

UNRECONSTRUCTED REBELS: CONFEDERATE VETERANS AND THEIR ROLE
IN THE FORMATION OF POST-CIVIL WAR TEXAS

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DEDICATION

To my Dad.

ABSTRACT

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Following the end of the Civil War, Confederate veterans returned to a home that was vastly different than the one they left behind. As veterans tried to adjust to the physical complications of their rebellion, they also had to deal with the political fallout of their actions as well. Under federal occupation, many ex-Confederates struggled to maintain control over their local governments and the newly freed slaves. In Texas, this struggle evolved into a series of confrontations, both political and clandestine, over who would control the state in the immediate aftermath of the war. In doing so, Texans attempted to assert their meaning of the war in the face of federal occupation. By following this struggle between ex-Confederates and the U.S occupation, the first chapter of this thesis also follows how Confederate veterans attempted to undo the effects of their defeat.

The second chapter of this thesis continues to follow Confederate veterans long after the events of the first chapter. By the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Confederate veterans occupied a venerated position in society. While the meaning of that veneration varied from commentator to commentator it is clear that many supporters of the Lost Cause saw veterans as representative of the best qualities of the fallen Confederacy. However, this veneration held Confederate veterans to higher standard, resulting in many wounded veterans being denied aid from the state government. The result was a system implemented to provide veterans with aid while attempting to preserve the qualities that made them special in the eyes of Texas

society. By looking at veterans in the immediate aftermath of the war, this paper shows how crucial they were in the formation of the Lost Cause.

KEY WORDS: Civil War, Reconstruction, Confederate, Confederacy, United Confederate Veterans, Wounded veterans, Texas, Lost Cause, veterans.

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PREFACE

In the summer of 2017, nine other students and I traveled across the United States to study the Civil War at the sites where the tragic conflict occurred. For eighteen days, we traveled from Montgomery, Alabama, the first capitol of the Confederacy to Appomattox Courthouse, Virginia, to learn about this important event in American history. One of the most important lessons I learned from the trip was the importance of experiencing the conflict from the eyes of the common soldiers who fought it. This experience opened my eyes towards the importance of the common soldier in understanding the war.

I primarily grew interested in the perspective of the common Confederate soldier after the events of the Charlottesville protest. After the protest, I became increasingly interested in the origins of the Lost Cause. This desire to trace the origins of the Lost Cause, and my newfound appreciation for understanding the narratives of Civil War veterans lead me to question the role Confederate veterans played in creating the Lost Cause.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
PREFACE	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
CHAPTER I.....	1
Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER II.....	10
Changing the Meaning of Defeat: Confederate Veterans and the Formation of the Lost Cause Narrative in Reconstruction Texas	10
CHAPTER III.....	27
“Keep the Fires of Memory Burning:” Confederate Veterans and the Creation of Southern “Americanism”	27
CHAPTER IV	44
Conclusion	44
REFERENCES.....	47
<i>CURRICULUM VITAE</i>	54

CHAPTER I

Introduction

On the night of August 11th, 2017, white supremacists filed in a field near the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, VA, bearing torches and chanting racist slogans marking the beginning of the so-called “Unite the Right” rally. One of the stated purposes of the rally was to protest against the recent decision to remove the statue of notorious Confederate general Robert E. Lee from a park bearing his name, and to rename the park “Emancipation Park.” The statue of Lee, which had been in the city since 1924, had come under scrutiny by city official following protests calling for its removal over the past several years. The following day, August 12th, saw the white supremacist groups such as, the KKK, rallying around the statue of Lee bearing Confederate flags and Nazi flags. The situation continued to escalate as counter-protesters showed up, clashing with the white supremacists near the park. By noon violence between the two groups led to the Charlottesville Police Department to break up the two protests. Before the day was over, one participant in the rally brutally slammed his car into the crowd injuring nineteen pedestrians and killing one.¹

This rally and the resulting violence showcase the legacy of the Lost Cause on the nation’s culture and politics. Following the defeat of the Confederacy, many southerners began to rebrand the memory of succession and treason as a noble and heroic struggle for principles such as state’s rights. As the poet Robert Penn Warren argues, “We may say that only at the moment when Lee handed grant his sword was the Confederacy born; or

¹ Joe Heim, “Recounting a Day of Rage, Hate, Violence and Death: How A rally of White Nationalists and supremacists at the University of Virginia Turned into a “Tragic, Tragic Weekend,” *Washington Post*, August 14th, 2017; Jacy Fortin, “The Statue at the Center of Charlottesville’s Storm,” *New York Times*, August 13th, 2017, accessed 4/18/2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/charlottesville-rally-protest-statue.html>

to state matters another way, in the moment of death the Confederacy entered upon its immortality.”² In a strange twist of irony, the defeated took the lead in shaping the legacy of the Civil War in a manner that would affect future generations in a profound and disturbing way. They essentially transformed a narrative of treason and defeat into a broader American narrative of adversity and triumph that has been transmitted to successive generations and had played a role in shaping conflicts like the events in Charlottesville.

Following the Civil War the Lost Cause formed in “a Southern culture awash in an admixture of physical destruction, the psychological trauma of defeat, a Democratic Party resisting reconstruction, racial violence, and with time, an abiding sentimentalism.” The Lost Cause myth itself, formed in two phases: the diehard phase, which lasted from 1865 until the 1880s, and the reconciliationist phase, which emerged in the 1880s. Formed by groups such as the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), this new phase of the Lost Cause emphasized “a story of redemption and victory” that glorified the South. One of the most enduring legacies of these two groups was the establishment of “history committees” enshrining a pro-Confederate memory of the war as historical truth.³ Therefore in order for this paper to discuss the effect memory has had on the culture of the South it is important to define memory and why its relationship to history.

² Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*. (Lincoln NA: University of Nebraska Press, 1961,) 15.

³ David Blight. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 258, 264, 272.

According to philosopher Israeli Avishai Margalit, “Memory is knowledge from the past. It is not necessarily knowledge about the past.”⁴ Despite this memory provides an important function both to the individual and to society at large as it tries to incorporate the past into the present. Memory allows for people to frame events in a context that is familiar to them and often has a more emotional appeal in the narrative it offers when it reconstructs the past for the benefit of the present. As such memory is everywhere whether it is in one’s own memories, or for the purposes of this paper, memories of an historical event. History in some ways is similar to memory in that fact that it too is a reconstructed version of the past that is created to contextualize the present-day. However, the differences between them are also readily apparent as one looks at how memory and history construct their versions of the past and the purposes they try to serve for society and the individual. By looking at how history and memory converge and diverge with one another, this paper hopes to provide a basis for how to look at memory historically. In doing so, historians can make use of this tool to look at a vernacular practice in an academic sphere.

Historian Edward H. Carr argues that the historian, when producing a work of history, “is engaged on a continuous process of moulding his facts to his interpretation and his interpretation to his facts.”⁵ What this means is that a historian must mediate his view of the past with documents and other historical artifacts as a way to construct the past and to make sense of it. The goal of history, as Carr argues, is “to master and understand it [the past] as the key to the understanding of the present.”⁶ On

⁴ Qtd in David W. Blight, “The Memory Boom: Why and Why Now?” in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 238.

⁵ Edward Hallett Carr. *What Is History?* (New York: Knopf, 1961), 35.

⁶ Carr, 29.

the other hand, memory tries to reconstruct the past based on a process of association where “people reshape omit, distort, combine, and reorganize details from the past and subjective way” that often shapes the past based on the demands and events of the present. The historian David Thelen argues that this is done in a social context, as well as a private one, as “people look to others to assist them in deciding whether their associations have yielded an accurate narrative of an event or experience, they acknowledge the need for a check on the subjective process by which they create a recollection.”⁷ That is not to say however that history is unaffected by social forces. Another historian pointed out that the “history we read... though based on facts, is strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgments.”⁸ What this means is that even what historians consider historical facts are often mediated by past historians and it is important to understand their contributions in the context in which they were written. This means that looking at it together history and memory are views of the past that are often created through a careful process of mediation. However where as the historian often looks at history through the mediation of facts and through the historiography, the person or persons doing the remembering often rely on commemorative sites, culturally significant symbols and other cultural artifacts to reconstruct the past in the same way one might reconstruct a family vacation based on a photograph.⁹

Another key difference between memory and history is the way the way they frame the past and the reason why they each construct their meaning of the past. Sam Wineburg argues that that history must navigate “the tension between the familiar

⁷ David Thelen “Memory and American History” in *The Journal of American History* 75, no 4 (March 1989): 1120, 1122.

⁸ Qtd in Carr, 13.

⁹ Thalen, 1122.

and the strange, between feelings of proximity to and feelings of distance from the people we seek to understand.”¹⁰ By navigating this tension a historian must place himself in between these two extremes in order to create a vision of a time and place that will never happen again and to relate that to the development of the present rather than a mere continuation of it. Memory on the other hand seeks to form a sense of familiarity with the past “to serve changing needs.” One of those needs is to fit their memories into a framework that also pleasing to the society that they live in, and since people often rely on society to help them create their memories this creates what Thalen refers to as “paradox” that explains “why people reshape their memories even as they often insist that their memories are vivid, unchanging, and accurate.”¹¹ If a memory that occurs during the lifetime of the person living it is so malleable, then how malleable is a memory that is passed down from generation to generation? Historical memory is often shaped by a wide verity of factors as it is transmitted from the generation that lived the event to future generations often codified by traditions and reinforced by society and various forms of media. However, this does little to explain why memory has such a strong hold on societies. Thalen argues that memories “provide security, authority legitimacy, and finally identity in the present.”¹² In this way memory reinforces the idea that the past is a familiar and intimately knowable thing that lacks the constant process of revision and reinterpretation that is a hallmark of the historical process. To put it another way, “Memory is owned, history interpreted.”¹³ If, as Carr has pointed out, history is a negotiated agreement between a historians facts and his interpretation of those facts;

¹⁰ Sam Wineburg “Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts” *Phi Delta Kappan* 92 No.4 (December 2010) : 83.

¹¹ Thalen, 1123.

¹² Thalen, 1126.

¹³ Blight, 243

memory is a clear bending of the facts, through a constant process of remembering, reshaping, and forgetting, to suit a particular interpretation created by society to make sense of and interpret anything from a specific event to a series of events. This leads to a creation of a myth that, according to Roland Barthes, “organizes a worlds that is without contradictions... a world... wallowing in the evident” and that history has a “blissful clarity.”¹⁴ On a broad level this myth could be interpreted as national memory as citizens come together to define their vision of a national past that while not homogenous still contains “common denominators that overcome on the symbolic level real social and political differences to create an imagined community.”¹⁵ This definition highlights the complexity of memory and how even by looking at the top most layer of memory in a society there is still a deep complexity in how memory is constructed. Therefore it is important to use this understanding of the difference between history and memory to see how one can incorporate it in to history.

By looking at memory as a constructed narrative that often uses a symbolic language to convey a memory and sense of familiarity with the past that have a history since these symbols change over time and are lost or given new meanings as each generation leaves its mark. This leaves an important question: How do you study memory in a historical context? Maurice Halbwachs in his book *The Collective Memory* argued that memory is a construction based on the individual relying on society to help him interpret and understand his own memories, as mentioned earlier in the paper.¹⁶ However this particular interpretation of memory, while highlighting the importance of the group

¹⁴ Qtd. in Blight, 241.

¹⁵ Alon Confino “Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method”. *The American Historical Review* 102 No. 5 (December 1997): 1401.

¹⁶ Thalen, 1122.

in studying memory it fails to account for the individual beyond his role as a member of the group. One must instead return to the definition of national memory to see how memory is not one singular group interpretation, but rather a compromise of various different viewpoints coming together to find some common ground. Historian Alon Confino argues the memory is a useful tool in linking together the “relationship between the social, the political and the cultural” while also serving as “an explanatory device that links representation and social experience.”¹⁷ Memory has the potential to look at an event as more than an historical occurrence but as a lived event that had consequences beyond the day that it happened. Therefore it is important to look at various groups and their role in forming the larger narrative of a regional memory to see what effects their experiences have had in that negotiated construction.

In order to look at memory as a consequence of a lived event, particularly the formation of the Lost Cause, this paper will look at Confederate Veterans and their role in the formation of Confederate memory. While recent works on veterans, such as *Marching Home: Union Veterans and their Unending Civil War* by Brian Mathew Jordan and *The Won Cause: White and Black Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* by Barbara A. Gannon, have focused on Union veterans and their attempts to adjust to civilian life and their memories of the war. Little has been done to look at these issues from the perspective of the returning Confederate soldier; therefore this paper will discuss the impact that Confederate veterans had on Southern culture and Memory. However, given the fact that Confederate veterans did not join together in a national group until the 1890's, this paper will look at veterans in the state of Texas as a case study of how veterans contributed to the greater process of remembering the Civil war.

¹⁷ Confino, 1402.

The first chapter will achieve this by looking at the political activities of returning veterans. By focusing on the attempts by veterans and other white Southerners to reassert control over the South during Federal occupation, the first chapter will explore the political aspects of memory in the state of Texas. As Southerners used laws and clandestine violence to oppose the aims of Reconstruction, they began to appeal to a version of the war that would eventually become part of the Lost Cause mythology and to a white supremacist understanding of antebellum life. After the end of Reconstruction, white Southerners incorporated their memories of the period into the Lost Cause myth as they celebrated the political supremacy of Jim Crow. Therefore, by connecting how memory influenced the violence and political reprisals against freedmen in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, this chapter explores veterans' role in the formation of the Lost Cause.

The second chapter will focus on Texas veterans long after they retire the politically active roles of their youth to become the role models of the Lost Cause. However, this prominent position came at the cost of being beholden to the standards of Southern notions of manliness, dependency, and charity. By being both the paragons, and victims, of Southern notions of what a Confederate veteran should be, Texas veterans took part of a larger process of veneration that placed their "duty" toward the Confederacy into a growing definition of "Americanism."

Only by understanding the cultural memories created by veterans can society come to terms with the legacy of the Confederacy in both our culture and our public spaces. Event such as Charlottesville did not occur in a vacuum; rather they occur organically over time as each generation makes its mark on the legacy of the

Confederacy. Therefore it is important to understand how certain groups process and remember past events so that one can understand how they impact the present in such a profound way.

CHAPTER II

Changing the Meaning of Defeat: Confederate Veterans and the Formation of the Lost Cause Narrative in Reconstruction Texas

It was the third Monday in August, 1866, when the Grand Jury of Victoria County, Texas, decided to charge Franklin Smith and William Stanley, both identified as “‘freedmen’,” with murdering “willfully and of their malice aforethought” one William Walker “with force and arms.” According to the Grand Jury, the two freedmen attacked and murdered Mr. Walker with bayonets attached to the end of their rifles.¹⁸ Given the description of these two men and the weapons they used to supposedly kill Walker, one might assume that these two men were part of a United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiment present in Texas to enforce the terms of the Federal occupation of the state after the end of the Civil War. If this is indeed the case, then this indictment is just one small part of the overall struggle for Southern political sovereignty over the rights of freedmen and the political goals of Reconstruction.

Following the end of the Civil War, Southerners were bitter over the end of the conflict and worried about the changes that federal Reconstruction would bring to the newly defeated South. With the 13th Amendment ending the practice of slavery and the actions of agencies such as the Freedmen’s Bureau curtailing Southern attempts to control the newly freed African-American population, many Southerners worried that they would no longer have control over their states. As the case against the two freedmen soldiers show, the presence of armed African Americans enforcing the new state of affairs proved to be worrying for Southerners as well. In order to combat the destruction

¹⁸ Grand Jury Bill, State of Texas vs. Grand Jury The State of Texas Vs. Franklin Smith (Freedman), William Stanly (Freedman). Box 2, Folder 16. Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

of the antebellum racial status-quo, many Southerners used political maneuvering and clandestine violence to restore the old South. By looking at how the South, and in particular Southern veterans, attempted to undo the changes created by the war, one can see both an appeal to an imagined racial past and the groundwork for the state's rights narrative of the Lost Cause myth.

According to historian Gregory P. Downs, in the early days of federal occupation, the army took a different approach in each area that it was stationed. In some places that meant working with local officials to maintain order, while in others that often meant the removal of local official in favor of appointing new ones that would work with the military. However, the biggest change that the army brought with them as they spread throughout the newly defeated South was confirmation of the end of slavery. As the army entered Texas, the Freedmen's Bureau came with them to help oversee emancipation in the area and the army was given the authority "to take control of any cases involving freedpeople." Texas was placed under the authority of General Phillip Sheridan, and the state itself was the least war-ravaged of all the other southern states. However, the attentions of the army in the Texas were split as "western settlers asked for soldiers against the Comanche, and eastern freedpeople for the troops against the reimposition of planter power." As Downs points out, the most practical understanding of emancipation in the immediate aftermath of the war was defined "by proximity to someone who recognized and would defend it."¹⁹

With the attention of the army divided, it is easy to see why violence erupted so quickly in Texas. According to historian Barry Crouch, "geography, the frontier ... and

¹⁹ Gregory P. Downs. *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and The Ends of War*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.), 29,30, 47, 144; Barry Crouch and Larry Madaras. *Dance of Freedom: Texas African Americans During Reconstruction*. (Austin TX: University of Texas Press, 2007,) 100

inadequate support from the army of the bureau all consorted to make rural blacks general targets for white violence.” Furthermore, Crouch argues that a large motivator for violence in the state came from the fact that “Texas whites resented black political equality, a free labor ideology, and more equitable social relations.”²⁰ This anger toward African-Americans was further compounded by the presence of USCT regiments active in the region. Downs points that black soldiers played a huge role in encouraging freedpeople to express their new found freedom and :taught freedpeople to expect voting rights and land redistribution.”²¹ As a result USCT regiments were a full endorsement of emancipation being armed African Americans in the service of the Federal government, the confirmation of most antebellum nightmares. As African-Americans began to organize more freely in the south they became more of a target to white southerners, Crouch points out that death rates among freedmen increased during the period when Republicans attempted to gain control of Reconstruction.

This conflict between Southerners and freedmen was part and parcel of a much larger struggle over the meaning of the war. Historian Charles Dew, points out that in the immediate aftermath of the war, one can see notable Confederate figures, such as Alexander H. Stephens and Jefferson Davis proclaim states rights as the primary motivation for secession rather than slavery. Davis himself claimed that, “The truth remains intact and incontrovertible, that the existence of African servitude was in no wise the cause of the conflict, only an incident.” The true cause of the conflict, according to

²⁰ Crouch, 102.

²¹ Downs, 53.

Davis, was the struggle over for “‘ constitutional government,’ for ‘the supremacy of the law,’ and for ‘the natural rights of man.’”²²

In the midst of this chaotic time, the average Confederate veteran had to make sense of his changed home. Historian Gerald E. Linderman argues that “returned soldiers felt impelled to turn rapidly from the war.” This was because they “became subject to an acceleration of selective memory, that strong psychological propensity to suppress the painful.” This lead veterans to enter into a state of “hibernation” that would last until the 1880’s.²³ However, by claiming that veterans sought to turn away from the war, Linderman ignores the immediate necessity of dealing with the effects of Southern defeat. Instead this chapter argues that veterans transformed the meaning of defeat through the struggle against federal occupation in Texas. The massive changes on the Confederate home front demanded that veterans respond to the “threat” posed by occupation and emancipation. The urgent nature of these two “threats” denied veterans the opportunity to retreat from the war’s tragedy, but rather forced them to fight in an attempt to restore the antebellum status-quo, in which they succeeded, to a certain extent.

As this chapter will show, the struggle over the meaning of the war and the conflict’s consequences intertwined with one another in very important ways. Conflict between Southern whites and African Americans showcase clear Southern fears concerning racial relations; however, the struggle to assert supremacy over their former slaves was done in a manner as to justify not only slavery, but the act of secession as well. Texas became an ideal place for Confederate resistance to Reconstruction. By

²² Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*. (Charlottesville VA: University of Virginia Press, 2001,) 17,

²³ Gerald E. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War*. (New York: The Free Press, 1987,) 267, 268, 280.

that voice; in the outrage southern citizens felt at the imposition of Federal troops in their society, to the political sphere as governors and state legislatures attempted to resist Federal power in a fashion that echoes the antebellum arguments concerning states rights. The new war over the peace resulted in a Jim Crow South that rewrote the history of the war in their image through reunions, monuments, and histories glorifying the Lost Cause. According to historian Gaines M. Foster, a “Confederate tradition” emerged in the 1870’s and 1880’s.²⁵ The foundation of this “Confederate tradition” lies in the early conflicts and confrontations after the war. However, this process took place on a state by state basis, as each ex-Confederate government went through its own struggles to mitigate the two consequences of the war: the enfranchisement of ex-slaves, and the Federal occupation.

* * * * *

Even before the destruction of the Confederacy, Texas refused to submit to federal authority. In a joint resolution passed in November of 1864, the state legislature began to circulate their version of the Lost Cause when they asserted “That it is well for the people of the North to understand even at this late day, that the Southern States did not secede from the Union upon any question such as the mere preservation of the slave property of their citizens.” Instead, Texans claimed that it rebelled because the Confederacy was made up of “Free and sovereign States, [and] they were resolved to preserve their freedom and their sovereignty. They were free to govern themselves as they and not as other saw fit.”²⁶ The legislature’s statement is significant for many reasons. First, one can see that this statement is a clear attempt by the State Legislature to

²⁵ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, The Lost Cause, and The Emergence of the New South*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987,) 17-18.

²⁶ Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel. *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* Volume 5, book, 1898; Austin, Texas. (texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph6727/; accessed December 3, 2017), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; 826.

frame the war as a struggle for states' rights, a key component of the Lost Cause mythology. This claim runs directly counter to the assertion made by "A Declaration of the Causes Which Impel the State of Texas to secede from the Federal Union," which argued that one of the reasons the war was started was because the North "demand[ed] the abolition of negro slavery throughout the confederacy, the recognition of political equality between the white and the negro races, and avow their determination to press on their crusade against us, so long as a negro slave remains in these States."²⁷ This statement also proclaims the State of Texas' defiance of the authority of the federal Government and the state's desire to resist the Union, even after the surrender as can be seen by the actions of individuals after the war.

Thomas Jewett Goree, a Texan who was a member of General Longstreet's staff, kept a diary that is revealing about the condition of the South after the war and how the war was perceived. For example, on the way home, Goree did not have to pay for his accommodations. When Goree asked one of his hosts for his bill, his host replied "No Charge against men who have fought the battles of my country."²⁸ Another Confederate, R.T Cole of the 4th Alabama, mentioned how he and other members of their regiment were treated to dinner one evening in Baltimore by Confederate sympathizers.²⁹ These events reveal the way how strongly people in the South felt about the Confederacy and how willing they were to support, albeit in a small way, to aid and support the remnants of the Confederate Army. This pro-Confederate support both official and un-official is

²⁷ A declaration of the causes which impel the State of Texas to secede from the Federal Union, February 2 1861. *Texas State Library and Archives Commission*. Accessed 18/13/17. <https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ref/abouttx/secession/2feb1861.html>

²⁸ Travel Diary of Thomas Jewett Goree, Thomason Room, Sam Houston State University

²⁹ R.T Cole. *From Huntsville to Appomattox: R.T Cole's History of 4th Regiment, Alabama Volunteer Infantry, C.S.A., Army of Northern Virginia*. Ed. Jeffery D. Stocker. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996.), 196.

important in understanding the difficulty the Federal Government had in enforcing the policies of Republican Reconstruction in the South.

However, before analyzing Texans' behavior after the war, this chapter must first note the uniqueness of the state compared to the other rebellious states. First, the Confederacy was one of the last states to be invaded by Union forces before the Surrender. Furthermore, the cooperation between federal troops and state officials was necessary due to the increase in Native American raids during this period as well as increased concern over the border with Mexico. Another way that Texas was unique was that during the war, slavery expanded during this period with slave-owners moving their holdings away from Federal armies. Texas was thus the last Southern state to experience the effects of emancipation.³⁰ Nonetheless, Texans both officially and unofficially fought against the imposition of federal authority on state affairs, primarily with respect to the condition of freedmen. For example, in the 1866 constitution, the right to vote was given to "Every free male person who shall have attained the age of twenty one years... (descendants of Africans excepted) shall be deemed a qualified elector." Furthermore, "No person shall be a representative unless he be a white citizen of the United States, and shall be a qualified elector at the time of his election," with a similar proviso for senators. Other state laws attempted to even circumvent the 13th Amendment, such as Chapter LXIII of the 11th State Legislature entitled "An Act establishing a General Apprentice Law, and defining the obligation of Master and Mistress and Apprentice." This law allowed land owners to bind young freepersons into a slave-like apprenticeship and even gave the "Master" the legal authority to corporally punish the "Apprentice" who legally

Downs. 27-28.

could not run away from the “Master” without punishment.³¹ Even without this law, freedmen were pushed into unfair and exploitative contracts with their former masters under unfair labor contract laws. The Cavitt family, a slave holding family from Wheelock, Texas (near College Station), forced its emancipated slaves into illegal contracts. According to one contract, an ex-slave by the name of John and his “Wife Adeline, and my family comprised of six children... will abide and remain with ... J.C Cavitt, “[to] perform such labor as he may require of us.”³² This law was opposed by the Freemen’s Bureau and made effectively useless by 1867.³³ While agreements like this were not always the norm throughout Reconstruction and its aftermath, tenant farming was. One tax record from Cavitt’s estate indicated that he had “354 acres in Ten Laborers,” indicating a continuation of using possible freedmen labor to tend the lands of the former Cavitt Plantation.³⁴

This desire to keep freedmen and other peoples of African descent in a state of inferiority to whites can be interpreted through white Southerners’ wartime goal to oppose the abolition of slavery. According to historian Chandra Manning, Confederate patriotism was “based firmly on white men’s perceptions of the best material and ideological interests of their loved one, which they assumed to depend on the survival of slavery.” A common fear of white southerners during the antebellum period was that emancipated slaves would “Terrorize, murder, and violate vulnerable white women and children” in violation of conceptions of white manhood which was tied to one’s ability to

³¹ Gammel, 860-861, 979-980.

³² Contract Between “John” and J.C Cavitt, Cavitt Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M.

³³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Carl H. Moneyhon, "Black Codes," accessed December 13, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/jsb01>.

³⁴ A List of Lands owned as Taxable property as agent in Tex. May 1873. J.C Cavitt, Cavitt Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 3, Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M.

protect ones family.³⁵ In 1863, State Senator and Confederate Officer James Webb Throckmorton, who would later serve as Governor of the State from 1865-1867, wrote that “If we fail in this struggle, we become the most degraded people on the face of earth. Our own slaves will be put on equality with us by our Masters. Nay, they will become our Taskmasters.”³⁶ Nothing emphasized a realization of white fears more than presence of USCT regiments in Texas. One telling episode that reveals these fears comes from a letter written in 1866 by Roth D. Lippett a merchant, to Governor James W. Throckmorton, a former confederate cavalry officer.³⁷ In his letter, Lippett explained how, “in Victoria, I had a difficulty with a freedman, and wounded him with a knife, not severely, for he was up in a few days, and not in the least is he disabled,” and as a result “The Negro Soldiers (the garrison of Victoria are negro troops) tried to arrest me, at the time, but I made my escape.” Lippett refusal to be arrested by the federal troops was based on a previous experience where he was “Detained without a hearing for eight days, and daily threatened with a trail by Military commission,” until he bribed a district Provost Marshall to be released. As a result of him resisting arrest, “The Negros, by order of the Post Commander, took possession of my wagons [that he had with him at the time], and robbed them of a large amount of the goods.”³⁸ As a result, Lippett pleaded with Throckmorton to intercede on his behalf. This letter was forwarded to the governor on behalf of C. Cosner, the Chief Justice of Victoria County, who in a small note below the previous letter urged the governor to “Power to stop all military interference with

³⁵ Chandra Manning. *What This Cruel War Was Over: Soldiers Slavery and The Civil War*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2007.) 6.

³⁶ Qtd. in Kenneth Wayne Howel, *Texas Confederate Reconstruction Governor: James Webb Throckmorton*. (College Station TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008.), 85.

³⁷ Letter from Roth D. Lippett to Gov. J.W Throckmorton, Victoria, August 20, 1866. Box 1, Folder 15. Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

³⁸ Ibid.

Civil Authority.” This appeal is noteworthy because it showcases anger on behalf of whites across the state towards the Federal Troops for interfering with Southern attempts to restore some semblance of the status quo.

Another example of white intransigence is illustrated in a letter to Sherod Townsend, the Sheriff of Bosque County, from Philip Howard of the Freedmen’s Bureau. In the letter, Howard demands Townsend “To deliver the Negro Boy Daniel Jones whom you hold as a prisoner in your Custody into my Custody as a United States Officer over the Freedmen in said county of Bosque.”³⁹ A subsequent copy of Howard’s orders sent of Gov. Throckmorton by the Sherriff in protest towards the actions of what he refers to as the “Negro Bureau” shows that Howard was empowered to bring Jones before a military tribunal “If you think the Boy confined for attempting to commit a rape is unjustly held and there is no good grounds for the action of the Civil Courts in the case take it out of their hands and try it yourself.”⁴⁰ In response to all of this, J.K Helton, the Chief Justice of Bosque County, much like his counterpart in Victoria County, wrote to Throckmorton to protest against what they perceived to be unjust federal interference with local affairs. In his letter Helton, assures the governor that the court has a right to prosecute because “The Grand Jury found a True Bill against [the] Negro Fellow for committing or attempting to commit a Rape on a young (White) Lady in this County.” Helton argues that in order for the state to peruse its right to prosecute and enforce the laws as they see fit that the trial be taken from Howard’s authority and instead authority given to a man

³⁹ Letter from Phillip Howard to Sherod Townsend, Bosque County, August 16, 1866. Box 1, Folder 15. Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

⁴⁰ Copy of Phillip Howards Orders by Sherod Townsend sent to Gov. J.W Throckmorton, August 21, 1866. . Box 1, Folder 16. Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

identified as Col. Burney a state senator.⁴¹ The way the State attempted to handle the case of Daniel Jones is particularly revealing for a number of reasons. The key component of the local authorities' attempts to prosecute Jones is the racial context in which the event lies, with a black man being accused of sexually assaulting a white woman: a clear violation of both Southern racial boundaries and traditional white male values. The second key component is the interference of the federal government in what local officials saw to be primarily their concern, given Helton's desire to hand over authority to a state senator rather than to an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. According to historian Elizabeth R. Varon, Southerners often generously interpreted the terms of parole set by U.S. Grant at Appomattox, especially the phrase claiming that "Parolees would 'not be disturbed by United States authority so long as they observe their parole' -[to mean that it] conferred political immunity on Lee" as well as the political systems of the South.⁴²

This imagined political immunity also extended to the state's belief that the political sovereignty of Texas entitled it to prosecute the soldiers who were there to enforce the will of the federal government. Take for example the arrest warrant issued by Bell County, Texas, asking for the arrest of one Lieutenant Carpenter so he could answer for the charge of murder.⁴³ In order for the state to make its case it even issued subpoenas ordering members of the 6th Regiment U.S. Cavalry to appear before the County court to

⁴¹ Letter from J.K. Helton, to Gov. J.W. Throckmorton, August 21st 1866. Box 1, Folder 16. Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

⁴² Elizabeth R. Varon, *Appomattox: Victory, Defeat, and Freedom at The End of the Civil War*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.) 191, 209.

⁴³ Arrest Warrant for Lt. Carpenter issued by the Sheriff of Travis County, Box 2, Folder 28 Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

testify against the Lieutenant.⁴⁴ By attempting to try Federal troops in a civilian court, local officials attempted to assert state authority, and the narrative of “state’s rights,” over the federal occupation, in a manner similar to the Daniel Jones case. The continuing conflict between the state government and the federal occupation lead General Sheridan to issue Special Order No. 105, expelling Gov. Throckmorton from office, given his longstanding opposition to freedmen and the presence of federal troops. The order itself considered Throckmorton to be “an impediment to the reconstruction of that state under the law.” He was then replaced E.M Pease who supported limited suffrage for freedmen. However, by 1872 the Democratic party was back in office when Richard Coke defeated Republican incumbent E.J Davis thus leading the state to become “redeemed.”⁴⁵

This attempt by ex-confederates to assert a white supremacist government was not just limited to the official sphere, but also extended to the unofficial, through violent tactics against freedmen and federal soldier alike. According to testimony provided by Lieutenant Wilson Miller, who was from a USCT regiment located near Corpus Christi, to the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, “Occasional difficulties have occurred between some of our officers and the officers and men late of the rebel army who would give utterance to their feelings of hostility to the United States government.” Furthermore, there appeared to be “a general feeling among that class of men [Confederate veterans] that in a few years, sooner or later, and probably very soon, they would have an opportunity to try this question of rebellion again; that the late war did not settle it.” He says that when he and other soldiers first arrived in Texas, he found “the

⁴⁴ Subpoena for the Men of the 6th U.S Calvary, Travis County TX, Sept. 1866. Box 2 Folder 28 Texas Governor James Webb Throckmorton records. Archives and Information Services Division, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

⁴⁵ Howell 155, 177.

feeling generally to be that of acceptance of the fortunes of war,” but as time went on, “this class of people were becoming more and more outspoken in their bitterness against the United States government.” When asked by Congress why this feeling had once again emerged among former Confederate soldiers, Miller responded that because “the general disposition of the government [was] to be lenient”, a possible reference to President Johnson’s plan towards Reconstruction, as well as having the support of Southern sympathizers, many Texans felt they “Could once more get the political power in the hands of the South.” From the Southern point of view, this might be interpreted to mean that through Presidential Reconstruction, Southerners felt that they had the right to their own legal sovereignty using “states rights” to defend their actions.⁴⁶

Miller also noticed that “there appeared to be a general hostility among rebels in and out of the army, against the negroes, not only from the old prejudice against the negro as a inferior creature, but an active hostility growing out of this war.”⁴⁷ Major General David S. Stanley echoed Miller statements when he claimed that due to leniency on behalf of the Government that people near “Sequin, Columbus, Gonzales, and such points, you will find them bitterly hostile to the Government, evincing great disinclination to submit to the results of the war,” and in Gonzales he even reported finding Confederates still wearing their uniforms albeit without any signifiers of rank. Furthermore, Stanley acknowledged the danger of these ex-Confederates by noting “that every one of them has either a six-shooter or a musket. They keep the muskets hid, but every man down there travelling through the country has a six-shooter. They never turned in their arms, they concealed them.” While the Stanley may have over exaggerated this

⁴⁶ Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Sub Committee on Florida, Louisiana and Texas, 39th Congress, 1st session, 1865, 44-45

⁴⁷ Ibid, 45.

statement, it never the less indicates how ready, veteran or not, these ex-Confederates were to fight against federal authority.⁴⁸

In a series of seventy six reports reported from Austin and various parts of Travis County, over twenty reports were confirmed cases of whites attacking freedmen in Travis County. Another five reports indicate violence against U.S soldiers stationed in the area. The majority of the crimes committed range from assault and battery, to the murdering of freedmen and soldiers. Certain reports indicated a dedicated level of violence and antagonism towards Freedmen and the federal institutions supporting them. For example, on June 30, 1868, the Bureau reported the burning of a Freedmen's school, which was believed to be "done maliciously by some party or parties unknown." Another report from Travis County, from January 31, 1868, reported the murder of someone only identified as "U.S Solider" by O. Wilcox, who according to the report only "shot the man because he said he wanted to kill a Yankee anyhow."⁴⁹ Another crime against freedmen comes from the testimony of Lieutenant Colonel H.S Hall of the 43rd U.S Colored Troops. According to Hall, the victim was a freedwoman only identified as Lucy, who was murdered for refusing to punish her child whom a white woman accused of stealing from her. As a result the white woman then conferred with two men that Hall identified as "discharged rebel soldiers" who murdered the freedwoman. The chief Justice could not issue a warrant for the arrest of the two men because "there was no testimony in the case but negro testimony."⁵⁰ This practice was made legal according to Chapter LIX passed by the Tenth Legislature which amended the legal code to read "Persons of color shall not

⁴⁸ Ibid, 40.

⁴⁹ Freedmen's Bureau Registered Reports of Murders and Outrages - Travis County, Texas. *Freedmen's Bureau Online*. <http://freedmensbureau.com/texas/travis.htm>. Accessed 12/13/2017.

⁵⁰ Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Sub Committee on Florida, Louisiana and Texas, 47.

testify, except where the prosecution is against a person who is a person of color; or where the offence is charged to have been committed against the person or property of a person of color” which was passed in October of 1886.⁵¹

This violence fits in to the interpretation of the Civil war espoused by the joint resolution passed by the state legislature in 1864. To Texas State legislators, such violence was justified because they were defending what they saw as their political and racial sovereignty. In this way one can see the a Reconstruction based origin for the Lost Cause legacy through the usage of states’ rights, using the “outrages” committed by freedmen and federal soldiers as a justification for this legal and guerrilla war. One cultural artifact of this way of thinking is the 1915 film *Birth of A Nation*. In the film, reconstruction is framed the imposition of racial and political anarchy by Radical Reconstruction, where black soldiers often harassed white Southerners in a manner similar to what Roth Lippert described in his letter. In order to combat these “injustices” Ben Cameron, the descendant of an antebellum planter family, and former Confederate officer forms the Klan to combat the black soldiers and radical politicians who were ruining the South.⁵² While the film is obviously false and reflects the views of the generations after the men and women who lived through the Civil War, but it provides a tool to look at how this violence was justified after it occurred and perhaps through this research how people felt while it occurred. This research has shown how ex-Confederates, both in and outside of the disbanded Confederate armies, used violence and discriminatory politics to set up the foundation for the rise of the Jim Crow South. It is

⁵¹ Gammel, 977.

⁵² *Birth of a Nation*, directed by D.W Griffith (David W. Griffith Productions, 1915), DVD (British Film Institute, 2015).

also important to note the blend of antebellum notions of race and the beginnings of the Lost Cause myth to justify violence and discrimination.

CHAPTER III

“Keep the Fires of Memory Burning:” Confederate Veterans and the Creation of Southern “Americanism”

In the final issue of the *Confederate Veteran*, which by that point in time was an organ for both the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), a man from West Virginia proclaimed Confederate veterans superior to their Union counterparts. In an article titled, “The Time Demands –Men!,” John J. Chase, proclaimed that he “was always amazed at the vigor of Confederate veterans.” According to Chase, the average Confederate’s back “seemed much stronger than the backs of the Union veteran, and their expression was correspondingly better.” This was because, Chase argues, the “Union veteran, with but few exceptions, was merely existing on his pension.” On the other hand, “The sturdy Confederate was plugging away at his business, walking straight in the sight of God and man.”⁵³

Chase’s article, suggests a way of thinking about Confederate veterans as more industrious and virtuous in their bearing and conduct in the aftermath of the war than their counterparts in the north. While it is true that because of their allegiance to the cause of succession Confederate veterans were afforded a pension only if their home state decided to issue one, many veterans struggled with issues relating to their service. Whether it was complications from disease, a debilitating amputation, or the mental stresses of a soldier’s life in the Civil War, many soldiers came home with problems that made integrating back into their civilian lives difficult.⁵⁴ However, as Chase illustrates, Southerners used their victory over reconstruction to glorify the homecoming of these

⁵³ John J. Chase, “The Time Demands- Men!” *The Confederate Veteran*. Vol. 40 No. 12. December, 1932.

⁵⁴ Brian Craig Miller, *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South*. (Athens GA: University of Georgia Press, 2015,) 1-2.

veterans and their attempts to rebuild their lives without any outside aid, despite the presence of state-based pensions later in the nineteenth century.

At the end of the war, a serious problem facing the newly conquered southern states was the issue of how to deal with the wounded and diseased remnants of the defeated Confederate armies. In his book *Empty Sleeves: Amputation in the Civil War South*, historian Brian Craig Miller argues that one of the hurdles that faced homecoming veterans was a cultural one. Miller argues that during the antebellum period, “the white male physique was the defining marker of manhood.” As a result, the South needed to reconstruct what it meant when it referred to these victims of the wars cruelty within an agrarian society that prized physical labor. With the loss of one or more limbs, many veterans were required to become more dependent on their loved ones to care for them. As a result of their failure to live up to antebellum notion of masculinity, many of these veterans “ended up on the sidelines in Lost Cause memory, finding limited help for their disabilities, ... [as] state governments initially remained hesitant to create an entirely new class of dependents.”⁵⁵ Many of the programs and support systems constructed in a state like Virginia, as Jeffery McClurken explores in his case study of Confederate veterans in that state, often required the veteran to showcase a need for state-based aid with restrictions being slowly eased as veterans got older and older.⁵⁶

On the other hand, while the public sidelined wounded veterans, Confederate veterans took a position of prominence in Lost Cause memory. In the early twentieth century, Confederate veterans exchanged their youthful political activism and campaigns of racial terror for their role as symbols of a true “Americanism,” rather than the active

⁵⁵ Miller, 5, 10.

⁵⁶ Jeffery W. McClurken, *Take Care of the Living: Reconstructing Confederate Veteran Families in Virginia*. (Charlottesville VA, 2009,) 145.

role they fulfilled in establishing the Lost Cause in the year following the war. Together with groups such as the UDC, the UCV took a leading role in promoting the lost cause legacy. One of the main stances of these two groups was to “glorify the valor of Southern soldiers and to defend their honor as defensive warriors who were never truly beaten in battle.”⁵⁷ One interpretation of looking at the role of veterans in the formation of the Lost Cause comes from scholar Charles Reagan Wilson’s idea of a “civil religion” dedicated to the Lost Cause. Wilson argues that the Confederate army was portrayed as “carrying morality and religion into the postwar world, as well as maintaining those elements during the war itself.” In essence these veterans became the protectors and propagator of “old-time Confederate virtue.”⁵⁸ Therefore, veterans would be used as an example should others find the society around them lacking in the antebellum notions of good character that these men were supposed to represent. Another historian, Gaines M. Foster, linked the participation of groups like the UCV to what he referred to as the “the Confederate celebration.” In this “celebration” of the Confederacy the common soldier who fought the Civil War was associated with “the economic and social revival of the South after the war.” This created, Foster argues, the idea of the Confederate veteran as “a solid, law-abiding, loyal man.”⁵⁹ While Foster’s argument indicates that veterans were used to glorify the progress of the South after the war and Wilson argues that veterans were used as role models for antebellum modes of behavior, it is clear that veterans had an important role in the formation of a post-war society.

⁵⁷ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 272, 274.

⁵⁸ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*. (Athens GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1980,) 2, 44.

⁵⁹ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987,) 123, 124

It is the purpose this chapter is to look at how the South glorified an idealized version of the average Confederate veteran, while at the same time mistreating his wounded comrades. As veterans grew older, more and more financial support was made available to them as they became elderly and thus more worthy of social support. By juxtaposing the methods by which veterans were treated against the rhetoric used to glorify them, this study will explore issues relating to how southern veterans fit into society, as well as issues concerning Southern definitions of masculinity and charity. This study will accomplish this by using statements made by the United Confederate Veterans, the reunions of a Texas encampment of the UCV and applications to a Texas pension program for Veterans.

* * * * *

It was a warm August afternoon in Hays County, Texas, but that did not stop many people from attending the thirtieth reunion of the Camp Ben McCulloch Encampment of the UCV in 1927. Lying in the area between Austin and San Antonio, this thirtieth Reunion drew in a large number of important guests including the Governor of Texas, Dan Moody. In a speech paying tribute to the elderly veterans in attendance, the governor also took the opportunity to “explain in detail a plan he favors by which Texas can build roads of concrete or asphalt rather than gravel roads.” The fact that the governor felt that comfortable speaking about his political agenda at an event meant to glorify the remnants of the Confederacy suggests that politicians wanted to associate themselves, and their goals, with a symbol of Southern pride. Another speaker at the event, State Senator Thomas B. Love, argued that it was important to support the veterans of the Confederacy. In his speech, Love declared that “There is no public policy in which

the people of Texas have been stronger or more strongly committed than that of the payment of pensions to the Confederate soldiers and widows.”⁶⁰ This is because by this point in time the elderly veterans became symbols of a bygone era which Southerners wished to celebrate. These reunions were used as much for educating young Southerners about the actions of these men, as they were political.

At another reunion, one of the guest speakers present spoke to the audience about why the veterans in the audience fought. The speaker, a Reverend D.E Hawke, proclaimed that “You old Confederates fought for constitutional government.” Furthermore, Hawke rhapsodized about “the conduct of the ex-Confederate soldier after the war in redeeming our southland from the ravages of war and the misrule of skalawags.”⁶¹ Such claims were not unusual by this point in time. As historian David Blight points out, by the 1880’s groups such as the UDC and UCV had already incorporated “their victory over Reconstruction” into “their narrative of Confederate Heritage,” and “Lost Cause orators moved from mournful to more triumphant tones.”⁶²

A theme of this celebration of Confederate triumphs was the maintenance of white supremacy after the war. One speaker present at the 1923 reunion took the time in his speech to praise the “people of the South” for being the “Purest Anglo Saxons.” The Hon. D. Ellis of Hallettsville argued that Southerners were “responsible, in large measure, for success in the World War” and that it was to the nation’s credit that “we had

⁶⁰ “Camp Ben McCulloch Reunion was Abundant Success: 30th Annual Gathering was Best Ever, Fine Program, Large Attendance.” 1927. Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶¹ “The Reunion: Excellent Program, Good Attendance” 1917 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶² Blight, 265.

a Southern man for president during the great struggle.”⁶³ Veterans themselves made similar claims. According to an article published in the *Confederate Veteran*, the South’s political, social and moral virtue comes from its heritage from England, and “Of all the British colonies Virginia was the most English.” This heritage is important, the article argues, because “the white people of the South are not only American, they are... the descendents of a race which... had been known in the world’s history as the exemplar and champion of the personal purity, personal independence, and political liberty.” The North, by contrast, is described as filled with “the hybrid population of Russians, Poles, Italians [etc.]” who do not have any conceptions of freedom and personal liberty and thus pose a danger to American Democracy. It is therefore for the benefit of the entirety of the nation that “The Anglo-Saxon Supremacy in the South has never been overcome” because “the principles and the institutions of American Liberty will find their most loyal and steadfast support in the twelve millions of Southern Anglo-Saxon Americans.”⁶⁴

These claims speak to a central point of Confederate memory as it turned in to the twentieth century. Because Confederate veterans fought for racial purity and white supremacy, speakers at the reunion implied that the figure of the rebel was a necessary example for the nation as a whole. Speakers insisted that a racially segregated South was necessary for the wellbeing of the nation. One speaker at the Camp Ben McCulloch made this connection between the Confederacy and Southern virtue by using the first part of his speech paying tribute to the Confederate Veterans in attendance and spent “the larger

⁶³ “The Reunion: Largest Attendance and Best Program in Years, Twenty Sixth Annual Reunion of Camp Ben M’Culloch, United Confederate Veterans was Abundant Success.” 1923, Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶⁴ “The South Is American” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol.2 No. 2, February 1894.

portion of his speech” urging “the importance of character building.”⁶⁵ It was important for Southern society to stay true to those virtues by maintaining a Lost Cause history of the war alive even after the last veteran passed away. L.A Smith, a speaker at the 1922 reunion, complained “of the inaccuracy of many of the histories of the war which do not do justice to the South.” Smith ended his speech by tying it back to his audience and “paid very eloquent tribute to the heroism of the Confederate soldier... and held up his [the veteran’s] conduct as worthy of the emulation of the younger generation.”⁶⁶

Veterans made a similar point about the need to maintain a Southern perspective of the war. One article published in the *Confederate Veteran* claimed that “One of the most pressing needs of our whole country is a history of the United State... written from a Southern standpoint.” The author did not want, “a prejudiced, partisan account of our political and social life, and of our civil war, but a clear, vivid story of the difficulties, efforts and growth of our people, in the light of those great ideas and principles” of American democracy that the South represented in the eyes of the Lost Causers. The article claims that what the country needs “is a history of the country from the beginning, which shall show the wonderful part the South had in its conquest and development, and the patriotic sprit and great sacrifices made by the South for the Union.”⁶⁷ Here, one can see a central argument of Confederate celebration; the South had become a model for the rest of the United States in the eyes of the Lost Cause. The principles of the Confederacy and the South, and the principles of the United States are compatible, they seems to say, and can serve as a model for the rest of the nation. In a similar vein the Confederate

⁶⁵ “Reunion This Year is the Best Ever” 1924 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶⁶ “The Reunions: Camp Ben M’Culloch Camp U.C.V” 1916 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶⁷ “Need of a United States History” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol. 2 No. 4 April, 1894.

veteran became an ideal citizen worthy of becoming a role model for future generations of Americans.

Not surprisingly, the Confederate reunion speakers marginalized the presence of slavery in the South. In an address entitled “Education,” Rev. V.A Godbey explained that slavery was “inherited” from England.⁶⁸ Such a defense of the South fits into the definition of what Robert Penn Warren calls the “Great Alibi.” According to Warren, the Great Alibi allows the South, “explains, condones, and transmutes everything.” By claiming that slavery was a condition forced upon them, participants in these reunions made their Confederate heroes victims of history. Since that is the case, Warren argues, then “the Southerner therefore is guiltless; [he] is, in fact an innocent victim of a cosmic conspiracy.”⁶⁹ While men and women from that time would not use such language to define what they are doing, the intent behind such claims seems to be clear. By absolving the men of the Confederate Army of the sin of slavery, men like Godbey preserve the heroic qualities of these men by protecting their character from any moral blemish.

That the men of the Confederacy fought for a noble cause would have been readily apparent to any visitor to these reunions. One speaker at these reunions, Hal Brennon the head of the American Legion in the state of Texas, went so far as to compare the men who fought in World War I to the armies of the Confederacy. In Brennon’s speech, “he showed how the Confederate soldiers and the soldiers of the World War were alike in that one fought for the preservation of the rights of the states of a democracy and

⁶⁸ “The Reunion: Twentieth Annual Camp Ben McCulloch United Confederate Veterans” 1916 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁶⁹ Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*. (Lincoln NA: University of Nebraska Press, 1961,)54-56.

the others for the preservation of the rights of nations in an international democracy.”⁷⁰

By linking together the veterans of the First World War with the veterans of the Confederacy and the Lost Cause, Brennon implied that the South fought for a noble patriotic cause that should be celebrated. In fact after World War I, the American Legion became an official part of the Confederate reunion. This caused the three day reunion to be organized into three distinct programs one for each day. The first day was known as “Legion Day” and was dedicated to the veterans of World War I, with the program for the day organized and led by the local American Legion post. The second day was referred to as “Confederate Day” or sometimes “Old Soldiers Day” dedicated to the veterans themselves. The final day was “Sons and Daughters Day” and was dedicated to the UDC and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. The combination of two veterans groups for one reunion speaks to how important it was for Southerners to associate themselves with these veterans and provides another example for how the Confederacy became American. Furthermore, the presence of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and the UDC implies the importance of maintaining the lesson of Confederate Americanism from one generation to the next, once the Veterans themselves had passed on.

Attendance at these reunions was so noteworthy that one observer claimed that “If devotion to a cause is to be measured by the attention given to it,... then is the ‘Lost Cause’ enduringly enshrined in the hearts of these people [who attend the Camp Ben McCulloch reunions.]”⁷¹ According to the generation that came to encampment to see these veterans, their cause was not to stir up bitterness and resentment about the

⁷⁰ “1931 Camp Ben McCulloch Reunion Successful, Big Crowds, Fine Program, More than Forty Confederates Present” 1931 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁷¹ “Camp Ben McCulloch Reunion was Abundant Success: 30th Annual Gathering was Best Ever, Fine Program, Large Attendance.”

Confederate defeat, but rather to celebrate its cause. As the newspaper account of the 1925 reunion puts it “To those who participated [in the Civil War] and to their children and grandchildren the ‘war’ is just one of the world’s greatest adventures- that’s all.” Nevertheless, it was important to celebrate that “great adventure” because the men who participated in it were just and noble in the cause making the Confederate reunion “a good place to go- a sacred place.”⁷² It was because the veterans themselves were slowly dying of that interest in them spiked considerably. One newspaper account of the reunion gave a rather glowing account of why the reunions were important to southern society:

“The Confederate Army was composed of wonderful men-from them we have received a great heritage. Except that heritage which has come to us across the centuries from Calvary’s hill, this which we have received from our Confederate fathers is our most noblest and most sacred. While we live let us cherish it, let us exemplify it in our lives, and let us teach our children and our children’s children that the annals of the world tell of no other race of men who contended for so long a time against such tremendous odds... with only principles at stake.”

It is for this reason that men and woman of the south take the opportunity to engage with these veterans, the article argues, so that they may learn about this “great heritage” so they might “keep the fires of memory burning.”⁷³ From this almost reverential account one can see the cultural authority veterans must have had to elicit such response from those that attended the reunions. By the early half of the twentieth

⁷² “The Reunion: Twenty Eighth Annual Reunion of Camp Ben McCulloch Quite Successful.” 1925 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

⁷³ “Ben M’Culloch Reunion: Good Program, Large Attendance” 1933 Newspaper Clippings, Camp Ben McCulloch Confederate Veterans Reunion Collection, Series 1, Box 1, File 1

century, Confederate veterans had become a symbol for a supposedly bygone era virtue and decency. As a cultural symbol, these veterans were to serve as an example for future generations to strive for, or as measuring sticks showing how society failed to measure up depending on the speaker and the situation. However, this adulation came at a cost as society held them up as an example of southern manhood to the detriment of those who did not meet those standards.

Despite a clear admiration for the moral character and symbolic value of the Confederate veterans, there was a strong cultural barrier towards providing financial aid for helping them, particularly in the latter half of the nineteenth century. While politicians such as Love spoke strongly in favor of supporting veterans in their old age, society at large seemed hesitant to support these men in the years between their struggle and their old age. After the war, many unemployed amputee veterans struggled to find meaningful employment to support themselves and their families, but found it especially difficult in a society dependant on manual labor. As time wore on and their wounds grew worse, many veterans needed to turn to either a state agency or a benevolent association.⁷⁴

A group such as the UCV pledged in its constitution “to see that the disabled are cared for,” and assured that “a helping hand is extended to the needy,” including the orphans and widows of veterans. Any applicants seeking aid from the UCV would have to send their applications to a “Relief Committee,” which according to the bylaws oversaw all matters concerning “relief, pensions, and other benevolent purposes of [the UCV.]”⁷⁵ However, many veterans still had to go to other sources, as demonstrated by an article printed in the *Confederate Veteran* in 1893. Entitled “A Most Worthy Plea For

⁷⁴ Miller, 135.

⁷⁵ “Constitution and by-laws of the United Confederate Veterans”

Help,” the article details the plight of Captain John M. Sloan, who served in the 45th Mississippi. Sloan spends the first half of his plea explaining his injuries including having his lower jaw shot off forcing him to “be fed by others on fluids.” “I dislike to beg,” Sloan claims, and he wished “that it was different, but I cannot help it.” Sloan finished his appeal by reminding his “comrades” that he earned his wound in the name of “defending our Sunny Southland, homes, property and firesides.” Without the aid of his fellow veterans, Sloan argues he cannot fulfill his duties as a Southern man given the fact that he has “a wife and two daughters who depend on me for support.”⁷⁶

What is the most telling about Sloan’s plea is the fact that it was published with several endorsements. One such endorsement was from the chaplain of Sloan’s regiment, who gave the details of how and where Sloan lost his jaw. Another endorsement for Sloan showed that aid from his comrades was really his only hope for support now. “He has done he could and supported himself for twenty-five years,” the endorsement claimed indicating that he has grown to old and his wound to debilitating for him to continue supporting himself and his family.⁷⁷ In order to secure financial aid, Confederate veterans needed to demonstrate- through the testimony of outside witnesses- that they could no longer fulfill their duties as a man. Sloan’s plea seemed to be successful as by April, 1894, some two months after his initial article, the Jno. C. Brown camp of El Paso, Texas, sent Capt. Sloan \$77.75 in aid.⁷⁸

Some veterans, on the other hand, thought that they did not need to get by on charity. In an article just below Sloan’s plea for help, one article describes a wounded veteran “who is unable, as a result of a wound received during the war, to earn a living in

⁷⁶ John M. Sloan, “A Most Worthy Plea For Help” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol. 2 no. 2, February 1894.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ “The Fund for Capt. Sloan.” *Confederate Veterans*. Vol. 2 No. 4, April, 1894.

the ordinary pursuits of life.” Despite this however, the veteran did not want a pension despite the fact that his state offered him one. “I did not fight for money” the veteran said, “but I believe that a medal ought to be issued to each deserving old soldier.”⁷⁹ Rather than serving as an endorsement for charity this article instead served as a call to further memorialize the Confederate cause. As Miller points out, “while the Lost cause organizations hailed the honorable sacrifices of an entire generation of veterans, they failed to raise a substantial amount of capital to help those very veterans survive, outside of commemorating their sacrifices.”⁸⁰ Another option for veterans, then, was to turn to a state agency to receive some form of financial aid.

According to J.C Jones, the Commissioner of Pensions for the State of Texas, in a speech made in 1916, the greatest pleasure of his job was “granting a pension to a worthy applicant.” Nevertheless, he lamented the fact “a few make efforts to obtain pensions fraudulently.”⁸¹ The fact that the commissioner was so worried about fraud indicates that there were some applicants who were outrightly fraudulent in their attempts to secure a state pension or did not meet the level of need required to secure a pension. After the war, several states had to wrestle with questions concerning the possible creation of a class of dependent veterans, and how to ensure that veterans met the standards for being worthy of Southern charity. The first major form of aid to veterans in the south came in the form of state funded prosthetic limbs, which began in states such as Georgia, Mississippi, the Carolinas, Virginia, Alabama, and Louisiana. While the Texas State Legislature did attempt to implement a prosthetics program, “it quickly snarled in a welter of budgetary

⁷⁹ “Medals for Confederate Soldiers” *Confederate Veteran*. Vol. 2 no. 2, February 1894.

⁸⁰ Miller, 139.

⁸¹ “The Reunion: Twentieth Annual Camp Ben McCulloch United Confederate Veterans”

limitations, constitutional questions... and the ideology that manhood did not have room for outside assistance.”⁸²

In Texas, a true “Confederate Pension Law” was passed into effect in 1899. The act itself was as an amendment to the Texas State Constitution. According to the act, “there shall be paid an annual pension of eight dollars per month... to every surviving disabled and indigent confederate soldier or sailor who is a native of this state... and who is either over sixty years of age or whose disability is the approximate result of the actual service in the Confederate army or navy.” According to the law, any application for a pension required proof of service, proof that the applicant did not receive any aid from a previous act, proof that they lived in the state before 1880, and proof that “the applicant is in indigent circumstances, and is not able, by his or her [for widows] labor, to earn a support.” According to the law the term “indigent” referred to “one who is in actual want and destitute of property and means of subsistence.” Furthermore, the act required a veteran who was applying to “furnish the testimony of a least two credible witness who personally know that he enlisted... and that he is unable to support himself by labor of any sort” and the testimony of his physician to ensure his exact physical condition. Following that, the applicant would then file his application with the local county judge and county commissioner who, after approving the application, would then send it off to the State Comptroller’s office. The State Comptroller would then send it to the Pension Clerk. By law, the Pension Clerk was required to be an ex-Confederate soldier or sailor.⁸³

⁸² Miller, 150, 156.

⁸³ Hans Peter Marcus Neilsen Gammel. *The Laws of Texas, 1897-1902* Volume 11, book, 1902; Austin, Texas. (texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph6576/m1/2/; accessed April 11, 2018), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu.

This of course, was another method that Southern states used to provide aid to veterans without directly making them dependants of the state.⁸⁴

Even if a veteran could not claim a pension, he sometimes mad an appeal anyway, as was the case with Edgar Sheppard Adams of Nacogdoches County, who in his application, mentioned that he is “not eligible for a pension on account of having more property than is allowed for one to secure a pension,” but decided to file anyway should the law change. In Adams’ application file, he filed the testimony of S.B Hughes, who claimed to know Sheppard since he was a boy and swore that “he and the said Edgar Sheppard Adams entered at the same time as cadets in the South Carolina Military Academy” with the cadets serving as state troops.⁸⁵ For F.B Albaugh to receive his pension he had to have his doctor submit an affidavit confirming that he had “paralysis which renders him totally disable[d] to do any kind of work.” One witness acting on behalf of Milton Neal Ballard testified that “Ballard made a good, true and faithful soldier from 1862 until the close of the war” and further testified that Ballard did not desert.⁸⁶ While the state law did not require an applicant to produce a certificate of discharge, an application could be denied if the veteran deserted the Confederate army. The Comptroller’s office usually filed a request with the War Department to determine both proof of military service and to see if the applicant was a deserter. In the case of

⁸⁴ Miller, 131.

⁸⁵ Pension Application File for Adams, Edgar Sheppard, Roll 1 Confederate Pension Applications records, 1899-1979, Texas Comptrollers Office Records, Texas State Library and Archives.

⁸⁶ Pension Application File for Ballard M.N, Roll 1 Confederate Pension Applications records, 1899-1979, Texas Comptrollers Office Records, Texas State Library and Archives.

W.H Fox the War Department reported back to the State Comptroller's office that Fox was labeled "absent without leave" according to his company's last muster roll.⁸⁷

As time went on, the law became less and less strict mostly by redefining the term "Indigence," by 1909 indigence was defined as having annual income of less than \$150 a year with the limit changing \$300 in 1913. By 1923, the term referred to any persons who owned less than \$1,000 in property. Even the payments increased over time, with unmarried veterans receiving \$25 and married veterans receiving double that amount per month.⁸⁸ These changing definitions indicate a willingness to provide for a veteran as he grew older and entered the category of elderly, a class much more suitable for charity than the young men who originally came back from the war. Even then, the fact that so many affidavits were required to prove that these men were eligible for help indicates unwillingness on Texas' part to make dependants out of men who were not already dependent on their families or benevolent organizations. Another point that these affidavits indicated is the states desire to see that those they aided lived up to the reputation that it had given them. By making them prove that they did indeed do their duty without abandoning it, the state endorsed the reputations that other Lost Cause groups fostered upon them.

Therefore when looking at how veterans were treated in the decades after the Civil War in Texas, one can see that veterans were representative of the ideals of the ideals of the Lost Cause. At the same time however, ex-Confederates were also beholden to Southern standards concerning self-sufficiency and manliness. By holding veterans to

⁸⁷ Pension Application File for Fox, W.H, Roll 2 Confederate Pension Applications records, 1899-1979, Texas Comptrollers Office Records, Texas State Library and Archives.

⁸⁸ Roll 1 Confederate Pension Applications records, 1899-1979, Texas Comptrollers Office Records, Texas State Library and Archives.

such a high moral standard, these ex-Confederates who needed help from state governments or benevolent societies were often marginalized, unless they could meet certain criteria set by those institutions. While further research needs to be done to see how veterans reacted to this dual status of marginalization and veneration, both aspects are telling about how the Lost Cause memory affected Southern society.

CHAPTER IV

Conclusion

When looking at the effect of Confederate veterans in the development of the Lost Cause, one can see that they served as both the foundation for and the cultural heroes of the Lost Cause mythology. In the first chapter, this chapter discussed how Texas veterans, through a campaign of violence and discriminatory politics, tried to debate the meaning and results of the war. This was done through a series of policies designed to curtail the liberties of freedmen and to assert the dominance of the state government in the face of a federal occupation. These policies were followed by clandestine attempts to restore the old racial order through acts of violence and terror. All of these actions, both political and violent, showcase an attempt by defeated Confederates to redefine the meaning of the war as a war for “states’ rights,” with a clear understanding that state’s rights meant that the state of Texas should define racial politics as it saw fit. Moving forward, this struggle for political sovereignty and the supremacy of the Southern definition of what the war was about became a rallying point for the Lost Cause in the latter half of the nineteenth century. By that point, the veterans and politicians that struggled in the name of white supremacy had succeeded in enacting the policies of Jim Crow in the name of antebellum notions of race.

The second chapter moved on to a much later period of veterans’ lives, shifting from when they were no longer politically active to a time in their lives when they were the focal point of Lost Cause adulation. By focusing on the attention trained on veterans at reunions, one can see how Texans created role models out of these veterans based on their actions in the years immediately following the surrender at Appomattox. What

followed was a duel exercise in veneration and education, as Texans used veterans as examples of proper behavior and a link to a supposedly by-gone era of virtue. However, one of the immediate downsides of their reputations as men of virtue was that aid for the most wounded among them was slow in coming for fear of undermining their manliness. This fear of undermining the moral foundation that veterans rested on is important in understanding how the South valued these men as integral to their understanding of the Civil War. So enduring was the myth that these veterans and the society that surrounded them created, that it dogmatically survived up in to the twenty-first century leading to the events of Charlottesville.

However, the legacy of white supremacy and political exclusion that these veterans helped to build is slowly starting to crumble: statue by statue, plaque by plaque. As time went on, the voices of those who supported the view of the Civil War as an emancipationist conflict have grown steadily louder. In the wake of the Charlottesville rally, the sight of empty pedestals grows across Southern cityscapes where they played a crucial role in promoting a Lost Cause view of the war. In Baltimore, a dual equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee and “Stonewall Jackson” was removed from a public park with little to no fanfare. In Durham, North Carolina, protesters marched out and tore down a statue dedicated to Confederate soldiers.⁸⁹ As more of these statues come down it is clear that the Civil War is once again being debated in the public sphere as this tragic conflict which consumed so many lives is being reexamined by the descendants of those who

⁸⁹ Nicholas Fandos, Russell Goldman, And Jess Bidgood, “Baltimore Mayor Had Statues Removed in ‘Best Interest of My City’” Aug. 16th 2017, *New York Times*. Accessed 4/20/2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/16/us/baltimore-confederate-statues.html>; Jonathan M. Katz, “Protester Arrested in Toppling of Confederate Statue in Durham” Aug. 15th 2017. *New York Times*. Accessed 4/20/2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/15/us/protester-arrested-in-toppling-of-confederate-statue-in-durham.html>

fought it. However, as society reexamines the war it is important that Americans come together and examine the origins of the Lost Cause myth so that one can see how the cultural relics of the past have informed public events in such a tangible and traumatic way. Only then can events such as the one that happened that August day recede into the past. The Civil War is one of the most defining events in American history; therefore, it is important how the United States chooses to remember the war to save the Union. As this paper has shown, under the leadership of the Lost Cause, a pro-southern view of the war allowed for the establishment of Jim Crow and a culture that promoted white supremacy.

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