual to take action. While the factors triggering the emotion of anger vary from theorist to theorist, most psychologists agree that the appraisal process follows a basic list of automated questions: Does the situation run counter to one's (or society's) goals? Is there someone

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<sup>5</sup> Diary Entry of 19 January 1861, in Jean V. Berlin, ed., *A Confederate Nurse: The Diary of Ada W. Bacot, 1860-1863* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1994), 26; See Faust, *Mothers of Invention*; and Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

identifiable to blame? Is the situation justified or fair? Does one possess the power to better their circumstances and/or punish the perpetrator? If answered in the affirmative, anger is the emotion likeliest to be evoked, a process that Thomas Cobb seemed to understand preternaturally in his Milledgeville speech.<sup>6</sup>

What Southerner Mary Clarke experienced on the plains of western Texas one night in 1856 closely followed the cognitive model. With her husband away on business, Clarke heard a rattling coming from outside her family's front door resembling the cracking of a whip. Knowing that a wave of burglaries had recently swept across the area, and that a loaded pistol waited on her mantle-piece, she ventured from bed to investigate the strange noise, gun in hand. When she opened the front door, Clarke found herself standing almost face to face with a would-be burglar. But rather than freezing with fear, Clarke experienced a fury akin to being possessed by "*the devil*," she later wrote. Overcome with the "intense desire . . . to kill" the intruder, she aimed her pistol and fired, missing the man whose own appraisal process had propelled him to flee for his life. Clarke began to chase down the intruder for a couple of

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<sup>6</sup> A large body of work on the part of psychologists has been dedicated to connecting emotions to processes of cognitive appraisal. A useful review on this subject is provided in Randolph R. Cornelius, *The Science of Emotion: Research and Tradition in the Psychology of Emotions* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996); the leading advocate for the cognitive appraisal theory to emotions was Richard S. Lazarus.

moments before catching her breath, realizing the precariousness of her situation, and heading for the safety of her closest neighbor. The scene presents a textbook case-study for cognitive appraisal theory. Clarke instantly judged the situation to be threatening, but being in a position of power (the loaded pistol) her cognitive appraisals provoked the emotion of anger propelling her preemptive attack.<sup>7</sup>

Admittedly, few situations in life prove as dramatic or clear-cut as Clarke's midnight encounter (though her traumatic episode seemed an apt metaphor for how Southerners imagined the rise of the Republicans). But two major conclusions come from attaching emotion to cognition that make these psychological theories useful to historians. First, because the appraisal process must inevitably filter through an individual's perceptions and mental baggage, derived from their life experiences and especially their cultural learning, emotions are experienced differently according to one's time and place, safeguarding against the ahistorical and ethnocentric pitfalls often associated with psychology's application to history. Second, it also means emotions should no longer be depicted as the antithesis of rational thought. The age old dichotomy of following one's heart versus one's head is in fact misleading.

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<sup>7</sup> Mary B. Clarke to Winchester Hall, 1858, in Mary M. Barden and Terrell Armstead Crow, eds., *Live Your Own Life: The Family Papers of Mary Bayard Clarke, 1854-1886* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 38.

Nor, then, should emotions be depicted as blinders obscuring the inflow of reason, liable to the manipulation of political demagogues mesmerizing their followers into illogical frenzies. That reevaluation largely debunks the interpretations of the older revisionist historians who depicted the Civil War as the unnecessary outcome of abolitionists and Southern fire-eaters whose collective blundering pushed Americans toward needless slaughter.<sup>8</sup>

More recently, however, historians and psychologists have perhaps veered too far in the opposite direction by depicting emotions as the “amplifiers” of ideology, catalyzing powerful political movements around shared sentiments. No doubt influenced by the rise of the Tea Party and Occupy movements (both of which have capitalized on the sentiment of anger, even hatred) this somewhat celebratory portrayal of emotions has provided fresh and compelling historical analysis. For instance, Michael Woods has recently shown how Preston Brooks’ infamous beating of Charles Sumner on the floor of the U.S. Senate triggered widespread moral indignation throughout the Northern states, a unifying sentiment that helped facilitate the

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<sup>8</sup> A useful review of emotions history can be found in the introduction to Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*. The most famous of the revisionist histories was probably Avery Craven, *The Repressible Conflict, 1830-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1939). For an insightful and stinging critique of the revisionists’ misuse of emotional theory, see Woods, “The Heart of the Sectional Conflict.” For a more nuanced and updated version of the revisionist school, see Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*. For an analysis that depicted South Carolina’s secession operating under fear and paranoia, see Steven Channing, *A Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 286.

rise of the nascent Republican Party. But such an interpretation can prove one-dimensional, with emotions becoming akin to a dominant ideology or discourse. Quite simply, the unpredictability and multi-valiance of emotions at the individual level can become lost in the emphasis on building communities of shared sentiments.<sup>9</sup>

Historian and cultural anthropologist William Reddy has developed a useful theory of “emotives” that depicts emotions in a more multi-dimensional light. For Reddy, emotives are the exploratory and inexact process by which people try to articulate their feelings, during the midst of which they can actually confirm, redirect, or completely nullify their original sentiments. Emotions are made and remade through the expression process itself, in other words, as an individual struggles to translate their feelings into language. Southerners were often painfully aware of their inability to adequately express the mad rush of emotions generated from the coming of civil war. “What now of my feelings,” a Tennessee woman asked in a clichéd but earnest mantra from early 1862, “volumes could not contain – could my pen express all the varied emotions and feelings I have

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<sup>9</sup> Woods, “The Indignation of Freedom-Loving People.” Several psychological studies have connected emotions to political movements and positions. For two examples, see James M. Jasper, “The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements,” *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 13, no. 2 (Sep, 1998): 397-424; Sabrina J. Pagano and Yuen J. Huo, “The Role of Moral Emotions in Predicting Support for Political Actions for Post-War Iraq,” *Political Psychology*, vol. 28, 2 (2007): 227-255; Roswein explicitly relates emotional communities to discourse, arguing that they share disciplining or controlling functions. See *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages*.

experienced." Reddy further argued that a culture's dominant emotional standards, what he deemed "emotional regimes," can be morally judged by the amount of freedom they provide individuals for their inherently wandering emotives. The more restrictions a regime imposes preventing the free flow of emotional expression, the greater emotional suffering will result at the individual level. In general, Reddy suggests that the greater emotional freedom the better, a conclusion challenged by the darkened emotional freedom seized by white Southerners during and after secession.<sup>10</sup>

One foot striding in the bustling Atlantic world, the other mired in an agricultural, slaveholding milieu, the Old South's emotional regime proved highly restrictive when it came to the expression of anger for elite women. On the one hand, through the avalanche of periodicals and cheap novels coming in from European and Northern authors, Southerners found themselves increasingly exposed to Victorian standards that equated anger with a dreaded loss of self control. To protect the moral sanctity of the newly enshrined domestic sphere, Victorian fathers were instructed to repress their anger at all costs. Though a woman was considered more emotional by nature, the restrictions bore even tighter on Victorian mothers, who were pressured neither to feel nor express the slightest touch of

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<sup>10</sup> Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*; Diary Entry of 11 February 1862, in C. Alice Reddy Diary, SHC.

anger lest their vile examples be instilled upon their impressionable children. Not coincidentally, in the most widely-read novel of Victorian America, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the villainous Simon Legree epitomized the evil of unrestrained anger with his fury-laden cursing and violence, while the saintly Uncle Tom provided a contrast of Christian tranquility. In short, Victorian culture had declared war against anger, inculcating nineteenth century parents with the impossible goal of eliminating "anything like angry contention or contradiction" from the family circle.<sup>11</sup>

Certainly, elite Southern women spoke of anger in terms of Victorian disapproval. In a common refrain recorded in 1848, one Mississippi matriarch advised her daughter at boarding school to be courteous to her classmates, obey her instructors, but above all, never "show your temper at any time." Following Victorian dogma, Southern women spoke of their anger as something resembling an evil spirit, capable of possessing their psyches and controlling their actions. Anger was "a terrible sin" that mutated many a "man or women into a demon," according to South Carolina's Keziah Brevard in 1861, while Mississippi's Ann Hardeman believed that the emotion made "slaves of weak

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<sup>11</sup> Though they had little to say about the antebellum South, Carol and Peter Stearns argued that Victorian emotional standards, or "emotionology," called for the absolute suppression of anger in the domestic sphere. See *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). For an example of the rising influence of Northern print culture in the antebellum South, see Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class*; and O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*; As quoted in Stearns and Stearns, *Anger*, 39.



minds." Guilt was closely associated with losing one's temper. Writing in 1852, Texan Elizabeth Neblett blamed her unwomanly demand for "independence" for provoking her to unleash "such angry sinful wicked and ungrateful words" to her mother in their constant domestic spats. "I am unfortunate," she sighed, "my temper, my disposition is truly an unfortunate one."<sup>12</sup>

While Victorian standards seeped into Southern homes via the print culture of the day, many Southern families continued to adhere to a patriarchal ethos in which the father ruled over the domestic realm like a petty lord, relegating his wife, children, and slaves to the status of vassal-like dependency. A woman's anger in this case could be considered an unwomanly breach of insubordination. As Thomas Dew explained, a Southern woman "cannot give utterance to her passions and emotions like a man," for her station demanded she "suppress the most violent feelings" stirring in her heart and "wear the face of contentment and ease." No doubt, in reality Southern marriages were more fluid than the patriarchal ideal allowed, with women erupting in bouts of anger that violated their vassal-hood to their husband's authority. For instance, David G. Harris's

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<sup>12</sup> Sarah E. Watkins to Letitia A. Watkins, 7 November 1848, in Dimond and Hattaway, *Letters from Forest Place*, 11-12; Diary Entry of 2 April 1861, in John Hammond Moore, ed., *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War: The Diary of Keziah Goodwyn Hopkins Brevard, 1860-1861* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1993), 107; Diary Entry of 24 November 1859, in Ann Lewis Hardeman Diary, in O'Brien, *An Evening When Alone*, 288; Diary Entry of 12 April 1852 in Erika L. Murr, ed., *A Rebel Wife in Texas: The Diary and Letters of Elizabeth Scott Neblett, 1852-1864* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 33-34.

journal entry of October 1859 consisted of a telling pledge from his wife promising "never to blow me up again." But such incidents were condemned as improper and unwomanly (Mrs. Harris in fact had to sign her name next to the pledge in her husband's diary). And just like their male counterparts, women who served the role of slavemaster bristled against the mask of tranquility imposed by the unique power relations demanded of the position, careful not to allow exhibitions of anger or frustration tarnish their image of mastery. "If I were to show my feelings," explained an exasperated Keziah Brevard in reference to her troublesome bondspeople, they "would only devil me the more." Whether Victorian sensibility or patriarchal subservience proved the foil, Southern women of the Old South's upper crust were clearly pressured to suppress their anger for the good of their household.<sup>13</sup>

The veil of feminine tranquility was to be worn beyond the family circle as well, as Southern women were pressured to swallow their anger when suffering the insults of strangers, particularly from men. In one example, female decorum demanded that Sallie McNeill and her classmates at Baylor College sit

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<sup>13</sup> As quoted in Kathryn Lee Seidel, *The Southern Belle in the American Novel* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1985), 8; Diary Entry of October 1859, in Racine, *Piedmont Farmer*, 119; Diary Entry of 20 February 1861, in Moore, *An Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 92. For an analysis of Southern marriage as patriarchal in nature, see Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). More recently, historians have begun emphasizing companionate marriage in the Old South. See especially Berry, *All That Makes A Man*.

silently through an insulting oration delivered by a visiting male student. The speaker belittled the young ladies in the audience by calling them a "fair and happy cavalcade," a comment which sent the boys in attendance into a frenzy of raucous stomping and cheering while Sallie and her classmates were left feeling "highly insulted." "They insulted us to our face," she fumed in her diary with impotent rage afterwards, furious at finding herself powerless to avenge the honor of her class. Georgia's Anna King experienced a more personal type of insult during a visit to Connecticut in 1852 while forced to suffer through an evening of interrogation from local abolitionist George Perkins. After coaxing King into sharing dinner, Perkins began inquiring about her slaves back on St. Simons Island, asking about their living and working conditions, as well as their religious state. "Never so annoyed in" all her life, King felt that as a guest in the man's home, she was "obliged to keep in my temper," and so responded to his queries with cold, terse answers. "I had many tart replies ready" in hand, she wrote her son after happily escaping the Perkins household, "but I restrained my tongue."<sup>14</sup>

To be sure, Southern women could find partial emotional refuge in the correspondence of trusted (female) friends or

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<sup>14</sup> Diary Entry of 22 August 1858, in Ginny M. Raska and Mary Lynne G. Hill, eds., *The Uncompromising Diary of Sallie McNeill, 1858-1867* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 28-29; Anna Matilda Page King to Hannah Matilda King, 25 August 1852, in Pavich-Lindsay, *Anna*, 190-192.

family. The letters of many Southern ladies echoed the opening lines of Hattie Harmon to her close friend Annie Carleton in 1855: "I am going to have a little social talk to you," she wrote, and "I don't wish" anyone to hear it "other than my warm hearted little Annie." A diary or journal could provide an emotional alcove as well, providing the writer space, as Amanda Edmonds described it, to record the emotions gushing "from the fountain of a secret and hidden heart" secure from the purview of the outside world. Here, Southern women could even air their fears and frustrations against such untouchable topics as the ills of their "peculiar institution." Women like Georgia's Maria Bryan could exclaim "how great an evil is slavery," after describing how she bandaged a slave woman beaten by the family's overseer, her face left "bloody and swelled" from the man's abusive wrath.<sup>15</sup>

But these examples of emotional refuge remained less than entirely secure, for diaries could be raided (Edmonds had her journal stolen at least once) and letters intercepted. Ella Thomas began an 1856 entry blasting the moral depravity of Southern white men before censoring herself in fear "that the prying eye of curiosity might scan these lines" someday.

Mississippi's Sarah Watkins apologized to her daughter Letitia

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<sup>15</sup> Hattie Harmon to Annie Carleton, 13 June 1855, in Letters to Annie Carleton, HAR; Nancy C. Baird, ed., *The Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmonds: Lass of the Mosby Confederacy, 1859-1867* (Delaplane, VA: N.C. Baird, 1984), 20; Maria Bryan to Julia Ann Cumming, 27 January 1827, in Bleser, *Tokens of Affection*, 36.

after her infuriated father had confiscated a handful of confidential letters penned by some of Letitia's female friends, which spoke of her illicit love for a man her father despised. Sarah could only advise greater circumspection in the future. "You ought to write to the girls to be particular what they write to you about," counseled the Mississippi matriarch who had grown accustomed to her husband's imperious ways, for all "your letters have to be seen" by father. In fact, many Southern diarists fully expected their pages to be read by future family members, making their authors mindful of potential audiences while they recorded their sentiments. Lacking an air-tight sanctuary even in their private writings, then, Southern women were compelled to suppress their anger at home and in public, in the company of friends, family, or strangers. When they did lose their tempers and express their rage, the pangs of guilt soon followed. In short, the emotional regime of the Old South was highly restrictive, and emotional suffering on the part of Southern women was undoubtedly the result. "I've always professed to be stoical" in the face of adversity, wrote a frustrated Sallie McNeill as she described the pain of having to habitually bottle her anger. And "bitter has been my punishment for the falsehood - [for] false I knew it to be."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Diary Entry of 12 May 1856, in Virginia Ingraham Burr, ed., *The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 148; Sarah Watkins to Letitia Watkins,

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This historical background makes the emotional explosions of secession all the more startling, a dynamic illustrated by the diaries of three Southern women: Amanda Virginia Edmonds, Keziah Goodwyn Hopkins Brevard, and Cora Alice Ready. At first glance, the three women (all single in 1860) appear to have shared much in common. They all enjoyed the privileges of the planter elite, the wealth and education which that status bestowed. But there were important differences as well. A veteran slave mistress in her late fifties, Keziah Brevard oversaw a vast slaveholding empire in central South Carolina when the secession crisis struck. More introspective and self-doubting than her younger counterparts, Brevard had already experienced her share of hardships by the end of the antebellum years. She had watched her husband succumb to a combination of alcoholism and mental illness (at his lowest point refusing to eat because he feared he was being poisoned) before dying in 1842. After the passing of her father two years later, Keziah, his only surviving child, inherited his lucrative estate. More than a capable manager, she presided over holdings that included four homes, two plantations, 6,000 acres of land, and over 200 slaves by 1860. Yet her long years as slavemaster had made her

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15 October 1851, in Dimond and Hattaway, *Letters from Forest Place*, 45; Diary Entry of September 1861, in Raska and Hill, *The Uncompromising Diary of Sallie McNeill*, 109.

weary and pessimistic rather than hardened to the physical and mental toils that the position demanded.<sup>17</sup>

On the other hand, Amanda Edmonds and Cora Ready were younger (both around 20 years old in 1860), more optimistic in viewpoint and removed from the traumas associated with hands-on slave management. Both hailed from prominent families of the upper South - Edmonds from northern Virginia, Ready from middle Tennessee. And in contrast to Brevard's often melancholic tone, the prewar diaries of Edmonds and Ready exude a sense of optimistic ascendancy, as they both foresaw prominent futures in the ranks of the social elite. Ready had recently graduated with honors from Maryland's prestigious Patapsco Female Institute in 1860 (a powerful writer, she had won a medal for composition there) and quickly made a splash entering the Murfreesboro social scene. Amanda Edmonds likewise mused light-heartedly over potential suitors throughout much of her prewar diary, chronicling the tale of her "young and blooming heart" discovering a "noble, generous" beau, as she described it.<sup>18</sup>

The three diarists highlight three distinct historical episodes relating to the coming of the Civil War - Edmonds on

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<sup>17</sup> Moore, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*. Moore has provided an excellent biographical sketch of Brevard's life prior to 1860 in the introduction to the diary. Also see the analysis of Brevard's diary provided in Shearer Davis Bowman, *At the Precipice: Americans North and South during the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 244-248. In reference Bandura's social-cognitive theory, Edmonds and Ready fit squarely in the high-efficacy category, while Brevard, despite her remarkable independence, showed a mixture of high and low characteristics.

<sup>18</sup> Diary Entry of 13 January 1859, Baird, *Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmondson*, 22.

John Brown's raid and subsequent execution in late 1859, Brevard on the secessionist winter lasting from Lincoln's election until the capture of Fort Sumter, and Ready on the arrival of Union forces to Murfreesboro in the spring of 1862. These three experiences individually triggered the overthrow of the Old South's emotional standards for each woman. Yet they followed a similar emotional pattern as they reacted to their respective crises, even if Ready's hatred for Union soldiers proved more visceral than anything uttered by her two counterparts. Thrown into a tailspin by the traumas of insurrection, secession, and war, they all experienced and attempted to express emotions they recognized as illicit in their intensity. Fear, anxiety, defiance all had their place. But almost immediately and repeatedly thereafter they steered toward anger and hatred, blasting past the cultural ramparts censuring such emotions as wicked and sinful. They gained emotional freedom as a result, and the sense of relief resonates clearly in their written pages. But so too does the darkening of their perspectives, as white Northerners and black slaves became the dehumanized objects of violent scorn, enemies worthy of alienation and even death.

For all three women, the sudden recognition of their new found helplessness (an infuriating shock to a high-efficacy personality) in the face of the sectional crisis explained much



of their immediate anger. With Harpers Ferry a mere 30 miles from her home in Fauquier County, Amanda Edmonds tried to describe the terror and outrage wrought by John Brown's raid in an explosive diary entry recorded on November 11<sup>th</sup> (approximately three weeks after the botched attack), a violent rupture from her normally playful tone. She realized the carefree existence of past days had died an instant, irrevocable death, that white Southerners had been wandering blindly though a world appearing "bright and beautiful," unaware the entire time there were "enemies prowling around us, just waiting for our lives." Immediately, she sought targets on which to unleash the acidic wrath that accompanied her fright. Of course, Brown and his fiendish band of insurgents stood in the forefront, but the list grew as internal threats seemed to linger in every shadow. With a subtle yet subversive touch, Edmonds lashed out against the area's largest slaveholders, men who owned the "most and the vilest" slaves, for failing to secure their human property. Many of the wealthiest planters seemed to sit "perfectly easy" throughout the entire ordeal, she accused, "O! that they would take and confine" their troublesome wretches. Next, stood northern Virginia's slave population, whose actions in the wake of the attack suggested they supported Brown's evil mission. Slaves in nearby Charlestown, for instance, supposedly burned sacks of wheat in connection to the raid. Fanatical in her

anger, Edmonds demanded to see the "fire kindled" and the offenders "signed and burnt until the last drop of blood was dried within and every bone smolder to ashes." Horrified by her hatred and realizing her lust for torture and execution violated almost every tenet of her culture, Edmonds immediately backtracked. "Ah but I couldn't," she explained. The emotional boundaries had been bent, but they were not yet broken.<sup>19</sup>

In a diary entry recorded exactly one year later, Keziah Brevard sounded equally shocked and helpless to learn that Republican Abraham Lincoln had actually won the presidency in November 1860. Convinced that the goal of the Northern abolitionists (i.e. Republicans) was to "exterminate" white Southerners in the "most horrid manner" imaginable, Brevard immediately conjured the nightmarish scenario of finding herself stranded among a black sea of liberated ex-slaves. "The idea of being mixed up with free blacks is horrid," she exclaimed. Brevard then launched into an ideological battle with an imagined abolitionist in her diary, a personal war she would wage for the duration of the secessionist winter. She had been born into a slaveholding society, she insisted in her opening salvo, and so slavery proved her tragic but inevitable inheritance. In fact, Brevard had often wished the South could

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<sup>19</sup> Diary Entry of 11 November 1859, *Ibid*, 31-32.

free itself of its peculiar burden and deport the slave population to some foreign land far from American shores, a chimera harkening back to the failed efforts of the American Colonization Society. But unlike the abolitionists sitting snugly in their New England villages, immediate abolition would force white Southerners to face millions of "half barbarians" seeking their revenge. Brevard then fired off a couple of common clichés - the slaves had been satisfied in their station before outside agitators had filled their minds with exaggerated tales of their own suffering; and Brevard herself had always proven a kind and benevolent slave mistress. "Well, Abolitionists you desire our blood - [but] you are not better than we," she concluded, her righteousness and that of her region having rebuffed the anti-slavery attack for the time-being.<sup>20</sup>

Some sixteen months later in mid-March 1862, Cora Ready watched helplessly as Union troops marched through the streets of her hometown of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, beginning their long military occupation. Ready's rage immediately took aim at the American flag under which the blue-clad soldiers marched, which she interpreted as the Yankees symbolically usurping claim to the legacy of the Founding Fathers. "I felt it would do me so

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<sup>20</sup> Diary Entry of 11 November 1860, Moore, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 50.

much good to trample" the cursed banner "in the ground and stomp" on it, she thundered," the fury "burning into its very depths" of her soul as she watched the flag placed atop the Murfreesboro courthouse. With her parents demanding pragmatic acquiesce on the family's part, Ready was forced to stay silent in the presence of the invaders. For as wealthy slaveholders, the Readys had much to lose in the event that their pro-Confederate sympathies were revealed, resulting perhaps in the arrest of Cora's father or even worse, the dreaded scourge of Yankee "depredations." The family was also aiding and abetting General John Hunt Morgan, providing shelter for the Confederate raider from Union authorities on at least one occasion (Morgan would marry Cora's sister Martha). Unable to unleash her rancor in the open, Ready vented her fiery wrath across the pages of her diary, the one place where "her thoughts and prayers cannot be controlled." Yet her sense of helplessness stemmed from more than the necessity of feigning emotional neutrality in public. She also felt prohibited from contributing her all to the Confederate war effort. For unlike the men who could don the Confederate gray (men like her own brother), Ready felt there was comparatively "little the ladies could do" to manifest their patriotism apart from the passive act of prayer. She repeatedly bristled against being relegated to the sidelines of the war from atop the pedestal of Southern womanhood, even as her

friends and neighbors suffered under Union occupation. "I am a greater rebel than ever before," she insisted a few days after the arrival of the Yankees, "and cry out in agony that I am not a man so that I too might fight."<sup>21</sup>

Just as Edmonds retracted her call for lynching the Charlestown slaves, all three women initially expressed guilt as they acknowledged the unacceptable ferocity of their anger. Keziah Brevard had long suffered from a fiery temper, even writing in the summer of 1860 how she longed to discover "what produced anger in the human body" to preclude her habitual outbursts. Her sense of guilt only intensified as the election of 1860 pushed her emotions to the brink. "Anger and unpleasant thoughts often rise in this breast of mine," she admitted in a long entry etched in late October 1860, and "all that is filthy I immediately call on God to help put down." But the Yankees were pushing her well beyond the limits of her forbearance. Like many of her region, Brevard made little distinction between the abolitionists who called for immediate emancipation, marauders like John Brown who sought slavery's violent death, and the recently-empowered Republicans who pledged to prevent the expansion of slavery into the western territories. They were "Northern cut throats" all, she explained, and whether openly stated or covert, their desire was to free the slaves and

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<sup>21</sup> Diary Entries of 20 March 1862, 12 April 1862, and 22 March 1862, C. Alice Ready Diary, SHC.

drown white Southerners in a deluge of blood. "I must stop now or give way to feelings I should not," she continued, trying to restrain her hatred of Yankee fanatics. But the defensive barriers of the Old South's emotional regime were already slipping. For surely the Biblical decree "to love thy enemy" did not apply to anti-slavery Northerners, she tried to convince herself in the same tortured entry, for how could any "Southerner love those whose highest glory would be to know we were exterminated to give place to a people far inferior."<sup>22</sup>

Cora Ready also feared the ghastly transformations taking place in her psyche during the early stages of Union occupation, especially since her family made it clear they would provide no refuge for her dreadful utterances. "I scarcely know myself," she wrote a few days after the coming of the Yankees in March 1862. "I am angry so much now and use too many harsh expressions," she was warned by a cousin, that her male friends would scarcely recognize when they returned home from war. "Mama says I talk wildly," she admitted later, provoking Cora to reply that she spoke only of "what my heart feels and head approves." And Ready rightly sensed that what truly bothered her family and friends was that her utterances "were unbecoming a young lady" of polite society, especially her continued lament

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<sup>22</sup> Diary Entries of 26 July 1860, and 24 October 1860, Moore, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 21, 43-44.

over how the Confederate ranks remained closed to her on account of gender, even though she would "love to fight and even die" for her country. Increasingly, her emotional expressions even in the once-safe sanctuary of private conversation were no longer permitted. "I never [before] wished I was a man," she wrote once again with exasperation in April, but the revelation of her "weakness and dependence" had never before been so keenly felt.<sup>23</sup>

Building momentum with each passing day, the anger and hatred eventually became too powerful for conventional standards to constrain, and the three diarists became increasingly comfortable in calling for the blood of their enemies. After a few weeks of reflection, Amanda Edmonds's fury at John Brown had grown more ferocious, subsuming both her fears and any sense of empathy for white Northerners. Brown was the "villain, murderer, robber, and destroyer of our virgin peace," she thundered, before delighting at the thought of seeing his body hang from the Virginia gallows, the imagined execution striking "an awfully sublime, glorious, charmed scene." "I almost wish I was man" to see the spectacle firsthand, she wrote. Yet, while Brown was being prepped for martyrdom by his Northern supporters (their numbers myopically exaggerated by the Southern press),

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<sup>23</sup> Diary Entries of 22 March 1862, 19 April 1862, 15 April 1862, C. Alice Ready Diary, SHC.

ex-Northerners lingering within the borders of the Old Dominion fell under a cloud of suspicion. She lauded how the people of nearby Paris, Virginia for repelling a suspected abolitionist under their threat of death, only wishing the Paris mob could have captured the denizen before he escaped to his Northern sanctuary. She likewise approved the course taken by town leaders in Charlestown, Virginia in arresting a band of Northern natives apparently suspected of harboring anti-slavery sentiments, calling upon Southern authorities everywhere to "put them in jail as soon as they set foot" on Southern soil. Anti-slavery Northerners, a slippery term at best for white Southerners, were becoming a "vile enemy" in the eyes of Amanda Edmonds, worthy of violent retribution.<sup>24</sup>

Keziah Brevard's violent hatred for Northern abolitionists in the aftermath of Lincoln's victory likewise showed how the ramparts of the Old South's emotional regime were being run. Brevard wished that the abolitionists/Republicans "could be blotted from the records," or at the very least, that "Lincoln and [vice-president elect Hannibal] Hamlin could have died before" they pushed the country into discord and the South to the brink of race war. The Northern people who had voted them into power were virtual heathen, she concluded, "their wicked

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<sup>24</sup> Diary Entries of 2 December 1859, 3 December 1859, and 17 November 1859, Baird, *The Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmonds*, 34-36.



hearts" revealing "they knew no God or they never could have the feelings they have towards us." She gave freer expression to her hatreds as South Carolina rambled towards disunion. "I do hate a Northern abolitionist - Lord forgive me," she murmured in early December, "but who can love those whose highest ambition is to cut our throats." No longer even willing to call them "neighbors" by the end of the month, Brevard deemed her Northern antagonists the "selfish sons of Satan - not a grain of charity in the whole body."<sup>25</sup>

Unlike Edmonds's desire to see John Brown hanged, or Brevard's prayer that God would crush the Republican cut-throats, Cora Ready soon desired to kill Northern soldiers with her own hand. After imagining her family's home invaded by Yankees, she was shocked how her fury overwhelmed any traces of fear. A Confederate officer had advised the Ready girls to wield their womanhood like a shield in the event they encountered Union soldiers, their feminine gentility hopefully keeping the Yankees' "evil intentions" at bay. But Cora preferred violence, imagining herself gunning down an entire squadron of Northern soldiers as they invaded her bedroom, shooting them "one after another as they come . . . piling their dead bodies at the door as they attempted to enter." In another

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<sup>25</sup> Diary Entries of 14 November 1860, 24 October 1860, 10 December 1860, and 30 December 1860, Moore, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 51, 43, 58, 65.

entry from March, Ready fantasized about feigning loyalty to the Union in order to gain an audience with Unionist Andrew Johnson, allowing her to assassinate Tennessee's arch-traitor in cold blood. Ready even refused in early April to visit the local infirmary housing wounded and sick Union soldiers, a duty she knew was excepted of the town's elite female populace. She feared her "womanly instinct might prevail" at the sight of their suffering, which would provoke her into providing care for the Northern men. She even celebrated the rumor that thirteen of the Yankee patients had died overnight. As "hard-hearted unwoman like as it may seem, even unchristian," she conceded, Ready rejoiced "to hear of the dying," for it would mean fewer Northern men for Confederate soldiers to kill.<sup>26</sup>

Repeatedly, the slave population wandered into the crosshairs of all three women, defying the emotional benevolence expected from paternalist orthodoxy. Disloyalty and ingratitude were their primary complaints, as almost overnight trusted family slaves were transformed into hated enemies under the stress of the sectional crisis. Amanda Edmonds had once voiced true sympathy for the plight of her family's slaves before the John Brown attack. With the death of her father back in 1857, a portion of the Edmonds bondspeople were auctioned off and

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<sup>26</sup> Diary Entries of 11 March 1862, 17 March 1862, and 8 April 1862, C. Alice Ready Diary, SHC.

separated from the slave community. "I know servants are very aggravating sometimes," Amanda wrote about the incident, "but when I see the poor ignorant, and sometimes faithful ones torn away so, I cannot help feeling for them." But now in 1859 she scoffed at the sentiments of fidelity coming from local slaves as they expressed their relief and gratitude that John Brown had been successfully hanged, which she dismissed as mere feints to avoid suspicion and punishment. No longer could her "heart harbor feelings of sympathy," she explained, for they had proven themselves such "heartless, ungrateful wretches" in the wake of Brown's attack. And once the war began, both Edmonds and Ready reacted with dismissive scorn when learning how their slaves were fleeing for the freedom offered by the invading Union Armies. Ready became infuriated at the thought of Union soldiers seizing her family's human property, but she declared good riddance for those who bolted under their own power. She was "very willing to do without" them, she wrote coldly in an utterance repeated *ad infinitum* by ex-slavemasters. "Let them go," echoed Edmonds as the Yankees crept ever closer to Fauquier County in April, 1862, "the very sight of one provokes me."<sup>27</sup>

Having spent her life as a plantation mistress, managing slave labor (with the aid of overseers) for decades and

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<sup>27</sup>Diary Entries of 22 April 1858, 11 November 1859, and 19 April, 1862, Baird, *The Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmonds*, 13, 32, 82; Diary Entry of 23 March 1862, in C. Alice Ready Diary, SHC.

suffering though their everlasting "impudence," Keziah Brevard agonized over the institution's unraveling during the secessionist winter. Repeatedly, she declared herself a tragic victim of circumstance, her fate as a slaveholder sealed by the happenstance of her family, her region, and her race. And that fate included sitting squarely on a ticking time-bomb. Brevard believed that Southern whites had only managed to dodge the first of many abolitionist volleys with John Brown's raid, and that the Northern villains would find plenty of slave allies if they wished to give their dreadful venture a second go. "What a pity that our lives and property are so uncertain," she wrote in late November, "I truly believe we are in the very midst of enemies." A single woman living among a state with a slave majority, Brevard admitted that the fear of slave revolt had stolen many an hour of peaceful slumber, as she "laid awake . . . thinking of our danger." She now feared that the impending abolitionist onslaught would fuel a subaltern rampage equaling the bloodshed of the Indian Revolt in 1857 (an historical episode nervously noted by several Southern slaveholders), with the slaves stepping into the role of Indian Sepoy, and white Southerners that of the hapless British imperialist. She harbored no illusions that the slaves would remain loyal to their masters in the event of civil war, unlike many of her

misguided neighbors. They will "butcher us," she predicted, "I . . . cannot think myself safe."<sup>28</sup>

But more than a feeling of mere terror, Brevard detested how her own slaves seemed to repudiate the paternalist self-image that she had carefully crafted over the last fifteen years, and which she used to defend her conscience from her abolitionist tormentors. With Lincoln's inauguration creeping closer, Brevard began to see signs of slave discontent everywhere. In late December, a suspicious tasting cup of coffee roused suspicions of poison, a paranoia harkening back to her husband's final mad days. Her slaves suddenly seemed like strangers, she tried to explain in January; Brevard could no longer read their actions or believe their professions of good faith. "Negroes are strange creatures," she wrote, "I cannot tell whether they have any good intentions for their owners or not." And two slaves in particular began to especially torment their longtime master - the troublesome Sylvia, and the once-trusted Jim. "Sylvia, if slavery continues I hope no relative I have will keep you about them," Brevard wrote in late January in response to an unnamed offense that suggested some brand of moral degradation. Sylvia's heart was evil, Brevard declared, and she "hated a white face." Likewise, every time Brevard

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<sup>28</sup> Diary Entries of 26 November 1860, 28 November 1860, and 8 January 1861, Moore, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 53-54, 54, 70.

thought "of Jim's impudence my spirit boils," she uttered in February, furious that her field driver had handed out physical punishment to a fellow slave without Brevard's prior approval. Joining together, Sylvia and Jim both unleashed a barrage of verbal abuse Brevard's way in late February, a lashing so hateful and passionate it convinced the veteran slave mistress that their sentiments were shared by the entire slave community. "Oh help, help! Help us - help us," she wrote with frenzy, "it almost makes me hate them when I find out their feelings to me after all I have done for them." They hated her as if "satan's principles" were embedded in her soul. "What are we to expect from slaves when mine hate me as they do," Brevard muttered, the basis of their indignation only being "that I am white and own slaves."<sup>29</sup>

The emotional regime of the Old South finally fell when women like Edmonds, Brevard, and Ready stopped apologizing for their anger and hatred. Amanda Edmonds made no explicit declaration of crossing some dehumanizing emotional Rubicon, but the emotional freedom was evident in the cold-blooded manner she acquiesced, even celebrated, the killing of her Yankee antagonists. No fire-eating advocate of immediate secession, the anger Edmonds had directed against John Brown was easily

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<sup>29</sup> Diary Entries of 26 January 1861, 30 January 1861, 20 February 1861, and 3 February 1861, *Ibid*, 81, 83, 92, 86.

rekindled with the outbreak of war. It burst forth in May 1861, for instance, when Virginia's James W. Jackson shot and killed Union Captain Elmer Ellsworth for attempting to dislodge a Confederate flag flying defiantly atop Jackson's Alexandria hotel, an incident that produced one of the first casualties of the Civil War and splashed across national headlines. "It was a good deed . . . the killing of Captain Ellsworth," she wrote with a ghastly coolness unimaginable two years earlier. After the battle of First Manassas in July, a pistol taken as a trophy from the corpse of one of the "Northern barbarians," a gift from a young Confederate soldier from Mississippi, became her most prized possession. And by 1862, her home virtually in earshot of the fighting, she celebrated the news that fifty Yankee soldiers had reportedly drowned in an attempted river-crossing, praying in fact that the rumor was true, that "every last one may be slain."<sup>30</sup>

Keziah Brevard was much more explicit in explaining her emotional transformation. Up through March 1861, she still prayed to find the "right feelings" for her Northern bedevilers, knowing that all true Christians "should forgive our enemies." But Brevard increasingly felt the task impossible. How could one "feel right feelings towards those who sent John Brown (that

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<sup>30</sup> Diary Entries of 26 May 1861, 13 June 1861, and 18 April 1862, Baird, *The Journals of Amanda Virginia Edmonds*, 49, 51, 81.

devil) to cut our throats," and who had now elected a Black Republican to the presidency. By April, Brevard began casting aside the old Biblical restraints. Firing her final shots against the abolitionist critic still tormenting her conscience, she refused to submit any longer to his moral condemnation. God would serve "as our grand Judge and Master," she thundered, "not the trifling pigmies of the North." And her anger flowed freely. "My feelings to those who wish to trample us to the earth is wrong, I know," she confessed. But she had "tried to do right, and feel right," and all she and her fellow Southerners had received "in turn was hatred" from their Northern counterparts. "Lord forgive me and make me thine - I love my God, my blessed savior," she concluded, "but I cannot love those who hate us." One can only speculate how Brevard's emotions continued to wander with the onset of war, for her journal stopped without explanation after the surrender of Fort Sumter.<sup>31</sup>

One year later, Cora Ready voiced a similar sentiment. By April 1862, she actually embraced the Yankee depredations that were reportedly being committed against the civilian population, hoping, in fact, they would prove "outrageous," for that would help galvanize local commitment to the Confederate cause.

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<sup>31</sup> Diary Entries of 4 March 1861, 7 April 1861, Hammond, *A Plantation Mistress on the Eve of the Civil War*, 97, 112-113.



Ready's religious faith had also been perverted by April, admitting that she truly believed "he who kills the greatest number of abolition thieves and their abettors is the best Christian." It was this destructive enmity that her friends and family feared, and which Ready had no intention of suppressing any longer. "I am shocked at myself at times when I think of the wishes which my heart frames and lips utter," she wrote after experiencing six weeks of Union occupation. But "as to God's anger against me for my feelings" of indignation against the Yankees, Ready could not "think God means for me to love them, when He says 'love your enemies.'" For hers was not a petty conflict with a jealous classmate or a trivial dispute or with an irksome neighbor; the Biblical command to "Love Thy Enemy" simply could not apply to her "implacable" Yankee foes. And so like Edmonds and Brevard before her, Cora Ready's anger reached a level of personal sanctification that shielded it from social condemnation or internal guilt. Ready's journal ended on the last day of April 1862; Yankee authorities arrested her father after he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Union. As the family bid what might have proven their final farewell, Mr. Ready told Cora where to find his pistol back home in case it should be needed. "If it is necessary, I shall use it," she promised.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Diary Entries of 24 March 1862, 21 April 1862, and, 12 April 1862, and 30 April 1862, C. Alice Ready Diary, SHC.

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While the ravages of war multiplied ("each man we lose but serves to render more intense our hatred of the Yankee," Ella Thomas explained), so too did the anger of Southern women deepen. While much of it was safely channeled in the direction of the Yankee aggressors, the emotional freedom propelled several elite women to attack Southern patriarchy for the very first time. In response to a string of military defeats in early 1862, for instance, South Carolina's Mary Leverett wrote her sons, both serving in Confederate gray, to unleash her fiery wrath. She started by blasting President Jefferson Davis and Secretaries Judah P. Benjamin and Stephen Mallory, common targets of Confederate disdain. But more than that, she condemned the "whole generation" of Southern men for the Confederacy's woes, deeming them due for a "thorough rousing," and wishing she could grasp them by their necks and "shake them to their senses." "I am disgusted with men since this war began," she thundered, they were "slow and stupid, a drinking, swearing, good for nothing set, selfish & unpatriotic . . . not half as honest as women." "How I hate 'em," she raged. A few weeks later, with Charleston's fall seeming imminent, she lamented how Southern men had "turned cowards" comparable to a "little puppy dog with the tail between the legs." She

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apologized for the outburst, never intending “to indulge in political” rants, yet she found herself compelled to speak her mind and satisfy the “fullness of her pen.” These were the new emotives and gender dynamics potentially unleashed by the war, and which Southern men would struggle to reverse once the fighting ended.<sup>33</sup>

But, the emotional freedom gained by Southern women was not a straightforward narrative of liberation. Held as the paragons of Christian civility by the same system of patriarchy that had long disempowered them, and having long utilized their domestic influence to mold a more morally refined existence, a darkness fell on the horizons of these women that would leave a lasting impact on Southern society. That impact might best be measured in their children. In 1862, Georgia’s Ella Thomas correctly noted that upon the “childish imagination” of Southern youths, “impressions will be made” and hatreds for the Yankees engendered that will “grow with their growth and never leave them.” Theirs would be the generation that would violently overthrow Republican rule during Reconstruction, launch Jim Crow and the lynching wave by the turn of the century, and embrace the race-baiting, North-hating demagoguery of leaders like James K. Vardaman and Benjamin Tillman. From Virginia, five-year-old

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<sup>33</sup> Diary Entry of 1 January 1862, *The Secret Eye*, 200; Mary Leverett to Milton Leverett, 20 May 1862 and Mary Leverett to Frederick Leverett, 17 June 1862, in Frances W. Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 128-129, 134.

William Fleet interrupted his mother's prayer for Confederate General John Magruder one night in January 1862, insisting that Stonewall Jackson take precedence above all others. The reason being, William's mother reported with horror, was that Jackson had "took so many prisoners and killed so many Yankees."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Diary Entry of 2 July 1862 in Burr, *The Secret Eye*, 207-208; Maria L. Fleet to Alexander F. Fleet, 12 January 1861, in Fleet and Fuller, *Green Mount*, 97.

#### **CHAPTER 4: WAR BY HATE: HIGH-EFFICAY CONFEDERATES AND THE CONTAGION OF ANGER**

"There is a great deal said about the gods of battles," Gideon Linceum scoffed from the Texas homefront in January 1862. The outspoken atheist took delight at the spectacle of both Union and Confederate leaders cloaking themselves in the rhetoric of providence, while their soldiers butchered each other by the thousands on the battlefield without decisive results. "Well, if there be any such warrior god, and we are to judge of his character," he wrote a friend, "it is a 'dem' bad one." For Linceum, Northern aggression had started the Civil War (it had nothing to do with divine intervention), and Southerners could end it only by vanquishing the Yankees through force. Six months previous, he wrote of the dreadful "necessity to slaughter a nation of lunatics" in order to achieve Confederate independence. An eccentric by any estimate, Linceum's high-efficacy interpretation proved far more popular than his anti-Christian outlook would suggest. Reuben Pierson, a young Louisianan soldier, shared his perspective. Like so many Confederates, he pledged to defeat the "unholy and base legions of Lincolndom" or die trying. Pierson's resolve only intensified after a string of crushing defeats in the summer of

1863. "I for one would welcome death a thousand times rather" than reunite "with such a band of robbers [sic], murderers and unhumane creatures as we are now fighting," he thundered. "The world cannot find a parallel for their beastliness," he believed. "I almost imagine that the keeper of Hades would refuse such beings admittance into the infernal regions." So resonated the high-efficacy motto during the war years: victory over a devilish foe, or death before the dishonor of defeat.<sup>1</sup>

As historian Drew Faust has recently shown, Civil War soldiers (and the civilians who supported them) worked hard to overcome their reluctance to kill. Despite all the patriotic saber-rattling and the religious rhetoric of a "just war," the act still defied human instinct in general and Christian morality in particular. Adding to the moral dilemma of combat for Southerners, the vast majority of Union soldiers shared their own language, religion, and racial identity. They could project the image of a hireling Union Army composed of Hessians and foreigners, but battlefield experience would easily undermine such comforting lies. As Mississippi's Margaret Erwin pointedly explained, one could become "completely attuned to the morality of an outright shooting of a despised figure, but when it is unknown brother against unknown brother," it became a

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<sup>1</sup> Gideon Linsecum to B.B. Seat, 29 January 1862, Gideon Linsecum to G. J. Durham, 27 May 1861, and Gideon Linsecum to G. W. Campbell, 29 November 1861, in Linsecum et al, *Gideon Linsecum's Sword*, 159; Reuben Allen Pierson to William H. Pierson, 31 January 1861, and Reuben Allen Pierson to Mary Catherine Pierson, 11 August 1863, in Cutrer and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*, 77, 207.

different matter entirely. And yet, as the fatality figures attest, American soldiers on both sides transformed themselves into killing machines with horrifying success. It was hatred, plain and simple, that helped many white Southerners separate their own humanity from that of their Northern antagonists, and which ultimately allowed them to kill a dehumanized Yankee foe. While a fatalist personality could foster an acquiescence to violence as well (an issue to be addressed in the next chapter), the high-efficacy Confederate stood more attached to the kind of ferocious enmity fueling a willingness, sometimes even a lust, to spill Northern blood.<sup>2</sup>

Historians have showed how vengeance pushed Civil War soldiers to enlist and keep fighting. This chapter will instead focus on the intensity of Confederate hatred, and specifically how it mutated over time for both soldiers and civilians alike. It will argue that Confederate visions of the Yankee enemy became so intense in their dehumanized fury, that the regional stereotypes of boorish merchants and greasy mud-sills were jettisoned for far harsher depictions. For individuals like Gideon Linsecum and Reuben Pierson, the anger and hatred became so firmly entrenched in the Confederate soul that a destructive war geared to annihilating the enemy became acceptable as both

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<sup>2</sup> Margaret Johnson Erwin to Carrie, July 1863, in Erwin, *Some Like Green Laurel*, 133. Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2008), especially pages 32-60. Mark E. Neely Jr. in particular has emphasized how the commonality of white supremacy worked to limit the destructiveness. See Neely, Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*.

strategy and ultimate goal; as both means and end. Furthermore, the chapter will illustrate how the antipathies generated by the Civil War developed a contagion-like quality infecting the very life-blood of Southern culture itself. With the emotional regime of the Old South in shatters, and with the fervor inherent in a defensive war waged to protect one's homeland, Southern hatreds increasingly turned against internal enemies - both real and imagined. As one Georgian woman described it by early 1863, a brutal hatred for the Yankees had simply "become part of my religion," an overpowering emotional perspective many would find difficult to discipline and uniformly channel in the direction of the blue-clad marauders alone.<sup>3</sup>

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Confederate hatred of dehumanizing nature was evident as early as the opening weeks and months of the Civil War. As we have seen, it was during this timeframe that William Nugent and Frank Winston confessed their "fiendish" desire to kill Yankees and ravish their homeland, that Savannah's Richard Arnold was

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<sup>3</sup> Julia Fisher to her brother-in-law William, 1 March 1863, in Arch Fredric Blakey, Ann Smith Lainhart, and Winston Bryant Stephens, Jr., eds. *The Rose Cottage Chronicles: Civil War letters of the Bryant-Stephens families of North Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), 209-210. A handful of historians have analyzed how hatred and vengeance pushed soldiers to fight and kill during the Civil War. For three prominent examples, see McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 148-155; Phillips, *Diehard Rebels*, 40-75; Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*. Reid Mitchell argued that Civil War soldiers started the conflict with extreme hatred, with both sides believing their antagonists were nothing more than savages, but eventually they gained a more humane perspective with firsthand encounters. See Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Viking, 1988). Bell Wiley, while emphasizing moments of fraternization, also believed that hatred was the dominant emotional experience for Confederates in relation to their Yankee enemies. See Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 308-321. For a work that analyses specific examples of the black flag being unveiled during the Civil War, see George S. Burkhardt, *Confederate Rage, Yankee Wrath: No Quarter in the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2007).



promising a "war to the knife," and that Gideon Linsecum urged his countrymen to hoist the black flag of no quarter. Some Confederate soldiers showed an amazing ability to depersonalize their enemy after their first taste of combat. After fighting the battle of First Manassas that claimed roughly 800 American lives (a ghastly number when compared to previous American military endeavors) South Carolina's Richard Simpson sounded more concerned with collecting war trophies from the bodies of the dead Yankees than reflecting on a troubled psyche. He wrote his sister apologizing for his inability to garner the most coveted Union items (sabers, pistols, and bayonets), but he could easily procure "some yankee bones" if she so desired. Simpson had also acquired a number of letters from the fallen bluecoats penned for their families and friends back home, items that seemed heavily inclined to rouse the flickers of empathy from a fellow soldier. But as far as the young Confederate was concerned, their prose merely displayed how their Yankee authors "were of the lowest down set in the world." For Simpson, it seemed, the sight of the Union dead was simply not a moral problem.<sup>4</sup>

At the onset of war in the summer of 1861, there were several factors that fueled the hatred of high-efficacy

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Simpson to Anna Tallulah Simpson, 22 August 1861, in Guy R. Everson, and Edward H. Simpson, Jr., eds. *"Far, Far, from Home": The Wartime Letters of Dick and Tally Simpson, Third South Carolina Volunteers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 64-65.

Confederates like Simpson. Befitting the historical era of the mid-nineteenth century, the ideology of nationalism helped stoke the flames of hatred from the very beginning. At least for those most zealous in their quest to accomplish Confederate nationhood, the effort could condone and even sanctify tremendous human sacrifice. Echoing her political leaders, Georgia's Ella Thomas declared in July her preference to see Southern rivers drowned in "blood and every mountain top covered with the bleached bones of our countrymen" before submitting to Yankee rule. Such rabid nationalism could serve to devalue individual human lives. After learning of the Confederacy's surrender of Fort Donelson in February 1862, for instance, Confederate officer Alexander Pendleton believed that the defenders had deserted the interests of their country in the name of self-preservation. "What difference does a few hours more or less here of life make," he stated bitterly, when placed in "comparison with the future destiny of the people?" Such statements show a nationalism that could justify the deaths of countrymen, and which could surely condone the wholesale slaughter of the nation's enemy.<sup>5</sup>

In the distinctive manner in which high-efficacy Confederates emblazoned the cause of independence with divine

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<sup>5</sup> Diary Entry of 13 July 1861, in Burr, *The Secret Eye*, 185; As quoted in Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 105. See McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 155.

sanctification, religion could become infused with nationalist zeal as well. This version of heroic "providence" had nothing to do with fatalism or helpless trepidation, but served the role of civil religion to bolster Southern independence as a holy cause. As Mary Chestnut recalled (in an unintended double negative) of Confederate faith, "there was not one doubt . . . in our bosoms that we are not the chosen people of God." The logical concomitant, if one's cause was sanctified by the Almighty's will, the enemy was inevitably devilish and depraved. With the blessing of providence firing his resolve by the end of 1861, Reuben Pierson believed Northern blood would flood the Potomac until "Lincoln and all his cabinet became convinced that a supreme being is sending a just punishment upon them for their wickedness." After witnessing the carnage accrued by the Confederate victories at the Seven Days Battles in the summer of 1862, Tally Simpson (Richard's brother) wrote home his belief that "God is with us because our people are more conscientious and religious than our enemies." The Almighty "has inflicted this war as an evil upon the wicked ones, and until he has sufficiently punished them, and perhaps us for our sins, the war may be continued to carry out his divine purpose." Such confidence would of course be greatly shaken with the loss of battles, famed leaders (especially Stonewall Jackson), countless lives, and eventually Confederate nationhood itself. Yet some

Southerners doggedly clung to the binary of Yankee sinners and rebel saints even into 1865 and beyond. "We were engaged in a just and holy war," Virginia's James Scott lamented from the darkness of defeat. "I doubt not - in his own good time God will give us a new and more beautiful [banner] which shall float proudly and wide over our foes."<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps the strongest element feeding initial Confederate enmity was the simple fact that the Yankees had invaded their homeland. As a Confederate soldier famously explained to his Union captors with simple but unassailable logic in 1862: "I am fighting because you are down here!" With the essence of Southern manhood largely emanating from one's role as protector of his household, however, the threat posed by the Yankee marauders to a man's actual family circle could inflame a passionate fury among Confederate combatants. "They fight like devils in a tophet," admitted a Northerner of his rebel adversaries in 1862, and their ferocity came from the fact that they were "fighting to keep an enemy out of [their] own neighborhood & protect [their] property."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As quoted in Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 81; As quoted in Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 163-164; Reuben Allen Pierson to William Pierson, 26 November 1861, in Curter and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*; Taliaferro N. Simpson to Caroline Virginia Taliaferro Simpson, 14 July 1862, in Everson and Simpson, Jr., "Far, Far from Home," 136. Historian Harry Stout argued that Americans created their first "fully functioning" civil religion amid the massive bloodshed of the Civil War. See Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, xvii.

<sup>7</sup> As quoted in McPherson, *What They Fought For, 1861-1865* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), 19. Several historians have pointed to the vital importance of fighting for one's "home" (both as a metaphor for their nation and as a concrete motive) in fueling the Confederate will to fight. See McPherson, *What They Fought For*, 18-25; Chandra Manning argued that Southern men saw the fight to protect the institution of slavery as vital to protecting

While Confederate rancor often appeared in the war's earliest days, the Southern determination to protect the homefront from Yankee despoliation exploded into ferocious indignation once Union commanders developed "hard war" tactics by 1864 that specifically brought the war to civilian doorsteps. For some passive personalities, the Yankee strategy carried out by Generals William Sherman and Philip Sheridan provoked uncharacteristic moments of anger and enmity. "Has war ever been carried out like this before, among civilized people?" the normally placid Josiah Gorgas thundered at the end of 1863, when "homes, gardens, crops, mills, all intended for the use and sustenance of the non-combatant population are relentlessly and systematically destroyed." By the following summer, the Confederacy's chief ordinance officer was demanding the annihilation of the "marauding scoundrels" altogether, believing that the conflict had reached the point where "no mercy can be shown the enemy," and that Confederate victory could be achieved "only by killing all." But for many Southerners, the Union's hard war only reinforced their conviction of their enemy's barbarity and doubled their fury-laden resolve to fight. "I think they placed themselves outside of the pale of civilization by the course they have pursued," wrote Stephen Ramseur in

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the Southern homestead. See Manning, *What this Cruel War Was Over*; and Aaron Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought: Family & Nation in Civil War Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

reaction to Sheridan's Shenandoah Valley Campaign. He, for one, was willing to fight to the bitter end "rather than submit to these miserable Yankees." The intensity may have been reignited by the Union depredations, but a high-efficacy rebel like Ramseur had been fighting with such determination and hateful passion since 1861.<sup>8</sup>

Likewise, Southerners exploded over the Lincoln administration's lurch toward emancipation and especially their decision to mobilize black soldiers into the Union Army. Bred from a slaveholding culture that had long deemed Africans not only racially inferior but inherently rapacious and barbaric, it was relatively easy for Confederates to champion the black flag to nullify the Union's black menace. Echoing many of his comrades, Davis Bryant promised his family that if the Union did indeed utilize black troops, "you'll hear of some of the 'damdest fights' you ever heard of" in the form of Southern retaliation. Every man in his unit was "determined to his best towards *wiping them out completely*," Bryant assured, a threat that was manifested at such notorious battles as Fort Pillow, Milken's Bend, and Saltville, among others. Even moderate

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<sup>8</sup> Diary Entries of 30 December 1863, and 7 July 1864, in Wiggins, *The Journals of Josiah Gorgas*, 88, 120; Stephen Dodson Ramseur to Ellen Elizabeth Richmond Ramseur, 10 October 1864, in Kundahl, *The Bravest of the Brave*, 287. The best account of changes in Union war policy remains Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Historians have argued that while the Union's "Hard War" approach may have crippled Southern resistance physically and logistically, it actually served to reinvigorate Confederate psychological resolve. For two examples, see LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1830-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); and Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought*.

Southerners could condone massacring black soldiers. "This policy seems severe," Kentucky minister George Browder admitted in 1862, "but the Southern people can never consent to treat negroes as prisoners of war" as if they were white combatants. The Union's mobilization of black troops was egregious enough to debase Northern whites in Confederate estimates. After coming across a group of wounded African Americans donning Union blue in 1864, Virginian chaplain William Black lashed out furiously at Northern political leaders for thrusting black soldiers into the front lines. "Cowardly wretches! they cannot subdue [us] themselves, and they force the ignorant and timid negroes to help them," he vented to his diary. "The Yankees are far more to be blamed than the negroes, and I feel more for the latter than I do for them."<sup>9</sup>

But again, as historian Jason Phillips has shown, the Confederates harbored the dual image of the Yankee soldier as barbaric marauder (from which the hard war despoiler and black liberator logically developed) and bumbling incompetent from the very beginning of the fray. For inherent in the process of constructing a national community is the creation and/or embellishment of antithetical counterpoints - a role, of course,

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<sup>9</sup> Davis Bryant to William Bryant, 25 March 1863, in Blakely et al, *Rose Cottage Chronicles*, 214; Diary Entry of 17 August 1862, in Richard L. Troutman, ed., *The Heavens are Weeping: The Diaries of George Richard Browder, 1852-1886* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 125; Diary Entry of 2 March 1864, in Alex L. Wiatt, ed., *Confederate Chaplain William Edward Wiatt: An Annotated Diary* (Lynchburg: H.E. Howard, 1994), 142. Many historians have written on this subject. For an example, see Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 44-47.

into which the Northern Yankee was immediately cast in 1861. But the process of instantly turning antebellum friend into bellum foe was neither easy nor straightforward, and Southerners wandered wildly in the creation of a fiendish Yankee "other" worthy of Confederate blood and steel. In many ways, Confederate nationalism can be conceived as a makeshift effort created very quickly under the pressures of secession and the Civil War, forcing Southern leaders to reassemble the available symbols, ceremonies, and mythologies of American nationalism most amenable to the creation of the South's new "imagined community." A similar process transpired as Southerners defined the conceptual boundaries of the new, dehumanized Northerner wrought by the experience of revolution and war, a process that built upon established stereotypes but which ultimately became something unrecognizable from the antebellum era (and beyond the binary images described by Phillips).<sup>10</sup>

At the war's beginning, it was common for Southerners to initially project the familiar regional banalities onto the bluecoats as they borrowed from polemical language, leading them to envision a splendid victory against an internally flawed Yankee nation. "The Northerners are a cool, calculating people and are influenced more by self interest than by principle,"

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<sup>10</sup> Phillips, *Diehard Rebels*, especially pages 40-75. For discussions of nationalism and its inherent construction of external others, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; and Said, *Orientalism*. This interpretation of Confederate nationalism being "assembled on the fly," comes from Cobb, *Away Down South*, 54-59.



South Carolina's Tally Simpson assured his aunt in comforting rhetoric just after Lincoln's election. And if "they are [stopped] for three months, multitudes will be thrown out of employment, and the cry for bread will be so general that the largest cities North will be overrun by the hungry mobs." Assuming the Union desire to crush the Confederacy was devoid of any ideological component, Southerners believed the Northern invaders lacked the patriotic fire that stirred Confederate souls. "It does certainly seem strange that the Yankees should be possessed as to leave their home and come so far to fight a people for whom but last year they claimed the feelings of brotherly love," North Carolina's Henry Graves mused as late as June 1862. And whether they were mere rhetorical devices or represented earnest belief, Southerners routinely referred to Union soldiers initially as "hessians," conscripts, bounty collectors, and ignorant immigrants, fighting for monetary gain or through coercion rather from patriotic sentiment or ideological conviction.<sup>11</sup>

But the notion of an incompetent Northern enemy was largely shattered as Union victories swelled in the spring of 1862, and then again in the summer of 1863. As one Texas officer put it: "We have despised them, and have considered one Southerner as a

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<sup>11</sup>Tally Simpson to Carolina Virginia Taliaferro Miller, 12 November 1860, in Everson, and Simpson, *"Far, Far, from Home,"* xvii; Henry Graves to Sarah Dutton Graves, 13 June 1862, in Graves Family Papers, SHC.

match for five Yankees," he wrote his uncle, "we have thought that the Yankees would always take to their heels after firing a few rounds." But the Union bluecoats had proven their mettle in battle after battle, and the Texan hoped the military rebukes would serve "a good purpose in dispelling these false illusions and causing us to throw off our apathy." Some Confederates attributed Yankee persistence to the prototypical Northern penchant for automatism, as the cog-like mudsills were remade into blue-coated fighting machines. "Perseverance is the quality in which as a people, we are inferior to the Northern fiends," a South Carolina rice planter opined in late 1863, "if we fail . . . it will be due less even to their superior preparation than their pertinacity and endurance." It also helped that the heartless Yankees placed little value on human life itself, an utterance that would forever become attached to the reputation of Union commander Ulysses "Butcher" Grant most specifically. After watching Union soldiers "work like Trojans" in constructing trenches outside Jackson, Mississippi in August 1863, William Nugent decided the Yankees were "no mean antagonists," for "they count time and men and money as nothing, esteeming the length of the war as of no moment." Heartless determination and the heaviest battalions - already the Lost Cause staples explaining Northern victory were being sown.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Thomas Goree to Pleasant Williams Kittrell, 15 February 1862, in Thomas W. Cutrer, ed., *Longstreet's Aide: The*

For others, the Yankee image began to wander into that of a foreign "race," the most accessible and firmly established antebellum discourse with which to demarcate a people as alien and inferior. Of course, as historian Michael O'Brien has shown, antebellum Southerners used "race" almost ubiquitously as a versatile synonym for the term "people," describing different ethnic and national groups. When Alabama native Daniel Hundley denounced the Yankees as a "close-fisted race" in 1860, he was actually referring to people of a particularly acquisitive and entrepreneurial mindset, an odious breed burgeoning even below the Mason-Dixon line. North Carolina private William Wooster even referred to his South Carolinian comrades as the Palmetto "race," with their most distinguishing feature being their penchant to curse the Northerners in the "strongest terms of which the language is capable," and their vociferous demand for a policy of "no quarter" in battle. It was not unusual for Confederates to speak of the Yankee "race" in the familiar terms of a national other. "Oh how intensely I did hate the whole race of Yankees," thundered Virginia's Lucy Buck in July 1862, for example, infuriated over the rumor that her Northern

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*Civil War Letters of Major Thomas J. Goree* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1995), 7; Robert Allston to Adele Allston, 11 November 1863, in J. H. Easterby, ed., *The South Carolina Rice Plantation as Revealed by the Papers of Robert F. W. Allston* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 197; William Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent, 27 August 1863, in Cash, and Howorth, *My Dear Nellie*, 129.

occupiers planned to force local civilians to pledge the Unionist oath under the threat of banishment or even death.<sup>13</sup>

Such rhetoric was powerful enough in the romantic age of nationalism to justify hatred and violence, for Europeans had unleashed a barrage of nationalist-inspired bloodletting during the "Springtime of Nations" barely a decade earlier. Yet some Confederates pushed the language of "race" towards that of a biological conception, denigrating the Yankees as embodying something less than full whiteness; something distinct and apart from the herrenvolk Confederates. As historian Reid Mitchell has suggested, Confederates envisioned Yankee soldiers as violent marauders wreaking havoc on the Southern landscape and attacking helpless women and children. Such was not the accepted mode of combat characteristic of civilized (i.e. white) nations, but more reminiscent of how Americans envisioned Indian warfare, an image that helped justify their repression and eventual elimination from white American society. The pillaging Yankee could be seen as merely a savage in disguise, a barbarian cloaked in the trappings of civilized military uniforms and a deceiving white skin. "Never be insulted by that cowardly race," Louisiana's Jared Sanders warned a female friend in 1862,

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<sup>13</sup>See O'Brien, *Conjectures of Order*, 215-252; See Daniel R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, ed. By William J. Cooper, Jr., (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), pages 129-162; William A. Wooster to Lucy Wright Wooster, 11 November 1861, in The Wooster Family Papers, SHC; Diary Entry of 26 July 1862, in Elizabeth R. Baer, ed., *Shadows on my Heart: The Civil War Diary of Lucy Rebecca Buck of Virginia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 130.

for "they wage war upon women and feeble old men." More explicitly, Sarah Buswell blasted the "destructive work of the [Northern] Vandals" who had ravaged the local Virginia countryside that same year, acts of debauchery that contradicted their claim to white civilization. "I think they showed themselves a barbarous nation," Buswell fumed to a cousin serving in Confederate arms, "I do not think the Indians ever did a much worse act; considering one always passed for a civilized and enlightened people while the other we know were not."<sup>14</sup>

But especially as the Union war evolved into a struggle for black freedom (or at least the destruction of slavery), some Confederates began to forge an increased mental connection between the white Yankees and their African American allies. Though conceptually murky, this was a dramatic departure nonetheless for a culture so heavily steeped in the ethos of white supremacy and racial separateness. Repeatedly, it infuriated Southerners to see Yankee officers and soldiers offer support and aid to their slaves, a complaint that echoed throughout the Confederate states during the four years of war. "Is their love for their Black Brother greater than they

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<sup>14</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 24-25; Jared Young Sanders to Elizabeth Alzira Wofford, 21 December 1862, in Mary Elizabeth Sanders, ed., *Letters of a Southern Family, 1816-1941* (Lafayette, LA: University of Louisiana at Lafayette, 2001), 72; Sarah Ellen Buswell to John Hite, 9 February 1862, in Harlan R. Jessup, ed., *The Painful News I Have to Write: Letters and Diaries of Four Hite Brothers of Page County in the Service of the Confederacy* (Baltimore: Butternut & Blue, 1998), 81-82.

experience for their white?," as Ella Thomas asked with aggrieved shock in 1862. "Oh they are a miserable fanatic set."<sup>15</sup>

Many Confederates believed that the Northern mission to abolish slavery was coupled with a desire for full-fledged racial "amalgamation." Indeed, in Confederate minds the two things were often indistinguishable. In other words, the Yankee were not fighting merely to destroy slavery, but to spread their fanatical system of social equality between whites and blacks that would lead ultimately to racial mixing. Southerners had long called the party of Lincoln the "Black Republicans" with its screaming racial overtones, and they had even accused the Republicans' 1860 vice-presidential candidate Hannibal Hamlin of having mixed race ancestry himself. According to Georgia's James Flourney back in 1858, interracial unions between white Northerners and free blacks were creating an "amalgamation of blood" making Americans above the Mason-Dixon line physically resemble the "Spaniards and Mexicans." And as the Union made clear its intent to destroy slavery, Confederate soldiers began echoing such eccentric racial theorists. Give me an "everlasting war in preference to a union with a people who condescend to equalize themselves with the poor, ignorant & only half civilized negro," Reuben Pierson wrote in a scorching letter to

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<sup>15</sup> Diary Entry of 1 January 1862, in Burr, *The Secret Eye*, 200. Jason Philips touches on how Confederates began to connect white Yankees and African Americans in *Diehard Rebels*, 66-67.

his father in March 1864: "Such a people is base, vile," he continued, and "altogether unworthy of the honorable and once proud name of Americans." The Union troops seemed to be forfeiting the status of full-fledged whiteness. Virginia's John Dooley met a Danville woman in 1865 who "had lived long enough to have grown old in her hatred of Yankees." According to Dooley's recollection, the woman considered "herself a pretty good Christian," but declared that "if the Yankees and white people were going to be all together in heaven, she believed she'd rather not go to heaven at all."<sup>16</sup>

Though Confederates may have maintained a greater comfort in killing African American soldiers, the long and bitter experience of fighting Unionists, black and white alike, gradually reduced the yawning racial barrier separating their common enemies. In rhetoric, at least, the most ferocious rebels spoke of providing no quarter for either set. In the aftermath of the battle of the Crater in July 1864, one of the conflict's most frenzied and brutal engagements that devolved to vicious hand-to-hand combat, Confederates were struck by the faceless, nameless heap of lost humanity that had accumulated in the scorched environs before them. "I have never seen such a sight in my life," a rebel survivor described it, "I have never

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<sup>16</sup> James J. Flourney to Robert Allston, December 1858, Easterby, *The South Carolina Rice Plantation as Revealed in the Papers of Robert F.W. Allston*, 148. Reuben A. Pierson to William H. Pierson, 22 March 1864, in Cutrer and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*, 228; Robert Emmett Curran, ed., *John Dooley's Civil War: An Irish American's journey in the First Virginia Infantry Regiment* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), 183.

beheld such a slaughter." Southern soldiers were particularly struck by how the field was strewn by black and white Union soldiers lying in one horrific mass. "The dead and wounded Yankees and negroes were literally crammed in our trenches and bomb proofs," a North Carolina captain wrote of the scene, "well had our boys taken revenge for the unmerciful actions of the enemy." Strikingly, this Confederate officer barely differentiated between the two groups and thus quietly violated the entrenched hierarchy of white over black defied by the amassed human wreckage; they were simply enemies all."<sup>17</sup>

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As many commentators have consistently observed, a psychological gap inevitably emerges between soldier and civilian during wartime. The soldier baptized in the blood of the battlefield often struggles to communicate his unholy conversion to his friends and family back home. As Milton Levrett wrote his mother from Fort Sumter in 1864, one could scarcely fathom the actual site of a young soldier lying on the "surgeon's table with a horrid wound," and to see "the very life blood itself . . . running down and dripping on the floor . . . and hear him begging the doctor just to give him 'one little dose of medicine and kill him and all the pain will be over.'"

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<sup>17</sup>J.P. Wood to Mrs. R.G. Wood, 5 August 1864, in William Emory Wilson, "Diary of W.E. Wilson: A Confederate Soldier, 1862-1863," SCL. ; Diary Entry of 30 July 1864, in T. H. Pearce, ed., *The Diary of Captain Henry A. Chambers* (Wendell, NC: Broadfoot's Bookmark, 1983), 210.



But Civil War soldiers, particularly Southerners, usually worked to retain their domestic identities as partners and providers of the family hearth. And with the constant flow of homebound letters, furloughed soldiers, and wounded returnees, Southern civilians were not completely adrift to the emotional world of the soldiers at the front. They were not fighting far overseas as would prove the case for the twentieth century counterparts, and their correspondence was not censored by some military watchdog. In an extreme but chilling example illustrating the connection, Kentucky's George Browder caught a vicarious glimpse of combat's fury while counseling a local soldier wounded in Virginia. The young man suffered a paralyzed arm and what modern psychologists would probably describe as post-traumatic stress disorder, constantly falling into lapses where he believed himself back in the thick of combat. "In his delirium he was fighting his battles over, burying the dead, charging batteries, talking to his comrades, and cursing yankees, with the most awful oaths," a horrified Browder explained in 1864. "When he thought he was burying the [Northern] dead [he] was cursing and vilifying yankees, urging the boys not to bury them deep, the buzzards would eat them - they would be nearer heaven . . . all such horrible talk." For a moment at least, the Kentucky preacher felt the dark emotions resonating from war. More commonly, with the Confederacy under invasion and as

civilian hardship became an ever more conscious Union war aim by 1864, the physical and emotional chasm separating homefront and warfront narrowed in the Civil War South.<sup>18</sup>

Still, many soldiers tried to shield their families from the horrors and hatreds provoked by combat. They strove to depict their battlefield experiences as evoking short-lived moments of military rage where prewar morality was only momentarily cast aside, experiences akin to temporary insanity. "In all my engagements with the enemy when I come in sight of their blue yankee uniforms a feeling more like that of a fiend than human takes possession of me," Georgia's Barrington King wrote home, "and I only feel an intense desire to kill, to strike to the earth all that comes in my reach." William Clarke wrote his wife Mary Bayard to apologize for his actions in the aftermath of Fredericksburg (his exploits had apparently become the subject of neighborhood gossip), storming the breastworks, shaking his cane at the defeated Yankees, and beseeching them to return for another round of slaughter. The rumors were true, he "was sorry to say . . . but I was excited by having my Reg't. cut to pieces [two] Yank. Regts. at the same time." As a cultural psychologist would recognize, both men were trying to depict their martial fury as a kind of out-of-body experience

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<sup>18</sup> Milton Leverett to Mary Leverett, 23 July 1864, in Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 346; Diary Entry of 25 April 1864, in Troutman, *The Heavens are Weeping*, 176-177. On the connection of civilians and soldiers (and their psychological barriers as well), see Sheehan-Dean, *Why Confederates Fought*. On the emotional suffering of the civilian homefront, see Faust, *Mothers of Invention*, 235.

evinced only during the heat of battle and which violently seized hold of their psyches. The war was responsible for the fiendish hatred, not them. In essence, they were hoping to sequester their brutalized enmity as a battlefield byproduct that could be cast aside when they escaped the scene of action, retaining the emotional purity of their prewar humanity and preventing its contamination of the family circle upon their hopeful return.<sup>19</sup>

But of course, the effort to discard the violent rancor usually proved impossible. In part, this was because many war-weary Confederates found in their letters to familiar correspondents (and the mere act of writing itself) a precious outlet to bear their battered souls, even if it was not the main intention of their writing. "I don't believe much in display of feeling, and never allow it to show itself if I can possibly [prevent] its manifestation," William Wooster wrote apologetically to his mother in 1862 after broaching his personal feelings about the war. "Yet the emotion exists smothered though it be" and was bound to spill its embers onto the pages of his letters home. Others had simply grown so

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<sup>19</sup> Barrington Simeral King to Catherine Margaret Nephew, 25 July 1864, in T. H. Galloway, ed., *Dear Old Roswell: The Civil War Letters of the King Family of Roswell, Georgia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 80; William Clarke to Mary Bayard Clarke, 1 January 1863, in Crow and Barden, *Live Your Own Life*, 129. The *rage militaire* of which Clarke and King spoke corresponds well with the theories of psychologist James Averill, who argued that the temporary loss of control commonly associated with the experience of anger allows people to seek retribution against certain targets without transgressing and thus jeopardizing community standards that often condemn verbal or physical aggression. See Randolph R. Cornelius, *The Science of Emotion*.

calloused by the bloodshed that they probably failed to recognize the psychological boundaries that their words and sentiments were trouncing. A Texan officer could write his parents of having enjoyed the sight of "the black and swollen [Yankee] corpses" littering the battlefield of Chickamauga in 1863, for instance, and that the experience had done him "good to see them laying dead." Arkansas's Alexander Spence could tell his mother in 1864 of how he had "the pleasure the other day of making two Yankees 'bite the dust'" by his own hand, before foraging their bodies for clothing and paper (including the paper she currently held in her hands). In contrast, some Confederate soldiers consciously tried to impart their hatreds onto the psyches of their loved ones back home. "Take the double barrel shotguns and pepper them like smoke. Kill, slay, and murder them," William Nugent instructed his wife Eleanor as the "ruthless enemy" inched ever closer to their Mississippi abode. "Give them no peace; for unless we do, we do not deserve God's mercy."<sup>20</sup>

Suffering their share of personal loss, those on the homefront could also succumb to the same lust for vengeance that fueled the soldiers in gray. By the spring of 1862, after being forced to abandon his lowcountry estate and with multiple sons

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<sup>20</sup> William A. Wooster to Lucy Wright Wooster, 11 November 1861, in *The Wooster Family Papers*, SHC; As quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 149-150; Alexander Spence to his parents, 6 September 1864, in Mark K. Christ, ed., *Getting Used to Being Shot At: The Spence Family Civil War Letters* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2002), 103; William Nugent to Eleanor Nugent, 25 May 1862, in Cash and Howorth, *My Dear Nellie*, 74.

in military service, former New England minister turned South Carolina planter Charles Leverett blasted his former countrymen in no uncertain language. "They are a rascally set from Lincoln down. I feel ashamed to have been born in New England and denounce the people [there] as the meanest criminals that ever disgraced humanity." They were all "liars, thieves, robbers, adulterers - villains generally," and he longed for "the day of retribution" to come when "God will strike with a vengeance suited to their criminal career." "I dont know *how* I feel, but *revengeful*," nineteen-year-old Bessie King wrote after Union soldiers had wreaked havoc on her hometown of Roswell, Georgia in 1864. "Maybe I am wrong, but it is my firm conviction, that we *must retaliate*," she thundered, our soldiers must not "leave *anything* if they go into the enemys country again." By 1864, Gideon Lincecum's vengeance seemingly knew no bound, as he fantasized slaughtering every human being opposed to the Southern cause. "It would make me very happy to know that all mankind, male and female, except the true friends and sympathizers of the southern confederacy, had to come to Richmond," he began, "and that Lee and his army . . . would set to work and utterly kill and destroy them from the face of the earth." <sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Charles Edward Leverett to Milton Leverett, 3 May 1862, in Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 120-121; Mary Isabella King to "mother-in-law," 1864, in Galloway, *Dear Old Roswell*, 89; Gideon Lincecum to R. M. Hannay, 7 July

In a cultural environment in which violent wrath could be so openly aired, and in which the crusade to vanquish the Yankees and establish Confederate independence was so fervently advanced, it was perhaps inevitable that Southern enmity would turn against itself. As with Keziah Brevard's hatred for her slaves, some internal targets were obvious. Southern Unionists stood among the forefront. "East Tenn is booked in my imagination as the most abominable section of the country I have known," wrote William Bryant after being stationed in the Unionist stronghold in 1862, for the "people are a lazy, ignorant, overreaching and cold hearted set." Deserters became objects of violent scorn as well. "I don't want our Southern society disfigured with the slime of deserters and traitors," Texan Elijah Petty informed his wife in early 1863, hoping all "the scoundrels will be caught and shot" by military authorities. Confederates showed an equally strong enmity for the prominent advocates of peace and the speculators or so-called war "exhortionists," men who made comfortable fortunes from the crumbling Confederate economy even as soldiers and civilians faced heinous privation. In 1864, a Moravian soldier from Salem, North Carolina spoke out against both menaces in destructive terms despite his church's pacifist stance. "It grieves me to hear of so many persons in Salem, who by their

actions almost make us ashamed to acknowledge that it is our home," he wrote his father in February 1864. The peace leaders deserved the gallows, he opined, and he promised a "rattling amongst the dry bones as has never yet been heard" when the soldiers returned to deliver a due reckoning on the speculators.<sup>22</sup>

Confederates also fired their wrath against their faint-hearted countrymen. In 1864, Mary Clarke blasted the cowardly streams of able-bodied men fleeing the beleaguered city of Petersburg and taking refuge throughout the Confederate countryside. "I should be ashamed to own them if they were my brothers or sons," she wrote, "a man who wont fight when his own hearth is threatened is not worth powder and shot it would take to kill him." Alabama's James Williams turned his wrath against the dandified male population of Memphis. The town's citizens "manifested little or no sympathy with us - not a confederate flag was waved, nor cheers greeted us," he complained upon his unit's entrance in early 1862. There were only "crowds of young men, pale-faced, white handed, perfumed, bedressed, and white shirted [who] stood on the walks and cheered us." He hoped that someday soon his commanding "general will order the town to be

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<sup>22</sup> William Bryant to Rebecca Hathorne Hall Bryant, 7 September 1862, in Blakely et. all, *The Rose Cottage Chronicles*, 145; Elijah P. Petty to Margaret Petty, 29 January 1863, in in Norman D. Brown, ed., *Journey to Pleasant Hill: The Civil War Letters of Captain Elijah P. Petty, Walker's Texas Division, CSA* (San Antonio: University of Texas, 1982), 134; Charles Francis Bahnson to George Frederic Bahnson, 8 February 1864, in Sarah Bahnson Chapman, ed., *Bright and Gloomy Days: The Civil War Correspondence of Captain Charles Frederic Bahnson, A Moravian Confederate* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003), 108.

burned to ashes," Williams fumed to his wife, a fitting retribution for a town of "traitors and cowards."<sup>23</sup>

As Confederate fortunes continued to wane, some soldiers even unleashed their ire against Southern women, a dramatic departure for a society long steeped in patriarchal gentility, especially considering the matronly patriot had been a cherished symbol of Confederate nationalism. Like many others, Virginia's John Dooley believed that a never-ending wave of disgruntled letters from wives and sisters had convinced many a soldier into desertion. "The Southern people have been false to their country," he lamented in 1865 while singling out women, and that the failure of popular will was more decisive than anything the Yankees deployed to cause the nation's downfall. As Drew Faust has shown, elite Southern women became targets of vicious criticism from the Confederate press late in the war, as their supposed penchant to enjoy the frivolities of high society - the conspicuous consumption, the parties, attending balls and theatrical productions - seemed like unpatriotic selfishness. "Can mirth and reckless revelry hold high carnival in social circles while every passing breeze chants the requiem of the dying" soldier, novelist Augusta Jane Evans angrily accused of

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<sup>23</sup>Mary Bayard Clarke to William Clarke, 20 July 1864, in Crow and Barden, *Live Your own Life*, 173; James M. Williams to Eliza Jane Richardson Williams, 9 March 1862, in John Kent Folmar, ed., *From that Terrible Field: Civil War Letters of James M. Williams, Twenty-First Alabama Infantry Volunteers* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 45-46



her wanting female compatriots. "Shame! Shame upon your degeneracy." More infuriating still was the idea that Southern women were aiding or even consorting with the Yankee invaders while the soldiers manned the warfront (even if such occurrences were often figments of pure paranoia). With his binoculars from his position at Fort Sumter in 1864, Milton Leverett could see local women congregating among the Union soldiers on nearby Morris Island, touching and admiring their artillery guns, the same artillery used to subject Milton and his comrades to a constant barrage of psychological torment. "It seems to me I wouldn't hesitate to shoot women in such a case if I could I give them a flesh wound with a Minnie ball," he wrote furiously to his mother.<sup>24</sup>

As they found themselves uttering such unthinkable oaths of hatred, Confederates recognized how the exposure to violence and bloodshed was mutating their emotional perspective. War was nothing but "blood, butchery, death, desolation, robbery, rapine, selfishness, violence, wrong: a disregard for everything holy and divine," according to William Nugent after two years of Confederate service, and all predicated upon a devilish "disposition to destroy." Elijah Petty realized by 1863 that the "injurious consequences" of the Civil War would result in

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<sup>24</sup> Curran, ed., *John Dooley's Civil War*, 198-199; As quoted in Faust, *The Mothers of Invention*, 244; Milton Leverett to Mary Leverett, 15 July 1864, in Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 337.

the "general demoralization" of Southern society as a whole. "Parents have sent bright and promising sons to the war," he recorded after visiting an Army hospital in Arkansas, but they will "receive back moral wrecks bloated with infamy and vice to darken" the fireside when they return. "We have all seen some of the horrors of war and they are terrible indeed," wrote Reuben Pierson in August 1862, the "dead and wounded lying in piles, the ground literally covered with blood. I have heard the groans of the dying, pitifully crying for help in the last agony of death." Such experiences would inevitably brutalize one's soul, he admitted. "Everything is very different from what I imagined it to be; a man can rush heedlessly on through battle over the dead and dying with as little remorse of conscience as he can shoot a wild beast."<sup>25</sup>

The deepening hatred was evident in the breakdown of antebellum moral principles. It was seen with Confederate zealots like Stephen Ramseur, who, in early 1862, was calling for a Confederate dictator to crush the merciless Yankee invaders - for he believed Lincoln already wielded such despot-like powers over the North. "Let us stop our miserable political squabbles and as one man put our shoulders to the wheel, pulling and pushing, working & suffering all things,

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<sup>25</sup> William L. Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent, 22 November 1863, in Cash and Howorth, *My Dear Nellie*, 148; Elijah P. Petty to his daughter, 24 March 1863, in Brown, *Journey to Pleasant Hill*, 157; Reuben Allen Pierson to William H. Pierson, 5 August 1862, in Cutrer and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*, 112.

until our independence is achieved," he wrote his brother while envisioning Southern democracy dying on the fields of battle. And "whoever baulks or hesitates or disobeys, let him be put out of the way, speedily, surely, eternally." It was present in the writings of soldiers like Charles Bahnson (a Moravian soldier) confessing to his father his unholy lust to disobey his commander's explicit orders and make short "work of the [Union] scoundrel" that nightly passed before his eyes while he was stationed on picket duty. Or even with the normally reserved Virginian Maria Fleet deciding that pacifism no longer represented a Christian virtue (like Cora Ready's declaration that Christian virtue was expressed in slaughtering Yankees), dismissing the stance of a local conscientious objector as unmanly cowardice. "I held both him and his arguments in utter contempt," Fleet wrote her son who had just survived the battle of Second Manassas, a mere plot intended to get himself "out of the scrape."<sup>26</sup>

High-efficacy Southerners struggled, unsurprisingly, to accept Confederate defeat even as Union victory appeared all but inevitable in late 1864 and early 1865 – the extreme hatred and vilification of the Yankee making capitulation an unthinkable horror. As William Nugent explained to his wife amid the

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<sup>26</sup> Stephen Dodson Ramseur to his brother, 11 March 1862, in Kundahl, *The Bravest of the Brave*, 86; Charles Frederic Bahnson to George Frederic Bahnson, in Chapman, *Bright and Gloomy Days*, 98; Maria Louisa Wacker Fleet to Alexander Frederick Fleet, 28 September 1862, in Fleet and Fuller, *Green Mount*, 169.

mounting cries for peace after the disastrous summer of 1863, "this country would be wholly worthless" under Yankee domination, devolving into a "barren waste and a desolate plain." If defeat became inevitable, Nugent hoped the Confederacy would fall under the colonial authority of the British or French, for "never will I be content to submit to Yankee rule," he declared; "the Russian yoke would be preferable" to cowering back into Lincoln's Union. A Texas officer made his position crystal clear in a letter to his wife in January 1864. "I would see the sun fall from its socket, the Moon refuse to shine, the stars go out, the Heaven fall, Hell burst up from the depths of earth, God Almighty turn his back upon the world and many other calamitous things," the fanatic pledged, "before I will take the oath of allegiance" to once again become an American citizen. Indeed, defiant Confederates spoke of accepting radical and self-destructive alternatives in order to stave off submission to the hated Union invaders. A surgeon in the 4<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry, Harvey Black argued in early 1862 that Southerners must show their "devotion and patriotism by burning everything that the enemy can appropriate" from the countryside, even if it meant the destruction of vast amounts of personal property. "We have but little to lose" ourselves, he consoled to his wife in reference to their humble Virginia homestead, "but if necessary, I would apply the torch

to it as readily as I would a bush pile." A grizzled North Carolina soldier agreed with such a course as early as February 1862. Southerners must apply the "torch to every house, rather than afford any shelter or comfort to the hell-born hounds" in the shape of the Yankee scavengers. He would even "infinitely prefer" to see his hometown of Wilmington "wrapped in flames - a smoldering heap, than the abode of those God-forsaken wretches." Georgia's Julia Fisher was willing (explicitly) to sacrifice her sons by 1862. "Life is a little sacrifice" for the principles of "*honor and liberty*," she wrote her sister, and "I would rather my boys should *die* in such a cause than *live to witness its defeat*." As Jason Philips has shown, thousands of "diehard" Confederates fired by nationalism, anti-Yankee disdain, and still believing in their own invincibility, continued to march in the military ranks even after the defeats of 1864 and Lincoln's re-election. When Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia limped toward Appomattox in April 1865, he still counted nearly 60,000 soldiers under his command.<sup>27</sup>

For some, the shock of defeat provoked painful introspection. Captain Henry Chambers of North Carolina

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<sup>27</sup>William L. Nugent to Eleanor Smith Nugent, 30 August 1863, in Cash and Howorth, *My Dear Nellie*, 132; Elijah P. Petty to Margaret Elizabeth Pinner Petty, 9 January 1864, in Brown, *Journey to Pleasant Hill*, 302; Harvey Black to Mary Irby Kent Black, in Glenn L. McMullen, ed., *The Civil War Letters of Dr. Harvey Black: A Surgeon with Stonewall Jackson* (Baltimore: Butternut and Blue, 1995), 30; William A. Wooster to Joe Wright, 14 February 1862, in The Wooster Family Papers, SHC; Julia Fisher to Rebecca Bryant, 25 May 1862, in Blakley et. al, *Rose Cottage Chronicles*, 118. See Phillips, *Diehard Confederates*, 147-177; Gallagher, *The Confederate War*, 34.

appeared dumbfounded to learn of Lee's surrender and the impending collapse of his Confederacy. "Oh! God, how can we bear this! Will not some terrible retribution yet, even in the mad intoxication of the hour, come to this motley crew who have waged upon us so unjust, so barbarous a warfare!" The Yankees had "burned our houses, desecrated our altars, plundered our wealth, waged unrelenting war upon the aged, the weak, and the helpless, and insulted and dishonored our lovely women!" The Union war had been fought by a "heartless and fanatical people," who had achieved victory "by money, by chicanery, by fraud, by passion, by superstition, by a fanatical religion" firing their "hell-hounds" to fight for four bloody years. It was virtually impossible for a high-efficacy Confederate to understand how God's providence could allow the Confederates to be conquered by such a despised and degraded foe. "Can it be? Can it be?," he lamented, that "after the shedding of so much precious blood, after so much sorrow and suffering . . . we are to be subjugated! and by such people!" It was a burden, he wrote in utterance against the Almighty, "almost too heavy to be borne." Some Confederates went further and expressed outright defiance to the thought that Northern victory was the plan of providence. "I grow skeptical and almost doubt whether Providence had anything to do with the matter at all," Ella Thomas wrote in her diary by December 1865. Grace Elmore was less circumspect. "I

cannot be resigned," she wrote in shocked defiance over her nation's downfall, "I feel so wicked, so rebellious against God, so doubtful of his mercy."<sup>28</sup>

But even before defeat became entirely clear, Confederates were working to ensure that their hatreds would be perpetuated for generations to come, inculcated into children who would never know the fury of battle firsthand. "Let our posterity never forget that the annals of the history of man furnishes no account of such a race of brutalized humanity as the damned yanky," wrote Gideon Lindeum in April 1864, "and that he is not nor will he be entitled to anything but death from the coming families of our posterity to the tenth generation." Perhaps to allay his sense of helplessness as he stood stranded on the homefront, Lindeum pledged to forever indoctrinate Southern children with "the idea of the necessity and the propriety of such action, so long as they can find one of the hateful tribe to kill. Never again permit one of them to pass with his peddling cart, his lying books, and false maps, but slay him as the enemy of mankind." Elijah Petty was more explicit in making a "Hamilcar oath" that he instructed his wife to relay to their children in September 1862. "Encourage them by every means . . . a bitter and unrelenting hatred of the Yankee race," he

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<sup>28</sup> Diary Entry of 9 April 1865, in Pearce and Daniels, *Diary of Captain Henry A. Chambers*, 262; Diary Entry of 31 December 1865, in Burr, *The Secret Eye*, 278; As quoted in Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 393.

instructed, for "they are our implacable enemies. The Yankee had ravaged the countryside and killed Southern civilians, Petty reminded his wife. "I am in eternal hostility to them I think it but right that my children who suffer as I suffer and as my country suffers should be indoctrinated with an implacable hatred to so vile and cursed a race." A Georgia soldier called for a strikingly similar request. "Teach my children to hate them with that bitter hatred that will never permit them to meet under any circumstances without seeking to destroy each other," he demanded, "I know the breach is now wide & deep enough between us & the Yankees [but] let it widen & deepen until all Yankees or no Yankees are to live in the South."<sup>29</sup>

Such was not the sturdiest emotional foundation from which to achieve national reconciliation after the Confederacy was crushed in the spring of 1865. Submission to fate had never been the strength of the high-efficacy personality. For many of these individuals, there never again could or would be peace, even after their military commanders had surrendered to Union authorities. As she gazed out her window while writing a diary entry in early May 1865, Ella Thomas took solace from the sight of a group of young boys "playing soldier," equipped with unloaded guns and rusty sabers bestowed perhaps by the Union

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<sup>29</sup> Gideon Linccum to Emily Moore, 13 April 1864, in Linccum et. al, *Gideon Linccum's Sword*, 265; Elijah P. Petty to Margaret Elizabeth Pinner Petty, 11 September 1862, in Brown, *Journey to Pleasant Hill*, 78-79; as quoted in Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 309.



soldiers who occupied her hometown of Augusta. Unlike their fathers, these boys showed no indication of having internalized the humiliation of Confederate defeat. They were not yet "whipped," in the parlance of the times. It beckoned well for the South's future, she thought. For "'the child is the father of the man,' . . . and may not the children someday avenge us if we are ruled with an iron rod." As the subsequent resistance to Northern Reconstruction would attest, successfully thwarting the ambitions of Yankee reformers and the hopes of African Americans, the self-efficacy of white Southerners would indeed outlive its Confederate manifestation.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Diary Entry of 2 May 1865, in Burr, *The Secret Eye*, 262. Thomas's quote originated from the William Wordsworth poem, "My Heart Leaps Up When I Behold."

**CHAPTER 5 - WAR BY FATE: LOW-EFFICACY CONFEDERATES AND  
PROVIDENTIAL FATALISM**

John B. Patrick desired Confederate victory with all his heart and soul. Though the South Carolina school teacher had despaired at seeing soldiers depart for battle, he held an unswerving faith that a "kind Providence will smile on our efforts to establish our independence." Like his fellow countrymen across the South, he celebrated the news of Confederate victories in the pages of his diary. But throughout the war, Patrick, a deeply religious man, consciously rejected the smoldering hatreds displayed by his more efficacious and less God-fearing counterparts. He had sighed relief that no deaths resulted from the opening battle of Fort Sumter, and he credited God's kind providence for the bloodless outcome. Even as the country sank into an ever deepening cesspool of bloodshed over the next four years, Patrick clung to his belief both in providential fatalism and in waging a civilized war with as little human damage as possible. Yet even he was repeatedly tested. After hearing of the battle of Shiloh in April 1862, for instance, a shocking bloodbath that resulted in roughly thirteen thousand Union casualties, Patrick felt a perverse thrill in learning of his enemy's staggering losses. But he

held back. "Such is the state that war brings us to," he lamented in self-disgust, "we like to hear of the slaughter and destruction of our enemies." He ended his diary entry with a simple prayer for peace, no paeans to righteous slaughter or civil religion, no declarations of striving for victory until death.<sup>1</sup>

The post-bellum image of the Civil War as a dignified conflict has suffered a devastating blow at the hands of academic historians. A clash of gallant soldiers, military restraint, and speedy reconciliation is fast fading away as Appomattox is being prepared for its sesquicentennial. Historians of Civil War memory have shown that such a sanitized depiction served the needs and interests of late nineteenth century American society (at least for white Americans) as the reuniting country embarked upon an era of disquieting industrial growth, virulent white supremacy, and imperialistic nationalism. Perhaps reaching the level of over-correction, however, recent histories have instead emphasized the destructiveness of the war, the targeting of civilians, and the chaotic violence wrought by partisans and pure criminals - factors leading to ongoing sectional and racial hostility in general, and the failures of Reconstruction and black civil rights in particular. Gone too, is the attached focus on fraternization between the

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<sup>1</sup> Diary Entries of 14 April 1861, and 16 April 1862, in John B. Patrick Diary, 1861-1865, SCL.

soldiers in blue and gray, moments that were once emphasized to display a "crazy and needless war" brought about by blundering politicians. As historian James McPherson noted in his definitive survey of Civil War combatants: "If soldiers' letters and diaries are an accurate indication, bitterness and hatred were far more prevalent than kindness and sociability" when it came to the relationship between Johnny Reb and Billy Yank.<sup>2</sup>

A cavernous gap exists between the emotional extremes of bitter hatred and sociable kindness, however, and it was within this space that many, perhaps most, Civil War Americans routinely navigated. The low-efficacy personality did not disappear when the guns of Fort Sumter roared, nor did white Southerners abandon their fatalistic interpretation of life once the Yankee bluecoats crossed the Mason-Dixon line. If anything, the unpredictable dynamics of war and enemy invasion reinforced the suspicion that a person's fate, like that of their nation, operated according to the will of "providence." With its minimalization of human agency and thus personal blame, the philosophy of providential fatalism fostered a surprisingly unmaliced perspective on the conflict, placing accountability

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<sup>2</sup> Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb*, 321; McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 2. On the topic of Civil War memory, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). For two post-consensus school histories of the Civil War, the first emphasizing ideological struggle, the second explicitly weary of nationalistic romanticism, see McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*; and Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003). For works that specifically seek a darker, less celebratory treatment of the Civil War. See Royster, *The Destructive War*; Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies*; and Phillips, *Diehard Rebels*.

for the war's terrors on impersonal/divine forces more than individual human actors. It was a perspective that could recognize the dual-victimization and suffering of Northerners and Southerners alike and provoked sentiments of sympathy at its strongest while rejecting brutalized hatred at its bare minimum. On average, low-efficacy Confederates (and their ranks broadened as the war crushed many a Southerner's self-will) stood less inclined to dehumanize their Yankee enemy, condone his utter annihilation, or refuse to accept Southern defeat. Like John Patrick, they often desperately desired Confederate independence, but they wished to maintain their humanity as well.<sup>3</sup>

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If the Old South suffered from a split-personality when it came to self-efficacy, the Confederacy was to an extent fighting a schizophrenic war - a war waged with wrathful determination on the one hand and resigned fatalism on the other. The Janus face of the Confederate struggle was revealed in the very ways Southerners spoke about the conflict. While the strong-willed boasted of their nation's sanctimony, the superior fighting prowess of its warriors, and their personal determination to

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<sup>3</sup> The best and most in-depth analysis of religious providentialism (which is different from my understanding of "providential fatalism") in the Civil War is Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*. While Rable sees providence as a flexible theology that was often used to justify tremendous slaughter, I argue that providential fatalism could create a somewhat more humane and empathetic approach to the Civil War. Nonetheless, this chapter has been greatly influenced by Professor Rable's work.

conquer or die, low-efficacy Confederates viewed the war as well beyond their locus of control. The dizzying experience of armed conflict and enemy invasion could easily enhance and even promulgate a low-efficacy perspective for both soldiers and civilians caught in its grasp. Despite the notorious lack of discipline in Civil War camps, the mundane realities and confinements of military life often proved highly detrimental to maintaining a strong will. A soldier's life became "a sort of treadmill operation" in the words of one Confederate combatant, severely testing the patience of many a planter's son accustomed to giving commands instead of taking them. An Alabama officer wrote jokingly of seeking a postwar occupation as a travelling philosopher after making himself content with the indignities and unpleasantries of military life. "I have learned to submit my will and my personal comfort even to men who are fools and [yet] maintain cheerfulness," he explained to his wife in early 1862, "and I have learned to look on things as luxuries which were once[,] I thought[,] the very necessities of life."<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, the fact that soldiers seldom knew when battles might erupt created a constant sense of fatalistic uncertainty. While the military grapevine grew twisted and tangled, most enlisted men and even their commanding officers

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<sup>4</sup> William A. Wooster to "Dear Cousin," 27 April 1861, in Wooster Family Papers, SHC; James M. Williams to Eliza Jane Richardson Williams, 15 January 1862, in John Kent Farmer, ed., *From that Terrible Field: Civil War Letters of James M. Williams, Twenty-First Alabama Infantry Volunteers* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981), 26.

never knew if their ordered movements represented a mere feint, a false alarm, or the prelude to mass carnage. As Alabama's Isaac Ulmer complained in 1861, "a soldier knows nothing. If he is ordered to prepare two or three days rations and to saddle he knows nothing where he is going" or what he is facing. The war's long-term prospects were even harder to forecast. "We cannot tell what the future has in store for us," North Carolina's Joseph Hoyle wrote his hopeful wife in the summer of 1862, even after a string of Confederate victories had projected false promises of peace. "It may be that most of our troubles are over, and it may be that they are just commenced." Hoyle himself had stopped speculating over such matters, for "sometimes we have news that gives us hopes of a speedy peace; then directly we have a contrary report; and so it goes." Southerners were painfully aware that victorious peace would come only when the Yankees abandoned their fanatical crusade and acquiesced in Southern independence, making Confederate destinies frustratingly contingent upon Northern willpower. And the Yankee columns kept marching on even after being routinely bludgeoned by Confederate forces in the Eastern Theatre, a dynamic that uncharitable Southerners often attributed to blind fanaticism, a hireling Union army, or the heavy-handed despotism of President Lincoln forcing his soldiers to maintain the ranks. "I would give all that I possess in this world to see the

country at peace and be at home with my dear wife and boy," Georgia's Ujanirtus "Ugie" Allen pleaded home after surviving the battle of Anteitam. But as long the Yankee menace still lingered, Allen's presence was required in the Confederate ranks. "We defeat them again and again," he sighed with a frustration echoed by many Southerners, "but like the hordes of Goths and Vandals that laid waste to South Europe, still they come." Aside from desertion or death (or a transfer to a safer station if one could pull the right strings), the war was something the average soldier simply could not escape.<sup>5</sup>

Unsurprisingly, combat itself proved a powerful harbinger of fatalism for the soldiers thrown into its fiery wrath. Like belligerents throughout history, Confederates discovered strategies to increase their likelihood for survival. One North Carolinian assured his girlfriend that he thought "more of [his] existence" than anything else when under enemy fire, and that he would never place himself near "the jaws of death on purpose." But with Civil War combat still relying on the phalanx-style tactics of fixed defensive formations and column-lined assaults, individual agency was often nullified at the expense of group cohesion and massed tactics. Thus, as soldiers

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<sup>5</sup> Isaac Barton Ulmer to "Dear Father," 14 November 1861, in Isaac Barton Ulmer Papers, SHC; Joseph J. Hoyle to Sarah Self Hoyle, 22 August 1862, and 1 September 1862, in Jeffrey M. Girvan, ed., *"Deliver us From this Cruel War": The Civil War Letters of Lieutenant Joseph L. Hoyle, 55<sup>th</sup> North Carolina Infantry* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland, 2010), 63, 66; Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 21 September 1862, in Randall Allen and Keith S. Bohannon, eds., *Campaigning with "Old Stonewall": Confederate Captain Ujanirtus Allen's Letters to his Wife* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 163-165



witnessed artillery barrages and rifle fire decimate their lines, they realized that to a horrifying degree, surviving "the elephant" owed much to simple luck. It was an atmosphere rife for fostering a fatalistic perspective, especially one couched in the mysterious religiosity of an omniscient deity. "God . . . alone can save you from the enemy and be a shield in every kind of trouble," as one Virginian explained. "God rules all things," a South Carolina lieutenant agreed while casting self-agency aside, "so I trust all to him having little to say in the matter." The language of secular causation simply broke down as soldiers recounted their brushes with death. While his unit fled from Union gunships bombarding the South Carolina coast in 1862, Milton Leverett recalled freezing like a statue when a Yankee cannonade was launched squarely in his direction. "I couldn't bend my body to lay down," he explained in a letter home, "I don't know why, but I felt fascinated, charmed to the spot." The experience defied reason. "I believe in that instant I uttered a prayer and providentially the ball dropped before it reached me" - the shot landed roughly twenty-five feet from where the young South Carolinian stood and thereafter failed to detonate. "Otherwise some of us (there were five altogether including myself) would have been killed."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> John Lewis Warlick to Cornelia McGimsey, 18 July 1861, in Michael Lawing and Carolyn Lawing, eds., *My Dearest Friend: The Civil War Correspondence of Cornelia McGimsey and Lewis Warlick* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic

As in the antebellum years, disease, the leading cause of Civil War deaths, haunted soldiers even during the long stretches when the threat of battle waned. The fatality numbers were astounding - roughly 194,000 Confederates died of disease from 1861-1865 compared to 66,000 by combat wounds. As a Louisiana soldier instructed his father, "Go to hospitals and there see every kind of disease that preys upon the human system, devouring men as fast as coffins can be made." Just as the enemy's artillery fire randomly sent some men to their graves while leaving others unscathed, a soldier would die from fever while his mess-mates maintained perfect health. And this was "the death of a brute," explained Georgia's Henry Graves, an un-heroic and anonymous fate that struck fear into every soldier's heart. It offered "all of the evils of the battlefield with none of its honors," as one of his Northern counterparts described it. The primitive and unreliable nature of Civil War medicine provided little confidence that doctors or surgeons could effectively stave off sickness or heal battlefield wounds. By 1864, Confederate surgeon Frederick Leverett (Milton's brother) had learned to stop predicting which of his patients would survive when they arrived under his care.

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Press, 2000), 34; Daniel Hite to John Hite, 25 January 1862, in Jessup, *The Painful News I Have to Write*, 78; As quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 67; Milton Leverett to Mary Leverett, 5 February 1852, in Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 101. See Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 160-162. James McPherson made an interesting distinction between optimistic and pessimistic fatalists among the Civil War soldiers he studied. See McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 62-67. Both groups, however, saw their ultimate fate as beyond their control.

"So often does it happen that men die from scarcely more than a scratch," he told his brother, while their comrades "survive the severest injuries" one could imagine. Their fates seemed almost entirely random.<sup>7</sup>

As the ranks of low-efficacy soldiers swelled under the weight of warfare, providential fatalism became a more popular theme in diaries and correspondence. Indeed, Confederates utilized a belief in providential determinism as both a coping mechanism to understand their own survival and a preemptive strategy to emotionally steel themselves for future battle. In prelude to the bloody fighting of 1864, Tennessee's Thomas Claiborne warned his wife that he "might perish in the enemy's campaign," a popular sentiment that can be dismissed as a clichéd mantra of heroic manhood. Instead, it was a painful strategy of emotional forbearance. A firm believer in an omniscient God, Claiborne claimed to harbor "no forebodings" about death, for "I am consigned to my destiny; you will have your dear children and sister, bring up the first as you know well best." Sometimes these statements had a brighter timbre. "Do you know that the path of every ball is directed by our kind father," a naval officer assured his fiancée in 1862, hence "no harm can come near me except by His special permission."

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<sup>7</sup> These casualty figures come from Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*, 213; Reuben Allen Pierson to William H. Pierson, 12 November 1861, in Curter and Parrish, *Brothers in Gray*, 62; Henry Graves to Cora, 13, September 1861, in Graves Family Papers, SHC; As quoted in Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, 4; Frederick Leverett to Milton Leverett, 15 January 1864, Taylor et al, *The Leverett Letters*, 274.

Nevertheless, they more often than not represented dark submissions to fate, channeling a mystical providence far different from that emblazoning the nationalistic banners of Confederate civil religion. The callous, almost indifferent tones of these statements must have shocked and disturbed their civilian recipients. "You may think I speak of battles quite indifferently," a combat-hardened Ugie Allen wrote his wife in 1862 after broaching the prospect of an impending fight. "No one dreads them more than myself. But if we must fight let us go at it hoping and praying and with a determination to do our best . . . We can not control circumstances, neither does our own fate rest in our own hands."<sup>8</sup>

North Carolina Lieutenant Joseph Hoyle presents an excellent example of the fatalistic perspective voiced by a committed Christian soldier. Born in 1838 and raised in the hills of western North Carolina, Hoyle entered the war as a deeply pious young man still pondering a postwar career in the ministerial ranks. He stood firm in his belief that the Civil War was a manifestation of divine will and that "God fundamentally directs the political concerns of man," as he explained in an editorial appearing in a North Carolina newspaper. "This being admitted, it follows . . . that God

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Claiborne to Annie Claiborne 27 March 1864, in Thomas Claiborne Papers, SHC; As quoted in McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 65; Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 9 November 1862, in Allen and Bohannon, *Campaigning with "Old Stonewall,"* 183.

confers blessings or curses upon a nation" according to the virtue and righteousness of its citizenry. It was the Almighty that had sundered the United States in twain as a punishment for the "depraved ambition" and "depraved humanity" of its people, he declared, and it was God who "justly entailed upon us this cruel war, with all its horrid consequences." While it is tempting to dismiss Hoyle's sermonizing as the typical theatrics of sanctimonious nationalism, his private correspondence echoed his public views. "We may receive marching orders at any time," Hoyle warned his wife during the chaotic summer of 1862, "but if it is our fortune to get into a battle, I hope the Lord will shield us from harm. Do not be uneasy about me, but trust it all to the good Lord." The ambiance grew darker over time, but his message stayed the same. "Sarah do not be uneasy, but trust in God," he pleaded once again in April 1863, on the eve of an expected fray, "If it should be his good will for me to die, I submit, and you must do the same." Hoyle knew this thought would make his beleaguered wife uneasy, but he "would be doing rong [sic] not to" bear his soul on the subject.<sup>9</sup>

If disturbed by their forebodings, low-efficacy civilians probably well understood the helpless feelings intoned by the men in arms. For Southerners on the homefront applied

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<sup>9</sup> Editorial in *Spirit of the Times* (Raleigh, NC), 22 September 1862; Joseph J. Hoyle to Sarah Self Hoyle, 22 August 1862, and April 1863, in Girvan, *Deliver Us from this Cruel War*, 69-70, 63, 103.

providential fatalism to their respective hardships and uncertainties as well. At least in the longer view, Southern civilians knew neither when nor where the Yankees might appear to unleash their notorious wave of depredations. True, thousands of Southern civilians fled their homes and communities when the Yankees came, becoming the legendary refugees of Lost Cause fame. But many civilians lacked either the financial resources or the simple will to relocate so suddenly. "I know of no place to go," north Florida's Maria Bryant wrote helplessly to her absent husband, and by the time "we could get moved the Yankees[,] if they were coming[,] would be here and do all the damage they wanted." Wives and mothers would only regain their husbands, brothers, and sons when the war or the Confederate government allowed, and they lacked the power of firing even the lonely musket at the Yankee horde invading their homeland. Thus, much like their men on the frontlines, Confederate wives wrapped themselves in the providential shawl to protect against the coldness of a lonely and sometimes desperate homefront. "I know well just how you must feel," Georgia's Mary Clemons consoled a friend whose husband was serving in Confederate gray (Mr. Clemons having been grievously wounded at the battle of First Manassas) , "but it is our

Heavenly Father's will to lay this burden upon you, and as a Christian, I know you will try to be submissive."<sup>10</sup>

While it may have provided its Southern followers with a degree of personal comfort, the age-old critique against fatalism accuses the philosophy of deemphasizing human will and thus eliminating moral responsibility. Indeed, Americans could boldly cleanse their hands of the Civil War dead as the tragic reckoning of God's will. As a Northern religious periodical blared: "Not one act of violence, not one destruction of life, not one drop of human blood is shed, without His knowledge and consent." Or, as one Virginia women exclaimed in instructing her husband to kill as many African American soldiers as crossed his path: "It is God's will and wish for you to destroy them. You are his instrument and it is your Christian duty" to eliminate them all.<sup>11</sup>

But strangely perhaps, providential fatalism instead tended to foster greater understanding and even compassion among its adherents. While high-efficacy Confederates wasted little time in blaming Northerners for instigating the war, their low-efficacy counterparts often attributed the conflict to impersonal forces operating high above the level of the average

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<sup>10</sup> Octavia Louisa Bryant Stephens to Winston John Thomas Stephens, in Blakey et al, *The Rose Cottage Chronicles*, 163; Mary Reid Clemons to Sarah Elizabeth Macleod King, in T. H. Galloway, ed., *Dear Old Roswell: Civil War Letters of the King Family of Roswell, Georgia* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2003), 27. On the plight of civilians under Union occupation, see Stephen V. Ash, *When The Yankees Came: Conflict and Chaos in the Occupied South, 1861-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

<sup>11</sup> As quoted in Rable, *God's Chosen Peoples*, 378; As quoted in Woodworth, *While God Goes Marching On*, 281.

Union bluecoat. Sharing their same predicament - the separation from home and hearth, the drudgery of military life, the horrible fear of battle - Northern soldiers could become objects of sympathy instead of scorn to their Confederate counterparts, both civilians and soldiers. "We are content my Savior," Belle Edmondson wrote as in personal communion with the Almighty after the devastating surrender of Vicksburg in July 1863, for "thy will, not ours, be done." She thereafter refrained from voicing anger even as the Union invaders encroached upon her family's Mississippi home in 1864, praying for God to "check the wicked foe and drive them from our soile [sic]." But Edmondson also beseeched her Confederate defenders to "answer to the flag of truce. No black flag, but as near to Christian warfare as is possible." For "we do not wish them any harm," she clarified in reference to her Northern opponents; Southerners only desired that God would grant them "victory and peace;" and allow "for the days when our dear boys will be once more [to] bless out homes with their presence."<sup>12</sup>

While Edmondson wrote from the distance of the domestic sphere (and the relative safe haven of Mississippi), soldiers were not immune to sentiments of empathy and compassion for their Yankee antagonists. Unlike the high-tech detachment of

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<sup>12</sup> Diary Entries of 7 July 1864, and 17 July 1864, in Loretta Galbraith and William Galbraith, eds., *A Lost Heroine of the Confederacy: The Diaries and Letters of Belle Edmondson* (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1990), 154, 160.



modern warfare, Civil War combat was fought in close enough quarters for one to see the enemy crouching or marching across the field. Confederates could hear the shouts and screams of the wounded Yankees, as well their anguished pleadings to a God who was, at least ostensibly, worshipped as their own. And during the long stretches of inaction between battles and skirmishes, the opposing lines sometimes hunkered in such close proximity to afford Southerners a personalized view of their Union foes, a nearness that allowed for the legendary exchange of items like tobacco, coffee, and newspapers, as well as a great deal of soldierly bantering. In one archetypical example, a South Carolinian recounted a strangely jovial exchange that took place between a Yankee and Rebel during a lull in the 1862 Peninsular Campaign:

The Confederate says to the other, 'What is your name?' 'Smith,' was the answer. 'Well, Smith,' says the Confederate, 'here are my compliments,' and raising his gun, quickly fired at him. Smith then poked head from behind the tree and says to the Confederate, 'What is your name?' 'Jones,' was answered. 'Well, Jones,' says Smith. 'I with pleasure return your compliment.' So raising his piece, fired and cut the bark from the tree just as Jones withdrew his head. There is much fun in this, but a great deal more danger than fun.

When enemy combatants were shot down during such impasses, the line separating dutiful killing and cold blooded murder grew murky and morally problematic. South Carolina's John Anderson was greatly disturbed in witnessing an unsuspecting Yankee

killed by a Confederate sharpshooter near Orange Courthouse, Virginia in late 1863. The bluecoat was walking to collect a slain turkey when the "reb drew on him and killed him, then went and got his turkey and fifteen dollars and a good over coat besides." There was something tragically relatable about the Yankee's actions, and thus tragically inhuman about this demise.<sup>13</sup>

Soldier empathy manifested itself in multiple ways, often subtly or even in the silent rejection of dehumanization. It was evident, for instance, when soldiers refrained from venting their righteous hatred when beholding the human carnage left on a battlefield, or refusing to garner war trophies from the bodies of the Union dead. "It was a horrid sight," Alabama's Thomas Hobbs recounted after touring the field of First Manassas just days after the Northern retreat. "Our dead were mostly buried, but the enemy's were not touched," the young officer explained, "and there they lay, men and horses, in all the various and ghastly shapes that death in battle leaves its victims," their shoes stolen and their pockets rifled. Roughly three months later, South Carolina's Andrew Moore gazed in horror upon the same hallowed field with human remains still

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<sup>13</sup> Tally Simpson to Caroline Virginia Taliaferro Miller, 30 April 1862, Everson and Simpson, *"Far, Far from Home,"* 121; John Crawford Anderson to Emma Buist, 7 December 1863, in Craig, *Upcountry South Carolina Goes to War*, 124. Reid Mitchell even argued that psychological/emotional "gulf between the stay-at-home and the soldier sometimes seemed greater than that which separated the Confederate and Union soldiers." See Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 38.

lying about in ghastly tribute both to the scale of the violence and the depravity of local grave-robbers. He described seeing "yankees partially rooted up by hogs," having been grotesquely scavenged from their shallow, makeshift graves. In particular, Moore struggled to shake-off the "ghastly, horrid" image of a Union artilleryman, "lying on his back , hands and feet stretched at full length, the flesh falling from his bones, and the head" decapitated and missing. "Never, never was I so forcibly impressed with the idea that war proceeds from want of humanity and wickedness of heart," he concluded solemnly.<sup>14</sup>

Yet a fatalistic perspective and its accompanying penchant for human empathy did not hinder Confederates from fighting and killing their Yankee foes. Ugie Allen well described the strange mixture of violence and compassion that defined his conduct during the war. Orphaned at the age of three, by 1861 the young Georgian had already garnered a lucrative estate totaling 450 acres of land and 13 slaves (in addition to a new wife and a newborn son), a testament to his tremendous ability to overcome adversity. Fittingly, his early Civil War correspondence bristled with the fury of a high-efficacy Confederate, blaming the "puritanical fanatical bigoted mind" of the North for fomenting the war and warning that white

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<sup>14</sup> Diary Entry of 23 July 1861, in Axford, *The Journals of Thomas Hubbard Hobbs*, 239; Andrew Charles Moore to Nancy Moore Evans, 20 October 1861, in Craig, *Upcountry South Carolina Goes to War*, 52.

Southerners would be "disfranchised, dishonored, murdered and our property taken away" in the event of Union victory. But the experience of combat and military life would change the perspective of this young Confederate captain, dramatically reducing Allen's confidence in his own self-efficacy (a process that probably occurred for many veterans over time). "I have long since ceased to endeavor to penetrate the dim vista of futurity with my short sight," he admitted in 1862, for "I am only a waif on the uncertain sea of fortune; unable to avert my doom be it either good or bad." "We cannot control circumstances," he explained more succinctly three months later in a letter to his wife, and "neither does our own fate rest in our own hands."<sup>15</sup>

As the low-efficacy perspective gradually swept over him, on par did Allen's empathy for Union soldiers seem to increase, while the thunderous rhetorical attacks against "Puritanical" bigots quietly disappeared. Most dramatically, Allen was among the Confederates who provided aid and comfort to Northern soldiers cut down during the battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862. The field before his breastworks being virtually "covered with dead and wounded Yankees" after the smoke cleared, Allen offered blankets and water for the Union soldiers, some of

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<sup>15</sup> Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 22 September 1861, 11 September 1861, 5 August 1862, and 9 November 1862, in Allen and Bohannon, *Campaigning with "Old Stonewall,"* 43, 39, 138, 183.

whom reciprocated by exchanging rations and coffee, as well as offering their heartfelt "thanks and blessings." It was a strange dual-dynamic for a soldier to kill one moment and heal the next, he admitted. "I can shoot them as deliberately and eagerly as ever I did any game" during battle, he tried to explain to his family, but once the fighting ceased he was simply incapable of passing "a wounded man without doing what I can for him, [even] if it is nothing more than s sympathising [sic] word or look." He quoted scripture to justify his course: "'Lord, that mercy to others I show, that mercy shows to me,'" the young Confederate being mindful that someday the roles might very well be reserved. Nevertheless, it was only the peculiar experience of battle that created these aberrations against his normal humanized perspective, he philosophized, and "happily, we are not always called upon for such exeptions [sic] of feeling." The moments of dehumanization were few and floated away with the smoke of combat, in other words, at least in Ugie Allen's war.<sup>16</sup>

Allen even strongly objected to the extreme anti-Yankee enmity resonating from the Confederate homefront, where one could voice utterances of brutality from the comfortable distance of the abstract. "Tell B that it is not timidity but humanity that causes me or any soldier to assist to alleviate

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<sup>16</sup> Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 17 December 1862, and 7 January 1863, in *Ibid*, 187, 206.

the sufferings of a dying enemy on the battlefield," he wrote defensively after an unidentified civilian had criticized his merciful actions at Fredericksburg. "He may think he would not assist" a fallen Yankee soldier, Allen chided, but "he could not resist when a poor dying mortal said; 'for God's sake spread my blanket to keep from freezing. I'm shot through the lungs or abdomen, or my thigh is torn to pieces'" and begged for one last drop of water before death.<sup>17</sup>

It would be wrong to depict providential fatalism as a positive emotional good (if pacifism is the benchmark). Though their mottoes of inspiration were different and their emotions a study in contrast, high and low-efficacy soldiers often found themselves treading along similar pathways toward destruction and death. In its own unique way, a dutiful adherence to "the God of battles" could instill a lethal military endurance that burned just as brightly as brutal indignation. For instance, a firebrand like Stephen Ramseur might launch into a scolding diatribe pledging in October 1864 to clutch "the musket and fight to the bitter end" (which, for the North Carolinian would come just days later at the Battle of Cedar Creek). And while a religious fatalist like Joseph Hoyle might instead beseech the Almighty for "no more shedding of blood" by 1864, the end result

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<sup>17</sup> Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 7 January 1863, in *Ibid*, 206. Jason Phillips argues that most Yankees encountered by Confederate soldiers created an impression of weakness and demoralization, be they deserters, the dead and wounded, or prisoners of war. See Phillips, *Diehard Confederates*. Yet these same examples also could easily become objects of sympathy in Confederate eyes.

was largely the same. He still believed that God controlled "all things and in his hands we are safe. If we are true to the Lord and ourselves, we will finally win our independence," and he still instructed his wife to submit to providence if it proved God's "good will for me to die" in combat. After Hoyle was mortally wounded at the Battle of Globe Tavern near Petersburg in August 1864, Sallie Hoyle would have to do just that. Even Ugie Allen was prepared to perform his duty for the war's duration as 1863 dawned, the crux being that "Old Abe is determined on prosecuting the war to extermination and we on resistance." Allen would not live to see the crucible's conclusion; for a few days after penning this epistle, he was killed at the battle of Chancellorsville.<sup>18</sup>

Lacking the power to ameliorate their fortunes, some low-efficacy Southerners descended into chasms of tremendous despair as their plights darkened. "May this people soon all turn to God that He will look down with a pitying eye, and stop this struggle," a hapless Isaac Hite exclaimed in late 1864 with powers of eloquence surpassing his acumen for grammar. "He and He only can stop it," the Virginian soldier lamented, "the wisdom and sagacity of the generals on one side seems to balance that of the generals on the opp side, and . . . thus war still

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Dodson Ramseur to Ellen Elizabeth Ramseur, 10 October 1864, in Kundahl, *The Bravest of the Brave*, 287; Joseph Hoyle to Sarah Self Hoyle, 4 June 1862, 20 April 1864, and 31 March 1864, in Girvan, *"Deliver us from this Cruel War,"* 56, 168, 165; Ujanirtus Allen to Susan Fuller Allen, 25 April 1863, in Allen and Bohannon, *Campaigning with "Old Stonewall,"* 229.

continues." Hite had ample reason for his fatalistic pessimism: the war had claimed the lives of three of his brothers serving in Confederate arms and had reportedly desecrated his family's Page County homestead during General Philip Sheridan's Valley Campaign. "I have heard there is nothing left," he wrote his father in reference to his desolated homeland. "Such is war, to bring the proud and haughty to be beggars and teach them that affluence and wealth may not always surround them." Strikingly, he seemed to cast blame on the Valley's occupants more than Sheridan's raiders. With her husband David finally called away into military service in 1865 (she considered him the "King of the household"), Emily Harris sank into an emotional nadir as she found herself the substitute master of a crumbling domestic world. Reminding herself repeatedly that "God's will [must] be done," and the "right cause . . . most certainly will" triumph in the end, the pressures wrought by David's absence were pushing Emily to the edge of mental illness (at least in her estimation). These melancholic "spells are periodical and today for the first time I have thought perhaps they were the premonitory symptoms of insanity," she brooded. If that proved the case, her condition was but another element of life stretching beyond her powers of



control. For while "a dark doom to dread . . . if it is so who can avert the fate" - "Oh! the war, the war."<sup>19</sup>

While providential fatalism could lead one to wallow in melancholy, its greatest psychological benefit probably came in providing a greater acceptance of Confederate defeat. They generally avoided the extreme pangs of introspection haunting high-efficacy Confederates like Mary Chestnut. "Madness, sadness, anxiety, turmoil, ceaseless anxiety," was how the South Carolinian diarist described the week between Richmond's fall and Lee's surrender in April 1865. Some unreconstructed Confederates (including Jefferson Davis) called for guerrilla resistance, others spoke of emigrating to Mexico or some slave-friendly locale like Brazil in bold repudiation of the Southern fidelity to their homestates.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the occasional utterance against God's will, the Southern Cross and the faith in providence would still stand strong after 1865, of course. Indeed, in contrast to Thomas and Elmore, many Southerners viewed their nation's destruction as the stroke of divine chastisement, a rebuking jeremiad of epic proportions. While some pontificated over specific crimes

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<sup>19</sup> Isaac Hite to Daniel Hite, 11 October 1864, in Jessup, *The Painful News I Have to Write*, 171-172; Diary Entries of 1 January 1865, and 17 February 1865, in Racine, *Piedmont Farmer*, 357, 362.

<sup>20</sup> Diary Entry of 15 April 1865, in Williams, *A Diary from Dixie*, 519; As quoted in Gaines M. Foster. Historians have debated how accepting Confederates were of defeat and their willingness to embrace Reconstruction. For an account that stressed the early acquiescence of Southerners to Union victory and reunion, see Dan T. Carter, *When The War Was Over: The Failure of Self-Reconstruction in the South, 1865-1867* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985). For the opposing view, see George C. Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1984).

perpetuated by specific Southerners (masters had failed to Christianize their slaves, soldiers and civilians had strayed from the righteous path, spectators had gouged, etc.) low-efficacy Confederates spoke only in the vaguest of terms, specifying neither what "sins" had been committed nor who were the guilty agents responsible (other than "the people"), thus maintaining a mysterious and impersonal explanation for defeat. Being typically opaque, John Patrick deemed his nation's military woes in 1863 a "visitation of Providence on us because of the sins of our people," providing no further explanations or reasoning. "Does it not look shameful and exceedingly sinful in the sight of God that men made in His own image should . . . be constantly imbruing their hands in each other's blood," a dejected Benjamin Fleet uttered at the end of 1863. It was undoubtedly "a punishment for our national sins," he exclaimed, neglecting to specify which "nation" was intended for violent chastisement. The laments grew much more despairing in 1865. As Texan Sallie McNeill muttered after the Confederacy's defeat, "we are growing resigned. The God of Battles had decided against us - we were not worthy; we are punished for our sins . . . the proud Southerner is humbled. We are but dust."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Diary Entry of 12 August, in John B. Patrick Diary, SCL; Benjamin Fleet to Alexander Frederick Fleet, 2 December 1863, in Fleet and Fuller, *Green Mount*, 286; Diary Entry of 10 November 1865, in Raska and Hill, *The Uncompromising Diary of Sallie McNeill*, 125. On Confederate civil religion in the lost cause, see Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980). Several historians have discussed how Civil War Americans in general, and defeated Confederates in particular,

As McNeill's dirge illustrates, providential fatalists could reach surprisingly levels of emotional resignation. They rarely indulged in hateful defiance to the Union victors or questioned God's wisdom. Union victory simply was, a fact of Southern life as indisputable and inalterable as the realities of an epidemic scourge, a season's harvest blighted by drought, or the ever-presence of infant mortality. Mississippi's Sarah Watkins was ready to concede defeat as a providential fate as early as June 1862. "Every side is dark to me. We are almost whipped. I put my trust in God, his will be done." As she told her daughter, "if the South is subdued it is the will of the Lord for it to be done and we must be resigned to his will and trust in him to take care of us." Surely like thousands across the South, Alabama's Augustus Benners would echo these sentiments in 1865 as Lee's Army stumbled toward Appomattox. "What further afflictions are in store for us God only knows," as he pondered a New South of black freedom and Northern overlordship, "but he doeth all things well and we can only put

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viewed the struggles and setbacks of the war as divine punishment. For an analysis of pro-slavery Southern theologians, see Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998). For a study of Civil War soldiers both North and South, see Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over*, especially pages 113-146. And for a general treatment, see Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*.

our trust in him." It was a philosophy that would succor Benners in the weeks and months to come.<sup>22</sup>

Though it contradicted the imperatives of morale and masculine virtue, a soldier could speak of inevitable defeat and emotional resignation as well. Wasting away in a meaningless (to him) quartermaster position, the war had become a "strange dream" for Thomas Claiborne by summer's end in 1864. Keeping true to his commitment to the cause while serving in the relative backwater theatres of Texas and Louisiana, the brooding veteran was losing faith in the prospect of Confederate victory. As he told his wife, one could garner a clear "inference from the progress of the battles in VA and GA" from any Southern newspaper. Those "inferences" looked increasingly negative as General William Sherman was then storming through Georgia and General Ulysses Grant had finally cornered Lee at Petersburg. For good reason, Claiborne believed all the signs encouraged the "hope that peace will come before many months." He would simply have to ride out the dying storm. "I have long ago surrendered myself up to Fortune and have been content to take things as I found them as the best way of submitting to the worst of matters," Claiborne explained. Throughout the final months of his wartime correspondence, he never bellowed with righteous

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<sup>22</sup> Sarah Watkins to Letitia Watkins, 27 July 1862, in Dimond and Hattaway, *Letters from Forest Place*, 283; Diary Entries of 15 February 1865, and 5 May 1865, in Linden and Linden, *Disunion, War, Defeat, and Recovery in Alabama*, 131, 137.

rhetic of "conquer or die," never demonized his Yankee foes and demanded their utter destruction, or spoke of the impossibility of Union victory.<sup>23</sup>

Fatalists could even reconcile with the new reality of black freedom. Suddenly, finding himself a master without slaves, Alabama's James Mallory accepted the institution's demise with remarkable poise. "God in his mercy may have some wise purpose in the change of the relation of master and slave," he reflected in 1865, "it may be his time for their freedom and a more active life for whites." It may even "work well for us," he concluded sanguinely. George Browder was much more explicit. "I have looked to the results of this war as a providential settlement to the great slavery question, either in its establishment or its demolition," the Kentucky minister and slaveholder explained in his diary. With the matter settled by the Confederacy's surrender, Browder believed "peace will soon follow and slavery be abolished all over the land. If such be God's will I cheerfully acquiesce." Even Josiah Gorgas succumbed to a fatalist defeat - "I am as one walking in a dream, and expecting to wake," he explained of his emotional state. "It is a curious problem which is being solved by the sword - this freedom of the African race," the ordinance officer commented with tremendous detachment. "But the world will wag

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Claiborne to Annie Claiborne, 9 August 1864, and 12 May 1864, in Thomas Claiborne Papers, SHC.

on and his freedom will cling to him and the master will continue to cultivate his land, with black labor or that failing with white," placidly envisioning a New South of social continuity. The "energies of the white race will halt but temporarily before this catastrophe."<sup>24</sup>

Though his providential fatalism derived more from the earthly experiences of a life in agriculture and a difficult marriage (and proved far more sanguine than his wife Emily), South Carolina's David Harris showed a remarkable ability to find solace and contentment during the four years of Civil War. A man who had deemed secession a necessary expedient to escape the clutches of the Abolitionist North, he hoped to avoid both being mustered into the Confederate Army (he refused to become "food for the hungry fishes" of Charleston Harbor by serving at Fort Sumter) and the heavy-hand of the expanding Confederate government. Yet as the war inevitably made his goals of avoiding military service impossible, Harris dutifully submitted to his plight. In November 1862, his state militia unit was temporarily called to Charleston for active service: "But all right," he recorded in his diary, "the time has come for all such as me to go to the field & do our part for the defence of our Country. It will be a bitter [pill] for me to take. But it

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<sup>24</sup> Diary Entry of 31 December 1865, in McWhiney et al, *"Fear God and Walk Humbly,"* 355; Diary Entry of 10 April 1865, in Troutman, *The Heavens are Weeping*, 196; Diary Entries 4 May 1865, 2 June 1865, in Wiggins, *Journals of Josiah Gorgas*, 167, 175.

had as well be me as any one." Back home by May 1863, he complained of mounting Confederate taxation: "Our taxes are heavy, but we must submit to it without a murmur, for money must be had to carry on the war or we must submit to the Despot (Lincoln)." On the last day of 1863, he learned the Confederacy would disallow draftees the option of hiring a substitute in their stead, a tactic Harris himself had employed to remain at home. "This seems to be hard and unjust, and I fear that it will cause a want of confidence in our Government," he complained, "but surely this is the time that every man should do all he can for our suffering country." After finally serving in the Confederate infantry, he sounded equally stoical about his country's ultimate demise in April 1865: "Went to the village to hear the news. Lee has surrendered. Johnstone is about to surrender," he etched, "the soldiers are coming home in gangs & we have gone up the Spout." But "perhaps it is all for the best," he reflected calmly, for "At least, I am relieved from the army at present . . . I am now going to work instead of to the war. I think I will like it best."<sup>25</sup>

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There was nothing peculiarly Southern about the low-efficacy personality or the doctrine of providential fatalism.

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<sup>25</sup> Diary Entries of 3 March 1861, 8 November 1862, 4 May 1863, 31 December 1863, 21 April 1865, in Racine, *Piedmont Farmer*, 184, 266, 290, 315-316, 371.

Indeed, perhaps Abraham Lincoln stood as the greatest personification of both personality traits, this despite his rise from a childhood mired in the "annals of the poor" to becoming the commander and chief of a military force numbering over two million men. Still, as biographers have noted, a strong streak of fatalism colored Lincoln's personality (what he himself called his "Doctrine of Necessity"), and the president even claimed reflectively to have never truly "controlled events" during the Civil War, but could only "confess plainly that events have controlled me." It was a stunning statement that many low-efficacy Americans would have understood, even if unfathomable to the outside perspective of historians.

Furthermore, Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address stands as surely the most profound narration of providential fatalism ever to reverberate from a political pulpit. In this brief oration, Lincoln showed little interest in pointing fingers for instigating the war, and he voiced no desire for vengeance in behalf of the roughly 350,000 Union dead. He hazily recalled how slavery had "somehow" served as the conflict's major harbinger, before summarizing in famous passive voice: "And the war came" (bypassing his own accountability as his election was the major trigger that had launched the secessionist tidal wave in the deep South, and his call for volunteers after Sumter had done the same for the upper South). The war and its ghastly



violence, he lectured to a crowd anticipating victory, was a punishment placed on Americans North and South for perpetuating the sin of slavery, an institution that "in the providence of God . . . He now wills to remove." Lincoln then warned that the Civil War might rage for years to come if such pleased the Almighty, perhaps lasting "until all the wealth piled by the bond-man's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword."<sup>26</sup>

Yet Lincoln's fatalism was not always so brooding and melancholic (nor did it obviously hinder his avid pursuit to preserve the Union). As Lincoln scholar David Donald noted, fatalism generated many of the man's most "lovable traits: his compassion, his tolerance, his willingness to overlook mistakes." To this list could be added Lincoln's rejection of anger and hatred, as well as his ability to forgive and forget. "With malice toward none; with charity for all," was how he famously concluded his stoical address, before beseeching all Americans to "bind up the nation's wounds . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations." Paradoxically, the "Black Republican" promised white Southerners a relatively amicable and

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<sup>26</sup> As quoted in David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 565-658. Several historians have analyzed Lincoln's intriguing Second Inaugural Address, including David Herbert Donald on the pages listed above. For two treatments that are particularly relevant to Lincoln and the concept of providence, see Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 372-374; and Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, 425-428.

restrained reunion. But in one of the war's last demonstrations of Southern agency, a cabal of assassins dramatically rejected the olive branch. And as one historian famously defined it, "The Age of Hate" awaited.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Donald, *Lincoln*, 15; George Fort Milton, *The Age of Hate: Andrew Johnson and the Radicals* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1930).

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