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Fashioning a Soldier: Male Clothing, Union Volunteers, and the Adaptation of a Soldierly Image

Robert W. Novak

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**Fashioning a Soldier:
Male Clothing, Union Volunteers, and the Adaptation of a Soldierly Image**

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Thesis submitted to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
at West Virginia University

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in History

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ABSTRACT

Fashioning a Soldier: Male Clothing, Union Volunteers, and the Adaptation of a Soldierly Image

Robert W. Novak

Despite hundreds of images of Union soldiers and countless accounts by veterans of their appearance during the Civil War, little is known as to how and why the soldiers looked the way they did throughout the conflict. The generalized image that emerges from the war centers around the four-button fatigue blouse prescribed in the 1861 regulations that was issued to every Union soldier at some point during the war. In understanding the origins of the fatigue blouse's design and the impact it had on the image of the ideal soldier in America through the end of the nineteenth century, greater connections can be made between the male fashions of the period and choices that soldiers made about their uniforms. By analyzing Quartermaster Department records, period photographs, letters, memoirs, and period newspapers, a cultural pattern emerges where the Union soldier based his clothing choices out of utility and comfort, but also through style considerations and changing beliefs surrounding the ideal male image. These conclusions connect to the broader literature of clothing and material culture studies in attempting to understand the cultural and social meanings behind historical garments.

For my parents who pushed me through.

And for Emma, whose love and support knows no bounds.

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Introduction

This study is an attempt to understand the influences of changing nineteenth-century male fashion trends on the uniforms chosen by Union soldiers during the American Civil War and how those choices developed into a standard representation that characterized their soldierly image. Industrial and economic constraints of wartime production and recent changes in male fashion forced Union volunteers to confront and challenge their pre-war assumptions of a masculine ideal soldier. When Union volunteers continued to wear the issued four-button fatigue blouse, previous historians have argued, they chose this garment over all others according to their needs on campaign. However, this choice reaches far beyond the need for comfort in “battle-dress.” Rather, it was a statement regarding the changing ideologies of masculinity and the male image. This change was heavily influenced by the ready-made clothing market of the North that thrived in the decades prior to the Civil War. This study proposes to link the two. The acceptance and widespread use of the fatigue blouse by volunteers, and their steadfast utilization of its image in their post-war iconography, is a physical manifestation of those evolving perceptions.

While the ideal gentleman in the Civil War era was to be humble and modest in appearance, the soldier’s uniform embodied the opposite ideals, thereby separating the soldier from the civilian at a quick glance. The complaints of soldiers on the frontier through the 1840s and 1850s brought increased awareness to the comfort of the soldier in his uniform, leading to new regulations and styles to be implemented. These styles, as all military uniforms are, were loosely based on the prevailing fashions of the day.¹ These fashions were made possible by the

¹ James Laver, *British Military Uniforms* (London: Penguin Books, 1948), 24. Laver posits making the soldier appear in marked contrast to the civilian is the object of military uniforms, making the man appear more tough and

expanding ready-made clothing market that developed through the first half of the nineteenth century and as male dress-codes adapted to the mass available of ready-to-wear clothing, so too did the fashions those clothiers produced.

It was these fashions that the Union volunteer of 1861 traded for the uniform of a soldier, but many scoffed at the garments issued to them. Because of the increasing popularity of loose-fitting sack coats in civilian male fashions, soldiers were already well aware of the design of a loosely fitting coat that fell off the shoulders and did not hug the torso.² Yet complaints continued throughout the war as many disliked the fit of the uniforms, the general look that they provided, as well as its perceived lack of quality. However, if soldiers were aware of the pitfalls in ready-made clothing production as well as the general design of the sack coat, what were their complaints truly about? This study argues that they were a response to the conflicting attitudes between dominant male fashions and the antebellum image of the ideal soldier.

As victorious Union soldiers marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in May 1865, they did so having altered their perceptions of the ideal soldierly image. This would soon be questioned, however, as the Quartermaster Department's policies of selling surplus uniforms provided opportunities for men to tarnish the image the soldiers had gained for their uniform through four years of war. The drunken veteran, the beggar, and the pension fraud became titles associated with the Civil War uniform in the post-war period. Veterans organizations, the contemporary military, and the Quartermaster Department all took steps to improve the public image, and therefore the post-war legacy, of the Civil War uniform.

yet more "gorgeous" by highlighting the body's frame. Despite their desire to depart from civilian concepts of clothing, the uniform is still designed with current civilian styles in mind.

² Joan L. Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), 104-105, 209.

Histories of Civil War uniforms very often come in the form of reference books which focus on the slight differences between units and uniform design. While valuable for the insight they give to particular regiments and subtle uniform construction techniques, their application to the larger historiography of the nineteenth century is limited.³ By focusing on the antebellum origins of Civil War uniforms and perceptions of a soldierly image, this study proposes to understand what meaning was imparted into the uniforms worn by Union volunteers and how that meaning was understood and defended in the post-war United States.

Interpretations of nineteenth century fashion are often understood through the lens of the ready-made system. This innovation allowed clothiers to produce large amounts of clothing within a short period of time while relying on a large unskilled labor force. Interpretations link the clothing itself with political, social, or cultural trends of the nineteenth century. Very often these works attempt to use production as a means to explain the meanings that the clothing represented.⁴ In interpreting the production and wear of Civil War uniforms, and connecting them to antebellum styles and values, this study centers itself within past interpretations of nineteenth century male fashion and applies similar techniques to understanding Civil War uniforms. Past studies have mentioned the uniform, particularly their production at Federal Arsenal and contract firms, to explain the trajectory of industrial production of ready-made clothing through the 1860s.⁵ However, they do not attempt to make connections between the

³ Examples include Francis A Lord, *Uniforms of the Civil War* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1970); Earl J. Coates, Michael J. McAfee, and Don Troiani, *regiment's and Uniforms of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002); Ron Field, *Rally Round the Flag: Uniforms of the Union Volunteers of 1861* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2015); and John P. Langellier, *Army Blue: The Uniform of Uncle Sam's Regulars, 1848-1873* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd. 1998).

⁴ Examples include Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003); Rob Schorman, *Selling Style: Clothing and Social Change at the Turn of the Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits: the Evolution of Modern Dress* (New York: Kodansha International, 1995).

⁵ Schorman, *Selling Style*, 169 n.10.

uniforms that were produced and the antebellum styles worn by men throughout the nation. By connecting past interpretations of the meanings placed in antebellum clothing with the styles worn by Union soldiers, this study helps to advance those interpretations in time and material.

Social histories of antebellum and wartime production provide a broader view of the social and labor issues that dominated the nineteenth century. This study uses the Schuylkill Arsenal, including production figures and labor struggles that emanated from it, to understand how the production of uniforms was a continuation of antebellum production practices on an increasingly large scale, further intensifying the labor and social issues that nineteenth century industrial production created. Previous studies on wartime production discuss the political implications on the industrial production of war goods. While this allows for deeper understanding of the ways that industrialists, capitalists, and politicians interacted and impacted the war, discussions of labor sit at the heart of their interpretations.⁶ For this, they very often turn to labor histories or works that discuss the home front and gender during the period. Their interpretations work to understand the evolving influence of time on people and institutions as well as providing a voice for historical actors whose voice has often been overlooked.⁷ By focusing on a select few clothing producers during the war – the Girard House Hotel, Brooks Brothers, and the Schuylkill Arsenal – this study can apply interpretations about gender and labor struggles to specific models. Past studies, including Gallman and Geisburg, have discussed an essential aspect of my interpretation of labor in uniform production, the 1864 Philadelphia

⁶ Examples include Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia During the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990).

⁷ Examples include J. Matthew Gallman, *the North Fights the Civil War: The Home Front* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1994); Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980); Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1989); Judie Geisburg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War in the Northern Homefront* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

sewing women's petition, and their interpretations of such events were especially influential in understanding the role of sewing women in nineteenth century ready-made clothing and interpreting the actions they took to increase their wages in both federal and private institutions.

Chapter One connects the antebellum clothing market and the development of ready-made to the industrial, economical, and labor concerns surrounding the production of uniforms for the Federal government. Special attention is given to the Schuylkill Arsenal as it was the center of uniform production before, during, and after the war. At its peak, the Schuylkill Arsenal hired between six and ten thousand sewing women on the outwork system to produce uniforms for Northern soldiers. Tens of thousands more men and women, however, were employed by contract firms across the North and their influence over production speeds and wages directly impacted the employees of the Schuylkill Arsenal. Brooks Brothers is highlighted as one of the largest antebellum clothiers turned government contractor and as an example of the corruption and poor workmanship that characterized much of contractor production. The Arsenal employees used their elevated status as government workers to petition the Federal Government for higher wages, but the competition with contract firms was too strong to generate any meaningful change.

Chapter Two discusses antebellum male clothing and uniform styles and their impact on the civilian perception of a soldierly image as well as how that image translated into the garments worn by Union soldiers during the war. Antebellum and wartime criticisms, praises, petitions, letters, and personal changes made to the United States uniform receive the bulk of the attention as these impacted the soldier's response to the uniform he was issued. The sections discussing the Civil War uniforms directly will situate the reader within the various attitudes toward what the soldier should look like based on civilian perceptions of European uniforms,

utility, and style. This chapter will use James Laver's principles regarding the design of clothing as well as the issue of a soldier's choice in regards to his uniform which provide other layers through which to analyze the connections soldiers made between their civilian and military attire.

Finally, Chapter Three discusses the various ways that veterans, the military, and the Quartermaster Department approached the memory of the Civil War veteran and his uniform. The issue that drives this chapter is the sale of surplus uniforms on the open market in the years following the war, allowing anyone in the country to buy, and wear, the uniform of the United States soldier. The three different groups had different responses in differentiating and distancing themselves from the civilians who bought and wore the sack coat. All of the responses worked in elevating the uniform and the memory of the Civil War soldier above the poor reputation it garnered through the late 1860s and 1870s. Their responses helped to solidify the positive image of the Civil War uniform and the soldiers that fought in it and helped to generate the standard or generic image of the Unions soldier that persists today.

By discussing challenges to the soldierly image, this study connects a small facet of the soldier's wartime experience with the ideas that they had about their legacy and memory. This brings the memory of the Union volunteer out of the more traditional sources of battles, leaders, and politics, and into the arena of imagery and perception. Larger than this, however, the study of Civil War uniforms places a material object within the discussion of nineteenth century labor and capitalism as well as gender and masculinity. The massive scale of production that took place at Federal Arsenals and privately owned contract houses is emblematic of the larger industrial trends that swept the North in the antebellum period and continued into the latter part of the century. Perceptions of one's soldierly appearance, dominated by the uniform, connect directly to nineteenth century understandings of manhood and ideal male that was accentuated by

his form and outward appearance. The male fashions that evolved in the antebellum period which ultimately helped define what a soldier wore in the Civil War were a direct consequence of the mass production of ready-made clothing. This study seeks to link these perceptions behind the unassuming sack coat worn by thousands of Union soldiers throughout the Civil War.

Chapter One: Ready-Made Uniforms

While the initial cries for volunteers brought many men to recruiting stations and into Federal uniform, thousands of other men and women turned to Northern industry to provide the uniforms needed by the steady stream of volunteers. The military economy of the Civil War included the Federal Arsenals scattered across the North and the hundreds of contract firms that supplemented arsenal production. The Clothing Bureau was centered in the Schuylkill Arsenal of Philadelphia where, at its height, an estimated ten thousand sewing women were employed along with thousands of other laborers of various occupations. Though employment at the arsenal was considered the fairest and highest paying, many more women worked in contract houses around the city, unable to gain employment at the Schuylkill Arsenal.

The mode of production at both the Federal Arsenal and contract firms followed the most common approaches to completing that massive volume of work on an industrial scale – outwork. By maintaining cutters of cloth and leather in-house, the organization could provide multiple garments or shoes ready to sew as outworkers arrived to gather their orders. The outworker provided the “findings” – needles, thread, wax, pins, candles – thereby lowering the cost fronted by the organization. A collection date was set by the organization and the outworker would submit their work for inspection upon completion and upon passing their inspection, the cycle would begin again.

However, because the system remained virtually unchanged from antebellum industrial production, the tropes, challenges, and institutional flaws continued, and were even exacerbated, by the massive scale of production that the war required. Issues of quantity were faced by the Quartermaster Department immediately as it transitioned from supplying a small pre-war military to a force of nearly one hundred thousand men by the end of 1861. Though quantity was

remedied quickly, issues of quality would plague the supply of uniforms throughout the war due to the fluctuating supplies of cloth and knowledgeable outworkers. One of the strongest issues faced by the Schuylkill Arsenal and contract firms alike, however, was the rampant inflation the war caused and the subsequent demands of higher wages by outworkers.

This chapter will highlight four examples of the difficulties in producing uniforms during the Civil War: the state-sanctioned production at the Girard House Hotel in Philadelphia from April to October 1861, the case of fraud and contractor gouging from the Brooks Brothers firm, a petition signed by tens of thousands of sewing women in 1864 calling for higher wages, and a petition from the Journeyman Shoemakers Society of Philadelphia calling for a reduction in government reliance on contractors and an increase in wages that correspond with their title of journeymen. Each of these three examples provides unique insight into issues that plagued the ready-made clothing industry in the antebellum period and show how those problems continued into the Civil War. The story of the Girard House Hotel stands as an example of how Northern soldiers and civilians reacted to the poor quality of garments produced in the early months of the war and their vehement hatred of contractor profiteering. Both complaints were leveled at ready-made clothing producers for their perceived lack of quality control in the antebellum period. The sewing women's petition used language and imagery well-known to Americans as the trope of the starving seamstress had been used as a tool to promote labor reform as early as the 1830s. The image of struggling sewing women was firmly entrenched in the cultural understanding of the ready-made industry, but gender norms stood as a firm barrier to any serious reform, even during the Civil War. Finally, the Journeyman Shoemaker's petition is a prime example of the decline of the artisanal workshop with the rise of ready-made and industrialized labor. While the custom garment and shoe trade maintained clientele in the decades before the Civil War, their

loss of social standing due to the increased availability of cheaper competitor's products, particularly from contractors, forced them to try and regain their place as craftsmen.

The ready-made clothing industry revolutionized the consumption of clothing in the antebellum North as a less expensive alternative to the custom clothing market. The concept developed at the end of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century out of a need for cheap clothing by sailors in port cities in the northeast. Derisively called "slops," these garments "were only used by those who either had little concern for size and fit or placed a premium upon a quick change."⁸ By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, however, ready-made clothing began to branch out from its slop-shop roots and into the mainstream clothing market. The growing trend of industrialization in the North also made its way into the clothing market, propelling the ready-made business model from slops to legitimate and acceptable attire. Many clothiers - their name synonymous with a business model rather than the skilled work of a tailor - had never made a suit before opening their "warehouses" for the whole sale of ready-made garments. In order to further distance themselves from the undesirable roots of the industry, clothiers such as George Simmons, one of Boston's most successful clothiers in the 1850s, stressed the need to attract "men of moderate income... whose patronage is always desirable because this class of the community compose the mass of consumers."⁹ By the 1860s, the ready-made market had achieved a notoriety for providing clothing to the middle class, an alternative to the bespoke clothing that had "cheapness, and at the same time a certain elegance."¹⁰

⁸ Egal Feldman, *Fit for Men: A Study of New York's Clothing Trade* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1960), 74; Rob Schorman, *Selling Style: Clothing and Social Change at the Turn of the Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 21.

⁹ Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 111.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* It should also be noted that many historians argue that the invention of the sewing machine and its widespread availability beginning in the 1850s was a key factor in the rapid growth of the industry and the low prices it offered. However, many of the clothiers that used sewing machines required their outworkers to own their

Despite its widespread acceptance on the eve of the Civil War, the methods used in producing ready-made garments cast doubt on their quality. Coats produced in the clothiers' warehouses were often characterized as "a different species of make."¹¹ This was very often due to the cost-cutting measures used by the clothiers in order to turn the most profit. The suits were produced almost exclusively using the "outwork" or "piecework" methods developed during the Industrial Revolution. The Clothier purchased cloth in bulk which would be sent to cutters where the pattern pieces would be cut from the fabric. The cut pattern pieces would then be given to an outworker, mostly women who used their sewing skills to assemble the garments, who would have a certain amount of time with which to complete the garments.¹² Once the finished product was returned to the Clothier, the outworker would be paid by the type and number of garments completed, their wages increasingly known as a "piece-rate." The skill of the seamstress or outworker could not be guaranteed, however, as evidence by the frequent mentions of ready-made clothing to have a "general misfit" or the haphazard placement of buttons or button holes.¹³ A lack of standardized sizes in patterns produced for ready-made clothiers made the fit of a

own, meaning that very few of the lower-class women could procure one even as prices fell to an average of fifty dollars just prior to the Civil War. However, the origin and increasing growth of the ready-made industry in the decades prior to the Civil War was built on the needles of tens of thousands of sewing women who did outwork, and historians such as Michael Zakim argue that the industry was well established before the invention of the sewing machine. This system was also the one adopted by the Girard House Hotel and other contractors as well as the Schuylkill Arsenal. The influence that the sewing machine had over the clothing industry grew after the Civil War. For further information on the use of the sewing machine and its influences on the ready-made industry, see Harry A. Cobrin, *The Men's Clothing Industry: Colonial through Modern Times* (New York: Fairchild Publications, 1970), 42-46; Schorman, *Selling Style*, 22; and Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 153-154.

¹¹ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 70.

¹² Bruce Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia, 1800-1850* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 23-25.

¹³ George Foster in his 1848 book *New York in Slices* used blatant sarcasm when referring to the fit and quality of the garments produced on Chatham Street, an epicenter for ready-made clothing, "and we'll wager our wedding suit that it is a 'splendid fit'... Every coat there fits everyone." He also referenced a "primitive formation of rags" that met the customer when they entered a Clothier's store that were "carefully classified into vests, coats, and pantaloons."

ready-made suit a joke in many circles, solidifying the difference between a bespoke suit and ready-made by both the quality of the fabrics used and the expectation of a proper fit.

Some Clothiers strove to increase the quality of their garments in an attempt to garner wealthier clientele and improve the reputation of ready-made clothing. In 1849, for example, the firm Lewis and Hanford of New York advertised four “qualities” in their spring catalogue. Seams of jackets or trousers might be double-stitched, increasing the strength of the seam but also increasing the amount of labor required. Edges of the garment might be flat-felled – the process of rolling the rough edges of the fabric under and stitching them down, greatly reducing the possibility of the edge fraying. Pockets of matching fabric or a more difficult welt or slash pocket – one where the pocket is placed between the outer layer and the lining with a “slashed” opening in the outer layer – might be added to the chest. The addition of cotton, wool, or silk braid to the outer seams of formal trousers helped to add an elegant flair to otherwise plain garments.¹⁴ It is important to note, however, that an increase in quality of a garment in the eyes of clothiers was accomplished by using finer cloth, strengthening seams, or adding pockets and buttons rather than a change in style. Men of all classes could wear garments of the same general style, but class could still be determined by the quality of the clothing bought from the same retailer.

By 1861, the ready-made clothing industry was well established in Philadelphia, employing 14,387 people full-time with tens of thousands of outworkers completing garments in their homes.¹⁵ The state of Pennsylvania and the Federal Government would call upon the clothiers to fill uniform contracts as well as the sewing women to complete garments in the

¹⁴ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 135.

¹⁵ J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 228.

contract houses and the Schuylkill Arsenal. However, the dilapidated state of the Schuylkill Arsenal required Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin to find other means of supplying the initial volunteers that left the state in April 1861. At noon on April 17, 1861, Robert L. Martin entered the office of Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin at the state capitol building in Harrisburg.¹⁶ In the meeting, Martin was commissioned to take charge of the clothing operations then underway in Philadelphia. Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand volunteers just two days before had brought the fervor of war preparations to Pennsylvania. The Governor was tasked with providing uniforms for all volunteers from his state.¹⁷ Along with Martin, the Governor chose Captain George Gibson to assist and advise on the production of the uniform suits. When the pair, along with Governor Curtin, arrived in Philadelphia, they immediately began searching for a suitable building to house their production. They settled upon the Girard House Hotel, then sitting vacant on the northwest corner of Chestnut and Ninth Streets, and sold all furniture left within the building to allow for the most amount of production space.

Robert Martin and Captain Gibson had become some of the first contractors to provide military uniforms and equipment, continuing a long tradition of government using clothiers to supply the military. This movement was slow to start in the early stages of the war, as the Federal Government's previous experiences with contractors, particularly during the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, had caused them to all but ban the practice. Many spoke out against the system, claiming that garments made at government firms were of better quality

¹⁶ "Testimony: Robert L. Martin," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1861.

¹⁷ This particular rule for clothing state soldiers was established in the Militia Act of 1792 and is referenced in the April 22, 1861 issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as the "act of 1795" as the act was reissued in that year. The rule states that companies of militia volunteers "at the discretion of the Commander in Chief of State" will be "uniformly clothed in raiments, to be furnished at their expense..." Article IV, The Militia Act of 1792. Robert Martin's testimony in June 1861 suggests that Governor Curtin argued that the Federal Government should clothe the troops, but regardless, the urgency of the time forced the Governor's hand. This suggests that the Governor was very concerned with the appearance of the soldiers from his state, wishing them to look the part.

and cut and that those operations ultimately saved the government money. The contract system, deemed “unsatisfactory” fifty years before, was revived because of the immediate need to supply the volunteers.¹⁸

On April 20, Martin and Gibson organized a group of advisors and administrators to assist, many of whom were formally employed at the Schuylkill Arsenal and would be instrumental in establishing the new contract house. Their team included John Hughes, “inspector of goods” at the “United States Arsenal,” S. S. Kelley, former superintendent at the Arsenal, and Neal Campbell, former inspector of “made-up work” at the Arsenal. With their team of former Schuylkill Arsenal employees, they were able to obtain patterns from the Arsenal to use in their cutting room. By April 23, Martin claimed that he had over 1,500 employees, of which nearly one hundred were cutters for the patterns.¹⁹ Reports from the *Philadelphia Inquirer* state that on April 22, the Girard House Hotel was “literally besieged by women” who were “anxious to make up ‘some of that army clothing upon any terms.’”²⁰ Numbers of sewing women alone were placed at nearly one thousand on April 22 with thirty letters being sent daily to Robert Martin from women offering their services to help manage the women.²¹ Martin himself claimed that at its peak in May and June 1861, the Girard House had employed within and outside of the hotel approximately three thousand sewing women.²²

¹⁸ Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History, 1989), 352-353.

¹⁹ “Testimony: Robert L. Martin,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1861. Other secondary sources point to R. C. Hale, Quartermaster General of the Pennsylvania Militia, as establishing the clothing operation at the Girard House Hotel after finding the clothing operations at the Schuylkill Arsenal lacking. Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 287; Allen C. Guelzo, *Faithful Lightening: A New History of the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 316.

²⁰ “Army Clothing,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 22, 1861.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² “Testimony: Robert L. Martin,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1861.

While an impressive start to clothing operations in Philadelphia, the Girard House encountered problem of procurement and quality almost immediately. The thousands of sewing women could manufacture approximately one thousand uniform suits in one day, but no amount of speed could alleviate a lack of adequate, army-standard cloth from which the suits could be made.²³ Philadelphia was one of the centers of textile production in 1850 with just under 10,500 workers in textile factories, manufactories, and artisanal workshops, and over 18,500 workers in 1860.²⁴ Yet Martin stated that there was only nine thousand yards of blue flannel available on the open market.²⁵ One explanation for the lack of suitable cloth was the opening of contracts by the state Quartermaster Department under R. C. Hale in mid-May 1861. The increased competition for cloth may have been the impetus for some of Martin's more creative solutions, such as reporting that other states had turned to other colors – Ohio and New York had adopted grey satinet for “pantaloon” – but he was adamant about maintaining the army standard. Satinet, he claimed, was not fit for use in pantaloons.²⁶

It was not just satinet that was being used, however, as “shoddy” and inferior cloths began to clothe the soldiers encamped at Camp Scott. Martin reported that, beginning in mid-May, he began receiving complaints of “defective” clothing, the first of which were eighty-four

²³ In a report submitted by R. C. Hale, Quartermaster General of the Pennsylvania Militia, over 113,000 individual uniform pieces were produced at the Girard House Hotel between April 26 and July 16, 1861. Of this number, 10,467 pieces were blouses, 11,392 were great coats, but only 62 were jackets. The vast difference in the numbers of blouses and jackets produced is based on the relative simplicity of the blouse's construction but also due to the US Army's regulations that stated the uniform coat of volunteers would be the fatigue blouse. R. C. Hale, “Report of the Quartermaster General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the Year 1861” in *Reports of the Heads of Departments Transmitted to the Governor in Pursuance of Law for the Financial Year Ending November 30, 1861* (Harrisburg: A. Boyd Hamilton, State Printer, 1861), 9.

²⁴ Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia*, 17; Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 229.

²⁵ “Testimony: Robert L. Martin,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1861.

²⁶ Satinet, much like Jean Wool and Cassimere, was a wool fabric that contained cotton woven into it. The difference between the types of cloth is in the percentage of cotton in the finished fabric, jean wool having the most and satinet the least. The kersey material used for army issue trousers was much thicker, coarser, and more durable because it was a pure wool cloth and the lack of it led to a substandard product.

sets of pantaloons. Martin replied by sending one hundred and fifty-four pairs to cover the immediate issue with some to spare. However, once word spread that complaints would be addressed by Martin, the letters “poured in.”²⁷ At no point did Martin acknowledge that shoddy cloth was used in the production of his uniforms, but other sources from the time suggest that the use of such cloth was commonplace in the early months of the war and continued to bleed into the clothing supply throughout the conflict.

The cover of the July 6, 1861 edition of *Vanity Fair* was dedicated to “The Girard House Contractors, and Governor Curtin.” Pictured are men labeled “The Pennsylvania Volunteers” who are being told to “Close Up!” and “Rally by Fours” Don’t you see the ladies coming?” The men forming a square are seen in their uniforms provided by the Girard House, but their trousers are in tatters, their sleeves frayed, the seams of their coats bursting, none but one wears socks, and the officer ordering the men is wrapped in a blanket with more patches than original cloth. Women are seen in the background, one with a shocked expression on her face, approaching the soldiers on a visit to the camp.²⁸

The language used and the depictions showing the faulty clothing display the distrust and shock shared by soldiers and civilians alike from a very early stage. Indeed, the derogatory use of the term “contractor” had already begun to permeate the language surrounding soldier’s uniforms. While the ready-made clothing industry was not widely known for their superior quality, there were no reports of clothing falling apart in the rain as the *Vanity Fair* cover shows. The failure of the Girard House Hotel’s clothing production is evidence of the ways that the problems of the pre-war clothing business were exacerbated by the war. The rapid production requirements

²⁷ “Testimony: Robert L. Martin,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 1861.

²⁸ “The Pennsylvania Volunteers,” *Vanity Fair*, July 6, 1861; reproduced in Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861 – 1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 25.

forced Robert Martin and other early contractors to cut corners further, evidently using poor quality cloth rather than the army standard. The initial fervor to clothe and equip the thousands of early volunteers aggravated the issue further where the need for soldier uniforms required them to accept the garments, even if they knew the issues with them.

The use of substandard cloth was not unique to the Girard House Hotel or contractors, but frequently appeared in antebellum ready-made clothing in the form of “shoddy.” Perhaps the most famous description of shoddy was published in *Harper’s Weekly* which called it,

“a villainous compound, the refuse stuff and sweepings of the shop, pounded, rolled, glued and smoothed to the external form and gloss of cloth, but no more like the genuine article than the shadow is to the substance. Soldiers on the first day’s march or in the earliest storm, found the clothes, overcoats and blankets scattering to the wind in rags or dissolving into their primitive elements of dust under the pelting rain.”²⁹

However, there were those who supported the manufacturing and use of shoddy cloth.

Englishman Samuel Jubb published *The History of the Shoddy Trade: It’s Rise, Progress, and Present Position* in 1860. In it, Jubb praised the cloth because the “object of its manufacture is to produce cheap, useful, tasteful, and economical cloths for wearing apparel and other uses” and that the cloth could be adapted for use by anyone.³⁰ The great fault in the use of shoddy, Jubb argued, was not necessarily the cloth itself – although Jubb suggests that the cloth’s “constitution” of being created by meshing together rag-wool, or shoddy, and sheep’s wool might contribute – but rather the manufacturers of the shoddy cloth. By misunderstanding, or ignoring, the proper proportions required to make the cloth strong, the manufacturers placed

²⁹ Robin Smith, *Brassey’s History of Uniforms: American Civil War Union Army* (London: Brassey’s Ltd., 1996), 6.

³⁰ Samuel Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy Trade: It’s Rise, Progress, and Present Position* (London: Houlston and Wright, 1860), 3.

“habitual caution” in the minds of customers.³¹ Indeed, shoddy had been used in England and other European countries for military uniforms. Jubb cites shoddy being used to make overcoats, which were chiefly made out of kersey cloth, but shoddy could be used as a replacement.³²

Despite the best efforts of men like Samuel Jubb, the general public’s outlook on shoddy cloth had always been cautious and apprehensive. Besides the shoddy’s tendency to fall apart after wear for only a few days, the consumers of shoddy also brought Northerners to avoid it. Clothiers across the North in the 1830s had done considerable business with Southern planters and slave owners, providing inexpensive, and sometimes poorly made, clothing for slaves. Derided as “Negro Cottons,” the cloths were woven for southern markets and particularly slaves which some historians have suggested resembled shoddy. More substantial evidence suggests that shoddy cloth, and the clothing made from it, were marketed to the urban poor.³³

Accusations for the use of shoddy cloth on uniforms was levied at the Girard House Hotel, but the state of New York stood proof-in-hand against one of the most famous clothiers in the nineteenth century – Brooks Brothers. Founded in 1818, Brooks Brothers quickly established itself as one of the leading clothing manufacturers in the United States. The firm began rebranding themselves in the 1850s, moving their store from Catherine Street to a massive four-

³¹ Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy Trade*, 2. Jubb does not mention the proportions required to make the shoddy, but goes on to explain that the scraps of cloth were woven into “rags” which were then woven together to make the full yardage of shoddy.

³² Jubb, *The History of the Shoddy Trade*, 49-50. Jubb is quick to note that when used for military clothing, shoddy was only used for those “of the lower descriptions chiefly,” meaning that the British military did not place much stock in the quality or strength of the cloth for military uses. The fact that shoddy could be used as a replacement in European militaries for other kersey garments helps to explain why it might have been used to make trousers at the Girard House Hotel as kersey was the required type of cloth to make army-issue trousers. This explanation also helps to understand what kinds of cloth was used which fell apart so quickly at Camp Scott.

³³ Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788 – 1850* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 120; Christine Stansell, *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789 – 1860* (Urbana: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 51. Stansell includes an anecdote of poor children scouring the docks in New York, picking up loose cotton that had fallen off the cotton bales from the South, selling them to junk dealers who then sold the scraps to paper and shoddy manufacturers. At every point, the urban poor were a major target for shoddy cloth and clothing.

story, 100,000 square foot structure on the corner of Broadway and Grand Street that was completed in 1857. While the store's location on Catherine Street was in the heart of the city's business district when it was established, as the wealthy classes moved further North on Manhattan Island, the Brooks brothers followed their clientele.³⁴ The new store's location placed it in the heart of the growing consumer and shopping culture that thrived in New York City through this period, garnering even more customers from New York's elite.³⁵ The store itself was designed to link luxury with the ready-made clothing that the firm produced. Large windows ran the length of the building along Grand Street and Broadway, allowing passersby to peer into the structure and gaze upon the hundreds of tables piled with clothing and male forms modeling the latest styles, the vaulted ceiling with crystal chandeliers and walnut walls, gold-capped columns, and a staff of nearly two hundred salespeople and clerks answering the needs of every customer. The store maintained a balance between the ready-made and bespoke clothing, relegating much of the upper floors to the process of cutting and sewing pieces.³⁶ A woman who visited Brooks Brothers in 1861 with her father on a trip to buy underwear was no less impressed with the nearly four hundred people she saw cutting and sewing clothing within the walls of the store than she was with the gold-capped columns and artificial gas lighting.³⁷ The firm's efforts placed

³⁴ *Established 1818: Brooks Brothers Centenary, 1818-1918* (New York: The Cheltenham Press, 1918), 12; Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 56. Beckert notes that because of the growing number of "sailors, workers, and vagabonds" that flowed into the lower neighborhoods of Manhattan, New York's elite moved further up the island to get away from what they perceived as a threat to their status. They congregated around locations such as Washington and Union Squares and the merchant elite followed.

³⁵ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 64-65.

³⁶ While the firm maintained a large staff within the walls of its store, it relied upon thousands of outworkers to maintain the steep level of production, particularly during the Civil War. Estimates from 1863 and 1864 cite firms such as Brooks Brothers, Lewis & Hanford, Delvin & Company, and Wilde & Company making nearly \$1 million each in annual sales while relying upon the labor of as many as three to four thousand seamstresses during the peak seasons. Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 92.

³⁷ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 101-102.

them amongst the wealthiest of New York's citizens and marked their business as one of the most prominent clothiers in the nation.

When New York began outfitting their state volunteers to quell the rebellion in 1861, they turned to Brooks Brothers as a source for uniforms that would send a powerful message about men from the Excelsior State. While the state Military Board published a contract for the production of 12,000 uniform suits to be produced within six weeks, companies were only given twenty-four hours to provide an example of their work. However, the Military Board had no intention of using any other firm than Brooks Brothers, providing them with advanced notice of the contract so they could prepare their samples. The initial contract was agreed at \$19.50 per uniform suit.³⁸ Rather than providing uniforms made by another clothier, the Military Board thought it important to outfit their men in clothing produced by what was considered one of the largest and most revered clothing firms in the nation. This in an effort to send a message to other states concerning the power and class of New York soldiers, placing their uniforms at a level above those of other states.

It became clear through the end of 1861, however, that many large clothing firms, such as Brooks Brothers, were using their personal connections within the state governments and wealth to gain access to contracts. Philip Dorsheimer, then Secretary of the Treasury of New York, was given gifts by many of the largest firms to win favor in the contract process. Brooks Brothers provided his wife with a new silk dress and expensively outfitted him, his sons, and the State Attorney General. These and other efforts would place Brooks Brothers as the second-largest

³⁸ Stuart D. Brandes, *Warhogs: A History of War Profits in America* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 71.

contractor to New York in the first year of the war.³⁹ This practice was not unique to the Civil War period or New York as the Buchanan administration had provided federal contracts to Democratic Party donors, but many feared that the practice would continue with the Lincoln administration.⁴⁰

Within twenty-four hours of receiving the contract, Brooks Brothers hired 125 cutters and over 5,000 hands to sew the uniforms, producing over 5,000 complete suits in one week. The immense number of hands hired owes strongly to the firm's reputation within the clothing community and the large prices paid for each uniform promised higher piece-rates for workers. Brooks Brother quickly discovered, however, that the supply of Army-quality wool broadcloth was in short supply within New York City with no possibility of receiving more. In a bid to complete their order, and to further maximize their profits, the firm persuaded the Military Board to allow them to "substitute other available materials." Some of the cloth they substituted was of an inferior quality and deteriorated rapidly, much of it being "shoddy" cloth. Other uniforms were reportedly bereft of button holes or had seams rip open upon first wearing it. As the New York soldiers entered their camps around Washington D.C., they were mocked by the soldiers from other states for their unsoldierly appearance.⁴¹

By the end of the year, the state launched an investigation into charges of corruption and substandard uniform production. Within that year, Brooks Brothers had produced some 36,000 uniforms and they claimed that only 500 had been reported as damaged. The Lieutenant

³⁹ Adam Mendelsohn, *Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2015), 168.

⁴⁰ Brandes, *Warhogs*, 71.

⁴¹ Brandes, *Warhogs*, 71; Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 20. This also meant that the soldiers would have to pay out of their clothing allowance to receive replacement uniforms, the US Army regulations allowing for every soldier to be outfitted in a complete uniform once per year with all substitutions or replacements being taken from the soldier's \$42 per year clothing allowance. While embarrassing for all soldiers, those without the means to replace the uniform pieces were under considerably more stress than their wealthier comrades.

Governor, on the other hand, claimed that most of the stock was “substandard.” When asked how much money the firm had made on the contract and substitution of inferior cloth, Elisha Brooks said, “I think I cannot ascertain the difference without spending more time than I can now devote to that purpose.”⁴² Brooks Brothers was ordered to replace 2,350 uniforms as partial compensation for their actions, but the damage had already been done. The New York newspapers viciously attacked Brooks Brothers, seeing an opportunity to characterize it as the face of all war profiteering through the early months of the war. Labeled as the “shoddy aristocracy,” the wealthy New York businessmen that invested in or ran other large clothing firms were quickly marked as corrupt and vile contractors who strove only to make money from the blood and sacrifice of the nation’s soldiers. “They were the government contractors and their families who had made such heaps of money, since last spring, by operations in shoddy, that they could afford to be great people,” wrote one contributor to the *New York Herald*.⁴³ The *New York Herald*, perhaps the most outspoken of all papers against the republican government and all who did business with it, claimed that “it is by such contracts as these that the life-blood is being sucked out of the nation by the vampires.”⁴⁴

When the Draft Riots erupted in New York City in July 1863, a public angered by the institution of the draft that was perceived to disproportionately affect the lower classes turned some of their fury against Brooks Brothers as the infamous face of the “shoddy aristocracy.” Their anger was certainly fueled by the incessant reports of shoddy contract work mentioned in letters from loved ones and national newspapers, but they were also known to be a hard employer as the previous March, four hundred tailors went on strike for higher wages. On

⁴² Brandes, *Warhogs*, 72.

⁴³ “Social Revolutions – Advent of the Shoddy Aristocracy,” *New York Herald*, November 6, 1861.

⁴⁴ Brandes, *Warhogs*, 72-73.

Monday, July 13, 1863, the rioters attacked and sacked the original Catherine Street Brooks Brothers store. Edwin Granville, a porter at the store, reported that the mob attacked the store at 9:30 pm and “the panels of the doors were broken in, and they put their heads in and called me names, and said if I did not open they would hang or shoot me.” Granville escaped from the rear of the store, changing his clothes from those he found on displays, so the mob would not recognize him. As he escaped, the mob broke through the front doors, illuminated the gas lights, and began ransacking the store. Cherry street was reportedly covered in hats, coats, pants, jackets, and bolts of cloth that were thrown out the windows or dropped by the rioters who took them. In the middle of the sacking, 150 police officers arrived and quickly began fighting their way through the crowd to the front doors of the store. The fight continued through the store, but finally the mob dispersed into the side streets and alleys surrounding the store. When they were able to take stock of the damage, the Brooks brothers counted over \$50,000 worth of clothing and material had been stolen or ruined.⁴⁵ *Harpers Weekly* characterized the mob as “roughs,” members of society who were of the lower social classes characterized by their lack of wealth and refinement, who could be seen retreating in all directions with their “ill-gotten booty.”⁴⁶ This blatant attack against the “shoddy aristocracy” reverberated across the North, and Brooks Brothers remained the face of nefarious contracting.

Both the soldiers who received clothing from the Girard House and contractors such as Brooks Brothers as well as the civilians who witnessed the subpar product helped to solidify the public perception of contractors as swindlers and cheats who were more inclined to make money

⁴⁵ Adrian Cook, *The Armies of the Streets: The New York City Draft Riots of 1863* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1974), 130-131. Along Division and Grand Streets, another mob broke into Abraham’s ready-made clothing store, stealing everything that the owner could not take upstairs with him, as well as everything in the storerooms and destroyed all his cases. This is to say that clothing was a target for many in the mob, but the fervor and anger used to begin the riots was partially against the new “shoddy aristocracy” and their contracting.

⁴⁶ “The Riots in new York,” *Harper’s Weekly*, August 1, 1863.

rather than provide a product that would serve the soldiers well. The use of shoddy cloth is uncertain in the case of the Girard House Hotel, but the use of substandard cloth by other firms is undeniable. The low opinion of contractors extended beyond those who made uniforms and the title of “shoddy” contract work was used to describe many other items such as tents, knapsacks, accoutrements, and shoes. Employees and outworkers at the Schuylkill Arsenal used examples of contract work as a comparison to their own work to prove the superior quality they could produce. This argument is used time and again in petitions submitted to Colonel George H. Crosman, commander of the Clothing Bureau at the Schuylkill Arsenal, to argue for higher wages and an increased reliance on Arsenal produced garments and equipment.

The only Federal Arsenal to produce uniforms prior to the Civil War, the Schuylkill arsenal struggled to ramp up production to meet the initial wartime demands. As mentioned above, the Quartermaster Department revived the contract system as a buffer for their own Arsenal production, Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs even going to far as to order 10,000 full uniform suits from the French government.⁴⁷ Contracts were continually sent out and given to the lowest bidder for procurement of cloth, leather, canvas, linen, and finished goods, all of which would be sent to the Arsenal for later use.⁴⁸ The influx of volunteers in 1861 necessarily meant an increase in workforce and production capability. Quartermaster General Meigs focused on establishing a surplus of clothing and equipment that could be distributed more

⁴⁷ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 353; Phillip Scranton, *Proprietary Capitalism: The Textile Manufacture in Philadelphia, 1800-1885* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 281. This number would be sufficient to fully equip ten 1,000 man regiments. Of the uniforms Meigs commented that the “material proved to be of excellent quality... its cost differ[ing] little from that of American goods.” The imported uniforms, however, received immense backlash from the Northern woolen textile plants that felt that all military cloth should be manufactured domestically. Meigs understood their concern and never made another foreign contract. To solidify this, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton officially barred the practice in 1862, ensuring it would never happen again.

⁴⁸ For an in-depth discussion of the kinds and amounts of contracts issued by the Quartermaster Department through the Schuylkill Arsenal and other government facilities, see Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, and James Nagle, *History of Government Contracting*, Second Edition (Washington D.C.: The George Washington University Press, 1999).

rapidly. Increases in outworkers through 1861 filled the storerooms of the Arsenal, leading Meigs and George Crosman to implement measures to stabilize the workforce and cut it down to the most necessary level.⁴⁹

It is hard to conceptualize the scale of production at the Schuylkill Arsenal as well as the near continuous flow of contractor-made uniforms and equipment into the Arsenal's storerooms. On June 13, 1861, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published an editorial describing the inside of the Gray's Ferry Arsenal, the local name for the Schuylkill Arsenal which sat on the east side of the Schuylkill River on the Grey's Ferry Road. In extreme detail, the writer describes everything that he saw as he toured the grounds and every floor of the main building. He estimated that the raw materials and finished equipment stored there was worth over \$3,000,000 and that the number of workingmen number in the thousands. For example, he notes that the Arsenal had an estimated 80,000 canteens stored in the main building. One of the more impressive descriptions comes from the packing room where, on the east side, bins stretched from floor to ceiling "and would make two ordinary sized country cottages." He goes on saying, "They are lined with linen, and are protected from the dust and heat of the sun by huge plaid drop curtains which may be raised by cords and pullies[sic]." He claimed to have counted over 12,000 sack coats in a single pass and that women make them all inside the establishment. Starting at the entrance and ending in the stuffy and cramped fourth floor attic, the author continued to mention everything he laid eyes

⁴⁹ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 87. No information is given as to what was considered a necessary level, but other measures were taken throughout the war to reduce the number of civilian outworkers at the Arsenal. In July 1863, George Crosman implemented "loyalty laws" where female employees, current and future, had to prove they had relatives fighting in the Federal armies in order to gain employment at the Arsenal. Within twenty-four hours, over one hundred women were fired. These laws would stay in place until the end of the war and production requirements dropped dramatically. Judie Geisburg, *Army at Home: Women and the Civil War in the Northern Homefront* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 137-138.

on - “drum sticks, shoulder scales, hat cords, ostrich plumes, brass letters for the designation of companies – and all the other trinkets and paraphernalia of ‘grim-visage of war.’”⁵⁰

By summer of 1862, the Schuylkill Arsenal had created the surplus Meigs desired, reporting that it had 3.2 million yards of regulation-grade uniform cloth on hand, enough to produce roughly 500,000 complete uniform suits.⁵¹ Meigs lamented the carelessness of soldiers in the winter of 1861-62 who often discarded clothing and equipment, such as knapsacks and overcoats, rather than returning them to stores or their regimental quartermaster, but the large amount of cloth and clothing on hand could replace what was discarded and much more. However, in July 1862 President Lincoln called for 300,000 more volunteers and in August called for 300,000 militia. These calls wiped out all stock of constructed garments as well as all cloth to make new ones.⁵² Meigs and Crosman responded by hiring more outworkers than had been employed previously where by 1863 and 1864 they employed between 8,000 and 10,000 seamstresses alone.⁵³

By 1864, the Schuylkill Arsenal had firmly established their construction and procurement methods, but rampant inflation and social concerns had begun to wear on certain sections of employees prompting them to act in the form of petitions signed by thousands of workers airing their grievances. One of the first in 1864 was that of the Journeyman Shoemakers Society of Philadelphia. Their grievances centered on their social place as journeymen and the Quartermaster Department’s over-reliance on contractor made boots and bootees. This was

⁵⁰ “They Gray’s Ferry Arsenal,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 13, 1861.

⁵¹ Russell F. Weigley, *Quartermaster General of the Union Army: A Biography of M.C. Meigs* (New York, 1959), 251-252.

⁵² Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 356.

⁵³ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 348.

certainly not the first-time shoemakers had believed their quality products were not appreciated as cobblers maintained a long history of fighting against the industrialization of shoemaking. Large firms mass-producing shoes outpaced the Journeymen, producing marketable shoes at prices the Journeymen could not match. Much like the merchants of the ready-made clothing industry who marketed garments to the middle class, mass-produced shoes, while certainly of a lesser quality due to the techniques used in making them, were viewed by many consumers as a modern alternative to the bespoke process.

The financial panics of 1819 and 1837 struck hard blows to the journeymen shoemakers making them “singularly aggressive in the area of wages.”⁵⁴ In the late 1820s for example, journeymen slashed the prices of boots by one-hundred and fifty percent and the cheapest work by one third, forcing them to turn out nearly triple the quantity and extending their work hours.⁵⁵ Despite their working conditions, journeymen were widely considered to be the among the most skilled craftsmen in Philadelphia in the 1840s and 1850s. They distinguished themselves from the other shoe manufacturers by completing entire shoes by hand, generally by hand-sewing all three main pieces of the shoe – the upper, lower, and sole. Their work through the first quarter of the nineteenth century taught them to band together to form worker’s unions and trade organizations to protect themselves from the lowering prices of larger manufactories, most of which used the latest machine technology to construct shoes much faster. The advances made in sewing machines, for example, allowed multiple kinds of stitches to be produced by the same machine – the “locking stich” was widely considered to be the most reliable as the two rows of stiches “locked” or wove around one another on alternating stitches.⁵⁶ However, the invention of

⁵⁴ Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia*, 21.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* Reports from the 1840s show that journeymen shoemakers and tailors were working sixteen-hour days in order to keep up with demands and to make enough money to survive.

⁵⁶ John Bedford Leno, *The Art of Boot and Shoemaking* (London: Crosby Lockwood & Co., 1885), 179-186.

“pegged” soles and subsequent “pegging machines” helped to revolutionize the shoemaking industry by using sized wooden pegs to attach the sole to the lower of the shoe. First invented in 1833 by Amos Whittemore, pegging machines patented in the 1850s and early 1860s used a mechanism that utilized a long, pre-sized cylinder of wood that would automatically cut the rod to the proper length by the machine as the user moved the levers.⁵⁷

It was machines such as these that put pressure on journeymen shoemakers and other artisanal craftsmen, but they were also used by contractors during the Mexican-American War who provided shoes that were wholly unfit for campaign, prompting the Schuylkill Arsenal to rethink their shoe supply. By mid-January 1847, soldiers on campaign in Mexico were “indeed destitute.” The long marches wore down the soldiers’ clothes and especially shoes. One Maryland soldier noted “many of the men have made sandals from rawhide, which looks right well...” going on to mention the lack of jackets and threadbare trousers of the men on parade.⁵⁸ By the summer of 1847, army shoes – or “bootees” so named because of their sturdy lowers of shoes and high ankle, but not so high as a boot that would come to mid-calf – were still produced exclusively by contract firms. At the end of 1847, the Arsenal established a bootee-making shop at the Schuylkill Arsenal that, by the end of the war in 1848, was turning out 12,000 pairs of properly sized and standardized shoes each month.⁵⁹

While a victory for journeymen as the Federal Government established the shoemaking department based on the perceived quality of journeymen products, the situation in the commercial sphere continued to deteriorate, particularly after the panic of 1857. The situation reached a boiling point in February 1860 when in Lynn, Massachusetts shoemakers from the

⁵⁷ Leno, *The Art of Boot and Shoemaking*, 210-211.

⁵⁸ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 253.

⁵⁹ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 256.

factory town went on the largest strike yet seen in American history. Northeast of Boston, Lynn was founded as a factory town that pioneered the use of sewing machines. The financial panic of 1857 all but ended the shoemaking operations in the town and by 1859 men that still had jobs were making just three dollars per week while women could expect just one dollar. The people of Lynn formed a Mechanics Association in early 1860 and created committees to meet with manufacturing bosses to negotiate higher wages. When the bosses refused to meet with the committees, the shoemakers of Lynn planned to strike in. In all, five thousand men and one thousand women marched through a blizzard in downtown Lynn carrying banners and American flags.⁶⁰ The strike sent shockwaves down the east coast and in cities like New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, shoemakers began to organize and hold meetings of their own. Historians have argued that artisan shoemakers like those in Lynn created a mechanics' ideology that was militantly opposed to the reorganization of production and the changing of traditional modes of work. This ideology had its roots in the theory of republican value - value in one's own work and one's own self sufficiency that, some historians have argued, transcended state boundaries and linked all artisan shoemakers through their apprenticeship processes and their status as journeymen or master craftsmen.⁶¹

By the outbreak of the Civil War in April 1861, the Arsenal employed 700 shoemakers, some as cutters, some who worked at the workbenches in the shoemaking building on the Arsenal grounds, and others that performed outwork. By June 1862, 15,000 pairs of boots and bootees were being produced each month. Even this increase was not nearly enough to supply

⁶⁰ Howard Zinn, "Chapter 10: The Other Civil War," in *A People's History of the United States* (Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 1980).

⁶¹ Mary H. Blewett, "Work, Gender and the Artisan Tradition in New England Shoemaking, 1780-1860," *Journal of Social History* 17, no. 2 (Winter 1983), 221. See also Paul G. Faler, *Mechanics and Manufacturers in the Early Industrial Revolution: Lynn, Massachusetts 1780-1860* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1981).

the armies and the Quartermaster Department once again turned to contractors to fill the void. The army's specifications and standards for footwear, however, were based on the processes used by the journeymen shoemakers employed at the Arsenal. They specified a hand-sewn shoe that was made of oak-tanned leather. Once the contractors began buying up leather, the supply of army-standard oak-tanned leather was exhausted and so many contractors turned to a much cheaper hemlock-tanned leather.⁶² Historian Erna Risch argues that hand-sewn shoes had almost completely vanished from the civilian market, citing a committee that investigated government contracts that claimed that not one-in-ten Federal enlisted men had ever worn sewn-sole shoes prior to his enlistment. Risch goes on to cite the improvements made to machine-sewn shoes due to the advancements made by Gordon McKay to his patented sewing machine. The shoes made by his machine impressed the Quartermaster Department so much that they changed their standard requirements and began ordering pegged and machine-sewn shoes by early 1863.⁶³

Many of the contractors that received government deals were well-established civilian companies. In the shoemaking business for example, T. & E. Bathceller and Kimball & Robinson of Massachusetts owned factories that before 1861 already employed hundreds of men and women using steam-driven pegging machines. In doing so, they were able to complete up to one or two thousand pairs of boots and shoes in one day. John Mundell and James Harmer of Philadelphia were not major companies before the war, but became leading contractors because they were able to rent McKay sewing machines.⁶⁴ The total value of the contracts entered into by

⁶² While there is no appreciable difference between oak-tanned and hemlock-tanned leather in terms of quality or sturdiness, it is yet another example of contractor fraud during the war, something that the journeymen shoemakers at the Arsenal were very upset with.

⁶³ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 361. While the technological advances made in the shoemaking industry seemed to permeate all levels, there was still a demand for hand-sewn shoes buy members of the upper-class, much like tailors remained in business because of the allure that surrounded bespoke clothing and served as a way to distinguish oneself from the "common" man. Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia*, 26.

⁶⁴ Wilson, *The Business of Civil War*, 120-121.

John Mundell throughout the war came to \$1.6 million while the total value of another major Philadelphia firm, James B. Harmer & Co., came to \$843,000.⁶⁵

In 1864, the Journeyman Shoemaker's Society of Philadelphia submitted a petition to Quartermaster General Meigs that built upon the previous decades of loss at the hands of industrialized shoemaking firms. The shoemakers were requesting higher wages because of the rising cost of "findings,"— the "thread, nails, bristles, wax, light," and other "notions" that were needed to make shoes – as well as the other general costs of living in Philadelphia. They provide examples of the rising inflation, citing goods such as coffee, which before the war cost sixteen cents per pound and had risen to forty-six cents per pound.⁶⁶ They note that "findings" had risen as much as three-hundred percent since the beginning of the war.

While many other occupations were suffering from similar issues at the Arsenal, the journeymen shoemakers were particularly frustrated because of their elevated status as Journeymen. They believed that they deserved higher wages because of the better quality they produced over the contract houses and that the government could "save many thousands of dollars to the Treasury of the United States" if they would only invest in the arsenal production of shoes and abandon, or at least lessen, their reliance on contractor-made shoes. To the Journeymen Shoemakers, the urgency of supplying so many soldiers at the outset of the war had passed and that arsenal manufacturing capabilities had reached a level of efficiency that would allow them to provide every pair of shoes and boots required by the Federal armies. Better still, the arsenal-made shoes would last "as long as two pairs made by a Sewing Machine and furnished to the Government by

⁶⁵ Wilson, "Table B.4: Leading Boot and Shoe Suppliers to the U.S. Army, 1861-1864," in *The Business of Civil War*, 233.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* They also include other household necessities such as flour - previously \$7.00 per barrel now \$9.50, tea - previously \$0.50 per pound now \$1.25, sugar – previously \$0.07 per pound now \$0.16, and butter – previously \$0.14 per pound now \$0.45.

Contractors.” The journeymen lamented the use of sewing machines, their antagonism only heightened by the fact that the government would pay a contractor the same price for machine-sewn boots and bootees that they would pay an arsenal employee for a hand-sewn pair.

While the Journeyman Shoemakers focused primarily on the issues they saw in the quality of the shoes, the Quartermaster Department could not deny the efficiency or production capabilities of the contract houses. To use the figures from the firms of T. & E. Bathceller and Kimball & Robinson of Massachusetts, the fact that they could produce one or two thousand pairs of shoes every day simply could not be beaten by the journeymen and their hand-sewing. The journeymen claim in their petition that many of them were veterans and had seen first-hand the quality of shoes produced by contractors. Their training as journeymen adds credibility to their observations. However, while use of the sewing machine was increasing in many manufacturing circles, there was still a stigma against the quality of garment that the sewing machine could produce and hand-sewn garments were considered more durable.⁶⁷ This may have been due to the continued need for hand-sewn, bespoke clothing for the wealthy and hand-sewn details on higher-quality garments, both of which were seen as being better than standard ready-made articles. The efficiency of the sewing machine and reduced reliance on highly skilled craftsmen to produce shoes was well understood by the Quartermaster Department as they revised their requirements for army-standard to reflect their changed perceptions.

The petition submitted by the Journeyman Shoemakers Society did not achieve a piece-rate increase or a reduction in the Quartermaster Department’s reliance on contractors and was

⁶⁷ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 348. Within the realm of military clothing, the sewing machine had been tried on coats, trousers, jackets, and shirts because of its increasing use in the ready-made industry, but by the time of the Civil War, it was only ever used on caps and chevrons – pieces that were not exposed to hard wear or use.

rebuffed by Quartermaster General Meigs after just two days. Another petition submitted later that year by seamstresses, however, garnered much more support and led to attempts at reform. While the shoemaker's petition called into question the reduced value journeymen and other artisanal craftsmen felt in the decades prior to the Civil War, the sewing women's petition used language reminiscent of the calls for aid and welfare for starving seamstresses seen across the North in the antebellum period. Showing a united front, the twenty-thousand signature on the petition of the sewing women of Philadelphia included women who worked at the Schuylkill Arsenal as well as the contract firms around the city. The well-known social issues surrounding the wages of sewing women contributed to the success and widespread knowledge of their plight.

“What need of argument?” claimed the sewing women's petition, “To an intelligent mind the result must be apparent...” – the prices paid to sewing women were simply too low to provide a living. On June 6, 1864, a “printed circular” was received at the Schuylkill Arsenal detailing the demands of “Twenty Thousand Working Women” of Philadelphia and the Schuylkill Arsenal.⁶⁸ It was placed on the desk of Colonel George H. Crosman as a warning for what they were going to send to Secretary of War Edwin Stanton. Crosman immediately forwarded the petition to his superior, Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs. Crosman reminded Meigs that the wages had been reduced in August 1862 after it was established that Lieutenant Colonel Vinton, head of the New York clothing department, was paying lower wages

⁶⁸ “Crosman to Meigs, June 6, 1864,” NARA RG 92: *Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915*, e. 225, Box 439. The circular used strong language that appeals directly to the gendered experience of the Philadelphia women. It speaks of the poor wages given before the war, wages that have dropped and become insufficient for making a living in the city. The document marks Stanton as God-like, a man who has the authority to clothe the needy and feed the hungry. As it is signed by women who work both in the Arsenal and the contract firms, their demands are pointed to the most direct needs of the women – regulation of the contracts forcing Arsenal prices be paid for contract work and new facilities be built at the Arsenal to accommodate “four times the number of women” employed at there.

for similar work. Crosman urged that the wages be increased and asked to consult with his chief inspectors to determine a pay scale, which he thought would “end all cause for complaint.”⁶⁹

The women certainly had cause for complaint, however, as rampant inflation had brought the value of one dollar down by an estimated seventy-five percent. Women at the arsenal had also seen a reduction of piece-rates – payment for each article of clothing completed - with the prices for a lined fatigue blouse dropping from forty-five to forty cents per blouse.⁷⁰

This was not the first time Crosman had been asked to increase the wages at the Schuylkill Arsenal. On April 14, 1864, Crosman wrote to Meigs complaining that he had been “repeatedly appealed to for an increase in pay by the employees of the Schuylkill Arsenal.” The employees claimed that they could find higher paying work elsewhere. Crosman suggested an Arsenal-wide reform, increasing wages based on the current levels of pay. For example, “all laborers, mechaniers [sic] and others whose present rate of pay is \$32 50/100,” would be increased by twenty five percent while clerks, inspectors, and others who received more than six hundred dollars per year, but no more than one thousand dollars per year, would receive a fifteen percent increase. Crosman also suggested that wages be increased in the same manner in all offices of the Quartermaster Department, perhaps in an attempt to make the suggestions more desirable to his superiors. Crosman ended his letter by placing himself on the side of the petitioners – that he and a great many “respectable gentlemen here” thought “[the employees] are entitled to the reasonable increase called for.” Quartermaster General Meigs responded quickly, although his acceptance of Crosman’s suggestions was vague prompting another letter from

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 244.

Crosman to ask how the process was to begin and how it would be implemented. Unfortunately, the evidence suggests that Crosman's plan was not applied completely.⁷¹

The women of Philadelphia created their own organization to lobby for their cause, the Working Women's Relief Organization. Just as thousands of women were working in relief organizations for Union soldiers, the sewing women created one for themselves, strengthening their case through greater pressure applied to the Arsenal and in popular opinion through the press' recognition. Philadelphia's press followed the meetings regularly, printing synopses of the events and speeches that took place. On April 27, 1864 one of the first meetings took place at Franklin Hall in Philadelphia. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* detailed the appointment of one "Mrs. Pratt" as President and a "Miss McDowell" as Secretary. Many letters were read at the meeting detailing the poor wages women received for their work. One such letter claimed that her hardest and best work would only net her one dollar and eighty cents per week. A resolution was then passed that appointed a committee to "draw up an appeal to all employers, asking them for more generous remuneration," and that the government workers would appeal directly to Congress for an increase in their wages.⁷² It was this resolution that prompted the "printed circular" that was placed on George Crosman's desk.

On May 4, 1864, the women met at Spring Garden Hall where William Nicholson spoke to the crowd, expressing his concern that women's wages were so far below those of men. Not only had the women garnered the attention of the press, but leading male figures of the community had joined in expressing their concern for the situation facing the sewing women. Letters were again read giving more hard figures to the disparity.⁷³ On August 4 the women had

⁷¹ NARA, RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 20 box 132 – Letters Received, Book 58, A-L 1864.

⁷² "Another Meeting of the Sewing Women," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 27, 1864.

⁷³ "City Intelligence – Meeting of Sewing Women," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 4, 1864.

appointed a committee to travel to Washington to meet with President Lincoln or Secretary of War Stanton in relation to the wages paid, especially to those women who had relatives in the Federal armies.⁷⁴ By appealing to the President and Secretary Stanton with this demographic of the working women, the committee could extend the message they placed in their circular, that these men could “ameliorate the condition of those who have given *their all* to their country.”⁷⁵

Finally, on August 22, 1864, news reached the sewing women in a letter from the Secretary of War that stated an increase in wages and the creation of more jobs at the Schuylkill Arsenal. Between one and two thousand jobs were to open for women in need at the Arsenal, but only for those women who could confirm a male relative in the service of the United States. Stanton ordered the wages of “those in the employment of the Government” to be increased by twenty percent. As for contract workers, however, their consolation would come from an ongoing investigation of pay within the contract system, as he did not wish to put the full force of the Government onto private business.⁷⁶

The sewing women’s first meeting with the President seemed to have achieved everything that they wanted, but as August continued into September and October, the women grew restless and motioned once again for action. The changes the President and Stanton had promised had never materialized. By January, the women were meeting once more and another committee was formed to meet with the President. They received their audience with the President on January 26, 1865 where he made the same promises as he had in August of an increase in the piece rate and more government job opportunities.⁷⁷ President Lincoln sent a

⁷⁴ “The Sewing Women,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 4, 1864.

⁷⁵ “Crosmen to Meigs, June 6, 1864,” NARA RG 92: *Consolidated Correspondence File, 1794-1915*, e. 225, Box 439. Emphasis in original.

⁷⁶ “Work for Soldiers’ Wives,” *Philadelphia Enquirer*, August 22, 1864.

⁷⁷ Geisberg, *Army at Home*, 139-140.

message to Colonel Thomas, the acting Quartermaster General in Montgomery Meigs' absence, saying, "I shall be personally obliged if you can hereafter manage the supplies of contract work for the Government made up by women as to give them remunerative wages for their labor."⁷⁸

The requirements of where a woman could work, the reasons for that work, how long she should be part of the work force, and the goals she wished to achieve through such work were all heavily structured and monitored. "Housewifery" in the nineteenth-century referred generally to all the tasks required to run a home such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, and laundry, as well as managing of servants, the things the home itself needed, and caring for the children and serving as emotional support for her husband.⁷⁹ These skills were passed from mother to daughter beginning at a very early age and a marriageable woman was supposed to have mastered them. Through the nineteenth-century, sewing chiefly a female domestic activity, one that could be employed for pleasure, household necessity, or, a wage-earning vocation. In 1837, Eliza Farrar wrote, "A woman who does not know how to sew is as deficient in her education as a man who cannot write. Let her education in life be what it may, she cannot be ignorant of the use of the needle... without neglecting some important duties."⁸⁰ Taught entirely within the domestic space, sewing created an intergenerational connection within the home and a sense of community amongst local women who often discussed their "work" and swapped patterns and finished pieces together.

A growing number of women, however, were taking their sewing beyond their social networks and friends and into the general market where they earned wages to help support their

⁷⁸ Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 246.

⁷⁹ Nina E. Lerman, "'Preparing for the Duties and Practical Business of Life': Technological Knowledge and Social Structure in Mid-19th Century Philadelphia," *Technology and Culture* 38, no. 1 (January 1997): 38.

⁸⁰ Amy Boyce Osaki, "'A Truly Feminine Employment': Sewing and the Early Nineteenth-Century Woman" *Winterthur Portfolio* 23, no. 4 (Winter 1998): 225.

families. While the wages themselves undoubtedly went to help support their families, their work was to be supplementary to their husband's, and the pay that they received reflected that concept. Because of the hard distinctions placed on what was women's or men's work, female labor could be understood as non-technical and thus it required no skill. In the clothing trade, the tailor was a technical position because of his work with patterns and the act of cutting and sewing pieces together himself. The term "sewing" was also a feminine word that described women's work "except when performed by tailors, or sailmakers, or cordwainers."⁸¹

While it was understood that women would sew clothes for themselves and their families for pleasure or need, it was an entirely different issue to enter the job market as wage earners. It created a strange paradox between the virtuous woman trained in housewifery and America's need for cheap labor.⁸² Because it was widely understood that any self-respecting woman's top priorities were husband, family, and home, any time that they could spend in the workforce should have been as short as possible. Women would have their husbands to provide for them and they should never have to enter work again so long as their husbands remained the hardworking ideal of nineteenth-century men. As Alice Kessler Harris synthesized, "a better job was one that paid more; but at the same time, a good woman was one who traded work for marriage."⁸³

However, for a growing number of women, employment was a necessity as their status as widows, poor, homeless or single motherhood meant that there was no other means of providing for themselves or their children. Regardless of their marital status, though, women's wages

⁸¹ Lerman, "Preparing for the Duties and Practical Business of Life," 35. See also Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

⁸² Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States* (New York, 1982), 22.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

reflected the nineteenth century understanding that a woman's performing labor meant that she was supplementing a husband's income and was therefore paid less. In Leeds, England, for example, clothing manufacturers were perfectly willing to pay high wages to their few male employees as long as they maintained downward pressure on the female employees. Male clothing workers, in England and the United States, understood that women were capable of doing the same work that they did, and because societal custom maintained the lower wages for women, they could be out of work due to an increase in lower-paid female clothiers.⁸⁴ In doing so, male employees maintained a cap on female wage-workers in the market, creating steep competition in the female sectors and maintaining the social constructs that placed men in control and secured their employment at their "just" wages.

Despite the wage gap, textile and ready-made clothing laborers on the whole were generally more impoverished and had some of the lowest wages of any industrial work force. It is estimated that in 1850 men earned two to three times as much as females working comparable or "lower" jobs. The average yearly income of the textile worker came to \$210 while the average wageworker in the top fourteen professions in Philadelphia was \$288. While there were many women who worked in clothing manufactories, there were still a great many women in 1850 who were doing outwork and their wages were drastically lower than those earned by factory women, "... only slightly better than unskilled laborers."⁸⁵ To place these figures in their proper context, English immigrant John Campbell created and published a budget for the laborer in Philadelphia to break even in 1851. He calculated that the base needs – food, clothing, rent, candles, etc. – came to \$10.37 per week. Therefore, in a year that the laborer worked fifty weeks, that

⁸⁴ Andrew Godley, "Introduction: The Development of the Clothing Industry: Technology and Fashion," *Textile History* 28, no. 1 (1997): 7.

⁸⁵ Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia*, 25.

wageworker would make \$518.35. This figure did not include money for medical expenses, clothing, recreation, or any other extra expenditure aside from the most basic necessities.⁸⁶ To reiterate the words of Nina Lerman, the disparity in wages should come as no surprise due to the nineteenth-century beliefs about “women’s work” and its perceived value. Even still, by 1860, nearly 285,000 manufacturing jobs were held by women.⁸⁷

In order to ensure quality of production by the out-working seamstresses at the Schuylkill Arsenal, a “Class” system was put in place to rank women by skill. This system can be seen as an extension of the practice of maintaining different outworkers of different skill levels that would work on different qualities of garment in the ready-made market.⁸⁸ Mary Millard, for example, was listed on an 1865 roster as “Class 1.” Only one other woman, Mary Massey, was listed under the same class while all other women were either “Class 2” or “Class 3” on that page. Based on the similar system used in the antebellum clothing trade, we can surmise that Mary Millard and Mary Massey were the best two seamstresses in their section. They would make eighteen cents per army shirt she produced, thirteen for every pair of drawers, forty cents for every completed pair of trousers, and forty-three cents for every fatigue blouse they completed.⁸⁹ If they were to make the most difficult item to construct, the infantry dress coat, they would receive \$1.25 per coat. They would be lucky to make more than three dollars per week as the complexity of the coat required many hours of hand stitching to complete. Thus, while the lowest paid man in a January 1862 pay ledger, Albert W. Clarke, was given twenty dollars monthly, the best Mary Millard or Mary Massey could hope for would be twelve dollars.

⁸⁶ Laurie, *Working People of Philadelphia*, 12-20.

⁸⁷ Silber, *Daughters of the Union*, 44.

⁸⁸ See Note 7 above.

⁸⁹ NARA – Philadelphia, RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 2326, box 1: Register of Persons Employed, List of Women Employed, List of Females Employed, List of Applications for Appointment at... ; “The Sewing Women Protest,” *Republican Farmer*, January 27, 1865.

Even if they were to take on fatigue blouses, a garment that a skilled seamstress could perhaps complete in one day, her net monthly wage would only be four cents higher.

Given their skill, they would have been well acquainted with the fatigue blouse as the complexity of the garment compared to other items required more skill to construct properly. The four-pieced body and two-pieced sleeve construction, as well as top stitching along the collar, cuffs, and front placket, required countless hours of sewing. All of this was to be hand sewn as many women could not afford a sewing machine, nor did the Arsenal equip any of their facilities to use them. In the 1850s, it was reported in *Nile's Weekly Register* that there were 25,243 stitches in a man's coat, similar in construction to the fatigue blouse, which constituted two days' work at "journeyman's hours." Those equated to 782 stitches for basting, 5,500 for edges, 7,114 for flat felling edges and faces, 1,982 for pockets and other "out-of-sight places," 3,056 for the collar, 5,359 for the seams, and 1,450 for buttons holes.⁹⁰ While these represent the amounts for a civilian coat, each soldier in all Federal armies was to receive two fatigue blouses per year.

It seems, however, that some women were not able to complete work at the army standard and at good quality. Twelve of the forty-two women listed alongside Mary Millard and Mary Massey have the comment "off by order" next to their name. "Off by order" referred to a woman being fired or put on probation from working at the Arsenal for a period. The former employee could be let back to work, as in the case of Sarah Murdoeh whose remark of "off by order" was crossed out and the word "returned" was scribbled above it.⁹¹ The comment could be linked to George Crosman's "loyalty laws" which were still in place in 1865, but Mary Millard's

⁹⁰ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 134.

⁹¹ NARA – Philadelphia, RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 2326, box 1: Register of Persons Employed, List of Women Employed, List of Females Employed, List of Applications for Appointment at...

strong place as the first on that page of the roster, despite not having a male relative in the armed forces, counters that notion. This means that the Schuylkill Arsenal was more concerned with the quality of work a seamstress could produce rather than their ability to prove military relations. The handwriting of the roster is unclear as to the “class” that Sarah Murdoch belonged to, but it is clear that she was not a “Class 1” seamstress. The Arsenal’s struggles with paying their employees, the main reason behind implementing the loyalty laws and reducing the workforce, meant that they would rather keep on women who could reliably construct the most difficult garments to the army-standard quality while lower classed women could be easily replaced.

Countless letters exist within the records of the Quartermaster General in regards to financing the wartime production of military equipment and clothing, none of them painting a picture of a balanced budget for the Clothing Bureau at Philadelphia. In just the month of July 1864, George Crosman wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury three times asking for more money. On June 28, 1864, the Treasury Department authorized \$1,000,000 in credit to be given to Crosman. Eighteen days later on July 18, 1864, Crosman received \$103,000 in credit. Finally on July 23, 1864, he was notified that he would have \$1,692.68 in credit.⁹² Earlier in the year, on April 8, 1864, Crosman received word that his request for \$1.5 million had been granted.⁹³ Such large sums of credit were intended for “certificates of indebtedness.” While the government and the contractors would rather use hard cash for transactions, the Schuylkill Arsenal could not maintain such large stores of money. In order to pay contractors, therefore, they were given the “certificates of indebtedness” which could be taken to any bank and cashed just as any other check could.

⁹² NARA RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 27, box 2: Letters Received from Heads of Departments and Bureaus, Book 2-3, 1864.

⁹³ NARA RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 20, box 132: Letters Received, Book 58, A-L 1864.

Given the low piece rates of the female seamstresses, and the thousands of women employees in that category, the “certificates of indebtedness” were have been viable. Mary Millard or Mary Massey’s predicted weekly income of three or four dollars depending on which garments they produced were not viable for the “certificates of indebtedness” system that was designed for the payment of contractors whose contracts were worth tens- or hundreds of thousands of dollars. Even though the prices paid to their outworkers were low, however, the arsenal still struggled to maintain an adequate amount of cash on hand with which to pay their employees. On September 5, 1864, for example, Alexander Perry, Assistant Quartermaster at the Schuylkill Arsenal, telegraphed General Meigs informing him that he did not have enough money with which to pay the seamstresses. He required two thousand dollars per day, but only had “fourteen hundred sixty five dollars cash on hand.” He requested that Meigs forward the necessary cash, otherwise he would be “compelled to suspend labor at the arsenal or create confusion.”⁹⁴

The two thousand dollars would not be solely going to the sewing women, as the Schuylkill Arsenal’s place as the primary clothing and equipment depot required cobblers, leather workers, laborers, clerks, inspectors, and many others. In January 1862 alone, the arsenal paid the “Persons Employed in the Military Storekeepers Office and the Public Stores” over twenty-two thousand dollars. The employees of the “Clothing establishment” combined were paid \$2,712.63.⁹⁵ The problem of procuring enough cash to pay the sewing women may have been a driving factor in the women’s 1864 movements.

⁹⁴ NARA RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 27, box 2: Letters Received from Heads of Departments and Bureaus, Book 2-3, 1864.

⁹⁵ NARA – Philadelphia, RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 2218, box 1: Records of the Quartermaster General, Quartermaster Depots, Schuylkill Arsenal, Report of Persons and Article Employed and Hired and the Army Clothing and Equipage Branch of the Quartermaster General Depot, 1859-1872.

The immediate aftermath of the war brought reductions in work across the North. Women who once held an Arsenal position soon found themselves without a job, sometimes without a husband or family to turn to. Between 1864 and 1866, over 7,000 more Philadelphians checked into the almshouses around the city.⁹⁶ Estimates of inflation during the war reach as high as seventy-five percent. This increase, when the price of a completed fatigue blouse was only forty cents in 1864, set the sewing women of Philadelphia back considerably. With this in mind, it is not difficult to conceive the reasons why the women were so adamant in their claims, or that twenty-thousand women signed the petition that was sent in June 1864.

The production of uniforms and equipment in Philadelphia during the Civil War was a continuation of the industrialization of clothing production that epitomized the ready-made market in the antebellum period. Issues of quality plagued the supply of uniforms and equipment throughout the war, leading the Schuylkill Arsenal to implement quality-control measures and constantly fluctuate employment of nearly 10,000 sewing women alone. However, with the continued industrialization of clothing production came the continuation of social issues such as skilled labor displacement and the wages of working women. These issues gave rise to political actions such as placing contractors on trial and petitions with thousands of signatures from the Arsenal's employees. These social issues ultimately continued the trend of distrust in poor quality garments produced under the ready-made system.

⁹⁶ Gallman, *Mastering Wartime*, 272.

Chapter Two: A Soldierly Image

Male fashion in the decades preceding the Civil War fundamentally changed the uniforms worn by common soldiers in the Federal armies. The increased popularity of ready-made clothing brought once unavailable styles to lower and middle class men at lower prices and increased availability. The social structures surrounding men's behavior also helped to dictate the clothing options and fabric choices available in the open market. Both ideas influenced male fashion through the 1850s and 1860s making them transition periods in male clothing design as forms became looser, offering a wide range of movement for the active male ideal of that period. While the previous chapter discussed clothing production, this chapter studies clothing fashion and its application in Civil War uniforms. It is vital to discuss the clothing options available to civilian men as the social and cultural requirements surrounding male dress directly correlate to the decisions soldiers made about their uniforms. Military uniform bases its design after civilian clothing with modifications in fit, color, and accessories to distinguish the soldier from civilians in similar attire. Thus, as the clothing choices available to civilians in the 1850s and 1860s transitioned from form fitting to looser, so too did the uniforms of the American military. These changes in uniform design came at odds with the ideal soldierly image as the pictures the Northern home front consumed were very different from the reality of the battlefield. A reporter for the *New York Times* wrote in May 1861, "This war is destined to create an entire revolution in uniforms."⁹⁷ The revolution would come from the choices made by individual soldiers surrounding their uniform, creating a legacy that informs modern interpretations of the Federal soldier during the Civil War.

⁹⁷ Ron Fields, *Rally Round the Flag: The Uniforms of the Union Volunteers of 1861 – The New England States* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2015), 53.

First, it is important to discuss the analytical framework that this chapter uses to understand historical clothing. James Laver, Keeper of Prints, Drawings, and Paintings at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from 1922 to 1958, sought to properly date and analyze the drawings he was tasked to keep by understanding the clothing and accoutrements he saw in them. This led him to develop “Laver’s Law,” which tried to compress the cycles of fashion into a simple timeline.⁹⁸ However, Laver also developed three “principles” of clothing design that he used to understand how clothing changed over time. While not without their faults, the ideas posited by Laver have maintained a strong place in the study of military uniforms, as it was in studying British military uniforms that he used the principles most convincingly, and will be used in this study to help structure the analysis. The principles include the “Seduction Principle,” the “Hierarchical Principle,” and the “Utility Principle.” All three speak to different but interrelated parts of clothing design.

The “Seduction Principle” encompasses clothing’s ability to make the wearer more attractive to the opposite sex and the changes made to enhance that function. Laver claimed in 1945 that “for the last hundred and fifty years,” seduction was not a consideration in male clothing design. “It is commonplace that in nature the male is nearly always more splendid than the female, and wins his mate, partly at least, by a sexual display,” Laver wrote to explain his confusion about why male clothing had abandoned the seduction principle.⁹⁹ In civilian clothing at least, Laver does not seem to consider the social structures surrounding male dress as a determining factor. For example, the requirements of male dress in the mid-nineteenth century called for sober attire with an increasingly loose shape. Molding one’s dress around these social

⁹⁸ James Laver, *Taste and Fashion: From the French Revolution to the Present Day* (London: DODD, 1938), 212-214. See also Valerie Cummings, *Understanding Fashion History* (Costume and Fashion Press, 2004).

⁹⁹ Laver, *Taste and Fashion*, 197-198.

structures and participating in the required social performances could be considered a use of the Seduction Principle. In contrast, the displays of the dandy, his garish and flashy display conforming more to Laver's ideas surrounding the Seduction Principle, brought ridicule from the mainstream of mid-nineteenth century society. However, when used to discuss military uniforms, the Seduction Principle is easily determined. Laver discussed how the Seduction principle could be used as a recruiting measure where "many a man who took the King's shilling did so in the firm conviction that there is nothing like a smart uniform to attract the girls; nor was he often mistaken."¹⁰⁰ Jane Austin's *Pride and Prejudice* provides an example, "His appearance was greatly in his favor; he had all the best parts of beauty, a fine countenance, a good figure, and very pleasing address... the young man wanted only regimentals [a uniform] to make him completely charming." The uniform embodied excitement, adventure, courage, and manliness, all enhanced by the cut of the uniforms as trimmings and lace helped to broaden the shoulders while fitted trousers or breeches showed off the calves and upper thigh.¹⁰¹ The near-ubiquitous understanding of what uniforms did to the male form forced uniform design to constantly apply the Seduction Principle.

The "Hierarchical Principle" explains the use of clothing to determine one's social standing and was what Laver considered "the general principle governing male dress."¹⁰² As the popularity of ready-made clothing grew through the first half of the nineteenth century, varying levels of quality or workmanship came to signify social place. Earlier periods showed the widespread use of second-hand clothing stores which catered to the poor and lower classes. This meant that there was constant difference between the classes where one could afford the new

¹⁰⁰ James Laver, *British Military Uniforms* (London: Penguin Books, 1948), 23-24.

¹⁰¹ Jane Austin, *Pride and Prejudice* (New York: Millennium Publications, 2014), 115-116; Tim Newark, *Brassey's Book of Uniforms* (Brassey's Ltd., 1998), 42.

¹⁰² Laver, *British Military Uniforms*, 23.

fashions tailor made and others could not. The ready-made market changed this by providing the latest styles in various qualities, solving the problems of fashion but maintaining the distinctions between social class. In regards to military uniform, Laver claims that the hierarchies are simplified to differences in rank. Applying such conclusions to Northern uniforms of the Civil War does not acknowledge the differences in quality soldiers perceived between suppliers and between those who could afford to have uniform pieces tailor-made and those who could not. An example of these differences arises when comparing the clothing of officers and enlisted men where the volunteer could receive his uniform from government quartermasters but the officer provided his own uniform made by Northern tailors. Adapting Laver's Hierarchical Principle to include these differences allows for a broader discussion of the role the uniform played in soldier's perceptions of themselves in uniform and the image it conveyed.

Finally, the "Utility Principle" discusses clothing's basic functions – maintaining warmth, keeping the wearer dry, and providing comfort – but also the changes made to clothing to make it more suitable to the work or environment of the wearer.¹⁰³ The adaptations the Utility Principle applied to clothing in the nineteenth century ranged from subtle seam changes to overhauls in social acceptance of particular garments. Similarly, the adaptations made to military uniform differ wildly but are most apparent in prolonged conflicts. Laver argues that in longer wars or extended time in the field, the soldier adapts his clothing to his environment by throwing away cumbersome or unnecessary accoutrements and by cutting away his uniform until it allows the greatest range of movement and comfort.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Laver, *British Military Uniforms*, 24.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

When applied strictly to military uniforms, Laver concluded that uniform design is a “tug of war between the seduction principle (in the sense of the heightening of masculinity and ‘martial’ bearing) and the utility principle.” Given a long enough peace, the seduction principle would triumph over the utility principle and the soldier becomes more “gorgeous.”¹⁰⁵ This conclusion leaves no room for a discussion of the Hierarchical Principle. By discussing the differences in quality soldiers and civilians could perceive in the garments they saw and wore, this chapter intends to extend the discussion of uniforms beyond Laver’s “tug-of-war.” Doing so provides another level of analysis to discuss the connections between soldier’s uniform and civilian attire.

The fashionable coat worn by gentlemen of the early nineteenth century was not an easy garment to construct. The coats were very simple in color and fabric – muted colors in wool broadcloth – but their shape was “artificial” in the same vein as corsets worn by women of the same period. The coat provided a nearly hourglass figure to the man where a tight seam at the waist enhanced the wearer’s broad chest and wide hips. The cloth chosen for these coats was one that had to be textually pleasing – woolen broadcloth of a tight weave and proper finishing making the outer surface almost shine. The seams were very pronounced, emphasizing the quality workmanship by the tailor and placing a social currency on the tightness of the stitching. The padding of the chest and torso, for example, was “carefully thinned out over the chest and back and disappeared in the lower half of the coat, so that the effect was of a wholly unpadded

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* He also concluded that with the introduction of long-range weaponry and the raising of increasingly large armies, the utility principle has triumphed eternally as the soldier’s concern for their own safety beat the need for sex appeal. These two principals were still at odds with one another at the time of the Civil War.

garment, and apparently natural covering,” allowing for the body to be accentuated in a discrete way to make it appear more natural.¹⁰⁶

To provide a garment that offered the proper look, not to mention the correct fit, required precise cutting and expert sewing. The time and labor requirements were prohibitive enough to dissuade new arrivals to Northern cities from purchasing custom garments, but the costs were distributed in interesting ways. With all the extreme skill required to make a coat of this style, the labor costs were quite low. A receipt from the firm of Callender and Jenkins of Boston, Massachusetts in 1803 to make a coat for Mr. George Homer placed labor costs at three dollars and eighty-nine cents. Those costs included making the coat as well as sleeve lining and pockets. “Small trimmings” and “velvet cape” amounted to one dollar and sixty-three cents. Six “plated buttons” cost eighty-seven cents. The largest expense, however, was one and three-quarter yards of “Supr. fine Green Cloth” which totaled nine dollars and sixty-two cents. After deducting forty-eight cents for “prompt pay,” Mr. Homer paid fifteen dollars and fifty-three cents for a single coat.¹⁰⁷ This shows the stock that Northern men placed in the quality of their garments. The “Supr. fine” cloth could be recognized at a greater distance than the seams of the coat and the cost of such fabric was prohibitive enough to ensure Mr. Homer could differentiate himself from the lower classes.¹⁰⁸ The expense for labor was no small cost either, emphasizing the quality workmanship that was needed to make a quality garment out of the expensive cloth. As

¹⁰⁶ Claudia B. Kidwell and Margaret C. Christman, *Suiting Everyone: The Democratization of Clothing in America* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1974), 39-41; Anne Hollander, *Sex and Suits* (New York: Kodansha International, 1994), 89-91.

¹⁰⁷ Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 39-41.

¹⁰⁸ Laver, *Taste and Fashion*, 197. Laver writes that up until the end of the eighteenth century, male clothing was “equally gorgeous” to that of women, men taking great pride in the bright colors and fine lines of their attire. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, however, men began to wear more muted colors, black becoming the unofficial standard for men’s clothing.

more men moved to Northern cities, however, it became increasingly apparent to tailors and other business men that their current tailoring system was not sustainable.

Tailors responded by adapting their traditional methods to create a new processes of clothing production. Prior to 1820, the tailor maintained a personalized collection of patterns for sections of sleeves or chests and every other required measurement which belonged to the various types of garments he regularly made. The tailor drew the patterns himself and he often sold them to other tailoring shops. Apprentices received copies at the end of their service to establish their own business. After first observing the customer, the tailor would then take measurements using tape, which, after the tailor had chosen the proper pattern based on his observations, would be used to make alterations to the cut fabric pieces to ensure the closest fit. It is important to note that prior to 1820, the tailor saw no need for units of measurement. Instead, the tailor would put markings or notches in that customer's personalized tape which were recorded on the pattern. The tailor kept the pattern and measurements for that customer for reference in future projects.¹⁰⁹ The year 1820 is important however because it saw the introduction of the inch tape measure to tailoring which placed more emphasis on "scientific principles" rather than the judgement of the tailor.¹¹⁰ Using the inch tape measure, tailors developed a proportional scale for the body that required only the customer's chest measurement. Using a proportional chart and the chest measurement, the tailor could determine "proper"

¹⁰⁹ Michael Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy: A History of Men's Dress in the American Republic, 1760-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003), 89-90.

¹¹⁰ Kidwell and Christman, *Suiting Everyone*, 41. In Gabriel Chabot's *The Tailor's Compasses; or, An Abridged and Accurate Method of Measurement*, the author claimed the book was "illustrated with Copious and Elaborate Tables and Explanatory Drawings; To which are added Extensive Tables of divisions of heights and breadths to enable every possessor to obtain with true precision every whim of fashion, in combination of Upwards of 15,000 sizes." Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 88. For examples of period patterns and their corresponding measurements, see R. I. Davis, *Men's Garments 1830 – 1900: A Guide to Pattern Cutting* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989); Norah Waugh, *The Cut of Men's Clothes, 1600-1900* (New York: Routledge Theater Arts Books, 1964).

allowances for many other body parts, thereby creating a mathematically precise garment. The ready-made model would use these proportional charts to create approximations of fit, allowing more garments to be made without the exactness of the tailor.

With the successes of the ready-made market through the 1830s and 1840s, fashions had to shift to compensate for the speed at which tailoring shops and clothiers could produce clothing. The exacting nature of the frock coat sold to Mr. George Homer could not be produced when a single chest measurement and mathematical calculations determined the cuts made in the fabric. The revival of Neo-Classical body awareness in the mid-eighteenth century required the natural form of the body to be enhanced by the clothing. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the changes in manufacturing techniques afforded a good fit around the chest but allowed the arms and waist extra room for different body proportions where the Utility Principle began to dominate the cut and form of garments. These ready-made garments lent themselves to a new term in male fashion: business dress. The *American Gentleman's Guide* suggested that when at their place of employment or at any time in the “morning,” men should be wearing “some strong-looking, rough, knock-about ‘fixin,’ frequently of nondescript form or fashion, but admirably adapted both in shape and material for use – for work.”¹¹¹

Indeed, the new “business attire” became a pseudo-uniform for men, particularly young men, in Northern cities. Their “utilitarian” and “democratic” image made them seem to be all as one body, all wearing the same styles and colors. The “surtout,” or frock coat, lost its waist seam, appeared with baggy sleeves, particularly at the elbow, and wrists. “The male silhouette generally became squarer” and more distinct from the fashions at the start of the nineteenth

¹¹¹ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 109; Waugh, *The Cut of Men's Clothes*, 113-114.

century.¹¹² The frock coat was accompanied by other styles of coats and jackets, and went through variations of its own. The “Paletot” or “Pilot Coat” first appeared in the 1830s and was a variation of the frock coat, paving the way for the general loosening of men’s clothing later in the period. Whereas the frock coat remained fitted across the chest and maintained a waist seam to help accentuate the waist and hips, the defining characteristic that separated the two garments was the paletot’s lack of a waist seam. Compaign and Devere’s *The Tailor’s Guide* from 1855 called the paletot the “the starting point for all fancy garments.” The construction of this coat was done in a dizzying variety of styles branching from the number and placement of seams, both of which created different “varieties” of paletot for the nineteenth century consumer.¹¹³

Perhaps the most dramatic change in male fashion of this period, and the ultimate victory of the Utility Principle, was the sack coat, introduced in the 1840s. Modeled after the English riding or morning coat, the sack coat, like the paletot of the same decades, could be made in a variety of different styles. What separated the two was the varieties of cloth the sack coat could be made - “from the cheapest ‘clops’ of cotton, through linen and every weight of wool.” The sack coat was far shorter than the frock coat, perhaps only a quarter of the way down the thigh, was closed with three or four buttons, and created a very boxy appearance without a waist seam. These broad-shouldered garments became popular as an all-occasions coat which, depending on cloth quality and production quality, could be worn in the morning or evening.¹¹⁴ While the frock

¹¹² Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 205

¹¹³ Waugh, *The Cut of Men’s Clothes*, 114-115.

¹¹⁴ Rob Schorman, *Selling Style: Clothing and Social Change at the Turn of the Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 26-27. Even between the late 1850s and 1865, minor changes to sack coat design can be seen in period photographs. For example, the sack coat of the late 1850s was “overlarge” and was extremely long, nearly as long as the frock coats of the same period, with dropped shoulders and wide lapels. By the 1860s, a move to return to the closer fitting styles, the pendulum having swung too far to the side of loose-fitting, created a more “youthful cut” is seen that is more fitted in the body and arms. For more information, see Joan L. Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer: Ordinary Americans and Fashion, 1840-1900* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995), 19-20, 104-105, 185-291.

coat seemed to remain in American minds as the quintessential coat that could be worn for all matters of business, the sack coat is shown overwhelmingly in period photographs, particularly with younger men.¹¹⁵

The sack coat is also seen in period paintings, showing its impact into the larger culture of the nineteenth century. An example is George Edgar Hicks' "Woman's Mission: Companion of Manhood" from 1863. The painting depicts a man covering his face in grief having received a letter marked on the edges with black, indicating that the letter contained bad news, likely a death. The man is wearing a "sack suit," a new designation for a suit of clothes all made of the same fabric and could often be bought together as one package. The suit is made of tan wool or tweed with a light tan trim around the lapels and above the cuff. It is closed with one button at the neck, another of the countless variations of the coat. The man depicted in the painting is representative of any fashionable man of the period.¹¹⁶

The exclusion of bright color or decoration in one's clothing was a result of social etiquette that both men and women ascribed to where clothing items were "cloaks of genteel anonymity." The changes in fashion coincided with changes in the ideal male image. By the 1850s and 1860s, it was no longer acceptable to stand out or to be a "dandy" whose sole purpose was to be noticed by other people. Instead, it "assumed the aspect of the solid, substantial, inexpressive businessman." The plainness of the clothing choices was the stylistic consideration in male fashion rather than the "pretty" fashions of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

¹¹⁵ Severa, *Dressed for the Photographer*, 184.

¹¹⁶ Penelope Byrd, *Nineteenth Century Fashion* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1992), 101. Byrd uses the term "morning coat" in her description of the painting and goes on to say that it was almost indistinguishable from the "lounge coat" and "even the tailoring journals tend to be confusing about the two forms." The morning coat seems to be used more often in the British tailoring journals while the sack coat was more of an American distinction for the garment.

It represented the rapid expansion of Northern cities and businesses throughout the first half of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁷

These three garments – the frock coat, paletot, and sack coat – formed the basis for all male clothing options through the first half of the nineteenth century. No matter the garment, however, the male figure was “generally marked by the comfort of a tubular looseness and a subdued conformity of colour and texture” by the 1860s. Everything about male style had transformed between the 1810s and 1860. Where previously the male form was to be accentuated by the clothing that he wore, by the time of the Civil War, the male form was to be hidden behind a loose and baggy attire, “high buttoning at the neck, lowering waistlines and deep or bagged sleeves and trousers, mostly in softer dulled textiles.” There was an emphasis on comfort and simplification, the latter as a result of the changing techniques by which clothing was being manufactured. The “tailoring legacy of the 1860s could then be said to have prioritized an emphasis on producing clothing marked by ease of fit to the exclusion of stylistic or decorative considerations.”¹¹⁸

Because of the influences that civilian clothing styles have on military uniform, particularly in fit or cut, it is imperative for the military to differentiate soldiers from civilians. This is achieved by hyper-accentuating pieces of the uniform so there is a clear difference between the two. However, uniform design also tends to follow the uniform used by the latest victorious western country.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ John F. Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth-Century Urban America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990), 118-119.

¹¹⁸ Christopher Breward, *The Hidden Consumer: Masculinities, Fashion and City Life, 1860-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 29.

¹¹⁹ Laver, *British Military Uniforms*, 24-26; Preben Kannik, *Military Uniforms in Color*, ed. William C. Carman (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 6.

Despite their defeat in the War of 1812, the British military, after the final defeat of Napoleon in 1815, was generally considered to be the best military in the world and therefore was the army to emulate. A short, tight-fitting jacket with a tall shako hat and fitted trousers made up the British uniform of the period. The shortness of the jacket, reaching only to the navel, helped to accentuate and elongate the legs just as the jacket's high collar elongated the neck. The uniform's form-fitting nature coincided with the civilian styles of the time, but differed in the shortness of the jacket compared to the long frock coat. By the 1830s, the short, form-fitting jacket had given way to the "tail coat," a predecessor to the frock coat, which boasted a form-fitting chest with two tails at the back of the coat and was left open at the front. This style was seen in civilian attire in the first decades of the nineteenth century but had become a style worn only for the most formal occasions by the time the military adopted it.¹²⁰

By the Mexican-American War, however, the uniform of the American military began to more closely resemble what would be worn by the Northern armies of 1861. While the regulations called for tailed coats with two rows of ten buttons, the men that marched to invade Mexico wore short, fitted jackets and loose trousers, both made of sky-blue kersey.¹²¹ This was the undress uniform that was issued to all regulars. State volunteer regiments generally followed the regulations set by the Quartermaster Department, but often included slight variations in cut or style. The "Palmetto Regiment" of South Carolina, for example, wore sky-blue jackets and trousers, but the epaulettes were "winged" or flared outward where it attached to the shoulder seam, and wore belts and buttons embossed with the state seal. This variation helped to

¹²⁰ Quartermaster Department, *Uniform of the Army of the United States from 1774-1889* (Washington: Government Press, 1885), 14-16. The updated regulation for 1836 use the phrase "cut after the fashion of the citizen's coat" to refer to the undress uniform, or the one that would be worn most often by the soldiers.

¹²¹ Gregory J. W. Urwin, *The United States Infantry: An Illustrated History, 1775-1918* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 66-67.

distinguish regiments from different regions, but caused issues when it came time to resupply the soldiers. Samuel E. Chamberlain of Company A, 2nd Illinois Infantry wrote in 1846 that “strange grotesque costumes now filled the Camp.” Each company chose a different uniform style – Chamberlain noted that his company wore “jacket and pants of blue mixed Kentucky jeans with yellow stripes across the breast like a Dragoon bugler” which loosely followed the general style that the regulations required but included personal choices and decisions made at the company level.¹²²

There were also those who completely ignored the regulations when uniforming themselves. Captain James Duncan, Company A 2nd U.S. Artillery eschewed the regulations completely when he chose to wear a short, dark blue jacket fastened with nine plain brass buttons. He also placed a pocket on either side of the jacket at forty-five degree angles that were closed with similar plain buttons. This jacket was a far cry from the regulations, which called for a dark blue frock coat with branch-designating buttons fastening the garment. Duncan’s jacket stands in marked contrast to an image of Lieutenant Isaac Bowen of the 1st U.S. Artillery who wears the regulation frock coat. Bowen’s collar, which was to stand upright and hooked closed, is folded down and is left unhooked in a more casual fashion, but otherwise his uniform was exacting to the regulations.¹²³ These examples, although of officers who were required to purchase their own uniforms, show the varying extents to which even officers would go to make their uniform more comfortable, showing that they were not immune to the effects of the Utility Principle.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ Ron Field, *Brassey’s History of Uniforms: Mexican American War, 1846-48* (Brassey’s Ltd., 1997), 38-39.

In the 1851 regulations, the frock coat was first designated for use by men below the rank of Lieutenant, ushering in a completely new uniform design for the American military. The frock had been used by officers above the rank of Lieutenant since the mid-1840s, but adoption of the frock coat for all ranks marked the complete transition away from the British influences that had existed since the Revolution. The success of the French during their campaigns in Italy, Austria, and North Africa inspired the United States to change their uniform to reflect those worn by what was considered the best military in the world. The frock coat was fitted in the chest and was closed by nine brass buttons with skirts that extended halfway down the thigh.¹²⁴ These differed from the civilian frock coats by the material used, the high standing collar, and the facings such as sky-blue piping around the collar and cuffs and brass military buttons, but the general fit and style were nearly identical to civilian frock coats. Although these were adopted in 1851, many soldiers would not receive their new frock coats until 1854.¹²⁵ Due to the large amounts of surplus uniforms and equipment accumulated from the Mexican-American War, Congress would not expand the budget of the Quartermaster Department for the procurement of new uniforms and asked that they continue issuing old stock until it was gone. This meant that soldiers stationed on frontier forts received old and outdated equipment well into the 1850s.¹²⁶

It is in the decade preceding the Civil War that most evidence exists for soldiers exercising personal choice in their uniform. The lack of new uniforms and the harsh conditions on the plains forced men to change their uniform to better suit the environment. Many soldiers began wearing informal attire while on patrol or on any duty outside the walls of their garrison

¹²⁴ Quartermaster Department, "Regulations for the Uniform and Dress of the Army of the United States: 1851," in *Uniform of the Army of the United States from 1774-1889* (Washington: Government Press, 1885), 35.

¹²⁵ Urwin, *The United States Infantry*, 78.

¹²⁶ Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington D.C.: Center for Military History United States Army, 1989), 302. Although there was not enough on hand to supply the entire army in 1855, many companies were still issued the last of the Mexican-American War clothing and equipment.

and only donned their issued uniform once they returned. Private Eugene Bandel of the 6th U.S. Infantry gave vivid descriptions of the “prairie outfit” he saw while on a survey party in southern Kansas,

“Every Man is wearing a broad-brimmed hat, each of a different color; white trousers of a rough material; a woolen shirt of red, green, blue, or brown – in short, of any and every color, usually open in the front and worn like a coat; the shoes (we still have shoes, though who knows how soon we may have to wear moccasins) with the uppers slashed wherever they might chafe in marching...”¹²⁷

An officer’s wife living on the Texas frontier also recalled men of the 1st U.S. Infantry all wearing shirts of a “dark blue check material.”¹²⁸ These examples from the frontier not only show the Utility Principle in action, but also the elements of personal choice soldiers made about their uniform. The choice between the color of the shirt, in the example provided by Eugene Bandel, seems to be left up to the individual while it was a company-wide choice of the 1st U.S. Infantry. While not uniform in the sense of the regulations, all soldiers seem to have gravitated to a somewhat uniform appearance with individual details chosen by the soldier.

While providing evidence of personal choice, the woolen shirts worn by the 6th U.S. Infantry while on patrol were similar to shirts worn by civilian laborers. Commonly called “overshirts,” these garments were made of coarse materials – wool, jean, or canvas – and could be bought ready-made from many stores. These shirts were meant to protect the clothing underneath, generally a shirt of linen or cotton, from the work of that day.¹²⁹ While the overshirt

¹²⁷ *Ibid*; Urwin, *The United States Infantry*, 82-83.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*.

¹²⁹ Joan L. Severa, *My Likeness Taken: Daguerreian Portraits in America* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2005), 263. In Severa’s work, the image she references is of a painter who’s canvas overshirt, canvas trousers, and black felt hat are splattered with paint, helping to note his occupation. These kinds of occupational photographs

had its origins in the hunting shirts of colonial America, its acceptability as an outer garment that could be worn in public is a product of the general loosening of male clothing styles in the mid-nineteenth century.

As the United States Army fought Native Americans and Mormons on the frontier, Europe erupted in war that would change how the military and the Quartermaster Department clothed their soldiers. Observers like Captain George McClellan were sent to the seat of conflict in order to report their observations and thoughts about the conflict. Captain McClellan's exhaustive report detailed the organization, administration, supply, and equipment of all the armies involved. On the final two pages of his report, he included many suggestions for the uniform. One small suggestion was to reinforce the seat of cavalryman's trousers with thin leather rather than just an additional layer of kersey. His most important suggestion for the scope of this study, however, is the adoption of "a loose flannel coat" for use on the prairie while leaving their uniform coats in garrison. Mounted soldiers, as noted by Eugene Bandel, were already wearing loose woolen shirts rather than their issued coats, and it is unclear whether Captain McClellan was aware of that practice. Rather than a variety of colors and shapes, however, the adoption of a flannel coat would provide a uniform appearance while troops were on patrol. McClellan suggested that the "ordinary dark blue sailor's shirt" was "as good as anything can be devised" with slight modifications such as cutting the shirt open in the front to make it more like a coat and "provided with a lining and pockets." He observed charges made by British and French soldiers who struggled to advance as the skirt of their frock coats were caught on snags across the field. The tightness of the frocks was also noted as the men seemed to tire

became popular during the period and provide excellent examples of the ready-made garments worn by all social classes.

quickly from lack of air, their chests unable to expand during quick or running advances. Thus, a light-weight and loose fitting garment would provide uniformity to the detachment while performing more rigorous duties while the standard uniform was to be worn when the soldier returned to garrison.¹³⁰

Many of the changes seen in the uniform regulations in the first half of the nineteenth century were changes based on the Seduction Principle rather than the Utility Principle. The uniform worn by United States soldiers during the invasion of Mexico were jackets similar to those worn three decades before. The two styles differed mostly in color with smaller differences in the height of the collar, kinds of braid or epaulets on the shoulder, or design of the button, none of which serve the soldier better in the field. These changes were representative of changing attitudes about the ideal soldierly image. The further the military got from the Revolution and the War of 1812, the more uniform designers adapted the uniform to be distinctly American. This changed with the adoption of the frock coat for all ranks in the 1850s. The victorious French army was the primary influence behind the garment and American versions were nearly identical to those worn by the French. Its adoption was not one of utility but purely in appearance. Regardless of regulation, however, the American soldier on the plains eschewed the Seduction Principle entirely and chose clothing that best served their needs. They turned to laboring clothes worn at home and abandoned all thoughts to a standard uniform until they returned to garrison. This shows the contempt that American soldiers had for the uniform required by regulations, believing it was inadequate for the tasks they were ordered to perform. The coat suggested by McClellan was an attempt to combine the two concepts, offering soldiers

¹³⁰ George B. McClellan, *Report of the Secretary of War Communicating the Report of Captain George B. McClellan, One of the Officers sent to the Seat of War in Europe in 1855 and 1856* (Washington, D.C.: A. O. P. Nicholson, 1857), 278.

a utilitarian garment that would provide a uniform appearance to soldiers. This garment, like the overshirts used on the plains in the 1850s, can be seen as direct connections soldiers made to their civilian styles.

The United States army took George McClellan's suggestion of a loose flannel coat and created the "fatigue blouse" which was formally adopted in 1858 and appeared first in the 1861 uniform regulations. The garment had a dual purpose – first to be used while the soldier was on fatigue duty and second as the primary garment worn by new recruits to the army. In fact, each purpose of the blouse had different specifications for production, the fatigue did not have lining while the coat for recruits would have lining in the sleeves and body. Both forms were also constructed the same as they were made of "dark blue flannel extending halfway down the thigh, and made loose... falling collar, inside pocket on the left side, four coat buttons down the front."¹³¹ While no other specifications were given for the cutters and tailors at the Clothing Bureau at the Schuylkill Arsenal, a clue to the general appearance of the coat is in the terminology used in the description. The garment was called a "sack coat" in both the fatigue and recruit designations, implying that the military was trying to model their work uniform after the dominant coat for business attire at home. The garment was to have a four-piece body and two piece sleeve, similar to the construction of various civilian sack coats. It is important to note, however, that once the recruit became a recognized foot soldier, he would be issued what the regulations called the "uniform coat" and would discontinue the use of his recruit coat.¹³² The designated uniform coat was identical to the frock coat prescribed by the 1851 regulations with minor changes such as the addition of brass shoulder scales rather than epaulets. It is very clear

¹³¹ War Department, *Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861* (Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1862), 9.

¹³² The regulations are unclear about the point at which a volunteer transitioned from "recruit" to soldier.

that the military wished to continue the image of the victorious French through their soldier's uniforms and relegating civilian-like attire to menial labor.

The outbreak of war in April 1861 caused a rush on government clothing stores and while the Clothing Bureau struggled to produce enough clothing to meet the need, state governments tried their hand at uniform design. Some states, such as Massachusetts, had maintained state uniform regulations for the militia regiments and independent companies scattered across the state. There and in many other states however, most of the independent battalions and companies had their own distinctive uniforms in defiance of the regulations. The example of the 6th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia was repeated throughout the North as each company had a different uniform where Company A left for Washington with blue frocks and black pantaloons and Company C wore “gray dress coats, caps, and pantaloons, and yellow trimmings.”¹³³ Other Massachusetts volunteers received blue or gray “fatigue shirts” of myriad varieties. Some, such as those described in the *Lowell Daily Citizen*, called for gray cloth and a seven-button front in two sizes, the “Largest Size” and the “Second Size,” while those received by the 8th Massachusetts Volunteer Militia were trimmed around the collar and cuff and had a five-button front.¹³⁴

Rhode Island avoided the confusion that arose from the various uniforms worn by states like Massachusetts by contracting former tailoring apprentice Ambrose Burnside to design a single uniform for all the state troops. Burnside based his design off contemporary overshirts and

¹³³ Ron Field, *Rally Round the Flag: Uniforms of the Union Volunteers of 1861, The New England States* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2015), 14. The regimental chaplain noted each company as very different from one another. Companies A and C have been noted while “Company B wore the United States regulation uniform... Company D wore the same as C, with buff trimmings. Companies E and F were dressed like B, and Company G wore blue dress coats; Company H, gray throughout; Company I, caps, and dark blue frocks and red pants, in the French style. Company K wore gray, and Company L was dressed in blue.”

¹³⁴ Field, *Rally Round the Flag*, 20.

hunting shirts worn by elements of the Continental Army during the Revolution. The blouse was designed as a pullover shirt with a falling collar and placket front opening. The design differentiated between enlisted men, line officers, and staff officers by having a double-breasted front for staff officers and single breasted for line officers and enlisted men. The Annapolis correspondent of the *New York Times* wrote that the Rhode Island volunteers were perfectly dressed for the requirements of heavy campaigning, “it is picturesque in the extreme, and eminently easy for a fight.” Another newspaper correspondent, this one for New York’s *Utica Herald*, noted that the Rhode Island regiment “elicits universal admiration... [their uniform] seems better adapted for service than the more elaborate dress of the New York regiments.”¹³⁵

The French Zouave uniform, made famous by French soldiers in North Africa, was commonly chosen by regiments to distinguish themselves as elite soldiers. The traditional French Zouave garb was based on the traditional military uniform of native North Africans and was characterized by a dark blue jacket worn open and without buttons, a closed vest underneath, bright red and excessively baggy trousers, blue sash, and a fez wrapped in a green or white turban. By 1860, the image and courage of the Zouave was well known across America, aided by E. Elmer Ellsworth’s Zouave cadets and drill team that traveled the United States participating in parades and drill competitions.¹³⁶ Some regiments chose Zouave uniforms and drill manuals from the outset while other regiments were awarded the uniforms for their perfection of drill and battlefield maneuvers in the first months of the war. In November 1861, Zouave uniforms that had been ordered from France by Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs arrived and were distributed to various corps and division commanders. General George McClellan appointed a

¹³⁵ Field, *Rally Round the Flag*, 50-53.

¹³⁶ Earl J. Coates, Michael J. McAfee, and Don Troiani, *Don Troiani’s Regiments and Uniforms of the Civil War* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2002), 61-64.

committee from his staff to oversee reviews of divisions to determine which regiment would receive the uniforms. According to O. W. Norton of the 83rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, fifteen or twenty thousand troops participated in the competition with the 83rd receiving unanimous approval from the committee and were awarded the uniforms.¹³⁷ All pieces of the uniform arrived on December 7, 1861 along with an agent from the French government to “fit each man with his uniform” while officers would receive custom pieces less than six weeks later.¹³⁸

The Zouave uniform embodied all of the components of Laver’s Seduction Principle. Whether chosen or won in competition, the Zouave uniform was meant to personify the fighting prowess of the world’s most famous soldiers. These uniforms, however, made the wearer stand out, even against the backdrop of the various uniforms worn by soldiers in the early months of the war. Whereas the fatigue shirts and overshirts worn by the volunteers from Rhode Island and Massachusetts conformed to the dress standards of the day – muted colors in recognizable forms – the Zouave uniform was quickly and easily distinguishable from civilians and other soldiers. Combined with the history of the uniform, this helped to enhance the perception of elite fighting prowess that surrounded Zouave uniforms.

Not all soldiers were as impressed by the uniforms provided in the early months of the war and complained bitterly of their design and quality. Martin A. Haynes of Company I, 2nd New Hampshire wrote on May 10, 1861 that “the regiment is now uniformed – the queerest-looking uniform in the world.” Haynes’ complaints stemmed from the style of coat, a “swallow-tail,” which more closely resembled the uniform coats of the 1810s and the “tail coat” which, by the time of the Civil War, was worn only at the most formal occasions by the extremely

¹³⁷ O. W. Norton to a Friend, November 15, 1861.

¹³⁸ O. W. Norton to his Sister, December 8, 1861.

wealthy.¹³⁹ William F. Goodhue of Company C, 3rd Wisconsin infantry wrote in his diary on September 21, 1861 that the regimental band had finally received their “very handsome” uniform and that his company had received replacement uniforms for those that were first issued to them. “We also got out Chemises sent to us by Wis. a more contemptable looking thing never saw for a uniform. Wis. had better think of some other way to show the U.S. something her men aint ashamed to wear.”¹⁴⁰ One month later, William Legg Harrison, Company C 12th Iowa Infantry, noted in his diary that the company received their “fatigue uniform” of a cap and a “miserable short... coat no better than a woolen shirt.” Harrison “refused to take it,” citing that it was not enough to keep him warm in late October and “unless I know that its cost corresponds with its quality I won’t take it.” One week later, Harrison agreed to take the “rag of a coat” and finally put aside his original coat. Harrison concluded that being a soldier meant “all we can do is grin and bear it.”¹⁴¹

Yet, as soldiers clad in a vast assortment of uniforms moved toward Washington D.C., the print culture maintained a strict adherence to the accepted soldierly image of 1861. The May 4, 1861 issue of *Harper’s Weekly*, for example, contained five separate woodcuts depicting soldiers of different regiments. All five images showed soldiers of the exact same height, facial features, and uniforms with accoutrements and rifles at the same angle. None of the soldier’s clothes are wrinkled, portraying a straight-backed soldier identical to every other around him. In two of the images, one of the Massachusetts volunteers and the other of the 7th New York State

¹³⁹ Field, *Rally Round the Flag*, 68.

¹⁴⁰ William F. Goodhue, *Diary of William F. Goodhue, 3rd Wisconsin Infantry*, September 21, 1861, University of Iowa Digital Library, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/ref/collection/cwd/id/15912>.

¹⁴¹ William Legg Harrison, *Diary of William Legg Harrison, Co. C 12th Iowa Inf.*, October 25, 1861 and November 1, 1861, University of Iowa Digital Library, <http://digital.lib.uiowa.edu/cdm/search/collection/cwd/searchterm/uniform/order/archiv>.

Militia, crowds of people line the streets cheering and waving handkerchiefs at the soldiers. In both of these images, however, the civilian male onlookers were clothed in various styles ranging from frock coats to sack suits and had varying facial features and heights. The soldiers wore identical long overcoats. Later in the issue, two woodcuts depicted soldiers drilling on Governor's Island, New York and included similarly identical soldiers. Men in the foreground stood at attention as the regulation frock coat they wore accentuated the thin waist and broad chest and shoulders of each man (Fig. 2.1-2.3).¹⁴²

The image of the ideal soldier was an extension of the ideal male figure of the period – muscular chest and shoulders, lean flanks, long legs. The uniformity with which civilian men dressed prior to the Civil War was to make one anonymous and to not stand out from the crowd. This idea is clearly seen in the woodcuts as each soldier is indistinguishable from another – complete anonymity with an ideal masculine frame. However, the highly accentuated frames of the soldiers help to distinguish them from the boxier frames that loose civilian clothing provided. The ideal soldierly image was therefore an extension of the masculine ideal that was enhanced by the uniform the soldier wore. The soldier was supposed to be extremely masculine with a broad and strong torso and long, powerful legs. The military's frock coat, and the frame that it

¹⁴² “Massachusetts Volunteers: the Boston Regiments Embarking for Washington in the Jersey City Cars,” *Harper's Weekly*, May 4, 1861, 280; “The Seventh Regiment Marching Down Broadway to Embark for the War,” *Harper's Weekly*, May 4, 1861, 281; “First Blood – the Sixth Massachusetts Regiment Fighting their way through Baltimore, April 19, 1861,” *Harper's Weekly*, 283; “Recruits Drilling in Squads on Governor's Island, New York,” *Harper's Weekly*, May 4, 1861, 285; “Parade of United States Troops on Governor's Island Before Embarkation,” *Harper's Weekly*, May 4, 1861, 285. See also Sarah Denver Beetham, “Sculpting the Citizen Soldier: Reproduction and National Memory, 1865-1917” (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 2014), 7 and Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 5-6. Beetham discusses a similar woodcut from May 1861 depicting the “Steuben Volunteers” massing in front of City Hall in New York City. In Beetham's analysis of the woodcut, she notes that making the soldiers in the foreground identical and background soldiers merely shapes would make the image easier to carve, allowing the paper to produce images more rapidly. However, in using the masculine ideal frame, the woodcutters were ascribing civilian standards on military attire.

forced men into, achieved most of this image in the eyes of Northern civilians.¹⁴³ Letters between soldiers and their loved ones reveal the effect the uniform had on a man's appearance. Alexander Hayes wrote to his wife in December 1862 that a mutual acquaintance, Dave Shields, appeared in uniform which made him look like the "dashing brave soldier."¹⁴⁴ Chauncey Herbert Cooke did not think of himself as a true soldier until he received his uniform and he wished that his parents could visit the camp to experience the "splendid sight" of a thousand soldiers practicing their drill.¹⁴⁵ Lieutenant-Colonel Wilder Dwight of the 2nd Massachusetts discussed his feeling about seeing soldiers on review, "there is something gay, inspiring, exciting, in a fine review... the brigade burnishes its equipments and perfects its uniform. It also puts on its pride and peacock feathers. All is elation and glorification."¹⁴⁶ The military ideal rested firmly with the uniform and the ceremony that surrounded it.

The reality seen in the ranks of the Federal armies was far different from the ideal soldierly image, however, as soldiers quickly abandoned the form-fitting uniform coats in favor of the loosely fitting sack coats. The soldier's decision was often quickly made, usually at the start of the spring campaign. John Billings' famous memoir *Hardtack and Coffee* explained, "a choice was made between the dress coat and blouse, for one of these must go." This was in an

¹⁴³ Hollander, *Sex and Suits*, 92-95; Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility*, 118-121.

¹⁴⁴ Alexander Hayes to Annie Adams McFadden Hayes, December 15, 1862, *Life and Letters of Alexander Hayes, Brevet Colonel United States Army, Brigadier General and Brevet Major General United States Volunteers*, ed. George Thornton Flemming (Pittsburgh: Privately Published, 1919), 708, <http://solomon.cwld.alexanderstreet.com.www.libproxy.wvu.edu/cgi-bin/asp/philo/contextualize.pl?p.7973.cwld.2052>

¹⁴⁵ Chauncey Herbert Cooke to His Parents, September 15, 1862, *Soldier Boy's Letters to His Father and Mother, 1861-5* (News-Office, 1915), 97, <http://solomon.cwld.alexanderstreet.com.www.libproxy.wvu.edu/cgi-bin/asp/philo/contextualize.pl?p.8619.cwld.2213>

¹⁴⁶ Wilder Dwight, December 15, 1861, *Life and Letters of Wilder Dwight: Lieut.-Col. Second Mass. Inf. Vols.* (Boston: Ticknor & Co., 1891), 349, <http://solomon.cwld.alexanderstreet.com.www.libproxy.wvu.edu/cgi-bin/asp/philo/contextualize.pl?p.11571.cwld.6202>

effort to lighten the infantryman's load as much as possible.¹⁴⁷ Other veterans recalled receiving their dress coat with great anticipation such as those who contributed to Wilbur Hinman's *Corporal Si Klegg and His Pard*. Hinman's account is nearly identical to Billings', writing "for all ordinary wear the blouse was the garment that fit the bill... on the first hard march the dress-coats disappeared rapidly." Corporal Si Klegg's reaction to wearing the coat for the first time, however, tells a story that coincides with the image of the ideal soldier as he was captivated by the row of bright buttons and corded seams, "and he thought it was the nicest coat he had ever seen." Si's constant companion Shorty, a veteran of a three month regiment, "smiled" at Si's enthusiasm, drawing a dress coat for himself and simultaneously "resolved that he would get rid of it at the first opportunity."¹⁴⁸

Much like the soldiers on the prairie less than a decade earlier, soldiers in the Federal armies were adapting their uniform to allow for the greatest amount of comfort and range of movement, exercising Laver's Utility Principle. Where the uniform of the Civil War differs from Laver's principle is in the length of time it took for Federal soldiers to adopt the more utilitarian uniform option. Laver argued that the longer a conflict dragged on, the greater the pull of the Utility Principle on the soldier's uniform. However, the Northern volunteer generally chose the sack coat over the dress coat immediately. Because of the widespread use of the sack coat in civilian life, particularly by younger men, the fatigue blouse issued by the Quartermaster Department became an acceptable garment for all occasions, not just fatigue detail.

¹⁴⁷ John Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee: The Unwritten Story of Army Life* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 317.

¹⁴⁸ Wilbur F. Hinman, *Corporal Si Klegg and His "Pard": How they Lived and Talked, and What They Did and Suffered, while Fighting for the Flag* (Cleveland, OH: The Williams Publishing Company, 1887), 96-97.

Federal officers were not immune from the benefits of the sack coat over their single or double-breasted frock coats either. While the regulations of 1861 were very specific in the prescribed dress of commissioned officers, they had traditionally been given greater freedoms when choosing their uniform as they had to procure it themselves. For example, an image of company grade officers of Company C 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery shows one officer wearing a sack coat (Fig. 2.4).¹⁴⁹ The coat is made of very fine dark blue broadcloth with a five-button front and extends almost halfway down his thigh. The entirety of the coat is edged in wool twill tape, most likely black, which is also used to create chevrons on the cuffs and lines the edges of the three pockets. The officer wears the coat unbuttoned and stands in marked contrast to the other two officers in the picture, both of which wear the regulation single-breasted frock coat. An even greater discrepancy is seen between the officer's sack coat and those worn by his men (*Fig. 2 and 3 for examples*). The quality of the coat, as well as the details such as the wool tape trim or chest and cuff buttons, placed another hierarchical difference between the officer and his men. This was not a new concept as it had been used in the ready-made clothing market for twenty years prior to the Civil War. Variations in details such as the number of pockets, buttons, or trim equated to varying levels of quality that helped to differentiate between the cheapest and most expensive ready-made coat.¹⁵⁰

Some of the most famous officers of the war relied upon their antebellum perceptions of quality and workmanship when choosing their uniform. General Willaim T. Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, Phillip Sheridan, and Joseph Hooker were all numbered amongst the customers of Brooks Brothers in New York. Despite the reputation they garnered in 1861 as swindlers and poor

¹⁴⁹ *Fort Brady, Va. Three officers of the 1st Connecticut Heavy Artillery*. 1864. Selected Civil War Photographs, 1861-1865, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington DC.

¹⁵⁰ Zakim, *Ready-Made Democracy*, 135.

craftsmen for the uniforms they produced for the state of New York, it maintained its strong reputation among the civilian elite and general officers as a respectable place to purchase their uniform. In fact, it had been traditional for officers to seek out Brooks Brothers for uniforms since the firm's founding in 1818.¹⁵¹

Many officers attempted to maintain a military appearance for their soldiers, particularly in regard to the cleanliness of their bodies and their uniforms. It was authorized by the army regulations for the soldier to bathe once or twice a week and wash their feet at least twice a week. Officers appealed to the ideas of gentility in civilian society where cleanliness was a marker of distinction. Some soldiers required no incentive to maintain cleanliness other than their own desire to be clean. Billy Davis, a private in the 7th Indiana, recorded in his diary that he and his tent-mates “adopted a rule that every man must clean his boots good before stepping inside.” However, as historian Lorien Foote notes, these ideals of genteel officers were in constant conflict with those of “roughs” who saw dirt and grime as a marker of hard work. The war helped extend the idea of manly accomplishment in being dirty through the ranks, though, as veterans encountered men who had never been on active campaign. They felt contempt for soldiers “who had never traveled but by steamboat.” Cleanliness in one's uniform signified men who were untested in battle and were therefore not truly soldiers.¹⁵² The elements of class conflict that arose in the ranks of Northern armies extended well beyond uniforms, but a man's soldierly appearance was a marker of his worth as a soldier.

¹⁵¹ Wm. L. Stone, *History of New York City from the Discovery to the Present Day* (New York: E. Cleave Publishers, 1868); “Affairs and Folks,” *National Magazine* 47 (December 1917 – December 1918): 315.

¹⁵² Lorien Foote, *The Gentlemen and the Roughs: Violence, Honor and Manhood in the Union Army* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 49-51.

Some wealthier soldiers attempted to match the quality seen in officer's custom garments by purchasing tailored uniform pieces before heading to the front, but their efforts were often met with scorn or ridicule by the veteran soldiers. Zenas T. Haines wrote in September 1862 that although the uniforms issued by the Government had arrived, many of the men "will wear uniforms made to measure, and of better stock than that furnished by Uncle Sam." The men of his regiment regretted not furnishing their own uniforms upon closer inspection of those sent from the Clothing Bureau.¹⁵³ However, veteran soldiers often derided men who purchased custom garments. John Billings characterized such men as a completely different class of soldier, one that was "not modest or retiring in demeanor." He referred to them as "military 'dudes'" in his memoir. He acknowledged that the men were allowed to wear whatever garment pleased them so long as it did not conflict with the regulations.¹⁵⁴

Regardless of where the garment came from, veterans protected their clothing choices by viscosly ridiculing those whose uniform might threaten their more relaxed appearance. In spring 1864, General Ulysses S. Grant called upon the heavy artillery regiments garrisoning the forts around Washington to reinforce the Army of the Potomac in Northern Virginia. Many veterans believed that the men who enlisted in the Heavy Artillery regiments did so in order to escape the battlefield. Instead, they received the "soft" duty of garrisoning forts surrounding Washington. When they arrived at the front, the veterans of the Army of the Potomac gawked at the clean and shining uniforms of the "heavies." Because they constantly received dignitaries and politicians from Washington, the men of the Heavy Artillery regiments maintained strict uniform standards, following the regulations to the letter. Lacking experience with long marches, the

¹⁵³ Zenas T. Haines, "Letter from Zenas T. Haines, September 6, 1862" in *Letters from the Forty-fourth Regiment M.V.M.: A Record of the Experience of a Nine-Month's Regiment in the Department of North Carolina in 1862-3* (Boston: Herald Job Office, 1863), 121.

¹⁵⁴ Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 205-206.

“heavies” made the same mistake that many of the veterans had made years earlier – they packed every conceivable treasure and keepsake into their knapsacks and they wore the frock coat that characterized the soldierly ideal. Veterans called out to passing heavy artillery regiments saying, “How are you heavies? Is this work heavy enough for you?” They watched as countless heavy artillerymen dropped their packs to discard a few treasures while others tossed their knapsack onto the roadside, not looking back. Also scattered along the road were the brass shoulder scales and a large number of their distinctive frock coats, the men donning instead the flannel sack coat that had been widely adopted by the veterans.¹⁵⁵

The choice afforded to soldier’s in terms of their uniform, however, can be seen as a cultural performance that was heavily based around one’s ability to acquire more choices. Shopping and variety were markers of distinction in the nineteenth century. Brooks Brothers’ store on Broadway is emblematic of the upper-class association with variety and choice. The vaulted ceilings, gold-capped columns, walnut paneled walls, and the staff of clerks and salesmen all combined to generate an air of refinement, and the countless varieties of clothes in numberless colors occupied that sophisticated space. While at the front, the soldier’s options for clothing variety were limited most often to what was available from the quartermaster or could be ordered from the military storekeepers. Those wealthy enough to purchase a uniform custom-made were continuing trends that they experienced in civilian life in purchasing bespoke garments.

At any point during the Civil War, federal units wore countless combinations of sack coats, frock coats, and jackets in an attempt to balance their ideal soldierly image with the

¹⁵⁵ Billings, *Hardtack and Coffee*, 318-320; Carol Reardon, “A Hard Road to Travel: The Impact of Continuous Operations on the Army of the Potomac and Army of Northern Virginia in May 1864,” in Gary W. Gallagher, ed. *The Spotsylvania Campaign* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 189.

comfort afforded by the sack coat. The balance that the soldier struck was often based on the individual rather than any outside influences. This was to be *their* soldierly image that was heavily impacted by a soldier's antebellum experience. Antebellum philosophies surrounding American "self-reliance" or the power of the individual were heavily influential in the production of a common soldier's uniform and appearance. For example, an image of the 139th Pennsylvania Infantry shows men wearing both frock coats and fatigue blouses (Fig. 2.5). Unfortunately, no other information aside from the regimental designation is known about the picture.¹⁵⁶ In the front rank, thirteen men wear the regulation frock coat while eight wear sack coats. In contrast, an image dated June 10, 1865 shows nearly all the men wearing sack coats (Fig. 2.6).¹⁵⁷ Mixed with the sack coats are jackets, the soldier kneeling in the front rank with a cocked black hat seems to be wearing the regulation artillery jacket complete with red trim on the collar and cuffs with small buttons on each side of the collar. While the first image shows a greater mix of garments and therefore a greater disparity in soldier's interpretations of what constituted a soldierly image, the image from 1865 shows the "revolution in uniforms" away from the form-fitting antebellum uniforms prophesized by the contributor to the *New York Times* in May 1861. The loose sack coat dominates the image as nearly every man wears one. Images such as this show the transformation that took place in during the Civil War regarding the soldierly image as it moved away from form fitting coats to more utilitarian garb. However, individualism still remains. While many men wear the sack coat in the latter image, the presence of other uniform styles displays a lack of a monolithic uniform or soldierly appearance in the

¹⁵⁶ *Co., 139th Pennsylvania Infantry*. 1861-1865. Large Formal Military Groups and Entire Units in Review, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington DC. The image reproduced here is a blown-up section of the line to afford the best viewing of the detail in the image.

¹⁵⁷ William Morris Smith, *Bull Run, Virginia. Monument on Battlefield*. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington D.C. The image reproduced here is a blown-up section of the image to afford the best viewing of the details in the image.

Union armies during the Civil War. Instead, this shows the decision-making process that soldiers made in regards to their own uniform. Perhaps it was influenced by their comrades, but the choice remained firmly with them.

Figures from Quartermaster Reports help to show this transformation as well. In the report for fiscal year ending June 30, 1863, for example, the Colonel George Crosman recorded the amounts of each garment he had on hand as well as all that were shipped to the front. In June 1862, the Schuylkill Arsenal had 282,829 uniform coats, 95,934 jackets, and 30,739 sack coats. By the following June, Crosman had issued 299,128 uniform coats, 181,302 jackets, and 470,498 sack coats. After subtracting what had been issued, Crosman reported that he still had 192,325 uniform coats, 49,110 jackets, and 135,927 sack coats.¹⁵⁸ These numbers indicate a pattern of soldiers requesting, and the Schuylkill Arsenal producing and acquiring through contract, more sack coats than any other garment. In fact, if the numbers of garments on hand in June 1863 and the numbers of garments issued are added together, the sack coat is issued and produced at rates more than double that of the frock coat.¹⁵⁹ Through the end of the war, the sack coat's popularity continued, as evidenced by a request for more clothing from the company commander of Co. C 36th Massachusetts Infantry (Fig. 7). This document would have been sent to the regimental or brigade quartermaster and from there to Washington to the Quartermaster General's office to be sent to a clothing depot, most likely the Schuylkill Arsenal, for fulfillment. He claims that many

¹⁵⁸ NARA, RG 92 *Office of the Quartermaster General*, e. 1127, box 1: Annual Reports of Quartermaster Officers, 1015-1027.

¹⁵⁹ The number of issued frock coats plus the number still on hand in June 1863 is 491,453, subtracting the number of coats on hand in June 1862 leaves 208,624 frock coats produced or acquired through contract at the Schuylkill Arsenal in fiscal year 1863. The number of issued jacket plus the number still on hand in June 1863 is 230,412, subtracting the number of jackets on hand in June 1862 leaves 134,478 jackets produced or acquired through contract at the Schuylkill Arsenal in fiscal year 1863. The number of issued sack coats plus the number still on hand in June 1863 is a staggering 606,425, subtracting the number of sack coats on hand in June 1862 leaves 575,686 sack coats produced or acquired through contract at the Schuylkill Arsenal in fiscal year 1863.

of him men were wearing “worn out” clothing and requested replacements be sent on March 25, 1865. Of the various garments and equipment requested, the only coat or jacket specified is three lined flannel sack coats.

Just after the war, in 1868, a medical report was published regarding the health and hygiene of soldier’s equipment and uniform, citing the sack coat as a garment that the United States Army should continue to wear. The “Woodhull Report” believed that the uniform worn during the Civil War was an innovation in fact rather than appearance. He likened the military sack coat to those worn by civilians across the country before, during, and after the war calling the wartime sack coat “an uncouth type of this more appropriate and serviceable habit.” “The frock or smock of the native and foreign laborer, the hunting shirt of the frontiersman and forester, the blouse of the tourist, and the loose pea jacket of the sailor are, all, the natural offspring of conjoined necessity and convenience with men who spend much time in physical exercise in the open air,” the report continued, linking the sack coat both with period fashion and Laver’s Utility Principle. With slight additions and modifications, the sack coat would continue to be worn through the end of the Nineteenth Century.

The dominance of the sack coat and a general loosening of fit in mid-nineteenth century clothing design revolutionized the uniforms worn during the Civil War. Soldiers gravitated to the looser garment as it provided a greater range of movement and was lighter than the regulation frock coat. Soldier’s on the prairie adapted overshirts to avoid the uncomfortable issue uniforms which followed the trend in male work and business wear. The design of the sack coat suggested by George McClellan followed similar logic and it was formally adopted as the fatigue uniform just prior to the Civil War. Its design mirrored that of the sack coats available in the wider clothing market – indeed the term sack coat was also the one used to describe the civilian

varieties. The government clothing authorities, as well as soldiers who were issued the sack coat, were well aware of the connections drawn from civilian fashion. Common soldiers and officers built upon this addition, bringing the wide range of uses and functions the sack coat could be worn for into their military experience. The ideal soldierly image was then transformed by soldiers in the field as they wore their “uniform” sack coats. The legacy of this transformation can be seen in what is today considered the generic depictions of Union soldiers. Many postwar depictions showed soldiers wearing the sack coat rather than the regulation uniform coat. These depictions would be used by the general public and veterans alike to reaffirm the image of the Civil War soldier and the values that his memory would come to represent. The design of the sack coat would continue to be used in the American military with slight variations through the 1890s, but Civil War veterans sought to cement the legacy of their soldierly image in granite, bronze, and in their own organizations in the decades following the Civil War.

Chapter 3: Remembering the Soldierly Image

The immediate aftermath of the Civil War brought renewed questions of style in American military uniforms as well as a desire from Union veterans to establish a strong legacy for their soldierly image. While James Laver argued that a long peace bred a desire for a more “gorgeous” uniform, the style and perceived quality deficiencies in the issued uniforms throughout the war brought continued complaints from soldiers as early as the Grand Review. Though some soldiers questioned the legitimacy of an army clothed in what they deemed an unmilitary uniform, many others saw no need for change as the war-time fatigue blouse was a symbol of their triumph in the war and the preservation of the Union.¹⁶⁰

Unanimous, however, were the calls to regulate who could wear the uniform in the decades after the war. The enormous amounts of clothing and equipment produced during the war left Quartermaster stores overflowing with surplus. As the Northern armies were reduced, so too were the stocks of clothing, equipment, ordinance, weapons, and transportation equipment from the Quartermaster Department which were sold at government auctions between 1865 and 1871. The auctions flooded the second-hand clothing market and helped establish the first army-navy surplus stores. The sales were widely successful but the mass availability of federal uniforms saw a sharp increase in the numbers of “veterans” begging in Northern cities. Veterans organizations, such as the Grand Army of the Republic, worked tirelessly to maintain a strong image for their uniform, closely modeling their organization’s uniform off of their wartime costume and allowing members to wear their old blouses as alternatives. Northern states and veterans’ groups built monuments on battlefields across the South and were quick to cast their

¹⁶⁰ John P. Langellier, *Army Blue: The Uniform of Uncle Sam’s Regulars, 1848-1873* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Military History, 1998), 183.

soldierly image in bronze and to carve it into stone as permanent reminders of their bravery and sacrifice – and appearance – for future generations. The Quartermaster Department as well took measures to solidify their legacy, hiring famous illustrators to photograph and paint the uniforms they produced and supplied, further solidifying the image of the Union soldier in the Civil War. The monuments aren't without their discrepancies, however, as some contain hints to the uniform adopted in the 1870s and 1880s in an attempt by veterans to connect their past struggle with the contemporary military. These efforts combined to help create the legacy of the Union soldier's image that would persist into the twentieth century.

On May 23 and 24, 1865, three Union armies converged on Washington D.C. to commemorate the war and celebrate the military display of the victorious Northern armies. Spectators flocked to the city and gathered along Pennsylvania Avenue to cheer on their soldiers. “The army has made a triumphal entry into that capitol whence it set forth to conquer the South,” wrote a commentator for the *Army and Navy Journal*, the military newspaper established two years before.¹⁶¹ Thousands of soldiers camped around the city in the weeks leading up to the review, reminiscent of their initial enlistment and bivouac at the start of the war. Many in the ranks, as well as the civilian population, chafed at remaining in uniform for so long after the surrender. “They complain, and we think rightly so,” reported the *Daily Constitutional Union*, “of the injustice done them in thus keeping them from their families and their occupations to gratify what is perhaps but a whim of military vanity.”¹⁶² Indeed, many soldiers remarked before and after the review, that the whole experience “border[ed] strongly on the ridiculous.”¹⁶³ This

¹⁶¹ “The Review,” *Army and Navy Journal*, May 27, 1865.

¹⁶² “The Grand Review,” *Daily Constitutional Union*, May 16, 1865.

¹⁶³ “Our Grand Review,” *Neighbor's Home Mail: The Ex-Soldier's Reunion and National Campfire* 4, no. 2 (February 1877): 28 quoted in Brian Matthew Jordan, *Marching Home: Union Veterans and their Unending Civil War* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2015), 15-16.

was just the last, some deemed unnecessary, act of a “long, arduous and deadly struggle in which they had triumphed and from which they were only too glad to get away.”¹⁶⁴

Animosity toward the review was perhaps the only thing the soldiers of the three armies could agree on as they languished in Washington as tensions flared between the Eastern and Western armies. The citizens of Washington had grown accustomed to the sight of the Army of the Potomac, but the arrival of Sherman’s men brought flocks of spectators and gawkers, eager to speak with the “bummers” and learn about the campaigns in distant Georgia and the Carolinas. The soldiers in the Army of the Potomac grew jealous of their western counterparts and belittled them throughout their stay in Washington. They called them “Sherman’s Greasers,” “Slouch Hats,” “Swamp Angels,” and “Thieves,” owing to their appearance and the stories that were spread about their march through Georgia. Sherman’s men retaliated, often retorting that if the men of the Army of the Potomac had marched as long and fought so much as they had, they would not look any better. They also called the Eastern troops “paper collars,” “soft bread,” “feather bed,” and “white gloves.”¹⁶⁵

Both days of the Grand Review were filled with cheers and words of admiration for the victorious armies which were echoed across the country as reports of the event spread quickly through Northern newspapers. Smaller, regional papers such as the *Daily Ohio Statesman* reported “The Grand Review of the Armies at Washington City was, undoubtedly, the most magnificent military demonstration that ever took place in this country, and, perhaps, the largest

¹⁶⁴ Michael H. Fitch, *Echoes of the Civil War as I Hear Them* (New York: R. F. Fenno & Company, 1905), 344. The *Army and Navy Journal* remarked, “It has been a very stern, severe and pressing war, in which pomp, pride, circumstance made way for use and urgency. Indeed the very nature of the struggle has prohibited any waste of time on military displays, the rude necessity of each day preventing them,” citing the soldier’s experiences in war as yet another reason why soldiers did not want to participate in the Review. “The Review,” *Army and Navy Journal*, May 27, 1865.

¹⁶⁵ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman’s Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (New York: New York University Press, 1985), 180.

that ever took place in any country.”¹⁶⁶ In nearly every case, the appearance of the soldiers was mentioned, “the appearance of the army on the streets of this city to-day fully justified their world-renowned reputation for military bearing and efficiency. . . . and the *ensemble* was well calculated to make a loyal American’s heart beat with patriotic pride and exultation.”¹⁶⁷ While no official orders were given to the armies specifically regarding their uniform from the headquarters of the army, many soldiers particularly in the Army of the Potomac, spent time in their camps polishing buttons, brushing uniforms, and cleaning equipment. The western soldiers, however, marched in their campaign-worn uniforms. One Wisconsin private wrote that as soon as the order to march was given, the men “took on an appearance of glory and holiness,” with “men marching in their old worn-out uniforms, some with new pants that stood out like sore thumbs, scuffed shoes,” and yet the crowds cheered so loudly that it “deafened our ears.”¹⁶⁸

Despite the westerners’ differing appearance, the newspaper reports spoke of the soldiers as one identical body, much the same as they did four years before. Papers wrote about the “general appearance” of the soldiers, attaching patriotic adjectives and quotes to their descriptions. For example, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* referred to the “serried battalions” as displaying “machine-like precision... such as to challenge the admiration by their soldier-like bearing and admirable discipline. . . . In appearance, bearing and majesty of deportment, they are the men to carry on ‘the big wars that make ambition virtue.’”¹⁶⁹ A soldier-correspondent for the *Army and Navy Journal* reported, “brushed uniforms, cleaned boots, blackened equipments,

¹⁶⁶ “The Grand Review in Washinton,” *Daily Ohio Statesman*, May 24, 1865.

¹⁶⁷ “The Armies of the Republic,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 25, 1865.

¹⁶⁸ Edwin D. Levings to Parents, May 29, 1865 in Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond*, 181-182. Only one order was given in regards to the general appearance of the armies. Special Orders No. 239, issued on May 18, read that the men would appear “without knapsacks.” “The Grand Review,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 19, 1865.

¹⁶⁹ “Home from the Wars,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 24, 1865.

polished arms were remarked as the rule.”¹⁷⁰ These ideas were reinforced by woodcuts that accompanied the stories. The May 25, 1865 issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* printed an image of the soldiers rounding the corner of Pennsylvania Avenue at Fifteenth Street that dominated the front page above the fold (Fig. 3.1). All of the soldiers are of identical height, body proportions, and uniforms – frock coats – while the throngs of spectators appear in various heights and costumes. While the woodcut is correct in showing the men in-step with weapons that the position of right-shoulder shift – Special Order No. 239 specified that the men would have their muskets at this position and would march in cadence between Fifteenth Street and New York Avenue – the image betrays the reality of the appearance of the soldiers on the march.¹⁷¹ Matthew Brady was authorized to place his camera at the same location as the woodcut’s perspective was drawn from, and he was able to capture numerous images of soldiers passing. One such image (Fig. 3.2 and 3.2.1), shows blurred figures on two wagons ahead of a regiment of infantry. While it is impossible to ascertain to what regiment, or which army, the soldiers belonged, scrutiny of the soldiers in the front ranks reveals most of the men wearing issued sack coats.¹⁷²

The discrepancies between the two images of the Grand Review, and of the appearance of Union soldiers, are emblematic of the North’s antebellum understandings of a soldierly image that remained in 1865. Joshua Brown’s work on pictorial reporting in Gilded Age America posits

¹⁷⁰ “The Review,” *Army and Navy Journal*, May 27, 1865.

¹⁷¹ “The Armies of the Republic,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 25, 1865.; “The Grand Review,” *Daily National Intelligencer*, May 19, 1865.

¹⁷² Matthew B. Brady, *Washington, District of Columbia. Grand Review of the Army. Infantry unit with fixed bayonets followed by ambulances passing on Pennsylvania near the Treasury*. 1865, Civil War Glass Negatives and Related Prints, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington DC. The cut, fit, and length of the garments reveals their identity as sack coats, see images in the previous chapter for reference. Three of the soldiers – the man carrying the drum and the men fifth and sixth from the left – are wearing garments that are shorter than the other sack coats, signifying that they are wearing issued jackets or one of the varieties of modified clothing that soldiers wore. See figures three and four in the previous chapter for reference.

that engravings that accompanied text in newspapers such as *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* were intended for social use. They conveyed in images of the people, places, and events of that day's news. As such, they were reflections of the public's social understandings, biases, and struggles throughout the period.¹⁷³ The distance between Northern civilians and the battlefields of the Civil War meant that their understandings of what soldiers looked like were based on antebellum views and were maintained by depictions such as the one that dominated the front page of the May 25, 1865 issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The soldiers that marched down Pennsylvania Avenue in the Grand Review wore the uniforms that they carried with them through four years of war. They buffed buttons, shined shoes, and brushed caked mud and stains from the fabric, but underneath its cleanliness, the uniform was fundamentally different from the one soldiers and civilians imagined in 1861. Soldiers wore their sack coats to an occasion marked by "military vanity," an action that went against the regulations and previously held social beliefs.

Union veterans seemed to show a unanimous front for a change in the way the general public perceived the soldierly image. Within months of the Grand Review, however, soldiers of all backgrounds and ranks were pushed into one of several factions in regards to the future of American military uniforms. One group wished to maintain the uniform worn by the victorious Union armies during the Civil War. This faction was championed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs and followed a mantra that to change the uniform would mean violating the memory of the Federal soldier, "...the uniform in which officers and men so well and gloriously served and saved their country." They believed that the war was won by men who

¹⁷³ Joshua Brown, *Beyond the Lines: Pictorial Reporting, Everyday Life, and the Crisis of Gilded Age America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 5-6.

were among the best fighting men ever to bear arms and they had done so clad in blue flannel blouses. Meigs even went so far as to chastise General of the Army William T. Sherman after he expressed interest in changing the uniform in 1869, suggesting that the old uniform “was good enough to make campaigns in, and it ought to be good enough for the more inactive duties of the present military state of this country.”¹⁷⁴ While Meigs may have truly believed that maintaining the old uniform was a service to the veterans of the Civil War, but his stalwart defense of the previous style was also heavily influenced by a significant problem in his department - surplus. The millions of coats, jackets, blouses, trousers, shirts, drawers, and caps produced over four years of war meant that at its close, the Quartermaster Department still had countless garments in storage. The rapid demobilization in the years after the war meant that stocks meant to clothe a million-man army for a year were stored for a military less than one-tenth the size.¹⁷⁵ The vast numbers of surplus uniforms would clothe the post-war army for nearly seven years.

Another faction was comprised of the medical community both domestically and abroad who were concerned with the connections between the health of soldiers and their uniform. The British were the first to act in 1865, forming an investigative committee to understand the relationship between their soldiers’ uniform and heart and lung diseases. They concluded that the major problem was the uniform itself, where the weight and tight fit were causing prolonged stress on the heart and lungs. In men with less than two years’ service, one of every seven was

¹⁷⁴Langellier, *Army Blue*, 183-204.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*; Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775-1939* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History United States Army, 1989), 500; Adam D. Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race: How Jews Sewed Their Way to Success in America and the British Empire* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 187; Gregory P. Downs, “Appendix 6” in *After Appomattox: Military Occupation and the Ends of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 262.

hospitalized and discharged due to heart disease where one in three men were hospitalized and discharged for lung disease.¹⁷⁶

Similar concerns were raised in the United States throughout the Civil War period but were not fully acted upon until after the war. On August 3, 1867, C. H. Crane, Assistant Surgeon General of the Army, wrote to the Medical Directors and Chief Medical Officers of the Army requesting they “call upon medical officers of experience, serving under your command, for their opinions regarding the hygienic fitness... of the present uniform and allowance of clothing for enlisted men, and to invite suggestions for its modification.”¹⁷⁷ Crane received 168 responses from army posts across the United States and tasked Assistant Surgeon General Alfred A. Woodhull with compiling the final report for the Surgeon General. Published on April 15, 1868, *A Medical Report upon the Uniform and Clothing of the Soldiers of the U.S. Army* contained myriad suggestions for the improvement of the uniform. One of Woodhull’s complaints surrounded the quality and cut of the uniform, referring to the “shameful carelessness in the cut and make.”¹⁷⁸ “It seems essential to tie the soldier down with straps and strings and then load him up like a freight car. He is half-choked with high-standing collars... he has belts and clothing so tightly bound around his waist that he cannot breathe by his abdominal muscles...” the report continued, emphasizing similar concerns to the British Fort Pitt report. Woodhull believed that the soldier’s “martial bearing” should result from his training, not restrictive clothing meant to “hold the soldier in position.”¹⁷⁹ Woodhull commented on the sack coat worn

¹⁷⁶ Scott Hughes Myerly, *British Military Spectacle: From the Napoleonic Wars through the Crimea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 27. Myerly explains that although the report was well received and many suggestions to change the uniform were made, very few reforms were made.

¹⁷⁷ Edgar M. Howell, “United States Army Headgear, 1855-1902: Catalog of United States Army Uniforms in the Collections of the Smithsonian Institution, II,” *Smithsonian Studies in History and Technology* no. 30 (1975): 29.

¹⁷⁸ Langellier, *Army Blue*, 207.

¹⁷⁹ Mary C. Gillett, *The Army Medical Department* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, United States Army, 1995), 48; “The Proposed Army Uniform,” *Army and Navy Journal*, May 23, 1868.

by Union soldier in the Civil War directly, noting that, despite its lack of quality in the final years of the war and in those issued to soldiers on the frontier, it was simply “an uncouth type” of appropriate civilian garb. However, if such designs were to continue, changes in color and ornamentation needed to be made to protect the health of soldier. He recommended that if the government insisted on blue as its standard color, a light blue or “Cadet gray” be adopted, anything approaching “a neutral tint.” Finally, the coat should continue to be made loose but also thin, allowing more under-layers to be worn in the colder months, rather than placing a soldier in a “heat box” in all seasons and climates.¹⁸⁰

The changes proposed in the Woodhull Report were welcomed by soldiers on the frontier as many had been suggesting changes since the end of the war. However, the soldiers’ proposals were often very different from what Woodhull eventually published. For example, many soldiers in the months immediately following the Grand Review took to the pages of the *Army and Navy Journal* calling for a return to more European-styled uniforms. They cited the cleanliness, the cut, the fit, and the style that made entire regiments appear “beautiful” and uniform with one another. A standard waistcoat or vest was suggested by some, allowing the soldier to remove his uniform coat and still be protected while on fatigue detail, thereby removing the need for a special fatigue uniform. Officers’ uniforms were not exempt from their scrutiny as many claimed that the passing observer could not distinguish the officer from the enlisted men. Some went so far as to suggest that the officer should be distinguishable from his men at “a couple hundred yards.” By far the most popular suggestions, however, were new standards on cleanliness and strict adherence to the regulations. “We have no uniform, for the irregularities which crept into the Volunteer service, as regards to dress during the war, are now painfully apparent in our

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*; “A Proposed Army Uniform,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, May 16, 1868.

regular forces,” wrote one soldier in September 1867. Soldiers cited that such irregularities persisted from lackadaisical efforts on the parts of company and regimental officers in setting and maintaining uniform standards. The freedom of choice that the volunteers were given in the Civil War began the current trend, and many post-war soldiers believed that such freedoms were the driving force behind other disciplinary concerns during and after the war. Now that the armies were no longer fighting, soldiers begged for change.¹⁸¹

All three factions surrounding uniforms in the post-Civil War period wished to uphold the image and dignity of the soldier. Traditionalists like Montgomery Meigs conceded to issues in fit and cut, but cautioned against change due to the memory of the Civil War volunteer. Changing the uniform would mean forgetting the brave deeds that the volunteer of 1861 won for themselves, wearing the fatigue blouse that so many appeared in during the Grand Review. Medical minds praised the sack coat for its freedom of movement, but its poor quality and cut did not allow for proper breathing and was a hazard to the health of the soldier. Soldiers themselves, while varied in their approaches, hoped mainly for a return to uniformity in appearance for all soldiers that might build upon the storied reputation the United States Army had gained in the Civil War. Within the Woodhull Report and the soldiers’ suggestions for a change in uniform, however, ran an undertone of anger toward the Quartermaster Department. The department’s operational standard of maintaining six-months to a year’s worth of clothing on hand for every soldier in the army meant that surplus and storage would continuously be an issue. After the Mexican-American War, surplus uniforms were issued to soldiers through the

¹⁸¹ “A New Uniform,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, August 4, 1866, 794; “European Military Systems,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, May 20, 1865, 611; “Military Uniforms,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, September 23, 1865, 70-71; “The Uniform Hat,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, April 18, 1868, 554; “Uniform Again,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, January 25, 1868, 363; “Reforms in Army Dress,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, September 9, 1865, 39; “A Uniform Needed,” *The Army and Navy Journal*, September 28, 1867, 90.

early 1850s for just this reason. These uniforms drew similar complaints of cut, fit, quality, and fashion as the post-Civil War uniforms would over a decade later. The difference between the situation in the 1840s and the 1860s and 1870s, and the reaction of the soldiers, was not the existence of surplus stock, nor its continued issue to soldiers, but what the Quartermaster Department chose to do with it – sell surplus on the open market.

While provisions existed for the sale of surplus, the task was deemed necessary by entities outside the Quartermaster Department due to lessons learned from a brief financial panic in March 1865. The Treasury Department heavily relied upon government bonds to pay its debts throughout the war. However, more than half of the bonds promised interest payments in gold rather than paper dollars, tying the value of those bonds to the price of gold. The premium on gold steadily rose during the war, adding more incentive to invest in the government war bonds. By March 1865, confidence the imminent victory of the Union dropped the price in gold as sellers reduced the premium on gold from one-hundred-one percent on March 1 to forty-eight and a half percent by March 24. This caused a corresponding drop in the value of government bonds, some by half while others dropped below their printed value. While the drop in the gold premium affected other markets such as petroleum, tobacco, and cotton, the fear resulting from the drop in gold threatened to drain the Treasury Department. The government responded by buying millions of dollars' worth of bonds on the resale market and gold in the hopes of driving the prices back up. Their plan succeeded and by April the value of the bonds stabilized. This crisis left its mark on the Treasury Department and with the surrender of Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, they immediately took measures to slash military spending.¹⁸²

¹⁸² Downs, *After Appomattox*, 92-93.

The Treasury's cuts to military spending prompted Meigs to send orders to all Federal Arsenals and storage facilities to "Reduce! Reduce! Reduce!"¹⁸³ Of the many measures taken, the first was to allow discharged soldiers to take their uniform and equipment with them, thus negating much of what might have been sent back to them from the front. Along with their back-pay, soldiers returned home in their uniforms and some went immediately to their local tailor or clothier to buy a new suit of clothes. Historian Adam Mendelsohn writes that the decision to allow soldiers to keep their uniforms helped to save many businesses that had relied on the contract system that abruptly came to an end in April 1865. He cites a clothier named Fred Lazarus who recalled that the soldiers were "buying clothes and doing away with their army blue and business was good. . . . Soldiers would go into the basement of the new store and change their army togs for the store clothes."¹⁸⁴ In the closing chapter of the war memoir *Si Klegg and His "Pard,"* author Wilbur Hinman includes similar commentary, writing that, when the regiment was mustered out in Indianapolis, few of the discharged veterans actually returned home "with their 'soldier clothes' on." Rather, most men immediately found the nearest clothier and bought new complete suits, "discarding the blue garments that they had so long and honorably worn, but which they hoped never to put on again."¹⁸⁵

Provisions were in place within the army regulations to authorize the sale of "unserviceable property" as well as items that the Quartermaster Department found more

¹⁸³ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 453. The Quartermaster Department began consolidating surplus stock in the closing months of the war, the idea being that sale and distribution of surplus would be more economical if there were central locations for different types of equipment. Consolidating storehouses also allowed the department to reduce the number of operations it established throughout the war and reducing the workforce.

¹⁸⁴ Mendelsohn, *The Rag Race*, 187. Mendelsohn also cites that the increase in customers from the disbanding army helped to drop clothing prices significantly, bringing wages in the private sector back up to par with their 1860 levels by the middle of 1865.

¹⁸⁵ Wilbur F. Hinman, *Si Klegg and His "Pard": How they Lived and Talked, and what they Did and Suffered, while Fighting for the Flag* (Cleveland, OH: The Williams Publishing Company, 1887), 674.

economical to sell rather than ship to other points. The key point was “unserviceable property” which was left up to the discretion of Quartermasters at each depot. If any piece of equipment could be repaired or made serviceable within the following ten years, it was to be retained for future use.¹⁸⁶ Sale at public auction very often brought prices significantly lower than their initial cost, but the department nevertheless received large sums of money from the sales. For example, between May 1865 and August 1866, the sale of horses and mules alone amounted to \$15.2 million. The sale of railroad equipment to private railroad companies in the rebuilding South amounted to roughly \$11 million. Clothing and equipment took longer to sell, but by 1871 the Quartermaster Department reported that it had sold nearly 1.3 million coats and jackets, over 800,000 blankets, over 400,000 shirts, over 350,000 pairs of trousers, nearly 630,000 caps, and nearly 220,000 pairs of stockings. Selling these items net the Quartermaster Department over \$9 million. In all, the Quartermaster Department would net over \$30 million from surplus sales with the total amount received from all Federal supply departments amounted to over \$66 million. The Quartermaster Department was severely in debt after the war but the vast amount of money made through sales meant that by June 1866, all debts incurred by the department had been paid.¹⁸⁷ The plan of the Treasury Department had worked.

The enormous amount of clothing and equipment sold at such low prices introduced an entirely new business to the post-war North – the army surplus store, the first of which, Bannerman’s, was established in the 1870s. Francis Bannerman VI was born in Scotland around 1852 and was brought to America two years later. His family lived on the west side of the Brooklyn Naval Yard in New York and in his youth, Francis purchased a small boat that he

¹⁸⁶ Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 455-456.

¹⁸⁷ Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 194-195. Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army*, 456.

would row around the harbor collecting items thrown or lost overboard that he would then sell alongside his father in one of the many junk and slop-shops surrounding the harbor. When war broke out, Francis' father joined the United States Navy while Francis continued the junk-selling business. Upon returning home, he and his father began attending the government auctions of surplus war material. Initially, the two purchased scrap metal, chain, and anchors for resale along the harbor and by 1867 had established a store at 14 Atlantic Avenue. However, when his father died in 1872, Francis expanded to purchasing everything from muskets and sabers to flags and uniforms, seeing an expanding market for veterans and collectors. Starting in the late 1880s, Bannerman printed a catalog of his goods, allowing his stocks to reach far beyond the doors of his Broadway store. He continued to buy and sell government surplus throughout the end of the nineteenth century and his showroom at 579 Broadway in Manhattan became a pseudo-museum for veterans and others able to visit.¹⁸⁸

The success of soldiers returning home with their uniforms, of government auctions, and of the resale of uniforms at surplus stores such as Bannerman's and second-hand clothiers meant that the uniform worn by soldiers in the Civil War was widely available across the United States and could therefore be bought and worn by anyone with the money or mind to do so. While issues of cut and quality were important for soldiers, they disagreed wildly on what should be done about it. What they could all agree on, however, was that they had lost their distinctiveness as soldiers because "laborers in the streets and hackmen in their boxes" were clothed in old

¹⁸⁸ Dwight D. Demeritt Jr., "Francis Bannerman VI: Military Goods Dealer to the World," *American Society of Arms Collectors Bulletin* no. 82: 43-50; Eric A Powell, "Fortress on the Hudson," *Archaeology* 56, no. 1 (January/February 2003) <http://archive.archaeology.org/0301/abstracts/hudson.html>. Bannerman was most famous for the scandal he was involved in concerning weapons he bought at government auction after the Spanish American War. He bought over ninety percent of the surplus American weapons and was accused of selling them to various Central and South American countries. He never recovered from the scandal, but his sons ran the business until his grandson, Charles Bannerman, closed the company's doors in the 1960s.

uniforms. In the Woodhull report, he commented on this same notion, writing that it destroyed “the caste feeling in the soldiery that is essential to the highest development of martial qualities.”¹⁸⁹ These sentiments were expressed by an “Old Soldier” who wrote, “There is no controverting the fact that our present uniform is looked upon with aversion by our own men, more especially those stationed in the South, from the fact that almost every idle, lazy, dirty individual, both white and black, in a country full of idle, lazy, and dirty individuals is dressed either partially or entirely in soldier’s garb.”¹⁹⁰

These blatant racial and regional undertones had their origins in very real situations throughout the South during Reconstruction. Section two of the bill that established the Freedman’s Bureau, for example, stated that the Secretary of War “may direct such issues as provisions, clothing, and fuel as he may deem needful” for Southern civilians. This was intended to help the “destitute and suffering refugees and freedmen and their wives and children,” indicating that the Freedman’s Bureau was authorized to aide both white and black Southerners.¹⁹¹ A case tried by the U.S. District Court in South Carolina included the sale of a United States Army uniform to a South Carolina citizen. Edward A Fowler plead guilty to a charge of purchasing a United States soldier’s uniform and was sentenced to pay a ten dollar fine and serve six months in prison.¹⁹² While it is not known what happened to the soldier who tried to sell Fowler his uniform, the severity of the sentence indicates a widespread issue in the post-war South of purchasing uniforms of soldiers, perhaps with the intent of impersonation.

¹⁸⁹ Langellier, *Army Blue*, 207.

¹⁹⁰ “The Uniform Hat,” *Army and Navy Journal*, April 18, 1868.

¹⁹¹ U.S. Congress, “Chap. XC: An Act to establish a Bureau for the Relief of Freedmen and Refugees,” in *Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America* vol. 13 (Boston, 1866): 507-509, <http://www.freedmen.umd.edu/fbact.htm>.

¹⁹² “The United States District Court,” *The Charleston Daily News*, August 19, 1867.

Tramps were seen as a “distinct and dangerous class” of men, worse than beggars as they moved from town to town, claiming to search for work but instead created a “menacing nuisance.” These tramps were a direct consequence of nineteenth century industrial capitalism. By industrializing the means of production, businesses created a surplus of unskilled laborers. While this helped to keep wages down for employers, this also created a system of constant unemployment for large numbers of unskilled laborers. A “tramp” was one such worker who refused to return to work and instead, preyed upon the good will of others, “when [the worker] is out of work, he is an outlaw, he is a tramp – he is a man without the rights of manhood – the pariah of society, homeless, in the deep significance of the term” wrote labor reformer George McNeill in 1877.¹⁹³ Exacerbated by the panic of 1873, the Northern public made connections between the tramp and the undeserving poor, both of whom were viewed as a lazy and contemptible group of people forming a “dangerous class” to Northern society.¹⁹⁴ Northerners saw a direct link between the laziness of camp-life learned by soldiers in their service to the great influx of tramps when the armies began demobilizing.¹⁹⁵ Demobilization of the military also meant demobilization of the civilian economy that had boomed over the course of the war, putting thousands of men and women out of work within a matter of months, “the whole tenor and tone of our daily lives is suddenly transformed from one of eager and vigilant activity for our national existence as if we had dropped from one sphere to another.” Within four years of Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, the entire Quartermaster Department reduced its civilian

¹⁹³ David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 5.

¹⁹⁴ Brown, *Beyond the Lines*, 145-147.

¹⁹⁵ Marten, *Sing Not War*, 222. Marten cites Todd DePastino’s *Citizen Hobo: How a Century of Homelessness Shaped America*, claiming that many Northern civilians “might respect soldiers’ valor on the battlefield, but they did not admire the ‘lazy habits of camp life’ developed during the long periods between battles.” Sherman’s “bummers” were of particular alarm due to stories of their disregard for private property they displayed during their famous “March to the Sea.”

workforce from over 100,000 to just four thousand. By November 1865, eighty percent of the Union armies had been demobilized and sent home.¹⁹⁶ As the massive numbers of recently unemployed veterans and civilians roamed the streets of Northern cities, it heightened already intense fears of tramps and vagabonds

The fears of Northern civilians were enhanced by imposters who claimed to be veterans but never served in the military. For example, a one-legged man who claimed to have lost his limb at Gettysburg was ousted as a fraud, but only after he had accepted meals and charity from local families.¹⁹⁷ A report from the soldiers' asylum in Dayton, Ohio cited instances where veterans were hired by "corporations in large cities of foreigners who own organs" and tasked with standing on a street corner or alley grinding the hand organ. Sympathetic passers-by gave the veteran money, but the veterans contract required him to give all of that money to the corporations, "which ends in the owner of the hand organ company receiving five, eight, and ten dollars a day and the soldier two." It was the large sums of money that a veteran, especially one disfigured or in uniform, could earn in a day that attracted many veterans and non-veterans to begging. "Again, some of the men these men who claim to be disabled, soldier, and who wear the uniform of soldiers, are men who never have been soldiers at all, but who, having lost their limb, or received some deformity by an accident as employees upon railroads or otherwise, assume the uniform of the soldier to thereby attract sympathy," wrote the report on the Dayton Asylum.¹⁹⁸ Former General Benjamin Butler wrote to the Board of Managers for the National Home for Disabled Soldiers in 1868 that he was disgusted by the "prostitution of the honorable wounds and the uniform of the soldier" that followed the beggars and tramps who claimed to be

¹⁹⁶ Mark R. Wilson, *The Business of Civil War: Military Mobilization and the State, 1861-1865* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 193-194.

¹⁹⁷ Marten, *Sing Not War*, 221.

¹⁹⁸ "The Dayton Asylum," *The States and Union*, January 25, 1871.

soldiers. He urged that the situation could only be saved by “the determination of every man, and especially of every woman, whose kind and patriotic hearts are touched by such exhibitions of apparent want, to refrain from giving.” Veterans could not be forced into soldier’s homes, but if the situation became dire enough, men could come to the asylums and soldiers’ homes across the country and be vetted for their veteran status. Those who were found to not be veterans could be dealt with while the true veterans would receive the care they deserved.¹⁹⁹

The sale of surplus uniforms hurt the image of the valiant and victorious Civil War soldier through the 1880s. Instead of marveling at the magnificent display of the soldiers marching down Pennsylvania Avenue, the American public soon associated the Civil War uniform with tramps, drunks, and criminals who took from upstanding citizens for their own gain. The mass availability of surplus uniforms on the open market after the war opened the door for any man armed with a disfigurement and knowledge of a few battles to pretend to be a helpless veteran. The image of the standing army suffered as well, themselves being associated with the tramps and beggars because they too wore surplus uniforms. Quartermaster General Montgomery Meigs claimed that only the inferior garments were sold to the public. However, that may have worked in the imposter’s favor as many veterans came home in their ragged, dirty, and bullet-hole ridden uniforms, making imposter’s stories all the more believable for a public that wished to see their veterans as heroes.

By 1871, the decline in available surplus stores at the Schuylkill Arsenal required action from the Quartermaster Department. Throughout the year, internal debates questioned whether to renew production of the Civil War pattern uniforms or to adopt a new pattern. With funds from

¹⁹⁹ *History of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers: With a Complete Guide-book to the Central Home, at Dayton, Ohio* (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Publishing House, 1875), 43, <http://www.daytonhistorybooks.com/page/page/5267259.htm>; Marten, *Sing Not War*, 221

Congress, the Quartermaster Department set out designing an entirely new uniform.²⁰⁰ The Department followed some suggestions given in the Woodhull report, particularly in regards to the blouse. Woodhull was struck by what was deemed the “Swiss” blouse which was made loose much like the Civil War era sack coat, but retained the length and frame of the frock coat as well as branch-specific piping and a nine-button front. What set this blouse apart from all previous concepts, however, were four pleats, or folds in the fabric, down each side of the garment. This concept was loved by Woodhull because of his desire to allow the troops to layer their clothing, and with the blouse already layering wool-flannel across the chest, the garment did not require underclothing.²⁰¹ General of the Army William T. Sherman believed the design of a “hunting or shooting jacket” was “possibly the most convenient for soldiers in service in the Indian country,” and the “Swiss” jacket was designed specifically from popular hunting jackets in Great Britain in that period.²⁰² A similar pattern blouse had also been worn by Rhode Island volunteers and their officers in 1861 and 1862, meaning that such a garment already been tried in combat and was generally successful. Montgomery Meigs had his doubts, however, writing in 1871 that he would not enjoy wearing a “close blouse of three thicknesses of flannel in Washington in summer,” much less “in Arizona, or the Rio Grande.”²⁰³

Despite Meigs’ doubts, the “Swiss” blouse was adopted for use in the 1872 regulations, but was immediately met with criticism from the soldiers. One report claimed that while many of the changes in uniform and equipment differed little from previous regulation, “the new style of coats, pantaloons, hats, and the complicated and multifarious equipments going to make up a

²⁰⁰ It was only after Meigs disposed of 60,000 remaining uniforms pieces still in storage that Congress appropriated the funds for a new uniform.

²⁰¹ Langellier, *Army Blue*, 202-203; David Cole, *Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons, and Accoutrements* (U.S. Army Medical Museum, 2007), 29-30.

²⁰² Langellier, *Army Blue*, 257; “Ulster Stalking and Universal Coat,” *New York Tribune*, May 3, 1873.

²⁰³ Langellier, *Army Blue*, 257.

soldier's outfit are of no earthly benefit whatever, except to the contractor that who has the furnishing of them.”²⁰⁴ Other comments were worse as “F. L.” wrote in the *Army and Navy Journal* “To the military mind the ‘ruffled blouse’ is an object of utter disgust and loathing. When received, it is a shapeless mass, and when the unsuspecting votary of Mars is inducted into it, it converts *him* into a shapeless mass, destroying in him all resemblance to anything either in nature or art, and so transmogrifying him that his own mother would fail to recognize him.” He went on to say that because it was so widely hated, each company and post commander altered it to their liking, thereby continuing one of the problems that was had with the previous uniform system – there was no uniformity in soldiers’ dress.²⁰⁵ No sooner had the “ruffled blouse” been adopted that it was discontinued in favor of a new fatigue blouse that was adopted in 1874. This blouse had a five-button front, fold down collar, and had branch-specific piping around the collar and cuffs. The overall design of the coat was similar to the Civil War era coat aside from the extra button and piping, bringing the memory of the sack coat forward to the military of the 1870s. This design would remain in use, with minor changes, through the 1890s.²⁰⁶ By distancing themselves from the poor image that surrounded the surplus Civil War sack coat, their reputation was not constantly compared to those of the drunks and tramps that roamed Northern cities. Instead, their new uniform helped to rebuild the image of the American military as occupation of the South ceased and the campaigns against the Native Americans in the western territories expanded.

As the army distanced themselves, so too did many Union veterans through veteran’s organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic. Designed first as a fraternal organization

²⁰⁴ “A Change in Uniform and Dress of the Army,” *The Sun*, August 8, 1872.

²⁰⁵ “Thoughts Upon Clothes,” *Army and Navy Journal*, October 4, 1873, 122; Langellier, *Army Blue*, 269.

²⁰⁶ Cole, *Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms*, 30; Gregory J. W. Urwin, *The United States Army: An Illustrated History, 1775-1918* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 125-137.

to continue the feelings of comradeship that were developed during the war, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) was established in 1866. They soon developed a constitution and fraternal “ritual” that allowed men who had been honorably discharged or wounded in action to join the organization. Within their constitution, they wrote their “principles” as an organization, mostly surrounding the support of deceased soldiers’ families, disabled veterans, and to continue to fraternal feelings that were developed during the war. Their constitution originally contained five principles, the last dealing with the memory of the Civil War soldier and veteran. “For the establishment of the defense of the late soldiery of the United States, morally, socially, and politically, with a view to inculcate a proper appreciation of such services and claims by the American people,” read their fifth principle, noting a feeling of dissatisfaction with the way the public had begun to perceive the veteran and his experiences through their perceived need to defend the memory of the soldier.²⁰⁷

Perhaps the greatest act in restoring the memory of the Union veteran was the establishment of Dedication Day, not Memorial Day, in states across the North. Adjutant General Chipman, a title given to him by the GAR, wrote that the observance of Memorial Day had done more to cement the brotherhood and “to remove any prejudice that might remain in the minds of the public against it.” By 1889, Memorial Day was a legal holiday in twelve states while many more still celebrated the day with parades and banquets to the memory of the fallen Civil War soldier.²⁰⁸ By all accounts, the Memorial Day observances and accompanying parades were a complete success as reports from both large and small newspapers of the period point to a

²⁰⁷ Robert B. Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic* (New York: Bryan, Taylor & Co., Publishers, 1889). 34-35 and 45.

²⁰⁸ Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 92. The twelve states that maintained Memorial Day as a legal holiday were: Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Vermont, and Ohio.

patriotic feeling that filled many of the onlookers as well as instilling virtues of courage and national pride into future soldiers. “There never must be a generation of Americans that does not know of the struggle of the ‘60s,” opined the Canton, Ohio newspaper *The Stark Democrat* in 1880. The report maintained that strategy, tactics, or individuals should not be praised on Memorial Day but rather the “good who died for their flag and country.” Interesting as well is the *Democrat*’s insistence on remembering “each patriot” who died however unworthy they may be of their praise, an idea the GAR would have firmly fought against as their desires more Memorial Day extended only to what they considered as “brave” soldiers that died during the Civil War.²⁰⁹

All GAR activities, including Memorial Day, were occasions for uniforms to be worn by its members, but the uniform was of constant debate and confusion through the early decades of the Grand Army of the Republic. In the annual *Journal of the National Encampment*, requests were made to change the laws to make them more straightforward and to provide a single uniform option. The committees that were established to investigate the issue were constantly at odds as to how much freedom in uniform would be permitted. In their service, the same veterans calling for a single uniform were given choices as to their soldierly appearance. This idea conflicted with the prevailing military’s cries for more uniformity in their issued clothing, a complaint that was answered in the 1872 and 1874 regulations. In the GAR, however, the subject of their uniform was often left up to individual post commanders as the responsibility trickled down from the organizations leaders. At the first meeting held in Indianapolis, Indiana on November 20, 1867, the orders for the occasion were for all “comrades” to wear the “‘blue,’ with

²⁰⁹ “The Heroism of Man,” *The Stark Democrat*, June 3, 1880.

corps badges, etc.”²¹⁰ In this context, the “blue” refers to the uniform worn during service, something that many men might have kept as well as it being easy to acquire from government sales or second-hand clothiers. Chapter V, Article IX of the GAR constitution gave an ambiguous answer on the subject of uniforms, “Departments may adopt a uniform for their own members. Where no uniform is prescribed by a Department, each Post may adopt a uniform.”²¹¹ An 1884 debate about the uniform shows the disparity in uniform between departments where “Comrade Barnum” of New York bemoaned a resolution to adopt a single uniform for the organization claiming that “in New York we are all equipped with uniforms... it doesn’t matter whether we have a blouse or a frock coat, if all would wear the Grand Army button it would be a uniform.”²¹²

Barnum’s claims about the GAR button, and by extension the GAR badge, show how veterans combined the ideas of uniformity with their wartime freedom to wear the style of coat they desired and their wartime experiences. The GAR badge was adopted in a special meeting in 1869. It was to be of “bronze, made from cannon captured in different decisive battles during the late rebellion, and in form a five-pointed star, similar in design to the two hundred medals of honor... to be given to soldiers and sailors most distinguished for meritorious and gallant conduct during the late war.”²¹³ Steeped in imagery, then, the GAR badge was to be a symbol connecting those who did not receive the Medal of Honor with their service, honoring them in an easily recognizable way. The GAR button was cast in brass with the letters “GAR” embossed

²¹⁰ Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 68.

²¹¹ *Proceedings of the First to Tenth Meetings, 1866-1876 (Inclusive) of the National Encampment Grand Army of the Republic* (Philadelphia: Samuel P. Town Printer, 1877), 281; *The Grand Army Blue-Book: Containing the Rules and Regulations of the Grand Army of the Republic and Official Decisions and Opinions Thereon, 1884, 1888, 1891* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1891), 107, 197.

²¹² *Journal of the Eighteenth Annual Session of the National Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic. Minneapolis, Minn., July 23, 24, and 25, 1884* (Philadelphia: Town Book and Job Printing House, 1884), 225-226.

²¹³ *Proceedings of the First to Tenth Meetings*, 281; Beath, *History of the Grand Army of the Republic*, 654.

across it and was similar in style to the buttons that adorned their uniform coats during their service.

The GAR uniform was not protected from frauds and other issues, particularly because of the organizations' continued use of the wartime uniform. In New York, for example, the *Horace Greely Post* believed that the GAR uniforms looked too much like the uniforms of "conductors, hotel porters, steamboat and railroad employees, elevator men, and postoffice and customhouse officials." *The National Tribune* warned of the difficulty in achieving this however, as the GAR uniform had to be blue and must "approximate somewhat in cut to that worn in the service of which we are so proud." When the buttons and other insignia are removed, the report continued, it should approximate street clothes so as to be a multi-function garment. Finally, the uniform had come to represent the organization, regardless of any likeness to the uniforms of other professions, and therefore the newspaper urged that the uniform not be changed.²¹⁴ The *Milwaukee Sunday Telegraph* in October 1884 published a story of a man claiming to be the commander of a GAR post in Pennsylvania roaming the streets of Milwaukee looking for help because he had been robbed. Following some investigations, the man was found to be a fraud who had committed similar crimes in other places. The newspaper urged that GAR members "owe it to themselves and the worthy men who deserve help to discover these swindling tramps and expose them."²¹⁵ Members of GAR in Kansas achieved just that when they helped pass a state law making it illegal to wear the badges or insignia of the GAR when one is not a member. "Any person who shall willfully wear the badge of the Grand Army of the Republic, or who shall use or wear the same to obtain aid or assistance thereby within the state... shall be guilty of a

²¹⁴ "The G.A.R. Uniform," *The National Tribune*, December 6, 1888.

²¹⁵ Marten, *Sing Not War*, 221.

misdemeanor,” read the bill, citing that when convicted the punishment should not exceed thirty days in prison or a twenty-five dollar fine.²¹⁶ At the Thirty-Third National Encampment in 1899, a similar law was suggested to be placed before Congress. The issue was not just people wearing the garment to receive aid, however, but “disreputable and questionable places of business” using the uniform to advertise their wares. The result, the resolution claimed, was to lessen the respect the people had for the organization and Civil War veterans. Their proposal was to make it illegal to wear such uniforms by making it a misdemeanor, much like the Kansas law, to do so.²¹⁷ These kinds of responses to issues surrounding the uniform worn by the GAR, and veterans more broadly, placed an official, state-sanctioned voice to the question of how the uniform of the Civil War soldier should be remembered. Placing the misdemeanor penalty onto the crimes of impersonation and fraud did help to curb the issues, but as evidenced by the issue still being discussed at GAR meetings at the end of the nineteenth century, the problem did not completely go away.

Perhaps the most public way that veterans and the GAR established the legacy of the Civil War uniform was the placement of monuments on battlefields across the South. The monument boom in the 1880s corresponded with the increase in veteran publications and memoirs which brought more public interest into the experiences of Civil War soldiers. No other battlefield has more monuments than Gettysburg with a total of 833 markers, 466 monuments

²¹⁶ “Kansas State News,” *The Barton County Democrat*, February 21, 1889.

²¹⁷ *Journal of the Thirty-Third National Encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic. Philadelphia, PA September 6th and 7th, 1889* (Philadelphia: Town Printing Company, 1899), 327. These laws and proposals have modern distinctions in the “Stolen Valor” laws passed by President George W. Bush in 2005 and President Barack Obama in 2013. The 2005 law made it illegal to wear the uniform of any United States military branch. Cases through 2012 found that the 2005 law was a violation of a citizen’s First Amendment right to freedom of speech and expression. These cases led to President Obama’s 2013 law which included the clause that the person wearing the uniform had to be seeking some sort of financial gain in order to be convicted of the crime. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/258/text>.

and 367 tablets, covering the field. Of that number, 499 are Union markers and ninety-four include an image, figure, or statue of a soldier.²¹⁸ The large amount of money required to design, construct, and place a monument meant that some states are more represented than others. Pennsylvania, for example, has the most with 124 monuments on the field with New York in a close second with 109, while states such as Delaware, Indiana, and West Virginia only have five, eight, and seven, respectively. However, in examining the figures and statues placed on monuments on the Gettysburg battlefield provides an opportunity to see the various ways that veterans approached their soldierly image twenty years after the end of the war.

For example, the monument to the 4th New York Independent Battery that sits atop Devil's Den depicts an artilleryman with a style of uniform not worn during the Civil War (Fig. 3.3).²¹⁹ Rather than the stylish artillery jacket with its high collar, twelve brass buttons, and red branch trim around the collar and cuffs, the figure on the monument wears a uniform more closely related to the fatigue blouse worn in the 1880s. The monument's coat has a low standing collar with a five-button front and two chest seams. It also has vents at the base of each side-seam and trim in the shape of a chevron above the cuff. The trousers also have a line of tape running down the outer seam. A comparison of the figure atop the monument to an image of a sergeant in the 25th U.S. Infantry displays many similarities (Fig. 3.5). The image of the sergeant depicts a five-button front with two chest seams, and the way the fabric falls along his left side and flares outward toward the hem of the coat, as well as the fact that the bottom six inches or more of that section falls straight down, indicate that there is a vent there. The sergeant's trousers

²¹⁸ Tom Huntington, *Guide to Gettysburg Battlefield Monuments* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2013), 1. The official number of every marker surpasses 1,000, but that number includes small flank markers which include the regimental state and number. Using the 833 number provides an opportunity to discuss only the major monuments that might include a figure or depiction of a union soldier.

²¹⁹ Another monument that follows a similar uniform is the 13th Massachusetts Infantry (Fig. 3.4).

also have tape over the outer seam.²²⁰ In modeling their monument after the uniforms worn in the modern military, soldiers connected their wartime experiences with the present day. This is made clearer by the fact that the War Department still owned the battlefield at Gettysburg in the 1880s and used it frequently for military exercises.

On the other hand, monuments to the 1st Minnesota Infantry, 11th Pennsylvania Infantry, 7th Pennsylvania Reserves, and 111th New York, for example, all depict soldiers wearing the Civil War era fatigue blouse. These monuments all depict soldiers in some sort of combat with weapons at the ready, reloading, or pointed toward the enemy. In choosing these poses as well as the uniform and accoutrements being worn, veterans were actively connecting their wartime experiences with the monument that they built. Very few monuments were built with soldiers wearing other period uniforms, such as the 15th Massachusetts Infantry monument wherein the soldier depicted is wearing the uniform coat prescribed in the regulations. Zouave regiments such as the 73rd New York, or the “2nd Fire Zouaves,” as well as the 23rd Pennsylvania, or “Birney’s Zouaves,” both include figures wearing their respective Zouave attire. Much like the monuments where the figures are wearing the issue fatigue blouse, both of these monuments depict soldiers in combat, further speaking to the idea that they are representing their wartime experience through accurate portrayals of their uniform.

The Quartermaster Department also took steps to ensure a strong memory for the uniform of the Civil War soldier in the late 1880s. Starting in the early 1870s, the Quartermaster Department became retrospective and began a small museum on the second floor of the executive’s quarters at the Schuylkill Arsenal.²²¹ Their plan was “to exhibit the various styles of

²²⁰ Orlando Scott Goff, *Buffalo Soldier, 25th Infantry*. 1884-1890. Gladstone Collection of African American Photographs, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington DC.

²²¹ “Clothing for Soldiers,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 7, 1888.

uniforms worn by the Army of the United States, since the foundation of the government.” Stocks of clothing from the Civil War were the first to be displayed, including some of the French chasseur uniforms that were imported by Quartermaster General Meigs in 1861. Images that were taken in 1866 to chronicle the uniforms worn during the Civil War were put on display as well. The Department even reached out to the superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point for worn out and old uniforms that could be put on display. What uniforms they could not buy or find, they used descriptions from their own records to recreate the uniforms using the seamstresses and tailors still on hand.²²² The uniforms were placed on mannequins that were “so lifelike that it would require but little imagination to believe that they were human.” Period commentators made comparisons between the uniforms of different wars, no doubt the desire of the Quartermaster Department in developing such a museum. By the late 1880s, the museum had fallen into disrepair, but one “Major Farey” was tasked with refurbishing the garments and the mannequins to a soldierly and “presentable” appearance.

In 1890, the Quartermaster Department also published a series of books entitled *Uniforms of the United States Army* which, like the museum, set out the chronicle and illustrate the various developments in uniforms from the Revolution to 1885. The Department was able to secure famous illustrator Henry Ogden to paint forty-four prints for the publication. While well known for his work with *Leslie's Illustrated* through the 1870s and early 1880s, Ogden also had a fascination for military uniforms. He published several books in his lifetime, most of which were directed at a young audience such as *Our Army for Boys: A Brief Story of its Organization, Development and Equipment, from 1775 to the Present Day* and *Boy's Book of Famous Regiments*, hoping to instill younger readers with feelings of national pride and dedication to the

²²² Langellier, *Army Blue*, 211-212.

government. Ogden drew countless sketches of Civil War uniforms in preparation for the Quartermaster Department's book and wrote to various veterans for more information on particular uniforms worn at different times.²²³ The result of all of Ogden's sketches, however, was a single picture, "Plate 27," that was to encapsulate the entirety to the war for the common soldier. The text that accompanied "Plate 27" in *Uniforms of the United States Army* described the men in the painting as "nothing of parade display" as they stand at-ease with worn shoes and trousers covered in dust. It notes that the 1861 regulation uniform was the frock coat but "very little was seen of this uniform, and the coat was not issued to the volunteers."²²⁴ Instead, the soldiers depicted in the image, officers as well as enlisted men, wear sack coats. Ogden's painting, which circulated widely with the publication of the book in 1890, soon became the standard by which Americans remembered the Union soldier in the Civil War.

Large-scale efforts on the part of the United States Army, Union veterans, and the Quartermaster Department in the decades after the war firmly established the positive legacy of the Union soldier's uniform. Their efforts worked against the growing concern of vagrancy and the "tramp problem" that swept the nation after the Civil War. The situation was made worse by men, clothed in surplus Union uniforms, who preyed upon upstanding citizens and disabled veterans for personal gain. The United States Army, who also wore surplus uniforms through the early 1870s, abandoned the Civil War clothing in favor of new uniform regulations that helped to separate them from the immoral tramp. For their part, veterans formed fraternal organizations to maintain the comradeship that developed during the war which utilized elements of the Civil War uniform in their rituals. Their parades, memorial services, and monuments helped to elevate

²²³ *Uniforms of the United States Army, Second Series* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), 1-11.

²²⁴ *Uniforms of the United States Army* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959), 37.

the popular image of the veteran, and also the Civil War soldier, above that of the beggar, the organ-player, and the pension fraud. The Quartermaster Department established a museum and funded publications dedicated to the uniforms of the United States Army, placing emphasis on the heroism, valor, and victories that the uniform represented. Each of these efforts maintain a positive message for the Union soldier and his uniform, hard fought over the course of thirty years after the end of the Civil War. Modern representations preserve the image of Union soldier in his sack coat, partially embedded in images and accounts of the war, but also embedded in the memory that veterans and others fought for in the post-war North.

Conclusion

Within the pages of Francis Bannerman's 1927 surplus catalog ran advertisements for "Civil War Contract Army and Navy Uniforms." Bannerman assured that the garments were free of moth holes and were packaged in their original boxes. He claimed that he had seen the same garments before when in 1880 a "General King" of the Freedman's Bureau tried to sell the uniforms to him. Declining, another buyer took the cases, only to sell them to Bannerman over fifty years later to be sold in "Bannerman's Bargain Shop." Bannerman claimed that he would accept orders of one dozen or more for Grand Army of the Republic of Sons of Union Veterans organizations at a price of one dollar and fifty cents each. However, he was clearly marketing to the individual collector by specifying their quality and cleanliness. Alterations could be made to enlarge the garments as many of them were smaller than a thirty-six in chest "as most of the volunteers were young men." "These uniforms are valuable as heirlooms of a time in which brave men fought the great battles of 1861-1865," the advertisement continued, displaying the high esteem that Americans of the early twentieth century maintained towards veterans and their wartime experiences. Across the top of the page were illustrations of Civil War soldiers wearing the garments Bannerman was selling. In the top-right corner stood an infantryman wearing the "New Infantry Blouse and Cap, Made by Contract, 1864." This image was copied from the pages of the Quartermaster Department's publication of *Uniforms of the United States Army* illustrated by Henry Ogden. The corporal stands at-ease, leaning on his musket while loaded down with accoutrements and full knapsack with his blanket rolled tied on top. Ogden's drawing had

transcended the pages of the Quartermaster's books and had become a common description by which the Civil War soldier was remembered.²²⁵

The image of the Civil War soldier remembered in Ogden's drawings was not his own, however, as hundreds of thousands of Americans – Northern civilians, clothiers, sewing women, contractors, army officers, volunteers, veterans, tramps, salesmen, artists – all contributed to the image Ogden put to paper. The innovations in the ready-made clothing market allowed Northern clothiers to dress thousands of men entering the cities for work through the early parts of the Nineteenth Century. The same increasing number of customers required alterations in clothing style as the market attempted to keep pace with demand and international design. The Northern volunteers of 1861 struggled in connecting their pre-war images of what a soldier should look like with the uniforms that were issued to them. Individual states attempted to clothe their soldiers in the early months and their design choices resembled the general clothing trends of the antebellum period, helping to explain the choices soldiers made throughout the war as to their uniform. Important of note was the element of choice afforded to soldiers in their uniform, allowing soldiers to change their uniform, and therefore their soldierly image, at a whim. The millions of uniforms made in the Schuylkill Arsenal and contract firms across the United States left hundreds of thousands in storerooms. In order to recuperate losses, the Quartermaster Department sold uniforms to anyone with the money to buy, placing military uniforms in the hands of many whose nefarious intentions clouded the memory the American public developed of the uniform. Rather than the gallant and victorious Union soldier, the uniform brought fear of tramps and frauds who would prey on the good intentions of upstanding citizens. Only through

²²⁵ Francis Bannerman Sons, *Bannerman's Catalog of Military Goods – 1927* (DBI Books, 1980), 257; "Plate 27: 1861-1866, Campaign Uniform, Field, Line and Non-Commissioned Officers and Privates," in *Uniforms of the United States Army* (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1989).

tireless lobbying, parades, and monumentation would the image associated with the Civil War uniform change in the final decades of the nineteenth century.

In making these conclusions, however, it is important to realize that the image of Union soldier was more than the coat that he wore. The coat was seen as the main identifying characteristic of the gentleman and the soldier, as the color, material, quality, and embellishments helped to define social class in the civilian sphere and the differences between soldiers and civilians throughout the period. Headwear was another defining factor where the style and material of the hat could also determine one's social class. In the military, however, the elements of personal choice exercised by Union soldiers in regards to their uniforms also extended to their headwear. The style and shaping to the hat was a personal touch to one's appearance. The coat and all other uniform pieces could be adapted, but only in regards to headwear was the soldier allowed the choice of color and shape. Much attention in this study, particularly in the first chapter, was devoted to the Schuylkill Arsenal. Although it was the center of uniform supply throughout the nineteenth century, uniforms worn by Northern soldiers were produced by countless contract firms. Millions of dollars' worth of clothing was produced outside of the Federal Arsenal and while contractors were provided with standard patterns for each uniform item, many contractors produced garments with slight alterations where button placement, hem length, and seam arrangement were identifying factors between government and contractor-made uniforms. Perhaps one of the greatest limitations to this study is the lack of examination of original garments. By examining construction techniques, for example, greater connections could be made between government uniforms and civilian clothing options. This study also only discusses Union soldiers and their uniform. In extending the parameters of this study to the Confederacy, greater comparisons could be made between the clothing styles,

soldierly expectations, international connections, and memory of each side's uniform. By examining these and other limitations in future, longer works, greater consensus can be made surrounding the expectations that soldiers and civilians had for a soldier's appearance and the values that it instilled.

By investigating the way that clothing was produced before and during the Civil War, how soldiers understood the image they conveyed in their uniform, and how that image was cemented in the decades after the Civil War, this study connects a small facet of the soldier's wartime experience with the memory they established after the war. Within the clothing of the ideal man stood the ideal principles and values that he would exhibit. The same was extended to the military uniform. Therefore, as the uniform changed during the Civil War period, the values instilled within the uniform were in flux. The attempts made by veterans and others after the war show how these groups fought to place a positive and valorous image in association with it. In doing so, the memory of the Civil War soldier was firmly established within his chosen uniform – the unassuming four-button fatigue blouse.

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FIGURES

Figure 1:

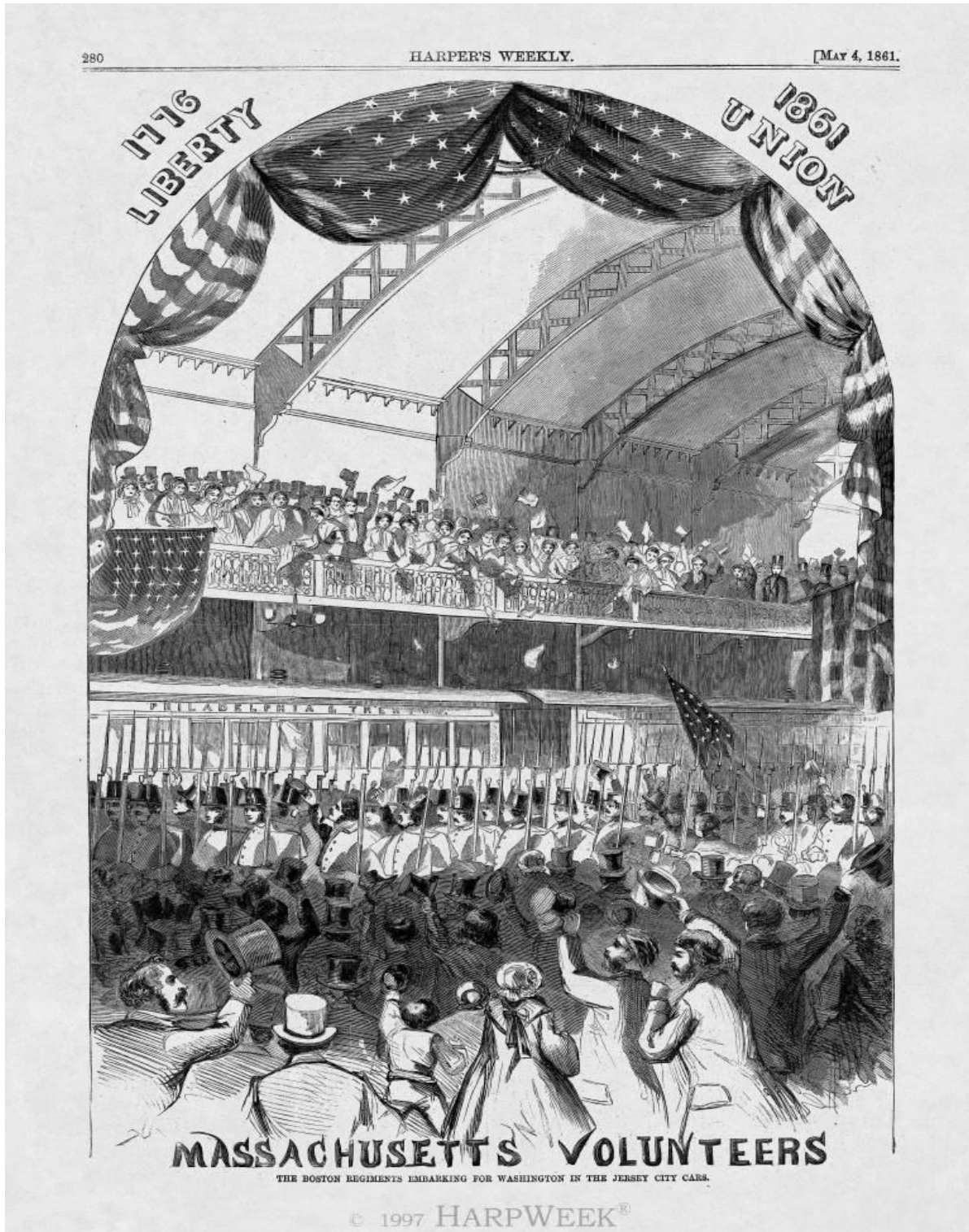


Figure 2:



Figure 3:

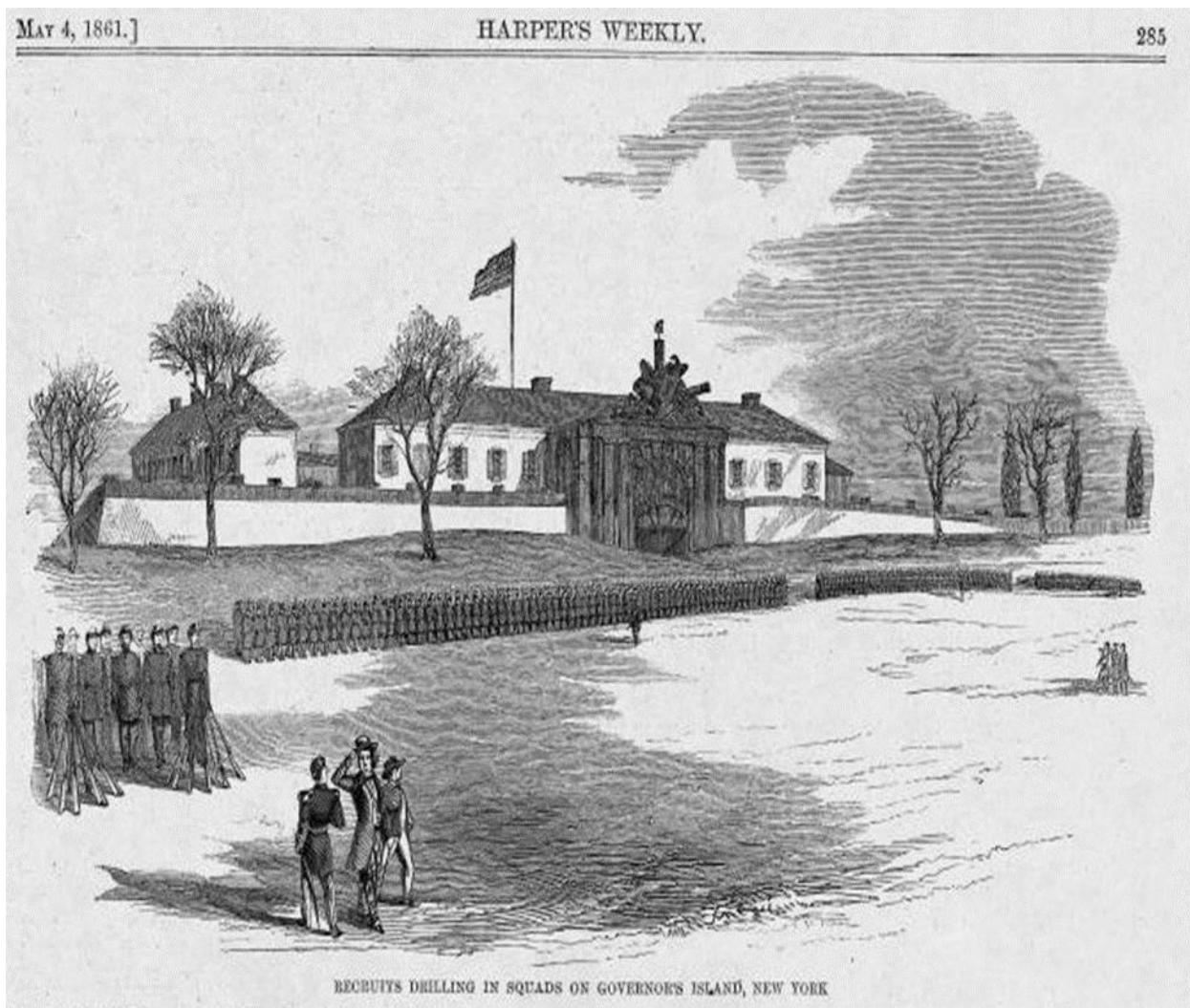


Figure 4:



Figure 5:

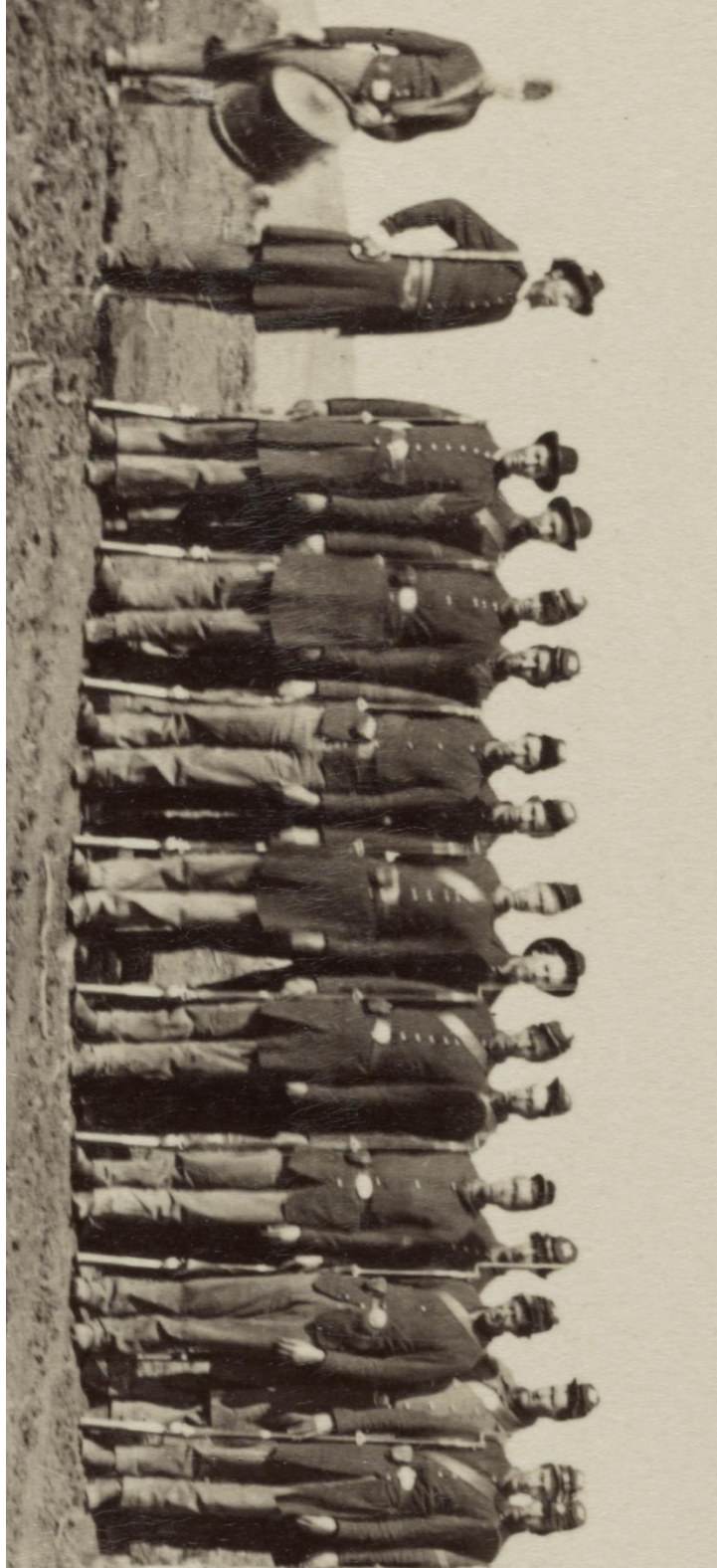


Figure 6:



Figure 7:

No. 40.

SPECIAL REQUISITION.

For <i>Co. C. 36th Regt. Inf. Va.</i>	
1. <i>Swage Cap.</i>	
2. <i>Flannel Sack Coats. (Lined)</i>	4. <i>Warrackets.</i>
5. <i>Trowsers. (Imply.)</i>	1. <i>Canteen.</i>
2. <i>Knit Shirts.</i>	
6. <i>S. Drawers. (wo.)</i>	
3. <i>Porters. (u)</i>	
15. <i>Stockings (u)</i>	
1. <i>Rubber Blanket.</i>	

I CERTIFY that the above requisition is correct; and that the articles specified are absolutely requisite for the public service, rendered so by the following circumstances: *To replace clothing worn out.*

St. Louis Field. *P. G. Woodward Capt.*
Co. C. 36th Regt. Inf. Va.
SR. Quartermaster, U. S. Army, will

issue the articles specified in the above requisition.

T. L. Barber, Lt. Col.
Commanding Dept.

RECEIVED at *Repos. Petersburg, Va.* the *16th* of *March*, 186*5*,
of *St. Louis Field.* *SR. Quartermaster U. S. Army, 36th Regt. Inf. Va.*

all the articles of clothing camp and Garrison Equipage
in full of the above requisition.

[SIGNED IN DUPLICATE.]

P. G. Woodward Capt.
Co. C. 36th Regt. Inf. Va.

Figure 8:

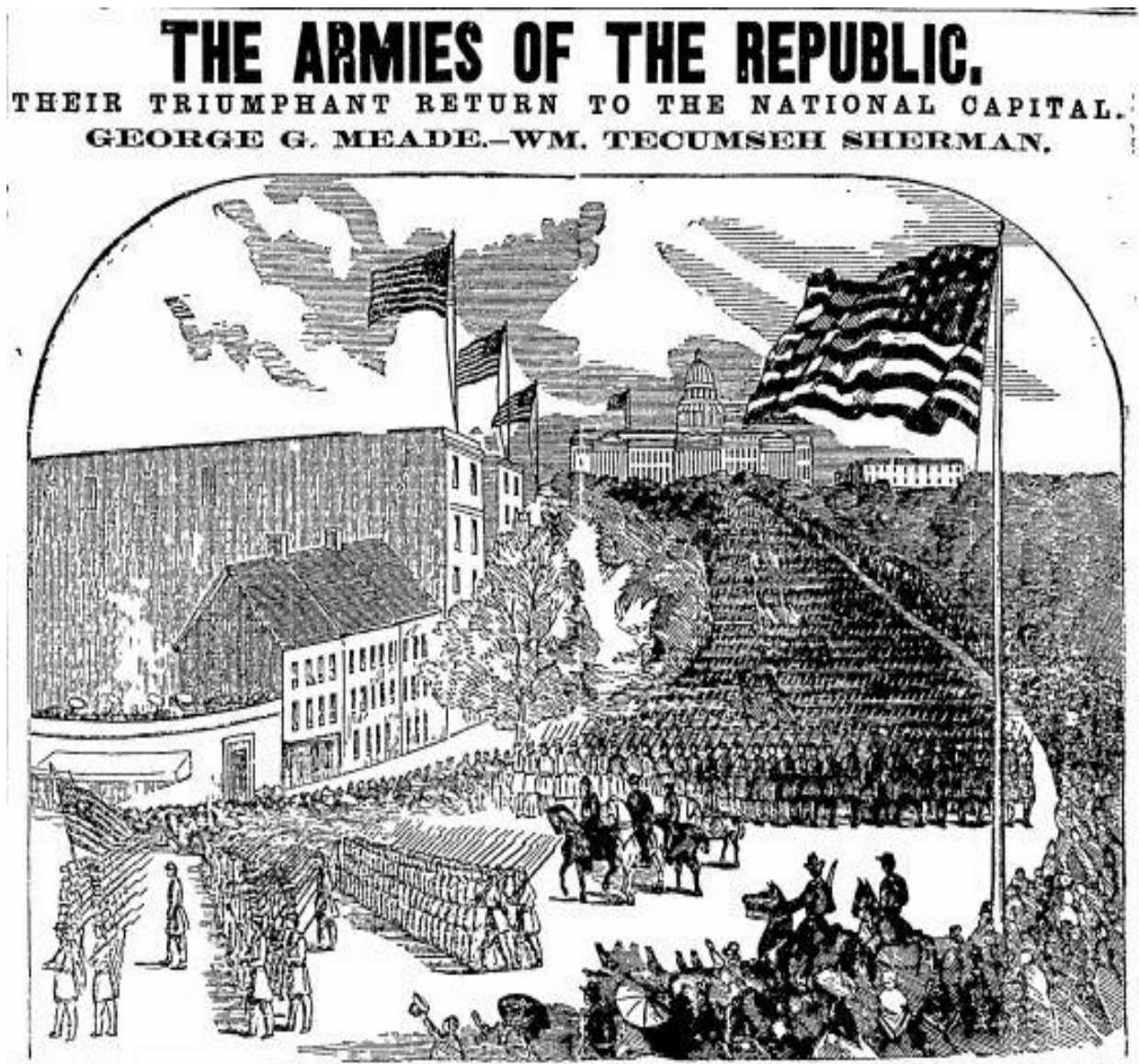


Figure 9:

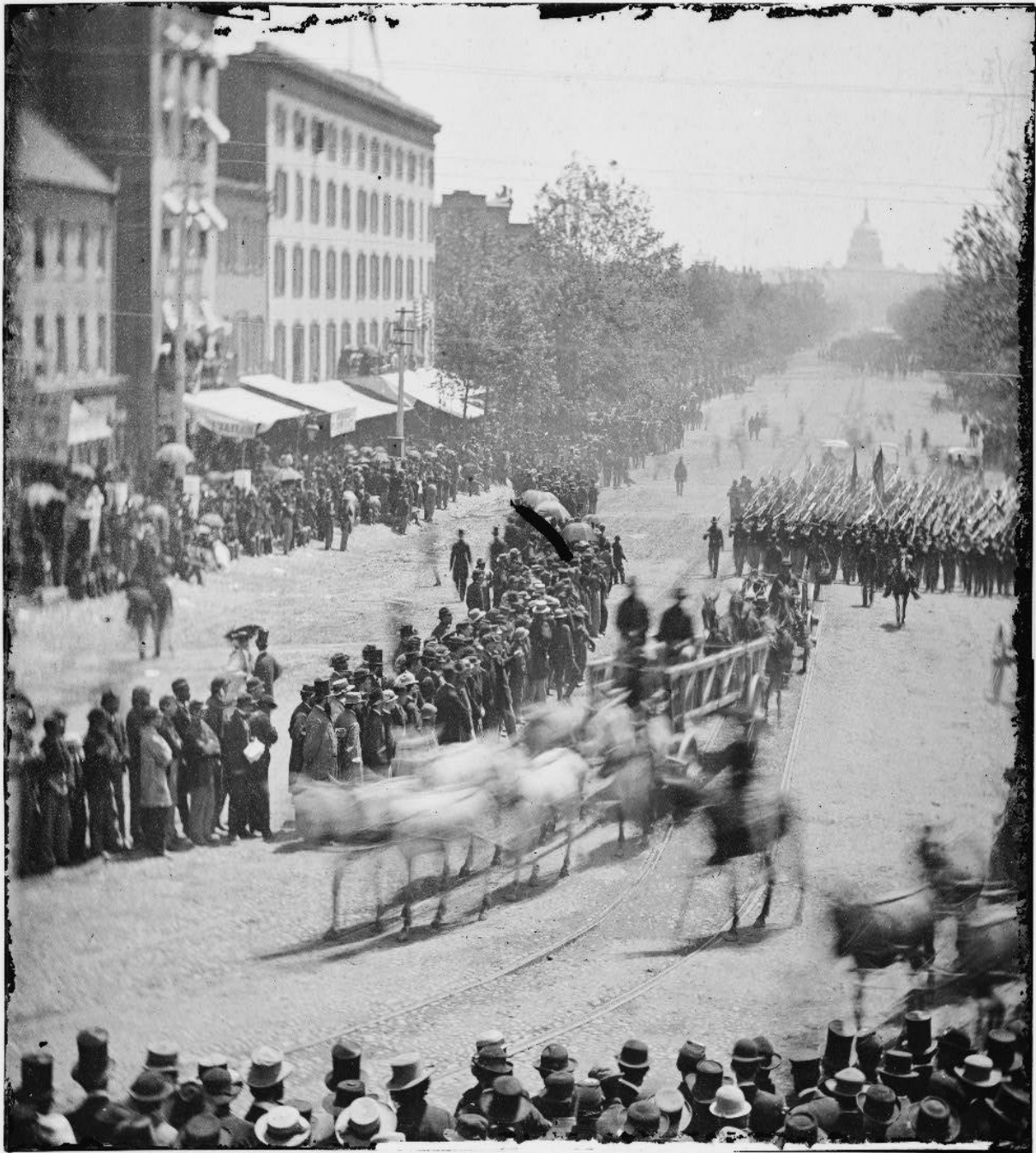


Figure 10:



Figure 11:



Figure 12:



Figure 13:

