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## "On our way for the Sunny South, land of Chivalry": Northern Imperial Attitudes in the Civil War South

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“ON OUR WAY TO THE SUNNY SOUTH, LAND OF CHIVALRY”:  
NORTHERN IMPERIAL ATTITUDES IN THE CIVIL WAR SOUTH

by

Kaci L. Nash

A THESIS

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“ON OUR WAY TO THE SUNNY SOUTH, LAND OF CHIVALRY”:  
NORTHERN IMPERIAL ATTITUDES IN THE CIVIL WAR SOUTH

Kaci L. Nash, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2012

Adviser: William G. Thomas, III

This study examines the discourse of Northerners who traveled into the South during the Civil War. Northern soldiers, nurses, teachers, relief workers, and officers' wives adopted an imperial framework in their encounter with the South. By the eve of the war, years of sectional turmoil had resulted in a perceived ontological separation between the North and the nation's internal Other—the South. To Northerners, the region was comprised of untamed wilderness, an antiquated society, and an inferior culture. When over two million Northerners mobilized and entered the southern states, they broadly adopted imperial viewpoints and awakened to the cultural power they wielded as invaders. A close examination of letters and diaries written by ordinary Northern men and women who traveled to the South during the war reveals how the mobilization and movement of Northerners resulted in a distinctly imperial discourse aimed at exerting control over the flora, fauna, people, places, and institutions of the region.

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To my family and friends, thank you for helping to keep my spirits high when the writing process seemed just a little too daunting.

And to my parents, I owe the greatest of debts for imparting in me my love of history and indulging a young child's fascination with the Civil War by a life-changing family vacation to Gettysburg.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The North and America's Internal Other**

Manifest Destiny was a powerful ideology, one that propelled the United States to expand from coast to coast of the North American continent. Native American civilizations that had flourished for centuries were attacked and forcibly removed from the path of American “progress,” a vision that did not include Native Americans, African Americans, and other minority peoples on the fringes of white society. During the mid-nineteenth century, the South and Southerners became another obstacle impeding American progress, another territory the nation must conquer in order to resume its pace along the westering path of Manifest Destiny. During the struggle to keep the nation whole, millions of Northerners invaded the southern states and quickly discovered the amount of power they could wield over the region and its peoples as conquerors, as saviors of their nation. Once victorious in the war, this process of imperial power would continue in the postbellum policies of Reconstruction and beyond, as the reunited country continued its expansion and fulfilled what Americans saw as its God-given destiny.

Scholars have devoted many pages to the Civil War, especially to the debate over its origins and comparative study of the North and the South. While not the focus of this thesis, the historiography of the regional comparison reveals characteristics with which Northerners developed a view of the South that was imperialist both in its outlook and in its plans for reconstructing the region. Historically, the examination of the relationship between the North and South has generally involved the broader argument over what

brought on the conflict, a historiography which centers on the tug-of-war between two interpretive camps— fundamentalists and revisionists.<sup>1</sup>

The fundamentalist interpretation of the war calls attention to the culture and society of the North and South as a catalyst for war. These scholars focus on “fundamental” differences between the regions that created the division between North and South, with slavery and the conflict between slave and free labor societies as the driving force.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, revisionists emphasize similarities between the regions and turn to politics and its actors to understand the war’s origins. Slavery receives attention as it relates to the break up of political parties and the inability of politicians to reach compromise.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth R. Varon, *Disunion!: The Coming of the American Civil War, 1789-1859* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>2</sup> Varon, *Disunion!*, 3; Edward L. Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?: Reflections on the South and Southern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 132. See, for example, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York:

<sup>2</sup> Varon, *Disunion!*, 3; Edward L. Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?: Reflections on the South and Southern History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005), 132. See, for example, Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007); Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Varon, *Disunion!*, 3-4; Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?*, 132. See, for example, William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion: Volume I: Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1990); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant 1854-1861* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2007); William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1988); Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1983).

A recent trend in scholarship has been to move away from these traditional approaches, to find new ways to tell the story of the war and its participants. William G. Thomas, III and Edward Ayers used comparative analysis to explore the implication of slavery in the differences between Augusta County, in slave-state Virginia, and Franklin County, in free-state Pennsylvania. Despite concluding that slavery was central to the coming of the war—“we believe the North and South fought tenaciously in the political realm precisely because they were fighting over the spread of slavery’s power”—they also proved that far from being “perfect counterpoints” to one another economically, socially, politically, and demographically, the two regions actually shared many similarities.<sup>4</sup> Significantly, the North and South were two modern societies, clashing over what kind of future they were heading toward—one founded on free labor or one permitting slavery. These conclusions were based upon research conducted with the aid of technology, primarily historical GIS, which permitted them to compare spatial relationships and social, economic, and political information between the two regions.<sup>5</sup> By using the digital medium, Thomas and Ayers took a new approach to old questions and arrived at conclusions that overturned previous interpretations of slavery as incompatible with modernity.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> William G. Thomas and Edward L. Ayers, “The Differences Slavery Made: A Close Analysis of Two American Communities,” *American Historical Review* (2003), <<http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/AHR/>>, T11.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas and Ayers, “The Differences Slavery Made,” TAS9, TM0. For a more detailed description of this methodology, see the methodology section of the article located at citation key TM0.

<sup>6</sup> See also, Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: The Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004). For an

Elizabeth R. Varon also looked beyond the traditional fundamentalist/revisionist debate in her examination of the discourse of disunion. The question of disunion, she argued, was “inseparable from the issue of slavery’s destiny” since the founding of the United States. Like Thomas and Ayers, Varon found slavery at the root of the Civil War, however, her goal was to “reframe the issue of causality” to examine “why slavery proved so divisive and why sectional compromise ultimately proved elusive.”<sup>7</sup>

This thesis does not look specifically at issues of causality, however, it follows this new development in the historiography of the Civil War. Instead of focusing on slavery, politics, economics, or culture, this study examines these issues through the eyes of the war’s Northern participants in order to grasp how these individuals understood what was happening to their country. In the process, this study demonstrates how the findings of earlier historians reflect a part of a discourse of imperial power that Northerners crafted throughout the early nineteenth century, explored and developed during the war, and would eventually put to work during the postwar reconstruction of the South and westward expansion.

### **Nineteenth-Century Worldview**

National identity, unsurprisingly, played a critical role in the separation of the South from the rest of the Union. James M. McPherson has tied the “Norman-Cavalier thesis” of nineteenth-century Southern political writer James B. D. DeBow to

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examination of slavery and modernity in the South during the Civil War era, see William G. Thomas, *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>7</sup> Varon, *Disunion!*, 337, 4.

nationalism, showing how the North and the South adopted different kinds of nationalism that affected the rhetoric of writers as they wrote about the war and their fellow countrymen.<sup>8</sup> Northerners' hostility toward the South was very strongly influenced by these distinct brands of nationalism. According to McPherson, Southerners looked to "blood ties," to ethnic associations, rather than to national or civic ties as Northerners did.<sup>9</sup> Southern "ethnic nationalism" reflected identity and loyalty drawn from the sense of unity felt by a group based on factors like culture, but more importantly, the belief in the common ancestry of the group as *distinct* from other groups of people.<sup>10</sup> The distinct relationship between the *people* and the Federal *government* found in this form of nationalism, helps to clarify the motivations of Southerners who favored secession from the Union.

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<sup>8</sup> James M. McPherson, "Was Blood Thicker Than Water? Ethnic and Civic Nationalism in the American Civil War," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 143, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 106. According to McPherson, the South adopted a "myth of Southern ethnic nationalism" which dictated that the South descended from the English Cavaliers (Norman conquerors) that settled in Virginia, while the North descended from the exiled Puritans (conquered Anglo-Saxons) that settled in New England. McPherson, 105. For a complete look at the argument regarding the ethnic division of the North and South, see Ritchie Devon Watson, *Normans and Saxons: Southern Race Mythology and the Intellectual History of the American Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> McPherson, "Was Blood Thicker Than Water?," 105.

<sup>10</sup> McPherson, "Was Blood Thicker Than Water?," 103. In his analysis of the Richmond *Daily Dispatch*, Robert K. Nelson has identified a unique Southern form of nationalism as well, in categories of topic modeling he calls "Anti-Northern Diatribes," "Poetry and Patriotism," and "Secession." See Robert K. Nelson, *Mining the Dispatch*, Digital Scholars Lab, n.d., <http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/>; Robert K. Nelson, "Of Monsters, Men — And Topic Modeling," *The New York Times' Disunion Series*, May 29, 2011, <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/29/of-monsters-men-and-topic-modeling/>.

While Southern ethnic nationalism reflected a local, geographic sense of identity, Northerners possessed a broader, more institutional form of nationalism. McPherson termed this “civic nationalism” for its sense of identity and citizenship based upon “a common loyalty to the symbols of the state . . . and to the historical memories and myths that define the nation.”<sup>11</sup> This form had ties to geography as well, but only in the sense of loyalty to the institutions governing a “specified territory,” that is, the United States.<sup>12</sup> These two different forms of nationalism based on differing cultures permeated nearly all aspects of Northern and Southern societies, including the war vocabularies of each region. Ethnically-minded Southerners used ethnic slurs to refer to their Northern enemies—Yankees, Mudsills—whereas Northerners generally associated Southerners with their anti- (civic) nationalist act of rebellion—Rebels, Secessionists, Secesh.<sup>13</sup> Combined with the social, cultural, and economic differences the North perceived between itself and the South, the national differences cemented a sense of breaking the nation in a way that could only be repaired by the conquering and remaking of the South.

This discourse of difference, of Southern distinctness and inferiority, was developed and distributed throughout the North through cultural products such as newspapers, novels, popular music, and travel literature. High literacy rates in the mid-century United States—80% of the population, including enslaved persons—allowed the existence of a “mass reading public,” an imagined community of Americans with a sense

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<sup>11</sup> McPherson, “Was Blood Thicker Than Water?,” 103.

<sup>12</sup> McPherson, “Was Blood Thicker Than Water?,” 103.

<sup>13</sup> McPherson, “Was Blood Thicker Than Water?,” 107.

of shared identity and shared cause.<sup>14</sup> These print mediums and their message greatly influenced the coming of the war, giving urgency to events happening in isolated corners of the country. Incidents such as Bleeding Kansas and John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry "gained critical significance because they were amplified and distorted by newspapers."<sup>15</sup> Print media spun these episodes into identity-shaping events, changing the way Northerners viewed themselves and related to the South, a region they came to regard as an "Other"—an identity reflecting the differences between North and South. Cultural artifacts such as Harriet Beecher Stow's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, E.D.E.N. Southworth's *The Hidden Hand*, and popular minstrel shows that toured the North promoted the "Otherness" of the South, and emphasized the presence of Southern aristocracy, the elegance of white plantation life, and the strangeness of the South's most exotic inhabitants: enslaved African Americans. Thus, as Edward Ayers argued, the "North" and the "South" as separate communities of Americans "took shape in *words* before they were unified by armies and shared sacrifice."<sup>16</sup>

For most nineteenth-century Americans, the "North" and "South" seemed to be as opposite as their names implied, and many harbored prejudices they had absorbed during

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<sup>14</sup> McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 19–20; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006), 43; Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?*, 140. As explained by Benedict Anderson, these communities are "imagined" not because they are unreal, but rather because they are *perceived* communities, based on discourse and shared belief, as opposed to a physical group of individuals.

<sup>15</sup> Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?*, 140.

<sup>16</sup> Ayers, *What Caused the Civil War?*, 141, emphasis added; Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (Penguin (Non-Classics), 1997), 30. For an examination of Northern popular literature during the war, see Frances M. Clarke, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

the decades of sectional and political crisis.<sup>17</sup> As a result, the perceived differences in economic systems and domestic institutions—as well as the moral characteristics associated with these systems and institutions—became “laminated onto the landscape” of the South, creating a “mythogeography” to be dissected and disseminated by Northerners made mobile by the war.<sup>18</sup>

### **A Northern Discourse**

The divisive atmosphere of the country fostered an unusual view of the neighbor across the Mason-Dixon line. Over the course of years of sectional turmoil, the South had developed into an American “Other” in the eyes of most Northerners. While they saw the South and its inhabitants as distinctly different, this sense of otherness was inclusive—the South was an *internal* Other. Stark differences existed—in culture, education, labor, nationalism—but they did not exclude the South from the nation. Instead, its status as an internal Other made it a place to be conquered and reformed to reflect the “true” nature of the country—that championed by the North.<sup>19</sup> As Northerners and Southerners increasingly began to see their cultures diverge, their national identities began to shift as

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<sup>17</sup> McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 38-39; Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 96. See also Steven E. Woodward, *Manifest Destinies: America’s Westward Expansion and the Road to the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> William Boelhoefer, quoted in Lisa C. Brawley, “Fugitive Nation: Slavery, Travel and Technologies of American Identity, 1830-1860” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1995), 10–11.

<sup>19</sup> Jamie Winders examines the project “of reconstructing the South, of occupying and attempting to rebuild the region socially, politically, and economically” in the postwar years. Jamie Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial: Northern Travel Writers in the Postbellum U.S. South, 1865-1880,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 95, no. 2 (June 1, 2005): 395. This project of reform and remodeling actually began during the war itself, as millions of Northerners invaded or traveled to the South in the course of the war.

well, further alienating them from one another. As Edward Said observed in his influential examination of culture and imperialism, “In time, culture [came] to be associated, often aggressively, with the nation or the state,” differentiating “us” from “them.”<sup>20</sup>

The identification of the South as a distinct Other yet still within the United States resulted in the formation of a unique discourse that was imperialist in nature—a form of “internal Orientalism,” to use the phrasing of geographer David Jansson.<sup>21</sup> Said’s post-colonial masterpiece, *Orientalism*, as well as his arguments in *Culture and Imperialism*, provide a model framework for understanding this discourse. His analysis of the “ontological separation of . . . two regions” and the domination of one over the other based on knowledge of presumed inferiority gives insight into the relationship between nineteenth-century Northerners and the South, as well as the intimation that if the North is one thing, then the South is the opposite.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, for Northerners at the time of the war, the South had become an “imagined space,” comprised of everything the North was not: “the ‘natural’ counterpart to an industrialized North,” known for “lush, untamed landscapes and beautiful green

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<sup>20</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), xiii.

<sup>21</sup> David Jansson, “Racialization and ‘Southern’ Identities of Resistance: A Psychogeography of Internal Orientalism in the United States.,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 100, no. 1 (2010): 203.

<sup>22</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979), 2. Said argues that imagined geographies “help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away.” Said, *Orientalism*, 55. This process of defining one’s self by what one is not is reflected in the relationship between the North and the South, but will not be examined in depth here.

agricultural scenes.”<sup>23</sup> By imagining “an idyllic place with abundant resources and climatic attributes,” Northerners could cement their perceived self-identity as progressively powerful and democratic—the true America—while creating a sense of greater distance between the North and its “domestic Orient, its secret self, its Other.”<sup>24</sup> Within this imagined South, the differences between the two sections emerged most visibly, and solidified the North as a loyal part of the Union.<sup>25</sup>

Said identified the division of “us” versus “them” present in Orientalism and in the relationship between the North and South as “the hallmark of imperialist cultures.”<sup>26</sup> While not an imperial nation in the more traditional sense of the word, in its relationship to its internal Other, the United States was a part of “classic nineteenth-century imperial culture,” with the South occupying a unique place as both insider and outsider.<sup>27</sup> The imperialist nature of the relationship between the North and South has received attention by scholars, however, the focus has been the postwar years.<sup>28</sup> Most relevant to this study,

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<sup>23</sup> Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 393; Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills, *At War with Metaphor: Media Propaganda and Racism in the War on Terror* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 28; Jansson, “Racialization and ‘Southern’ Identities of Resistance,” 203; Winders, 400.

<sup>24</sup> Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 400; Diane Roberts, quoted in Jansson, “Racialization and ‘Southern’ Identities of Resistance,” 206.

<sup>25</sup> Jansson, “Racialization and ‘Southern’ Identities of Resistance,” 203.

<sup>26</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xxv.

<sup>27</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 9. Said’s definition of “imperialism” refers to “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory.” Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 9.

<sup>28</sup> D. W. Meinig referred to the post-war South as a “new imperial holding” and Dewey W. Grantham called the South the nation’s “colonial appendage.” See D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History, Volume 3: Transcontinental America, 1850-1915* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); D. W. Meinig, “Strategies of Empire,” *Culturefront* 2 (Jan. 1993): 12-18; Dewey W. Grantham,

geographer Jamie Winders considered the Reconstruction South “a new imperial holding” of the United States, both “an occupied territory (re)captured through war and [yet] part of the victorious nation itself.”<sup>29</sup> During the North’s postbellum reconstructing, “imperialist” project, the South became “a space simultaneously (or alternatively) center and margin, victor and defeated, empire and colony, essentialist and hybrid, northern and southern.”<sup>30</sup>

But this imperial process began much earlier than the postwar reconstruction of the South, beginning when millions of Northerners entered the region, carrying with them a discourse of Northern superiority and power over their internal Other. Armed with a library of knowledge formulated during the prewar years, these agents of imperial power recorded their experiences with their imagined perception of the South in personal writings and correspondence.<sup>31</sup> What Winders identified as the South’s “double placement as both ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ within the nation” is seen referenced and disseminated within the written records of these wartime travelers, as they discovered applications of the power they could exert over the South.<sup>32</sup> These observations of the

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*The South in Modern America: A Region at Odds* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001). See also Jennifer Rae Greeson, “The Figure of the South and the Nationalizing Imperatives of Early United States Literature,” *The Yale Journal of Criticism* 12, no. 2 (1999): 209–248. John Carlos Rowe’s examination of internal colonialism in the United States does not include the nation’s relationship with the South during or after the Civil War. John Carlos Rowe, *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: From the Revolution to World War II* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 391-2.

<sup>30</sup> Jon Smith and Deborah Cohn, *Look Away! The U.S. South in New World Studies* (Duke University Press Books, 2004), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Jansson, “Racialization and ‘Southern’ Identities of Resistance,” 203.

<sup>32</sup> Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 392.

South were sent home where they were absorbed into the existing discourse of an inferior South.

### **Wartime Travelers**

There was comparatively little travel before the war, not only because there were few railroads, but because the nation had not yet been put into motion. Army life left a generation of restless men at home . . .<sup>33</sup>

- Lewis Morris Iddings, 1897

The onset of the war set in motion a mobilization that would eventually see close to two million Northerners entering the South.<sup>34</sup> This was a new experience, as most of the travelers had seldom ventured beyond their home counties.<sup>35</sup> Yael Sternhell referred to the Confederacy as a “revolution in motion” for its ability to mobilize the citizenry of the Confederate States.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, the war to suppress this revolution was a mobile one, as men and women from all stretches of the Northern states of the Union moved southward. The motion of this war between the North and South allowed soldiers and an army of citizens to become travelers in their own country, observing the institutions and lifestyles that they saw as contributing to its fracture. In the process, these Northern wartime travelers gained insight into themselves as Americans and what exactly they expected that country to represent.

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<sup>33</sup> Lewis Morris Iddings, “The Art of Travel,” *Scribner’s Magazine*, March 1897 quoted in Amy G. Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 174n42.

<sup>34</sup> Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 96.

<sup>35</sup> John D. Cox, *Traveling South: Travel Narratives and the Construction of American Identity* (University of Georgia Press, 2005), 165.

<sup>36</sup> Yael A. Sternhell, “Revolution in Motion: Human Mobility and the Transformation of the South, 1861-1865” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2008).

Travel is often associated with identity formation.<sup>37</sup> As Susan L. Roberson noted in her examination of travel narratives, the road, “often connected with the contact zone between different cultures and peoples, . . . also constitutes a contact zone where ideas of the nation meet and grapple with each other.”<sup>38</sup> Carrying with them an imagined geography of the South based on the stories, stereotypes, and propaganda circulated by print media and popular culture, the war brought Northerners close enough to personally observe the Southerner and his way of life, providing an opportunity to take stock of their internal Other, and ruminate upon what necessitated their presence in the South as part of a war effort rather than as tourists. Such self reflection is a common occurrence in travel, as is the process of “Othering” the people and places encountered.<sup>39</sup>

Soldiers are not routinely recognized for their role as travelers, nor do their movements gain recognition as travel in the traditional sense.<sup>40</sup> But as Roberson insisted,

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<sup>37</sup> For literature on the relationship between travel and identity formation, see Cox, *Traveling South*; Brawley, “Fugitive Nation: Slavery, Travel and Technologies of American Identity, 1830-1860”; Susan L. Roberson, *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road: American Mobilities* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>38</sup> Roberson, *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road*, 11.

<sup>39</sup> Roberson, *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road* 21; Cox, *Traveling South*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> For works that address the experiences of Union soldiers, see Wiley, *Life of Billy Yank*; Joseph T. Glatthaar, *March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman’s Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995); Gerald Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989); Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union*, 2nd ed. (Fordham University Press, 1997); Randal C. Jimerson, *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought During the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*; James M. McPherson, *What They Fought For 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994); Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); James M. McPherson, *For Cause and*

“every story is a travel story,” and these wartime travelers had unique access to the Southern landscape and its inhabitants.<sup>41</sup> John Cox treated Union soldiers as travelers—“tourists with guns (and pens)”—in his analysis of travel in the construction of national identity. He argued that Union soldiers traveling South during the war discovered similarities between themselves and Southerners which helped foster or reinforce an American national identity. Cox’s argument relied significantly upon the postwar reminiscences and memoirs of his subjects, thus relying upon a corpus of texts written and published during an era of romanticized and reconciliatory views of the war, where the object of these texts was to promote a reunified country, free from the sectional difference which had pushed the nation toward war.

This thesis instead examines letters and diaries, which capture Northerners’ immediate reactions to their Southern surroundings. Unlike later wars, the letters and diaries of Civil War soldiers were not censored, and thus contain valuable insights into their perceptions of the South. Although not the usual travel writers, their position as soldiers did not impede their powers of observation.<sup>42</sup> However, the degree to which Northerners could interact with and observe the South was affected by factors such as

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*Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1998); Earl J. Hess, *The Union Soldier in Battle: Enduring the Ordeal of Combat* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997).

<sup>41</sup> Roberson, *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road*, 7.

<sup>42</sup> James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (Oxford University Press, USA, 1998), 12; Thomas Clark quoted in Cox, 171; Jane E. Schultz, *Women at the Front: Hospital Workers in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 3. Gary W. Gallagher also makes use of the diaries and letters of war participants to make new conclusions regarding Northern views of an participation in the war. See Gary W. Gallagher, *Union War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

mobility, occupation, and gender. The soldiers' female counterparts faced more restrictions than members of the highly mobile Union armies.

When the war began and Northern women watched their men enlist for military service, many found their own way to contribute to the preservation of the Union. Local aid societies emerged in churches and homes, as women spent countless hours sewing and knitting, cooking, and gathering necessities to help the war effort. Yet many were not content staying Northbound and organizing for others at the front, so they went South in search of pupils, patients, and the enemy.<sup>43</sup> As nurses, teachers, aid workers, and even soldiers, the observations of many of these female travelers were hindered by restrictions they faced due to their stationary posts in hospitals and schoolhouses. A young woman from Wisconsin, who traveled to Tennessee at the end of 1864 to work in the hospitals, often commented in her diary that she felt imprisoned by her post. "It is a very strange life we live here now almost like prisoners yet I am not unhappy. Hope to do some good while here."<sup>44</sup> Much of the written records kept by these female workers focused on their

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<sup>43</sup> There has been little analysis of the movement of women during the Civil War. Most of the historiography has focused on the war's effects on the autonomy of women and the future of women's rights. For books written on Northern women during the war, see Agnes Brooks Young, *The Women and the Crisis: Women of the North in the Civil War* (New York: McDowell, Obolensky, 1959); Mary Elizabeth Massey, *Women in the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994); Wendy Hammond Venet, *Neither Ballots Nor Bullets: Women Abolitionists and the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1991); Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Yankee Women: Gender Battles in the Civil War* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1995); Nina Silber, *Daughters of the Union: Northern Women Fight the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005).

<sup>44</sup> Libbie Ward, letter dated February 2, 1865, "Papers, 1864-1865," Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

duties, however, when they cast their eyes outward to their Southern surroundings, they did so through a lens of superiority and power.

Free African Americans in the North were also a part of this imperial vision. Despite the fact that they could not officially become citizens of the United States, many self-identified as Americans and *acted* as citizens. As Christian G. Samito argued in his examination of the quest for citizenship by African Americans and Irish immigrants, armed service during the war “allowed them to assert, more powerfully than ever before, their American identity and vision of how they should fit into the United States.”<sup>45</sup> Part of this identity was formed as a result of identification as a part of the imagined community of the North, and absorbing all of the attitudes toward the South that were circulating within this community. Even more significantly, African Americans took part in anticipating what they could help the South become once the slaveholders’ rebellion was quashed. In their support for the Union and enlistment in the army to fight on its behalf, African Americans asserted themselves as citizens of the nation, and acted in the hopes that such allegiance would be rewarded with the rights and privileges afforded to native-born or naturalized whites.<sup>46</sup>

Despite the unconventionality of these travelers, the letters and diaries of these Northerners are indeed a kind of travelogue, documenting the landscapes, cities, and peoples they encountered. While generally not written for public audiences and therefore

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<sup>45</sup> Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship During the Civil War Era* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire*, 217.

lacking the narrative depth and detail of professional travel writers like Frederick Law Olmsted, these documents provide more than just local color. Historians have failed to acknowledge the significance of these average citizens' views—they stand as sources for culture, for ideological motivations, or for the experience of war service. But a close reading of the journals and correspondence kept by these Northern travelers reveals the imperialist discourse of power and superiority they felt over the South, describing a landscape to be acquired and “civilized” and a people to be conquered and reformed. The writings of these individuals indicate that they felt they were “the active agents of civilization.”<sup>47</sup>

This was an easy role for them to assume. As Ritchie Devon Watson summarized, “because they [the Northern travelers] had listened for years to the South’s boasting of its refined culture and its aristocratic blood, they were surprised and delighted to report to their friends and relatives on the low and primitive state of the southern society they encountered.”<sup>48</sup> Their observations of Southern society uplifted their own to a superior, American nation which would right the wrongs of the South. At the same time, it allowed them to see the riches of the Southern landscape—the potential in its ill-used farmlands and the mysterious beauties of its untamed wilderness, exotic vegetation, and wildlife.

### **Methodology**

This thesis examines the texts of letters, diaries, and journals of participants in the Civil War. Because these documents were written during the course of the writers’

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<sup>47</sup> Mona Domosh quoted in Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 397.

<sup>48</sup> Watson, *Normans and Saxons*, 191.

travels, they contain their immediate reaction to the Southern landscape and its population, free from postwar coloring or victors' perspectives. The postbellum literary scene, with its romanticized and reconciliatory perception of the war, featured the publication of many recollections and memoirs written by Northerners who were eager to offer their contributions to the war effort. These reminiscences are valuable resources—especially for understanding the way in which the war appeared in national memory and, coupled with letters and diaries, allow for an interesting survey of this process of memorialization—but they lack the immediate reactions to their surroundings found in journals, diaries, and letters.<sup>49</sup> To understand the discourse of Northern superiority and the process of imperial power in the South, sources that are not colored by postwar thought processes must be examined.

Soldiers were the largest group of Northerners who journeyed South, and thus constitute the largest group of travelers in this study. However, careful attention was given to include as broad a sample as possible—racially, politically, geographically, and in terms of gender and levels of literacy and education. These travelers were emigrants and natives, men and women, black and white, wealthy and working class, and residents of both rural and urban settings. This variance of source material revealed the depth to which the conviction of superiority was engrained in Northern society and how it

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<sup>49</sup> See David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002); Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Paul A. Shackel, *Memory in Black and White: Race, Commemoration, and the Post-Bellum Landscape* (Lanham: Altamira Press, 2003). See also Kaci Nash, “Union Veterans and the Fight over Civil War Memory” (presented at the Great Lakes History Conference, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2010).

developed into a discourse of imperial power over the South as the war progressed.<sup>50</sup>

Wherever possible, I have retained the voices of these Northern writers. The original spelling, grammar, and punctuation of manuscript sources has been preserved. Some of the quotations from these documents may be lengthy; however, to understand how Northerners saw the South, it is necessary to read exactly how they wrote about it, whether it be through humor, disgust, curiosity, or sympathy.

It is through a close reading of these observations that manifestations of imperial power over the South are evident in the actions and attitudes of the Northerners who participated in the eventual conquering of the Confederacy during the war. Within this Northern discourse of superiority and power lay certain categories of rhetoric which will be explored in the ensuing chapters—flora and fauna; friends and enemies; and institutions and destinations. In each instance, Northerners worked through the discourse of Southern Otherness and inferiority.<sup>51</sup>

Digital humanities methodologies aided me in my close reading of the sources and discourse analysis, and greatly informed my conclusions. My own digital history project, “*On our way for the Sunny South, land of Chivalry*”: *Northern War Travelogues*

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<sup>50</sup> See the Appendix for brief biographical profiles of the Northerners consulted for this study.

<sup>51</sup> Other discourse analysis studies of the nineteenth century include Varon, *Disunion!*; Hugh J. Reilly, *Bound to Have Blood: Frontier Newspapers and the Plains Indian Wars* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2011); John M. Coward, *The Newspaper Indian: Native American Identity in the Press, 1820-90* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1999); and John D. Dorst, *Looking West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999). While these works look at public texts such as literature, newspapers, as well as folklore and culture, this study looks to private texts—letters, diaries, and journals—in order to look at the beliefs and understandings of the common citizen, not the representations of the political and social elite.

*and the Southern Landscape*, served as a preliminary investigation of the question of how Northerners interacted with and understood the Southern landscape and peoples.<sup>52</sup> Digital text analysis tools such as TokenX, Wordle, and Exhibit allowed for a very close reading of the text of the journal kept by an Illinois soldier for a period of two years. These tools allowed me to work with the writer's words in ways that were revealing, uncovering and amplifying patterns in the text and making connections through processes like concept highlighting, key words in context, and word counts.<sup>53</sup> For example, utilizing the word frequency function of TokenX to search for selected words, I discovered the author's reluctance to accept the validity of the Confederacy—he only used the word once during his two-year journal—as well as his feelings toward those who fought on its behalf—always “rebels” or “secesh” but rarely the “enemy.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Kaci Nash, “*On our way for the Sunny South, land of Chivalry*”: *Northern War Travelogues and the Southern Landscape*, 2011, [http://segonku.unl.edu/student\\_projects/hist970/s11/knash/](http://segonku.unl.edu/student_projects/hist970/s11/knash/). The project is also available to download along with a copy of this thesis at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Digital Commons, located at <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/>. This project was completed under the guidance of Douglas Seefeldt during a one semester seminar on Digital History.

<sup>53</sup> For further explanation of these processes, see [http://segonku.unl.edu/student\\_projects/hist970/s11/knash/vis.html](http://segonku.unl.edu/student_projects/hist970/s11/knash/vis.html) and John Burrows, “Textual Analysis,” in *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, ed. Susan Schreibman, Ray Siemens, and John Unsworth, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Professional, 2004), <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/companion/>. For additional readings on digital humanities methodologies, see Ayers, “A Digital Civil War” in *What Caused the Civil War*; Jerome McGann, *Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Johanna Drucker, *SpecLab: Digital Aesthetics and Projects in Speculative Computing* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2009); Steven Ramsey, *Reading Machines: Toward an Algorithmic Criticism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> See [http://segonku.unl.edu/student\\_projects/hist970/s11/knash/v\\_counts.html](http://segonku.unl.edu/student_projects/hist970/s11/knash/v_counts.html).

Such text analysis tools are most commonly used to do what literary scholar Franco Moretti termed a “distant reading” of texts, using visual representations or models of written works to emphasize “the explanation of general structures [across multiple works] over the interpretation of individual texts.”<sup>55</sup> While these techniques can be applied to large corpora, when turned to smaller collections such as the one gathered for this study, distant reading tools can be used for a close, detailed reading of individual texts. By interrogating the diary used in my digital history project with text analysis software, I was able to gain greater insight into the motivations of the author and uncovered themes that might not otherwise be apparent without extensive and time-consuming scrutiny. Additionally, and perhaps more importantly, the results of this process acted as a research aid, signaling what to look for within each subsequent text I interrogated. The results of this digital case study and what it revealed about the thought patterns of a Union soldier encountering the South informed and guided my later readings of letters and diaries.

By the outbreak of the war, Americans on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line had endured decades of sectional controversy as politicians and the politically-minded butted heads over the issue of slavery. Through the thirty years between the sectional crises of

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<sup>55</sup> Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees: Abstract Models For A Literary History* (New York: Verso, 2005), 91. See Moretti for examples of distant reading techniques and their applicability and usefulness to textual analysis. See also the Stanford Literary Lab <litlab.stanford.edu> directed by Matthew Jockers and Franco Moretti. Projects like “A Geography of Nineteenth-Century English and American Fiction” use digital tools to examine a large corpus of texts to uncover patterns across categories such as time, genre, and author.

1832 to the acts of the winter of 1860, many Northerners had been building upon layers and layers of animosity toward their upstart countrymen. As Bell Irvin Wiley aptly observed, by the time the war began, Northerners' view of the South had been shaped by "the emotion-charged atmosphere of the late fifties and early sixties."<sup>56</sup> The coming of the war provided Northerners with the opportunity to work out these issues as they confronted the objects of their vexation and prejudice.

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<sup>56</sup> Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 98.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Flora & Fauna

I am very anxious that you should know how it looks here but I don't suppose that it will be possible for me to describe it so that you will.<sup>57</sup>

- Rufus Robbins, 7th Massachusetts

William W. Christy of Mercersburg, Pennsylvania was in many ways a typical Union soldier. A laborer in his early twenties, he enlisted for a three-year term of service with his three brothers and his brother-in-law as soon as the opportunity to fight arose. Unlike the average white Union soldier, however, William Christy and his brothers were African American, and their race had prohibited them from answering their country's call-to-arms until April 1863. When a recruiter for the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts appeared in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, Christy and forty-five other Pennsylvanians joined the neighboring state's regiment, so eager to participate in the war that they would not wait for their home-state to accept African-American soldiers.<sup>58</sup>

Once enlisted in the Union army, Christy found himself on the move to destinations far from his Pennsylvania roots—to Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida. The 1860 census indicated that Christy could neither read nor write but that he had attended school in the past year. By 1863, he had become versed in the rudiments of

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<sup>57</sup> Rufus Robbins, *Through Ordinary Eyes: The Civil War Correspondence of Rufus Robbins, Private, 7th Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 37.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Ayers, William G. Thomas, and Anne Sarah Rubin, "Black on the Border" in *Slavery, Resistance, Freedom*, ed. Gabor Boritt and Scott Hancock (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 73.

reading and writing, and he wrote home to his sister, Mary, to inform her of his travels in the “sandy south.” “We have be over agrate and saw agrate deel of the contrey,” he wrote. “I have saw more then i ever expected to see be for i left home.”<sup>59</sup> For the average American, who rarely traveled beyond his home county, the war presented an occasion to become a sightseer and student of their country and experiment with the imperializing applications of power granted to them as agents of civilization, a superior force invading an inferior region.<sup>60</sup>

### **“A pleasure trip or a voyage of discovery”: The Southern Wilderness**

Once they entered the South, Northerners were confronted by a natural landscape they often interacted with as if it were a foreign world. Some travelers came from urban environments and had little experience with the natural world, and even those from rural origins sensed grand differences in the wilderness of the South. They often attempted to make comparisons to home, but for the most part, everything they encountered seemed

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<sup>59</sup> William Christy to sister, August 2, 1863 in Edward L. Ayers, William G. Thomas, III, Anne S. Rubin, and Andrew Torget, eds., *Valley of the Shadow: Two Communities in the American Civil War*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F3022>.

<sup>60</sup> There have been few environmental histories of the Civil War. See Jack Temple Kirby, “The American Civil War: An Environmental View,” National Humanities Center, *Nature Transformed: The Environment in American History*, rev. 2001, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntuseland/essays/amcwar.htm>; Mark Fiege, “Gettysburg and the Organic Nature of the American Civil War,” in *Natural Enemy, Natural Ally: Toward an Environmental History of War*, Richard P. Tucker and Edmund Russell, eds. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2004), 93–109; Lisa M. Brady, *War Upon the Land: Military Strategy and the Transformation of Southern Landscapes During the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012); Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012).

incredibly exotic. In the flora and fauna of the region, Northerners encountered the mythologized South that had been promoted back home—the “moonlight-and-magnolias myth of a Cavalier South”—filled with the sublime and the picturesque, and evidence of the exotic geography they had expected to see.<sup>61</sup>

The notion of the South as a quaint, rural society seemed to be confirmed as they ventured into the interiors of the region. While Southerners would boast of their comfortable, isolated countryside, many Northerners saw a lack of development. Even those from rural hometowns would have had at least some familiarity with urban settings. Of the one hundred largest cities in the U.S. in 1860, 86% were located in the North. Only four Southern cities appeared in the top 25: New Orleans, which was the sixth largest; Louisville, Kentucky, twelfth; Charleston, twenty-second; and Richmond, twenty-fifth. Atlanta, a city frequently associated with the Civil War, ranked ninety-ninth.<sup>62</sup> With the prevalence of scattered towns and plantations amongst a landscape that in many places still appeared in “frontier condition,” the South seemed to Northerners as a wilderness waiting to be tamed as the Midwestern frontier had been.<sup>63</sup> “I gaze upon the luxuries of this clime,” one soldier wrote, “all which to us are beauties and of which we had read in story and romance. I notice the loveliness which nature has thrown over this

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<sup>61</sup> Watson, *Normans and Saxons*, 28.

<sup>62</sup> Kelby Ouchley, *Flora and Fauna of the Civil War: An Environmental Reference Guide* (Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 8.

<sup>63</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 97; Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 403.

portion of the country and a climate which cannot but be appreciated by the stranger.”<sup>64</sup>

The Northern strangers generally did appreciate the beauty and bounty of the wilderness, as it met their expectations of their exotic internal Other.

Twenty-five year old Charlotte Forten came from a prominent African-American family in Philadelphia. After the first year of the war, she determined to go South, pledging herself to work as a teacher to the formerly enslaved inhabitants of South Carolina’s Sea Islands. On the evening of her first day in the South, she experienced a South Carolina sunset, which she described in vivid and romantic detail. “It was just at sunset—a grand Southern sunset; and the gorgeous clouds of crimson and gold were reflected in the waters below, which were smooth and calm as a mirror. Then, as we glided along, the rich sonorous tones of the [Negro] boatmen broke upon the evening stillness.”<sup>65</sup> The whole experience played right into her Southern fantasy. Picturesque sunsets, sweet-singing black boatmen, her entrance to the South fulfilled her expectations of what “a grand Southern sunset” ought to be like.

One day later, as she continued in her preliminary observations of the South, Forten was pleased to find that the school where she would spend her time was hidden among a grove of oak trees. “Never saw anything more beautiful than these trees,” she recorded in her diary. “It is strange that we do not hear of them at the North. They are the first objects that attract one’s attention here. They are large, noble trees with small glossy

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<sup>64</sup> Diary entry dated August 15, 1863 in Benjamin F. McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier: The Diary of Benjamin F. McIntyre*, ed. Nannie M. Tilley (University of Texas Press, 1963), 207.

<sup>65</sup> Journal entry dated October 28, 1862 in Charlotte Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, ed. Brenda Stevenson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 388.

green leaves. Their beauty consists in the long bearded moss with which every branch is heavily draped. This moss is singularly beautiful, and gives a solemn almost funeral aspect to the trees.”<sup>66</sup> Forten was typical in her reverence of the natural wilderness; diary entries and letters home were filled with detailed descriptions of the scenery, accompanied by adjectives such as magnificent, lovely, romantic, “beautiful in the extreme,” and unsurpassable. Their language was often flowery and romantic, as if the exotic nature of the environment had inspired the writers to become novelists as they attempted to capture the grandeur with words.

Adrift on the Gulf of Mexico, one Iowa native recorded his awe-inspiring view. “At night watched sparkle on water—here scattered starry points bespa[n]gled; there sparkling constellations [in] the Heaven of waters—& here as if a portion of the milky way was poured down, a breaking wave rolls a flood of light on the water sky, which spreads & shimmers a moment & disappears.”<sup>67</sup> Another soldier found the scenery along the Cumberland River so beautiful, he praised the war that had brought him there. The scenery was “in many places beautiful, and in some places grand beyond my powers of description. . . . And then added to the natural scenery was our fleet steaming along, with the black smoke rising majestically from the tall smoke pipes, and occasionally brass

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<sup>66</sup> Journal entry dated October 19, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 391.

<sup>67</sup> Diary entry dated October 28, 1863, “Jacob Wentworth Rogers Diaries and Papers, 1841-1900,” Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

bands playing while the echoing sounds came back again from the eternal hills. ‘Twere worth ten years of peaceful life, on glance at their majesty.’<sup>68</sup>

For many soldiers and travelers in the Western and Trans-Mississippi Theaters of the war, travel included transportation via steam engine. Gliding down Southern rivers in steamships or cutting through Southern countryside on the railroads provided a unique vantage point for these strangers on exotic soil.<sup>69</sup> A nurse on her way to Tennessee from the North wrote of the train ride, “I enjoyed the journey very much . . . [and] while day light lasted gave myself up to the enjoyment of the scenery . . . I have now seen mountains not the largest sized, but that looked large to me, and ravines, and deep cuts for the road through the solid rock. Then we passed through the tunnels where the blackness of darkness was surely seen and felt. It seemed so long several minutes for us to pass through. I was enchanted with the scenery.”<sup>70</sup>

Another nurse traveling by steamship glimpsed some of the exotic inhabitants as they passed by. “A band of female contrabands trooped down to the shore giggling and chattering amidst the bushes—nothing could be lovelier than the colour of their clothes & turbans with the background of green. It was a beautiful evening, a delicious air blowing, birds singing and locusts rattling in the bushes.”<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> George W. Pepon to sister, February 12, 1863, “Civil War Correspondence, George W. Pepon, (1855-1868),” Regional History Center at Northern Illinois University.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas, *The Iron Way*, 82–88, 102.

<sup>70</sup> Ward, letter dated January 29, 1865.

<sup>71</sup> Letter dated June 29, 1862 in Harriet Douglas Whetten and Paul H. Hass, “A Volunteer Nurse in the Civil War: The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 48, no. 2 (December 1, 1964): 147.

Traveling aboard a gunboat through the waters of Mississippi, German-American Henry A. Kircher felt as if he were on a mission of exploration rather than a military expedition during a time of war.

Now we have been traveling on the various rivers, bayous and narrow passes for almost 3 weeks, and have gotten to see nothing of either civilization or the world of foe or friend. One can almost hardly describe how crooked the rivers are here; they consist of nothing but rounded corners. . . . everything is forest, sky and water, and quite often just forest and water above and below. . . . We live here on the gunboat quite content. If we didn't know that some time things have got to break loose you might think that we were making a pleasure trip or a voyage of discovery.<sup>72</sup>

A “voyage of discovery” is an apt phrase for Northern travel through the wilderness of the South. Their descriptions of Southern scenery often present a picture of an exotic destination rather than a familiar locale within their understanding of their American home. As her hospital steamer glided down the James River during the Peninsula Campaign of 1862, Harriet Douglas Whetten commented on the scenery. “The mouth of the Chickahominy is very lovely—a long low point of land on one side with two single trees. There are cypresses growing in the water at different parts of the river, and one especially beautiful grove, which I wish I could draw for you, full of oriental beauty and reminiscences of Arabian nights.”<sup>73</sup> The linguistic choices made by Northerners in their writings reveal a perception of the South as exceedingly distant and foreign from their everyday understanding.

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<sup>72</sup> Letter dated March 10, 1863 in Henry Adolph Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland: The Civil War Letters of Henry A. Kircher* (Kent State University Press, 1983), 74.

<sup>73</sup> Letter dated July 13, 1862 in Whetten, “The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 150-151.

Sensational imagery of Southern landscapes abounded in the travel narratives of these Northerners. One Philadelphia native frequently confided in her diary her affinity for the romance of the natural wonders of the Sea Islands in South Carolina.

Saw a beautiful, beautiful sight. In some parts of the wood the branches of the live oak formed a perfect ceiling overhead and from them depended long sprays of that exquisite moss lighted up by the sun's last rays. I c'd think only of some fairy palace, at first, then the sight suggested the Mammoth cave as I had seen it once in an excellent Panorama. Those sprays of moss, glowing in the sunlight, were perfect stalactites, as I saw them illuminated. . . . I longed to be an artist that I might make a sketch.<sup>74</sup>

Marcus M. Spiegel was ten years an American after he and his wife emigrated from Germany to Ohio. An exceptional American for his well-traveled past, he found the mountainous terrain of western Virginia to be on par with other exotic locations he had visited. “Marching along now as we do in a fine Spring afternoon, on the left of us we behold the beautiful ‘Blue Ridge’ Mountains, which have a Picturesque appearance as they show themselves in a Mountain chain as fair and blue as the Sky in Italy; you behold to our right the Alleghenies as far as the Eye can reach.”<sup>75</sup> Spiegel often went to great lengths to detail his observations for his wife and children back home, comparing them to imagined literary landscapes that had appeared in the works of favorite author, E. D. E. N. Southworth—“Mrs. Southworth ought to be here [to] see the beautiful caves and everything for a splendorous romance”—and providing such detailed descriptions that they might have appeared in one of Mrs. Southworth’s novels.

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<sup>74</sup> Journal entry dated November 22, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 401.

<sup>75</sup> Letter dated March 22, 1862 in Marcus M. Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War: Marcus M. Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers*, ed. Jean Powers Soman and Frank L. Byrne (University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 76.

On our march we had to climb a Hill of at least 3-1/2 miles long and awful high, a grand Scenery to behold by moonlight; an awful hill, all the time on one side of high Rocks and Scattered Pine and Spruce trees and on the other Side the grandest precipice down, down, as far as men could see, with an awful rolling of Water which at first sight, would naturally stop a person and make him look, admire and chill at the awful, romantic and fearful sight.<sup>76</sup>

Northerners often resorted to using historical or literary comparisons to their locations, perhaps in an effort to make the unfamiliar seem familiar, but further illustrating a sense of distance and otherness in their relationship with their Southern surroundings.

Irish-born Wisconsinite William Wallace revealed an understanding of European history as he recorded his march through Virginia. “As we passed over the Shenandoa we had to encounter a steep rugged mountain called the Virginia Blue Ridge. It is a long crooked dreary road and when at the top of it we had a fine view of the surrounding country, and while crossing it we thought of Bonapart crossing the Alps but our fighting was little compared with his.”<sup>77</sup> Iowan Benjamin McIntyre found the exotic wilderness of the South to be so magnificent the picturesque beauty of the West could not compare.

Today we have passed over some of the highest ranges of the Boston Mountains and for anyone but a Soldier in our Situation there would have been food for thought. here were displayed the beauties of nature, of romance, the picturesque and sublime mingled in happy confusion— cascades & waterfalls commingling with Sunshine the colors of the rainbow, rock of gigantic proportion upon rock until it seemed to cleave the sky and gazing as far as the eye could reach was a succession of abrupt elevations. The ascents were difficult, the descents attended with danger, for many of them for hundreds of yards were broad Stepping Stones arranged as a causeway seemingly for Some giant master. For a distance

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<sup>76</sup> Letters dated January 27, 1862 and February 17, 1862 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 29-30; 41.

<sup>77</sup> William Wallace to his wife, March 23, 1862, “William Wallace Papers, 1861-1864, 1899, 1973-1974, 1989,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

of perhaps 20 miles we traversed these rocky heights which present at each step new incident for the poet, the painter and Scholar. And when the glory of western scenery shall find admirers none can surpass the beauty, majesty and awe of such as I have witnessed today.<sup>78</sup>

Even the fearful nature of certain elements of the wilderness held Northerners captive with its sublime beauty. Caught in a “tempest” on the Gulf of Mexico, one soldier described being pitched from one side of his steamer to the other, the soldiers aboard “frightened out of their wits.”<sup>79</sup> Another described a similar experience, recreating the scene in excited, descriptive prose.

The old ship rolled as though it was a cradle with a cross child rocking it, still it struggled on against the mighty waves as if conscious of its precious burden . . . a storm at sea is a sight of fearful grandeur to see the great waves come rolling up chasing each other as though eager to seize their prey & then to see them break together or against the ship & roll back to meet the next[.] none but those who know by experience can imagine the splendor of those Grand old waves with their foam covered crest & then to see a ship go rolling over them half upsetting & then righting[.] it almost seems as though they were things of life instead of old hulks of wood & Iron.<sup>80</sup>

Many Northerners found themselves so overwhelmed by the power of the beautiful Southern wilderness when they first arrived, they described it as the “most perfect picture of paradise.”<sup>81</sup> An African-American soldier stationed in Florida wrote to the *Christian Recorder*, “I have seen beautiful bouquets here in the month of March.

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<sup>78</sup> Diary entry dated December 30, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 86–87.

<sup>79</sup> Diary entry dated March 16, 1862 in Rufus Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier: Rufus Kinsley and the Civil War*, ed. David C. Rankin (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 89.

<sup>80</sup> Journal entry dated October 30, 1863 in Alexander O. Morse, *Civil War Journal*, Tim L. Morse, Antioch, California. This diary can also be found at Nash, “*On our way for the Sunny South, land of Chivalry*,” [http://segonku.unl.edu/student\\_projects/hist970/s11/knash/](http://segonku.unl.edu/student_projects/hist970/s11/knash/).

<sup>81</sup> Diary entry dated May 11, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 92.

Florida, for pleasantness of climate and beauty of country, is almost a 'Paradise.' With the exception of the prospective crop of the Alligator family, and flourishing condition of the reptile kingdom, I should prefer making Florida my future home."<sup>82</sup> Another soldier confessed to his brother and sister that the land where he was encamped twenty-five miles from Richmond was "the most beautiful country I believe I ever saw." Only the war marred this picturesque landscape. "It is warm and dry and if it were not for the war the country would seem a paradise on earth."<sup>83</sup>

Army surgeon Daniel M. Holt expressed similar sentiments in a letter home to his wife in New York. "I think of all the places I ever saw, this is by nature the most sublime and romantic." The land around Virginia created a view that was "soul-inspiring, and were in not that war has rendered desolate this heaven favored region I should be willing to 'live and die in Dixie.' As it is, however, I have no desire to remain, and had much rather join my wife and family in the green hills of the happy North."<sup>84</sup> The war was bringing ruin to the rich landscape of "Dixie," and with such beauty around them, some Northerners began to question the nature of the war that brought them to this strange and magnificent region. Holt continued, "This Valley is one of the most lovely the eye ever rested upon. For miles and miles away, almost a garden stretches out before you.—If ever

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<sup>82</sup> Letter from Rufus Sibb Jones dated April 13, 1864 in Edwin S. Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men: Letters from African-American Soldiers in the Union Army 1861-1865* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 50.

<sup>83</sup> Diary entry dated May 12, 1862, "Diary of Silas Dexter Wesson, 1861-1865," Regional History Center at Northern Illinois University.

<sup>84</sup> Letter dated November 7, 1862 in Daniel M. Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War: The Letters and Diary of Daniel M. Holt, M.D.*, ed. Janet L. Coryell, James M. Greiner, and James R. Smither (Kent State University Press, 1994), 43.

a people *ought* to be happy and prosperous, it is the people of this region.”<sup>85</sup> As the war progressed, praise of the Southern wilderness continued, but comments expressing a desire to settle in the South changed form, expressing a desire to return after Northern industry and reform had been applied to the region.

Another element of the South that was often featured in the Northerners’ narratives and intrinsically linked to Northern ideas about the region was the climate. The phrase “sunny South” is the most common phrase to appear across Northern travelers’ writings, used to indicate comfort—“Army fare and ‘Sunny South’ appears to agree with my health”—but mostly used in irony when the South did not live up to its name.<sup>86</sup> Before the war, Maine native Zenas T. Haines wrote for the *Boston Herald*. When he enlisted in the 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, he corresponded with the newspaper during his eight months in North Carolina. “In the morning we were a little surprised to find the ground white with snow, and conjectured that the ‘Sunny South’ was ahead of Massachusetts in that particular, for once.” Later that winter he wrote, “We awoke this morning to find the ground white with snow, and the air thick with flakes, driven by a high wind. The scene was decidedly New Englishish, and contrasted curiously with that of the preceding evening. The climate of the ‘Sunny South’ is certainly not without its

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<sup>85</sup> Letter dated September 26, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 259.

<sup>86</sup> Letter dated April 25, 1863 in George Walter Squier, *This Wilderness of War: The Civil War Letters of George W. Squier, Hoosier Volunteer*, ed. Julie A. Doyle, John David Smith, and Richard M. McMurry (University of Tennessee Press, 1998), 15.

freaks.”<sup>87</sup> Richard Baxter Satterlee also called upon the “Sunny South,” but as a lament. “I have heard a great deal said about the sunny south,” he wrote of Georgia, “but I cant see it in that light.”<sup>88</sup> The Wisconsin Quaker’s anti-slavery convictions clouded his view of a cheery, beautiful region.

Most of the references to Southern climate were spoken either in praise of the pleasing temperatures during what would have been a blustery Northern winter, or cursing the “killing” heat during the summer months.<sup>89</sup> “The weather is perfectly beautiful,” one officer’s wife recorded in December 1862. “It is so warm that I do not pretend to put anything around me when I go out. The birds are singing as they do with *us* in the spring.”<sup>90</sup> A soldier described similar conditions in Louisiana to his wife. “The weather is delightful, only at noon or about noon it is too warm to go out; you never saw a June pleasanter or warmer as January is here.”<sup>91</sup> Charlotte Forten found the winter months of South Carolina to be equally as pleasing. “March, usually so blustering with

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<sup>87</sup> Letters dated November 11, 1862 and February 3, 1863 in Zenas T. Haines, *In the Country of the Enemy: The Civil War Reports of a Massachusetts Corporal*, ed. William Charles Harris (University Press of Florida, 1999), 87, 127.

<sup>88</sup> Richard Baxter Satterlee to his wife, October 28, 1864, “Letters, 1864-1865, 1968,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>89</sup> Wallace to his wife, July 21, 1861.

<sup>90</sup> Diary entry dated December 28, 1862 in William Penn Lyon and Adelia C. Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War: Compiled from the War Correspondence of Colonel William P. Lyon and from Personal Letters and Diary by Mrs. Adelia C. Lyon* (Press of Muirson & Wright, 1907), 75, emphasis added. While this source is a post-war memoir, it does contain excerpts from letters and a diary kept by Lyon throughout the war. This source has been used with careful consideration.

<sup>91</sup> Letter dated January 30, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 317.

us, comes in here soft and mild as June. These are indeed June days.”<sup>92</sup> Illinoisan George Pepon stressed the exotic nature of Tennessee in a letter to his sister. “The weather here is perfectly charming now. The climate is said to rival the far famed clime of Italy. The air is pure, soft and balmy.”<sup>93</sup> The climate was an environmental difference between home and the South that Northerners could sense most readily.

By comparing the temperate winter weather to memories of frozen months back home, Northerners reveled in an aspect of the South that made it tangibly different from the rest of the country. When the “genial breath of the South” ceased to be so genial and was instead “cool enough to be . . . bracing like an Iowa early Autumn,” Northerners were often informed by the locals that they were to blame for the anomaly.<sup>94</sup> When one soldier awoke on an October morning in Tennessee to find “ice half an inch thick,” he reported that “the old settlers are astonished at such weather, and say it is our fault.”<sup>95</sup>

Libbie Ward wrote home complaining of the cool weather she found in Nashville.

“Perhaps you have it still colder with you but it is cold enough & people dress as warmly & more so than at home. Those who have always lived here say that it grows colder every year, and some say the Yankees have brought the North down with them.”<sup>96</sup> These exclamations were mostly spoken in jest, however, for Northerners, it represented another

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<sup>92</sup> Journal entry dated March 1, 1863 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 459-461, emphasis added.

<sup>93</sup> Pepon to his sister, April 18, 1863.

<sup>94</sup> Letter dated October 25, 1862 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 71; Rogers, diary entry dated September 20, 1863.

<sup>95</sup> George Read Lee, October 26, 1862, “Diary of George R. Lee: Battery E, 1st Illinois Artillery,” Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

<sup>96</sup> Ward, letter dated January 29, 1865.

way in which their presence in the South exerted some kind of power over the landscape. Whether in praise or critique of the weather in the South, Northerners used the climate to emphasize its otherness and widen the gap between the familiar North and the exotic South.

### **“We shot several, and *shot at* a great many”: Southern Wildlife**

Another way Northerners applied power over the South during their travels was in the way they interacted with the plant and animal life they encountered. The fact that a large portion of the Union army and the army of workers that entered the South came from urban environments is reflected in the prevalence of descriptions of rare and unknown plants and animals featured in letters and diaries. Plants served as emblems of the South and also as curiosities. Most frequently associated with the South was the magnolia tree. Travelers would refer to the tree with its “wonderful white blossoms, large, pure, dazzlingly white as they shone among the rich, dark, shining leaves.”<sup>97</sup> Surgeon Daniel M. Holt enclosed a blossom in a letter home to his wife. “It is a simple little thing [the magnolia blossom he encloses in the letter], but keep it as a memento of this time and place. The magnolia is a beautiful tree, and just now covered with the sweetest smelling white blossoms you ever saw.”<sup>98</sup> Another soldier sent his brother “a ring made of James Island live Oak.”<sup>99</sup> Sending home souvenirs of the South was a common occurrence. While many prizes were confiscated from abandoned (and

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<sup>97</sup> Journal entry dated June 4, 1863 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 487.

<sup>98</sup> Letter dated June 15, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War*, 206.

<sup>99</sup> John J. Miller to Brother, August 4, 1862, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0154>.

sometimes not) Southern properties, many were pieces of the exotic landscape, like flowers or cotton balls. These memories of beauty and elegance, rather than the blood and misery of war, were what brought Northerners back to the South in the years after the war and Reconstruction.<sup>100</sup>

Botanical discoveries were frequent. Rufus Robbins of Massachusetts wrote home to his brother with details of a new variety of rose he encountered in Virginia. “I must tell you of the roses which we have out here. This is a great country for roses. I have seen several varieties here which are new to me. One is the Yellow Rose. I did not know that there was such a flower in existence.”<sup>101</sup> Many new discoveries ended up supplementing army rations. Blackberries became a favorite treat for many Northerners, and Southern vendors and agriculturalists were frequently prey to Northern appetites. One soldier confided in his diary that as they stopped in “a small pony village” in Tennessee for dinner, “the boys found a blackberry patch apparently inexhaustible. We picked a large pailfull in a few moments.”<sup>102</sup> Wisconsinite Alva V. Cleveland and his young drummer boy son were exploring Louisville, Kentucky when they came across “some Fruit new to us[.] on enquiring found to be persimons[,] so George and I concluded we were now persimons.”<sup>103</sup> Walter V. Reeder likewise embraced the spirit of discovery most travelers

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<sup>100</sup> Souvenirs and their connection with tourism are discussed further in Chapter 3. For an examination of relics of war and their place in material culture, see Joan E. Cashin, “Trophies of War: Material Culture in the Civil War Era,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 3 (2011): 339–367.

<sup>101</sup> Letter dated June 14, 1862 in Robbins, *Through Ordinary Eyes*, 137.

<sup>102</sup> Lee, diary entry dated July 18, 1862.

<sup>103</sup> Alva V. Cleveland, diary entry dated November 5, 1861, “Diary, 1861-1862,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison. I have chosen to insert punctuation in this

felt when he excitedly reported to his family his first encounter with cultivated peanuts. “It was the first time I saw them growing and I thought that I had learned something new,” he wrote, “They grow in the ground like potatoes, have a vine some like the pea vine with yellow blossom. They were planted in hills like we plant potatoes. Those I dug were quite large about half ripe.”<sup>104</sup>

Plants and animals offered welcome distractions from the war. Accompanying her husband on his campaigns through Tennessee, one woman marveled at the “rich vegetation of this geographical zone. There are magnificent wild flowers. I wish I had a botanical catalog of all this flora.”<sup>105</sup> Zenas Haines wrote to the *Boston Herald* from North Carolina that he and his fellow soldiers were “quite delighted with their situation” along the Tar River. “This morning, one of the loveliest of Spring, the air is fragrant with pines and flowers, and melodious with the songs of birds. The field is dotted with fruit trees in bloom. Yesterday we found the woods spangled with jasmine, violets, box and dog-wood, and our skirmishers with their hands full of flowers looked more like a Maying party than soldiers expecting a foe in every bush.”<sup>106</sup> Oftentimes when there was no human foe to be found, soldiers turned to animals, both wild and domestic, as targets of both their curiosity and their weaponry.

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instance and hereafter when indicated by brackets for the sake of modern readability. As previously stated, no other corrections or changes have been made to the words of these Northern travelers.

<sup>104</sup> Walter V. Reeder to his parents, brother, and sisters, July 29, 1862, “Walter V. and Carvasso Reeder Letters, 1861-1863, 1866,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>105</sup> Diary entry dated June 17, 1863 in Nadine Turchin, “‘A Monotony Full of Sadness’: The Diary of Nadine Turchin, May, 1863-April, 1864,” ed. Mary Ellen McElligott, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 60, no. 1 (1977): 43.

<sup>106</sup> Letter dated April 18, 1863 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 165.

For many soldiers from land-locked states, the wildlife they encountered along the coasts was novel. “Saw porporses to day,” Iowan Jacob Rogers wrote in his diary. “[They] shoot out of the water.”<sup>107</sup> Vermont native Rufus Kinsley was quite taken with the sights he encountered along the Gulf of Mexico where he spent most of the war. He filled his journal with excited accounts of his encounters with wild animals, documenting the first whales he had ever seen and having been chased ashore by a shark while bathing along the coast of Mississippi. Skillful with words, Kinsley’s diary is filled with colorful anecdotes of his experiences. “Ship surrounded by schools of porpoise, highly tickled at sight of the Yankees, who looked, in their blueish hats and blueish green coats, as they were sprawling around the decks and hanging over the rails, quite like a cargo of overgrown bull-frogs.”<sup>108</sup>

The reptilian residents of the habitats they entered were the most notable to soldiers. “Saw a huge anaconda hanging over the limb of a tree,” Kinsley enthused, “left the vicinity on the ‘doublequick.’”<sup>109</sup> Illinois soldier Marshall Perkins was none too fond of the snakes that occupied the same camp as his regiment in Carrollton, Louisiana.

The Snakes, but there is no use in talking about them, there is no end to them, and they are Snakes too none of your little harmless things[.] there is a ditch filled with water not far from camp, and I have been along there and seen a Snake oftener than every rod, and almost all of them would be wound around a Small bush or laying out on a limb over the water, and when you disturbed them off they would go into the water[.] I have not yet seen a live aligator but most of the boys have. I might by going out into the Swamp But I dont care to cultivate the acquaintance of the inhabitants

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<sup>107</sup> Rogers, diary entry dated November 1, 1863.

<sup>108</sup> Diary entry dated March 13, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 89.

<sup>109</sup> Diary entry dated April 11, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 90.

of that region . . . the flowers . . . would do your eyes good to look upon if you did not think of the Snakes all the time.<sup>110</sup>

Snakes were generally an unwelcome pest to soldiers and not nearly the most popular animal inhabitant of the South. In addition to housing “all the snakes in the catalogue,” some Southern locales were home to the most exciting of exotic novelties—the alligator.<sup>111</sup> Alligator sightings were common events documented in the writings of soldiers stationed in the Gulf States of the South. Northerners eagerly encountered less dangerous but no less exotic animals.

Soldiers George Read Lee and Rufus Kircher both wrote of encounters with exotic birds for the first time. “Saw seven ‘Parrokeits,’ a bird similar to a parrot, and very beautiful,” Lee recorded in his diary.<sup>112</sup> Kircher sent home a remembrance of his encounter with parrots in Mississippi. “People buy them,” he wrote to his mother. “They are so pretty: red heads, yellow-gold collars around their necks and then into green for the rest of their bodies, sometimes lighter, sometimes darker, really very beautiful. I am enclosing a little wing feather for you. They are about as big as a wild dove.”<sup>113</sup>

Iowan Benjamin McIntyre came across several curiosities during his time stationed in Texas. He described the oddities in his diary in a scientific and instructive manner. “I have seen several Armadilloes since I came to this place and I understand they are quite numerous in the chapperal. They are a singular creature with a hard creasy

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<sup>110</sup> Marshall Perkins to his sister, June 19, 1864, “Hall Family Collection,” Regional History Center at Northern Illinois University.

<sup>111</sup> Diary entry dated April 7, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 90.

<sup>112</sup> Lee, diary entry for November 9, 1862.

<sup>113</sup> Letter dated November 24, 1862 in Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 27.

substance covering them like a turtle—they are harmless however.” Native species were not the only inhabitants McIntyre found in this foreign landscape. “A Dromedary [a one-humped camel]—a regular old he fellow fat and sleek—was brought in from a ranch several miles distant a few days ago. It is one of the number which was imported to this country several years ago to try their utility in travelling this country and act as beasts of burden. This one is a fine specimen and very tame and docile.”<sup>114</sup> The bright colors, strange appearance of, and thrilling encounters with wild fauna exclusive to the South further increased the sense of difference between Northerners and the Southern environment, which became increasingly alien the more species they encountered.

Interest in these wild inhabitants often occasioned the slaughter and waste of the creatures. In an era before the conservation movement, many Northerners placed little value on wild animals. As Kelby Ouchley noted in his catalogue of American interactions with flora and fauna during the Civil War, these wild creatures had “no intrinsic beneficial values other than as targets for rifle practice.”<sup>115</sup> The most frequent victims of this behavior were alligators. “We killed four alligators on the way,” one soldier confessed. “I tried my rifle on two of them; put a ball in the right eye of each. One of them was thirteen feet long. We ate two of them for supper. Found the flesh, when boiled, more like a chicken’s breast than anything else.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Diary entries for November 28, 1863 and December 21, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 270, 280.

<sup>115</sup> Ouchley, *Flora and Fauna of the Civil War*, 116.

<sup>116</sup> Diary entry for June 3, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 97.

Snakes were also often killed for sport and kept as trophies or emblems of power. Benjamin McIntyre saw a snake in Texas that had been killed by a soldier on picket: “It was 8 feet long, as large as a mans thigh, and 17 rattles upon its tail.”<sup>117</sup> A woman accompanying her officer husband in Tennessee excitedly recorded an encounter with a native inhabitant of the region. “For the first time in my life I saw and killed what I am quite sure was a water moccasin. It was a very young and agile creature like an eel.”<sup>118</sup> Other animals soldiers reported hunting were turtles, large cats—one soldier reported catching a “minx cat” in a Tennessee wood—and even sharks. One unlucky shark was caught by Rufus Kinsley in the Gulf. Eight feet long, “he fought like a tiger . . . but the carpenter’s ax made a bad hole in his head, after which he kept very quiet while surgeon Gale dissected his body.”<sup>119</sup> Another soldier boasted to his brother of a large turtle that members of his regiment attacked when it came on shore to lay its eggs. “they were out on picket and five of them run their bayonets into it and could hardly master it[.] it weighed two hundred and thirty five pounds[.] i saw it weighed.”<sup>120</sup>

In a great display of power, soldiers often made animals targets as they traveled through the landscape on the railroad. “From the top of the cars where many of us stood,” one soldier wrote, “we saw hundreds of huge alligators, and large numbers of turtles, and a great variety of snakes, lying on large logs just above the surface of the water. We shot

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<sup>117</sup> Diary entry for July 17, 1864 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 374.

<sup>118</sup> Diary entry for July 21, 1863 in Turchin, “A Monotony Full of Sadness,” 52.

<sup>119</sup> Diary entry for June 14, 1864 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 153; Lee, diary entry dated November 4, 1862; Diary entry for March 26, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 89.

<sup>120</sup> John J. Miller to brother, August 4, 1862, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0154>.

several, and *shot at* a great many.”<sup>121</sup> Speeding through the South, Northerners displayed uncontested power over the landscape as they laid waste to animals and disrupted the environment.

Some soldiers who fought in the Ozarks of Arkansas had a horrific experience with the population of feral hogs that lived in wooded areas of the countryside, descendants of domestic hogs that once escaped from area farmers.<sup>122</sup> The day after the Battle of Prairie Grove, one Union soldier made the grisly discovery of dead bodies “scattered through the woods half eaten up by the hogs.”<sup>123</sup> A captain in the 7th Missouri Cavalry was found stripped of his clothing, “the hogs having half eaten him.”<sup>124</sup> Soldiers constructed pens made out of fence rails in order to protect the dead as best they could. These animals earned a loathsome reputation with Union soldiers and many shot the hogs on sight, though not for food. Given their diet of human flesh, the soldiers left the animals for dead and refused to eat them.<sup>125</sup>

Domestic animals were treated with a similar air of superiority and unchecked power by the Northerners who entered the South. Cattle, sheep, and poultry were not exempt from the treasonous secessionist label Northerners pinned on disloyal Americans

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<sup>121</sup> Diary entry dated February 23, 1863 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 123.

<sup>122</sup> Earl J. Hess et al., *Wilson’s Creek, Pea Ridge, and Prairie Grove: A Battlefield Guide, with a Section on Wire Road* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2006), 196–197.

<sup>123</sup> J. Eaton, letter dated December 11, 1863, quoted in Michael A. Mullins, *The Fremont Rifles: A History of the 37th Illinois Veteran Volunteer Infantry* (Wilmington: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1990), 164.

<sup>124</sup> Journal entry dated December 9, 1862 in Charles Dewolf, “A Yankee Cavalryman Views the Battle of Prairie Grove: The Splendors and Horrors of a Battlefield,” ed. Howard N. Monnett, *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (December 1, 1962): 300.

<sup>125</sup> Hess et al., *Wilson’s Creek, Pea Ridge, and Prairie Grove*, 197.

in the South and borderlands. Livestock was confiscated to aid the Union war effort with little or no remorse shown for the victims of their theft. “The people generally sympathize with the rebels,” one soldier wrote from the Virginia border. “Our boys have fared sumptuously every day. They declared that even the pigs were secessionists and they burned them at the stake for their treason. Turkeys and chickens shared the same fate. It was impossible for me to restrain men who had been starved on salt-beef and hard tack, when they were scattered over four miles of territory and sneered at as Yankees by the people. The fact is I ate some pig myself.”<sup>126</sup> Another soldier on guard in Tennessee “captured and retained as prisoner, a secesh horse, he having made an attempt to enter the Park, which is against the law.”<sup>127</sup> Confiscating these “rebel” animals was common practice and demonstrated a sense of superiority over the peoples and landscapes of the South.

Soldiers delighted in the opportunity to subjugate the South, even in the smallest of ways. Benjamin McIntyre recorded an amusing incident while encamped at the rear of Vicksburg, Mississippi. “I noticed several fields of corn now in full ear but the fences have been destroyed and hundreds of CS mules are foraging on their masters corn. Our boys have gay times with these secesh mules and horses, taking short rides into the

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<sup>126</sup> Letter dated September 8, 1862 in Rufus R. Dawes, *Service with the Sixth Wisconsin Volunteers* (Marietta, Ohio: E.R. Alderman & Sons, 1890), <<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/u/?quiner,22359>>, 22. Although this source is a post-war reminiscence, it contains letters written by Dawes during his Civil War service. This source has been used with careful consideration.

<sup>127</sup> Lee, diary entry dated July 18, 1862.

country, running races & to their hearts content.”<sup>128</sup> Diaries and letters are filled with accounts of Northerners taking “sheep, pigs, flour, honey and everything they got their hands on, nobody forbidding them.”<sup>129</sup> Empowered by their presence in a rebellious land, they exerted their control over even the animals of the South. It was not always simply for food either; as with the wild animals butchered for sport and trophies, domestic animals were the victims of thoughtless waste as well. One soldier recounted how a group of Union soldiers “shot 5 or 6 head of Cattle” while they halted during a march in Texas, “and took but little with them[,] had not time to cook & eat.”<sup>130</sup> Despite the cost for the inhabitants of the areas they pillaged or on the animals they killed indiscriminately, Northerners were able to demonstrate a power over the South that contributed to and influenced the ideas of superiority they had brought with them. This superiority was amplified by the hardships of war and the increasingly hostile feelings felt for the region, its strangeness, and the war being waged to make it American once more. The North’s perceived superiority over the animals of the South became a metaphor for the war itself. Many sketches appeared on envelopes used in correspondence to and from the seat of the war associating the ignorance and treason of the Southerners with their native animal inhabitants.<sup>131</sup> These envelopes, as with the

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<sup>128</sup> Diary entry dated June 20, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 169.

<sup>129</sup> Wallace to his wife, March 3, 1862.

<sup>130</sup> Rogers, diary entry dated November 11, 1863.

<sup>131</sup> See, for example, the sketch which depicts a drowning man labeled “South” about to be devoured by an alligator labeled “Secession,” as Uncle Sam holds out an American Flag for the “South” to grab on to. The caption reads, “I say old fellow just hold on to this ere Flag or ‘You are lost.’” “Or you are lost [Pictorial envelope],” *Civil War Treasures*

contents of the letters mailed within them, became vehicles of the discourse of superiority over the South.

As bounties of the Southern landscape, animals—whether wild or domestic—became tools of control and power, trophies and spoils of war. “They [the cavalry] were all well and in good spirits,” one soldier observed. “There was some of them had geese and chickens tied to their saddles. They had a little of everything with them.”<sup>132</sup> Bearing witness to the wilderness and its floral and animal curiosities confirmed Northern beliefs and expectations of a Southern Other, unique and different from the rest of America.

**“Scarce a tree or bush but bears upon it the marks of [a] ball”:  
Destruction of the Landscape**

Not all of the scenic observations recorded by Northern travelers were pleasing—some held more grim connotations. When nurse Harriet Eaton found herself “riding over the battle field of Antietam,” she was “deeply affected” by what she saw. “There were the graves, the trenches, scattered all over the field, friends still seeking the graves of dear ones. There was the famous cornfield where the battle was so fierce, the orchard where our Maine 10<sup>th</sup> tried to fight under cover of the trees, the hay stacks, the riddled school house, the trees with the branches broken in all directions, and the field far across still covered all around with dead horses making the air in some cases offensive in the

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from the New York Historical Society, *American Memory*, The Library of Congress, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpcoop/nhihtml/cwnyhshome.html>.

<sup>132</sup> Sylvester McElheney to his wife, December 14, 1864, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0902>.

extreme.”<sup>133</sup> Travelers often remarked upon the ways in which the landscape had been inexplicably changed and devastated by war.

The scene immediately following a battle was especially harrowing to behold. Soldiers and citizens alike often attempted to contemplate and work through the ghastly sights by writing about them in letters and journals. Irishman William Wallace confided in his diary his experience on the battlefield near Strasburg, Virginia. While walking through a mangled wood, “I got something to shock the stoutest heart. There lay rebels by the whole sale. At every big tree lay a dead rebel and at one big red oak on the side of the little slope lay three dead together having all been shot in the head and a flood of blood six or 8 paces long that had run from their mangled heads.”<sup>134</sup>

Less horrific than the mangled limbs of fallen soldiers, but no less devastating in its scale of destruction, was the effect a battle had on the landscape. In addition to the slain foes, Wallace described trees that were “broke down like as if a tornado had broke them down with our canon ball.”<sup>135</sup> Benjamin McIntyre also evoked colorful storm language to describe the torn landscape following a battle. “For the space of a mile, there is scarce a tree or bush but bears upon it the marks of ball,” he wrote following the battle of Prairie Grove. “Large trees have been cut entirely off, limbs torn from the trunks, and

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<sup>133</sup> Diary entry dated November 2, 1862 in Harriet Eaton, *This Birth Place of Souls: The Civil War Nursing Diary of Harriet Eaton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 73–74.

<sup>134</sup> Wallace to his wife, March 20, 1862.

<sup>135</sup> Wallace to his wife, March 20, 1862.

many huge trees split and splintered as if struck by a thunderbolt while bushes and underbrush seems to have been cut and clipped to pieces by small shot.”<sup>136</sup>

Months after an engagement, the landscape was still visibly scarred by the horrors of the day. Nearly one year after the battle of Pea Ridge, Alcander Morse and his Illinois regiment found themselves camped on “the very ground where we made our last charge . . . the effects of the battle are to be seen on every side[.] here a tree splintered by a shell[.] in another place a score of bullets are embedded in the trunk of some giant oak.”<sup>137</sup> William H. Smith found the ground near Yorktown to be “torn up with shell and shott and Every Place you go the grounds is strewn with Pieces of Shell and Cannon Balls.”<sup>138</sup> Such devastation would be long-lasting. Nearly four years after the First Battle of Bull Run, Silas Wesson reported that “the field is [still] covered in places with human skulls.”<sup>139</sup>

As the war progressed, the landscape became more of a graveyard than a picturesque Eden. As nurse Harriet Douglas Whetten traveled through the countryside with the army, she noted that it was one littered with graves. “By the way side, unprotected & raw looking, is a row of graves which you can hardly avoid stepping

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<sup>136</sup> Diary entry dated December 11, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 67-68.

<sup>137</sup> Morse, journal entry dated January 25, 1863.

<sup>138</sup> Letter dated May 7, 1862 in Thomas W. Smith, “*We Have It Damn Hard Out Here*”: *The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Thomas W. Smith, 6th Pennsylvania Cavalry*, ed. Eric J. Wittenberg (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1999), 29.

<sup>139</sup> Wesson, diary entries for November 2, 1864 and March 8, 1865.

on.”<sup>140</sup> Northern presence in the South as a conquering force and military power had transformative effects on the landscape.

Not only had the South become a graveyard for both patriots and rebels, but Northerners also witnessed its transformation into a landscape of terror. As Daniel Holt looked over the battleground days after the fight at Mine Run, Virginia, he noted the deformation of the landscape, where the wilderness had been turned into an instrument of death and destruction.

Of all *hard looking* places, that of Mine Run was the hardest I ever beheld. Stretching as far as the eye could reach from left to right, on the crest of a low range of hills across the stream, was a continuous line of defenses . . . Intervening between our lines and theirs was a low, swampy stretch of marsh, through which Mine Run wound its slow serpentine course, and to make still more difficult a crossing which at any time, under the most favorable circumstances would have been a work of difficulty, they had sharpened stakes and driven the bottom full—thus presenting a barrier a thousand fold more difficult than in a state of nature. . . . Immediately after crossing as you began to ascend the hill towards their works, trees had been felled with topped branches, and these sharpened to a point, presenting a front perfectly impossible to overcome, even though no other impediment was in the way. All along the heights could be seen battery upon battery, some masked while others were clearly perceptible, ready to belch their iron contents of grape and canister into the stiffened, freezing flesh of the best blood of America.<sup>141</sup>

Despite its beauty, the war was gradually tainting the Southern landscape for Northerners. As one soldier lamented in Young’s Point, Louisiana, “When I looked over the many, many graves and thought of the brave and noble fellows whose ambition ended there by

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<sup>140</sup> Diary entry dated August 2, 1862 in Harriet Douglas Whetten and Paul H. Hass, “A Volunteer Nurse in the Civil War: The Diary of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” *The Wisconsin Magazine of History* 48, no. 3 (April 1, 1965): 215.

<sup>141</sup> Letter dated December 4, 1863 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 160.

becoming victims of the malarious ‘Swamp’, I felt sad.”<sup>142</sup> No longer simply a thing of curiosity and beauty, it was turning against them. Ordinary environments were made infamous by violence and destruction. As Adelia Lyon noted as she looked over the battleground at Fort Donelson, Tennessee, “There are a great many interesting places around here, made so by events that will enter history.”<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Letter dated April 10, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 325.

<sup>143</sup> Diary entry dated March 15, 1863 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 87.

## CHAPTER TWO Friends & Enemies

We are on our way for the Sunny South, land of Chivalry.<sup>144</sup>

- Alcander O. Morse, 37th Illinois

Stark differences between the North and South were evident in the exotic nature of the wilderness, and exacerbated by the battle scars the war tore into the landscape. Through force of arms, discriminate destruction, and romanticization, Northerners began a process of imperial power through the control they exerted over the environment as they pushed through the South. But it is through their interactions with the human element of the Southern landscape where Northerners most displayed and acted upon their acquired power. The reactions to and stories of Southerners which feature prominently in their diaries and letters emphasized Southern difference and inferiority. The language used to describe Southerners reflected an understanding of the people of the region as antidemocratic and in need of reform and control.

Despite their conviction that the South was a part of the Union—it is what had brought them south, after all—there were several indications that they were entering foreign soil. In addition to the visual cues of difference observed in the wilderness and landscape, the language of Northerners' letters and diaries indicate that there was another sense of exclusion when they entered the South, an evident physical division between North and South. Many travelers describe the land itself as the enemy in the war of

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<sup>144</sup> Morse, journal entry dated April 28, 1864.

Southern rebellion. Charlotte Forten arrived in Hilton Head, South Carolina in 1862 and noted in her journal that “We signed a paper, which was virtually taking the oath of allegiance [and] we left the ‘United States.’”<sup>145</sup> Sometimes the division between “us” and “them” was associated with the alleged Confederacy and other times with the presence of slavery, depending upon the personal convictions of the writer.

William Wallace described the army’s movements during the Atlanta Campaign as marching “clean through the southern confederacy,” and Alcander Morse, returning to the seat of the war after recruiting duty, proclaimed, “& now for Dixey away, & for the end of the rebellion.”<sup>146</sup> William P. Moore, whose thoughts strayed more toward an abhorrence for the institution of slavery, remarked upon his regiment’s movements across the Ohio River from Indiana into Kentucky with anti-slavery speech. “For the first time the Wis 10th Regiment found its self on slave soil.” After boarding the railroad and steaming further into the Confederacy, Moore noted stark differences between his home in Wisconsin and the South. “For the first time we were able to contrast the . . . difference between slave and free states for until we reached the polluted soil of Kentucky were conveyed in first-class passenger cars, and now we are loaded into cattle cars, like so many horses.”<sup>147</sup> For Moore, the barbarity of the South because of slavery was evident everywhere, down to the condition of his travel accommodations—human cattle cars.

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<sup>145</sup> Journal entry dated October 28, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 388.

<sup>146</sup> Wallace to his wife, May 21, 1864; Morse, journal entry dated February 29, 1864.

<sup>147</sup> William P. Moore, undated diary entry, Fall 1861, “Civil War Diary, 1861-1862,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

Other soldiers implied the anti-Americanness of the South in the ways they referred to it. Silas Wesson wrote to his siblings, “I recd a letter from you yesterday. I was glad to hear from ‘America’ once more.”<sup>148</sup> When he first entered the South via Louisville, Kentucky, Spencer G. Beers observed that it was “a large city, altogether different from what I expected to find, and found things in general different from what they are in America.”<sup>149</sup> The identification of one of the border states—slave states that had remained loyal to the Union—as a part of the peculiar South was a common occurrence.

Northerners found these states inhabited by hostile citizens at best and at worst, occupied by guerrillas. Either way, it was safest to treat the inhabitants of the Southern states as their enemy until proven otherwise. This attitude of hostility combined with the library of knowledge Northerners brought with them from the North—truths combined with stereotypes and exaggerations that had been fermenting throughout decades of sectional turmoil. The result of this process was a evaluation of Southerners that defined them as a people “as foreign as the landscape.”<sup>150</sup>

### **“Of the Gray-back Persuasion”: The Confederate Army**

The most obvious enemy in the South was the Confederate army. Northerners working in the military realm as soldiers, surgeons, doctors, and nurses frequently had contact with the “rebels” or “rebs” as they were generally referred to. Some Northerners

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<sup>148</sup> Wesson, diary entry dated May 12, 1862.

<sup>149</sup> Spencer G. Beers, diary entry dated March 10, 1865, “Jenks-Beers Family Papers, 1861-1957,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>150</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109.

referred to Confederate soldiers as “secesh”—short for secessionist—but that term was usually saved for the disloyal citizens of the South. As not only the instigators of the war—being secessionists—Confederate soldiers were the men (and women, as the case may be) who were waging the war, who stood between the Northerners making it back home safely or being buried in traitorous soil. Harriet Whetten, a nurse with the Sanitary Commission, found it difficult to put aside these differences when performing her duty. “I confess when a man tells me he belongs to a Southern regiment it seems as if clock work stopped inside of me for a minute—and there is a little pause before it begins again.”<sup>151</sup> Being traitorous in the eyes of Northerners could determine the degree of care soldiers might receive.

While varied depending on the individual, Northern thoughts regarding the military enemy generally fell into one of the following categories on a broad spectrum from apathy to empathy: dehumanization; pity; and a contradictory friendly manner, reflecting the peculiarity of the South’s place in the United States as an internal Other. The easiest way to deal with this internal enemy force was to demonize them. Following the disappointing performance by Union troops in the first major battle of the war, Kelsey Adams wrote home to his brother his opinion of the enemy. “It is evident to my mind that the southerners are no cowards. They battle with a madness of purpose and rush in with such fury that it requires much . . . self possession to withstand them which our volunteer forces cannot be expected to possess. The very idea of meeting a whole reg’t of blood

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<sup>151</sup> Letter dated June 14, 1862 in Whetten, “The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 143.

thirsty Georgians armed with such knives as I have seen makes the stoutest hearts quail.” Two years later, his opinion had not changed, referring to them as “Southern barbarians,” and later “gentlemen of the ‘gray-back’ persuasion.”<sup>152</sup>

Northerners’ descriptions of rebel troops often described the Confederates as no more than animal-like, wild savages. Zenas Haines referred to a group of Rebel soldiers as a “nest of cowardly traitors” and Harriet Eaton described the “hideous yells” of the “rebs” at Chancellorsville.<sup>153</sup> George W. Squier reported a successful foraging expedition in Tennessee, made so by the cargo they returned with and also because they did not see “any of the ‘butternut tribe.’”<sup>154</sup>

The vocabulary used to describe these enemy soldiers was not the only way in which they depicted the Confederate army as a savage tribe. Northerners also recorded incidents of barbaric conduct. William P. Moore wrote in his diary how their march through Kentucky was thwarted by rebel troops who “had killed some sixty horses and ‘innumerable other animals,’ such as dogs, cats, sheep, hogs, cattle &c and with the view to cut us of[f] for a supply of water, had placed them in all the watering places along the road through the entire days march.”<sup>155</sup> In addition to the cruel use of animals to make Union troops suffer, some Northerners also decried the inhumane treatment of colored troops in the later half of the war. One soldier wrote “The rebs have a great dislike to the

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<sup>152</sup> Kelsey M. Adams to brother, August 7, 1861, “Civil War Letters, 1859-1871,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison; Adams, unaddressed letter, March 12, 1863; Adams to brother, July 6, 1864.

<sup>153</sup> Letter dated November 11, 1862 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 84; diary entry dated May 4, 1863 in Eaton, *This Birth Place of Souls*, 147.

<sup>154</sup> Letter dated December 15, 1862 in Squier, *This Wilderness of War*, 29.

<sup>155</sup> Moore, diary entry dated February 13, 1862.

negro soldiers and they will fire into them on boats or picket where they will not molest white troops. There was 15 or 16 of them killed and wounded when they were going up the river to relieve us but we passed up and down unmolested.”<sup>156</sup> Such barbaric conduct added to the general disregard many Northerners felt toward their military enemy.

One soldier wrote home to his sweetheart after a fight in Tennessee that “I fired sixty rounds at the Sesesh Sunday and over forty more the next day, and as I had a fair chance at them, you may reckon as many as you are a mind to as shot on your acc[ount].”<sup>157</sup> The joy at having killed a great many enemy was shared by army surgeon Daniel Holt. “Send them [the rebels] back again in double quick. I like such charges!” he confided in his diary about the bloody action he saw at Cold Harbor. “The ground [was] covered with graybacks. Twice during the night they attack us, and twice sent reeling back with heavy loss. Let them come again. We like it!”<sup>158</sup> Holt’s position as surgeon did little to soften his view of the enemy. Many regular soldiers also shared such disregard for the death and suffering of Confederate troops.

One soldier confessed, “I crossed the battlefield at Williamsburg and it was a rather bloody sight but the dead were mostly Gray coats and I did not feel the least bit sorry.”<sup>159</sup> Another soldier wrote, “There is a rebel hospital in the neighborhood where helpless humanity suffers, where but little attention is paid them and less sympathy

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<sup>156</sup> Peter Stillman Cottrell Tubbs to sister, November 6, 1864, “Letters, 1863-1865,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>157</sup> Edwin Hubbard to Nellie Williams, April 12, 1862, “Civil War Letters, 1862,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>158</sup> Diary entry dated June 2, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 196.

<sup>159</sup> Wesson, diary entry dated May 12, 1862.

manifested to those who now suffer for the part they have taken in striving to establish southern rights.”<sup>160</sup> Such responses were not necessarily evidence of a sinister widespread callousness (though this may have been the case on an individual level). On the contrary, soldiers were deeply moved, troubled, and even traumatized by the scenes of gore and death they encountered. But by mourning for their own losses, they could compartmentalize the devastation in such a way that the agonies that befell those responsible for bringing the war—the Southern rebels and secessionists—became a welcome sight. On burial detail after a fight in Kentucky, Kelsey Adams wrote to his brother that “it was positive torture to see those large men writhing and groaning in their agonies, still possessing their strength but suffering the most intense pain.” It was an “awful sight” to behold the Union men suffer, however, when he came upon “some rebels in the agonies of death . . . the sight of them was a relief for I could look at the poor devils even in that condition with indignation.”<sup>161</sup>

Harsh feelings toward the enemy, however, began to slacken when Northerners encountered rebel soldiers who were weakening in their wartime convictions. At Vicksburg, William Henry Harrison Clayton interacted with rebel prisoners. “Some of them are fine looking fellows, and some are very reasonable and admit that they are defending a bad cause. I have talked with a number that say they will fight no more if

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<sup>160</sup> Diary entry dated December 10, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 67.

<sup>161</sup> Adams to his brother, October 3, 1862.

they can possibly help it.”<sup>162</sup> The more un-Southern or anti-rebel a soldier seemed to be, the more pleasing in appearance he became. After the Battle of Seven Pines, nurse Harriet Whetten cared for “the only handsome rebel I have seen. . . . He was very gentle & sweet, and said to one of the gentlemen, with tears in his eyes, that he did not see how he ever could be forgiven—it was the cruel falsehood of politicians that had misled the men of the South.”<sup>163</sup> That the rebel soldiers had been misled was a common theme of Northern interactions with Confederate prisoners.

Kelsey Adams encountered a paroled prisoner on his way home who claimed that “nobody ever enlisted in any cause with more patriotic motives than he did—that he believed that at the time that it was his duty to volunteer in defence of the so called Southern Rights, but he now looked at it in a different light—that they were not fighting for a southern Confederacy but to gratify the ambitions of a few broken down politicians. He considered their cause hopeless.”<sup>164</sup> Another Union soldier came across a more blunt response to the Southern cause. When taken prisoner at the Battle of West Point and asked what he was fighting for, a rebel soldier replied, “For the men who pushed me into it.”<sup>165</sup> Another soldier encountered rebels who had entered Union lines in order to

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<sup>162</sup> Letter dated July 5, 1863 in William Henry Harrison Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound: The Civil War Letters of William Henry Harrison Clayton*, ed. Donald C. Elder III (University Of Iowa Press, 1998), 79.

<sup>163</sup> Letter dated June 1, 1862 in Whetten, “The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 142-143.

<sup>164</sup> Adams to his brother, September 14, 1863.

<sup>165</sup> Wesson, diary entry dated May 10, 1862.

surrender. “They said they had fought enough for nothing,” the soldier wrote.<sup>166</sup> It was easier to feel pity for the enemy when they were poor, misled fools.

Harriet Whetten treated a Confederate soldier whose demeanor seemed to bolster her resolve in the Northern cause. “A rebel private who cried whenever he spoke,” Whetten was compelled to pity the man, “a simple country fellow, forced into the army only four or five weeks ago.”<sup>167</sup> For Whetten and many other Northerners, encounters with such Confederate soldiers created an idea of the Southern cause being defended by nothing more than poor, country farmers, forced to be rebels. Also bolstering to the Union cause and the sense of Northern superiority was the often ragged appearance of the Confederate army. One soldier wrote to his sister of a memorable encounter with rebel prisoners in Virginia. “Of all the dirty ragget filthy looking men that it was ever my ill fortune to see i think they would take the Prize,” he scoffed. “Some of them had not enough Rags to cover their nakedness and one Poor Devil had nothing on but a pair of ragget pants and a great ragget Coat that trailed on the Ground . . . They were so dirty that they Really stunk as they passed us.”<sup>168</sup>

Alcander Morse was moved to pity as he observed the suffering in the rebel hospitals. “It is a very hard sight[.] all unkind feelings vanish as one looks upon those poor suffering men,” he wrote in his journal. “It is true they brought it upon themselves,

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<sup>166</sup> Wallace to his wife, June 4, 1864.

<sup>167</sup> Letter dated June 14, 1862 in Whetten, “The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 143.

<sup>168</sup> Letter dated May 15, 1862 in Smith, “*We Have It Damn Hard Out Here*,” 31.

still it looks hard to see them suffer so.”<sup>169</sup> The suffering of the wounded was a common denominator most likely to provoke compassion from Northerners. Norwegian immigrant Ole Kittelson and his fellow soldiers went to considerable effort in order to aid their wounded foes whilst a part of Sherman’s expedition through Georgia. “We took 40 ambulances loaded with wounded Rebs. We made a hospital out of a church and had 90 Rebs housed in it.”<sup>170</sup> Regardless of the hard and compassionless view of the enemy held by many, some Northerners were still capable of caring for their misguided and strange countrymen.

Nurse Harriet Whetten’s nerves were put to the test when she treated rebel troops. One man to whom she was administering aid was “very civil and grateful and superior to the rest of his appearance & manner. But to tell you the truth I was frightened. I could be alone with hundreds of our men and feel safe and happy, but these fellows looked different.” Despite her misgivings, Whetten cared for the man and his countrymen overnight. When she bade him goodbye in the morning, he told her, “I hope I may meet you in Virginia. Strange things happen in war times, and if I do, I may be able to return your kindness to me.”<sup>171</sup> Initially wary of the Confederate prisoners, whom she expected to be wild and rebellious men for their association with the secessionist cause, she found humanity and amity. Even surgeon Daniel Holt, for all of the bloodthirsty declarations of

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<sup>169</sup> Morse, journal entry dated December 9, 1862.

<sup>170</sup> Ole Kittelson, diary entry dated September 2, 1864, “Civil War Diaries, 1862-1865,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>171</sup> Letter dated June 1, 1862 in Whetten, “The Letters of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 141, 142.

slaughtering the enemy, was able to concede that “these men, after all, have a heart *sometimes* when they are so inclined.”<sup>172</sup>

Occasionally during the course of the war, both sides found occasion to “have a heart” together. There are many instances of communion between Northern soldiers and their Southern enemy. Exemplifying the strangeness of civil war, Alva Cleveland wrote of a curious occurrence near Murfreesboro, Tennessee. “A Flag of truce came to the Col with a Rebel Major & a small guard with him . . . Cap Samuels met an old Friend and acquaintance amongst them[,] they drank & chatted together for some time[,] Shook hands and parted.”<sup>173</sup> It was not necessary for a prewar acquaintance to exist for the armies to fraternize. Sometimes all it took was boredom. Henry M. Erisman wrote home to his brother that when out on picket in their current camp, they could “have a Chat with the Rebels whenever we feel like it. I had a talk with a fellow that was Born and Raised in Columbia [Pennsylvania] . . . and left there [the] time of the Cholera and got to Texas some how. . . . I asked why he didnt come on our side to fight he said he had too much Property in Texas for that. . . . We Talked for About 1 hour and a half when they was Relieved. after he was Relieved he told me to take care of myself and hoped that we might have a drink together and he left.”<sup>174</sup>

William Wallace witnessed similar scenes of “friendly conversations” between Union soldiers and the rebels. “I witnessed a meeting of two of our men and two of the

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<sup>172</sup> Letter dated August 25, 1863 in Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War*, 137.

<sup>173</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated January 8, 1862.

<sup>174</sup> Henry M. Erisman to his brother, August 18, 1862, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0675>.

rebs meeting half way between the skirmish lines and after talking and shaking hands, the whole four of them sat down in the cornfield and commenced to read a paper. They had quite a chat but I was not near enough to hear what passed between them. After a while they shook hands and each parties went to their own post.”<sup>175</sup> These friendly meetings must have been eye-opening for Northerners who had expectations of ignorance and difference between themselves and Southerners. To discover that there were individuals not unlike themselves with whom they could get along must have strengthened their resolve for reuniting the Union. With the presence of likeminded individuals among the slavery-loving, plantation class and dishonest politicians Northerners associated with the South, there was a better chance of successfully remaking the South in a way that would make it more compatible with the rest of the Union.

William Hazelton made such a discovery in a rebel quartermaster he was charged with overseeing.

We talked very freely of our ‘difficulties’ and I found that he, like many other Virginians, was not a secessionist, exactly, but a ‘states right’ man. That is, he believed that he owed no higher allegiance than to his State. . . . And said that he remained firm for the Union so long as there was any chance of preserving it. . . . When his State seceded, he considered it his duty to go with her whatever her fate may be. . . . On the whole, I liked this rebel Quartermaster first rate, and should hate to meet him in a fight, for I fear my pistol would ‘hang fire’ terribly before it would shoot him.<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Wallace to his wife, June 4, 1864.

<sup>176</sup> William C. Hazelton to Fannie, June 1, 1863 in *Life and Letters of Civil War Soldier William C. Hazelton, 1856-1865*, ed. Ellen Hazelton Nicol (St. Charles: St. Charles Heritage Center, 2004), Regional History Center at Northern Illinois University.

Despite these pleasing encounters and friendly sentiments, there was still a war happening. As nurse Cornelia Hancock put it, “the Rebs gave our men tobacco when the flag of truce was up, but they will shoot with a vigor when ordered.”<sup>177</sup>

While different and demanding reform before full inclusion could be achieved, these rebels still possessed certain qualities Northerners could relate to. The peculiar and contradictory view of Confederate soldiers by Northerners reflected the peculiar and contradictory status of the South within the United States—simultaneously insider and outsider, enemy and friend (or at least friendly when the occasion allowed). While Confederate troops were generally only a threat during an active campaign and in battle, Northerners faced another enemy that was somewhere between military enemy and civilian enemy—the partisan or guerrilla.

### **“Disagreeable Vermin”: Guerilla Fighters**

The Confederate guerrilla has been described by Reid Mitchell as “the man who did not abide by the rules of war, the man who pretended to be a civilian—perhaps a Unionist—the figure most indistinguishable from the Southern landscape.”<sup>178</sup> While rebel

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<sup>177</sup> Letter dated June 10, 1864 in Cornelia Hancock, *South After Gettysburg; Letters of Cornelia Hancock from the Army of the Potomac, 1863-1865* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1937), 102.

<sup>178</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 132. For further reading on guerrillas and their role in the war, see Daniel E. Sutherland, “Guerrillas: The Real War in Arkansas” in *Civil War Arkansas: Beyond Battles and Leaders*, ed. Anne J. Bailey and Daniel E. Sutherland (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2000); Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 1990); Thomas Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); Daniel E. Sutherland, ed., *Guerrillas, Unionists, & Violence on the Confederate Homefront* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 1999).

soldiers could sometimes become friends (no matter how temporarily), the irregular guerrilla fighter was as wild and dangerous as the snakes, alligators, and malarial swamps that Northerners encountered. “The guerrilla transformed the rural countryside of the South and its ignorant people into something threatening,” Mitchell wrote.<sup>179</sup> The most dangerous trait of guerrillas was their unpredictability. As Silas Wesson described to his brother, “these guerillas are citizens, Farmers etc. that start out in small parties fire a few shots at our men and then run. No one can tell where they are.”<sup>180</sup> Also sometimes referred to as “bushwhackers,” one Union soldier described them as “a most contemptible class of beings, not much better than dogs, whom to kill is only ridding the world of disagreeable vermin. May the race soon become extinct, is the sentiment of my heart, and may all the people say amen.”<sup>181</sup>

When caught, this inferior breed of Southerners were afforded the punishments given to traitors and deserters, not enemy soldiers. Alcander Morse, whose army service was frequently spent rooting out partisans along the border of Missouri and Arkansas and along the Mississippi River, was no stranger to the devastation caused by guerilla fighters. In Huntsville, Arkansas, he witness the execution of several partisans. “While here [General] Herron shot 9 bushwackers[,] mostly leaders of bands.”<sup>182</sup> Union soldiers greatly resented the irregular status of these partisans, and word spread throughout the army of their vicious, villainous conduct.

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<sup>179</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 133.

<sup>180</sup> Wesson, diary entry dated January 31, 1863.

<sup>181</sup> Pepon to his sister, April 18, 1863.

<sup>182</sup> Morse, journal entry dated January 11, 1863.

Benjamin McIntyre joyfully recorded in his diary of the death of “the noted guerrilla and bushwhacker Alfred Boland—for whom a large reward had been offered . . . Boland was a noted character before the breaking out of this rebellion & was a bloodthirsty villain and the war furnished him and pretext for carrying on his deeds of crime, rapine and murder—he espoused the cause of the South and woe betide the Union man who was so unfortunate as to fall into his hands. . . . Several attempts were made to rid the country of this monster but without success.”<sup>183</sup> For all of the controversy that surrounded the legality and illegality of partisan activity—the Union army’s refusal to treat captured guerrillas as prisoners of war, for example—the Northern soldiers who were most affected by the bushwhackers held them as a very different class of beings, deserving of the severest punishment. But just as deceiving as the partisan fighters were the disloyal citizens Northerners found in the borderlands.

### **“We Must Teach Them”: The Borderlands**

Northern soldiers learned very quickly to distrust their countrymen in the slave states that remained loyal to the Union. While not necessarily Southern in a political sense, their frequent sympathy to the Southern cause compelled many Northerners to associate them with the Southern Other. Interacting with citizens on the borderland was the way most Northerners were acquainted with disloyal citizens, but it was also discerned in other ways. As one soldier entered Maryland on the railroad, he was conscious of the precariousness of the Union cause in the border states. “Seen no sesesion flags at all but did not meet with the same hearty cheers as we did in the free states.”

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<sup>183</sup> Diary entry dated February 2, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 107.

Wherever we entered the state of Maryland the military was stationed every mile to protect the railroad track.”<sup>184</sup> Northerners, most of whom came from states where slavery had been abolished, were quick to distinguish between slave states and free, emphasizing the wariness felt toward slavery-supporting members of the Union.

Even the state militias of borderland states could not always be relied upon. On patrol along the Missouri-Arkansas border, Benjamin McIntyre and his Iowa regiment “passed from Missouri to Arkansas, our first advent into a Confederate State.” After only venturing into the state about two miles, the Missouri militia that had been accompanying them on their movements came to a halt and would not go any further, as their “enlistment was such as did not compel them to go out of their state.” After a speech by their Colonel, who “appealed to them in the name of God and patriotism and the state of Missouri,” the militia agreed to “go wherever duty called them.” The ringleader of the mutiny was court martialed on the spot and sentenced to twelve months’ hard labor, stripped of his pay, and reduced to the ranks.<sup>185</sup>

Incidents such as this revealed to Northerners that the border states were more enconced in Southern culture than they were Northern, and that official loyalty to the Union did not negate the presence of individuals who believed in the bizarre form of nationalism that put state loyalty above the nation. Many Northerners came to this realization under dangerous circumstances. One soldier stationed in Maryland reported a farmer being shot by sentinels for attempting to poison a spring with arsenic. He also

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<sup>184</sup> Wallace to his wife, July 16, 1861.

<sup>185</sup> Diary entry dated October 18, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 31.

reported that there were men under guard for selling butter, vegetables, and whiskey laced with poison.<sup>186</sup> Alva Cleveland found some Confederate sympathizers in Kentucky who claimed to be “Neutrals,” but in talking with and observing them, “saw enough to satisfy me where their sympathy was[.] had a man said half as much in Wisconsin, he would have been taken to the guard house.”<sup>187</sup> Cleveland also came across secessionists who complained that the Union army was there to liberate their slaves. Cleveland wrote, “We tell them it is not so[.] it is to preserve the Union[.] I suppose they do not believe us so we must teach them.”<sup>188</sup> This proved to be easier said than done. Just as Northerners were influenced by their cultivated library of knowledge of an imagined South, Southerners had created an imagined identity of Northerners based on their own cultural products and print media.<sup>189</sup>

While the borderlands could be hostile toward Union men and women, and stories of disloyalty were often related in correspondence and diaries, Northerners were warmly received by many of the people in these Union states where slavery existed. Daniel Holt found national kinship in the landscapes and institutions of Maryland. Despite being “under slave control,” it had not fallen into the “cauldron of secession” and thus was “comparatively a free and happy state” compared to Virginia. “Blessed by Nature in the

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<sup>186</sup> Wallace to his wife, August 21, 1861; Elon Beers, diary entry dated August 20, 1861, “Jenks-Beers Family Papers, 1861-1957,” Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

<sup>187</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated November 5, 1861.

<sup>188</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated November 21, 1861.

<sup>189</sup> This statement is based upon observations embedded in the writings of Northern travelers to the South. A good but dated analysis of Southern views of Northerners during the Civil War can be found in Everard H. Smith, “Chambersburg: Anatomy of a Confederate Reprisal,” *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 2 (April 1, 1991): 432–455.

productiveness of her soil—blessed in her institutions which are mild and human[e], compared with her sister slave states, and blessed by the honest industry of her sons, she stands forth a pattern of warm-hearted generosity, such as New-York or any other Northern State might feel proud to emulate.”<sup>190</sup> Made different from the North by slavery, Maryland was nevertheless superior to the seceded states of the South—dishonest, sedentary, and inhumane as they were.

Other soldiers likewise encountered friends on the soil of Maryland. During one march through the state, William Wallace noted that the farmers along the road appeared to be loyal and were very kind to the traveling Union soldiers. “They had their slaves tending us with water and in some instances giving them bread and meat and fruit. The people sat on the fences like as many pea fowl, some remarking ‘Aint them rough looking fellows.’ They gave us the praise of being the best fellows passed this way. The citizens says that if all the soldiers is like the Wisconsin first, that the rebellion will soon be at an end.”<sup>191</sup> These loyal characters are nevertheless described in a way that sets them apart from Northerners, evident in Wallace’s use of animal imagery to describe the farmers as well as his use of their regional dialect.

### **“The Southern Chivalry”: Citizens**

Cultural differences such as dialect seemed to be the greatest offense committed by Southerners. Northerners found them to be a peculiar breed of Americans, from their perceived work ethic, economic system, gender norms, city planning, agricultural

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<sup>190</sup> Letter dated July 1, 1863 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 117.

<sup>191</sup> Wallace to his wife, July 21, 1861.

practices, food, mannerisms, and language.<sup>192</sup> Northerners were eager to point out these cultural differences. Adelia Lyon was appalled to discover a peculiar habit of many Southerners: dipping. “Here we saw for the first time the filthy habit of dipping. They take a small stick and chew the end of it into a brush, then stick it into Scotch snuff and rub it all around their teeth.”<sup>193</sup> This habit was one frequently commented upon by Northerners in their observations of Southern women and a cultural trait used to shame them. One of the more noticeable differences was the regional dialects and accents they encountered in the South. It was common for Northerners to use “black speak” in their writings about African Americans, but a similar technique was used to demonstrate the bizarre and uncivilized manner of speech of the white Southerners.

Wisconsin nurse Libbie Ward kept notes in her diary of “Tennessee Oratory” she encountered in her months down South. One note read:

Another [woman] complained that “Cap’en Sharman dunt shew fair play nuhow! He jus puts his walkerbacks right in frunt, and sends his critterbacks right round on our eends, and flunks us.” I will explain that “critterbacks” mean in southern phrase, cavalry, and “walkerbacks” infantry. Some who are rather more highly educated call cavalry, -calvary. These are truths, and not fictions.<sup>194</sup>

Ward also reported in her diary that wounded Northern soldiers “are never rude or disrespectful to us [nurses], but seem so glad to have us speak *Northern*.”<sup>195</sup> One soldier blamed Southern accents for his dislike of the young ladies he saw. “Young ladies

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<sup>192</sup> See Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 92-93 for a discussion of the difference in material folk culture between the North and the South.

<sup>193</sup> Diary entry dated January 14, 1863 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 76.

<sup>194</sup> Ward, undated note.

<sup>195</sup> Ward, letter dated December 5, 1864, emphasis added.

between the ages of 15 & 20 . . . are much better looking than those north, but they all have that harsh, disagreeable nigger twang to their speech, which to say the least is disgusting. All are ignorant—rich and poor.”<sup>196</sup>

Northerners were also very aware of a perceived difference between Northern industry and Southern indolence. One soldier commented on the dated nature of everything he encountered in the South. “It is curious to see the people and their ways down here. I have never seen them have a washboard or any kind of a washing-machine. . . . I have only seen one stove since I left Fayetteville. I have not seen a pump since we left Louisville, Ky., all rope and bucket. I have not seen a reaper or mower or thrashing machine and nearly every house has a loom in it.”<sup>197</sup>

En route to her husband’s camp in the South via railroad from Washington, D.C., Harriet Perkins noted that “there were a great many delays after we reached Baltimore waiting for the down trains[.] there is only one track all the way, so you see just how enterprising the Southern people are.”<sup>198</sup> Isaac Newton Parker, a member of the Seneca tribe, was likewise wary of the industriousness of the Southern people. When his watch needed repairs while he was in North Carolina, he sent it back home to his wife in New York. “I will not trust it in none of their hands down here for they are nothing but the

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<sup>196</sup> Adams to Alice, November 14, 1862.

<sup>197</sup> Wallace to his wife, May 22, 1864.

<sup>198</sup> Harriet Perkins to her sister, December 19, 1863, “Hall Family Collection,” Regional History Center at Northern Illinois University.

unfinished apprentices of our northern cities.”<sup>199</sup> Northerners saw very little to encourage them of the capabilities of the Southern people.

Perhaps the greatest influence of Southern culture in the eyes of Northern travelers was the perceived class system in the South. Northerners entered the South with the idea of only two classes—the aristocracy of wealthy slaveholders and the poor whites they subjugated. Even when they encountered evidence to the contrary of this understanding, Northerners found ways to classify these Southerners within this two-class system. The middle class of Southern whites were either elevated to the “chivalric” class or devaluated to poor “white trash” status. “I have often Spoken of the prevailing ignorance of the people of the South,” one soldier wrote. “The more that I See of the country the more does this become apparent. It has been Settled policy of the Slave aristocracy to Keep all the land all the property and all Knowledge in their own possession. A man owning a thousand acres of land will not Sell to a poor man a homestead but will allow him to Squat on his domain So that afterward he can control his vote and in any other way use him as a tool.”<sup>200</sup> This understanding of Southern society was central to Northerners’ perception of the war’s cause. For as Reid Mitchell argued,

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<sup>199</sup> Letter dated June 21, 1863 in Isaac Newton Parker, *A Seneca Indian in the Union Army: The Civil War Letters of Sergeant Isaac Newton Parker, 1861-1865*, ed. Laurence M. Hauptman (Shippensburg: White Mane Pub, 1995), 80.

<sup>200</sup> Marshall Perkins to his wife, May 23, 1865. Bell Irvin Wiley argued that soldiers actually rarely came in contact with the upper classes of the South, due to their isolated homes and plantations. Instead, they were witness to the “common folk” about whom they based their conclusions about Southerners. Wiley, *The Life of Billy Yank*, 98.

“the Northern interpretation of the war’s causes required that the masses of Southern whites be pitiable slaves to aristocratic domination.”<sup>201</sup>

Such an image permeated the ranks of Northern travelers and created the sense that the majority of the Southern people were waiting to be liberated and brought into the folds of true democracy and freedom that the North could provide. The archetype of the South, and those responsible for the problems of the nation, were the wealthy class—the Southern “chivalry” that Northerners frequently read about in newspapers. The word “chivalry” was intended to conjure an image of Cavalier Knights, of culture and refinement. But as the war progressed, Northerners more frequently used the term as a symbol of corruption, an ironic title for a people they found to be anything but refined. Southern chivalry came to represent Southern hypocrisy, and was used as a fierce insult meant to call into question the very foundation of Southern society and identity. In a boastful letter home after the fall of New Orleans, one soldier wrote, “when the events of today shall have become History, posterity will be amazed that the Crescent City, Queen of the South and mistress of the Gulf, defended by thousands of her chivalrous sons, should surrender to the despised Yankees, without striking a blow. *Sic transit gloria chivalri*. [So passes the glory of the chivalry.]”<sup>202</sup>

African-American soldier James F. Jones boasted of chivalry’s disgrace. “In the city of New Orleans, we could see signs of smothered hate and prejudice to both our color and present character as Union soldiers. But, for once in his life, your humble

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<sup>201</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109.

<sup>202</sup> Diary entry dated May 13, 1863 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 93.

correspondent walked fearlessly and boldly through the streets of a southern city! And he did this without being required to take off his cap at every step, or give all the side walks to those lordly princes of the sunny south, the planter's sons! Oh, chivalry! how hast thou lost thy potent power and charms!"<sup>203</sup>

Northerners also used chivalry and the courteous behavior the term implied to further demonstrate the barbarism of Southerners and the hypocrisy of their pretentious claims of knightly origins and behavior. Imprisoned in Andersonville Prison, Iowan Henry Clinton Parkhurst contemplated the notion of chivalry in his diary. "We captured about as many men at Vicksburg as are now confined in this stockade. Suppose we had marched them down into a Yazoo swamp, cut away the timber, built a stockade around them, deprived them of shelter of any kind, starved them, shot them, or left them to die by inches from pestilence, filth, and famine," he wrote, referencing his own experiences as a prisoner of the South. "The first thing that was done after Vicksburg fell was to run a fleet of Union supply steamers down to the wharf of the city and unload tons and tons of the best kind of rations for the use of Pemberton's emaciated army. That was an example of *Northern* chivalry."<sup>204</sup>

The moonlight-and-magnolia myth of Southern Cavaliers was being thoroughly debunked by these Northerners who instead found wild, untamed wilderness and inhumanity. Such discoveries spurred on Northern desires to defeat the South, to bring it

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<sup>203</sup> Letter from James F. Jones dated May 8, 1864 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 142-143.

<sup>204</sup> Henry Clinton Parkhurst, diary entry from Andersonville Scrapbook, August 12, 1864, "Henry Clinton Parkhurst Collection, 1862-1921," Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City, emphasis added.

to its knees in order to remake it into a region worthy of its part within the United States. In the summer of 1864, with the Richmond-Petersburg and Atlanta campaigns underway, Union soldiers were optimistic of defeating the South, and Alcander Morse boasted, “the Southern Chivalry must give up for there will be nothing left to continue the War for[.] or if they donot give up we can soon sweep their whole teritory.”<sup>205</sup>

Not only would this defeat be beneficial to Northerners seeking to reunite the country and reform the rebellious, inferior South, but they also hoped it would benefit the poor whites, who would have the chance to thrive once out from under the thumb of the slaveholding aristocracy. Marcus Spiegel, a Jewish immigrant from Germany, wrote eagerly of the prospects of the poor whites he saw in Louisiana after General Banks abolished slavery in the state in January 1864. According to Spiegel, the former masters were eager to hire the recently freed blacks. “I am satisfied in twenty five years from now, the negro will be an educated, well to do laborer and the white man none the worse.” The wealthy plantation owners would most likely not concur, but he was more interested in the opportunities for the poor whites. “A new era is dawning for them in this Country (South); heretefore they were almost worse [off] then the negro slave here.”<sup>206</sup>

Marshall Perkins was hopeful for the poor whites as well, and pondered how the war might create a middle class in the South. Dismissing most of the claims of destitution in the region as “gammon,” he wrote from Savannah at the beginning of 1865.

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<sup>205</sup> Morse, journal entry dated June 30, 1864.

<sup>206</sup> Letter dated February 12, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 320-321.

There is no doubt that there are many Such cases where families four years rolling in luxury, are now reduced to want. But what do I or you care. Their wealth was ill gotten. Let them want or go to work. The poor are better off for the war[.] Property heretofore lying in heaps is being scattered[.] The poor are getting a grab at it. Heretofore there has been only two classes in the South. The immensely rich and the miserably poor. No middle class[.] For my part, I think that it is better for the country to have twenty five men worth a thousand dollars a piece than to have one man worth twenty five thousand dollars and the other twenty four not worth a cent.<sup>207</sup>

When not being pitied, the poor whites were mocked for their crudeness.

Apparently alien to Northerners, these Southerners were often observed in the same manner as the flora and fauna. “Witnessed several good specimens of the real Southern ‘white trash,’” one soldier wrote from North Carolina. “The country is well calculated to develop this species of the genus homo.”<sup>208</sup> Another told his sister that “there is no propriety in the people of the north Sending money to civilize and christianize the heathen of foreign lands. We have them in our own land in abundance. Not one half of the white children in the Streets here even Know their age. They have no more idea of learning to read and write, than have the dumb beasts in your barn yard.”<sup>209</sup> Other descriptions of this class of beings include “snuff-dipping, tobacco chewing and smoking creatures filled with domestic whiskey when they can get it,” and a people “much less human than the negroes, more ignorant, dirty and lifeless,” deserving of pity and in need of the “influences of religious instruction, conjoined with free schools.”<sup>210</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Marshall Perkins to his brother, February 5, 1865.

<sup>208</sup> Letter dated October 26, 1862 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 75.

<sup>209</sup> Marshall Perkins to his sister, June 28, 1865.

<sup>210</sup> Letter dated October 2, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 263; diary entry dated February 3, 1865 in Esther Hill Hawks, *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War: Esther Hill*

Northerners became accustomed to viewing the Southern population as inferior to the peoples in the North and described them with variations of humor, pity, and disdain. “It is surprising how ignorant some of them are,” one soldier reported from Mississippi. “I have heard some say that the Yankees were a dwarfish race of people, inferior to both the Southern and Western people, another one appeared to think that they were all foreigners who came over and make their living by swindling & cheating. . . . He also thought that these Yankees were so plenty [in the] east, that they controlled the elections and had everything their own way. I find that the reports in regard to the South given in our papers telling how the people were *deluded* and led into it by the leading men were true, many of them have told me that they did not fight with a good will.”<sup>211</sup>

Ignorance was one thing. Responsibility for the war was another. In addition to rich or poor, white, black, or “mixed,” most Southerners were part of a more serious class of people: traitors who brought on the war. One of the most common phrases found within the writings of Northerners was a variation of “they brought it on themselves” in response to some sort of negative effect Southerners incurred as a result of the war. “[I am] thankful that King Cotton is dethroned,” one soldier wrote, “and that I see in the desolation, and wide-spread ruin, and terrible starvation, and in the ceaseless wail of wretchedness that is heard all over the South, simply ‘the reward of their doings.’”<sup>212</sup> Another noted that “misery, starvation, ruin all mark the city [of Vicksburg, Mississippi]

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*Hawks' Diary*, ed. Gerald Schwartz (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1984), 108-109; letter dated October 2, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War*, 263.

<sup>211</sup> Letter dated July 10, 1863 in Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound*, 82-83.

<sup>212</sup> Diary entry dated January 1, 1863 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 116.

with its pain, its woe, its horror, and they see for the first time the damnable influences of rebellion they have brought upon themselves.”<sup>213</sup>

Understanding the war—and their participation in it—as a necessary reaction to the actions of Southerners relieved Northerners of any guilt brought on by their murderous and destructive conduct. It also encouraged ideas for reform and betterment of the region at the hands of the North, which was superior to the South both in terms of morality and democracy. “They have with open eyes entered into a conspiracy to break up and destroy our free institutions and entail slavery dark and eternal upon us,” one soldier wrote, explaining his “evil feelings” and “wrath” towards the Southern people. “As a free, an enlightened and a christian people, we are bound to subdue this rebellion even though we wade through oceans of blood and empoverish the Nation.”<sup>214</sup>

The veracity with which Northerners believed they were in the right over Southerners—who were waging this “cruel war” with “all the eagerness of madmen”—was evident in the powerful words they used to describe the war and the “madmen” responsible for it.<sup>215</sup> When news of the capture of Atlanta reached Ole Kittelson, the Norwegian-born Wisconsin recorded a rant in his diary about the Southerners’ responsibility for the war. The news of Atlanta’s fall “filled their palaces in Richmond with a stinking odor which made Jefferson Davis and his whole cabinet pale as death. And gave them hell’s heart anguish which bowed them down for the first time and perhaps for the last time on their knees and prayed their servant Satan to prepare a place

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<sup>213</sup> Diary entry dated July 6, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 182.

<sup>214</sup> Letter dated September 16, 1862 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 22.

<sup>215</sup> Morse, journal entry dated December 31, 1863.

for them where they might be protected from the damnation which they had themselves underwritten with the blood of the North's men."<sup>216</sup>

George W. Squier of Indiana chose foreign rather than religious rhetoric to blame the South. "Egypt had its plagues and its all-consuming swarms of locusts. . . . But the United States are afflicted with a curse worse than all these—treason—secession. . . . Secession is death—distruction—ruin—everything good and pure and holy is blasted and blackened by contact with it."<sup>217</sup> Secession, rebellion, these American plagues affected the entire country, but woe to those who began it all. "It is just lucky," Henry Kirsher wrote, "that the loss falls hardest on those who are to blame for all the trouble."<sup>218</sup>

In the midst of the hostile environment of the South, Northerners were surprised to find friends among Southern citizens. There are numerous references to little pockets of Unionism throughout the South, from single families to entire towns. Adelia Lyon was granted the hospitality of a Quaker family that was forced to hide their Unionism behind closed doors and a hidden room they had built to protect the family's men from being taken by the rebels.<sup>219</sup> The town of Shelbyville, Tennessee received attention from more than one soldier for its strong Unionism. One soldier wrote, "Shelbyville is the strongest Union town south of the Ohio river which I suppose accounts for their being the most intelligent people."<sup>220</sup> Another wrote, "It is very strange that a Union town should be found alone by itself, but such is the fact. They are the right kind of Union people, too.

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<sup>216</sup> Kittelson, diary entry dated September 3, 1864.

<sup>217</sup> Letter dated September 8, 1864 in Squier, *This Wilderness of War*, 81.

<sup>218</sup> Letter dated April 15, 1863 in Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 89.

<sup>219</sup> Diary entry dated March 30, 1865 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 207.

<sup>220</sup> Adams to his brother, June 7, 1865.

They are in favor of sustaining the Government at all hazards, though slavery should fall, and many of them believe it has already received its death blow. God grant it.”<sup>221</sup>

The loyalty and patriotism of these Unionist Southerners did not always negate their identity as Southerners; despite their national loyalty, they were still *Southern*.

Benjamin McIntyre noted an encounter with “three buxom blooming lasses” as his regiment marched through northern Arkansas.

Real country beauties dressed with taste and seeming care in striped homespun flannel[, they] were standing in front of their log shanty which was nearly hidden from view by the thick wood in front of it. . . . As we passed them they had various expressions of encouragement for us which I will give in their own language as it fell from as pretty lips as ever made sunshine in an Arkansas cabin—Go in, boys, give them h—ll—You are the boys who can whip all the G—d d—md Sesesh in Arkansas—I’ll bet on you fellers.<sup>222</sup>

Although grateful for the encouragement, McIntyre still presented a story ripe with the usual jabs at Southerners and their uncivilized landscape, their archaic customs, and humorously vulgar language.

### **“Full of Venom”: Southern Ladies**

Southern women were frequent targets of Northern derision. Not only did they find enemies amongst Southern females, but they also found questionable displays of womanhood. Northerners repeatedly portrayed Southern women as aggressive, political, and crass specimens of the South that were as exotic and peculiar to Northerners as were the region’s alligators and magnolias. Alcander Morse frequently mentioned “Ladies” in his journal following his movements through the Trans-Mississippi Theater of the war.

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<sup>221</sup> Pepon to his sisters, July 19, 1863.

<sup>222</sup> Diary entry date December 14, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 72.

Traveling through Arkansas, he remarked, “People are very destitute through this section of the country[.] mostly Seceshionests[,] especially the Ladies (if such they may be called which I doubt).” Their womanhood was called into question by the customs and habits he observed, most memorably the ladies who “smoke & chew tobacco & swear like pirates.”<sup>223</sup>

Tobacco use amongst women was a novel experience to Northerners, who frequently commented on it. Adelia Lyon made note of the first time she witnessed this peculiar habit. “We saw here for the first time well-dressed Southern ladies chewing tobacco and spitting behind the backlog.”<sup>224</sup> One soldier gave a more detailed description of the process after witnessing an enslaved woman called Aunt Fanny partake of snuff. “She transferred the snuff from a tin box to her mouth with a sweet gum wood stick, which she used like a tooth brush, and then left the handle sticking out of her mouth. Aunt Fanny afforded me the first opportunity I ever had of witnessing the operation of ‘dipping,’ and I am thus particular in my reference to this classic custom, which is said to prevail among the white women as well as the black ones at the South.”<sup>225</sup>

Kelsey Adams had an amusing encounter with a wealthy white woman whose snuff box accompanied her to the dance floor. Attending a ball on Lookout Mountain in honor of George Washington’s birthday, Adams found the ladies to be “more handsome (some of them were beautiful) than we generally see by the north, but one thing about

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<sup>223</sup> Morse, journal entries dated October 7, 1862 and October 25, 1862.

<sup>224</sup> Diary entry dated December 12, 1862 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 74.

<sup>225</sup> Letter dated March 20, 1863 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 145.

them was actually disgusting.” He made this discovery after becoming acquainted with a handsome Georgia belle—

a lady who many susceptible young men might have fallen desperately in love with at first sight. . . . Never did I exert myself harder to be polite and do the exquisite than when I engaged her to dance with me, and what was my surprise when she answered “Wal, now look hyar, Ill be hanged if I dont, Cap’n”!! The dance being through she pulled a great plug of tobacco from somewhere, took a chew herself and asked me if I would like a “cud” I informed her that I did not use the weed, at which she appeared very much surprised and evidently thought if I didn’t “chew” I couldn’t be much.<sup>226</sup>

The manners of Southern women forced many soldiers to view them warily. Alcander Morse was not always impressed with the women he encountered, even the beauties. “This is a beautiful morning in the prettiest City I have yet seen in Dixey,” he wrote in Natchez, Mississippi. “Such pretty Flower Gardens Walks, Parks & so many Lovely Ladies[.] still they are Southern Ladies.”<sup>227</sup> As with the landscape, Southern women could possess beauty, but they were still Southern, still different, still inferior.

While most soldiers resorted to humor to discuss Southern women, others could be cruel. One soldier reported near New Orleans that “it seemed quite nice when we first came here to see a woman but I have seen all of the She Bitches that I want too. (I said She Bitches for such they have turned out to be) and I dont care much how quick we leave here. It dont seem much like home society, evry old jade that passes carries a dozen or less bottles of whiskee coneieled in their clothes . . . it is plainly to be seen that the Co.

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<sup>226</sup> Adams to all[?], March 2, 1864.

<sup>227</sup> Morse, journal entry dated May 15, 1864.

is becoming degraded.”<sup>228</sup> Not only were Southern women unlike Northern women, but their unladylike behavior was a threat to Northern men as well. Another soldier described the women he encountered in Virginia as “fair specimens of Southern Chivalry—snuff dipping, dilapidated, lantern jawed bipeds of *neuter gender* [who] keep aloof from their hated brethren in blue.”<sup>229</sup> For some Northerners, Southern womanhood was so distorted, its women could not even be considered part of the female gender.

One of the biggest critiques of Southern women was their idleness. “The white woman dont pretend to work any down here,” one soldier complained.<sup>230</sup> Another poked fun at the idea of a Southern finishing school he encountered in Alabama. The building, “more a la temple, [was] surrounded and decorated by a mass of pillars; whether Roman, Greek or Southern chivalrous style I don’t know. Expect I learned that it was to train Southern teenage girls to be belles or ladies; in other words, to perfect their rocking in the rocking chair.”<sup>231</sup> Northerners’ understanding of Southern women was that slavery had made them lazy and incapable of performing the usual womanly duties. They were also fiercely, even defiantly, political. Soldiers found these particular women to be “overbearing, haughty and stubborn” and “so full of venom they cant look a soldier straight in the face.”<sup>232</sup> With many of the men serving in the army, Northern travelers were given greater access to the women of the South, whom they discovered were

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<sup>228</sup> Tubbs to his sister, September 7, 1863.

<sup>229</sup> Letter dated December 4, 1863 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 163.

<sup>230</sup> Wallace to his wife, April 6, 1864.

<sup>231</sup> Letter dated November 18, 1863 in Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 140.

<sup>232</sup> Letter dated February 12, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 320-321; Wallace to his wife, April 6, 1864.

unafraid of displaying their politics for Northerners to see. “Nashville is a Purty Place,” one soldier observed. “The City is diserted of nearly all its inhabitants except the Ladys and they are all secesh and wear a secesh flag for Aprons and have a belt around their waists with an Ivory handled Colt Revolving Pistol of the best quality sticking in it.”<sup>233</sup>

The political-mindedness of Southern women caused Northerners to call into question their gender. “I Saw this morning a lady or rather a thing in peticoats Step out into the mud of the Streets rather than walk upon the Side walk because that our flag was Suspended over it,” Marshall Perkins observed in Savannah, neutering the woman of her femininity because of her brash, political behavior. One soldier whose army service in the South carried into the beginning of Reconstruction reveled in the fate of such women. Admiring “a fine large U.S. flag” that hung over the full length of a hall where a ball was being held, he wrote, “Some of the Ladys that danced on that Flag in the dust 5 years ago danced under it tonight, could not help but respect it, although it was verry Mortifying to some of them. Bayonets taught them a lesson.”<sup>234</sup> Eventual Union victory would subdue the unwomanly females of the South. Northern force of arms would recolonize the South, bringing it back to the Union, and superior Northern moral character would see to the

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<sup>233</sup> Henry M. Erisman to his brother, March 12, 1862, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0677>.

<sup>234</sup> Diary entry dated September 9, 1865 in Mathew Woodruff, *A Union Soldier in the Land of the Vanquished; the Diary of Sergeant Mathew Woodruff, June-December, 1865*, ed. F. N. Bony (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1969), 35–36.

recolonization of acceptable social norms and reform the South within a proper model of gender behavior.<sup>235</sup>

### **“Good For Something”: African Americans**

To Northern travelers, African Americans were the most foreign aspect of the Southern population. They featured prominently in the writings of Northerners, regardless of their views on slavery or the rights of African Americans. Many Northerners came from populations with little or no access to blacks. Much like “seeing the elephant” was a rite of passage in war, seeing an African American was a key experience of entering the South for many Northerners. “I have seen so many colored people pass here since I came,” one female nurse wrote after her arrival in Tennessee, “that they cease to be a rarity.”<sup>236</sup> For all of the talk of slavery and its role in precipitating the war, Northerners were finally able to come face to face with the real Uncle Toms and Elizas.<sup>237</sup>

African Americans were generally viewed as a curiosity, studied and recorded like the flora and fauna. Subjects of both pity and disdain, they were almost always victims of racialized stereotypes. Nevertheless, views of African Americans tended to be favorable for the most part. “Childish, disheveled figures of the blacks welcomed us at every gate of entry, at every street corner, with their charming and eternal Ethiopian smile: the smile from ear to ear, blinding you with the ivory white enamel of their teeth,”

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<sup>235</sup> Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 38.

<sup>236</sup> Ward, letter dated January 29, 1865.

<sup>237</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 117.

one Northern woman wrote of a scene in Huntsville, Alabama. “Poor people! . . . Oh, if compensatory justice holds this human world in equilibrium, this poor race—humiliated, exploited, and crucified—must have somewhere in centuries to come a brilliant destiny.”<sup>238</sup>

The language Northerners chose when writing about their experiences with blacks was predominantly demonstrative of their disassociation from them as racial equals, fellow Americans, or even human beings. One soldier conjured up an image that could very well have been a comic in a weekly illustrated newspaper to describe a scene in one summerlike day in January. “The darkies both male and female are out thick as toads after a thunder shower preparing the land for a crop.”<sup>239</sup> Another soldier described a group of African Americans doing menial tasks for the army as “the blackest longest heeled darkeys I ever saw—they seem real Congo’s and are a pure and unadulterate race.”<sup>240</sup> Doctor Esther Hill Hawks, though scientific in her approach, created in her diary a portrait of black residents of South Carolina’s Sea Islands fit for a cabinet of curiosities.

It is an undeniable fact that the negroes of these Sea Islands are of the lowest type—the flattest nosed and thickest lipped—accompanied by the numbest skulls, any where to be met with in America. The reason for this seems to be largely their environment—cut off as they are almost wholly from any intercourse with a higher intelligence, there has been no mental food for them any more than for the swine and cattle with whom their lives are shared and the wonder is that we find them so nearly human so teachable.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Diary entry dated July 14, 1863 in Turchin, “A Monotony Full of Sadness,” 50-51.

<sup>239</sup> Tubbs to his sister, January 19, 1865.

<sup>240</sup> Diary entry dated April 9, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 135.

<sup>241</sup> Diary entry dated October 16, 1862 in Hawks, *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War*, 38.

Even African-American schoolteacher Charlotte Forten acknowledged the foreign nature of these Southerners. As she entered the port at Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, she saw contrabands, “of every hue and size” for the first time. “They were mostly black, however, and certainly the most dismal specimens I ever saw.”<sup>242</sup>

Common features of African-American stories in Northern writings include the general failure to identify African-American persons by name, and often times when named, their names were given within quotation marks, as if they were somehow unreal. Like their white countrymen, Southern blacks were referred to in a variety of ways, from “nigger” and “negro” to “darky” and “colored.” The most common term was “negro,” used by both male and female Northerners, while “colored” seemed to be favored mostly by women. As with white Southerners, Northerners were also amused by the African Americans’ dialect. When they allow the words of their curious friends to appear in their writings, they captured the dialect almost without fail. One soldier quoted the excited utterance of an enslaved Georgian woman who observed the coming of Union troops. “Lowd de yeah ob Jubille hab cum to town.”<sup>243</sup>

Another soldier quoted an Arkansan “negress dressed in fantastic calico” acknowledging the Union army’s entrance into the city of Van Buren. “O Massa, I say is dese de Unine ‘feds’? Youse a mighty fine lookin set of sojers, wears de goodest kind of clothes but it pears to me you all look alike—like brudders and twin brudders to.”<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Journal entry dated October 28, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 388.

<sup>243</sup> Wallace to his wife, December 18, 1864.

<sup>244</sup> Diary entry dated December 28, 1862 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 86.

Whereas regional dialect was used to convey the inferiority of white Southerners, it was often seen by Northerners as an endearing, childlike trait of African Americans.

Philadelphia-born African American Charlotte Forten confided in her diary the pleasure she took from cutting out a dress for an elderly black woman. “It was a pleasure to hear her say what a happy year this has been for her ‘Nobody to whip me nor dribe me, and plenty to eat. Nebber had such a happy year in my life before.’”<sup>245</sup>

Curiosity generally prevailed over cruelty in Northern accounts, reflecting not necessarily a true telling of events, but rather that documenting the peculiar race was more important than documenting acts of cruelty. Northerners were incessantly curious about the life stories of the people they encountered. Marshall Perkins provided a lengthy tale of an African American he met on Key West, a man whose story shed light onto the deceptive nature of the slaveholding class.

In my wanderings I was fortunate enough to fall in with the most noted character of the Island. Sandy, a negro. He was been free Seventeen years He paid \$3300, for himself He is now Said to be the richest man on the island. He owns nineteen acres of land and raises fruit and vegetables . . . He has a great many visitors and likes to show them over his grounds but is not in the habit of pulling off his fruit to feed them all. . . . Sandy is quite intelligent as well as wealthy and understands the condition of the country as well as most people and much better than your copper heads at the north. . . . He described to me the manner of life of the poor whites of the South and how they were deceived and led about by the few Slave holders. And how the masters tried to deceive their slaves telling them that the yanks were going to Sell them all off to Cuba that were worth any thing and the old men and women who were past labor were to be killed But Says he the negroes knew better than this though they pretended to believe it.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Journal entry dated November 6, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 395-396.

<sup>246</sup> Perkins to his brother, April 9, 1864.

Shortly after arriving in the South, William Wallace became interested in a young enslaved man who entered his camp and was brought before the general in charge. “That son of freedom told him that he was now a free man. He is cooking for Co. D. Captain Clark of Waupun pays him 49 dollars per month and [he] is dressed in full uniform. . . . He is 18 years old and very smart. . . . I had a long conversation with him. He seems to know a good deal about the war. I asked him if Jef Davis was as good looking as me. He turned around quick and looked me straight in the face and exclaimed, I tell you what you could not being to be as good looking as him. The answer set all the boys a laughing.” As the war progressed, the novelty of African Americans began to wane, and Wallace’s descriptions of blacks took on a harsher, meaner tone. “Niggers came to us by the thousand,” he wrote. “I saw a drove of 1500 sent off yesterday that came across from South Carolina.”<sup>247</sup> By this point in the war, inquisitiveness and personal connection with them had given way to viewing them in a manner similar to a head of cattle. As the war progressed, the vocabulary of soldiers often shifted as they became more accustomed to the African-American presence in the South, and individual thoughts and beliefs fused into a larger collective identity. The more neutral “negro” and “colored” descriptors became “nigger” and “darkey,” as the exotic tone used to describe African Americans transformed into a more disdainful, inferior one.

Most Northerners did not come to the South with strong feelings for African Americans one way or the other. Oftentimes their opinions of blacks ebbed and flowed

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<sup>247</sup> Wallace to his wife, August 8, 1861 and December 18, 1864.

like the tide of the war. While most written accounts of African Americans were harmless encounters or observations, some Northerners *did* document acts of cruelty, both those committed by themselves and those that they witnessed firsthand. Cruelty against blacks took many forms, from blatant disregard and insults to physical violence.

Failure to compensate a black for his work was one way in which Northerners showed their indifference to the status of African Americans, treating them no better than slaves. A lieutenant in the 38th Iowa hired “a colored young man” who had previously worked in the 91st Illinois and 20th Iowa but never received any of his wages.<sup>248</sup> It is unknown whether the 38th Iowa proved to be a better employer than the previous regiments. Northerners often found their black workers troublesome. Nurse Harriet Eaton complained to her diary, “I do’nt know what I shall do with Rachel.—She has not a clean table cloth for tomorrow, and the bedding has been tucked away without being washed this week. Scolding her has no effect.”<sup>249</sup>

Surgeon Daniel Holt also had troubles with Josh, a contraband he employed as his servant. Josh often complained about having to wait to eat until after Holt had finished his meal. “Well, if he does not like it he will have to leave,” Holt wrote, “for with all my love for a black skin I never yet saw one with whome I would be willing to be on *perfect* equality. . . . [L]et me say it is not because I feel that by nature I am better than they, but education—early as life itself is against it. It is engrafted in me—I cannot help it.” Holt

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<sup>248</sup> Rogers, diary entry dated November 16, 1863.

<sup>249</sup> Diary entry dated October 29, 1864 in Eaton, *This Birth Place of Souls*, 163.

eventually dismissed Josh, as “he had become insolent and saucy, and demanded an increase of pay, so I thought he had better go. I can get another as good and cheaper.”<sup>250</sup>

The disregard for the worth of African Americans was more obviously seen in the willingness of some Northerners to commit violence against blacks, regardless of their age or gender. Dr. Esther Hill Hawks chastised the conduct of Union soldiers in South Carolina for their inhumane treatment of the African Americans they encountered.

If our soldiers had been content with destroying the rebel property—there might be found excuse for them—but every indignity which human ingenuity could devise was heaped upon the poor negroes, who had hailed their coming so joyfully . . . No colored woman or girl was safe from the brutal lusts of the soldiers—and by soldiers I mean both officers and men. . . . Mothers were brutally treated for trying to protect their daughters, and there are now several women in our little hospital who have been shot by soldiers for resisting their vile demands. . . . No one is punished for these offenses for the officers are as bad as the men.<sup>251</sup>

If African Americans fought back against such treatment, it was seldom commented upon by Northerners. A black chaplain with the 102d U.S. Colored Troops, however, gleefully recorded the fate of a “negro-hating” Union soldier who interfered with “a colored woman in her own yard, and she, like a *true South Carolinian*, falls back on her ‘reserved rights’ and cuts his head with an axe.”<sup>252</sup>

Reid Mitchell argued that such treatment of blacks by soldiers was the result of misplaced emotions brought on by the war, and that violence against blacks served as an outlet for “some of the frustrated rage they felt toward the enemy, toward the army, and

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<sup>250</sup> Letters dated December 18, 1862 and February 17, 1863 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 60-61, 77.

<sup>251</sup> Diary entry dated October 16, 1862 in Hawks, *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War*, 35.

<sup>252</sup> Letter from William Waring dated February 15, 1865 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 75, emphasis added.

toward civil society.” Hardened by the war and desensitized to violence, Mitchell asserted, “many soldiers did not see in them [these acts of violence] anything but amusement.”<sup>253</sup> While this may be correct, such violence and treatment of blacks also indicated the degree to which Northerners could exert unchecked power and control over these Southerners.

Not all Northerners looked upon blacks with such indifference; some were encouraged by the effects of the war’s progress. From freedom and the promise of citizenship to enlistment in the army, some Northerners were pleased with the improvements to the condition of Southern blacks after Northern intervention. Illinoisan William C. Hazelton found that enslaved African Americans were the army’s only allies in northern Virginia, and reported receiving “much valuable information” from them. Hazelton befriended “a bright intelligent looking boy of fifteen” named Robert who lived on a nearby abandoned plantation, and offered to employ him to care for his horses for then dollars a month. “After consulting the Butler (his brother-in-law) and his Mother, he signified his readiness to go with me. I presume his master, if he knew it would have decided objections to his property’s accompanying me off. But believing that God created Robert with certain inalienable rights as well as his master, I shall not hesitate to take him along.”<sup>254</sup>

Northern soldiers would find that blacks were eager to aid the Union war effort. “The blacks here, who comprise a great majority of the resident population of

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<sup>253</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 123.

<sup>254</sup> William C. Hazelton to Fannie, December 28, 1862.

Washington, [North Carolina] are extremely fervent in their prayers for the success of the Northern cause, and rightly attribute their enlarged liberty to the presence of our soldiers,” a soldier correspondent reported. “They are a more intelligent and orderly population than can be shown in the foreign precincts of our great cities.”<sup>255</sup> Very often, action would accompany prayers in support of the Northern cause. Enslaved and free blacks of all walks of life passed along information to Union troops, becoming valuable allies against the rebels. One soldier described the actions of an African American who entered camp with military intelligence. “[A] Negro (free American of African descent) suddenly came running toward the colonel and breathlessly called ‘Massa! Massa! Day flank you, Rebel flank you ova da!’ The colonel looked in that direction and saw that 3 steamboats were landing . . . They [the Union troops] succeeded in escaping. . . . So the Negroes are good for something. The Black will probably soon become a major general, as he already knows what flanking is.”<sup>256</sup>

When African Americans were finally allowed to enter the ranks, depictions of them continued to be polarizing. Those Northerners predisposed to sympathy spoke reverently of the black troops, while many white soldiers were wary of sharing close quarters with large numbers of blacks. George Pepon was one soldier who judged the colored troops by their own merit. “A good deal has been said about the Negro soldiers, as to their fighting qualities. I know they will fight, and most gallantly too. I went over the ground where they and the white soldiers charged the Rebel works side by side, and

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<sup>255</sup> Letter dated March 30, 1863 in Haines, *“In the Country of the Enemy,”* 150.

<sup>256</sup> Letter dated March 24, 1863 in Kirsher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 85.

although they at first were repulsed, their dead bodies close to the works attest their bravery. In fact they went nearer than the veteran white soldiers. This I know, for I saw it with my own eyes.”<sup>257</sup> Zenas Haines saw the reformatory possibilities of soldiering, and shared it with the readers of the *Boston Herald*. “Our colored recruits are already winning golden opinions for their soldiering qualities. Our most bitter negropholists admit that they will fight . . . Some of the poor fellows lie behind the breastworks with a spelling book in one hand and a musket in the other.”<sup>258</sup> Haines’ portrait of African Americans was one of a people ready, willing, and deserving of Northern efforts to educate and civilize.

Some soldiers were more hesitant to accept black soldiers. “There is two ‘nigger’ regiments here,” William Henry Harrison Clayton wrote, “They do all the picket and out post duty which makes it comparatively easy upon us. The negroes make better soldiers than I expected they would. They keep themselves in good trim and seem to be well drilled. Col. Allen who commanded the post at Tyler for a long time says that they will fight for he knows it. . . . But for all that, I do not much like the idea of soldiering with them and believe that it would have been better never to have armed them. That is, I think, the principal reason why we were not exchanged sooner. The rebs will not recognize them as soldiers, and our authorities persist in retaining them as such.”<sup>259</sup>

Personal suffering as a prisoner of war affected Clayton’s perception of the Colored Troops, yet he placed the blame with the black soldiers, not the white rebels who refused

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<sup>257</sup> Pepon to his sister, December 10, 1864.

<sup>258</sup> Letter dated April 3, 1863 in Haines, “*In the Country of the Enemy*,” 154.

<sup>259</sup> Letter dated August 13, 1864 in Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound*, 118-119.

to exchange all Union soldiers, regardless of the color of their skin. Such bitter resentment was hard to dispose of and feelings of helplessness transformed into desires to control and exert power over the group responsible.

Most of the views of black soldiers were influenced by the racism inherent in most of nineteenth-century white society. As German-American Illinoisan Henry Kirsher commented, "I am not far enough advanced in civilization that I don't know the difference between white and black anymore." Such beliefs did not stop Kirsher from approving of the possibility of black soldiers, provided "the black regiments don't come into contact with the white ones. For as soon as this occurs . . . gradually the difference between white and black will show less and less until it has disappeared. What is a white who forgets that he stands above the African?"<sup>260</sup>

Despite the racial tensions from the presence of African Americans, there was often still a sense that they were preferable to some white Southerners. Blacks could be easily controlled and managed, while the white population was the out-of-hand rebel mass who had torn apart the nation. Stationed in Tennessee in the summer months after the fall of the Confederacy, Kelsey Adams found that "the people are just as rebellious in spirit and the presence of troop is all that preserves the place. . . . I would like to see the niggers vote in these Southern States. To be sure their new employers would influence many to vote as they please, but with the aid of troops, loyal citizens will be allowed to utter loyal sentiments and the niggers will vote all right until they know how to read &

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<sup>260</sup> Letter dated April 19, 1863 in Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 92.

write when they will be more competent to judge for themselves than the majority of the white ‘idiots.’”<sup>261</sup>

Amidst a Southern community of black and white, it became clear to Northerners that there existed an even wider divide between North and South than they had thought previous to their arrival. In their examination of media, propaganda, and racism, Erin Steuter and Deborah Wills argued that when the “seething mass” of the Other seems non-threatening, it becomes the object of sympathy and invokes a “will to reform.” When the Other is perceived as threatening, then it becomes the object of “indiscriminate” violent action.<sup>262</sup> The myriad of Southern friends and enemies were viewed in both ways by Northerners, as harmless but useful allies, as objects of ridicule, barbarians to slaughter, threats to civilization, and misguided fools. The sum of its parts was a population to be controlled and guided to the correct morality, politics, and place in American society.

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<sup>261</sup> Adams to his brother, August 9, 1865.

<sup>262</sup> Steuter and Wills, *At War with Metaphor*, 28.

### CHAPTER THREE Institutions & Destinations

we are fight[ing] for the good old Stars and Stripes. So three rousin cheers for the union and let the Southerners take the whole southern Confederacy niggers and all and leave quickly to parts unknown, for I would not live here for the whole.<sup>263</sup>

- Peter Stillman Cottrell Tubbs, 29th Wisconsin

In the fall of 1862, Charlotte Forten was the twenty-five year old daughter of a prestigious African-American family in Philadelphia, the fourth generation of the family to be born free. An abolitionist seeking legal equality for blacks, Forten's contribution to the cause was to aid in the education of the groups of blacks that had gathered in contraband camps in South Carolina. As she took in the sights of her first Southern city, Charlotte Forten commented on the architecture of Beaufort, South Carolina, remarking that the "houses are large and quite handsome, built in *the usual Southern style* with verandahs around them, and beautiful trees." When she entered one house, she saw that the elegance continued inside when she was "shown into a lofty ceilinged parlor where a cheerful wood fire glowed in the grate, and we soon began to feel quite at home in the very heart of Rebeldom."<sup>264</sup> The South appeared as a grand exotic destination, fulfilling her expectations of what "the usual Southern style" of architecture ought to be like. When Northerners first entered the South, they had certain expectations based off of the accounts that peppered Northern society—newspapers, travel narratives, political

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<sup>263</sup> Tubbs to his sister, February 8, 1863.

<sup>264</sup> Journal entry dated October 28, 1862 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 388, emphasis added, 390.

debates, literature, lithographs, and other cultural creations. They viewed their surroundings with eyes and minds greatly influenced by what they had imagined the South would be like. For Forten, these expectations were of a grand, wealthy society, and classic, magnificent architecture to match the quaint civilization that resided there.

German immigrant Marcus Spiegel's expectations of the South were greatly influenced by the Southern stories of author E.D.E.N. Southworth. "Mrs. Southworth's beautiful Tales located in the Valley of the Shenandoah and the Rapehanick in which we thought she stretched a good deal, are daily coming to my mind as we pass through here," Spiegel wrote home to his wife as he discovered landscapes he had thought were fictions were reality after all.

Just now we came passed a most grand looking building which would I think fill the description of the mansion of Capitola's Uncle [from the novel *The Hidden Hand* (1859)] whose name I forgot. The House is large, of Ionic Architecture, finished Mansion of Solid Stones to which Miss Sumner's House near Middlebury or Sam Thomlin's [locals of Ohio] would only be outbuildings in comparison. The front is supported by heavy Corinthian Pillars and the Windows and Bay Windows of a Gothic Structure. The broad Alley, through an Arched Gate leading, with the Gigantic old Weeping Willows on each side, the Zink Roof which in the Sun looks like Crystal, and the handsomely finished Hot Greenhouses in front give the beholder an Idea that some Count must like there, or rather hold his sway over the 4 or 500 Blacks who reside in their quarters some distance from the palace which looks a great deal like the Herrnsheimer Schloss [a castle in Germany] I told you so frequent about.<sup>265</sup>

Spiegel's imagined South continued to unfold before him throughout his travels. "As we marched along through the prettiest country a man can see anywheres and see the magnificent palasts surrounded by beautiful plantations and negro shanties, all of which

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<sup>265</sup> Letter dated March 22, 1862 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 76.

at once satisfied and shows to the thinking man, oh what fools were you to bring on a destructive War while everything was surrounding you, that could be wished for; in times of peace you certainly had plenty.” Even the cities presented a grandness that played to Spiegel’s fantasies. He found Baton Rouge and its stately buildings to be “monuments of Beauty and former Prosperity,” and its “dwelling houses” constructed in “the plain *true Southern style*; square, large and high Room, and very wide Porches on each story and on every side of the house.”<sup>266</sup> Northerners’ expectations were generally met when they encountered the elegance of the wealthy.

Daniel Holt found the South he had imagined in president John Tyler’s plantation. “The mansion though old and showing evidences of decay, is one of those fine specimens of southern aristocracy, where the F.F.V.’s [First Families of Virginia] have so long and luxuriously lived.” Now that the war had cleared the area of most of its former chivalrous inhabitants, Holt could imagine residing in such beauty and elegance. “I would like to live and die in just such a home as this if peace were restored. The surroundings are beautiful in the extreme—old majestic shade trees—clean shady walks and bowers—gardens filled with fruits and flowers—all all calculated to satisfy a man with earth, and fit him for heaven. In this part of the State, everything is different from the Northern and Middle. *Here the real chivalry dwell and here you find that ‘marked hospitality to*

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<sup>266</sup> Letters dated March 13, 1862 and April 10, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 68, 326, emphasis added.

*strangers*' of which you read so much."<sup>267</sup> The plantation myth that was featured so prominently in antebellum accounts of the South seemed to be confirmed.

### **Rural & Urban Institutions**

Northerners quickly learned, however, that there was more to the South than the one-dimensional portraits they had read in travel literature. The stereotype of the elegant plantation was found to be the exception rather than the norm. Instead they found vast areas of wild frontier and farmland, and gained increasing feeling of superiority over the South and its agricultural pursuits. For while the South was renowned in the North for its agricultural wealth, Northerners increasingly felt that Southerners did not know how to properly utilize their landscape. Northerners seemed to begin viewing the South through the lens of Manifest Destiny, the same ideology that had complicated matters between the North and South over the expansion of slavery. When Northerners encountered the wild and frontier-like environment of much of the South, it was often as "an entity to be conquered, civilized, and rid of competing wild beasts as necessary."<sup>268</sup> These attitudes were evident in the Northern soldiers' treatment of wild animals and also the comments made about the Southerners' abilities to utilize the landscape to Northern standards.

Travelers were more likely to critique the agricultural abilities of Southerners than they were to praise them. Most of the compliments paid to the land were in response to bountiful harvests of fruit that Northerners could then partake of. "A fine field of winter wheat joins our camp & the fields that we occupy raised wheat Rye Oats & corn," one

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<sup>267</sup> Letter dated June 15, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War*, 206-207.

<sup>268</sup> Ouchley, *Flora and Fauna of the Civil War*, 8.

soldier wrote. “It is a splendid Farming country all around[,] just rolling enough to make it pleasant[.] Clay Loam soil on top but under the clay is a red as and Red bricks that I ever saw[.] it looks singular to our Black soil of Wisconsin.”<sup>269</sup> Soldiers write of trees “bending down with fruit” and bushes of blackberries “by the million.”<sup>270</sup>

But far more often, travelers commented upon the desolation of the land and the indolence of the people who cultivated it. “This region is really, really very beautiful in places,” Henry A. Kircher wrote of Alabama. “But for a farmer it is not an Illinois by far. It is remarkable that where the ground doesn’t consist chiefly of gravel and sand in the valleys the way is boggy and marshy.”<sup>271</sup> Another soldier was unimpressed with the condition of land he saw in Missouri, considering it “not worth three cents for farming purposes” and “not worth a cent for anything oonly for Tad Pols.”<sup>272</sup> Yet another soldier wrote home, “How would you like Father to have a farm out here? I wish you could see some of the corn fields here and then I think you would have a ready answer. I have not seen a farm here yet that I would swap mine for, though it were 40 times as large, if I have got to spend my life upon it.”<sup>273</sup> Many could not understand why Southerners would fight so hard for such land. One soldier wrote home, “I dont see what they are fighting for and another thing as long as our army stays in Virginia they will whip the rebels for A

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<sup>269</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated December 7, 1861.

<sup>270</sup> Letter dated September 14, 1862 in Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound*, 15; Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 298.

<sup>271</sup> Letter dated November 18, 1863 in Kircher, *A German in the Yankee Fatherland*, 140.

<sup>272</sup> Vinson Holman, diary entries dated February 1, 1862 and February 16, 1862, “The Civil War Diary of Pvt. Vinson Holman, 1862 January 1-March 28,” Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

<sup>273</sup> Letter dated August 21, 1861 in Robbins, *Through Ordinary Eyes*, 59-60.

country like this for its nothing but woods hills and mountains this is an awful cuntry if I could get out of it I would.”<sup>274</sup>

If the land was not at fault, then Southerners were to blame for the disagreeable agricultural conditions in the South. Upon returning to his regiment after recruiting duty, Alcander Morse wrote in his journal, “Now we are bound for the Sunny South where every thing in the vegetable line has come to maturity long ago.”<sup>275</sup> A farmer back home in Boone County, Illinois, Morse made frequent quips about the farms he encountered as he marched through Missouri and Arkansas. “The people are very ignorant in this part of Missouri,” he wrote. “They have beautiful farms but they are so very indolent that they look very bad.” Similarly in Arkansas, “Apples are plenty but owing to the indolence of the people they are nearly all spoiled by the frost.”<sup>276</sup> The failure of Southerners to manage their rural lands proficiently in the eyes of Northerners—many of whom were farmers and agriculturalists themselves—was one of the strongest influences for Northern control over the region. As Jamie Winders argued, the rural South was where “northern travelers could most effectively position the South as an imperial territory waiting to be tapped by northern investors.”<sup>277</sup>

This attitude was also reflected in Northern perceptions of Southern cities. A predominately rural region that prided itself in its comfortable, uncrowded communities, the South seemed to Northerners a region plagued with a lack of progress and

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<sup>274</sup> John Smith to his grandmother, March 6, 1863, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F1101>.

<sup>275</sup> Morse, journal entry dated May 11, 1864.

<sup>276</sup> Morse, journal entries dated March 10, 1863 and November 1, 1862.

<sup>277</sup> Winders, “Imperfectly Imperial,” 401.

development.<sup>278</sup> Northerners, for whom the town or city was central to society, entered the South prepared to see urban areas similar to those at home. They were continuously disappointed. “I had pictured Mt. Pleasant [South Carolina] in glowing colors—imagining it was to this City what the suburbs of Boston or N.Y. are to those great cities,” one Northern woman said. “Instead, I find but a few really elegant residences and with all its natural scenery in a state of natural still-wild and unadorned.”<sup>279</sup> The lack of urban growth and preponderance of country wild and untamed was evidence to Northerners of the savage Southern society, far from the civilized and developed North.

Northerners frequently critiqued the antiquated condition of Southern towns. William Wallace wrote of several towns he encountered in Virginia, comparing them to some of his previous homes. “Smithfield is a small town like Kekoskee but 20 times as old. Towns dont grow fast down here in Dixie. Charlestown is scarcely as big as Waupun. . . . The Court House is about the size of the school house in Nelson St. in Philadelphia with two Marble Colums in front one on each side of the door. There is no fence around it. they have no town clock at all.” The county seat of Rappahannock County, Virginia was likewise unimpressive to Wallace. “Washington . . . is a very small insignificant little place. Houses is all over a hundred years old, and in a dilapitated

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<sup>278</sup> Thomas and Ayers, “The Differences Slavery Made,” TAS7; Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 99.

<sup>279</sup> Diary entry dated April 12, 1865 in Hawks, *A Woman Doctor's Civil War*, 129.

condition.”<sup>280</sup> Another soldier described the Kentucky village of Shepardsville as “in a most awful condition,” comprised of houses built mostly in “old Daniel Boons time.”<sup>281</sup>

For many Northerners from Midwestern states, these areas of the South were the oldest towns they had ever seen, as they came from parts of the country that had been settled relatively recently. Yet to them, these areas represented not civilization, but the lack thereof. African-American soldier Rufus S. Jones remarked of one Florida town “that one would naturally suppose it would justify itself in appearances, and show that it wanted to be a town, at least. In general appearance, a person would not take it for a town in the north, nor even disgrace the name of town by applying it.”<sup>282</sup> To Northerners, the South was a barren, undeveloped frontier in general want of a civilizing force to improve the “usual filthy Shiftless appearance of all Southern cities.”<sup>283</sup>

Throughout their travels, Northerners were constantly searching for symbols of modernity—institutions they recognized from home that would speak to the potential of the region and its towns that looked as though they were built “in the days of Washington and Jackson.”<sup>284</sup> Northerners came across very few school houses, which contributed to their understanding of the Southern people as ignorant and uneducated. While the literacy rates of the white populations of the North and South were relatively similar, Northerners had greater access to public schools. Education in the South was primarily through

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<sup>280</sup> Wallace to his wife, March 9, 1862; July 22, 1862.

<sup>281</sup> Moore, undated diary entry, Fall 1861.

<sup>282</sup> Letter from Rufus S. Jones dated March 20, 1864 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 40.

<sup>283</sup> Marshall Perkins to his wife, May 23, 1865.

<sup>284</sup> Morse, journal entry dated October 19, 1863.

private institutions, so fewer Southerners were able to gain education than those in the North.<sup>285</sup> Northerners were aware of this lack of school houses. “The vicinity presents many fine farms such as I have not seen since I came into the service,” one soldier noted in Arkansas. “There is also a fine church and a schoolhouse at this place which are things seldom met with in our former travels.”<sup>286</sup> Another wrote of Kentucky, “I have not seen a meeting or school house since I left Camp Buell except in Elizabethtown although we are passing through a fine country & on 2 very important roads.”<sup>287</sup>

The South’s lack of modernity in the eyes of the North made some question the lengths to which the country was going to retain such worthless, undeveloped real estate. “The houses & out buildings where there is any are so different from ours[;] mostly log ones & all the chimneys are built outside of them. one of our boys made the remark in my hearing that such a damed looking set as they were was not worth fighting for & we ought to go home about our business[.] about ½ right I think.”<sup>288</sup> Not all of the South was as dismal looking as the portion Cleveland described. Soldiers would often eagerly make note of places that reflected the industry and civilization they knew back home. “Clarksville is one of the greatest tobacco marketts in that portion of the state [of Tennessee],” one soldier wrote. “It contains about ten thousand inhabitants, and to its credit be it said schools are more generally attended than is usual in the Southern states.

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<sup>285</sup> Thomas and Ayers, “The Differences Slavery Made,” TAF26, E119.

<sup>286</sup> Diary entry dated December 6, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals on the Frontier*, 57.

<sup>287</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated December 14, 1861.

<sup>288</sup> Cleveland, diary entry dated December 14, 1861.

And to this may be ascribed the intelligent appearance of its inhabitants, more than any one thing else.”<sup>289</sup>

Alcander Morse was particularly taken with New Orleans, which he compared to Chicago and other Northern cities he had seen. “I have been to the city & well may New Orleans be called the queen City of the south it is kept so clean[.] it has no such magnificent buildings as some Northern Cities has[.] still they look very pretty.”<sup>290</sup>

Northerners were sure to applaud well-developed cities when they found them, despite their obvious Southernness and inferiority to Northern cities. Cities were an integral part to Northern life and what they understood as a civilized society. Their absence seemed to confirm, as Reid Mitchell argued, “that Southern society was as savage and undemocratic as the Union soldiers already believed.”<sup>291</sup>

Much of the dissatisfaction many Northerners felt toward the urban and rural institutions of the South could be attributed to the disorderly nature of the landscape. Soldiers from the more westerly states in the Union were accustomed to the methodical grid system that had been designed by Thomas Jefferson. For these Northerners, square farms, straight roads, and town squares housing courthouses were the epitome of modernity and civilization. They did not know how to react to the confusion of the Southern landscape, with its small, poorly maintained roads, tiny and infrequent towns, and isolated farms and homes.<sup>292</sup> The frontier-like condition of the South suggested to

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<sup>289</sup> Moore, undated diary entry, Spring 1862.

<sup>290</sup> Morse, journal entry dated August 25, 1863.

<sup>291</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 99.

<sup>292</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 97-99.

Northerners that the region was available for and in need of restructuring and settlement by enterprising Northerners.

### **Northern Improvements**

The devastating toll the war took on the Southern landscape worked in favor of Northerners. Not only did such destruction aid the war effort in terms of depriving the enemy of needed supplies and deliver a moral blow to the citizens and supporters of the Southern cause, but it also served as a way for Northerners to wield a powerful hand over the South. The wave of destruction that crashed over the South created a clean slate from which Northerners could erect a new South of their own choosing, one made in the image of what the North thought the South should be.<sup>293</sup>

For four years, the war waged over thousands of miles of Southern lands, cities, and towns. The inadequacy of most of the South's institutions prompted Northerners to devise ways to improve or remake them. This process was aided by the widespread destruction wreaked by the war. Important civil utilities like roads, bridges, and railroad tracks were destroyed for the sake of impeding the enemy's progress. Towns and store houses were put to torch to keep valuable supplies out of enemy hands. Acts committed by both Union and Confederate forces resulted in a wave of destruction tearing down the institutions and destinations of the region. During the first year of the war, nurse Harriet Whetten was witness to an act of destruction that was repeated many times over the next four years. As she disembarked her hospital steamer, she discovered large group of Union

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<sup>293</sup> For an examination of the impact of war on the institutions of the South, see Megan Kate Nelson, *Ruin Nation: Destruction and the American Civil War*.

soldiers converged on the house of Edward Ruffin, the man who fired the first gun on Fort Sumter.

Many of them had already reached the lawn—they were about 1,500 in all. They began immediately to cut down some fine large trees and in a short time fired the negro quarters and out-buildings. Then began a splendid sight—such bursts of flame and volumes of black, dun-colored & white smoke I have never seen. One large frame house was long in burning; the whole front was a wall of flames before the roof began to burn. One or two of the buildings retained their skeletons in living coals for what seemed a long time, and at last fell with a crash. The large store house was the last fired. . . . While these nine buildings were burning our troops were drawn up silently in line, no indecent or exultant cheers.<sup>294</sup>

Destruction need not have strategic military significance—revenge often fueled the conduct of Northerners, such as burning down a symbol of the rebellion.

Such destructive conduct committed by armies of the United States was not unheard of in American warfare. Burning food stores and homes as well as terrorizing the citizen population had been practiced in campaigns against Native Americans for decades. The perceived inferiority of the Indian victims exonerated such excessive force, and this imperial precedent was a justification readily available to Northerners during the war.<sup>295</sup> Once the inferior institutions were destroyed, Northerners would be able to rebuild the South in an image of their own choosing.

The rebuilding of the South would be a widespread endeavor, for towns from Arkansas to Virginia were laid to waste. “This is a beautiful town,” one soldier wrote of Fayetteville, Arkansas, “or has been[.] now it is sadly desolate. [Confederate General] Ben McColloch destroyed its most important parts mills Seminary CourtHouse &c.

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<sup>294</sup> Diary entry dated August 1, 1862 in Whetten, “The Diary of Harriet Douglas Whetten,” 213-214.

<sup>295</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 138.

which were all splendid buildings.”<sup>296</sup> Some soldiers saw this destruction not as devastating only to the South, but the whole United States. Marcus Spiegel lamented the destruction he witnessed in Virginia. “To see 64 Locomotives of the very best and biggest kind (1 as big as 3 of ours at home) destroyed, willfully, maliciously and feloniously, the nicest Bridges of iron and wood destroyed, a magnificent Depot House as nice as I ever saw in the United States smashed and destroyed, I am satisfied you would feel Secession is awful and must be subdued.” Later Spiegel described destruction of numerous fine bridges, “a shameful work of destruction,” by the rebel troops “which belongs to the Barbarians of the middle Age. I can not see how men as intelligent as our Southern Brethen can get so wrathly and self forgetting as to cut off their own noses to spoil the looks of their own faces.”<sup>297</sup> When destructive acts were committed by Southerners, Northerners felt it was a shame, a result of “the great Father of Secession,” but when done by Northerners, it was victory.<sup>298</sup>

“Georgia is now ‘a good country to emigrate from,’” a soldier wrote from outside Savannah in the midst of the Savannah Campaign. “All the factories, mills, cotton gins, iron founderies, arsenals—all public buildings and thousands of private dwellings have been laid in ashes through a belt of country ranging from 50 to 80 miles wide, from Kingston to Savannah, have been laid in ashes and the country left a barren wilderness,

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<sup>296</sup> Morse, journal entry dated October 29, 1862.

<sup>297</sup> Letters dated March 9, 1862 and April 3, 1863 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 65, 94.

<sup>298</sup> Moore, diary entry dated February 16, 1862.

destitute of everything except a few women, children and old men.”<sup>299</sup> This destruction was carried out in an attempt to “gut the state of everything which could subsist an army.”<sup>300</sup> While this was certainly accomplished, it also served to wage war against the South *itself*, the “Southern way of life,” not just in response to its act of rebellion.<sup>301</sup> An African-American soldier also commenting on the ruination caused by the war wrote of Charleston, “that rebellious city . . . is a little better than a mass of ruins, but ere long it will be repaired by Uncle Sam.”<sup>302</sup> The same could not be said for the private dwellings looted and burned by troops on both sides of the conflict.

It was a curiosity to Northerners that secessionist citizens could continue to support the Confederate cause after being misused by its army. “The town [Bloomfield, Arkansas] has been a beautiful one,” one soldier observed, “but it has been ransacked by the Reb’s, & strange as it may seem the people are rebel sympathisers still[.] the officers of the Rebel Army have allowed the men to pillage this town[.] they have even taken the dresses bedquilts & pillows from the Ladies and in some instances they have taken the victuals from the houses so that the people have to go hungry.”<sup>303</sup> Destruction of the South was not entirely at the hands of the Union forces—the residents of the South found themselves caught between two armies. “We have passed through the once pleasant towns of Calhoun and Adair which are found deserted,” a soldier wrote of his march

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<sup>299</sup> Adams to his brother, December 14, 1864.

<sup>300</sup> Adams to his brother, October 30, 1864.

<sup>301</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 91.

<sup>302</sup> Letter from J. H. W. N. Collins dated March 19, 1865 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 78-79.

<sup>303</sup> Morse, journal entry dated April 30, 1863.

through Georgia, “stripped of everything and many of the finest dwellings burned Hundreds of houses along the road were burning. The ‘rebs’ burning the houses of Union men, the ‘feds’ putting the torch to those left.”<sup>304</sup> While the Union army was not void of empathetic souls who refrained from destroying and profiting from the livelihood of Southerners, a mob mentality prevailed amongst the ranks, and as one soldier wrote, “property is completely destroyed as far as our army goes, as nothing can escape the scrutiny of the boys.”<sup>305</sup>

Sometimes the destruction was sinister in nature, revealing a sense of narcissistic pleasure derived from bringing an end to the Southern way of life. “So far today the boys is busy taking down the farm house and using the floors to keep themselves off[f] the ground,” wrote William Wallace. “Mr. Planter will find no house if he ever gets back. . . . The boys ripped open all the beds and let the feathers go with the wind. . . . All their fruit trees is destroyed and some hundred acres of corn and wheat. Everything is gone up as the boys call it.”<sup>306</sup> After serving in Minnesota for nearly two months during the fall of 1862, another soldier arrived in the South. “We are now in State of Mississippi,” he wrote. “Plenty of corn and cotton and niggers[.] we camped at an old secesh and he cursed the yankee[.] before we left we burnt every thing[;] I stole a horse saddle and bridle.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Adams to his brother, May 17, 1864.

<sup>305</sup> Wallace to his wife, June 4, 1864.

<sup>306</sup> Wallace to his wife, July 1, 1864.

<sup>307</sup> George Washington Sherman, diary entry dated November 27, 1862, “George Washington Sherman Diaries, 1855-1880,” Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

In the end it was determined by most Northerners that such actions were to benefit the Union and to smite the South. Coming into sight of “the famous city of Nashville,” George Pepon noted that many of the “secesh” and “aristocracy” of the city had left “& gone ‘souf’ as the darkies say, & their splendid mansions are left to the tender mercies of the U.S. soldiers. of course things are spoiled to quite an extent, but then they ought to be for our glorious old Union and not in the Southern army.”<sup>308</sup> For the more ideological or abolitionist-minded Northerners, the ruination of the South was a justifiable response to that most peculiar institution—slavery.

### **The Peculiar Institution**

Slavery was on the minds of many Northerners, due to its place in the sectional conflict that had predicated the war, yet it was not something most had seen first hand. Still, some held very strong opinions on the subject. “With all the beauty of this lovely place, the curse is here,” Rufus Kinsley recorded in his diary, which he entitled “The Slaveholders Rebellion” in large scrawl at the top of its first page. “The South is being burned with fire, and drowned in blood. Her villages are desolate, her lands, the richest in the world, laid waste, the wings of commerce idle, all her interests, material, social, political, tied to the hideous monster—Slavery . . . let them hang together. I am content. Slavery must die; and if the South insists on being buried in the same grave, I shall see in it nothing but the retributive hand of God.” With slavery as an evil to be quashed, Northerners became instruments of God and their actions necessary, not only for the preservation of the Union, but also sanctioned by a freedom-loving God. “I thank God I

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<sup>308</sup> Pepon to his sister, February 12, 1863.

live to see the day when the South is beginning to burn,” Kinsley proclaimed, “and that it is my privilege to help kindle the fires. Not because I love to look on scenes of desolation, burning villages, and starving women and children, but because I love liberty, and hate slavery.”<sup>309</sup>

George Pepon also held slavery responsible for the war, referring to it as “the Pandora box whence all our troubles come.” It was also the decisive factor in determining the worth of the South. “Though the soft balmy breezes ever blow, and the forests are ever green, I fail to see where in it excells the Free North. The green of the forest comes from interminable thickets of pine, and the breezes blow over a land cursed and blighted but that hideous Demon Slavery.”<sup>310</sup> The presence of slavery blighted the landscape in a way that seemed impossible to transcend to some Northerners.

One soldier found the scenery of Washington County, Maryland to be very beautiful, reminding him of the land at home in New York. “It resembles the Mohawk Valley in many particulars—its range of Mountains, pleasant vales and pure streams remind me of home.” But the beautiful scenery was for naught. “Were it not for the baneful curse of slavery which alike has polluted the Southern soil, I could make and enjoy a home here, but as it is, no freeman can feel like adopting in whole or in part any of the established rules which govern the peculiar institution.”<sup>311</sup> Observing the land at the mouth of the Tennessee River near Pittsburg Landing, William P. Moore lamented the region’s location in the South. “The country presents a wild and uncultivated

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<sup>309</sup> Diary entry dated January 21, 1863 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 119.

<sup>310</sup> Pepon to his sister, August 14, 1864.

<sup>311</sup> Letter dated September 25, 1862 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 30-31.

appearance. Every thing shows a want of energy and enterprise.” For Moore, the inferior condition of everything he encountered would not have happened at the hands of Northerners and their superior skill and moral bearing. “I could not help thinking how different it would be if that beautiful stream had been laid in one of our Northern states where the accursed blight of human bondage does not bind the intellect of man with a chain of iron, forged by Arestocratic hands as it does in states where slavery is worshiped as the ‘God of Day.’”<sup>312</sup> The dilapidated appearance of the South, with its uncultivated lands, its improperly-tended fields, and its undeveloped cities, all could be blamed on the presence of slavery and its lifestyle of sloth and neglect.

For Northerners coming face to face with slavery for the first time, it was rather shocking. Regardless of their beliefs regarding African Americans—most Northerners shared the view of Southerners that blacks were a lessor race that must remain separate from whites—when they saw slavery in the flesh, many Northerners were repelled by what they saw. In Mississippi, one soldier made an effort to observe slavery in practice, and found an institution of barbarism, a crime against Heaven. “I can tell you that as I watched the poor things working away there, my heart felt sad within me, and I thought that if this were slavery, I for one, would be willing to fight to blot out this relict of barbarism, and if need be, to lay down my life for this end. . . . No wonder I thought that our nation is involved in war, when they suffer such a heinous crime in the sight of Heaven . . . I trust when this war is over; this sin will be banished from our land.”<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>312</sup> Moore, undated diary entry, Spring 1862.

<sup>313</sup> Reeder to his parents, brother, and sisters, July 29, 1862.

The idea of slavery versus its reality was a sobering discovery. War Democrat Marcus Spiegel initially praised slavery for its benefits to the enslaved race, a belief that he initially confirmed. Questioning a “number of fat, sleek and hearty looking slaves,” he asked how “satisfied” they were and whether or not they would leave to go North with him. “To the first their answer was, pretty well; and to the latter, guess not massa.” The interaction reaffirmed his political beliefs that it was the Union to fight for, “to punish and to shoot traitors; but it is not necessary to fight for the darkies, nor are they worth fighting for.”<sup>314</sup>

After about nine months in the South, Spiegel’s views of the enslaved began to soften. Floating down the Mississippi River, he encountered blacks imploring for their freedom.

That seems hard to see and not to comply; yet if all the agitation had never been and those poor and unfortunate men been left in their once happy state of carelessness, there is no question but they would have been more benefit to humanity in a social philanthropic and human Auspice but as it is, it seems hard to deny a privilege to *be free*. Yet when on the other hand you see thousands of the Contrabands pulled a way in the same manner from their masters, in a miserable and starving and filthy condition, the in a spirit of philanthropy you will say, better be in slavery than such freedom as I can give you.<sup>315</sup>

His sentimental view of the enslaved was interrupted by the implementation of the Emancipation Proclamation which prompted him to begin searching for a way to be honorably discharged, as he would not fight for “Lincoln’s Negro proclamation one day longer than I can help.” Eventually, patriotism prevailed for Spiegel, and he recommitted

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<sup>314</sup> Letter dated March 7, 1862 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 62.

<sup>315</sup> Letter dated December 22, 1862 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 204.

himself to suppressing “this unholy and wicked rebellion!”<sup>316</sup> By the dawn of the third year of the war and his second year in the South, he had finally seen enough to understand the inhumanity of slavery.

Since I am here I have learned and seen more of what the horrors of Slavery was than I ever knew before and I am glad indeed that the signs of the times show, towards closing out the accursed institution. You know it takes me long to say anything that sounds antidemocratic and it goes hard, but whether I stay in the Army or come home, I am [in] favor of doing away with the institution of Slavery. I am willing for the Planters to hire them and in favor of making the negro work at all events, inasmuch as he is naturally lazy and indolent, but never hereafter will I either speak or vote in favor of Slavery; this is no hasty conclusion! but a deep conviction.<sup>317</sup>

His new conviction held, and he later confessed to his wife that once hired as free laborers, he supposed that “in twenty five years from now, the negro will be an educated, well to do laborer and the white man none the worse.”<sup>318</sup> For Spiegel, the only way to truly understand slavery was to see it first hand.

While Spiegel did not identify the sight that turned his heart against slavery, other Northerners readily identified the sights that stirred their souls. “Visited during the day several plantations; and saw enough of the horrors of slavery to make me an Abolitionist forever,” one soldier exclaimed. He described the instruments of the institution he saw there. “Stocks, gnout, thumb screw, ball and chain, ring and chain, but which they are bound to perpendicular posts; iron yokes of different patterns, hand cuffs, whips, and other instruments of torture, for the benefit of those who had been guilty of loving liberty

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<sup>316</sup> Letters dated January 25, 1863 and May 25, 1863 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 226, 285.

<sup>317</sup> Letter dated January 22, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 315, 316.

<sup>318</sup> Letter dated February 12, 1864 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 320.

more than life, but had failed in their efforts to obtain the coveted boon. Verily this picture presents positive proof that the slave is happy and contented with his lot.”<sup>319</sup>

While stationed in Washington, D.C., nurse Cornelia Hancock worked at a contraband hospital which received cases from all around the D.C. area, and was also the destination for many African Americans who were disfigured and injured by white soldiers and masters.

Almost all have scars of some description and many have very weak eyes. There were two very fine looking slaves arrived here from Louisiana, one of them had his master’s name branded on his forehead, and with him he brought all the instruments of torture that he ware at different times during 39 years of very hard slavery. . . . he wore an iron collar with 3 prongs standing up so he could not lay down his head; then a contrivance to render one leg entirely still and a chain clanking behind him with a bar weighing 50 lbs. This he wore and worked all the time hard. At night they hung a little bell upon the prongs above his head so that if he hid in any bushes it would tinkle and tell his whereabouts. The baton that was used to whip them till the blood streamed down their backs. . . . may God grant that it may cease all over this boasted free land.<sup>320</sup>

To Northerners, these instruments of torture called to mind a barbaric society incompatible with American values.

The horrors of slavery did more than reflect the depravity of the slaveholders themselves, but the moral misguidedness of the whole region. One soldier described a respectable “chivalrous gentleman” who sold his slave mistress, but kept his three daughters by her as concubines. Each one bore a child by their own father, two of which were sold. “Verily slavery is profitable,” the soldier concluded, but at a devastating cost. “What wonder that men are ready to die for it? What wonder that [Southern] women are

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<sup>319</sup> Diary entry dated June 17, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 98.

<sup>320</sup> Letter dated November 15, 1863 in Hancock, *South After Gettysburg*, 32.

ready to suffer in order that it may be perpetuated, while it does them such honor? . . . the moral sense of the South is such that it is looked upon [as] a matter of course, [a] business transaction. Well, it is a *course* business transaction.”<sup>321</sup> Northerners could scarcely understand how Southerners could wage war and face death and ruination for the preservation of such a morally, economically, and socially backwards institution. Gazing into the hungry, sorrowful eyes of the enslaved, another soldier pondered, “Is this the glorious institution for which the south will sacrifice and suffer and become bankrupts and beggars to sustain?”<sup>322</sup>

Regardless of their feelings toward African Americans, most Northerners who entered the South learned to despise slavery; it served as yet another reminder of the South’s difference from the rest of the nation, another antiquated institution of an unadvanced society.<sup>323</sup> Russian immigrant Nadine Turchin compared Southern slavery to the feudalism she recalled in Russia. “The climate and the countryside remind me of Little Russia or the Ukraine, the sun perhaps a little warmer. But instead of the beautiful Russian race tilling the soil over there, you have here the Negro slaves.” It was more than the labor system that Turchin found similar to Russian Feudalism. “Social conditions created by these two dominating classes are quite similar. Negligence, arbitrary ignorance, primitive instincts given free rein, general stagnation, social debility recalling

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<sup>321</sup> Diary entry dated August 25, 1862 in Kinsley, *Diary of a Christian Soldier*, 104.

<sup>322</sup> Diary entry dated July 6, 1863 in McIntyre, *Federals at the Frontier*, 183.

<sup>323</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 105.

the Orient—all is here, even racial mixture, having one father for an unlimited number of servile mothers.”<sup>324</sup>

If the South was frozen in a state of primitive barbarism, its only hope was Northern intervention, a process already begun by the presence of two million soldiers invading the region. Alcander Morse noticed an improvement in Memphis after the city was placed under army control. “This is a beautiful city & is kept in good order[.] I should judge by appearances that the Cmdg. Gen (Hurlbut) was doing his duty well.”<sup>325</sup> The destruction of many antiquated symbols of modernity through either battle or intentional actions by Northerners was one way of intervening to force the rebuilding of what they saw as an undeveloped region of the nation. But Northerners also plotted and anticipated what the future would hold for the South once the rebellion was crushed and the industry and productivity of Northerners and Uncle Sam could begin to make some key and necessary improvements.

### **The South as a Tourist Destination**

As early as January 1862, Northerners were speaking of a new South. William H. Johnson was a free African American serving with the 8th Connecticut after a 90-day term with the 2nd Connecticut as an “independent man” where he fought at the First Battle of Bull Run. “We will not give up the South,” he wrote in a letter published by the *Pine and Palm*. “It has cost us too much, and her vast territory can and must be converted

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<sup>324</sup> Diary entry dated May 31, 1863 in Turchin, “A Monotony Full of Sadness,” 34.

<sup>325</sup> Morse, journal entry dated June 8, 1863.

into free soil for free men, irrespective of color.”<sup>326</sup> Charlotte Forten rejoiced over this process in her part of the Sea Islands. Reading a copy of the *Liberator*, she relished the presence of the paper—“the pioneer paper in the cause of human rights”—on soil where “those rights have been most barbarously trampled upon.” She praised the work of William Lloyd Garrison and his compatriots, with whom she attributed the fact that “Northern people now occupy in safety the S[outh] C[arolina] shore, that freedom now blesses it, that it is, for the first time, a place worth living in.”<sup>327</sup>

The uncivilized nature of the Southern people, and their inability to use the land and develop their towns and cities effectively, was the chief complaint of Northerners and how they planned to affect changes in the South. “After the war, when evil passions are lulled to rest, this country will be a desirable one to live in,” Daniel Holt wrote during the third year of the war. “Northern men and northern money and energy will develop its resources, and an unprecedented reign of prosperity will follow.”<sup>328</sup> Holt went on to anticipate the benefits to the “down trodden serfs of Southern Chivalry”—the poor whites, small farmers, and the formerly enslaved—formerly beholden to the aristocracy. “*They* are to become men, while their lords and masters will have to come down and take a back seat. The ‘*mudsills*’ of a despised North will henceforth teach them real political freedom

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<sup>326</sup> Letter from William H. Johnson dated December 29, 1861 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 10, 14.

<sup>327</sup> Journal entry dated January 31, 1863 in Forten, *The Journals of Charlotte Forten Grimké*, 443.

<sup>328</sup> Diary entry dated February 7, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 171.

and instruct in sciences of political economy such as never entered their heads or hearts before.”<sup>329</sup>

Some Northerners thought this would be a more difficult task. The people and environment they encountered in many places gave them little hope for improvement. One African-American soldier wrote of the Floridians around Jacksonville, “The people here are less a people than any I have seen; they do not seem to understand anything but that they are the most God-forsaken looking animals on earth . . . To think that these fellows voted Florida out of the Union without the aid of the primitive inhabitants—alligators—is simply preposterous. . . . If we but get the right men to command us here we will teach these ‘ginger-colored gentlemen’ their duty to civilization and Christianity.”<sup>330</sup> Northerners could not trust the South to improve itself—it was comprised of Southerners, after all, and most Northerners found little to impress them, black or white. In order to expand civilization—the Northern view of itself as a nation—Northerners would need to exert power over the Southerners and their lack of industriousness, economic prudence, and moral integrity.<sup>331</sup>

The promise of improvements also changed the nature of the South as a hostile region. As Northerners explored the South and reveled in traveling farther than they ever had before, they discovered the South as a future tourist destination. The events of the war had given significance to ordinary locations, which would prompt later tourism

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<sup>329</sup> Diary entry dated February 7, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 171-172.

<sup>330</sup> Letter from Rufus [last name unknown] dated May 17, 1864 in Redkey, *A Grand Army of Black Men*, 54-55.

<sup>331</sup> Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 131.

efforts. Having experienced the incomparable wilderness, wandered magnificent plantations, and visited important locations from the nation's past, the imagined geography of the South transformed in a way to accommodate the region as a desired destination to travel to after it was successfully returned to the Union and redirected down the American path of progress.

Not long after they arrived in the South, Northerners began to view it as a significant travel destination. They collected souvenirs and sent home "relics" of this strange civilization and the war that brought them there. One soldier wrote home to his daughter to tell her that if she was a good girl, he would bring her back a "Sesesh Relic."<sup>332</sup> Another soldier sent his sister "a couple of Genuine Sesesh shin plasters," giving the rebel currency special significance.<sup>333</sup> Objects from the Confederacy and its army were valuable keepsakes. Copper buttons, utensils, currency, and even bits of shell and shot were sent home as evidence of a soldier's participation and presence in the South, evidence of their grand journey so far across the states. Charles Webster Knapp inquired of his father about the sale of "trophies and curiosities from the south the proceeds of which are to go to get up a home for sick and wounded soldiers." Knapp decided to keep such items for himself. "I have got a spoon that I took out of a Dead rebel haversack on the battlefield of Bentonville, and a cup and knife and fork from the house of Col. Mackelivain's house in South Carolina."<sup>334</sup> Another soldier crafted rings for his

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<sup>332</sup> Letter dated February 17, 1863 in Spiegel, *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War*, 45.

<sup>333</sup> Undated letter from June 1862 in Smith, *"We Have It Damn Hard Out Here,"* 43.

<sup>334</sup> Charles Webster Knapp to his father, March 31, 1865, "Letters, 1864-1865," Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.

female relations back home. “I maid them out the Rebels shels that tha throed over and that didn bust and I took the scoos out and maid them rings.”<sup>335</sup>

In addition to the collection of artifacts from the war, Northerners in the South collected their experiences as well. From early in the war, they began demonstrating an understanding of the importance of certain locations within the Southern landscape. When the opportunity presented itself, Northerners singled out these places as desirable destinations to sightsee and collect souvenirs. Over a year after the battle, William H. H. Clayton found himself marching very near the battlefield of Wilson’s Creek, Missouri. “I did not stop to go over it as I would have liked to. I went over one edge of it and saw the remains of clothing, shoes, some bones and a few graves.” A month later, he got his chance to visit the site of the battle. “Last Sunday I and three others got a pass to go to Wilson Creek battleground. . . . The trees and saplings showed the scars of cannon & musket balls. A good many small balls were found on the ground. I have one I got there.”<sup>336</sup> Even soldiers who had not participated in the engagement understood the significance of the location and what happened there, transforming the ordinary Southern location into a site for pilgrimage.

Nurse Harriet Eaton made this connection with similar destinations of war. As she rode through Virginia as part of an ambulance train, she made note of passing “Harwood

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<sup>335</sup> Sylvester McElheney to his wife, March 1, 1865, in *Valley of the Shadow*, <http://valley.lib.virginia.edu/papers/F0904>. For an examination of war souvenirs and their place in material culture, see Joan E. Cashin, “Trophies of War: Material Culture in the Civil War Era,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 1, no. 3 (2011): 339–367.

<sup>336</sup> Letters dated October 16, 1862 and November 29, 1862 in Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound*, 22, 32.

Church, that famous place where the rebels rushed last winter.”<sup>337</sup> A cavalry battle near the redbrick church months earlier gave prestige to the small country church. In March 1865, Adelia Lyon, encouraged by her husband’s desire that she “see all of the South that I can,” traveled through Chattanooga and the surrounding mountains. “Saw Lookout Mountain, where General Hooker fought and bled above the clouds,” she recorded in her diary.<sup>338</sup> Before the war had even concluded, Northerners identified the Southern landscape with its significance to the history of the war and the American nation.

Urban locations were likewise given similar significance. In April 1865, with the fall of Richmond imminent, nurse Cornelia Hancock anticipated entering the city. “Day after tomorrow I am invited to go to Richmond . . . I shall go and get a relick of Old Libby [Prison] and take my dinner at the Spotswood House [Hotel]. . . . [I] Shall probably be one of the first Union women in Richmond.” Hancock saw herself as part of the conquest of Richmond, and part of retaking the city involved being present at important locations in the city and making her mark. When she finally did enter the city, she boasted that she “saw for myself that Gen. Weitzel has his headquarters in Jeff’s mansion” and “saw Jeff Davis’ head quarters, but no Jeff Davis there.”<sup>339</sup> Dr. Esther Hill Hawks likewise recorded the excitement of a surrendered city. Upon entering Charleston in March 1865, she wrote in her diary that “all is eager excitement rushing after relics and souvaners.”<sup>340</sup> In identifying important destinations in the South, Northerners imparted

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<sup>337</sup> Diary entry dated May 1, 1863 in Eaton, *This Birth Place of Souls*, 145.

<sup>338</sup> Diary entry dated March 26, 1865 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 205.

<sup>339</sup> Letter dated April 11, 1865 in Hancock, *South After Gettysburg*, 168-169.

<sup>340</sup> Diary entry dated April 6, 1865 in Hawks, *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War*, 126.

power to the landscape as they conquered it on behalf of the Union. The urge to collect artifacts of the dying and defeated Confederacy was a manifestation of power over the region that would sit on the shelves and in the trinket boxes of Northerners for years after the war, as reminders of their participation and witness to the rebellious region being brought to its knees.

Traveling throughout the South also afforded Northerners the chance to connect the region to their understanding of the nation. “It is interesting to travel over this region, on very many accounts—not the least of which is identity with the stirring events of the rebellion,” army surgeon Daniel Holt wrote to his wife from Virginia. “But here General Washington in person surveyed the movements and planned operations against the English in the days of the Revolution.”<sup>341</sup> Revolutionary destinations were important locations for Northerners to visit as they fought a war to preserve what their Revolutionary forefathers had bled for. When Thomas W. Smith was encamped near Yorktown, Virginia in May 1862, he visited the location of the British surrender. “Enclosed I send you a piece of Granite,” he wrote to his sister. “I broke it off the monument Erected on the spot of ground where General Washington stood when he Received the Sword of Lord Cornwallace . . . The Monument is completely demolished.”<sup>342</sup> Silas Dexter Wesson visited the site a few months later and remarked

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<sup>341</sup> Letter dated November 20, 1862 in Holt, *A Surgeon's Civil War*, 49.

<sup>342</sup> Letter dated May 7, 1862 in Smith, “*We Have It Damn Hard Out Here*,” 29.

that “the stone was there last May but now it is gone, chipped off in pieces and carried off by relic hunters.”<sup>343</sup>

Relic hunters also razed other historical iconography they encountered in the South. One soldier happily recorded chipping “a piece of wood from the tree under which Pocahontas plead for the life of Capt. Smith: *a veritable relic*.”<sup>344</sup> These places of import to the nation emphasized to Northerners the shared history with the South, reaffirming their belief that it belonged with the Union and that their duty was to help the region resynchronize with the rest of the country. The mobile nature of service with the army permitted many Northerners to play tourist. William Wallace eagerly visited locations associated with the infamous John Brown. While in Sandy Hook, Maryland he boasted of having eaten off of the same table in the hotel Brown did before his advance on Harper’s Ferry. Later in Virginia, he visited the room of the prison where Brown was held. “There stands the old table where he eat off and the stove too. Most of the table the boys cut up and intends taking it home. I have a piece in my pocket book for safe keeping.”<sup>345</sup> The veneration of such sites for their historical significance laid further claim for Northerners over the South.

For New Yorker Sarah Wakeman, the nation’s capitol in Washington, D.C. was a long ways South. Living as a man and enlisted in a New York infantry regiment stationed in D.C., Wakeman remarked in letters home that “when I am down to the Depot and see so many men and women agoing North it makes me homesick.” A new and exciting

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<sup>343</sup> Wesson, diary entry dated August 25, 1862.

<sup>344</sup> Diary entry dated June 15, 1864 in Holt, *A Surgeon’s Civil War*, 204.

<sup>345</sup> Wallace to his wife, July 21, 1861 and March 9, 1862.

destination, however, Wakeman took to D.C. and its sights. “There are some pretty houses here. We are Right in sight of the united states Capitol. It is one hundred feet high from the ground to the top of it and there is men to work on it all of the time. This building is made of all marble stones. I have been inside of it. I have been in the Congress hall. It is a pretty place you better believe.”<sup>346</sup> Boasting to her family back home, Wakeman’s descriptions of the nation’s capitol are plain and relatively non-descript, yet nowhere else in her letters does she narrate her surroundings as she does in the passages detailing her time in Washington, D.C.

Other travelers found intriguing destinations as they moved through the exotic South. Iowa landlubber William H. H. Clayton was thrilled to visit the Pensacola lighthouse while out on picket in Florida. He described it carefully for his parents back home in Iowa. “It is quite a structure built of brick in a circular form, I think about 30 feet in diameter at the bottom and gradually tapering towards the top where it is about 10 ft. in diameter. Its height is about 180 feet, the ascent is made up the winding stairway on the inside, the steps are iron, all was used in its construction being brick and iron. The lamp is a splendid concern, made of cut glass.”<sup>347</sup> Dr. Esther Hill Hawks also found excitement in Florida, seizing an opportunity to explore the dungeons of an old Spanish structure, Fort Marion. “We spent a very pleasant hour in examining this ‘relic’ of a past age—got

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<sup>346</sup> Letters dated September 20, 1863 and August 5, 1863 in Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, *An Uncommon Soldier: The Civil War Letters of Sarah Rosetta Wakeman, alias Private Lyons Wakeman, 153rd Regiment, New York State Volunteers*, edited by Lauren Cook Burgess (Maryland: The Minerva Center, 1994), 48, 41.

<sup>347</sup> Letter dated September 14, 1864 in Clayton, *A Damned Iowa Greyhound*, 123.

a few blossoms from its sides and a *bone* from the blackest dungeon, probably it belonged to some poor victim of Spanish tyranny.”<sup>348</sup>

The war provided the means for Northerners who had seldom traveled beyond their home state to see the scope of the American nation they called home, to explore its exotic destinations and institutions, to catalog and collect the remnants of the dying society, and to bridge the gap between the regions by identifying their shared history, strengthening their cause for Union based on that history’s legacy. What resulted was a Southern landscape littered with bodies of patriots and traitors, but also locations of *new* historical significance, places to return to when victory was achieved, and the South set right.<sup>349</sup> Then the North would look back on the South, and all the things that made it inferior and in need of redirection and reform became the things they found endearing and increased their desire to visit.

At the end of May 1865, as Confederate forces continued to surrender, Adelia Lyon and her husband, Colonel William P. Lyon, visited the home of President Andrew Jackson in Tennessee. Reminiscent of late nineteenth-century travel literature, her description of the day reflected the sentimental portrait of old ways gone by that Northerners would adopt in the postwar years.

We took our lunch, expecting to picnic, but the old servants offered us the use of the dining hall, a large, beautiful room, which they said was seldom opened. There was a very nice mahogany extension table, made in the old fashion, and they brought us the old family china, and gave us all the buttermilk we could drink. (Buttermilk is a great luxury with the Southern people.) We saw the old

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<sup>348</sup> Diary entry dated January 26, 1865 in Hawks, *A Woman Doctor’s Civil War*, 107.

<sup>349</sup> For a discussion of the postwar tourism boom and romanticization of the Old South, see Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, 166–192.

family carriage, made entirely from the old ship Constitution; but the gray-headed negroes were the greatest novelty about the plantation.<sup>350</sup>

The Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery had yet to be ratified by all the states in the Union, and the war was but lately won, still the “gray-headed negroes” had already become a “novelty” of the South. Victory had secured the region, and confidence in the superiority of the Northern culture and society permitted Northerners to look back at the parts of the South that made it inferior with a sense of nostalgia and pride.

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<sup>350</sup> Diary entry dated May 28, 1865 in Lyon, *Reminiscences of the Civil War*, 217.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Imperial Continuity**

This discourse of imperialism, of enforcing power over people and landscapes for the sake of American progress, once learned, was not forgotten. As the newly reunited country continued its process of expansion, many of the Northerners, for whom the war was their first real experience with traveling, returned home with new understandings of the scope of their country and the many opportunities for success that lay in the undeveloped parts of the nation where white civilization had only begun to intrude. For some, this was not an unknown experience. Descendants of or emigrants themselves, some Northerners were already living on the fringes of western settlement when the war began. Now that they had safeguarded the country's future, they looked to their own.

In the years after the war, the process of settler colonialism that conquered and populated the eastern half of the country went to work on the western portion with startling speed, as the United States worked to extend its empire from coast to coast. The war had proven to be a massive undertaking of imperial power and set the tone for how the rest of the country would be settled. Legislation passed during the war reflected the imperial intentions of the nation—the Homestead Act to aid in western settlement, and the Pacific Railway Act to provide the means for settlers to get there. It is hard to imagine the fast settlement of the Great Plains and beyond without the consequences of a war that put a generation of Americans in motion, demonstrated the possibilities of imperial

success through the use of military might, and helped a nation define itself by confronting its internal Other.<sup>351</sup>

For nineteenth-century Americans, the Civil War came as a result of the South's unusual place within the American nation. A prewar imagined space of the South, inspired by decades of sectional disorder and political conflict, as well depictions of the region in newspapers, novels, travel writing, and other cultural mass media, created an ideology of regional superiority. As Northerners moved southward for the war effort, they entered into a process of exerting imperial power over the Southern people and landscape that would eventually influence the attempts at reconstruction in the years after Northern victory.

Northerners whose sympathies lay with the preservation of the Union entered the South with expectations of reining it in, and as they traveled through the vast region, they discovered an environment stranger and more different than any place they had ever been. They encountered their exotic counterpart, their internal Other, comprised of a culture that varied significantly from their own. Northerners perceived these differences in landscape, language, dress, architecture, education, gender norms, and urban development as evidence of inferiority. As Edward Said argued for the Orient and the Occident, Northerners understood the North and South as oppositional terms for oppositional regions. The South was an inversion of the North, and its peculiar habits and institutions, its indolence, and its undeveloped resources would need to be Northernized

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<sup>351</sup> Thomas, *The Iron Way*, 199–205.

in order for the progression of the United States to continue. Victory in the war secured the Union and replaced the Southern vision for America's future with that of the North.

The process of invading the South through participation in the war effort allowed Northerners to exert power over the features of the South that made it inferior to the North, mocking them for their strangeness and seeking to destroy what made them incompatible with the rest of the Union. An exotic locale, wild and untamed in some places while antiquatedly civilized in others, the South was both curious vacation destination and landscape of death. Face to face with the target of their regional animosity, through military presence on Southern soil, Northerners began the process of imperializing power over the South that would lead to acts of reconstruction after the war.<sup>352</sup> Through this process, Northerners encountered a region that to their minds would always be the "Sunny South," former home of slavery, the graveyard for patriots and rebels, and the residence of a peculiar breed of Americans.

This glimpse into the personal sphere of Northern Americans through the use of correspondence and personal writings reveals more than simply the character of the era—

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<sup>352</sup> For an account of a Northerner's experience during Reconstruction, see Albion Winegar Tourgee, *A Fool's Errand* (New York: Fords, Howard & Hulbert, 1879). Although a work of fiction, the novel was based on Tourgee's experiences as a Union soldier and his relocation to the South after the war. One theme of the novel is the conflict between Northerners' expectations for the postwar South and the reality of the postwar process of Reconstruction. "We tried to superimpose the civilization, the idea of the North, upon the South at a moment's warning," the novel's main character proclaims. "We tried to build up communities there which should be identical in thought, sentiment, growth, and development, with those of the North. It was a fool's errand," he concludes. Tourgee, 341.

the customs and peculiarities of the authors and the Southerners they encountered.

Indeed, these sources reveal the degree to which Northerners felt a part of the process of American progress. By turning to source material beyond the well-trodden political and military avenues, there is still more to be learned about the war and its participants. Most of these sources are cloistered away in archives and private collections. A few have migrated into the digital realm of the Internet, where documents can be shared by their owners without being given away and can be used by researchers without requiring travel.<sup>353</sup>

As a whole, the field of history seems reluctant to devote funds and resources to the digitization of the historical record, despite the fact that exciting new scholarship has arisen through the use of digital archives and technologies.<sup>354</sup> In order to facilitate a rise in such scholarship, the field needs to be more cognizant of the merits of technology towards the creation and dissemination of historical research. Source material like letters and diaries should be made more accessible to scholars and the general public in digitized form. To make this a reality, additional funding must be made available for digital

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<sup>353</sup> See, for example, the crowdsourcing transcription enterprise, *Civil War Diaries & Letters Transcription Project*, University of Iowa Libraries, 2012, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cwd/transcripts.html>. See also the digital collection, *Wisconsin in the Civil War*, Wisconsin Historical Society, 2011, <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/civilwar/>.

<sup>354</sup> See, for example, William G. Thomas, *Railroads and the Making of Modern America*, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2011, <http://railroads.unl.edu/>; Scott Nesbit and Edward Ayers, *Visualizing Emancipation*, Digital Scholars Lab, 2012 <http://dsl.richmond.edu/emancipation/>; Robert K. Nelson, *Mining the Dispatch*, Digital Scholars Lab, n.d., <http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/>; Anne Sarah Rubin and Kelley Bell, *Sherman's March and America: Mapping Memory*, 2010, <http://www.shermansmarch.org/>.

scholarly pursuits. As technology is developed that lends itself to the improvement of the craft of historical research, the history field cannot afford to waste the opportunity for innovative and widely disseminated scholarship. Such inaction risks failing forgotten histories, ultimately losing stories that have yet to be told.

## APPENDIX Prosopography

This alphabetical list contains brief biographical sketches of some of the individuals whose travel accounts were referenced in this study.

*Adams, Kelsey M.* From Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, Adams served as a private in the 1st Wisconsin, a lieutenant in the 21st Wisconsin, and a major in the 47th Wisconsin. He participated in the Battle of Chickamauga and Sherman's March.

*Christy, William W.* A laborer from Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, Christy enlisted in Company I, 54th Massachusetts, with his three brothers and his brother-in-law on April 22, 1863. The company descriptive book listed him as 21 years old, 5 feet 7 inches tall, of light complexion, with brown eyes, and black hair. He was killed in Florida at the Battle of Olustee on February 20, 1864. His brother-in-law, David Demus, recorded an account of his death in a letter to his wife, Mary Jane. According to Demus, Christy was shot in the arm. His brothers urged him to fall back to the rear but he refused to leave the line of battle. Not long after, he was shot in the breast and killed. He served in South Carolina and Florida.

*Clayton, William Henry Harrison.* Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Christy's family moved to Cincinnati, Ohio when he was two, and later into Iowa. At the age of 22, Clayton enlisted as a private in Company H, 19th Iowa. At one point during the war, he was captured and held as a prisoner of war for over nine months. His duties took him to Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. He mustered out as a sergeant, and moved back to Pittsburgh after the war, eventually relocating to California in 1879 after the death of his wife. He died on December 18, 1917 at the age of 77.

*Cleveland, Alva V.* In 1861, the 56 year old resident of Milwaukee enlisted in the 1st Wisconsin as a nurse or orderly. His twelve-year-old son, George, enlisted as a drummer boy and Cleveland wanted to be with his son. The war took the father and son from Wisconsin to Kentucky, Tennessee, and Georgia.

*Eaton, Harriet Hope Agnes.* Born in Newton, Massachusetts in 1818, by the second year of the war, Eaton was a 44-year-old widow living in Portland, Maine. When her son enlisted in a Maine regiment, she volunteered as a nurse for Maine soldiers so as to be near him. A "roving" nurse with the Army of the Potomac, she traveled through Virginia and Maryland, caring for soldiers after battles such as Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. After the war, she spent the remainder of her

life doing charity work, supported by the wages of her two working daughters with whom she lived. She died in 1884.

*Forten, Charlotte.* Born August 17, 1837 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to a wealthy free black family, Forten was the fourth generation of the family to be born free. During the second year of the war, she traveled to South Carolina to teach contraband slaves in Union camps where she remained for about 19 months. After the war, she worked as Secretary of the Teachers Committee of the New England Branch of the Freedman's Union Commission in Boston, as a teacher in both South Carolina and Washington, D.C., and as a clerk in the Treasury Department. In 1878, she married a Presbyterian minister who had been a slave, and did missionary work with her husband. She died July 22, 1914 in her home in Washington, D.C.

*Haines, Zenas T.* At the outbreak of the war, Haines was he was living in Maine, but by 1862, the 31-year old was in Boston writing for the *Boston Herald*. During his nine months of service in Company D, 44th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia, Company D, he wrote home letters to the *Herald* detailing his experiences in eastern North Carolina.

*Hancock, Cornelia Otis.* A Quaker born February 8, 1840 in New Jersey, at the age of twenty-three, Hancock volunteered as a nurse for two years in 1863. Her hospital work took her to Washington, D.C. and throughout Virginia. After the war, she helped start a school for black children in Charleston where she worked for ten years followed by work with various aid societies in Philadelphia. She never married, but committed herself to reform and charity work for the rest of her life.

*Hawks, Esther Hill.* Born in Hooksett, New Hampshire on August 4, 1833, Hawks was an abolitionist who studied medicine at the New England Female Medical College in Boston from 1855-1857. During the war, she traveled to the Sea Islands to serve the blacks there, and later applied for an appointment as a teacher of freedmen in the Sea Islands with the National Freedman's Relief Association. After the war, she continued to practice medicine and perform charity work in Massachusetts. She died May 6, 1906.

*Holt, Daniel M.* Even before the war, Holt was accustomed to travel. Born in Herkimer, New York, he moved to Madison, Wisconsin in 1842. By 1853, he was in Cincinnati for medical school, after which he moved to Newport, New York. He enlisted as assistant surgeon with the 121st New York on August 27, 1862, at the age of 43. He participated in battles at Fredericksburg, the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg. He died October 15, 1868 of tuberculosis he contracted while in the army. It was this illness which had forced him to resign in October 1864.

*Kinsley, Rufus.* An abolitionist, Kinsley was born in Fletcher, Vermont on October 9, 1831. He moved to Boston in the early 1850s, and worked at a newspaper and as superintendent of the Sabbath school at an African Methodist Episcopal Church. He eventually moved back to Vermont, and when the war came, enlisted on November 29, 1861 in Company F, 8th Vermont. Rufus was one the five siblings that would serve in the war; all survived. In October 1863, he accepted a commission as second lieutenant in the Second Regiment Infantry, Louisiana Corps d’Afrique—which later became the 74th Regiment, United States Colored Infantry. After the war, he returned to Vermont, and died June 11, 1911.

*Kircher, Henry Adolph.* Kircher was born in Beardstown, Illinois on November 10, 1841 to German immigrants. At the age of nineteen, he joined the 9th Illinois for a three month term of service in 1861. He did not enlist for a full three years with the regiment, perhaps due to animosity directed toward soldiers of German heritage. He and several others from his hometown crossed the border into Missouri to enlist in the 12th Missouri, a regiment composed largely of immigrants. He was wounded in battle at Ringgold, Georgia on November 27, 1863—a shattered bone in his right arm and a split tibia in his left leg. Both limbs were amputated. After the war, he went into local politics and was active in business ventures, married, and had three sons. Despite surviving his horrific war injuries, he died on May 1, 1908 after a cold developed into pneumonia.

*Kittelson, Ole.* Born in 1839 in Norway, Kittelson served in Company K, 32nd Wisconsin. He kept a journal in his native Norwegian, and documented his travels through Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and the march from Savannah to Washington, D.C. He died April 29, 1899 in South Dakota.

*Knapp, Charles Webster.* From Manitowoc, Wisconsin, Knapp was a member of Company K, 21st Wisconsin, which took him to Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina.

*Lee, George Read.* Born Feb 25, 1852 in Verplanck, New York, Lee and his family moved to Oskaloosa, IA in 1855, where he eventually worked for the *Oskaloosa Herald*. A local regiment was never mustered, so he and a friend traveled to Illinois and enlisted in Battery E, First Illinois Artillery for three years. Lee fought in the Battle of Shiloh, and traveled through Tennessee and Kentucky. After the war he went back to work in the newspaper business eventually moving to Colorado where he owned and published his own paper. He died March 17, 1906.

*Lyon, Adelia C.* Lyon accompanied her husband, William P. Lyon, who captain of Company K, 8th Wisconsin and later Colonel of the 13th Wisconsin. She traveled with him on campaigns in Tennessee, Alabama, and Missouri.

*McIntyre, Benjamin F.* McIntyre mustered into Company A, 19th Iowa as a sergeant and left as a first lieutenant. He fought in the Battle of Prairie Grove and the siege of Vicksburg, and traveled through Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas.

*Moore, William P.* Born September 8, 1827, at the start of the war, the 34-year-old was living in Black River Falls, Wisconsin. He served as captain of Company G, 10th Wisconsin, which took him to Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. He was killed on July 4, 1862 in a skirmish in Larkinsville, Alabama.

*Morse, Alcander Othello.* Born July 31, 1840 in Cuyler County, Morse and his family eventually settled near Bonus, Illinois. Shortly after the Battle of Bull Run, Morse, his stepbrother, and friends from the area enlisted in Company I, 37<sup>th</sup> Illinois. As a corporal, the twenty-two-year-old served with the regiment for three years, traveling from Illinois to Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. Some sort of military complications forbid him from reenlisting with the regiment, so he mustered out in October 1864 as a sergeant. He soon enlisted as a corporal in Company B, 1 U.S. Veterans Volunteer Infantry where he served out the remainder of the war. He returned to Illinois, farmed, and started a family. In 1883, Morse filed a claim for a homestead in South Dakota where he lived for several years before relocating to Iowa. He died whilst visiting his daughters in South Dakota on September 20, 1894 from health problems stemming from his war service. He was 54.

*Pepoon, George.* Twenty-nine years old at the start of the war, Pepoon served as second lieutenant, first lieutenant, and brevetted captain of the 96th Illinois in Alabama and Tennessee.

*Perkins, Marshall.* Born May 14, 1823 in Croydon, New Hampshire, Perkins studied medicine at Cambridge Medical College. He enlisted as an assistant surgeon in the 14th New Hampshire on September 23, 1862 where he traveled through the Gulf, Georgia, and Louisiana. Mustering out on July 8, 1865, he lived the rest of his life in Marlow, New Hampshire where he died June 17, 1902.

*Rogers, Jacob W.* Captain of Company F, 38th Iowa, Rogers was born in Moultonboro, New Hampshire. He eventually emigrated to Wisconsin and then Iowa where he worked in real estate and town building, which he continued after the war. His service took him through Missouri, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Texas.

*Spiegel, Marcus M.* The son of a rabbi, Spiegel was born in Abenheim, Germany on December 8, 1829. He immigrated to America in 1849 and lived in New York, and Chicago, where he secured work as a peddler. He was assigned territory in Ohio, and it was there that he met his wife and eventually settled. By the time of his enlistment, he had three small children. He served as a second lieutenant in the

67th Ohio and the colonel of the 120th Ohio. He was mortally wounded when his steamboat was attacked by a Confederate battery. He died on May 4, 1864 in a house on the banks of the Red River in Louisiana. He was 34.

*Squier, George W.* Born September 13, 1831 in New York, but raised in Indiana, when the war began, Squier was married with three young children. He served in the 44th Indiana as a corporal and first lieutenant in the battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Stones River, and Chickamauga. After the war, he and his family emigrated in Missouri, moved back to Indiana, and then finally settled in Michigan. He suffered from lung trouble and liver disease resulting from typhoid fever which he contracted in the service. On April 2, 1907, he died of pneumonia, complicated by heart disease.

*Tubbs, Peter Stillman.* Born in 1841, the resident of Neosho, Wisconsin enlisted as a private in Company I, 29th Wisconsin. During the war, he served in Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, and died in 1919 at the age of 78.

*Turchin, Nadine.* Born in 1826, Turchin immigrated to the United States from Russia in 1856 with her husband. John Basil Turchin, a veteran of the Crimean War, was colonel of the 19th Illinois. Nadine accompanied him on his campaigns through Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama. She died in 1901 in Radom, Illinois.

*Wakeman, Sarah Rosetta "Lyons."* Born On January 16, 1843 into a farm family in Afton, New York, by August 1862, Wakeman was living as a man under the alias Lyons Wakeman. While working as a coal handler on a canal boat, she came across recruiters for the 153rd New York, in which she enlisted. She served in Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Louisiana. During the Red River Campaign in Louisiana, Wakeman developed chronic diarrhea from which she never recovered. She died June 19, 1864 in a New Orleans Hospital. She was buried in Chalmette National Cemetery in Louisiana under the name Lyons Wakeman. Despite her month-long stay in the hospital, her sex was never discovered.

*Wallace, William.* Born in Culdaff, County Donegal, Ireland, Wallace immigrated to the United States in 1851. He lived in Philadelphia until 1859 or 1860 before moving to Wisconsin. When the war came, he enlisted as a private in Company E, 3rd Wisconsin. He traveled to Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia, and participated in the battles of Kernstown, Port Royal, Culpepper, Marietta, the Atlanta Campaign, and Sherman's March to the Sea. After the war he settled in Kansas, where he died April 10, 1920 at the age of 89.

*Ward, Libbie.* A 26-year-old resident of Kenosha County, Wisconsin, Ward worked for the U.S. Christian Commission as head of kitchens in army hospitals in Louisville and Nashville beginning in late 1864.

*Wesson, Silas Dexter.* Enlisted in Company K, 8th Illinois Cavalry, Wesson was a sergeant who fought in the Seven Days' Battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. He missed the Battle of Gettysburg due to injuries he had received in earlier fighting. His regiment was reviewed by President Lincoln several times, which Wesson recorded in his diary.

*Whetten, Harriet Douglas.* A native of Staten Island, New York, Whetten worked as a nurse on hospital steamships with the Sanitary Commission. Her service took her mostly through Virginia.

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