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## Remembering the Civil War

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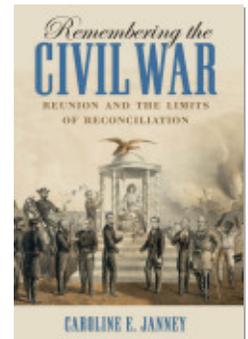
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## THE WAR

*April 1861–March 1865*

In the summer of 1863, Henry W. R. Jackson asked his fellow Confederates to consider the definition of “Yankee.” In his estimation, it was a term “comprehensively expressive of all that is impure, inhuman, uncharitable, unchristian, and uncivilized (barbarian and heathen is scarcely acceptable in the case)” of these “demons of hell in the guise of men.” The lone problem, he contended, was that the English language did not contain “words of sufficient force to express the baseness of the character and nature of the Yankees and the perverting influence of their self established creed, which has given birth to all the demoralizing, degrading, and hellish isms including (the last though not the least) equalityism or negrophilism.” The *Richmond Whig* offered its own definition. According to the records of a British traveler in 1791, the *Whig* said the term had derived “from a Cherokee word, *enakke*, which signifies coward and slave.” Accordingly, the “epithet of Yankee was bestowed upon the inhabitants of New England by the Virginians, for not assisting them in a war with the Cherokees, and they have always been held in derision by it.”<sup>1</sup> Regardless of its true etymology, for Confederates, “Yankee” was a foul word that came to symbolize money-grubbing, self-righteous, cold-hearted abolitionists bent on destroying all that was good and true in America. Confederate rhetoric insisted that Yankees were evil incarnate.<sup>2</sup>

Unionists similarly loathed their foes. In the summer of 1861, the *Illinois Daily State Journal* published a blistering account of rebel atrocities. Noting that Americans had witnessed shocking acts of barbarity by

Indians in previous wars, the paper was nevertheless shocked by the behavior of Confederates after the battle of Bull Run. “A more blood-thirsty set of pirates never took up arms in a wicked cause,” observed the editorial. “When this war broke out we knew that our foes were engaged in an unholy work, and we expected some departure on their part from the established rules of war; but we did not expect to meet armies of cowardly mutilators of the dead, murderers of the wounded and slayers of women.” Recounting the monstrous acts committed by the rebels, the paper declared that “a demonic spirit guides their actions.” Atrocities by such savages could not be ignored. “We must retaliate,” urged the paper, “by making this a war of extermination of a brood of fiends who bring such black disgrace upon their race and country.” “They deserve no mercy.”<sup>3</sup> For those who supported the Union, Confederates were not only rebels, they were also barbaric, treasonous, and decidedly un-American.<sup>4</sup>

For the soldiers who marched off to battle and the civilians who remained on the home front, the war was raw, it was visceral, and the stakes grew higher as the fighting continued. It was far from the romanticized accounts that would fill picture books, paintings, novels, and even television mini-series in later decades and centuries. Those who experienced the war not only recognized the brutality and devastation inflicted by the bloodletting, but they also held firm convictions about why they were willing to sacrifice so much. Confederates agreed that southern independence was the only way to ensure the survival of their slave-based social system.<sup>5</sup> Their desire for an independent country coupled with a deep and growing hatred for northerners fostered an intense attachment to the Confederate nation that compelled many to continue the struggle even when the odds seemed against them. Northerners were equally clear and tenacious about their war goals: they were fighting to save the Union.

As the war continued to rage for four bloody years, soldiers and civilians, white and black, men and women, Unionists and Confederates experienced and perceived the conflict in a myriad of ways. Many Unionists began to believe that only hard war would quell the rebellion, while many Confederates increasingly recognized that the stakes of their quest for independence were becoming higher with each passing day. Along the border regions, some desperately hoped only to survive the unpredictable and deadly guerrilla warfare. Many on both sides came to view their enemy as barbaric, savage, and un-American. In the postwar years, veterans would wistfully recall how enemy troops had fraternized along the lines and would contend that both rebels and Yankees were true Americans. But the voices of the war told a different story, one of bitter hatred and ani-

mosity toward the enemy that would not quickly be forgotten, shaping the memories that would follow and long complicating and limiting the process of reconciliation.

## CAUSES

In the spring and early summer of 1861, young men from Minnesota to Maine bade their families goodbye and rushed to the local mustering station to enlist for their nation. Had they been asked why they clamored to take up arms they might have listed any number of reasons: for the adventure that they could not find behind the plowshare, to win the affection of their sweethearts, out of duty and obligation to the state or region from which they hailed, because of their religious convictions, to assure themselves and their communities of their courage and manhood, or simply because their brothers, cousins, and friends had enlisted. Despite this complex mixture of duty, honor, manhood, and comradeship, most would have agreed that they fought primarily for their country, for the Union.<sup>6</sup> As one young farmer from Michigan informed his sister, he enlisted in the summer of 1861 because “the government must be sustained.” “If the union is split up the government is distroid . . . we will be a Rewind [ruined] nation,” he insisted.<sup>7</sup>

For northern soldiers, fighting for the Union meant fighting to preserve the democratic principles established by the founding fathers that set the United States apart from other nations. Since the Constitutional Convention, Americans had recognized the fragility of the Union. Time after time, both northerners and southerners had cried disunion and threatened to destroy what their forefathers had labored so arduously to create. The crises of Missouri, Kansas-Nebraska, Dred Scott, and John Brown had all made Americans wonder if their precious democracy would survive. Moreover, the European revolutions of 1848 had reminded them that democracies were not guaranteed.<sup>8</sup> If northern soldiers failed they would be unworthy of the heritage bequeathed to them. “Our fathers made this country,” wrote one young Ohio lawyer to his wife; “we their children are to save it.”<sup>9</sup> The Union was their supreme motivation, allowing them to endure battlefield setbacks, the deaths of comrades, and even their own mortality. Fighting for the Union meant fighting for the principles of liberty, freedom, justice, economic opportunity, and patriotism that Americans held dear.<sup>10</sup> In short, it meant fighting for the country.<sup>11</sup>

Although abolitionists and a small but vocal minority of white northerners had been pushing for emancipation for several decades, most north-

erners did not initially consider attacking slavery within the South—and most white Union soldiers did not enlist in the name of emancipation.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the antebellum years, the great majority of northerners objected to slavery not on moral grounds but on its spread into the western territories. A loose coalition of antislavery Democrats and Republicans who believed in the “free labor” ideology maintained that the opportunity of men to achieve the status of landholder, and therefore the economic independence essential to freedom, was jeopardized by slavery. In their estimation, slavery created a world of degraded slaves, poor whites with little hope of economic betterment, and lazy aristocrats. If slavery was to spread into the West, many northerners feared their opportunities for social and economic advancement would be severely reduced. The territories should thus be reserved for free men.<sup>13</sup> Most white northerners had no qualms with slavery so long as it did not spread west. Even many political abolitionists directed their attacks more specifically against the slave power rather than the institution of slavery. While men like Senator (and later Governor) Salmon P. Chase of Ohio viewed slavery as morally wrong, many were most acutely concerned about what they perceived as the rising national influence of the slaveholding minority on national policies and northern rights. It was the power of the “slave oligarchy” or the “slavocracy” that they objected to the most.<sup>14</sup>

If they had not gone to war to free the slaves, many northerners held that freeing the great mass of white southerners from the stranglehold of the slave oligarchy was another matter. Initially, few believed the Confederacy enjoyed extensive support. Most white southerners were Unionists, or at worst involuntary rebels, they argued, deceived into secession by a handful of wealthy, slaveholding men who had for years conspired to control the federal government, nationalize slavery, and destroy democracy. “It may well be doubted whether there is, to-day, a majority of legally qualified voters of any State, except perhaps South Carolina, in favor of disunion,” President Abraham Lincoln observed as late as July 1861. “There is much reason to believe,” he continued, “that the Union men are the majority in many, if not in every other one, of the so-called seceded states.”<sup>15</sup> Once freed from this slave-power conspiracy, these wayward countrymen would resume their loyalty to the Constitution.<sup>16</sup> This deep-seated belief in widespread Unionist sympathy not only reaffirmed the validity of the North’s goal of reunion, but it also tempered any push for emancipation even among many like Lincoln who opposed slavery.<sup>17</sup>

When southern Unionists failed to materialize and the Union war effort faltered along the banks of the James River in the summer of 1862, how-

ever, many northern civilians and soldiers alike came to realize that not only had slaveholders precipitated the conflict, but slavery also continued to bolster the Confederate cause. The labor of 3.5 million enslaved men and women allowed the South to enlist a significant percentage of its military age white men in Confederate armies.<sup>18</sup> More important, slaves directly assisted the war effort when they constructed fortifications, nursed wounded soldiers, worked as pioneers, or labored in southern factories.<sup>19</sup> The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1863 and its provision for arming black men became a tool by which the Union might deny Confederates the use of slave labor and simultaneously place more men in the U.S. armies.<sup>20</sup>

As the war intensified, many white northerners increasingly acknowledged that abolition was the only means of preserving their beloved Union.<sup>21</sup> Col. Hugh B. Ewing no doubt spoke for many Union soldiers when he informed his wife in 1862, “If slavery is not broken, the war will last long supported & fed by it—and the loss of life on both sides will be frightful.”<sup>22</sup> An Indiana colonel acknowledged that few of his men were abolitionists, but they desperately desired “to destroy everything that in *ought* gives the rebels strength” including slavery, “so this army will sustain the emancipation proclamation and enforce it with the bayonet.”<sup>23</sup> Although emancipation was disdained by Peace Democrats or Copperheads (so called by their enemies for their politically poisonous, even traitorous qualities) and fueled serious antiwar opposition, by 1863 Union and emancipation had become intertwined in the northern war effort.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, for most white northerners, emancipation was not a purpose of the war so much as a necessary tool for crushing the rebellion, punishing the white South, and restoring the Union.<sup>25</sup>

Pro-slavery Unionists who donned the blue in border regions such as Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, eastern Tennessee, and western North Carolina proved to be important exceptions to this pro-emancipation pattern—exceptions that would long shape the contours of Civil War memory in those regions. Kentucky, for example, had overwhelmingly voted for the Constitutional Union candidate John Bell in 1860 and sent an estimated 72,275 white volunteers to fight for the United States, many of whom believed that their interests in slavery were better protected within the Union than outside of it.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the war, slaveholders from the Bluegrass State steadfastly maintained their belief in the constitutionality of slavery, on several occasions turning down Lincoln’s offer for compensated emancipation. Even after the Confederate surrender, many Kentuckians refused to acquiesce. As late as November 1865 the conservative-

dominated legislature rejected the Thirteenth Amendment, which would abolish slavery throughout the United States. All this serves as a reminder that for vast numbers of loyal citizens in Kentucky and other border regions, Unionism never embraced emancipation.<sup>27</sup>

For those white Union soldiers who did believe emancipation was central to the Union war effort, it is imperative to acknowledge that they did not include nor did they demand that equal rights for African Americans must follow freedom. Instead, most white U.S. soldiers remained as racist as their southern counterparts. Fighting to end slavery did not indicate a belief in racial equality, and therefore it should come as no surprise that veterans would carry their racist convictions with them into the postwar years.<sup>28</sup>

The inclusion of black men within the ranks of the Union army likewise failed to change assumptions about the racial hierarchy.<sup>29</sup> After the battle of Olustee in February 1864, one white Union soldier commended the performance of a United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiment. “Their colonel was then shot dead from his horse, and the arms of the regiment were not loaded; but they preserved their line admirably and fought splendidly,” he remarked. Four months later he praised the fearless attack of another colored division at the battle of the Crater but noted their inability to maintain themselves after the Confederate counterattack. The USCT became “panic stricken, and blindly hurl themselves back on our bayonets,” he recounted, and “a wild scene of confusion ensues.”<sup>30</sup> Perhaps Bartholomew B. S. De Forest of the 81st New York best expressed the sentiments of many white Union soldiers: “They will make good soldiers,” he noted, and they should therefore be “recognized as equal with the white soldier, when they are engaged in one common cause.” But, he continued, “When he lays off the blue jacket, he is a negro still, and should be treated as God designed he should be, as an inferior, with kindness and sympathy, but not as an equal, in a social point of view.”<sup>31</sup> Loyal Americans might acknowledge African American men as first-rate soldiers who would help secure victory for the Union cause, but such praise for USCT soldiers did not indicate a postwar commitment to civil rights for USCT veterans or other freedpeople.

Confederate soldiers marched off to war in the spring and early summer of 1861 for many of the same reasons as their northern brethren. They, too, sought adventure, felt impelled to join companies along with their family and friends, and found motivation in the Scripture. Some bore arms to protect their hearth and homes from Yankee invaders, and others enlisted to protect their cherished liberty and self-determination. Like their north-

ern neighbors, southerners believed that they were the rightful heirs of the American Revolutionary spirit. Confederates repeatedly insisted that just as their forefathers had repudiated the despotic British, southern patriots had seceded from the oppressive Yankees in order to defend their liberty. Moreover, the fact that southerners were defending their homes reminded them of their ancestors' struggles to do the same against the invading Red Coats. "If we should suffer ourselves to be subjugated by the tyrannical government of the North," wrote one Virginia soldier to his wife, "our property would all be confiscated . . . & our people reduced to the most abject bondage & utter degradation." "I think every Southern heart," he demanded, "should now respond to the language of the great Patrick Henry in the days of '76 & say give me Liberty or give me death."<sup>32</sup> Just like northerners, southerners conceived of themselves as the true Americans perpetuating the founding fathers' legacy.<sup>33</sup>

Still others recognized that the southern states had seceded to protect slavery and thus believed the war was merely an extension of that endeavor.<sup>34</sup> Even nonslaveholders understood that slavery provided both social and economic benefits to the white South. Foremost among the reasons for nonslaveholders to support the Confederacy were the advantages of white supremacy. The privileges of being white provided even the poorest men more respect and prestige than any free black man could ever hope to attain. And despite northern arguments of an all-powerful slave oligarchy that controlled the South, living in a slave society afforded many nonslaveholders the ability to rent slaves from their wealthier neighbors during harvest as well as access to railroads that arrived because of planters' market needs. All of that, however, appeared to be in danger with the election of Abraham Lincoln and the Republicans.<sup>35</sup>

Just as Union soldiers were motivated by an ardent patriotism and allegiance to their country, Confederates developed a deep and intense attachment to their new nation. During the first two years of war, a sense of national identity emerged that helped to bind soldiers and the home front to the cause of Confederate independence despite the bloodshed of the battlefield, the adversity of camp life, or even war weariness. This loyalty to an independent Confederate nation came from a variety of sources, including military service, a desire for revenge, powerful symbols such as flags, and a deep-seated belief that white southerners shared little in the way of cultural values with those from the North. By the war's midpoint, however, Robert E. Lee and his soldiers stood at the center of Confederate nationalism. From June 1862 when he took command of his newly christened Army of Northern Virginia until the end of the war, Lee and

his army with their string of victories fostered solidarity among soldiers and the home front as well as confidence in the Confederate cause of independence.<sup>36</sup> In September 1864, Ezekiel D. Graham of the 6th Georgia reflected the attitude of many when he proclaimed “the Army of Northern Virginia alone, as the last best hope of the South.” Lee’s army, he believed, “will sooner or later by its own unaided power win the independence of the Confederacy.”<sup>37</sup> Although there were white southerners who became disgruntled with the Confederacy, an unshakable belief in Lee and his army allowed Confederates from all classes and regions to believe they might secure an independent southern nation.<sup>38</sup>

Regardless of whether they donned the blue or the gray, Civil War soldiers understood that they were fighting to preserve their freedom and liberty as true Americans. Even as they considered their own cause righteous in the eyes of God and an extension of the Spirit of 1776, most Confederate and Union soldiers considered the other side not only the enemy but “un-American.”<sup>39</sup>

#### A BARBARIC AND SAVAGE ENEMY

In 1861, Georgia planter Charles Colcock Jones Jr. declared, “In this country have arisen two races, which, although claiming a common parentage, have been so entirely separated by climate, by morals, by religion, and by estimates so totally opposite to all that constitutes honor, truth, and manliness, that they cannot longer exist under the same government.”<sup>40</sup> Regardless of the extent to which the North and South were distinctive cultures or two separate civilizations, by the mid-nineteenth century northerners and southerners *believed* they were different and acted accordingly.<sup>41</sup> Even though most shared a common language, belief in the same God, history, and abiding faith in republicanism, by the 1850s Americans on either side of the line separating slavery from free labor could readily point to the differences between northerners and southerners. Increasingly, many northerners came to see the South as a barbaric, backward region where the ignorant and illiterate masses of whites were ruled by a fiery, intemperate slavocracy. White southerners like Jones looked north and envisioned a land of materialist merchants, factory workers who labored under conditions far worse than slaves, filthy immigrants, masculine women, and abolitionist fanatics conspiring to subjugate the South.<sup>42</sup>

Despite how one understood the enemy’s motivations, fighting transformed both sides’ disdain of the opposing section into a venomous hatred of the enemy and reinforced the perceived sectional differences.<sup>43</sup> As the

war carried into a second and then third year, both sides increasingly described the other as savage and brutish. Union soldiers assigned to bury their comrades after the battle of Williamsburg were aghast to find that many “had evidently been bayoneted by the rebels, after they were shot down.”<sup>44</sup> News that Confederates had massacred surrendering Union troops at Fort Pillow, including a significant number of USCT soldiers, outraged many Republican editors and their abolitionist allies. “Insatiate as fiends, bloodthirsty as devils incarnate, the Confederates commenced an indiscriminate butchery of whites and blacks, including those of both colors who had been previously wounded,” reported the *New York Daily Tribune*. A Cleveland paper concurred, adding that the bloodletting was “without parallel in civilized warfare.” Here was inexplicable evidence of the brutality fostered by a slaveholding society.<sup>45</sup>

Confederates were equally appalled by what they perceived as the un-Americanness of their foe. “I don’t see why it should be called a *civil* war,” observed one Confederate soldier; “we are not fighting our own people—but a race which is & has always been antagonistic in every particular to us—of a different country & of different pursuits.”<sup>46</sup> Officers were not immune from such feelings of loathing. When Confederate general Richard Ewell complained to Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson that hogs were feasting on the remains of Union soldiers just beyond Confederate lines, Jackson chillingly retorted, “I knew a hog was not particular about what it ate but I gave them credit for having better taste than to eat a Yankee.” He famously noted later that “the only objection he had to Genl Lee was that he did not hate Yankees enough.”<sup>47</sup> Perhaps Jackson had never witnessed Lee express his own deep abhorrence of the enemy. Hearing that his beloved home Arlington had fallen into enemy hands, Lee informed his daughter that he “should have preferred it to have been wiped from the earth . . . its beautiful hill sunk, and its sacred trees buried, rather than to have been degraded by the presence of those who revel in the ill they do for their own selfish purposes.”<sup>48</sup>

Such hatred was not reserved for the men who did the killing. Caricatures of the enemy flowed forth from pens both North and South in the form of political cartoons, songs, and poems intended to animate both fear and hatred in the popular culture. The northern press reminded its readers that the South was controlled by the slavocracy and depicted Confederate president Jefferson Davis in particular as a traitor who, at the very least, was mildly threatening. Such a South could easily be defeated. For their part, southern newspapers regularly published sketches of northerners, and Lincoln in particular, at best as incompetent and inept, at worst

as handmaidens of the Devil. Confederate camp songs and poetry likewise mocked the Union war effort and bolstered southern soldiers' belief in their own invincibility. But Confederate popular culture also spread the conviction that Yankees were invading blue hordes bent on subjugating the white South and unleashing miscegenation on the region.<sup>49</sup> One Confederate ballad warned,

Northern Vandals tread our soil,  
Forth they come for blood or spoil,  
To the homes we've gained with toil,  
Shouting "Slavery!"<sup>50</sup>

For the men of Kirk's Ferry Rangers of Louisiana who listened to this song in 1861, the meaning was clear: this was not an objection to black bondage; rather, Confederate soldiers were called to arms to prevent the savage North from enslaving the white South. Another verse, penned by Confederate prisoner of war S. Teakle Wallis and published in the *Richmond Examiner*, anticipated the race war sure to be unleashed by the savage foes:

They are turning the slaves upon us,  
And with more than the fiend's worst art,  
Have uncovered the fire of the savage,  
That slept in his untaught heart!<sup>51</sup>

Whether read in newspapers or sung in camp, popular images of an incompetent, brutal, inhumane, and un-American enemy pervaded both North and South.

Northerners pointed to Confederate women as particularly fiendish, especially in their adoration of ghastly war relics. Reports circulated of southern women donning rings carved from Yankee bones or exhibiting remains taken from Union soldiers as parlor ornaments. According to one account, a southern woman had requested her lover to fetch "Lincken's skaalp." Mollie Sanford of Colorado was aghast after hearing of a Texas woman who demanded that her sweetheart "never return . . . without a necklace made of Yankee ears."<sup>52</sup> With stories such as these circulating, the following poem, which appeared in a San Francisco newspaper during the summer of 1862, no doubt held resonance with many Unionists:

Silent the lady sat alone:  
In her ears were rings of dead men's bone;  
The brooch on her breast shone white and fine,  
'Twas the polished joint of a Yankee spine;

And the well-carved handle of her fan  
Was the finger bone of a Lincoln man,  
She turned aside a flower to cull,  
From a vase which was made of a human skull;  
For to make her forget the loss of her slaves  
Her lovers had rifled the dead men's graves.  
Do you think I'm describing a witch or a ghou?l?  
There no such things—and I'm not a fool;  
Nor did she reside in Ashantee;  
No—the fair lady was an F.F.V.<sup>53</sup>

Some Confederate women appear to have relished their reputation for collecting such seemingly gruesome war trophies. In Savannah, one Confederate woman told Union soldiers that her prized possession was a letter from an admirer of hers sent from the battlefield of Chickamauga, reportedly written in Yankee blood. Her rebel soldier told her that he had “dipped the pen in blood as it ran from the wound that caused the yankees death.” She informed the Union soldiers that she intended to keep it as “evidence of the heroism of Chivalry.” Another rebel woman claimed to be the proud recipient of a Yankee jaw bone that had been transformed into a spur, while one of her acquaintances declared that she used a Yankee skull for a drinking cup.<sup>54</sup> Confederate nurse Phoebe Yates Pember was horrified by a conversation with several Richmond women. “One lady said she had a pile of Yankee bones lying around her pump so that the first glance on opening her eyes would rest upon them,” she noted in her diary; “another begged me to get her a Yankee Skull to keep her toilette trinkets in.”<sup>55</sup> Whether there is any truth to these tales is unknown and insignificant. What mattered was that these Confederate women clearly realized that bragging to Union soldiers of such cherished relics only served to demonstrate their deep faith in the Confederate cause and exhibit their intense hatred for their foes.

Public announcements were not the only expressions of southern white women's hatred of Yankees. Nearly every diary or collection of letters written by a Confederate woman contained some colorful phrase exuding her loathing for the “vandals in blue.” Sixteen-year-old Lizzie Alsop of Fredericksburg boasted in her diary that she “never hear[s] or see[s] a Federal private or officer riding down the street that I don't wish his neck may be broken before he crosses the bridge.”<sup>56</sup> Emma LeConte of South Carolina had hated the enemy even before she encountered them. But once they arrived at her home, she recognized that there were “no limits to the feelings

of hatred” she bore for the men whose name was “a synonym for all that is mean, despicable and abhorrent.”<sup>57</sup> Another declared she wanted no mercy for such beasts after learning that U.S. soldiers had raped a white woman in Memphis. “Shoot them, dear husband, every chance you get,” she wrote in October 1863. “Hold no conference with them. They are devil furies who thirst for your blood and who will revenge themselves on your helpless wife and children. It is God’s will and wish for you to destroy them. You are his instrument and it is your Christian duty. Would that I may be allowed to take up arms, I would fight them, until I died.”<sup>58</sup>

Although the trials and stresses of war led some women to become disgruntled with the Confederacy, southern men stressed Confederate women’s devotion and sacrifice to the cause in the name of national unity.<sup>59</sup> In an 1863 book dedicated to women’s efforts, Henry W. R. Jackson had no doubt that if Confederate men should ever fail to prove heroic, the South’s women would “call forth from among their own sex a leader for our armies to forego the pleasures of ease and feminine considerations and respond to the call of temporal requirements for the occasion like a Joan of Arc.”<sup>60</sup> A soldier from the Army of Tennessee congratulated the women of Atlanta for their “constant and glorious patriotism and self-sacrificing devotion to our cause.”<sup>61</sup> Even the Confederacy’s beloved Stonewall Jackson noted that the South’s women were “patriots in the truest sense of the word, and I more than admire them.”<sup>62</sup> While women did not vote or (usually) shoulder muskets, southern men considered them a vital component of the nation, a fact that would become imperative in the immediate postwar efforts to commemorate the Confederacy.<sup>63</sup>

Tales of Confederate women’s defiant, vituperative, and unfeminine behavior permeated the northern army and home front. Rather than merely chastising the unruly deeds of rebel women, these reports had the added effect of stirring resentment in the North both among and toward Union women, who many claimed were not as devoted as their southern counterparts.<sup>64</sup> Yet countless northern women had volunteered on behalf of the Union cause. Like Confederate women, when the war began tens of thousands rushed to organize informal soldiers’ aid societies, where they sewed national and regimental flags for their troops. Coordinating their efforts through the U.S. Sanitary Commission, they produced clothing, bedding, jellies, and other goods to be distributed to the troops. They held grand bazaars like the one in Chicago in 1863, which raised more than \$100,000 for soldier relief. Middle-class women in urban areas formed “Loyal Leagues” devoted to identifying disloyal elements of their communities. An estimated 21,000 women (out of a population of 22 million) served in hospi-

tals as nurses, matrons, cooks, laundresses, seamstresses, and chambermaids. And at least 400 donned the clothes of men and went off to the battlefields to fight.<sup>65</sup>

Despite their volunteer activities, the distance between the battlefield and the home front meant that northern women were often perceived by Union soldiers, the northern press, and even other women as indifferent to the war effort.<sup>66</sup> The very fact that they did not endure the tightening blockade meant they did not have to confine themselves to two meals a day or forego luxury clothing as some had urged. Moreover, unlike Confederate women, northern women had fewer opportunities to display acts of defiance against enemy soldiers.<sup>67</sup> When they did have contact with rebel forces, they too insulted enemy soldiers and boldly defended their cause.<sup>68</sup> And like Confederate she-devils, they relished battlefield relics; one woman later recalled that she had been thrilled to receive the sword of a Confederate soldier from the battle of Fair Oaks. She had been told that the saber had been “struck from the hand of a rebel colonel, while in the act of raising it to strike one of our officers.” “Oh, how proud I felt of that beautiful silver-mounted trophy,” she later wrote. She could not help but treasure the thought that as the rebel soldier “lay in the agonies of death . . . his splendid sword passed into my feeble hands.”<sup>69</sup>

Loathing the enemy was not enough. Instead, loyal women were forced to wage a war on the home front against the stereotype that they were less than devoted patriots. In a well-circulated pamphlet titled “A Few Words on Behalf of the Loyal Women of the United States,” an anonymous northern woman rebuked such nonsense. She dismissed the notion that Union women had not “shown passion enough,” arguing that while northern ladies had been taught to demonstrate self-restraint, Confederate women were less educated and “more demonstrative.” “Passionate utterance is no evidence of right feeling,” she added. While northern women busily, if quietly, labored in their soldiers’ aid societies or at collection centers of the U.S. Sanitary Commission for the cause of liberty, “the women of the South have no higher incentive than the determination to uphold their husbands in the attempt to perpetuate slavery.” Was “passion” relevant, she wondered, when one’s cause was wrong?<sup>70</sup> Such unwomanly, treasonous behavior was hardly something Union women should emulate. Like U.S. soldiers, Union women steadfastly believed theirs was the right cause, and they would continue to maintain this in the postwar years. Yet the perception that northern women had not been as devoted as Confederate women would continue to haunt them long after the war had ended.

## HARD WAR

If northerners looked upon Confederate women as barbaric and unwomanly, white southerners argued that the strongest evidence of Yankee savagery lay in the implementation of a hard-war policy.<sup>71</sup> Neither Lincoln nor his generals had commenced the war intending to inflict suffering on southern civilians or their property. Not only did few northerners initially believe that the Confederacy enjoyed widespread support, but targeting southern civilians was also anathema to the Union's war aim of restoring the country. Instead, throughout the first year of conflict, the U.S. government actively deployed a conciliatory policy that sought to spare white southerners from the hardships of war. But a series of Union defeats in the summer of 1862 convinced many northerners that only in abandoning conciliation could they achieve reunion.<sup>72</sup>

The hard-war strategy was most evident in Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas and Gen. Philip H. Sheridan's raids in the Shenandoah Valley in 1864.<sup>73</sup> Although both friendly and enemy armies wreaked havoc on the landscape, destroying railroads, fences, and fields, southern residents and soldiers watched as Union armies began to purposefully wage a war that included the destruction of any and all resources that might sustain an army in the field. As Union troops marched through Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia, they seized crops and livestock and dismantled railroads in an effort to destroy Confederate morale. Even more egregious, according to Confederates, were Union bombardments of southern cities such as Fredericksburg, Vicksburg, Atlanta, Charleston, and Petersburg. Such barbaric attacks on civilians infuriated Confederates both in the field and on the home front, convincing them that the foe they fought was not abiding by the rules of civilized warfare. After all, churches and residences, not merely military infrastructure such as railroads, provided strategic targets for Union guns during each of these sieges. But more important, they believed that Union commanders had explicitly ordered the shelling of cities occupied primarily by women and children. Upon hearing that Petersburg had been fired upon, the *Charleston Mercury* ranted that the Union would resort to the "barbarous practice of shelling a city" occupied primarily by "defenceless [*sic*] women and children."<sup>74</sup> None "but the most dastardly race on the face of the earth would engage in a business so supremely contemptible, as well as inexpressibly villainous," declared one Richmond newspaper.<sup>75</sup> The Union policies only reinforced what many white southerners had be-

lieved for decades before the war, namely that northerners were a brutish, uncivilized, and barbaric people intent upon destroying all that was good about the South.

For Confederates, the most deplorable aspect of hard war was emancipation. White southerners had long believed that Republicans were intent on ending slavery, not simply preventing its spread west. The Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862, which authorized seizure of Confederate property, including slaves, had indicated as much, but the Emancipation Proclamation confirmed their worst fears.<sup>76</sup> Writing to Secretary of War James A. Seddon in January 1863, General Lee described the Emancipation Proclamation as a “savage and brutal policy . . . which leaves us no alternative but success or degradation worse than death.”<sup>77</sup> Confederate clerk John B. Jones concurred, noting that the “Emancipation Proclamation, if not revoked, may convert the war into a most barbarous conflict.”<sup>78</sup> And addressing the Confederate Congress that same month, Jefferson Davis denounced the proclamation as “the most execrable measure recorded in the history of guilty man.”<sup>79</sup> The stakes were now higher than they had ever been: if the Confederacy was defeated, life would be radically different for all southerners, white and black, slave owner and nonslaveholder. By 1863, Confederate soldiers had even more reason to secure their independence than they had believed in 1861.<sup>80</sup>

More disturbing for many rebels was the entry of African American soldiers into combat.<sup>81</sup> Upon learning that Lincoln had demanded that the USCT be treated the same as white troops, one Confederate predicted that “the war will not be conducted in a civilized way hereafter.”<sup>82</sup> The image of black troops only stirred white southerners’ long-held fear of a race war, of armed black men roaming the land, raping white women and murdering white masters. From occupied New Orleans, Julia LaGrand noted that Union troops “preach openly to the negroes to arise and kill us.” Such fears explain why some rebels proved exceedingly pleased with the murder of black prisoners of war at Fort Pillow and Petersburg’s battle of the Crater.<sup>83</sup> Cities might be rebuilt, fields might be planted again, but the long-term effects of emancipation would not only be disastrous for the white South but also be permanent.

The hard-war policies of foraging, bombarding southern cities, and emancipation had the unintended effect of stirring a desire for retaliation and bolstering rebels’ devotion to their nation. “If there is one degree of *hell* hotter than an other I think it will be retained for the Vandales who invade our homes, rob & destroy our property,” one soldier advised his wife.<sup>84</sup> War weariness, strains of disaffection, class tension, doubts about slavery,

and even fears of God's disfavor had taken their toll, causing some to question their government.<sup>85</sup> But even well into 1864, the Union's hard-war tactics tended to strengthen Confederate resolve. Whether a soldier hearing tales of his family's suffering on the home front or a woman encountering Union soldiers as they marched through South Carolina, hard-war tactics were likely to embolden white southerners' will to fight, reinforce their sense of themselves as a distinct people, and heighten the desire for an independent nation. Union tactics thus bound soldiers and civilians ever more tightly to the Confederate nation.<sup>86</sup>

For those who lived in the border regions, it was more difficult if not impossible to identify the enemy. With loyalties violently divided, one's minister, neighbor, or even brother might support the opposition. Although the border regions sent soldiers off to battlefields to fight under the regular armies, these locales experienced some of the harshest and most brutal atrocities of the war through guerrilla fighting. Guerrilla warfare was intense and sprawling. Spilling into parts of the Upper South, Deep South, trans-Mississippi West, and Midwest (well beyond the traditional notion of the Border States of Maryland, Delaware, Kentucky, and Missouri), guerrillas blurred the lines between friend and foe, civilians and combatants, even more than regular warfare.<sup>87</sup> Guerrilla troops—whether Unionist or rebel irregulars, bushwhackers, sanctioned partisan rangers like those led by John Singleton Mosby, lone gunmen, or outlaw gangs—attacked not only army supply lines and advancing troops but also civilians. They plundered towns, kidnapped alleged spies, and executed their avowed enemies under the cover of darkness. Confederate irregulars launched especially brutal attacks against African Americans who sought to enlist in the Union army. Perhaps the most infamous bushwhacking took place along the Missouri-Kansas border, where guerrilla chieftains William Quantrill, “Bloody Bill” Anderson, and George Todd led troops in pillaging, looting, terrorizing, and inflicting horrendous murders on Unionist civilians, then quickly disappeared into the countryside with the aid of the population sympathetic to the Confederates.<sup>88</sup>

In the border regions, guerrilla conflict muddied the waters, complicating the war's memory and prospects for reconciliation. Border residents often found it nearly impossible to come to any collective understanding of the conflict either among themselves or with those who lived in the major theaters of regular warfare. In the postwar years, some rebels would strive to forget the brutality of guerrilla warfare in an effort to refashion their image. Others proudly and defiantly remembered their role, insisting they had been legitimate soldiers and had nothing of which to

be ashamed. Still others, both Unionists and rebels, clung to the memory as a marker of all they had endured.<sup>89</sup> The savage war of guerrillas would continue to pervade the public and private lives of those along the border well into the late nineteenth century.

For Unionists and Confederates living beyond the contested border, the treatment of prisoners of war engendered tremendous enmity. During the fighting, approximately 408,000 soldiers became prisoners, while 56,000 succumbed to the deadly conditions of their cells and makeshift compounds.<sup>90</sup> The treatment and horrid death of so many soldiers stirred embittered accusations and violent passions, especially after the system of prisoner exchange broke down in the wake of African American enlistments in 1863. Andersonville is infamous, but horrid accounts poured forth from the more than 150 prisons across both the North and South: of disease, starvation, rats, inadequate clothing, deplorable sanitary conditions, and guards who shot prisoners without provocation. No doubt many prisoners could have echoed what one Texas soldier said of his place of imprisonment when he declared that “if there was ever hell on Earth, Elmira prison was that hell.”<sup>91</sup>

The degree to which the suffering was a result of intentional malice or a product of incompetence has been debated since the war.<sup>92</sup> But during the conflict, each side was sure that their foe was deliberately inflicting torture on prisoners. In 1864, the U.S. Sanitary Commission published a report charging that Confederates were employing cruelty and deprivations as part of a “predetermined plan, originating somewhere in the rebel councils, for destroying and disabling the soldiers of their enemy.” (Of course Confederate prisoners, the commission maintained, received generous treatment in Union hands.)<sup>93</sup> The northern press launched tirades in particular against Capt. Henry Wirz of Andersonville and Dick Turner of Richmond’s Libby Prison for their alleged atrocities, while numerous eyewitness accounts from men who had survived these stockades appeared during the war. In June 1864, *Harper’s Weekly* ran two illustrations of men appearing as nearly skeletons, thereby providing “indisputable proof” of Confederate authorities’ “inhuman treatment” of Union prisoners in Richmond’s Belle Isle. Prisons revealed the enemy in his most barbaric and brutal form.<sup>94</sup> It is no small wonder that the perceived inhumanity and atrocities committed against prisoners of war would prove to be one of the bitterest of memories for years to come.

# FRANK LESLIE'S ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPER

Entered according to the Act of Congress in the year 1864, by FRANK LESLIE, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

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13 WEEKS \$1 00.]

## The Campaign—Grant and Sherman— Richmond and Atlanta.

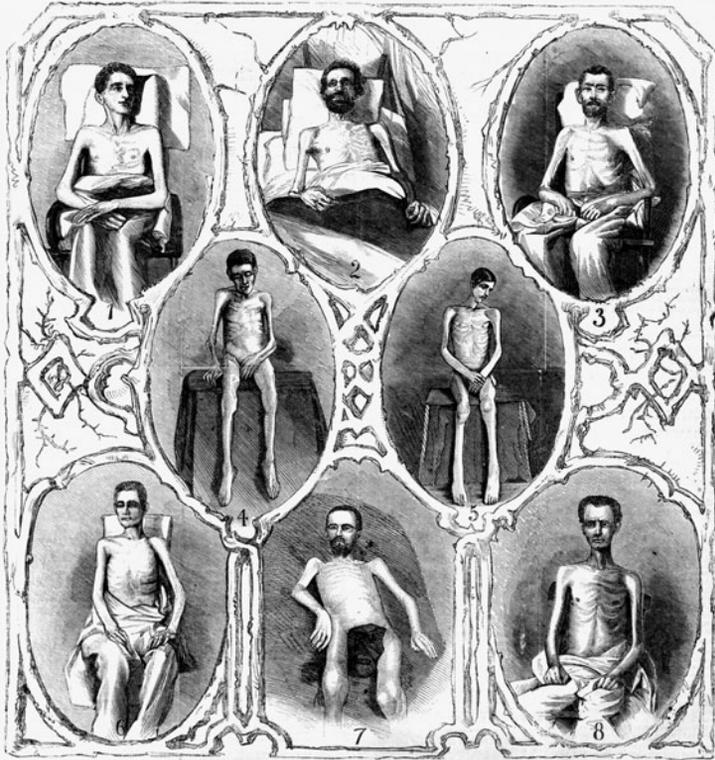
ANOTHER week of signal and uninterrupted successes has been added to the glorious record of our advancing armies, East and West. Grant thundering at the gates of Richmond, and Sherman sweeping down with his irresistible columns upon Atlanta, are the great historical facts of the day. The heart of every Unionist

rejoices, while the chiefs, organs and oracles of the rebellion are amazed and confounded.

These treacherous guides of a deluded people are now beginning to realize their folly, and to hint at their hopeless situation. Their blunders, unending devices of unshining falsehoods and brazen deceptions have failed to account, to the satisfaction of their reckless followers, for the presence of Gen. Grant in front of Richmond and of Gen. Sherman at Atlanta. And why? Because the people's

credulity of the South had been flattered with the promise of a crushing campaign through Maryland and Pennsylvania by Gen. Lee, and a sweeping invasion of Ohio by Gen. Johnston with an army of veterans 100,000 strong. These royal promises, contrasted with the sorry performances of both Lee and Johnston, have demanded an explanation beyond the inventive facilities of the rebel leaders to make. But they have, nevertheless, tried, by the boldest misrepresentations and effrontery, to make it

appear that Lee and Johnston are doing wonders towards the achievement of Southern independence. Thus, when a few weeks ago the people of Virginia inquired why Gen. Lee, instead of moving across the Potomac, was on the road to Richmond, with Gen. Grant close upon his flanks, they were answered that Gen. Lee is drawing the Yankees away from Washington. He will still retire there on to Richmond with a small force, so disposed as to appear a large army, while, with the main body



1. Private Lewis Klein, Co. A, 14th N. Y. Cav. 2. Private John Bostick, Co. G, 4th N. Y. Cav. 3. Private George H. White, Co. F, 8th Me. A. Private Francis W. Beards, Co. H, 8th Mich. Cav. 4. Private John Q. Ross, Co. H, 1st Ky. 5. Private Charles R. Woodworth, Co. G, 9th Me. Cav. 6. Private S. E. Patton, Co. B, 1st W. Tenn. Cav. 7. Private Robert Cunningham, Co. F, 7th Ohio Cav. 8. Private James M. ...  
UNION PRISONERS AS THEY APPEARED ON THEIR RELEASE FROM THE REBEL PRISONS.—FROM PHOTOGRAPHS MADE BY ORDER OF CONGRESS.—SEE PAGE 150.

*Union soldiers as they appeared on their release from rebel prisons. This June 1864 edition of Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper depicting Union prisoners of war unleashed a torrent of anger among northerners.*

(Library of Congress)

## HONORING THE FIELDS OF GLORY

If memories of prisoners of war conjured up resentment and animosity in the postwar years, the gallantry of battlefield fighting would prove to be one aspect of war on which many veterans would eventually agree. The first endeavor to commemorate a battleground occurred at Gettysburg just weeks after the battle ceased. One of the many thousands of visitors to the town in those first days was Pennsylvania governor Andrew G. Curtin, who was aghast at the number of unburied bodies and concerned by the temporary nature of the graves. In late July, representatives from the northern states who had lost men in the battle held an informal meeting to discuss the issue. All agreed, as army surgeon Theodore Dimon recounted, that it would be “practicable to have a piece of ground purchased for a burial place on or near the battlefield, to which the dead bodies of all our soldiers should be removed and there buried by regiments and states and their graves permanently marked.” Gettysburg attorney David Wills conveyed the information to Governor Curtin, who agreed that a cemetery should be created on the hallowed ground. Working on behalf of Pennsylvania, Wills secured the purchase of several acres near the town’s Evergreen Cemetery and the reinterments began.<sup>95</sup>

From October through March, crews labored to reinter 3,512 Union bodies in the burial ground. Uniting soldiers together in death, rather than returning them to their homes for burial as had been done in previous wars, was a radical concept born of necessity in a war that claimed more than 750,000 lives.<sup>96</sup> In designing the space, the Cemetery Association agreed that every state would receive equal placement and laid out the grounds so that each grave was of identical importance regardless of rank. All soldiers would be equal in death, among those who had fought on the side of right.<sup>97</sup> Charged with superintending the interments, Gettysburg physician Samuel Weaver meticulously examined every corpse to ensure that no rebel would lie beside an honorable Union soldier for eternity. The Confederate dead were instead left decomposing in mass shallow trench graves for years after the battle.<sup>98</sup> “None but loyal soldiers of the Union lie here,” declared a December 1865 issue of the veterans’ magazine *Hours at Home*. “This intermingling of States in the ashes of their dead,” the periodical continued, “is itself a symbol and a prophecy of the reality and perpetuity of that Union which was here redeemed and sealed by so much precious blood.” The cemetery would be known as the Soldiers’ National Cemetery—the name itself invoking the exclusivity of the term “na-

tional,” by which northerners meant those loyal to the Union.<sup>99</sup> In honoring the Union dead alone, the national cemetery at Gettysburg established a precedent for commemorating the war dead that would find full fruition after the war’s guns finally fell silent.

Construction of the cemetery had only recently begun when, on November 19, 1863, nearly 20,000 people descended on the small Pennsylvania town to dedicate the first national cemetery. Like the southern Memorial Days that would commence three years later, the day’s ceremony began with a military procession that wound from the center of town to the cemetery site. For two hours the principal orator of the era, Edward Everett, spoke laboriously, detailing the three-day battle and honoring the men who had fallen in one of the North’s most triumphant victories. But there were four elements of his talk that would prove significant in the grander narrative of Civil War memory. First, Everett stressed that the field itself was memorable. “The spots where they stood and fell . . . Seminary Ridge, the Peach-Orchard, Cemetery, Culp, and Wolf Hill,” would henceforth become “dear and famous.” This land was sacred. Second, unlike most northern dedicatory addresses, he issued effusive praise to “the women of the loyal states” not only for nursing wounded soldiers, but also for their steadfast support on the home front. Third, he unreservedly denounced the war as a rebellion and condemned the South for initiating the war to preserve slavery. He reminded the crowd of the consequences of yielding to the rebels, namely “national suicide.” Moreover, he noted the North’s responsibility for ensuring that the “helpless colored population, thousands of whom are periling their lives in the ranks of our armies,” were not returned to the horrors of slavery. Finally, and most important, he steadfastly believed that the war was first and foremost about re-Union. “The bonds that unite us as one People,” he declared, “are of perennial force and energy, while the causes of alienation are imaginary, factitious, and transient. The heart of People, North and South, is for the Union.”<sup>100</sup> While Lincoln’s short address would become mythic, memorized by schoolchildren for generations and enshrined in stone throughout the nation, Everett’s words, with the exception of his praise for northern women, foreshadowed more accurately how northerners would come to remember the war.

Efforts to secure the battlefield began at the same time as those to create a national cemetery, although the motives and visions differed from the start. Initiated by David McConaughy, another local attorney, the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA) was a private organization dedicated to protecting the land now sanctified by blood. In a let-

ter dated August 13, 1863, McConaughy explained that immediately after the battle “the thought occurred to me that there could be no more fitting and expressive memorial of the heroic battle and signal triumph of our army . . . than the battle-field itself . . . preserved and perpetuated in the exact form and condition they presented during the battle.” He had already purchased several significant portions of the field, including the heights of Cemetery Hill, the granite spur of Round Top, and a portion of Wolf’s Hill. Calling on the “patriotic citizens of Pennsylvania” to subscribe by purchasing ten-dollar shares, he hoped to form an organization that would preserve the only battlefield on the free soil of the North.

The following year, on April 30, the GBMA was incorporated to “commemorate the heroic deeds, the struggles, and triumphs of [the Union’s] brave defenders.” “Let it be the shrine of loyalty and patriotism,” declared the association, “whither in all times will come the sons of America, and the pilgrims of all lands, to view with wonder and veneration the sacred scenes of heroic struggles, in which were involved the life of the nation and the perpetuity of liberty.” While the cemetery would honor those who had sacrificed their lives, the battlefield would serve as a memorial to both the living and the dead, preserving for eternity the Army of the Potomac’s victory. With the war still raging to the south, the GBMA sought not only to protect the field now consecrated by blood but also to shape the lessons of the war for future generations.<sup>101</sup>

The battlefield was intended to serve as a site where visitors might come to better understand the war, but not everyone could travel to the nation’s newest shrine. Thus by 1864, commercialized versions of the battle began to appear. Booklets, maps, photography collections, stereographs, and even sheet music became available for the American public. Baltimore’s Sanitary Fair and Philadelphia’s Great Central Fair both showcased and sold relics from the field. Such material objects were not trivial but intended to educate and connect those on the home front with those on the frontlines. Bringing a purchased print, image, or even minié ball found on the field into one’s home was similar to collecting relics sent from soldiers to the home front. Both instances knit the home and battlefield more closely together in the great endeavor for the Union. On the other hand, enterprising merchants were well aware of the potential profit to be derived from such an emotional item.<sup>102</sup>

Militarily, Gettysburg may not have been as significant as the surrender of Vicksburg. But the battle had been resoundingly important for many in the North because it marked the Army of the Potomac’s first clear victory over Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia. Here on the rolling hills

of Pennsylvania, the Army of the Potomac had finally stopped Lee's momentum in the eastern theater generated by Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville. The outcome of the war remained uncertain, yet northerners felt compelled to commemorate so holy a plot of land that was within their domain. Eventually the battlefield would become a much more popular tourist attraction than the national cemetery, but both would permanently alter the landscape of the nineteenth century and thus serve as the most important physical reminders of the war. For future generations, these would be the places where victors and losers, veterans and tourists, would come to relive, experience, or learn about the nation's bloodiest conflict.

Just as white northerners began commemorating the Union dead at Gettysburg even before the war was over, African Americans initiated the first Emancipation Day celebrations in the winter of 1862–63.<sup>103</sup> Rejoicing in Lincoln's proclamation set to take effect on January 1, 1863, black Americans from the Midwest to the South heralded the act as confirmation that the national battle was indeed being fought for universal freedom. For them it would not be the battlefield that would loom as the principal site of commemoration, but rather the town and city streets on which they had been denied equal access as slaves. Throughout the holiday season in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, a growing community of former slaves enjoyed a ball and sumptuous dinners and then went "marching through town all night whooping, dancing, and singing 'Kingdom Coming.'"<sup>104</sup> On New Year's Day, a day previously feared as one of uncertainty and horror because it marked the annual rental and sale of slaves in the South, freedmen and -women from the surrounding countryside arrived in Norfolk, Virginia, for an immense celebration. The occasion began with a spectacular procession led by black soldiers through the city's main avenues. Behind the freedom warriors marched civilians—men, women, and children, most on foot but many in wagons and carts. Demonstrating their intense revulsion of the rebel cause, two particularly daring black women proceeded to destroy a Confederate flag and subsequently to trample it, and later participants burned an effigy of Jefferson Davis. On the streets of Norfolk, black Virginians claimed their vision of a triumphant Union and a defeated Confederacy.<sup>105</sup>

Retaliation by local whites did not dim the celebration. Neither did the contingent nature of freedom. In 1863 Confederate defeat, and therefore slavery, was hardly a given. But this failed to diminish the faith many freedpeople held that history would be redemptive. The first Emancipation Day celebration and those in the following decades from Chicago to the Deep South defined the struggle for liberty among African Ameri-

cans as the most important aspect of the war—the aspect most worth remembering.<sup>106</sup>

#### A HARMONIOUS REUNION

When veterans reunited on the bloody battlefields like Gettysburg in the 1880s and 1890s, some of their favorite memories would be those that stressed the fraternizing that occurred between armies. Although not nearly as ubiquitous as veterans would suggest, fraternization did happen on occasion. There are well-documented instances of an informal truce along the banks of the Rappahannock in December 1862 when soldiers from both sides tossed stones toward the enemies' bank while some of the most daring trekked across for visits with their foes.<sup>107</sup> A year later, a member of the 5th New York Cavalry stationed near Germania Ford noted that his men had become "quite familiar with Rebel pickets on the other side of the river," exchanging papers and swapping coffee for tobacco.<sup>108</sup> As the siege of Petersburg entered its ninth month, soldiers occasionally indulged in exchanges along the picket lines. "We had a truce in front of our Brigade this evening for a few minutes. I exchanged papers with a Yankee. Some of them gave our boys coffee, pocket knives, etc. The truce ended and both parties resumed firing," Confederate private James Hall scribbled in his diary.<sup>109</sup> Union nurse Cornelia Hancock likewise observed the rebels exchanging tobacco with soldiers in blue but knew that they would "shoot with vigor when ordered."<sup>110</sup>

As Hall and Hancock indicated, there was often a very practical rationale for this fraternization: a longing for goods to which the enemy had access. Union soldiers who craved tobacco were quite willing to trade northern newspapers and coffee with their foes. Recognizing that orders strictly forbade such contacts, some clever soldiers employed warning devices such as floating sailboats across the water to caution each other about approaching officers. Soldiers along picket lines likewise traded insults or profane jokes rather than goods. Even when these exchanges took place on friendly terms, seldom did they represent the fraternal camaraderie that veterans would recall in later years. Trade along the pickets did not signify the roots of reconciliation; rather, it was mere evidence of soldiers' desperation for tobacco, caffeine, or even lively banter.<sup>111</sup>

If such consorting with the enemy was not intended to promote reconciliationist sentiment, the wartime policies of President Lincoln and General Grant were. By the time frost reappeared in the fall of 1863, substantial portions of the Confederacy, including New Orleans, parts of Ar-

kansas, and most of middle Tennessee, had come under Union control. Believing that the Union would soon be victorious, Lincoln began to formulate his policy for reconstructing the nation. He recognized, however, that process would be difficult because many northerners fiercely hated the rebels and wanted to see them punished, while others longed for a quick reunion. His December 8, 1863, proclamation previewed the policy he would adopt a year and a half later: he offered pardon and amnesty as well as the full restoration of rights “except as to slaves” to any rebels who took an oath of allegiance to the United States (high-ranking Confederate officers and government officials were omitted from this plan). In any given state, when the number of oath takers reached ten percent of the number who had voted in the 1860 election, the loyal constituency could establish a new state government that would be recognized by the president. Although some in the North believed his plan would facilitate a quick reunion, plenty of Democrats and Republicans offered sharp rebukes—the Democrats charging that the plan interfered with state rights, while Radical Republicans cried that it was much too lenient. Other proposals abounded, including the 1864 Wade-Davis Bill that would have required, among other things, an end to military resistance and a declaration of loyalty to the Union by half the population, so the heated disputes continued. Despite these points of contention, both Lincoln and congressional Republicans agreed on two things: winning the war was imperative, and slavery must be abolished to secure the Union.<sup>112</sup>

Grant’s terms of surrender at Fort Donelson and Vicksburg were likewise intended to promote a harmonious reunion. Along the Cumberland River on February 16, 1862, Grant would first demonstrate the magnanimity toward the rebels that would become legendary at Appomattox. Asked if he intended to observe a traditional surrender ceremony, he declined: “The surrender is now a fact. We have the fort, the men, the guns. Why should we go through vain forms and mortify and injure the spirit of brave men, who, after all, are our own countrymen.”<sup>113</sup> Sixteen months later his terms were equally generous. “Men who have shown much endurance and courage as those in Vicksburg,” he wrote to Confederate general John C. Pemberton, “will always challenge the respect of an adversary, and I can assure you will be treated with all the respect due to prisoners of war.”<sup>114</sup> Foreshadowing the policy he would employ with Lee, Grant provided the Confederate soldiers “paroles,” which allowed them to travel home so long as they promised not to take up arms against the United States again and thereby relieving them of incarceration in northern prisoner camps. Defending his rationale against numerous complaints,

he further explained: "The men had behaved so well that I did not want to humiliate them. I believed that consideration for their feelings would make them less dangerous foes during the continuance of hostilities, and better citizens after the war was over."<sup>115</sup> Grant, like Lincoln, fervently believed the Union would succeed and wanted the army to set the tone for a harmonious peace.

Lincoln and his commanders were joined by millions in their continued devotion to the nation. Throughout Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, and California, Republicans rechristened themselves the "Union Party," abandoning the more radical principles of their recent past and claiming to become more bipartisan. The resulting fusion coalition refused to let anti-slavery alone define it. Declaring themselves, as opposed to the Democrats, the foremost devotees to the nation, Republicans could declare that the country was their party. In 1864, the national Republican convention assumed the banner of bipartisanship, renominating Lincoln as its presidential candidate and nominating former Democrat and Tennessee senator Andrew Johnson for vice president. The Union Party's primary goal was reunion.<sup>116</sup>

While the Democrats likewise agreed that saving the Union was imperative, adding emancipation to the war aims had intensified the divisiveness between the two parties and thus within the North.<sup>117</sup> Supported by a base of working-class northerners who feared competition with freedmen, the antiwar Copperheads railed against the Conscription Acts of 1863 and alleged Republican violations of civil liberties, and they blamed Lincoln's party for the faltering U.S. war effort. But even those Democrats who supported the war effort, the so called War Democrats, would use racism as their primary political weapon to wage a formidable presidential campaign in 1864. Democrats nominated George B. McClellan, former commander of the Army of the Potomac and a soldier favorite. Though widely regarded as a War Democrat, McClellan agreed to run on a peace platform, noting in late August that "if I am elected, I will recommend an immediate armistice and a call for a convention of all the states and insist upon exhausting all and every means to secure peace without further bloodshed."<sup>118</sup> But peace was not enough for many Democrats. Transforming Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation into the "Miscegenation Proclamation" and calling on voters to reject "Abraham Africanus the First," the party exploited fears of racial amalgamation. By the early fall, it appeared that the Democrats might prevail, but news from the battlefield proved invaluable for the Republicans. On September 2, Sherman captured the key railroad city of Atlanta, and within weeks more favorable re-

ports reached the north of Sheridan's triumphs in the Shenandoah Valley. On November 8, the northern public rejected the Democrats' peace and anti-miscegenation platform, resoundingly reelecting Lincoln. Fighting to save the Union would continue unabated.<sup>119</sup>

As 1864 gave way to 1865, those in both North and South recognized that the Confederacy was in desperate straits. In August 1864, Mobile Bay fell, closing the Confederacy's last port on the Gulf of Mexico east of the Mississippi River and thereby completing the Union's blockade. By early February, Sherman had captured Savannah and then turned north, leading his 60,000 men on a march of destruction across South Carolina. Outside Petersburg, General-in-Chief Grant, now accompanying the Army of the Potomac, held Lee's army in a siege that clearly could not last much longer. On February 3, three Confederate commissioners met with Lincoln, Grant, and Secretary of State William Seward aboard the *River Queen* near City Point to discuss peace. Lincoln made his terms clear: the restoration of national authority, no retreat on the slavery question, and the unconditional surrender and disbandment of all Confederate forces. Reflecting his intense desire for reunion, Lincoln promised generous terms of pardon for rebel leaders and their confiscated property. But Confederate president Davis had not authorized the commissioners to negotiate such terms, and so they returned to Richmond with no peace secured.<sup>120</sup>

Soon the ground began to thaw, and Confederate military surrender seemed increasingly likely. On March 27, Lincoln boarded the *River Queen* yet again, this time to meet with Grant, Sherman, and Rear Admiral David D. Porter. And again, he expressed his desire to end the war quickly and provide liberal terms of peace. "Let them surrender and go home," he stated, "they will not take up arms again. Let them go, officers, and all, let them have their horses to plow with, and, if you like, their guns to shoot crows with." In addition to these generous terms he demanded only that Confederates accept emancipation and swear loyalty to the United States. His principal agenda was restoring stability and civil government in the South. The president hoped that his top military commanders would recognize and concur with his deepest hope. "We want these people to return to their allegiance and submit to the laws," he noted. "Therefore, I say, give them the most liberal and honorable terms."<sup>121</sup>

Between these two meetings with his commanders, Lincoln voiced similar sentiments to the American public. On March 4, 1865, he delivered his second inaugural address. Even the mud-thronged streets that resulted from an incessant rain could not keep nearly 40,000 onlookers from

the occasion. At mid-morning a procession began along Pennsylvania Avenue, as the crowds pushed forward for a glimpse of the volunteer firemen from various cities, Odd Fellows, but most especially the Union boys in blue. And for the first time, the crowd witnessed African American soldiers as four companies of the 45th USCT took their place in line. Though wet and overcast, the streets of Washington took on a joyous atmosphere. For unlike his inauguration four years earlier, the president and the nation had ample reason to be optimistic that peace—reunion—might be near.<sup>122</sup>

At precisely 11:40, the rain died away and the president stepped onto a temporary platform on the east front of the newly finished Capitol. Looking out over the sea of civilians and soldiers as the sun peaked through the clouds, he began his speech. Imparting a somber tone on what had heretofore been a celebratory day, his was not a triumphant oration. Rather, he reminded his fellow Americans that they were more alike than different, that both sides were complicit in the sins of slavery that had caused the war, and that God had his own divine purposes. In the final and most memorable passages from the speech, Lincoln set forth his vision of a reunited nation. He beseeched northerners to be forgiving and avoid harsh treatment of the defeated South. He asked that they reach deep within and find compassion for their foe. “With malice toward none; with charity for all . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.” Invoking the nineteenth-century meaning of “charity,” Lincoln was asking Americans, northerners and southerners both, to love their enemies. Moreover, “malice toward none” meant exactly that—even Confederate military leaders, government officials, and soldiers, as well as civilians, were to be included in the president’s exhortation. His postwar vision contained no retribution, no reprisals.<sup>123</sup>

Lincoln’s hope for a reunited, reconciled nation was not, however, the predominant expression of northern attitudes in March 1865. The nation was weary of war, but many were not ready to open their arms and welcome the traitorous rebels back so easily. And yet this posed a problem for northerners. Had not the war been about restoring the Union? Had not more than 360,000 young men given their lives so that the nation might be reunited? Even if reunion of the states were achieved, did that necessitate reconciliation among those who had stared down the barrel of a rifle or watched as their brothers lay dying in agony? Neither were most Confederates willing to abandon their steadfast belief that they had been justified in their quest for southern independence. They might be vanquished on

the field of battle, but the war had facilitated a deep and intense Confederate identity that would not be so easily subdued. Kate Foster, who had lost two brothers in the fighting, contemplated what might happen if the Confederate forces failed. “How can I ever love the Yankees as brothers when they made these deep and everlasting wounds in my heart?” she asked.<sup>124</sup> The military conflict might be nearing its end, but both sides remained adamant that theirs had been a moral and just cause.

Invasion, occupation, hard war, and emancipation had defined the last year and months of the war for soldiers, statesmen, and those on the home front. The sights and smells of smoldering buildings left in Sherman’s path, the heated encounters of Union soldiers with Confederate women, and the sights of former slaves donning the U.S. blue—these would be the images seared into their memories most clearly as the Confederacy’s hopes for independence dimmed. The bitterness and rancor engendered by four long years of fighting had reinforced white southerners’ belief in their distinctiveness, a conviction that would not be easily subdued. In contrast, for freedmen and -women, the mixture of anticipation, uncertainty, and sheer joy of freedom would forever be linked in their minds to the war’s last days.

Even before the fighting had ended, Unionists and Confederates, white and black, were already shaping the ways in which the conflict would be remembered. Northerners had waged a war for reunion. But did this mean forgetting the causes of the war, the costs of the war? Did it mean reconciliation? Confederates, on the other hand, needed to distance themselves from slavery’s role in the conflict if they were to convince future generations that theirs had been a noble cause. But, ironically, as was often true in civil wars, the enemies shared an identical conviction. Both thought of themselves as the true Americans, men who had fought for liberty and their homes. Although their war goals would prevent reconciliation for years to come, this conception of themselves as Americans would eventually prove imperative for fostering a sense of reconciliation between 1880 and 1915, when interregional harmony was at its height. In the interim, many were left to wonder: how do you get from collecting enemy skulls to clasping hands with your former foe?