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“MISSOURI! BRIGHT LAND OF THE WEST”: CIVIL WAR MEMORY AND WESTERN  
IDENTITY IN MISSOURI

A Dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Arch Dalrymple III Department of History  
The University of Mississippi

by

AMY L. FLUKER

August 2015



## ABSTRACT

This project argues that Missouri's singular position as a border state not only between the North and South, but also between the East and West shaped the state's Civil War experience as well as its memory of the conflict. During the Civil War, Missouri was a slaveholding border state on the western frontier and home to a diverse and divided population. Neither wholly Union nor Confederate, Missouri's Civil War was bitterly divisive. In its aftermath, Missourians struggled to come to terms with what it had been about. They found no place within the national narratives of Civil War commemoration emerging in the East, namely the Lost Cause, the Cause Victorious, and the Emancipation Cause. Missourians' sense of marginalization from these narratives resulted in a distinctive brand of Civil War memory in the state, which found expression in the paintings of famed Missourian George Caleb Bingham, the work of Civil War veterans' organizations, and the operation of the state's homes for Confederate and Union veterans. By allowing us to analyze Civil War memory at the personal, collective, and institutional level, these examples serve to demonstrate Missourians' deep investment in Civil War memory. Most importantly, however, they reveal how Missouri's Western identity shaped that memory. Ultimately, by remaining sensitive to this nuance, this project adds a new dimension to our understanding of Civil War memory.

*for my parents, Steven and Irene Fluker*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been said you never really love a place until you leave it. That certainly proved true in my case. It was not until I left Missouri to attend graduate school at the University of Mississippi that I began to better understand the state I left behind. It was not until I left Missouri that I began to call myself a Missourian and it was not until I lived in the Deep South that I began to think of Missouri as the West. Since then, as fellow Missourian Major General Benjamin M. Prentiss put it, “nothing has ever preserved me better, given me more strength, than the enthusiasm born within me when I talk about the people of Missouri.”<sup>1</sup>

This has been a labor of love and it would not have been possible without the generous support of numerous organizations, colleagues, and friends. I would like to thank the University of Mississippi Arch Dalrymple III Department of History, the University of Mississippi Center for Civil War Research, the University of Mississippi Graduate School, and the University of Mississippi Graduate Student Council for providing research assistance. I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to the staff at the State Historical Society of Missouri and the Missouri State Archives, whose help was instrumental in the completion of this work. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the contributions made by Lee Ann Whites, Joan Stack, Jeremy Neely, and Wade Ankesheilm, who shared their research and lent their insight at critical stages in the process.

I must also thank my committee, Dr. April Holm, Dr. Anne S. Twitty, Dr. Jodi Skipper, and my chair Dr. John R. Neff. Their expertise and guidance were extremely valuable in shaping the final direction of this paper. Dr. Neff, in particular, reviewed numerous drafts, provided

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<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Macon, Missouri, April 17 and 18, 1895* (St. Louis: A Whipple, Printer, 1895), 90.

instruction, and offered advice. His interest in and enthusiasm for this project inspired me to keep up my energy and focus. He has been the best advisor and mentor I could have asked for.

Thanks are also due to my family and friends, particularly W. E. Barringer, Miller Boyd, III, Joel Gillaspie, Boyd Harris, and Katrina Sims, who went through this process beside me. My best friend, Tiffany Link, also deserves a special thank you for offering endless encouragement, sincere criticism, editing help, and, occasionally, much appreciated distractions. I am also grateful for the unfailing support of William Fluker, Emily Vonderahe, and Steven and Irene Fluker. Finally, I would like to honor Preston Gervase Berwanger and Mary Ann Louise Berwanger. Their faith has sustained and inspired me.

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## INTRODUCTION

“An Enchanting Region for War”: Missouri, the West, and Civil War Memory

“The turning points of national history are bound up in the culture and politics of so many local places.”<sup>1</sup>

-Adam Arenson (2011)

Not unlike many Missourians, Mark Twain was a conflicted and contradictory personality. A self-proclaimed “border-ruffian from the state of Missouri,” who had briefly served in a Confederate militia, Twain professed a Southern heritage while composing, in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, one of the most profound literary critiques of American racism. All the while, Twain also cultivated a popular persona as a witty, irreverent, rough-and-tumble Westerner.<sup>2</sup>

Twain was amused by the seeming obsession Southerners nurtured for the Civil War. In his characteristically humorous fashion, Twain observed: “In the South, the war is what A.D. is elsewhere: they date from it. All day long you hear things ‘placed’ as having happened since the waw; or du’in’ the waw; or right aftah the waw; or ‘bout two yeahs or five yeahs or ten yeahs befo’ the waw or aftah the waw.”<sup>3</sup> Missourians, Twain recognized, had a less well-defined relationship with the Civil War. “Out west there was a good deal of confusion in men’s minds during the first months of the great trouble—a good deal of unsettledness,” he remembered, “of leaning this way, then that, then the other way. It was hard for us to get our bearings.” At first,

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Twain, “Plymouth Rock and the Pilgrims,” in *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, & Essays*, ed. Louis J. Budd (New York: Viking Press, 1992), 782.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1901), 454.

Twain pledged to defend the Union, but like many Missourians, found his loyalty under scrutiny. One Northern friend frankly doubted Twain's sincerity. "He would not listen to me with any patience;" Twain wrote, "my loyalty was smirched, to his eye, because my father had owned slaves" and he "went on decrying my Unionism and libeling my ancestry."<sup>4</sup> Twain ultimately enlisted in the Confederate cause, but served only briefly, managing to avoid any real fighting before skedaddling off to the silver mines of Nevada.

Twain's account of his Civil War experience was certainly fictionalized, but like most of his work, revealed certain truths about the time and place in which he lived. Missouri "was an enchanting region for war," Twain mused, and one that perfectly encapsulated the tensions at play in the Civil War.<sup>5</sup> The Civil War deeply affected Missourians, including Twain, and forced them to reevaluate their place in the nation. As a result, Twain's work speaks to Missouri's Western identity, its unique Civil War experience, and demonstrates that Missourians made sense of their wartime experiences differently from other Americans. These sentiments were echoed throughout the commemoration of the Civil War in Missouri.

Missouri expressed its Civil War memory in a fundamentally different way from the rest of the nation. This project argues that Missouri's singular position as a border state not only between the North and South, but also between the East and West shaped the state's Civil War experience as well as its memory of the conflict. During the Civil War, Missouri was a slaveholding border state on the western frontier and home to a diverse and divided population. Beset on all sides by the forces of sectionalism, Missouri's populace fractured and factionalized. The deeply divisive nature of the Civil War in Missouri, a manifestation of its conflicted identity,

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Twain, "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed," in *Mark Twain: Collected Tales, Sketches, Speeches, & Essays*, ed. Louis J. Budd (New York: Viking Press, 1992), 863; see also Barbara Ladd, "'It Was an Enchanting Region for War': West by South in Mark Twain's 'The Private History of a Campaign that Failed,'" *Studies in American Humor Series 3*, No. 10 (2003): 43-9.

<sup>5</sup> Twain, "The Private History of a Campaign that Failed," 868.

meant that Missourians emerged from the conflict without a mutual understanding of what it had been about. Collectively, Missourians revered no shared heroes, celebrated different victories, and clashed with one another while working to mend the scars of an intensely divisive war. In the aftermath of the Civil War, Missourians struggled not only to reconcile with one another, but also to reconcile their experiences with the master narratives of Civil War memory emerging in the East. The result was that Missourians felt marginalized by Civil War commemoration and so it never became the defining moment of Missouri's history. Instead of nurturing Civil War memories that could only be contentious, Missourians reconciled around their shared sense of Westernness.

The ways in which people relate to and utilize their history makes the past an essential component of identity. The existence of a social or collective memory, beyond but inherently tied to individual recollections of the past, was first identified by sociologist Maurice Halbwachs.<sup>6</sup> Halbwachs links the interconnectedness of individual memory and the social environment through what he calls "collective memory." According to Halbwachs, memory is a socially constructed phenomenon, kept alive through interpersonal interaction. People are not "isolated beings," Halbwachs writes, "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."<sup>7</sup> Most importantly, Halbwachs argues, collective memory can be fallible and is often distorted to preserve social cohesiveness and solidify group identity. "The past," he says, "is not preserved but is reconstructed on the

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<sup>6</sup> Although he never specifically wrote about "memory," Émile Durkheim no doubt greatly influenced Maurice Halbwachs, who was his student. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Durkheim noted the influence of society on the individual and observed how the usage of history in ritual helped forge group identity. In those rituals and celebrations, totems recalled group memories and helped create collective experience. See Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen Fields (New York: The Free Press, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. and ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38, 43.

basis of the present.” “Through [memories],” he concludes, “a sense of our identity is perpetuated.”<sup>8</sup>

Collective memory is sustained, according to Pierre Nora, through social and moral props he calls “les lieux de mémoire,” or sites of memory. These sites of memory include museums, archives, cemeteries, monuments, and even particular celebrations. These are all devices that serve, as Nora puts it, as the “exterior scaffolding and outward signs” of memory.<sup>9</sup> Emerging from a fear that the past is losing a battle to modernity, and that something of identity would be lost along with it, sites of memory help sustain the group identity rooted in a shared history. Sites of memory restore the sense of an “imagined community” built upon a shared relationship to the past.<sup>10</sup> Sites of memory, however, never represent every perspective on the past. “Memory,” Nora says, is equal parts “remembering and forgetting” and “only accommodates those facts that suit it.”<sup>11</sup>

Wars represent important moments in history around which collective memory coalesces. This may be because the experience of war is inherently collective or because its horrors tend to brand themselves on the human consciousness. “Everyone who remembers a war first-hand knows that its images remain in the memory with special vividness,” literary historian Paul Fussell explains. “The very enormity of the proceedings, their absurd remove from the usages of

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<sup>8</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40, 47.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations* No. 26 (Spring 1989), 12, 13.

<sup>10</sup> An “imagined community,” according to Benedict Anderson, is a socially constructed sense of identity and commonality between people who might have no real contact between one another. Although he intended this construct to explain the emergence of nationalism, scholars have applied his formula to other identity groups. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006). For more on the evolution of memory scholarship, see Kerwin Lee Klein, “On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse,” *Representations* No. 69 (Winter 2000): 127-50.

<sup>11</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.

the normal world, will guarantee that . . . ready narrative recall will attach to them.”<sup>12</sup> After all, as Halbwachs observes, “the most somber aspects of our existence . . . exercises an incomprehensible attraction.”<sup>13</sup> No matter where it originates from, the memory of war serves an important function within society, both to commemorate the sacrifices made by individuals on behalf of the group and to make sense of the trauma war inflicts. Indeed, remembering war takes on the aspect of a moral obligation.<sup>14</sup> According to historian Jay Winter, the utility of collective memory is to “comprehend and then to transcend the catastrophes of . . . war.”<sup>15</sup>

The Civil War serves such a function in American memory. In the case of the Civil War, however, memories are often divisive. Attempts made by both sides to justify their part in the bloody and awful war they endured required, as Halbwachs and Nora suggest, equal parts remembering and forgetting. This tension has become a key theme in the historiography of Civil War memory. For example, historian David Blight argues that there were three predominant modes of Civil War memory: white supremacist, reconciliationist, and emancipationist.<sup>16</sup> Southerners constructed the “white supremacist” narrative of the war to explain their defeat while maintaining their sense of racial superiority. Northerners, on the other hand, remembered the war as a just effort to save the Union. They also collaborated in the “reconciliationist”

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory, The Illustrated Edition* (New York: Sterling, 1974, 2009), 410. In this study of British literature and culture surrounding the First World War, Fussell carefully traced the connection between collective memory and the experience of war. It was the bitter irony of war, he argued, that made it particularly memorable.

<sup>13</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 48-9.

<sup>14</sup> Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 411.

<sup>15</sup> Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>16</sup> David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001). Blight, however, is by no means the only historian to address Civil War memory, other important works in the field include: W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961); Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980).

narrative, however, which allowed Northern and Southern whites to reconcile with one another by forgetting the importance of slavery to the causes of the Civil War and overlooking the contributions of black soldiers. At veterans' reunions like the famous 1913 Gettysburg reunion, Blight claims, former foes demonstrated their shared commitment to a reunified "white man's republic." African Americans, largely and often deliberately excluded from these occasions, embraced the "emancipationist" narrative of the war—insisting the war was fought to end slavery and that African Americans played an essential part in Union victory.

Other scholars, however, have critiqued Blight's thesis by doubting the extent of reconciliation between white Americans. John R. Neff suggests that Blight's emphasis on reconciliation overlooks the depths of grief Americans endured over the war dead. Both sides suffered immense loss and their mourning intruded on their efforts at reconciliation.<sup>17</sup> "In the process associated with mourning and memorializing," Neff explains, "it was incumbent upon the living to interpret and render sensible the sacrifice of those no longer among them. These expressions . . . necessarily involved justifications of the separate nationalist visions of the soldiers who had died." In this way, the memory of "death . . . remained one aspect of the war that could not be turned to the purpose of reunion."<sup>18</sup> William A. Blair also finds fault with Blight's thesis, noting that while racism certainly played a part in Civil War remembrances, particularly Decoration Days, "the categories of reconciliationist, emancipationist, and white supremacist do not always hold up."<sup>19</sup> Americans' feelings about the Civil War could not be so easily categorized. Furthermore, Caroline Janney reminds us, reunion is not the same thing as

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<sup>17</sup> John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005). Drew Gilpin Faust has countered this argument, claiming that "death's threat, its proximity, and its actuality became the most widely shared of the war's experiences." See Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage, 2009).

<sup>18</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 5-6, 210.

<sup>19</sup> William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4.

reconciliation. Neither side ever forgot that the war started over slavery and rarely saw eye-to-eye. “Former enemies might . . . remain silent on the divisive issues,” Janney says, “but . . . Union and Confederate veterans tended to maintain that *their* cause was the virtuous one.” “Reconciliation was never the predominant memory of the war among its participants,” she argues.<sup>20</sup> The work of each of these historians reveals that the Civil War left a deep gulf, one that separated Americans by race and region, and it was not easily bridged.

Historians might disagree about the extent of reconciliation or the degree of forgetting Civil War era Americans exhibited, but they do generally agree on one thing: the Civil War was a defining moment in American memory. Reflecting back on the Civil War during its centennial, Robert Penn Warren described it as America’s “‘felt’ history—history lived in the national imagination.” “This is not to say that the War is always, and by all men, felt in the same way. Quite the contrary,” Warren qualified. “But this fact is an index to the very complexity, depth, and fundamental significance of the event.”<sup>21</sup>

Missourians, in particular, “felt” the war differently. Torn between the North and South and often marginalized by its Western identity, Missouri was at odds with the conventional history of the Civil War. For Missourians, the Civil War was part of a larger, ongoing conflict revolving around westward expansion and the institution of slavery, beginning as early as the Missouri Compromise, reaching a crescendo with Bleeding Kansas, and only subsiding in the final decade of the nineteenth century. As a result, it was some time before historians began to make sense of Missouri’s complicated relationship to the Civil War era.

After a long period of neglect in the historiography, Civil War historians have firmly established Missouri’s centrality to the causes and to the progression of the Civil War as a whole.

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<sup>20</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 9, 6 (emphasis in original).

<sup>21</sup> Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*, 46.



A wealth of scholarship, spanning the last half-century, has effectively demonstrated Missouri's importance to the Civil War. First among these histories was Jay Monaghan's 1955 treatise *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865*, which provides an overview of Missouri's long Civil War, emphasizing the role of irregular forces in the state.<sup>22</sup> Monaghan's history offers a new perspective on the Civil War, with an entirely different chronology, scene of action, and cast of historical actors from other Civil War histories. In many ways, the culmination of Monaghan's work is Michael Fellman's *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*.<sup>23</sup> Fellman describes Missouri's Civil War as a cultural crisis that pulled ordinary men and women into a brutalizing conflict, in which violence and terror dismantled their orderly world and transformed their war into a desperate, personal struggle for survival. Fellman's work drew widespread scholarly attention to Missouri—particularly to the guerrilla war.<sup>24</sup> Since the publication of *Inside War*, however, scholarship on Missouri has also expanded beyond the guerrilla war, placing Missouri at the center of the issues that fractured Civil War America, rather than on their periphery.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Jay Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1955).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> See Daniel E. Sutherland, "Sideshow No Longer: A Historiographical Review of the Guerrilla War," *Civil War History* Vol. 46, No. 1 (March 2000): 5-23. Other histories of Missouri's guerrilla war include, Joseph Beilein, Jr., "The Guerrilla Shirt: A Labor of Love and the Style of Rebellion in Civil War Missouri," *Civil War History* Vol. 58, No. 2 (June 2012): 151-179; Richard S. Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy: Guerrilla Warfare in the West, 1861-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1958); Mark Geiger, *Financial Fraud and Guerrilla Violence in Missouri's Civil War, 1861-1865* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Thomas Goodrich, *Black Flag: Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995); Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). For the impact of guerrilla war on Missouri women, see LeeAnn Whites, "Forty Shirts and a Wagonload of Wheat: Women, the Domestic Supply Line, and the Civil War on the Western Border," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* Vol. 1, No. 1 (March 2011): 56-78; LeeAnn Whites and Alecia P. Long, eds., *Occupied Women: Gender, Military Occupation, and the American Civil War on the Border* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013). For a military history of Missouri's Civil War, see Louis Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001) and Gerteis, *The Civil War in Missouri: A Military History* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2012).

<sup>25</sup> See Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke, eds., *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013). While not directly about Missouri, Nicole Etcheson positions the violence of "Bleeding Kansas" at the heart of the ideological causes of the Civil War; see

Even though scholars have now persuasively established Missouri's importance to the Civil War era, its Civil War memory remains understudied, perhaps because the parameters of Civil War memory established by the field do not fit with Missouri's experience. Because these categories are so closely linked to sectional identity, to how Northerners and Southerners remembered the war, they cannot be effectively applied to Missouri. As a slaveholding but resolutely Unionist state, it is difficult to see where Missouri fits into the current scholarship on Civil War memory. As a result, very few scholars have yet grappled with Missouri's Civil War memory—or have else erroneously assumed it followed national trends.

Considering Missouri's settlement by Southerners and its role in the expansion of slavery, it is not surprising that most historians have focused on the emergence of a Confederate, or "Lost Cause," memory in Missouri. Historian LeeAnn Whites, for example, explicitly connects Missouri's Civil War memory to the South and to the Lost Cause. Whites identifies "the legacy of the white South" as Missouri's "largely unquestioned hegemonic culture" and cites persistent racism as evidence of the state's sympathies with the Confederacy and the Lost Cause.<sup>26</sup> Remarkably, however, she chronicles the process by which students at the University of Missouri managed to have a Confederate monument removed from their campus to another part of town—a move which speaks to the powerful contestation over Civil War memory taking place within the state.

Further evidence of the emergence of a Confederate identity in Missouri, according to scholar Matthew C. Hulbert, may be found in the attempts of guerrillas to claim a place in the Lost Cause. Their efforts to bring legitimacy to their wartime conduct helped Missouri "vouch

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Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

<sup>26</sup> LeeAnn Whites, "You Can't Change History by Moving a Rock: Gender, Race, and the Cultural Politics of Confederate Memorialization," in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Culture*, eds. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 216.

for [a] Confederate, and therefore southern identity.” Confederate-sympathizing Missourians, particularly journalist John Newman Edwards, “implied that Missouri bushwhackers—despite their state’s failure to secede—had fought hardest for the cause and been the most Confederate in spirit all along.”<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, Hulbert argues, Civil War memory in Missouri remained “hyper-local and hyper-personal.” As a result, it was nearly impossible for Missourians “to create a master, or meta-narrative of the war.” There were few big battles to commemorate, no “demigod” commanders to rally behind, and their divisions were too deep. Despite their best efforts to “become Confederate,” Hulbert points out, Missouri lacked “Confederate credibility” because of its failure to secede from the Union. As a result, he concludes, “its commemorative path in the postwar period looked as fractured and wrought with complexity as its wartime experience had been.”<sup>28</sup>

Other scholars attempting to elucidate the role of region in Civil War memory have looked to establish comparisons with other border states. In the case of Kentucky, a slaveholding border state like Missouri, historian Anne Marshall criticizes Blight’s categories of memory for over-generalizing and for failing to appreciate the numerous variations of memory within regions. “There was no one memory of the war in Kentucky,” Marshall argues, “but rather divergent memories belonging to many Kentuckians, which competed with one another over time for cultural primacy.”<sup>29</sup> In many ways, Kentucky does offer a useful comparison to Missouri, which Marshall occasionally draws upon. Both Kentucky and Missouri lay along, as

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<sup>27</sup> Matthew C. Hulbert, “Constructing Guerrilla Memory: John Newman Edwards and Missouri’s Irregular Lost Cause,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* Vol. 2, No. 1 (March 2012), 61, 72.

<sup>28</sup> Matthew C. Hulbert, “How to Remember ‘This Damnable Guerrilla Warfare’: Four Vignettes from Civil War Missouri,” *Civil War History* Vol. 59, No. 2 (June 2013), 145-8.

<sup>29</sup> Anne Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4.

Marshall describes it, “a geographical and ideological crossroads.”<sup>30</sup> Both states were populated largely by slaveholding Southerners, endorsed Unionist politicians, contributed roughly the same amount of troops to the Union and the Confederacy, and suffered the continuation of post-war violence. Marshall acknowledges, however, that Kentucky took a dramatically different post-war course. Kentucky remained firmly in Democratic control and promptly restored the franchise to former Confederates. Kentucky, Marshall claims, was always Southern, but only became wholly Confederate in the aftermath of the war. For this reason, the evolution of Civil War memory in Kentucky cannot be representative of the other border states, particularly Missouri.

Aaron Astor also examines the emergence of a Confederate identity in both Kentucky and Missouri. While Astor does not address Civil War memory in depth, he does acknowledge its role in perpetuating what he calls “belated Confederatism” in Missouri. Building on Blight’s reconciliationist thesis, Astor argues that as newly freed African Americans made increasing claims to political and social equality in these border states, white conservative Unionists chose to “‘forget’ their whole service to the Union.” “These belated Confederates,” Astor claims, “constructed their own memories of the war based on the deep sense of shame they felt at watching their once conservative Union succumb to radicalism and biracial citizenship. They helped legitimize the construction of a southern regional identity in the postwar border states.”<sup>31</sup>

The consistent problem with these interpretations of Missouri’s Civil War memory is the lack of distinction they make between racism, Southern identity, and the Lost Cause. While racism is firmly entrenched in the mythology of the Lost Cause and in the culture of the South, racism does not preclude another regional identity. Racism has always been a national, not merely a Southern problem. In fact, as historian Brent M. S. Campney explains, “those who

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<sup>30</sup> Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 5.

foster the idea that racist violence was overwhelmingly Southern hinder a comprehensive appraisal of it in other sections of the country.”<sup>32</sup>

Furthermore, while these historians have persuasively demonstrated the persistence of Civil War memory in Missouri, they have missed some salient points, not the least of which is the full scope of Missouri’s participation in the Civil War. The overwhelming historiographical focus on the guerrilla war has caused historians to overlook the reality that tens of thousands of Missourians joined the regular armies and fought in every theater of the Civil War—in all the major campaigns and under all the most famous and revered commanders. Far from forgetting those experiences, they worked diligently to earn recognition for them, both among their fellow Missourians and their comrades across the North and South.

Finally, in order to fully understand Missouri’s Civil War and its methods of postwar commemoration, we must also add its Westernness as a dimension to its collective memory. Before beginning, however, the terminology “frontier” and “West” require foregrounding. Any analysis of the West must begin with Frederick Jackson Turner and *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*.<sup>33</sup> Although Turner’s so-called frontier thesis has been heavily criticized and revised over the years, it is nonetheless one of the most influential texts in American history.<sup>34</sup> Turner described the Western frontier as an area, a process, and a culture all at once, and insisted it was instrumental in the evolution of American identity. “American history has been in a large degree the history of the colonization of the Great West,” Turner famously

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<sup>32</sup> Brent M. S. Campney, “‘A Little Different than in Alabama’: Sectional Narratives and the Rhetoric of Racist Violence,” in Earle and Burke, 226. Campney documents racist violence in postwar Kansas and the state’s contentious and ultimately effective attempts to distance themselves from identification of the South by positioning such violence as an aberration.

<sup>33</sup> John Mack Faragher, ed., *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994).

<sup>34</sup> For a review of the impact of Turner’s thesis on Western historiography, see Gerald D. Nash, *Creating the West: Historical Interpretations, 1890-1990* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991).

argues. “The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.” One of the most important functions of the Western frontier, in Turner’s estimation, was its “nationalizing tendency.”<sup>35</sup> The West broke down sectional divisions and remolded individuals into Americans. According to Turner, “the West . . . received the great streams from the North and from the South, and . . . compelled these currents to intermingle.” As a result, the West imparted Americans with certain shared and defining characteristics, including self-confidence, industriousness, fair-mindedness, egalitarianism, pragmatism, and rebelliousness.<sup>36</sup>

Influential as it has been, Turner’s thesis is problematic. First and foremost, Turner’s history of the American West was Anglo-centric. He assumed that civilization came west with English colonists and neglected the experiences of Native Americans, African Americans, women, and the Spanish. Furthermore, Turner minimized the extent to which the interactions between all of these groups helped shape the American West. Seeking to correct this oversight, historians belonging to the New Western school incorporate a multitude of perspectives into the study of the West. As historians Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute explain: “The new approach has strongly emphasized conquest as opposed to settlement, race and class instead of frontier equality and democracy, environmental degradation rather than progress, and government intervention in directing development in place of frontier self-reliance and autonomy. Because of these issues’ persistence, New Western historians have rejected notions of the frontier as static.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, 31, 53.

<sup>36</sup> Turner, “The Problem of the West,” in Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, 70, 67.

<sup>37</sup> Andrew R. L. Cayton and Fredrika J. Teute, eds., *Contact Points: American Frontiers from the Mohawk Valley to the Mississippi, 1750-1830* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 7. Prominent contributions to the New Western historiography include William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists,*

A part of the attempt to add diversity and nuance to Turner's thesis has entailed a revision of his terminology, specifically "the frontier."<sup>38</sup> Turner's usage of "frontier," Cayton and Teute argue, "sets up an invidious comparison between two sides, establishing one side as normative and casting the other in the dark as unknown, unoccupied, savage, dangerous." The "frontier," they believe, is more aptly described as not only a geographical, political, and cultural space, but also a "psychological, or intellectual barrier between the known and unknown. . . . between occupied and unoccupied territory."<sup>39</sup> A frontier is not always a clearly demarcated "dividing line," they insist, but a more fluid and complex space.<sup>40</sup> A "frontier," according to Stephen Aron's definition, is a "zone of shared and contested occupancy," a place "where political control was undetermined and boundaries—cultural and geographic—were uncertain."<sup>41</sup> This understanding of the frontier as a "middle ground" was first expressed by historian Richard White. His construction of the "middle ground" is useful because it orients our focus "not on the ultimate domination by white Americans of the frontier, but on the multisided negotiations of

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*and the Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1983); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1987); Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of my Own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991); and Donald Worster, *Dust Bowl: The Southern Plains in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>38</sup> Some of the most important works in frontier historiography include James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiations on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000); Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>39</sup> Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms," in *A Companion to the American West*, ed. William Devereaux (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 6; Cayton and Teute, 2. Historians have also used other terminology to describe the frontier, including "borderlands," "shatter-zones," and "homelands." See David J. Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986): 66-81; Richard L. Nostrand and Lawrence E. Estaville, eds., *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place across America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), xxi.

<sup>41</sup> Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms," 6.

power involved in forming that most distinctive of American landscapes, frontiers.”<sup>42</sup> In short, it “provide[s] a formula for comprehending a complex process of cultural exchange, agency, balance of power, and creation of new social forms among intersecting societies on the North American continent.”<sup>43</sup>

Scholars have also challenged Turner’s formulation of the West as immutable, pointing out that “there was not one West, but many Wests” over the course of American history.<sup>44</sup> Although regions are determined by certain defining characteristics, including geography, climate, population, culture, economics, and politics, they are—like frontiers—“complex and unstable constructions.”<sup>45</sup> As a result, the West has changed and evolved over time.<sup>46</sup> “The great sectional crisis leading to the Civil War has made ‘North’ and ‘South’ seem like timeless entities,” historian Edward Ayers says, “distinctive regions that long antedated the crisis itself. Contemporaries, however, had difficulty figuring out where one section began and the other ended.”<sup>47</sup> This was true of the West in the Civil War era as well.

Besides the quantifiable characteristics that defined the West, New Western historians have also pointed out the mythological aspect of Western identity. “Not just a real geographical

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<sup>42</sup> Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 2. According to White, “the middle ground is the place in between: in between cultures, peoples, and in between empires and the nonstate world of villages.” “On the middle ground,” White says, “diverse peoples adjust their differences through what amounts to a process of creative, and often expedient, misunderstandings. . . . They often misinterpret and distort both the values and the practices of those they deal with, but from these misunderstandings arise new meanings and through them new practices—the shared meanings and practices of the middle ground.” See White, *Middle Ground*, x.

<sup>43</sup> Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Nash, *Creating the West*, 134. Nash credits this idea to geographer Donald W. Meinig; see Donald W. Meinig, “American Wests: Preface to a Geographical Interpretation,” *Annals of the Association of American Cartographers* 62 (June 1972): 159-84.

<sup>45</sup> Nash, *Creating the West*, 134.

<sup>46</sup> Edward L. Ayers, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Stephen Nissenbaum, and Peter S. Onuf, *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Michael Bradshaw, *Regions and Regionalism in the United States* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1988); for an annotated bibliography of academic work dealing with regions see Michael Steiner and Clarence Mondale, *Regional and Regionalism in the United States: A Source Book for the Humanities and Social Sciences* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988).

<sup>47</sup> Edward Ayers, “American Regionalism,” University of Virginia, [xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/ayers\\_in.html](http://xroads.virginia.edu/~drbr/ayers_in.html) (accessed 31 March 2015).



region,” Gary J. Hausladen explains, “the West is a mythic concept that repeatedly transcends simple historical-geographical description.”<sup>48</sup> Geographer Donald Meinig describes the West as “a mental image, a perception in the minds of millions of individuals inside or outside a particular area.”<sup>49</sup> In fact, some scholars have read Turner’s thesis as indicative of the “mythic West,” a place more imagined than real, that has dominated the American consciousness for more than a century.<sup>50</sup> “From the eighteenth century on,” Western historian Ray Allen Billington argues, “this image of the West influenced statesmen, fired the imagination of authors, and helped shape the attitude of the people toward their own land as well as toward other nations and the world.”<sup>51</sup>

This understanding of the nature of the frontier and the West, as both region and myth, provides essential context for interpreting Missouri’s Civil War memory. In fact, nineteenth century Missouri encapsulates the dynamic of the early Western frontier. Missouri was indeed a “middle ground,” where Southern slaveholders, Northeastern farmers, European immigrants, and enslaved African Americans all negotiated space. As a result, Missourians adopted a unique regional identity. At the same time, the appeal of the mythic West as a place of unbounded opportunity positioned Missouri as the “Gateway to the West” and made it an incredibly important aspect of the state’s identity.

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<sup>48</sup> Gary J. Hausladen, ed., *Western Places, American Myths: How We Think about the West* (Reno & Las Vegas: University of Nevada Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>49</sup> Nash, *Creating the West*, 134.

<sup>50</sup> Hausladen, *Western Places, American Myths*, 1. See also Robert G. Athearn, *The Mythic West in Twentieth-Century America* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1986); Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950); Wilbur Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973).

<sup>51</sup> Ray Allen Billington, “The American Frontier,” *American Historical Association* (1958), 23.

At different intervals in its history, Missouri's regional identification evolved.

"Technically" Northern, "but emotionally Southern," Missouri was caught in a regional divide.<sup>52</sup>

And, while Missourians clearly thought of themselves as occupying a central position, they almost always favored the designation of Westerners. Nevertheless, as Stephen Aron points out, a "presentist and regionalist focus" has limited Western history to the current "American West" or the "western United States." "Reading present-day boundaries backwards," he warns us, "pretends that the West is where it always was. That fixed sense of place loses sight of the contested character of the West's shifting borders." In reality, Aron argues, "the United States had many Wests" over the course of its history, due to the evolving nature of the frontier.<sup>53</sup>

Missouri was one of them.

Nevertheless, historians have almost entirely overlooked the Western aspect of Missouri's regional identity in the evolution of Civil War memory in the state. Only historian Christopher Phillips has thoroughly explored the relationship between Missouri and the West.<sup>54</sup> "By casting Missourians as uniformly proslavery and thus by default as Southern," he argues, "historians have oversimplified not only Missourians' motives and actions but also, more important, the social and ideological evolution of the very border region they occupied."<sup>55</sup> While Phillips acknowledges Missouri's Westernness, however, he suggests it ultimately succumbed to

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<sup>52</sup> James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 122.

<sup>53</sup> Aron, "The Making of the First American West and the Unmaking of Other Realms," 5, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); Phillips, "The Crime Against Missouri: Slavery, Kansas, and the Cant of Southernness in the Border West," *Civil War History* 48 (March 2002): 60-81; Phillips, "'The Chrysalis State': Slavery, Confederate Identity, and the Creation of the Border South," in *Inside the Confederate Nation: Essays in Honor of Emory M. Thomas*, ed. Lesley J. Gordon and John C. Inscoe (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Phillips, *The Making of a Southerner: William Barclay Napton's Private Civil War* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008). Jeremy Neely has also explored the shifting nature of identity along the western border by tracing the shared experiences of Missourians and Kansans in the Civil War era and the evolution from a Southern to a Western identity; see Jeremy Neely, *The Border between Them: Violence and Reconciliation on the Kansas-Missouri Line* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007).

<sup>55</sup> Phillips, "The Crime Against Missouri," 61.

Southernness before the Civil War even began. According to Phillips, the events of Bleeding Kansas, which “rent the nation and sent tremors across the West’s political landscape precipitated in large sections of Missouri a transformation of its residents’ collective identity from one predominantly Western to self-consciously Southern.”<sup>56</sup> Frustrated by Northern attempts to limit the expansion of slavery and by aspersions cast on slaveholders, “these former Westerners turned to the region that now embodied their sense of betrayal—the beleaguered South.”<sup>57</sup>

My work, on the other hand, reveals the persistence of Missouri’s Western identity. This regional identity dictated Missouri’s course during the Civil War era and had a definite impact on its Civil War memory. In the antebellum period, Missourians considered themselves to be Westerners. And like other Westerners, Turner says, they increasingly “resented the conception that [the West] was merely an emanation from a rival North and South. . . . [The West] took the attitude of a section itself.”<sup>58</sup> As a result, Missouri’s Civil War was chaotic and confusing, as these Westerners found themselves drawn into the conflict against their will. Neither Union nor Confederate, Missouri occupied an uncomfortable place in the narratives of Civil War commemoration emerging at the end of the war. Missourians’ sense of marginalization from these narratives resulted in a distinctive brand of Civil War memory in the state, which found expression in the paintings of famed Missourian George Caleb Bingham, the work of Civil War memorial organizations, and the operation of the state’s homes for Confederate and Union veterans. By allowing us to analyze Civil War memory at the personal, the collective, and the

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<sup>56</sup> Phillips, “The Crime Against Missouri,” 61.

<sup>57</sup> Phillips, *Missouri’s Confederate*, 81.

<sup>58</sup> Turner, “The Significance of Section in American History,” in Faragher, *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner*, 208.

institutional level, these examples not only serve as evidence of Missourians' deep investment in Civil War memory, but also demonstrate how Missouri's Western identity shaped that memory.

Chapter 1 explores the origins of Missouri's Western identity through its early history. Situated at the heart of the Louisiana Purchase and at the confluence of the nation's greatest rivers, Missouri was both the western frontier of the United States and the front line of westward expansion. Missourians embraced the West as a part of their cultural identity and adopted a Western agenda in their politics. This agenda drew Missourians inevitably into the Civil War, as westward expansion exacerbated the debate over the expansion of slavery. While Missourians struggled to maintain their interest in the institution of slavery as well as their central position in the Union, prevailing forces from the North and South pulled the state apart. Despite the turmoil of the war years, however, Missouri's government worked diligently to reestablish its place in the Union. At the end of the war, Missourians avoided the ordeal of Reconstruction, but inaugurated dramatic political and social changes that aligned their state even more firmly with the West.

Chapter 2 provides an intimate look at the interconnectedness between Missouri's Westernness and its relationship to Civil War memory. It begins by addressing how the radical measures adopted by Missouri's wartime provisional government and the federal army under martial law alienated Missouri's Unionists, who remained loyal yet faced suspicion and coercion. This feeling manifested itself in George Caleb Bingham's famous painting *Order No. 11*. This painting is important because it not only depicts a Civil War scene, but also because Bingham created it deliberately to ensure the tragedy of the war would not be forgotten. Reproduced countless times, particularly in histories of the Civil War in Missouri, *Order No. 11* has proven to have remarkable staying power. It is the defining image of Missouri's Civil War. Because of

its damning depiction of the brutality of a federal war measure, however, it perpetuates the misplaced belief in Missouri's Confederate identity. In actuality, it exhibits the sense of betrayal loyal Missourians felt as they found themselves treated in the same manner as traitors. It also illustrates how incredibly contentious attempts to commemorate the war could be in Missouri.

Chapter 3 looks at the evolution of Civil War memory in Missouri at the collective, rather than the personal, level. It details how Missourians began to make meaning of their Civil War experience. For African American Missourians, emancipation and the end of the war fueled a desire for political and social equality. Black veterans helped establish the first schools for freed people in Missouri, explicitly connecting the legacy of the Civil War to their ongoing struggle for civil rights. White Missourians, on the other hand, sought validation for their contributions to the Civil War within the ranks of national veteran's organizations, including the United Confederate Veterans and the Grand Army of the Republic. African American, Confederate, and Unionist Missourians frustrated one another's commemorative efforts, however, as they each represented a challenge to the dominant narratives of Civil War memory. As far as their comrades back East were concerned, this tension made Missouri ill-suited to represent their respective causes. As a result, former enemies in Missouri shared a sense of marginalization that fostered a degree of cooperation between them, even leading them to undertake joint commemorative projects.

In particular, Missourians worked together to ensure the care and shelter of their Civil War veterans. Chapter 4 examines the creation of two separate veterans' homes, the Missouri Home for Confederate Veterans in Higginsville and the Federal Soldiers' Home in St. James. Although begun as private charities, the state of Missouri assumed control of both homes in 1897—a complicated responsibility no other state undertook. As a result, these two homes

represented the culmination of the combined efforts of Missouri's men, women, and the state government to pay tribute to their citizens' role in the Civil War. By their very inception and by their continued use, these veterans' homes speak to the ways in which Missourians struggled with their wartime past.

In this examination of Missouri's Civil War memory, I have depended extensively upon primary sources. Unless otherwise noted, all original usage, capitalization, and emphasis is preserved. Of course, these sources have their silences. Because this research depends heavily upon organizational and government records, African American perspectives into Missouri's identity and Civil War memory remain elusive. While I have incorporated their experiences whenever possible, there is considerable room for future research here. Finally, in order to tell such a broad and convoluted history, I have often generalized about the thoughts, feelings, and motivations of "Missourians" although they belonged to many different groups—racial, political, economic—and their interests often conflicted. I have attempted to convey this complexity, but there are many different sides to this story, each offering an avenue for further exploration and revision.

Despite all the room Missouri leaves for silences, contradictions, and misunderstandings, it offers a compelling case study for the breadth of experience in the Civil War. After all, "the turning points of national history," as historian Adam Arenson observes, "are bound up in the culture and politics of so many local places" and Missouri is no exception.<sup>59</sup> In fact, Missouri provides an excellent opportunity to explore the connections between the West, the Civil War, and collective memory. This set of relationships has not yet been thoroughly examined. When it comes to the Civil War, historian Elliot West notes, "it's as if there are two independent

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<sup>59</sup> Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 5.

historical narratives, and because the one that is set in the East and centered on the Civil War has been tapped as the defining story of its time, the one that is set out West seems peripheral, even largely irrelevant, to explaining America during a critical turn of its history.”<sup>60</sup> As a result, Missouri has often been treated as an afterthought, with historians retroactively struggling to adapt Missouri to the already established narratives of Civil War history and memory. “For too long,” Arenson adds, “the Civil War has been understood as merely a two-way conflict. . . . *This misses the crucial third side to the Civil War, that of the West.*”<sup>61</sup> This project corrects that oversight by reorienting the Civil War around an East-West divide and placing Missouri at the center of that story.

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<sup>60</sup> Elliott West, *The Last Indian War: The Nez Perce Story* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xix. For a similar argument, see Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

<sup>61</sup> Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 3 (emphasis mine).

## CHAPTER 1

### “Missouri! Bright Land of the West”: Crisis, Conflict, and Conciliation in Missouri

“On the whole, the things that I saw and heard made the West exceedingly attractive to me. This was something of the America that I had seen in my dreams; a new country, a new society almost entirely unhampered by any traditions of the past; a new people produced by the free intermingling of the vigorous elements of all nations, . . . with almost limitless opportunities open to all, and with equal rights secured by free institutions of government.”<sup>1</sup>

-*Carl Schurz (1909)*

In the spring of 1861, Missouri teetered on the brink of civil war. In April, Missouri Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson refused President Lincoln’s call for volunteers to suppress the rebellion and, on May 10, federal troops opened fire on a riotous crowd in St. Louis, killing twenty-eight. The tide of secessionism had perhaps never been higher and Southern songwriter Harry McCarthy penned an appeal entitled “Missouri, Bright Land of the West,” hoping its lyrics would inspire Missouri to join the Confederacy:

Missouri! Missouri! bright land of the west!  
Where the way worn emigrant always found rest,  
Who gave to the farmer reward for his toil,  
Expended in turning and breaking the soil—  
Awake to the notes of the bugle and drum,  
Awake from your slumber the tyrant hath come:  
And swear by your honor your chains shall be riven,  
And add your bright star to our flag of eleven.<sup>2</sup>

It was a rousing song to provoke Missouri’s secessionists, but by appealing to Missouri as the “bright land of the west,” McCarthy acknowledged it belonged to a region apart.

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<sup>1</sup> Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1852-1863*, Vol. II (London: John Murray, 1909), 48.

<sup>2</sup> Harry McCarthy, “Missouri, Bright Land of the West” (Montgomery: Schreiner & Son, 1861) [http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/hasm\\_conf0048/](http://library.duke.edu/digitalcollections/hasm_conf0048/) (accessed 19 March 2015).



In the ensuing Civil War, Missouri did get a star on the Confederate flag, but kept its place on the Star-Spangled Banner as well. Neither side could claim Missouri's complete loyalty in the bloody conflict. McCarthy, and the Confederacy for that matter, failed to win Missouri because they based their appeal upon the commonalities that existed between Missouri and the South—not the least of which were kinship and the institution of slavery—commonalities modern-day historians have also traced. Whatever connected Missouri to the South, however, it was not enough for the state to “become Confederate,” during or after the war.<sup>3</sup>

Missouri's loyalties were far more complicated. Although settled largely by Southern immigrants, Missouri's population soon became too diverse to call it “Southern” in any meaningful way. Rather than representing simply an outcropping of the plantation South, Missouri emerged in the years following its statehood as the heartland of the growing United States, or, as one historian has described it, the “American confluence”—the hub of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Ohio rivers and “the place where north, south, east, and west connected.”<sup>4</sup> Missouri was not just a geographic crossroads, however, but also a demographic and ideological crossroads, whose identity was shaped not just by Southern slaveholders, but also by enslaved African Americans, New England businessmen, and German refugees. These competing economic and cultural factors combined to make Missouri unique among the slaveholding states.

Missouri's unusual characteristics also had tremendous implications for the state's history during the era of the Civil War and Reconstruction. As the gateway to the Louisiana Purchase, Missouri loomed large in the national vision of Manifest Destiny and in debates over the

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<sup>3</sup> It certainly did not “become Confederate” in the way some scholars suggested Kentucky did; see Marshall, 4. See also Hulbert, “Constructing Guerrilla Memory,” 61.

<sup>4</sup> William E. Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri: From Wilderness Outpost to Statehood* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989), 299; Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), xxi.

expansion of slavery into the West. As tensions mounted, exacerbating age-old sectional divisions, Missourians found themselves caught in the middle in more ways than one. With their interests and sympathies divided between the North, South, East, and West, the result was a vicious, fratricidal conflict.<sup>5</sup> “In Civil War-era Missouri,” historian Silvana R. Siddali points out, “there were many sides. Men and women, federals and rebels, slave and freeborn, immigrants and natives, pro- and anti-slavery residents.”<sup>6</sup> Despite the bitter fighting that raged between these groups, Missouri’s westward orientation facilitated a relatively rapid recovery for the state. Unlike her Confederate neighbors, Missouri avoided the rigors of Radical Reconstruction, but nevertheless underwent a self-imposed transformation in the aftermath of the Civil War that led to the emergence of compromise politics, a diversified economy, and progressive social changes.

Even though both the Union and Confederacy made claims to Missouri’s loyalty during the Civil War, Missouri remained a Western state with a distinctly Western perspective. This was particularly evident in the aftermath of the Civil War. Because of their complicated relationship with the national government and with one another, reconciliation was more than an abstract objective for Missourians, but a practical necessity. As former enemies learned to live and work with one another once more, the West offered a non-partisan direction for the state to focus on. The West came to symbolize progress, prosperity, and an end to the sectionalism that plagued Missouri throughout its early history.

Although Missouri’s history would be defined by its relationship with the West, Southerners shaped its early settlement. Drawn by Lewis and Clark’s accounts of the abundance of the Louisiana Purchase, a wave of settlers headed into what would become the Missouri territory. In particular, these settlers moved to the Boonslick—an area of rich bottomland

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<sup>5</sup> Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Silvana R. Siddali, ed., *Missouri’s War: The Civil War in Documents* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2009), 1.

stretching alongside the Missouri River, named in honor of one of the first Southern migrants to the area, Daniel Boone. Following in the footsteps of this famous pioneer, one settler remarked, “the ‘new comers’ . . . came like an avalanche. It seemed as though Kentucky and Tennessee were breaking up and moving to the ‘Far West.’ Caravan after caravan passed over the prairies of Illinois, crossing the ‘great river’ at St. Louis, all bound to the Boone’s Lick [*sic*].”<sup>7</sup> “[The Boon’s Lick] was, wrote one observer of the postwar population rush, ‘the common point of union for the people. Ask one of them whither he was moving, and the answer was ‘to Boon’s Lick to be sure.’”<sup>8</sup>

These immigrants transplanted the culture of the South on the Missouri frontier. Of course, the most tangible attribute of Southern culture in Missouri was the presence of slaves. Even though many Northern states still had slaves in this period, they had implemented programs for gradual emancipation. Missouri, on the other hand, symbolized slaveholders’ intent to grow and strengthen their peculiar institution. They viewed Missouri as an avenue through which they would secure the future of the most profitable enterprise of the era. As a result, one paper explained, “[slaveholders] acquired lands and had settled there with their slaves. They had so purchased and settled, without any restriction against slavery. The treaty and the constitution protected them.”<sup>9</sup>

This meant that enslaved people participated, however unwillingly, in the settlement of the Missouri. Whether they came with individual owners or in traders’ coffles, the West promised no opportunities for advancement for them, but rather forcible and painful separations

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<sup>7</sup> John Mason Peck, quoted in Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery’s Border: Missouri’s Small Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 24.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Aron, *American Confluence*, 165.

<sup>9</sup> *Boon’s Lick Times*, July 4, 1840.

from loved ones.<sup>10</sup> White territorial Missourians, however, regarded slaveholding as an important part of the process of gentrification, civilization, and progress on the frontier. They believed it helped to establish white racial and cultural superiority. According to historian Christopher Phillips, “dominance of others filled the void created by the insecurity of distance that the West naturally forced upon its frightened inhabitants.”<sup>11</sup> As a result, slavery scholar Diane Mutti Burke adds, “most Missourians supported slavery as a system of labor and of social and racial control.”<sup>12</sup>

Slaveholding in Missouri took on distinctly Western characteristics. For the most part, settlers were small-slaveholding yeomen from the backcountry who had been largely excluded from the slave society of the plantation South. “Small slaveholders were marginalized in much of the South,” Burke argues, “but in Missouri they dominated, creating a slavery culture that differed socially, politically, and economically from that of plantation regions.”<sup>13</sup> In part, these differences were a consequence of geography. Bordered both by free states and unorganized territory, there were too many avenues of escape for enslaved people to establish a stable plantation society on the Western frontier. Furthermore, Missouri’s climate was not conducive to growing cotton, so Missourians made slaveholding profitable by cultivating grains, tobacco, hemp, and raising livestock.

Besides the practical limitations that prevented slaveholders from establishing a new slave society in Missouri, its position on the “middle ground” infused the state with different customs and economic practices that never breached the entrenched order of the plantation South. As a result, Missouri’s slaveholders soon modified their aspirations from those of the

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<sup>10</sup> For more on the experience of enslaved people in the settlement of Missouri, see Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 38-44.

<sup>11</sup> Phillips, *Missouri’s Confederate*, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

planter class they left behind. “A few attempted to emulate the lifestyles and priorities of southern planters,” Burke notes, “but most simply had neither the economic means nor the leisure time to do so. Instead, Missourians were driven by practical concerns.” “Most Missouri owners instead . . . developed alternative economic strategies, such as the lucrative practice of hiring out excess slave laborers, to keep their workers occupied; other[s] pursued interests in light industry.” This made Missouri a critical outpost of the plantation South, but not a slave society in its own right.<sup>14</sup>

Nevertheless, Missouri became a focal point in the escalation of the national debate over slavery. The question of Missouri’s statehood jeopardized the tenuous balance between free and slave states in Congress and threatened a national crisis. As the first substantial territory to organize an application for statehood from the Louisiana Purchase, Missouri’s admission set an important precedent for the future of slaveholding in the United States. In Congress, various proposals sought to limit slavery in Missouri’s statehood bill by creating a program of gradual emancipation. Missourians resented the delay to their statehood for the sake of sectional Congressional bickering. They wanted their state to be admitted without restriction and on equal terms with every other state. After extensive debate, Congress finally settled on the Missouri Compromise in 1820. This compromise admitted Maine as a free state and Missouri as a slave state, but prohibited the formation of new slave states in the Louisiana territory north of Missouri’s southern border at 36° 30'. Although the compromise ultimately proved unsatisfactory to all those concerned, it was a momentous occasion—one that heralded doom in the minds of slaveholders and put Missouri at the center of the slavery controversy.

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<sup>14</sup> Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 5, 49, 57.

Even though slavery dominated the emergence of Missouri on to the national stage, it did not necessarily bind Missouri to the South. Slaveholding and a sense of Southern sectional identity did not go hand in hand. While there was hardly any anti-slavery sentiment in the state at the time, Missouri was little more than an appendage of the slaveholding South, destined to evolve and diversify, both in terms of its population and its economy.<sup>15</sup> While transplanted Southerners made up the majority of Missouri's population, it should also be noted that along the Kansas-Missouri border, at least "four out of every five persons . . . had been born in states west of the Appalachians."<sup>16</sup> As a result, Phillips claims, "early national Missourians . . . uniformly regarded themselves as Westerners."<sup>17</sup>

Missourians encouraged settlers from all across the nation, not just the South, to come to their new state. They envisioned Missouri as a place where sectional identities could be remade; a place that could heal the hostilities so evidenced in the tortured birth of their state. *The Missourian* welcomed "intelligent freemen" of all stripes to the state and pledged "to assist the march of industrious enterprise to Missouri, from every country; to harmonise [*sic*] and conciliate local animosities into a bond of fraternal concord, and to melt down all distinctions into the enviable one of a 'Missourian.'"<sup>18</sup> "Emigration should be encouraged by every means in our power," *The Missourian* insisted. "Our state should be made the home of those whom enterprize [*sic*] or want or misfortune may induce to plant their future prospects among us. The misfortunes of the times have for two or three years checkered the growth and prospects of our

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<sup>15</sup> Perry McCandless, *A History of Missouri, 1820 to 1860*, Vol. II (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1972), 7.

<sup>16</sup> Neely, *The Border between Them*, 82.

<sup>17</sup> Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, xii. According to Arenson, at this time the West included the "residents of a vast region—including parts of Arkansas, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and Michigan as well as California, Missouri, Iowa, Wisconsin, and federal territories from Minnesota to Oregon to New Mexico—considered themselves westerners." See Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *The Missourian*, June 24, 1820.

state. . . . This evil, it is to be hoped, will be remedied. . . . Missouri, possessing such great advantages of soil, climate and navigation, cannot fail to reach exalted destinies.”<sup>19</sup>

Missouri’s prosperity was built upon the tide of Manifest Destiny sweeping the nation in the 1840s. Americans felt inspired to expand, believing it was their God-given duty to create an American Empire stretching from coast to coast, bringing civilization to the West.<sup>20</sup> Once the frontier itself, Missouri soon became the most westerly outpost of civilization. As the point of departure for the Sante Fe Trail, Oregon Trail, and the California gold fields, Missouri was of central importance to the project of westward expansion. Drawn by the lure of Manifest Destiny, the trickle of adventurers that had long crossed the state became a tide and Missourians led the way. “In this winning of the West,” one state history proclaimed, “Missourians were many and foremost.”<sup>21</sup> “To Missouri,” one paper reflected with pride, “belongs the exalted privilege of disseminating the principles of the federal constitution over the vast regions west of the Mississippi: from her bosom will issue colonies of freemen to carry the stripes and stars of the union to the provinces of Spain, to the Pacific ocean, to the frozen realms of the north. . . . Much of our own and the nation’s glory depends upon the energy and integrity of our citizens.”<sup>22</sup> It may have been a matter of pride, but it was no less than the truth. In fact, Missourians were among the first to blaze a pass through the Rocky Mountains and were heavily involved in the foundation of California’s “Bear Flag Republic.”<sup>23</sup> Missouri politicians were also instrumental in the opening of the west to white settlement. Senator Thomas Hart Benton, for example, helped

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<sup>19</sup> *The Missourian*, September 5, 1821.

<sup>20</sup> Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History, A Reinterpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1963), 24.

<sup>21</sup> Walter Barlow Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri: The Center State, One Hundred Years in the Union, 1820-1921* V. 1 (St. Louis: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), ix.

<sup>22</sup> *The Missourian*, July 22, 1820.

<sup>23</sup> John C. Frémont’s famous California expedition left from St. Louis and helped establish the Bear Flag Republic (by hook and by crook), under the direction of Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton. Ray Allen Billington, *The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1956), 43.

pass funding for mapping expeditions of the west and, in 1841, Senator Lewis Linn tried to pass a law giving free land to citizens immigrating to Oregon.<sup>24</sup>

Missourians eagerly anticipated the wealth and power westward expansion would bring to their state. As a result, Missourians looked to the West, not to the South, for their future. Rather than single-mindedly becoming entrenched in the institution of slavery, Missourians acted with urgency to reap the rewards of Manifest Destiny. “We must explore and develop [sic] the resources of the state,” *The Missourian* entreated its readers. “The west is filling with active and enterprising [sic] people, good farmers and industrious artisans, and it behoves [sic] Missouri not to be an underling, a stunted shrub of the prairie, amidst the surrounding oaks of the forest.”<sup>25</sup>

Missourians responded to the call, embracing rapid and dramatic change in this period. The state experienced exponential population growth—“nearly 600 percent between 1820 and 1840,” according to one source.<sup>26</sup> “Each year the tide of immigration grew larger,” historian Ray Allen Billington explains, “attracted by the rising prosperity of the frontier state. The trade of all the Far West centered in Missouri.”<sup>27</sup> In particular, it centered in St. Louis. Situated at the heart of bustling river traffic on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, St. Louis became the lynch pin uniting the far west to the east. In 1847, the *Democratic Banner* proclaimed St. Louis “the *pride of the west*” and by 1849, St. Louis was known as “the Gateway to the West.”<sup>28</sup> Indeed, St. Louis businessmen monopolized the fur trade and outfitted traffic on the westward trails, netting profits as high as 300% selling goods and provisions to travelers.<sup>29</sup> “In the spring of 1849,” Missouri

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<sup>24</sup> West, *The Last Indian War*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> *The Missourian*, September 5, 1821.

<sup>26</sup> West, *The Last Indian War*, 47.

<sup>27</sup> Ray Allen Billington, *Westward Expansion: A History of the American Frontier* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 469.

<sup>28</sup> *Democratic Banner*, July 12, 1847; Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 12 (emphasis in original).

<sup>29</sup> Billington, *The Far Western Frontier*, 36.



historian William Parrish claims, “an estimated 1,000 immigrants passed through St. Louis each week.”<sup>30</sup>

To facilitate Missouri’s role as the Gateway to the West, Missouri’s politicians championed funding for internal improvements, including clearing the Mississippi and Missouri rivers of snags and sawyers to allow steamboat traffic.<sup>31</sup> This, one paper hoped, “will give a new impetus to enterprise and improvement that must carry our citizens rapidly forward on the road to prosperity and wealth.”<sup>32</sup> Missourians also encouraged the construction of new roadways and invested in railroads, which they believed were essential to further growth. As the *Western Union* put it: “Why lag behind our sister states in the noble race for greatness? Why strive to keep down internal improvement, and *drive* the emigrant from our shores to other and less desirable States?”<sup>33</sup> “Missouri is now on the high road to prosperity and true greatness,” the *Hannibal Journal* added, “and with railroads and navigable rivers to every point of the compass—rich in mineral and agricultural resources—who can bespeak for her other than a glorious career.”<sup>34</sup> Missouri embraced diversification and internal improvements in a way the plantation South never did.

As one of the westernmost slaveholding states, however, Missouri still featured heavily in the continuing debate over the future of slavery in America. In 1848, the controversy reached a new crisis when the conclusion of the Mexican War and the annexation of vast new territory in the southwest brought the issue to the forefront of Missouri politics once more. Democrats in the Missouri General Assembly rejected any attempt to limit the expansion of slavery into the

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<sup>30</sup> McCandless, *A History of Missouri*, 130.

<sup>31</sup> Nancy Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), 76-90.

<sup>32</sup> *Grand River Chronicle*, May 14, 1849.

<sup>33</sup> *Western Union*, “Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad,” May 29, 1851.

<sup>34</sup> *Hannibal Journal*, “Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad Locates,” March 22, 1853.

Mexican cession. In a piece of legislation known as the Jackson Resolutions, proposed by future governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, Missourians voiced their belief that Congress had no power to legislate on the expansion of slavery and branded attempts to proscribe it as blatant Northern aggression against slaveholding states.<sup>35</sup> They also threatened to unite with the slaveholding states in the interest of mutual protection if Congress imposed any further restrictions.<sup>36</sup> Hotly contested, the Jackson Resolutions nevertheless passed.

Westward expansion had wrought dramatic changes in Missouri, however, and the influence slaveholders held in the General Assembly did not necessarily speak for the sympathies of the state. In fact, Missouri's population was now dramatically more diverse than in its territorial days. "By 1860," Burke demonstrates, "the foreign-born population of Missouri reached 12 percent; as early as 1850, half of St. Louis residents were immigrants, mostly German and Irish. On the eve of the Civil War, nearly 17 percent of state legislators were natives of northern states or foreign countries, more so than in any other slaveholding state."<sup>37</sup>

The arrival of German immigrants, in particular, profoundly shaped the state's identity. For these newcomers, mostly refugees of the German Revolutions, Missouri exerted a powerful appeal as a part of the "mythic West"—a place of opportunity, both to become American and to make a prosperous new life. German immigrant Carl Schurz, who later became a leading Missouri politician, explained: "Especially did I long to breathe the fresh air of that part of the Union which I imagined to be the 'real America,' the great West," as he called it, of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri.<sup>38</sup> "On the whole," he continued, "the things that I saw and heard made the West exceedingly attractive to me. This was something of the America that I had seen in my

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<sup>35</sup> John Vollmer Mering, *The Whig Party in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967), 167.

<sup>36</sup> McCandless, *A History of Missouri*, 246.

<sup>37</sup> Burke, *On Slavery's Border*, 263. See also Aron, *American Confluence*, 202.

<sup>38</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1852-1863*, 38.

dreams; a new country, a new society almost entirely unhampered by any traditions of the past; a new people produced by the free intermingling of the vigorous elements of all nations, . . . with almost limitless opportunities open to all, and with equal rights secured by free institutions of government.” Schurz’s visit to St. Louis confirmed his perception of the fluidity of western life, with one important qualification. “There the existence of slavery,” he observed, “with its subtle influence, cast its shadow over the industrial and commercial developments of the city, as well as over the relations between the different groups of citizens.”<sup>39</sup> Slavery, to Schurz, felt incompatible with the egalitarian spirit of the West.

Nevertheless, slavery continued to have a profound impact on the state’s development. Missouri returned to the center of the national debate over slavery during the controversy surrounding the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854. Because it allowed popular sovereignty to determine the expansion of slavery, effectively repealing the Missouri Compromise, Missouri slaveholders favored the bill. Already bordered by free states to the east and north, Missourians feared restrictions on the spread of slavery. They regarded the expansion of slavery as essential to the continued momentum of westward expansion. Missourians were concerned, Phillips explains, “that if Kansas should not become a slave state, Missouri would become the first and only slave state bordering a free state to its west, effectively sealing slavery from further ingress and changing forever the complexion of westward expansion.”<sup>40</sup>

As a result, Missourians watched the influx of settlement into Kansas and Nebraska with trepidation. “These two vast territories will soon be thrown open for settlement,” the *Glasgow Weekly Times* observed, “and will most probably be peopled with a rapidity unprecedented. . . .

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<sup>39</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1852-1863*, 48, 39.

<sup>40</sup> Phillips, “The Crime Against Missouri,” 73.

Thousands are even now in sight, and only waiting the word to locate.”<sup>41</sup> “The roads are filled with people all bound for the new Territories. A determined effort is to be made to introduce slavery into Kansas,” it continued, “while there is a general disposition to let Nebraska be free. . . . Much excitement, violence and bloodshed is anticipated. But this always is the case, in the settlement of new countries.”<sup>42</sup> Fearing the influence of abolitionist immigrants in Kansas, hordes of pro-slavery Missourians poured across the border to vote in the territorial elections and defend the expansion of slavery. The immediate aftermath was violence and bloodshed between pro-slavery Missourians and free-soil Kansans. It was only the prelude of the much longer and exponentially more bloody conflict to come. The Kansas-Nebraska Act “not only brought civil war upon Kansas,” Missouri Senator Edward Bates predicted, “but is likely to bring civil war upon the whole country.”<sup>43</sup> Indeed, historian Stephen Aron observes, “historically the place where north, south, east, and west connected, the American confluence looked more and more like it would be the site at which the United States divided.”<sup>44</sup>

While defending slavery and its expansion on the national stage, Missouri’s own reliance on the institution declined.<sup>45</sup> As the numbers of free white settlers grew, the slave population failed to grow correspondingly.<sup>46</sup> By 1860, slaves made up less than 10% of the state’s population.<sup>47</sup> This leant Missouri, Schurz said, “much more of the elasticity of Western life than

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<sup>41</sup> *Glasgow Weekly Times*, June 1, 1854.

<sup>42</sup> *The Glasgow Times*, “Kansas and Nebraska,” June 22, 1854.

<sup>43</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “Speech of Mr. Edward Bates,” August 26, 1856.

<sup>44</sup> Aron, *American Confluence*, xxi.

<sup>45</sup> Although it garnered very little attention in Missouri, Dred Scott began his suit for freedom in this same period. While the Missouri Supreme Court had often ruled in the favor of enslaved people in similar cases, they decided against Scott, forcing him to take his case to the U. S. Supreme Court. Again, Missouri was at the center of national controversy that strengthened the institution of slavery and abridged the rights of enslaved people. See McCandless, *A History of Missouri*, 258-61.

<sup>46</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 3.

<sup>47</sup> Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 264. “Despite the proportional decline of the slave population in Missouri during the final antebellum decades,” Phillips argues, “raw numbers of slaves in Missouri actually increased during the same period, and they did so dramatically. Between 1830 and 1850, Missouri’s slave population more than

any of the larger . . . slave-holding States.”<sup>48</sup> What really undermined the stability of slavery in Missouri, however, was the significant opposition posed to it by German immigrants like Schurz. No other slave state had such a population to contend with. Missourians, once unified in their defense of the expansion of slavery, were becoming increasingly divided over the questions of slavery and the Union.

Even with the institution of slavery in jeopardy at home and threatening to tear the nation apart, Missouri slaveholders staunchly defended the Union because they believed it offered the best protection for slavery. They feared secession would lead to war, the disruption of which would jeopardize their slaveholdings. The federal government, on the other hand, had consistently protected the property rights of slaveholders at every opportunity. “It is well known that slave property is timid in Missouri,” one individual acknowledged, “and as it is my fortune to be one of the largest slaveholders in this part of the State, I would earnestly ask gentlemen who have no direct interest in this matter, to desist in protecting my interest after the fashion of [William Lowndes] Yancey and his disunion followers, feeling assured as I do, that if their councils prevail, Missouri will not be a slaveholding State many years.”<sup>49</sup> Missourians had a stake in protecting slavery, but that did not lead them to sympathize with secession. In fact, many of the state’s most prominent slaveholders, including Benton, Francis P. Blair, and James S. Rollins, were also the most vocal critics of disunion.

In the crisis following the presidential election of 1860 and the bleak Secession Winter, Missourians proved their staunch Unionism. Slaveholders largely supported John Bell of the

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tripled to 87,422; by 1860, that number had increased by another third to 114,931, an all-time high.” See Phillips, “The Crime Against Missouri,” 65-6.

<sup>48</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1852-1863*, 39.

<sup>49</sup> Yancey was a politician from Alabama and a leader in the secession movement. Col. Kennet, “What about those Guns, Saturday?” *Glasgow Weekly Times*, May 24, 1860.

Constitutional Union Party, but Northern Democrat Stephen Douglas carried the state.<sup>50</sup> The election was a testament to the strength of Missouri's Unionism. "The people of this State are Union-loving law-abiding people and have repudiated [secessionists]," the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* proclaimed. "What a withering and lasting rebuke this is to disunion," it concluded.<sup>51</sup>

Missourians mostly regarded the election of Republican Abraham Lincoln with equanimity. They expressed some reticence about the sectionalism inherent to the Republican Party and found fault with Northern abolitionist sentiment, but did not regard Lincoln's election as grounds for secession. "We have no doubt he will make us a good President," the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* stated, "at least we hope so. Although elected entirely as a sectional candidate, it is his duty to so shape his course as to make his administration national."<sup>52</sup> There was no reason to expect anything less. "The enlightened world will not look upon the election of Lincoln as a cause for the secession of a State or States," one contributor to the paper wrote. "Wait until something is done real and tangible against the property, liberty, or life of the people of the South."<sup>53</sup>

Following the secession of South Carolina, the nation watched Missouri's next move with interest. No one could be quite sure where her sympathies lay because Missourians themselves were deeply conflicted. Missouri's assurances of loyalty were often accompanied by expressions of sympathy for its fellow slaveholding states. "We have been asked the question," one paper commented, "'to which section of the Union will you go should a dissolution take place?' . . . *We are for the Union at all hazards.—We believe the people of the State of Missouri*

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<sup>50</sup> Burke, *On Slavery's Border*, 266.

<sup>51</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, October 6, 1860.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> H. W. Riley to W. H. Lusk, in *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, December 1, 1860.

are for the Union.”<sup>54</sup> “But if the Union be permanently disrupted,” the same paper continued weeks later, “there can be no doubt of the destiny of Missouri. . . . Missouri would go with the South, if she must go anywhere; and it is equally clear that her citizens will acquiesce in no attempt to coerce the cotton States into submission.”<sup>55</sup>

Despite expressing sympathy with the plight of other slaveholders, most Missourians faced the prospect of civil war with no small amount of concern. Their state’s position on the “middle ground,” which brought them dynamic growth and prosperity, now seemed a frightening liability. “Hers, indeed, it is a pivotal position as regards not only the North and the South, but also the East and the West,” the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* remarked. “She is the great half-way house of the four extremes and her interests are intimately identified with all. . . . Hers is now a mixed population, a population whose ties of consanguinity and tenderest sympathies extend to the extremes of the Union.” These conflicting interests, the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* predicted, would inevitably put Missouri at the front lines of the war and the well-being of their state, particularly the institution of slavery, would hang in the balance. “Missouri, in the event of a sectional war,” the paper warned, “will be more exposed, and has more to lose than any other State in the Union. She is therefore more interested in the maintenance of the Union than any other State—much more than any other slave State; will suffer more in the destruction and loss of property; more in the loss of social amity; more of orphanage and widowhood, and will sacrifice more of future prosperity and greatness.”<sup>56</sup>

For the sake of self-preservation, Missourians attempted to distance themselves from both Northern and Southern extremism. Rather than choosing between the two sides, some Missourians felt they should focus their attention on the West and leave the sectional squabbling

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<sup>54</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “The Union,” December 22, 1860 (emphasis in original).

<sup>55</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “State Convention—Shall One be Held?” January 12, 1861.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.* See also Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 266.

to the East. “Our State,” Representative John W. Reid wrote, “from the character of her people, the nature of her productions, and her interior and central position, has many interests, which bind her to the people of both sections of the country. . . . My opinion is, that she will attach herself neither to . . . the North or the South, but make herself the centre of a great Western Republic, upon which the stomachs of both the others will be dependent.”<sup>57</sup> More often, however, Missourians felt a responsibility as Westerners to act as arbitrators.<sup>58</sup> “What ever position Missouri may take,” the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* remarked, “we hope to see her act in the spirit of conservatism—to act cautiously.”<sup>59</sup> “Missouri is the child of compromise,” it continued, “and her people will ever be found ready to make any compromise not inconsistent with her honor.”<sup>60</sup>

This is not to suggest, however, that Missouri did not have its share of secessionists. Chief among them was Claiborne Fox Jackson, author of the Jackson Resolutions and now governor of Missouri. Although elected as a moderate Democrat and avowed Unionist, Jackson promptly changed his colors. In his inaugural address, Jackson justified secession and blamed the sectional crisis on Northern antagonism, as manifested by the Republican Party and President Lincoln. Lincoln’s election, Jackson claimed, posed a serious threat to slaveholders and he appealed to Missourians to stand by the South. “The destiny of the slaveholding States of this Union is one and the same,” he said. Jackson acknowledged that Missourians were “devoted to the Union,” but insisted Missouri would “stand by her sister slaveholding States, in whose

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<sup>57</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “Letter from Hon. J. W. Reid, ‘What Will Missouri Do?’” December 22, 1860.

<sup>58</sup> Phillips, “The Crime Against Missouri,” 67.

<sup>59</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, December 29, 1860.

<sup>60</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “State Convention—Shall One be Held?” January 12, 1861.



wrongs she participates and with whose institutions and people she sympathizes.” Jackson concluded by advising the state militia to arm itself in preparation for war.<sup>61</sup>

As the secession crisis deepened, the Missouri General Assembly called a state convention on February 28, 1861, in order to decide how their state would respond. News of the convention met with suspicion from Unionists, who feared it was a secession convention. In their eyes, the 1860 election illustrated Missouri’s commitment to the Union and no further discussion was necessary. “Missouri is either disunion or not,” the *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer* flatly stated. “If disunion, let her act like other disunion States, and call a convention; if not, let her act unlike the disunion States, call no convention, and concentrate all her powers in aiding the Federal Government in the execution of the laws.”<sup>62</sup> Their concerns, however, proved unfounded.

When it came to choosing delegates for the convention, Missourians expressed their deep affinity for the Union. Like many Missourians, the delegates were overwhelmingly Southern-born. In fact, of the 104 men in attendance, eighty-seven hailed from slaveholding states and only thirteen from free states. The remaining four were born abroad. Nevertheless, they were resolutely Unionist. No doubt echoing the sentiments of many of his fellow delegates, James O. Broadhead declared: “I stand here not as a Southern man, but as a Missourian and an American citizen. Born at the South, I think I know something of my duty to the South as well as to the Constitution of my country.”<sup>63</sup>

The convention first convened in the courthouse in Jefferson City, before decamping to more spacious headquarters at the Mercantile Library Hall in St. Louis. The convention proceedings give the impression that, at times, their deliberations were quite heated. A raucous

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<sup>61</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “Inaugural Address of Gov. C. F. Jackson,” January 12, 1861.

<sup>62</sup> *Weekly Jefferson Inquirer*, “Call of a Convention,” January 12, 1861.

<sup>63</sup> *Journal and Proceedings of the Missouri State Convention, Held at Jefferson City and St. Louis, March 1861* (St. Louis: George Knapp & Co., Printers and Binders, 1861), 5-7,122.

crowd gathered to observe the convention and the delegates found it necessary to close their doors to the general public. Only as many spectators as would fit in the available seating could remain in the hall; the rest of the crowd listened from the lobby. They occasionally became so disruptive that the delegates appointed a doorkeeper and sergeant-at-arms to keep them at bay. The sergeant-at-arms was authorized to eject particularly rowdy spectators from the building.

In the course of the convention, there was extensive debate over the constitutionality of secession. The delegates blamed the secession crisis on anti-slavery fanaticism but regretted the South's over-hasty response. They insisted there were no grounds on which secession could be justified. Ultimately, the convention resolved to support the Crittenden Compromise, which promised the protection of slavery and the creation of stronger fugitive slave laws. To preserve the peace, the delegates also petitioned the federal government to withdraw their garrisons from all forts within the seceded states.

That decided, the main business of the convention was to consider when and how Missouri would respond in case of a civil war. While the delegates swore Missourians would never willingly surrender their slave property, they expressed considerable reluctance over fighting for its defense. Hamilton Rowan Gamble, one of the state's most outspoken Unionists, warned the convention about the risks military conflict would pose for Missouri. Speaking on behalf of the Committee on Federal Relations, Gamble said: "The thought of revolution by Missouri, under present circumstances, is not, we believe, seriously entertained by any member of this Convention. But what is now the true position for Missouri to assume? Evidently that of a State whose interests are bound up in the maintenance of the Union, and whose kind feelings and strong sympathies are with the people of the Southern States, with whom we are connected by ties of friendship and of blood." Although he recognized the strength of these ties, he urged the

convention to act with caution: “In a military aspect, secession and a connection with a Southern confederacy is annihilation for our State. . . . Emigration must cease. No Southern man owning slaves would come to the frontier State; no Northern man would come to this foreign country avowedly to battle his native land. Our slave interest would be destroyed, because we would have no better right to recapture a slave found in a free State than we now have in Canada.”<sup>64</sup>

Indeed, most delegates shared Gamble’s opinion that remaining within the Union would best protect Missouri’s interests—slave and otherwise. Broadhead expressed his certainty that “slavery would not exist ten years after Missouri joined a Southern Confederacy. As she stands now,” he assured the convention, “she is protected.” Delegate Sample Orr went even further. Missouri’s “only salvation for the institution of slavery,” he insisted, “is her adherence [*sic*] to the Government that prof[t]ects slavery”—the United States. In the case of civil war, however, Missouri stood to lose far more than its stake in the institution of slavery, as Broadhead reminded the convention. “I am a slave owner myself,” he admitted, “but I am not willing to sacrifice other interests to the slave interest, or say that it is the peculiar institution of Missouri, when we know that it is not true.” He cited Missouri’s investment not only in agricultural pursuits, but also in mining, manufacturing, and trade. These industries were more important to Missouri than the institution of slavery, Broadhead argued, and it would be foolish to sacrifice them by joining arms with the Confederacy. He continued:

Where are we to get men to open our fertile prairies? Where are we to get the men to work in our mines, in our workshops, and to carry on our commercial business, if it is not from the overcrowded Eastern States and Europe? . . . [I]f you make Missouri a member of the Southern Confederacy, with but a small slave population, you can see at once that all this population is driven off. Men will not . . . come to Missouri for the purpose of engaging in these pursuits, when they know that, so far as our political power is concerned, we shall be subjected to the cotton lords of South Carolina and Louisiana.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> *Journal and Proceedings of the Missouri State Convention*, 35-6.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, 127.

Broadhead recognized that Missouri owed its prosperity to its power to attract immigrants from every corner of the country—even the world—to the West. If Missouri sided with the South, it could no longer be the Gateway to the West.

As Westerners, the delegates expressed a great deal of uncertainty about their place in the sectional conflict. Some seemed to think it had a little to do with Missouri at all. “We stand like the rock in the ocean,” one man declared, “rolling back from us the waves that come from the North and the South.” “Missouri is an integral part of the great West,” delegate James McFerran insisted, “and declares her fealty and attachment to her own interests and section, and invites her sister States of the West to ignore the dogmas of New England on the one hand, and the Gulf States on the other; and at once inaugurate a Western policy, loyal to the Federal Constitution and the Union of the States.” “Missouri,” he went on, “is emphatically a Western State, and while she remains on terms of peace with, these States of the Mississippi Valley her prosperity will not be materially injured. . . . I do not believe her fate depends upon any conflict that might ensue between the General Government and the seceding States.”<sup>66</sup> The path that McFerran sought, and many Missourians like him, was one of neutrality.

Other delegates, however, believed they had a central role to play in the conflict. As Westerners, they felt ideally situated to facilitate compromise between the North and South. “I hold it especially to be the duty of Missouri to be calm, prudent and wise in this emergency,” one delegate advised. “She should occupy a middle ground in the temperate zone of politics, which she occupies in a geographical point of view. . . . The office of Missouri is that of a pacificator.”<sup>67</sup> “If it be the glorious mission of Missouri to aid in arresting the progress of

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<sup>66</sup> *Journal and Proceedings of the Missouri State Convention*, 68, 26, 82-3.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

revolution and in restoring peace and prosperity to the country;” Gamble reflected, “she will but occupy the position for which nature designed her by giving her a central position.” “Missouri entered the Union at the close of an angry contest on the subject of slavery,” he continued. “Her geographical position, the variety of the branches of industry to which her resources point, her past growth and future prospects, combine to demand that all her counsels be taken in the spirit of sobriety and conciliation.” “Missouri,” another delegate succinctly concluded, “is for peace, compromise, concession, conciliation and settlement of all the questions involved.”<sup>68</sup>

Unfortunately, Missouri could not long remain outside of the conflict. As the clouds of war gathered, deep political and social divisions wracked the state as both the United States and Confederate States vied for Missouri’s allegiance. Within the state, the opposing sides marshaled armed forces but continued to profess a desire for neutrality. On May 10, 1861, events came to a crisis when federal troops arrested Southern-sympathizing State Guardsmen occupying Camp Jackson in St. Louis. Even though they had not yet taken direct action, they seemed poised to attack the nearby federal arsenal. “The tragic part of the transaction was reserved for the close,” however, the *Glasgow Weekly Times* observed. When the State Guard was captured and marched back through the streets, a riot broke out. “The attempt of the troops to press back the multitude of excited men, women and children, by presenting bayonets only exasperated the crowd the more,” the *Times* reported, “and provoked them to madness. It is said that stones, dirt, and turf were thrown at the troops, and even pistols fired at them, until a company of the latter irritated and annoyed fired into the assemblage.”<sup>69</sup> In the end, twenty-eight Missourians were killed. Camp Jackson inaugurated the Civil War in Missouri.

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<sup>68</sup> *Journal and Proceedings of the Missouri State Convention*, 36, 50, 176.

<sup>69</sup> *Glasgow Weekly Times*, “Exciting Military Demonstration,” May 16, 1861.

The following month, the Civil War began and the Confederacy worked to secure Missouri's allegiance. Its manpower, resources, and strategic location along the nation's most important rivers made it a coveted prize. McCarthy's "Missouri, Bright Land of the West" encouraged Missouri join the Confederate cause, but his was not the only summons. "The case of Missouri appeals most loudly," the Alabama *Mobile Register* proclaimed, "not only to our patriotism and manhood, but to our sense of interest." The Confederacy needed Missouri to "guard [their] western frontier" and hoped her "hardy frontiersman" would fight for the South.<sup>70</sup> They believed Governor Jackson supported their cause, with good reason, especially after he fled the state capital in the face of the Union army. While in exile, Jackson convened the state legislature and passed an ordinance of secession—although historians continue to debate the legitimacy of this measure as there is no proof of a quorum.<sup>71</sup> It was enough for the Confederate States, however, who welcomed delegates from Missouri to the Confederate Congress. Jackson ultimately reestablished his government in Texas, where it remained for the duration of the war.

Back in the capital city, the state convention reconvened. In July of 1861, the delegates appointed new officials to fill the offices vacated by Southern-sympathizers and established a provisional government.<sup>72</sup> On August 1, 1861, they appointed Hamilton R. Gamble the new governor of Missouri. Working in close cooperation with the Lincoln administration, Gamble's government was characterized by conservative Unionism. "They desired to preserve the *status quo* as much as possible," Parrish notes, "while still asserting Missouri's sovereignty over its

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<sup>70</sup> *Glasgow Weekly Times*, June 6, 1861.

<sup>71</sup> Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 268. See also Missouri General Assembly (Confederate), Archives, 1861 (C2722), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia; Arthur Roy Kirkpatrick, "The Admission of Missouri to the Confederacy," *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. 55, No. 4 (July 1961): 366-86.

<sup>72</sup> William E. Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule, 1865-1870* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1965), 3.

own internal affairs against federal encroachment.”<sup>73</sup> In particular, they expressed a commitment to preserving Missouri’s slave property.

In the early stages of the war, the provisional government sought to limit federal intervention in Missouri, but the federal government could not safely neglect Missouri. The actions of Governor Jackson and Missouri’s slaveholding status led them to regard its loyalty with suspicion. Historian Richard S. Brownlee explains the government’s predicament in relation to Missouri:

There were numerous people disloyal to the Union throughout the State, and there were even more, who if forced to take sides, would become disloyal. There was the baffling question as to the definition of loyalty itself. . . . There was the vexing riddle of the various types and shades of disloyalty, and the matter of measures to be taken against men in each instance. There was the problem of guilt; guilt by active resistance to authority; . . . guilt by blood relationship and marriage, and guilt suggested by informers or by mischievous or revengeful people. . . . To further complicate the situation, the Union command also had as its responsibility a very large population that was loyal to the Union. This population had to be protected, supported where possible.<sup>74</sup>

In the interest of caution, the federal government assumed a rabid disloyalty amongst the population of the slave state that did not actually exist—with tremendous implications for wartime Missourians. “Missouri was . . . unquestionably opposed to the secession of the State,” one Missourian later remembered. “But so closely was she identified with the South by reason of her institutions as well as the origin of a large portion of her inhabitants that she became an object of suspicion and of prompt military occupation by the troops of the United States.”<sup>75</sup>

On August 31, 1861, U. S. Major General John C. Frémont placed the state under martial law. Missourians found their civil liberties sacrificed to the exigencies of war. The provisional government mandated all public officials and anyone suspected of disloyalty to take what

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<sup>73</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 143.

<sup>75</sup> S. T. Ruffner, “War in Missouri Began at Camp Jackson,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XX, No. 1 (January 1912), 27.

became known as “test oaths,” avowing their allegiance to the federal government. Provost marshals enforced the oaths with arbitrary power. Property was seized, the writ of *habeas corpus* suspended, and citizens arrested.<sup>76</sup> Frémont also threatened to confiscate the property of known rebels—including slaves. This measure prompted intense debate, but President Lincoln quickly rescinded it in order to appease Missouri’s conservative slaveholding Unionists. Nevertheless, Frémont’s actions alienated white Missourians. Martial law put them in an unenviable position—they “remained loyal to the Union,” historian Michael Fellman argues, “yet deeply resentful of Federal force.”<sup>77</sup>

The federal government and the Union army discovered that there was still one group of Missourians they could rely upon: African Americans. “Many were inclined to believe that most white Missourians—especially slaveholders—were on the wrong side of the war,” Burke explains. As a result, they depended heavily upon enslaved people to enforce martial law. “In a reversal of decades of Missouri law that would not allow for the testimony of slaves against whites,” Burke demonstrates, “the provost marshals used the testimony of slaves as they built cases against white Missourians accused of disloyalty.” The willingness of enslaved people to remain in Missouri and assist the efforts of the Union army, however, was sometimes surpassed by their desire for freedom. When the federal government failed to endorse Frémont’s proposal for limited emancipation, many enslaved people took their own initiative to free themselves. During the course of the Civil War, they fled Missouri by the thousands. Many ran away to the neighboring free states of Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> William E. Parrish, *A History of Missouri, 1860 to 1875*, Vol. III (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1973), 44-45, 67-68.

<sup>77</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 11.

<sup>78</sup> Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 289, 285, 283.



The persistent perception of Missouri's disloyalty seemed justified by the brutal guerrilla fighting that quickly spread throughout the state. Due to the lack of the presence of the regular Confederate army and stringent Union control, Southern-sympathizing Missourians often turned "bushwhacker" and carried on their own private war with a vengeance. "There was hardly any form in which treason to country, treachery to fiends, faithlessness to obligations, and disregard of all law, . . . that was not exhibited daily, for years, in this unhappy State," attorney Charles Drake remembered.<sup>79</sup> In reality, however, these guerrillas had little in common with the Confederacy. According to Fellman, the guerrillas were "bad men" who "warred against the true and good Missouri community. The rebellion of the South had nothing to do with it."<sup>80</sup> In other words, the guerrilla war in Missouri became less about the Union or the Confederacy than about revenge. There was little ideological motivation undergirding the conflict besides retribution for perceived injustices committed against the guerrillas by their neighbors, the provisional government, and the Union army.

In fact, far from reinforcing Missouri's ties to the Confederacy, guerrilla activity only increased the federal presence in the state and radicalized Unionists, who supported more and more severe measures to stop them. Ultimately, the guerrillas never had the organization or strength to dislodge the provisional government or the Union army, who remained in firm control of Missouri throughout the war. Even though guerrillas menaced private citizens and disrupted Union operations along the western border of the state, inhabitants of eastern Missouri, particularly St. Louis, saw very little fighting. Despite the best efforts of the guerrillas, historian

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<sup>79</sup> Charles D. Drake, "Missouri Voters' Oath: Have the People of Missouri the Right to Prescribe the Qualifications of Missouri Voters?" (argument, *Francis P. Blair, Jr. vs. Stephen Ridgely and John S. Thomson*, St. Louis Circuit Court, St. Louis, MO, April 19, 1866), 7.

<sup>80</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 90.

Adam Arenson points out, “Missouri’s condition was so stable that the principles for postwar government could already be considered in June 1862.”<sup>81</sup>

By 1863, however, Missourians became increasingly vexed with the provisional government. A cadre of Radicals, many of them German immigrants, began to challenge Gamble’s conservatives.<sup>82</sup> War-weary Missourians seemed receptive to their new agenda, particularly in regard to the institution of slavery. As Drake observed:

The scales have fallen from the eyes of tens of thousands of that people . . . and they see, with startled gaze, that they have nursed in their bosom the only viper that could ever have inflicted upon them such deadly wounds. . . . And they will never unlearn that truth. As well attempt to roll back the Mississippi to its source, as to stem the mighty swell of that enfranchised opinion, which, throughout Missouri, presses home upon S[la]avery all the woes and tears, the ravages and dismay, which have made those two years hideous and insufferable to her people.<sup>83</sup>

“The conviction is universal,” Drake continued, “that there is no more peace, and consequently no more prosperity, for our State, while Slavery sits firm on our soil, to kindle anew every day the fires of civil strife, and invite perpetual incursions from the South.”<sup>84</sup> Because officials in the provisional government would not be called to face regular elections until 1864, however, public opinion on this matter carried little weight. The feeling of dissent grew palpable.

In response, Gamble called a convention to discuss emancipation. The delegates devised a program for gradual emancipation, followed by varying periods of apprenticeship for former slaves depending on their age, formally abolishing the institution on July 4, 1876.<sup>85</sup> It also proposed to soften the blow to slaveholders by suspending any further tax payments on slave property. This disappointed the Radicals, who wanted immediate emancipation. “It was,” Drake

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<sup>81</sup> Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*, 132, 138.

<sup>82</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Charles D. Drake, “‘Camp Jackson: Its History and Significance,’ Oration of Charles D. Drake, delivered in the City of St. Louis, May 11, 1863, on the Anniversary of the Capture of Camp Jackson” (St. Louis: Printed at the Missouri Democrat Office, 1863), 12.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>85</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 4.

complained, “for any good to this generation, about equivalent to declaring it in the next century.”<sup>86</sup> Drake believed Missourians would support immediate emancipation as an essential wartime measure, but the issue was never put before them. Outraged by the intransigence of the provisional government, Drake fumed: “Let others call it what they may, I call it DESPOTISM—the exercise of absolute power, the wielding of authority unlimited and uncontrolled by men, constitutions, or laws, and depending alone upon the will of those who wield it.”<sup>87</sup>

Meanwhile, federal authorities authorized a new series of repressive measures under the auspices of martial law. One of the most troubling aspects of the war came under the command of Union General Thomas Ewing, commander of the District of the Border, which encompassed much of western Missouri and eastern Kansas. Under martial law, Ewing also served as the ultimate authority in that region. In the minds of many Missourians, Ewing was responsible for guerrilla atrocities since he had not effectively prevented them. In 1863, the general proposed a new strategy to eradicate the guerrilla forces in Missouri. Ewing believed the best way to undermine them was to take direct action against their families, who frequently sheltered and provided supplies for their rebellious relatives.<sup>88</sup> In order to eliminate this base of support, Ewing seized a three-story brick building in Kansas City and transformed the top floor into a crude jail. By August, approximately seventeen women were detained there, including two sisters of the infamous and merciless guerrilla William “Bloody Bill” Anderson.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Charles D. Drake, “The Missouri State Convention, and its Ordinance of Emancipation” (speech, St. Louis, MO, July 9, 1863), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Drake, “The Missouri State Convention, and its Ordinance of Emancipation,” 8 (emphasis in original).

<sup>88</sup> Neely, *The Border between Them*, 119. See also Whites, “Forty Shirts and a Wagonload of Wheat,” 56-78.

<sup>89</sup> The number of prisoners varies according to different sources; see Neely, *The Border between Them*, 189.

Shortly after the women arrived, however, questions arose about the building's structural integrity. According to one source, the added weight of the prisoners to the building caused its crumbling walls to bulge under the strain. On August 13, 1863, the decaying structure collapsed, resulting in the deaths of five prisoners and severe injury to twelve others. Suspicion of sabotage immediately fell on Ewing and his men. Some believed the soldiers had removed the building's interior support columns, deliberately bringing about the collapse, but the rumors were never proven.<sup>90</sup>

Spurred on by these deaths and a decade of hostility towards Kansas free-soilers, the guerrillas launched an attack on the abolitionist stronghold of Lawrence, Kansas. Notorious guerrilla William Clarke Quantrill led the raid; riding into Lawrence with a band of 440 men on August 21, 1863, and unleashing them on its unsuspecting inhabitants. His raiders sacked the town and showed little mercy to its occupants, killing at least 150 men and boys and burning nearly every building in town.<sup>91</sup>

The raid quickly came to be known as the Lawrence Massacre and, though Quantrill's guerrillas were the true perpetrators, Ewing shared in the blame for the atrocity. The public widely condemned him for not taking greater steps to prevent guerrilla violence. On August 25, 1863, Ewing responded to such criticism by issuing General Order No. 11, the most controversial act of the Civil War in Missouri. This order read, in part:

All persons living in Jackson, Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri, and in that part of Vernon included in this district . . . are hereby ordered to remove from their present places of residence within fifteen days from the date hereof. Those who, within that time, establish their loyalty to the satisfaction of the commanding officer of the military station nearest their present places of residence will . . . be

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<sup>90</sup> Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 280; Neely, *The Border between Them*, 120-1.

<sup>91</sup> Albert Castel, "Order No. 11 and the Civil War on the Border," in *The Civil War in Missouri: Essays from the Missouri Historical Review, 1906-2006*, ed. William E. Parrish (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 2006), 142, 140.

permitted to remove to any military station in this district, or to any part of the State of Kansas, except the counties on the eastern border of the State.<sup>92</sup>

Ostensibly, Ewing designed the order to prevent another raid like the one carried out on Lawrence. Ewing hoped that by evacuating these four counties, the guerrillas would lose their allies amongst the civilian population and hence their ability to sustain their forces. “Though this measure may seem too severe,” Ewing wrote, “I believe it will prove not inhuman . . . but will soon result, though with much unmerited loss and suffering, in putting an end to this savage border war.”<sup>93</sup>

The order fulfilled its purpose. It forced an estimated 40,000 civilians living in the region, both Unionists and Confederates, out of their homes.<sup>94</sup> Troops from Kansas primarily enforced the order; consumed with anger over the Lawrence Massacre, they used it as an opportunity to exact revenge. Many Missourians lost their homes and possessions. Some even lost their lives. Within two weeks, the counties affected by General Order No. 11 were desolated; they became known as the “Burnt District.” Blackened chimneys, called “Jennison tombstones” in honor of the infamous jayhawker chieftain Charles “Doc” Jennison, dotted the landscape where homes once stood.<sup>95</sup>

Refugees of the order had no place to turn and wandered helplessly on the dusty, sweltering hot roads looking for shelter. “It is heart sickening to see what I have seen,” one Union soldier wrote his wife, “a desolated country and men & women and children, some of

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<sup>92</sup> *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Ser. 1, Vol. XXII, Pt. II (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), 473; hereinafter cited as *Official Records*.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 584-5.

<sup>94</sup> Neely, *The Border between Them*, 124. This number is an estimate based on the population of those counties before the war. Ronald D. Smith puts the number of residents closer to 10,000; see Ronald D. Smith, *Thomas Ewing, Jr.: Frontier Lawyer and Civil War General* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2008), 201-4.

<sup>95</sup> Alberta Wilson Constant, *Paintbox on the Frontier: The Life and Times of George Caleb Bingham* (New York: Ty Crowell, Co., 1974), 151.

them allmost [*sic*] naked. . . . Oh God.”<sup>96</sup> One victim of the order, Frances Fristoe Twyman, later recounted the horrors she witnessed: “Never can I forget the many scenes of misery and distress I saw. . . . The road . . . was crowded with . . . women walking with their babies in their arms, packs on their backs and four or five children following after them—some crying for bread, some crying to be taken back to their homes. Alas! They knew not that their once happy homes were gone. The torch had been applied—nothing left to tell the tale of the carnage but the chimneys. O, how sad!”<sup>97</sup> Now homeless and dispossessed, many Confederate Missourians fled south—“gone to Dixie,” as one Missourian put it.<sup>98</sup> Their removal further cemented Union control over the state.

Following Governor Gamble’s sudden death from pneumonia in 1864, Missouri increasingly came under the sway of Radical Republicans. They felt the provisional government had fulfilled its objective of keeping Missouri in the Union, but was otherwise ineffective. The Radicals’ frustration with the provisional government mounted later that same year when Confederate General Sterling Price made one final attempt to reclaim control of Missouri. He anticipated a great uprising of sympathetic Missourians would join his ranks and drive out the Union army, but the response was not forthcoming.<sup>99</sup> His famous “Great Raid,” was ultimately unsuccessful and the state remained under the sway of federal power.

The Civil War in Missouri ended with little fanfare. After Price’s withdrawal from the state, the Confederates recognized their cause in Missouri was lost. Some, most famously Confederate General Jo Shelby and his “Iron Brigade,” left to settle in Mexico rather than surrender. The guerrilla war, however, continued unabated. Many of the Union troops in

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<sup>96</sup> Castel, “Order No. 11 and the Civil War on the Border,” 146.

<sup>97</sup> Frances Fristoe Twyman, “Reminiscences of the War,” in *Bitter Tears: Missouri Women and Civil War, Their Stories*, ed. Carolyn M. Bartels (Independence, MO: Two Trails Publishing, 2002), 147.

<sup>98</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 74, 237, 77.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

Missouri having either been dispatched to the east as reinforcements or else demobilized following the Confederate surrender, there was no one left to keep the guerrillas in check. The escalation of guerrilla atrocities at the end of the war further convinced the Radicals of the provisional government's inability to adequately respond to crises.

St. Louis attorney Charles Drake led this new Radical movement. Carl Schurz later remembered Drake as “an able lawyer and an unquestionably honest man, but narrow-minded, dogmatic and intolerant to a degree.”<sup>100</sup> In particular, Drake and his followers had no tolerance for the defenders of slavery and disunion. They considered themselves “as the *Ne Plus Ultra* of American Radicalism and American loyalty—that Radicalism,” they explained, “which . . . in any political capacity prefers a black loyalist to a white traitor.”<sup>101</sup> Anxious to cast off the trappings of slavery, the Radicals wanted to encourage a new rash of immigration to Missouri and establish the groundwork for progressive economic and social changes.<sup>102</sup>

The Radical Republicans got off to a promising start as Drake led them to a remarkable victory in the elections of 1864. They won the governor's office and swept the General Assembly as well, giving them complete control of Missouri's government. The disenfranchisement of Confederate sympathizers under the 1861 test oaths certainly contributed to their success. According to Parrish, “nearly 52,000 fewer Missourians went to the polls in 1864 than in the previous presidential election.”<sup>103</sup>

Flushed with their success, the Radicals drafted a new constitution—nicknamed the Drake Constitution—and quickly passed an ordinance of immediate and unconditional

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<sup>100</sup> Carl Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1863-1869*, Vol. III (New York: The McClure Company, 1908), 293.

<sup>101</sup> *The Holt County Sentinel*, October 27, 1865.

<sup>102</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 7.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 12-3.

emancipation, effective January 11, 1865.<sup>104</sup> Missourians had taken a dramatic step for any slaveholding state by abolishing slavery *before* the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment, but they were less willing to provide civil rights for freed people or protect them from violence. Although the Freedman’s Bureau offered African Americans some assistance, they received little support from the majority of white Missourians. “Slavery dies hard,” Union General Clinton B. Fisk observed. He continued:

I hear its expiring agonies and witness its contortions in death in every quarter of my district. . . . I blush for my race when I discover the wicked barbarity of the late masters and mistresses of the recently freed persons. . . . Some few have driven their black people away from them with nothing to eat or scarcely to wear. . . . There is much sickness and suffering among them; many need help. I hope the waters will soon grow still, and Missouri in peace be permitted to pursue her way in the golden path of freedom and empire.<sup>105</sup>

Unwilling to wait for that uncertain future, however, many African American Missourians pursued opportunities outside the state. As they had throughout the war, many freed people continued to leave for Kansas, Iowa, and Illinois; a quarter of those who remained relocated to the St. Louis area. By 1870, African Americans made up only 6.9% of Missouri’s population—the smallest percentage of any of the formerly slaveholding states, besides Delaware.<sup>106</sup>

The emancipation provision, however, was only one of a number of controversial features of the Drake Constitution. It also included what became known as the Iron Clad Oath—a measure intended to disenfranchise former Confederates and Southern-sympathizers. The Iron Clad Oath demanded that all voters and all persons serving in public office, including elected officials, lawyers, jurors, educators, and clergymen, swear they never committed treason against the United States. The constitution deemed all veterans of Confederate army and navy traitors, as well as former guerrillas and anyone else who had “ever given aid, comfort, countenance, or

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<sup>104</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 17; Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 299.

<sup>105</sup> *Official Records*, Ser. I, Vol. XLVIII, Pt. I, 1257.

<sup>106</sup> Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 151.



support” to the nation’s enemies, whether by “sending within their lines money, goods, letters or information.” It also condemned those who “advised, or aided any person to enter the service of such enemies; or . . . by act or word manifested his . . . sympathy with those engaged in exciting or carrying on rebellion against the United States.” Anyone who failed to take the oath within sixty days would not only be banned from voting and removed from public office, but might also face fines or imprisonment. In addition, the Iron Clad Oath called for the biennial registration of voters. The Drake Constitution gave registration officials complete latitude to decide for themselves whether voters took the oath sincerely or not. Finally, the constitution declared, “no person shall be allowed to vote, who would not be a qualified voter according to the terms of this Constitution, if the sec[tions] and Article[s] thereof were then in force.”<sup>107</sup> In other words, anyone who would be unable to vote under the provisions of the new constitution could not vote for its ratification.

Radicals defended the Drake Constitution and the Iron Clad Oath as the necessary first steps towards their long-term goals of restoring Missouri to economic prosperity and to its proper place among the loyal states. They could not countenance the thought of secessionists and former Confederates returning to the polls to jeopardize their work. As Drake put it:

The moral sense of all patriots revolts at the thought of the government of a State being controlled by those who, in a war of unheard-of atrocity, had traitorously sought to destroy the Nation of which that State is a part; had ravaged the State itself; had waged cruel and relentless strife against its citizens, solely because they were loyal and faithful; had imbrued their hands for years in the blood of unoffending patriots; had made the land howl with the wails of the widows and orphans of murdered loyalists; and yet, after all this, would, with the impudence of the arch-fiend himself, demand equal rights at the ballot-box.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Missouri Constitution (1865), art. II, sec. 3-14, art. XIII, sec. 6. See also Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 27-37; and Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 121-2.

<sup>108</sup> Drake, “Missouri Voters’ Oath,” 11.

Many loyal Missourians agreed with Drake, particularly Union veterans. In order to gain their support for the new constitution, the Radicals mobilized the memory of the late war by “waving the bloody shirt.” They branded their opponents “copperheads” and, according to Parrish, “admonished the eligible soldier electorate to vote as they shot—that is, to support the ‘loyal men’ in their efforts to secure protection at home for all ‘true’ Unionists.”<sup>109</sup>

As the Drake Constitution went before the people of Missouri for ratification in the late spring of 1865, the state stood at the cusp of transformative changes. Congress may have spared Missouri from Radical Reconstruction, but the Drake Constitution amounted to just that—it demonstrated that Missourians embraced the agenda of Radical Reconstruction in a way no other formerly slaveholding state did. The Drake Constitution was Missouri’s opportunity to divest itself forever from the cultural and political ties it had long held with the South. “The world is attentively and anxiously observing our progress,” the *Missouri State Times* advised its readers. “With a free State Constitution, and the adoption of a policy that will speedily and effectively eradicate the disloyal element from amongst us, Missouri will be regarded as the emigrant’s haven of rest. Reject the proposed Constitution and our State will be flooded with rebels, and those seeking homes in the West will shun us as a community of semi-barbarians.”<sup>110</sup>

Missourians ratified the Drake Constitution by a slim majority and it went into effect on the Fourth of July, 1865. Some aspects of the constitution were quite progressive for the time. For example, it provided for the creation of the first publicly funded school system in Missouri. Although public schools would be segregated, it committed to providing equal funding for white and black schools.<sup>111</sup> The constitution was less successful, however, when it came to African American enfranchisement. African American veterans and the Equal Rights League pressured

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<sup>109</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 7.

<sup>110</sup> *Missouri State Times*, quoted in *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>111</sup> Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 124.

the Radicals to use the new constitution to defend their rights as citizens, but to no avail. African American suffrage was broadly opposed on racist grounds, even among the Radicals, who feared it would not only lessen support for their party, but also draw a mass of freed people from the South into Missouri. Ultimately, African American Missourians would not obtain the vote until the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment. Still, Parrish concedes, in terms of racial reconciliation, “Missouri progressed much more rapidly toward a lasting, harmonious solution than her Southern sisters.”<sup>112</sup>

Upon ratification of the Drake Constitution, the Radicals also began implementing their plans to stimulate economic growth and attract new immigration. They understood, Parrish argues, “a westward movement was inevitable at the end of the war, and those with a stake in the state’s future prosperity determined to channel as much of it to Missouri as possible.”<sup>113</sup> The Radicals hoped to draw, as one paper put it, “good, law-abiding, loyal and energetic residents, to purchase the farms and take the places of the disloyal, the dangerous or the useless portion of the population, and to help improve the country.”<sup>114</sup> As a result, emigrant aid societies formed across the state looking to attract outsiders. New Englanders were particularly drawn to Missouri and bought up tens of thousands of acres. In 1863, one Boston paper contained glowing accounts of Missouri, predicting: “Freedom, with her immense resources, will soon make her [Missouri] the Empire State of the West.”<sup>115</sup> In response to circulars advertising land sales in Boone County, one New Englander remarked: “Missouri is to be a great state and is rich in latent fortunes for

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<sup>112</sup> Parrish, *A History of Missouri, 1860-1875*, 150-1.

<sup>113</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 179.

<sup>114</sup> *Missouri State Times*, June 16, 1865, quoted in *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>115</sup> Quoted in Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 180. See also George W. Smith, “New England Business Interests in Missouri During the Civil War,” *Missouri Historical Review*, Vol. 41, No. 1 (October 1946), 1-18.

enterprising Yankees.”<sup>116</sup> In the aftermath of the Civil War, Missouri did indeed record a 45.6% population increase.<sup>117</sup> As many as 95% of the new immigrants came from other Union states.<sup>118</sup>

This stint of Radical dominance had tremendous implications for the development of Civil War memory in Missouri. Economic prosperity and population growth, not to mention the disenfranchisement of former Confederates and the extension of some civil rights to African Americans, laid a foundation for progressivism that distanced Missouri not only from the Deep South, but from the other border states as well. In Kentucky, for example, Democrats quickly returned to power after the war and restored the franchise to former Confederates as early as November 1865. As a result, Parrish points out, “the example of Kentucky, where Conservatives entrenched themselves in power at the end of the war only to succumb to infiltration from ex-Confederates, contrasts markedly with Missouri. In Kentucky, economic and social stagnation characterized the five years after the war, and the state was long in recovering.”<sup>119</sup>

As time passed, however, significant opposition to the Radical regime grew within Missouri, particularly among former Confederates and Conservative Unionists, who accused the Radicals of perpetuating wartime hostilities. “We have no doubt that if the devil had made the Constitution of Missouri,” the *Glasgow Weekly Times* quipped, “he would have made a better one for Drake’s purposes than Drake himself turned off; because the devil is not as mean as Drake, and would have not have gone too far—as Drake did—in the matter of the test-oath. . . . Drake’s fame as a lawyer—as it is as a man—is fast getting to be infamy.”<sup>120</sup> According to Parrish, Francis P. Blair, leading Missouri conservative and friend of the late President Lincoln,

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<sup>116</sup> George W. McKee, quoted in Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 183.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 185-6.

<sup>118</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 243-4.

<sup>119</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 325; Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 37.

<sup>120</sup> *Glasgow Weekly Times*, August 31, 1866.

“denounced the new constitution as ‘begotten of malice and concocted by a clique who were destitute alike of heart, head, or conscience.’”<sup>121</sup>

After more than a decade of bloodshed, dislocation, and recrimination, many Missourians expressed a desire to restore harmony to their state. Former Confederates, in particular, sought to bring wartime hostilities to a close. Following President Andrew Johnson’s promise of amnesty to all but a select group of high-ranking Confederates, they expected to return to their homes on equal terms with other U. S. citizens. In Missouri, however, the Iron Clad Oath remained in effect, barring Southern-sympathizers from full participation in the new state government. Some disillusioned Confederates fell in with the guerrilla bands that still roamed the countryside and Missouri suffered a resurgence of bushwhacker violence as a result. Violence of this kind was characteristic of Reconstruction throughout the South, where it was almost exclusively employed to intimidate freed people and restore white supremacy. In Missouri, however, the violence was often white-on-white, as the guerrillas targeted Unionists, Radical Republicans, and German immigrants.<sup>122</sup> In 1868, for example, as Carl Schurz prepared to embark on a trip across state, his friends advised him to go armed. “I was warned by anxious friends that my journey might be somewhat unsafe,” Schurz remembered, “and that it would be wise for myself and my companion to travel with revolvers on our laps, ready for action.”<sup>123</sup>

The Radicals swept the state elections again in 1868, but the Conservative Unionists became ever-more critical about the excesses of radicalism in Missouri.<sup>124</sup> Alienated by Radical

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<sup>121</sup> Francis P. Blair, *Missouri Democrat*, October 23, 1865, quoted in Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 57.

<sup>122</sup> Aron, *American Confluence*, 187.

<sup>123</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1863-1869*, 293.

<sup>124</sup> There was criticism of Radical policies from religious quarters as well. The Drake Constitution’s failure to exempt the clergy from the Iron Clad Oath drove many German Catholics into the ranks of the opposition, who regarded the Oath as nothing more than anti-Catholic nativism. Father John A. Cummings, who refused to take the oath, brought a test case against it in the courts. In October 1865, the Missouri Supreme Court upheld the Iron Clad

Republicans but not willing to throw their support to the Democratic Party, they opposed the Drake Constitution and maintained loyalty to President Johnson's lenient Reconstruction policies. "Desirous of healing the scars of war and concentrating on the development of Missouri's future potential," Parrish explains, "they became increasingly dissatisfied with a leadership that seemingly failed to see the necessity of building a stronger party foundation than the present one based on the continued proscription of the enemy." To this end, they favored African American enfranchisement and sought a removal of the Iron Clad Oath. Their proposal was nothing less than full equality for all male Missourians. They felt this would "promote the 'spirit of harmony' necessary for the continued progress of the state."<sup>125</sup>

Schurz emerged as the chief challenger to Drake and his Radical Republican regime. Since his earlier visit to the West, Schurz had settled in Wisconsin and served in the Union army. After the war, he took a job with a St. Louis newspaper and established himself in Missouri. A Republican himself, Schurz understood that wartime animosities heavily colored Missouri's political situation. "Republicanism in Missouri was in one respect somewhat different from Republicanism elsewhere," he explained. "In Missouri a large part of the population had joined the rebellion. The two parties in the Civil War had not been geographically divided. The Civil War had therefore the character of a neighborhood war—not only State against State or district against district, but house against house. . . . The bitter animosities of the civil conflict survived in Missouri much longer than in the Northern States."<sup>126</sup> Schurz encouraged Missourians to

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Oath. Cummings then appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court, which ultimately declared the Iron Clad Oath unconstitutional in *Cummings v. Missouri* in March, 1866. See Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 65-75.

<sup>125</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 26, 137.

<sup>126</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1863-1869*, 292-3.

“endeavor to close up the distracting agitations which have sprung from our civil conflict,” and believed he could help make that happen.<sup>127</sup>

Missourians responded positively to his message and Schurz viewed his success as “evidence of the liberal and progressive spirit moving the people of Missouri.” In fact, Parrish argues, Schurz’s election was “an indication of their desire to forget the past and proceed with the work of building a strong Missouri for the future.”<sup>128</sup> “In Missouri, [Schurz] claimed, the passions of the war were over. Everyone was obeying the laws and working to bring prosperity to the state. The only remaining reminder of the war keeping passions alive was that ‘thousands and thousands of citizens . . . [were] . . . cut off . . . from all the political rights of citizenship.’”<sup>129</sup> Schurz’s popularity indicated a “profound discontent” with Radical Reconstruction.

The fracture within the Republican Party became a formal split at the 1868 Republican convention. During the convention, Schurz introduced a resolution to modify the party platform in favor of “equal suffrage for all,” including African Americans and former Confederates.<sup>130</sup> “We highly commend the spirit of magnanimity and forbearance with which men who have served in the rebellion . . . are received back into the communion of the loyal people;” Schurz proclaimed, “and we favor the removal of the disqualifications and restrictions imposed upon the late rebels.”<sup>131</sup> “The original justification for these laws had long ceased to have force,” he continued, “and their chief function as to furnish unscrupulous Republican politicians with the

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<sup>127</sup> Carl Schurz, “On Being Chosen United States Senator,” in *Speeches, Correspondence and Political Papers of Carl Schurz, October 20, 1852-November 26, 1870*, Vol. 1, ed. Frederic Bancroft (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1913), 476.

<sup>128</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 267, 309.

<sup>129</sup> Heather Cox Richardson, *West from Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 109.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>131</sup> Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1863-1869*, 285; *Missouri Democrat*, September 3, 1870; Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 295.

means to maintain party supremacy in State and local affairs.”<sup>132</sup> The Radicals, however, refused to compromise.

On December 15, 1870, Schurz broke with his fellow Republicans and proclaimed himself a “liberal Republican.” The central plank of the Liberal Republican platform was political equality for freed people and former Confederates alike. Schurz explained: “We desire peace and good will to all men. We desire the removal of political restrictions and the maintenance of local self-government to the utmost extent compatible with the Constitution as it is. We desire the questions connected with the Civil War to be disposed of forever, to make room as soon as possible for the new problems of the present and the future.”<sup>133</sup> “The fundamental principle of government, [Schurz] declared, was not to enrich a political oligarchy but ‘to guaranty [*sic*] the largest possible liberty, and, at the same time, the greatest security of individual rights to all in our political and social organization.’”<sup>134</sup>

Schurz’s Liberal Republican Party appealed to Missourians from both ends of the political spectrum and enabled him to build a coalition of Conservative Unionists and Democrats. “I know that in the efforts I am now making,” Schurz observed, “I have the hearty sympathy of large masses of people, not only Democrats by any means, but Republicans who are not corrupted by the patronage or frightened by official terrorism. Here in the West you can observe clearly how this movement is disintegrating the Democratic party. The late rebels are doing admirably well. They pronounce themselves without reserve for the new order of things.”<sup>135</sup> Liberal Republicans insisted, however, that they did not desire former Confederates to wield too much influence. “The nearest duty in this State,” one newspaper observed, “is to put

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<sup>132</sup> Frederic Bancroft and William A. Dunning, “A Sketch of Carl Schurz’s Political Career, 1869-1906,” in Schurz, *The Reminiscences of Carl Schurz, 1863-1869*, 321.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>134</sup> Richardson, *West from Appomattox*, 110.

<sup>135</sup> Bancroft and Dunning, “A Sketch of Carl Schurz’s Political Career,” 332.



out of the way a Bourbon Democracy, which misgoverns Missouri, breeds disorder, impairs public credit, and blocks the path to all reform.”<sup>136</sup>

With Schurz at their head, the Liberal Republicans swept the state elections in 1870 and followed up on their success in 1871 by electing their candidate, B. Gratz Brown, governor. The Liberal press celebrated the demise of the Radical faction. “Liberal men are going to rule Missouri,” the *St. Louis Democrat* informed the Radicals, “and your part in its future is ended.”<sup>137</sup> In a very real sense, Missourians pioneered political reconciliation through the Liberal Republican movement. “As the postwar years lengthened,” Parrish argues, “Missourians of both political faiths and of differing wartime loyalties found common economic, cultural, and social ties. In so doing, old animosities frequently proved a hindrance to communication and a needless burden.”<sup>138</sup> Schurz’s Liberal Republican Party promised to forge “a new middle ground for America.” It made sense that such a philosophy would take root in Missouri, a state that had long accommodated diverse political, economic, and cultural systems.

Building on their success in Missouri, the Liberal Republican movement soon spread to the national scene where it enjoyed a brief period of ascendancy. According to historian Heather Cox Richardson,

the Liberal Republican platform defined a new alliance in American politics for the rest of the century and began the reconciliation of the North and South around the idea of individualism. In this increasingly mainstream vision, individual men could rise on their own, so long as government refused to pander to the interests of industrialists or disaffected workers. . . . Together, the men and women who embraced this worldview made up a new ‘middle class,’ distinguished not by their income but by their determination to hold what they believed was an evenhanded government steady from the demands of those at the top as well as those at the bottom of society.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> *The Andrew County Republican*, September 12, 1873.

<sup>137</sup> *The Weekly Caucasian*, September 24, 1870.

<sup>138</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 319.

<sup>139</sup> Richardson, *West from Appomattox*, 122, 147.

The Liberal Republican Party's emphasis on individualism, a trait increasingly associated with the mythic American West, was at the heart of its appeal and helped link Missouri even more strongly to its Western identity. Americans imagined the West as a place where, with hard work and persistence, rugged individuals could avail themselves of the untapped resources available there. "The West became an image," Richardson argues, "permanently rural, antigovernment, and wild." Equally important, "the West offered a new national culture distanced from the tensions between the North and South . . . without any sectional strife and, in fact, without any of the causes of that strife—no people, no politicians, no agriculture, no business."<sup>140</sup> Fertile ground, in other words, for reconciliation.

The same emphasis on individualism that powered the Liberal Republican movement also manifested itself in the romanticization of outlaws—most famously the James Gang of Missouri. Indeed, Missouri was so strongly associated with this brand of individualism that in some quarters it became known as the "Outlaw State." Increasingly, Americans regarded "outlaws as representatives of a free West, uncorrupted by government." According to Richardson, "romantic tales of cowboys and of men like Jesse James and Billy the Kid, who, in spite of their outlaw status, represented loyalty, fairness, antimonopoly, and self-government, permitted mainstream Americans to relocate American individualism to the Far West as it disappeared in the East."<sup>141</sup> Jesse James, for example, justified his lawlessness on the persecution of Confederate sympathizers like himself by the Radical Republican government. James claimed the banks, railroads, and express companies were the *real* robbers, who enriched themselves by

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<sup>140</sup> Richardson, *West from Appomattox*, 270-1, 155, 116.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 225, 346.

stifling individuals. To some, James became a hero, exhibiting distinctly Western traits like “coolness in danger,” “nerve,” “skill,” “endurance and overpowering bravery.”<sup>142</sup>

The success of the Liberal Republican movement was short-lived, however. By 1872, Missouri returned to the control of Democrats, who held the state for the next thirty-five years.<sup>143</sup> Missouri’s Democrat ascendancy had more to do with the rejection of the Republican Party as the party of special interests and corruption, however, than with any identification with the Solid South. In fact, they credited Missouri’s prosperity during Reconstruction to the fact that it “was a thriving and growing *western* community.”<sup>144</sup> Regardless, they hoped to dismantle the legacy of the Radical Republicans in Missouri. According to the *St. Louis Dispatch*:

*It is impossible . . . for the Missouri Democracy to forget within the next twenty years the remorseless persecution that was its lot from 1862 to 1870. . . . When the millennium comes, indeed, and the lion and the lamb lie down together, the new party, born of a race that has neither wrongs to remember nor monuments to build, may come into Missouri as a plant likely to find root and growth, and bear fruit meet for the repentance of its followers. Until then, Democracy in the state will remain as now—the Gibraltar [*sic*] of the continent.*<sup>145</sup>

Initially, it looked as though they might achieve their goal.

Republicans deplored the loss of Missouri, taking up the refrain of “Poor Old Missouri” in the press. Throughout the late 1880s, any time the failings of Democratic rule were contemplated—when a new saloon was built, when public education stagnated, or when the mosquitoes were particularly noxious—papers always reported it to the tune of “Poor Old Missouri.” “It has been called ‘Poor Old Missouri’ so long,” *The Butler Weekly Times* complained, “that it is not easy to convince people that we have here one of the greatest states in

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<sup>142</sup> Richardson, *West from Appomattox*, 223.

<sup>143</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 323-4.

<sup>144</sup> *The Weekly Caucasian*, “The Road to Hell,” March 4, 1871 (emphasis mine).

<sup>145</sup> “Missouri Democracy,” *St. Louis Dispatch*, May 13 [n.d.] in Vol. 3a, Ira B. Hyde (1838-1926), Papers, 1867-1939 (C122), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia (emphasis in original).

the Union.”<sup>146</sup> Indeed, the epithet tarnished Missouri’s national reputation. For example, the *Omaha Daily Bee* admitted that “although the state has excellent resources and natural advantages, the quality of its population does not seem to be up to the standard of modern civilization.”<sup>147</sup> Missourians lamented the blow to their reputation and blamed the Republican press for the problem. As the *Chariton Courier* put it:

For many years the *Globe-Democrat* has made the air blue with abuse of Missouri. . . . It has cried ‘poor old Missouri’ until it has actually succeeded in giving the state a bad name all over the country. As law abiding as any commonwealth in the Union, strangers have been afraid to pass through ‘poor old Missouri’ lest they be robbed, or shot down, or both. . . . It would seem that considerations of home pride would have inspired a big newspaper to efforts in behalf of its own state, especially when that state was absolutely the best field for the investment of capital, affording the best homes for immigrants, settled already by the best people and enjoying the best government to be found anywhere in the far West.<sup>148</sup>

Contrary to popular imagination, they argued, “there is no more law-abiding, religious, peace-loving people in all the land.” Missourians are an “earnest, conservative, patriotic people, self-respecting, but not intolerant, firm in their opinions, but not proscriptive. They are proud of their state, anxious for its improvement and development. . . . To real and practical reform they are not indifferent.”<sup>149</sup> Just as they had during the Civil War, Missourians defended their loyalty in the face of mounting skepticism.

All was not lost, however. Years of Republican dominance, first by the transformative administration of the Radicals then by the moderating influence of the Liberals, meant Missouri would not be “Redeemed” alongside the former Confederate states. “Fortunately for Missouri,” Parrish argues, “the Liberal wing of the Radical party infused the Democratic ranks with much of its progressive spirit during the 1870’s. As a consequence, the good beginnings of the postwar

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<sup>146</sup> *The Butler Weekly Times*, April 25, 1888.

<sup>147</sup> *Omaha Daily Bee*, August 29, 1889.

<sup>148</sup> *Chariton Courier*, July 26, 1888.

<sup>149</sup> *Chariton Courier*, April 17, 1890.

era were consolidated and advanced in the following decade.”<sup>150</sup> Even under the Democratic aegis, Missourians continued to encourage development, diversification, and progress.

The Civil War era was a transformative one for the state of Missouri. Although Missouri entered the Union as a slave state, embodying slaveholders’ aspirations to expand the institution, it quickly linked its destiny to the West, rather than to the South. As the “Gateway to the West,” Missouri embraced immigration, internal improvements, and trade, and looked forward to a bright and prosperous future. Unfortunately, the Civil War interrupted these plans and turned the state’s divided population against itself. The war years were devastating for Missourians. In their wake, however, Missourians focused on westward expansion as grounds for political and social reconciliation, distancing themselves from the legacy of the Civil War and aligning themselves more strongly with the West. “The incidents, the details of the conflict which went on in Missouri from 1861 to 1865, are almost incredible,” one state history observed. “They are shocking. But recalling of them is justified by what followed. . . . Nowhere else along the border, nowhere else in the country, were the wounds healed, the scars removed, so rapidly as in Missouri.” “In a decade,” it continued, “Missouri had recovered from the strife and the desolation, and was prospering. . . . No other State has been called upon to adapt itself in such short time to such radical changes.”<sup>151</sup> Missouri avoided the pitfalls of Radical Reconstruction and laid a foundation for prosperity, but that scarcely meant Missourians had entirely forgiven or forgotten. In the coming years, Missourians would struggle to negotiate their new relationship not only with one another, but with the nation as a whole.

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<sup>150</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 326.

<sup>151</sup> Stevens, *Centennial History of Missouri*, viii.

## CHAPTER 2

“In All the Memories of the People”: George Caleb Bingham’s *Order No. 11*

“Art being the most efficient hand-maid of history, . . . I . . . became impressed with the conviction that . . . I could not find a nobler employment for my pencil, than in giving to the future, . . . truthful representations . . . of the character of . . . military rule.”<sup>1</sup>

-*George Caleb Bingham (1871)*

In 1865, “Missouri Artist” George Caleb Bingham put his paintbrush to canvas and captured an indelible scene of the Civil War. Horrified by the Union’s implementation of General Order No. 11, which left tens of thousands of Missourians destitute and homeless, Bingham painted *Order No. 11* in response.<sup>2</sup> With its stark depiction of murder, theft, and destruction, it is a painting unlike any other produced during the Civil War. In *Order No. 11*, Bingham communicated a specific memory of the war, one that spoke to the complicated nature of the Civil War in Missouri and one that ensured that experience would not be lost to time. Through an examination of this painting, we move from the general into the particular, revealing how Bingham and his contemporaries grappled with the contentious legacy of the Civil War in their state.

Bingham was no stranger to using history painting to achieve particular ends. In fact, “from the era of western development to the end of Reconstruction,” art historian Nancy Rash observes, “the major paintings by George Caleb Bingham recorded American society as manifest

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<sup>1</sup> George Caleb Bingham, *An Address to the Public, Vindicating a Work of Art Illustrative of the Federal Military Policy in Missouri during the Late Civil War* (Kansas City: 1871), 3. Hereinafter, any citations attributed to “Bingham” refer to “George Caleb Bingham.” Those who share his surname will be cited by their full name.

<sup>2</sup> To avoid confusion between Bingham’s painting and the military order, I will refer to the order itself as General Order No. 11 and to the painting as *Order No. 11*.

in Missouri and reflected the major political issues of the day.”<sup>3</sup> Most importantly, however, Bingham’s work reflected Missourian’s sense of themselves and of their history. For this reason, his work was popular in his lifetime and has been a source of pride for Missourians ever since. In that sense, Bingham’s *Order No. 11* might well be understood as representative of Missouri’s memory of the Civil War.

Exhibited all over the country and reproduced countless times, particularly in histories of the Civil War in Missouri, *Order No. 11* has proven to have remarkable staying power. Sometimes, however, the resonance of memory can divorce a painting from its original meaning. In this case, because it depicts atrocities committed under the aegis of federal military authority, critics often read Bingham’s *Order No. 11* as emblematic of Missouri’s “Lost Cause.” As a careful examination of Bingham’s life and times bears out, however, *Order No. 11* is not representative of an emerging Confederate identity in Missouri, but of Missouri’s deeply conflicted sympathies and those of the artist as well. A lack of appreciation for its historical context has resulted in a consistent and fundamental misreading of the painting.

Bingham is typically classed among the foremost painters of the Western frontier, never of the South. Why, then, should historians and critics so often interpret *Order No. 11* as expressing a Southern, rather than a Western, perspective on the war? In part, this is because so little research has been done into what a Western perspective would look like. In this respect, Bingham’s *Order No. 11* is a useful tool. Bingham was a characteristic Westerner of the nineteenth century, demonstrating a complex cultural and political worldview that does not fit our prescribed narratives of the Civil War. As a result, Bingham and *Order No. 11* have suffered

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<sup>3</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 227; Barbara Groseclose, “The ‘Missouri-Artist’ as Historian,” in *George Caleb Bingham*, Michael Edward Shapiro, Barbara Groseclose, Elizabeth Johns, Paul C. Nagel, John Wilmerding (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1990), 56.

from misperceptions and an uncritical analysis of their motives. We must see Bingham's work—and Missouri itself—in all its complexity.

George Caleb Bingham, like many settlers in the Missouri territory, was not a native Missourian at all. Born in Virginia, on March 20, 1811, Bingham's family moved to Missouri in 1819.<sup>4</sup> It was a trajectory familiar to many new Missourians, who largely migrated from the Old South—Virginia, Kentucky, and the Carolinas. Like most of these settlers, the Bingham family arrived with slaves. The expansion of slavery was an essential component of westward expansion and the birth of Missouri.

Bingham's family ultimately settled in the Boonslick and opened an inn called the Square and Compass, frequented by travelers on the Missouri River and the Santa Fe Trail.<sup>5</sup> As such, it was an important point along the path of westward expansion. As a child, Bingham met many travelers heading to the west and the southwest, including Chester Harding—America's foremost portraitist of the day. Bingham would recall much later, "the wonder and delight with which [Harding's] work filled my mind impressed them indelibly upon my . . . memory."<sup>6</sup> From this meeting, Bingham dreamed of becoming an artist.

Early in his career, perhaps acting on Harding's advice, Bingham decided to establish himself as a professional artist by painting portraits.<sup>7</sup> In search of commissions, Bingham wandered mid-Missouri as an itinerant painter, stopping in almost every town along the Missouri River. In Columbia, he met James Sidney Rollins, a man who would become a lifelong friend

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<sup>4</sup> E. Maurice Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham: The Evolution of an Artist* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 8.

<sup>5</sup> John Francis McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Bingham to J. Colvin Randall, December 25, 1872, in Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*": *The Letters of George Caleb Bingham*, ed. Lynn Wolf Gentzler, compiled by Roger E. Robinson (Columbia: The State Historical Society of Missouri, 2011), 345.

<sup>7</sup> Lew Larkin, *Bingham: Fighting Artist* (Kansas City: Burton Publishing Co. Inc., 1954), 19.



and who had a tremendous impact on Bingham's career. Rollins proved not only to be a sympathetic friend but a great patron of the arts as well. Rollins even loaned Bingham \$100 so he could afford to travel to St. Louis to study art and, more than once, at Bingham's request Rollins drummed up business for his artist friend amongst the elite of Columbia.<sup>8</sup>

Bingham's success coincided with the economic maturation of Missouri. In this atmosphere, the cultural life of the frontier thrived and, with the help of Missouri's growing and flourishing press, Bingham's reputation grew as well. By 1836, he had more commissions than time to paint. According to Albert Christ-Janer, a Bingham biographer, every self-respecting household in Missouri had a Bible and a Bingham portrait.<sup>9</sup> The *Missouri Republican* praised Bingham, saying "he gives promise of attaining to an enviable celebrity in the profession which he has chosen, and to which he devotes himself with increasing industry."<sup>10</sup> "This success is flattering," Bingham admitted in a letter to his first wife.<sup>11</sup> Not only flattering, but profitable as well.

Despite his overwhelming success as a portraitist, Bingham viewed portrait painting merely as a means to a financial end. Portraits, he observed much later, "made the pot boil."<sup>12</sup> His real interest and passion was for genre painting, a style of art that strove to depict scenes of everyday life. Missouri was the subject of Bingham's most famous genre paintings—the unique landscape and diverse population of his adopted state inspired him and evoked his sense of local

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<sup>8</sup> Fern Helen Rusk, *George Caleb Bingham: The Missouri Artist* (University of Missouri Press, 1917), 20; E. Maurice Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1986), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Albert Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham of Missouri: The Story of an Artist* (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Co., 1940), 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Missouri Republican*, December 13, 1836.

<sup>11</sup> Bingham to Elizabeth Bingham, 1836, Bingham Family, Papers, 1814-1930 (C998), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia.

<sup>12</sup> Bingham to James S. Rollins, June 7, 1874, James S. Rollins (1812-1888), Papers, 1546-1968 (C1026), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia. Hereinafter, any citations attributed to "Rollins" refer to "James S. Rollins." Those who share his surname will be cited by their full name.

pride. In fact, newspapers christened him the “Missouri Artist.”<sup>13</sup> But Bingham’s fame was not confined to Missouri alone. “Eastern audiences . . . developed an appetite for visual images of western types” and encouraged Bingham to paint “colorful activities and noble events of the ‘borderlands.’”<sup>14</sup> Critics all over the country praised his work. The imagery in his genre paintings appealed to many Americans because it captured the spirit of Manifest Destiny and the civilization of the West.

Living in Franklin, Arrow Rock, and Independence, all important outposts on the Santa Fe Trail, Bingham observed westward migration unfolding on a daily basis.<sup>15</sup> Bingham’s genre paintings of this period, including *The Jolly Flatboatmen* (1844), *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845), and especially *The Emigration of Daniel Boone* (1851), which he dedicated “to the Mothers and Daughters of the West,” reflected life on the Missouri frontier and the ideals of westward expansion.<sup>16</sup> Each of these paintings had a distinctive regionalism in their execution and subject. Particularly, art historian Elizabeth Johns observes, through the inclusion of Western archetypes like “the fur trader, married to an Indian; the flatboatmen; . . . the rough frontier family; . . . and small town Western men entertaining themselves with tavern activities and outdoor shooting contests.”<sup>17</sup> These were the subjects that secured Bingham’s place among America’s great painters. “Bingham could paint the men of the West effectively,” Bingham expert John Francis McDermott explains, “because he was one of them.”<sup>18</sup> Bingham’s unique perspective translated to canvas and imbued his paintings with real authenticity. As a result, Barbara Groseclose argues, Bingham’s artwork helped construct “regional memories.” By

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<sup>13</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Johns, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Artist,” in Shapiro, et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 95.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Dickey, *Arrow Rock: Crossroads of the Missouri Frontier* (Arrow Rock, Mo.: The Friends of Arrow Rock, Inc., 2004), 65.

<sup>16</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 58-62.

<sup>17</sup> Johns, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Artist,” in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 136.

<sup>18</sup> McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham*, 4.

“memorializing on canvas Missouri’s recent frontier conditions, delineating a heritage in which singular individuals . . . and ordinary people . . . quite literally emerged from the wilderness to prepare the way for civilization, Bingham pictured a Missouri in which the dangers of the ‘wild West’ had disappeared and to which progress had brought the responsibilities of sovereignty, the comforts of prosperity, and, on occasion, the excesses of war.”<sup>19</sup>

This process of civilization, however, was largely driven by the white supremacy inherent to Manifest Destiny.<sup>20</sup> Although Bingham never explicitly articulated his feelings about the role of race in westward expansion, Indian removal was in full force during the period in which Bingham came of age. In fact, between 1804 and 1824, the forcible removal of many eastern tribes caused the Native American population of Missouri to rise from around 2,000 to 8,000.<sup>21</sup> In this atmosphere, the Missouri frontier took on the character of the “middle ground,” where American, French, and Indian communities intermingled.<sup>22</sup> Bingham captured this atmosphere in *Fur Traders Descending the Missouri* (1845) in his depiction of a French trader and his interracial son.

As white settlers continued to pour into Missouri, however, they enjoined the federal government for assistance in driving Native Americans out. By 1833, the government forced the last groups of Native Americans from Missouri. Even though the Trail of Tears crossed Missouri, Bingham never painted a scene of the expulsion of Indians from Missouri, as he later would for those evicted under the infamous General Order No. 11. As Groseclose notes, “[Bingham] rarely drew upon negative iconography to advance the notion of civilization in the

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<sup>19</sup> Groseclose, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Historian,” in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 63, 91.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>21</sup> John Mack Faragher, “‘More Motley than Mackinaw’: From Ethnic Mixing to Ethnic Cleansing on the Frontier of the Lower Missouri, 1783-1833,” in Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 316.

<sup>22</sup> Faragher, “‘More Motley than Mackinaw,’” in Cayton and Teute, *Contact Points*, 313; Groseclose, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Historian,” in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 59.

West, painting only two Indian scenes, *The Concealed Enemy* (1845) and *Captured by the Indians* (1848).”<sup>23</sup> In these paintings, Bingham chose to depict Native Americans as hostile and dangerous and as impediments to civilization.

Bingham characterized himself as a “thorough democrat” and a patriot, and it is likely he chose not to paint subjects that challenged his perception of the purity of America and its Manifest Destiny.<sup>24</sup> It was not until the Civil War, when he felt his fellow white Missourians suffered under unjust policies, that Bingham finally challenged the manner in which the federal government dealt with its enemies. In this respect, Bingham was like many Missourians of this era. “Bingham’s art as social history fully displays the impact of the desire,” Groseclose explains, “so widespread and compelling it might be called a national ethos, to boast of the progressively civilized development of life in the new country,” even if it came at the expense of Native Americans.<sup>25</sup>

Busy as he was with his paintings, Bingham also pursued a career in local politics, where he held various offices for much of his adult life, including a seat in the General Assembly. In fact, during his lifetime, Bingham’s renown in Missouri stemmed at least as much from his political activism as from his artistic achievements. As the Whig party gained popularity in Missouri, Bingham became one of its most prominent and enthusiastic members. The June 19, 1846, issue of the Whig journal *Missouri Statesman* praised Bingham’s devotion to their cause, saying “he is a Whig, ‘dyed in the wool.’”<sup>26</sup>

During his tumultuous tenure in the General Assembly, Bingham rose to the forefront of debates over the future of slavery in Missouri and the West. Bingham rejected Congressional

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<sup>23</sup> Groseclose, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Historian,” in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 56-8.

<sup>24</sup> Bingham to Rollins, December 12, 1853, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>25</sup> Groseclose, “‘The Missouri Artist’ as Historian,” in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 56.

<sup>26</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, June 19, 1846.

attempts to restrict slavery, particularly the Wilmot Proviso, because he believed the new territories had a right to self-determination.<sup>27</sup> Many of his colleagues, however, opposed such attempts on pro-slavery grounds. In legislation known as the Jackson Resolutions, Democrats in the Missouri General Assembly insisted Congress had no power to legislate on slavery and voiced their intention to stand by their fellow slaveholding states for the sake of mutual protection if Congress further infringed on the institution.

Bingham resented the sectional bitterness so clearly evident in the Jackson Resolutions, as well as their pro-slavery tone. Although the Whig Party attracted both pro-slavery men and abolitionists, Bingham opposed slavery on moral and political grounds.<sup>28</sup> His foremost concern with the institution, however, was that it was destructive to the principles of the Union. Bingham believed “there could not be a question presented more fearfully adapted to the overthrow of our national confederacy than that of slavery. Sectional in its nature, and out of harmony with those principles of equality, which lie at the foundation of our great political structure, it is the very instrument upon which ambitious *traitors* would most likely seize to accomplish the fell purpose of disunion.”<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, Bingham did not approve of federal impositions on the expansion of slavery, nor did he advocate forcing emancipation on the slaveholding states. Bingham supported gradual emancipation, claiming that it was “the only scheme which will not be fraught with evils greater than those which we are seeking to remedy.”<sup>30</sup> He considered colonization an acceptable alternative for abolition.<sup>31</sup> Ultimately, he felt any decisions regarding slavery should be made by the people. To Bingham and Missourians like him, preservation of the Union was the

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<sup>27</sup> Mering, *The Whig Party in Missouri*, 169.

<sup>28</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 21, 1855, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>29</sup> Bingham to James Shannon, January 18, 1856, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 155 (emphasis in original).

<sup>30</sup> Bingham to Rollins, February 16, 1863, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>31</sup> Bingham to President James Shannon, January 25, 1856, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 156-7.

government's first priority and if that meant making concessions to slaveholders, so be it. As Bingham himself said later, "I am *conditionally* for men, though unconditionally for the *Union*."<sup>32</sup>

Bingham's attitudes towards race, however, are not so clear. He appears to have been sympathetic, if paternalistic, in his attitudes towards African Americans and enslaved people.<sup>33</sup> On one visit to his family's old home in Virginia, Bingham recounted meeting one of their former slaves, a man he called "Old Tom." "I stayed with the old man about three hours," Bingham said, "he appeared to talk with pleasure about old times, those days he said were gone now, he could no longer work like he used to." "Old Tom's" wife, however, directly contradicted the fiction of paternalism. When Bingham asked if the elderly man was being provided for by his new mistress, she responded: "now they had got all the cream out of him, they didn't wa[nt] him any more." Bingham gave them some money and as he left, he recalled, "Old Tom" began "calling down blessings upon my head. And I felt, that if the prayers of any man could avail for me, his would."<sup>34</sup> In all, Bingham seems to have deplored the effect of slavery upon the country as much or more than its effect on enslaved individuals. It is telling, however, that despite the fact he inherited two enslaved people from his parents, he did not remain a slaveholder himself.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Bingham to Rollins, January 22, 1862, James S. Rollins, Papers (emphasis in original).

<sup>33</sup> Joan Stack, "Toward an Emancipationist Interpretation of George Caleb Bingham's *General Order No. 11*: The Reception History of the Painting and the Remembered Civil War in Missouri," *Missouri Historical Review* Vo. 107, No. 4 (July 2013), 205.

<sup>34</sup> Bingham to Mary Bingham, September 25, 1841, in Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 57.

<sup>35</sup> It is unclear exactly what became of Bingham's slaves. In the 1850 slave schedule, Bingham is listed as owning two enslaved people, a twenty-one year old female and a fifty-five year old male, but Bingham does not appear in the 1860 census or slave schedule. Because Bingham lived abroad throughout the late 1850s, it is likely he relinquished his slave property after his mother's death in 1851 and before he left for Europe in 1856. It is impossible to say whether he freed them, or passed them to his siblings. Bingham's family members in central Missouri certainly remained slaveholders. In 1868, however, Bingham proudly reflected that he committed himself to "measures which freed *my own* [slaves]." See Bingham to Rev. R. S. Johnson, December 23, 1868, in Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 295.

Bingham channeled his opposition to slavery in an effort to defeat the Jackson Resolutions. Determined that they should not pass unchallenged, Bingham prepared a rebuttal against them in the form of a report to the legislature known as the Bingham Resolutions. In stark contrast to the Jackson Resolutions, the Bingham Resolutions spoke for Missouri's moderates. They acknowledged that Congress did have the authority to legislate over slavery in the territories, but not over slavery where it already existed, maintaining the rights of citizens to control the "internal policy" of their states. Nevertheless, while they expressed sympathy for their fellow slave states, they doubted "the propriety of pledging ourselves to a sectional combination such as is contemplated by the [Jackson] Resolutions." After all, Missouri's prosperity depended on its position at the nation's confluence, not on its allegiance to one section to the exclusion of others. For that reason, the Bingham Resolutions stressed the importance of the preservation of the Union at all costs. "We deem it our most sacred duty," the Resolutions declared, "to cherish an immovable attachment to the National Union; to watch for its preservation with jealous anxiety, to discountenance even the suggestion, that it could in any event be abandoned, and indignantly to frown upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of the country from the rest." "We pledge ourselves," it concluded, "come what may, whether prosperity or adversity, weal or wo[e], still to stand by the Union."<sup>36</sup>

Condemned as conciliatory by some and praised as patriotic and bold by others, the Bingham Resolutions were without doubt the most outstanding achievement of Bingham's political career. According to the editor of the *St. Louis Republican*, the Bingham Resolutions were "not surpassed in force & ability by any thing that has been written or spoken on [the

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<sup>36</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, "Majority Report of the Committee on Federal Relations," March 16, 1849.

Wilmot Proviso].”<sup>37</sup> Bingham’s resolutions represented the pinnacle of his political career and clearly illustrated Missourians’ concern with preserving the Union as well as their continued commitment to slavery.

Although the General Assembly backed the Jackson Resolutions by a sizable majority, Bingham and his political allies, including famed Senator Thomas Hart Benton, were convinced they “did not represent the will of the people.” Benton took their passage as an opportunity to canvass the state, championing the Bingham Resolutions as evidence “that the people of Missouri love the Union, and are in favor of maintaining it at all hazards.” Along the way, Benton made important converts, including Missouri’s governor, Democrat Austin King. The Jackson Resolutions had been a victory for slaveholders, but their ascendancy in Missouri was nearing its end. In fact, Bingham, Rollins, and Benton managed to have the Jackson Resolutions rescinded in 1853.<sup>38</sup>

Bingham left the legislature in 1850 and returned to painting; politics, however, remained on his mind. This manifested itself in the execution of a series of four paintings, *Canvassing for a Vote* (1852), *County Election* (1852), *Stump Speaking* (1853), and *The Verdict of the People* (1854), known collectively as the Election Series. Each painting in the series chronicles the American political process, from the campaign trail, to election day, to the returns. In the face of the divisive political issues of the day, including debates over nullification, slavery, and secession, the Election Series was Bingham’s testament to the democratic process on the tumultuous western border. Gone were his depictions of the political imperatives of an emerging frontier state; gone were the fur traders, flatboatmen, and Indians that made Bingham’s earlier genre paintings famous. Instead, the Election Series provided a timely reminder of the “will of

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<sup>37</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 104.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 105, 106, 115.



the people” in the face of increasingly sectional politics. Caught between the polarizing radicalism of both the slave South and the free-labor North, Bingham felt an impending sense of the fragility of “free people” and “free institutions” on the western border. “[The Election Series assures] us,” Bingham wrote much later, “that our social and political characteristics as daily and annually exhibited will not be lost in the lapse of time for want of an art record rendering them full justice.”<sup>39</sup>

Widely regarded as Bingham’s crowning artistic achievement, the Election Series cemented Bingham’s fame as both an artist and a politician and earned him an additional nickname: the “Statesman-Artist.” Art enthusiasts all over the country praised Bingham’s insight into politics and his ability to effectively capture the spirit of the democratic process.<sup>40</sup> One reporter wrote: “the genius of the artist has transferred to the canvas a principle in our Government—the exercise of the elective franchise—and submission by the people to the will of the majority is colored true to the requirements of the constitution, and the instincts of our people.”<sup>41</sup>

It is ironic, however, that as Bingham added the finishing touches to his patriotic Election Series, the nation spiraled closer to civil war. In 1854, passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act stirred a new national controversy over the expansion of slavery. To Bingham’s surprise, a good number of Whigs, both in Missouri and in Congress, supported the Kansas-Nebraska Act. Bingham, however, could not reconcile himself to the expansion of slavery, nor would he associate himself with the party that endorsed it.<sup>42</sup> Instead, Bingham chose to join the fledgling Republican Party, which galvanized former anti-slavery Whigs and Northern Democrats in

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<sup>39</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 19, 1871, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>40</sup> Rusk, *George Caleb Bingham*, 60, 56.

<sup>41</sup> *Missouri Republican*, “Bingham’s Painting,” May 6, 1856, quoted in Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 144.

<sup>42</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 2, 1854, James S. Rollins, Papers.

opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the expansion of slavery.<sup>43</sup> “I fear that I will no longer be regarded as a Whig in Missouri,” Bingham wrote Rollins, adding prophetically, “the deed is done, and a storm is now brewing in the north which will sweep onward with a fury, which no human force can withstand.”<sup>44</sup>

From his studio in Independence, Bingham watched the influx of emigrants into Kansas with trepidation. “Since I have been here,” he wrote Rollins, “I have observed the emigration which is still daily passing for the Territory. . . . The men are thoughtful and silent, and from the fact that they have *no negroes* with them the inference is reasonable that their influence will be against slavery.” Still, he did not anticipate violence. Even at this late hour, Bingham believed the bonds of Union were stronger than those of slavery. “Clear headed thinking men . . . regard the establishment of slavery in Kansas as utterly impossible,” he continued. “Those, therefore, who are most deeply interested in slavery, will soon see the propriety of justice and moderation, such as will conciliate, rather than exasperate neighbors.”<sup>45</sup>

Bingham could not have been more wrong. In the summer of 1856, during the affair known as “Bleeding Kansas,” the Western border became the scene of some of the most horrific violence in American history. For his part, Bingham believed this violence was the direct consequence of the brutality of slavery. “Slavery is doomed, and that Providence is determined to use its brutalized champions as the instruments of its overthrow.”<sup>46</sup> As a result, he sympathized with the Kansas free-soilers. “I trust that the people of that Territory are now strong

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<sup>43</sup> Monaghan, *Civil War on the Western Border*, 16.

<sup>44</sup> Bingham to Rollins, May 57, 1854, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>45</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 21, 1855, James S. Rollins, Papers (emphasis in original).

<sup>46</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 2, 1854, James S. Rollins, Papers.

enough to fight themselves right, if not permitted to vote, and that they will no longer hesitate to adopt, if necessary, the last and most available resort against outrage and usurpation.”<sup>47</sup>

Bingham spent the latter part of the 1850s in Prussia studying painting and refining his craft, but he remained engaged in the news from home and returned on the eve of the Civil War. “Our country is full of traitors,” Bingham remarked in a letter to Rollins, “and I think it our duty to denounce them as such every where, and if fight comes in consequence I am for no backing out.” “God grant that our government may be preserved,” he added.<sup>48</sup> After the violence at Camp Jackson, however, Bingham was ready to fight. Though Bingham still hoped the Union could be saved, he no longer advocated making concessions to the South. In fact, in a letter to Rollins, he condemned all talk of peace as being neither “manly or patriotic.”<sup>49</sup>

Bingham, now fifty years of age, promptly enlisted in a Union regiment. After a brief sojourn as a private, he became a captain in Robert T. Van Horn’s United States Irish Volunteer Corps. It was a highly patriotic gesture, but his enlistment also had roots in financial necessity. “Art is far below every thing else in such times as these,” he lamented in a letter to Rollins. “I am ready to turn my attention, for the time being, to any thing by which I can keep from sinking in debt, and secure the bare necessities of life for those who have a right to look to me for support.”<sup>50</sup>

His military service was short-lived, however. On August 1, 1861, Hamilton R. Gamble, a friend of both Bingham and Rollins, became the new provisional governor of Missouri. Gamble then appointed Bingham state treasurer. On the surface, Bingham was a surprising choice for the office. He had absolutely no experience dealing with money and, judging from his

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<sup>47</sup> Bingham to Rollins, October 12, 1857, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 189.

<sup>48</sup> Bingham to Rollins, January 29, 1861, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>49</sup> Bingham to Rollins, May 16, 1861, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 5, 1861, James S. Rollins, Papers.

letters, was frequently deep in debt himself. Regardless, at the outbreak of the War Bingham pledged himself unreservedly to the defense of the Union. “This *Great Emergency* of our Country requires us to imitate the example of our Fathers,” he wrote, “and I yield myself, with the best ability which I possess, to any service which may be required of me.” Besides, Bingham frankly admitted, political service was “more agreeable” than field duty.<sup>51</sup> He took office on January 4, 1862.<sup>52</sup>

From his position in the provisional government, Bingham strived to limit the brutality of the war in Missouri. Though both sides committed atrocities, Bingham was chiefly concerned with the outrages perpetrated by the federal government and the army under the auspices of martial law. From the start, Bingham criticized martial law because it subjected the rights of citizens to the will of the state, an idea that Bingham found antithetical to democracy.<sup>53</sup> Bingham was especially disgusted by the wanton disregard for the security of private citizens and property evinced by the portions of the Union army. Murder and robbery, carried out by vengeful Kansans and directed at both Northern and Southern-sympathizers, went unchecked in the western counties of Missouri. “I believe it may be truthfully affirmed that we have no *Rebellion*, worthy of the name at this time, within our borders,” Bingham wrote, “yet we have serious troubles in some districts growing out of the conduct of a portion of our military.”<sup>54</sup>

In particular, Bingham carefully documented the villainy of the infamous “jayhawker” Colonel Charles “Doc” Jennison, commander of the Seventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry. Although a part of the Union army, the Seventh Kansas operated beyond the bounds of official policy. Hardened veterans of the border war, Jennison’s jayhawkers acted more like guerrillas

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<sup>51</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 29, 1861, James S. Rollins, Papers (emphasis in original).

<sup>52</sup> Bloch, *The Evolution of an Artist*, 213.

<sup>53</sup> Bingham to Rollins, May 16, 1861, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>54</sup> Bingham to Rollins, February 16, 1863, James S. Rollins, Papers (emphasis in original).

than regular soldiers. Kansas Governor John J. Ingalls described them as “*a band of destroying angels*. . . . They take no prisoners and are not troubled with red tape sentimentalism in any form.”<sup>55</sup> Jennison in particular earned a reputation throughout Missouri as little better than a murderer and a thief. The depredations he wreaked on Missourians drove many men to the ranks of the guerillas. In fact, Bingham insisted that “[Jennison’s] execution upon a scaffold would do more for the Union cause in Missouri, than the defeat of a Rebel army.”<sup>56</sup> General Henry Halleck, Jennison’s commanding officer, was inclined to agree and complained to President Lincoln, but the commander-in-chief seemed unwilling or unable to act.<sup>57</sup>

At Rollins’ urging, Bingham drafted a scathing exposé of Jennison’s tactics in Jackson County, which Bingham forwarded to his congressman for publication in the national press. Bingham depicted Jennison as no more than an outlaw who used “indiscriminate pillage and rapine in crushing out rebellion.” He recounted numerous murders and robberies committed by Jennison’s men. Jennison’s path across western Missouri, he claimed, “may be traced by the ruins of the dwellings of our citizens, which were first pillaged and then burned without discrimination or mercy. . . . They are now but heaps of ashes, above which the tall chimneys remain in their mute solitude—sad and mournful monuments of the ever to be remembered march of a desolating fiend.” Despite such depredations, Bingham knew Jennison had his defenders: “The opinion seems to be entertained by many, at a distance, that Jennison’s depredations are committed upon Secessionists only. . . . It is very well known, to all residing within the limits of his operations that Union men have been the greatest sufferers from the outrages which have attended his command.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, 151 (emphasis in original).

<sup>56</sup> Bingham to Rollins, February 12, 1862, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Neely, *The Border between Them*, 107.

<sup>58</sup> Bingham to Rollins and Hall, February 12, 1862, James S. Rollins Papers.

According to Bingham, Jennison alienated Missouri's loyal slaveholders by leading ranks of African American soldiers into the state and liberating slaves. On one occasion, Bingham reported, Jennison arrived with "*a company composed, exclusively, of negroes, armed, uniformed and mounted as soldiers of the United States, and headed by a slave, who had been enticed from a master of widely known and unwavering loyalty!*"<sup>59</sup> Bingham explicitly compared this to John Brown's raid on Harpers Ferry—a violent and inflammatory act, not "the march of loyal troops to uphold the Constitution."<sup>60</sup> Among other acts of "petty tyranny" committed by Jennison, he compelled a loyal slaveholder, under the threat of death, "to perform the service of a menial in the presence of his negro soldiers."<sup>61</sup> For Bingham, this was not an expression of freedom and equality, but a deliberate attempt to humiliate Unionist, but slaveholding, Missourians. He reminded Jennison's defenders that there was a "vast difference between emancipation . . . in harmony with constitutions and laws, and the reckless upheaving of society by John Brown raids, in contempt of the Government which their countrymen are so gallantly fighting to maintain."<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps as a result of Bingham's crusade, Jennison temporarily resigned his command.<sup>63</sup> Despite his success, Bingham's position on emancipation put him at odds with the more radical Republicans in the provisional government, many of whom, as early as 1863, sought to abolish slavery in Missouri. As a member of the growing ranks of Conservative Unionists, Bingham realized that abolition presented a unique challenge in Missouri. He dismissed the Radicals' call for immediate, uncompensated emancipation as self-interested. They merely wanted to force Democrat slaveholders out of Missouri and protect their political position. He also knew

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<sup>59</sup> Bingham to Rollins and Hall, February 12, 1862, James S. Rollins Papers (emphasis in original).

<sup>60</sup> Bingham, "Jennison—His Raids in Missouri—His Murders, Robberies, and House Burnings," *Missouri Republican*, May 6, 1862, in Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 271.

<sup>61</sup> Bingham to Rollins and Hall, February 12, 1862, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>62</sup> Bingham, *Missouri Republican*, May 6, 1862, in Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 274.

<sup>63</sup> McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham*, 138.

Missourians would oppose immediate emancipation and that might end their best chance to abolish slavery in Missouri. Most of all, Bingham feared radicalism would “render Emancipation upon any plan impossible, and thus perpetuate slavery in our State for all time[s].”<sup>64</sup> Thus, racism, Unionism, and emancipation coexisted side-by-side in the hearts of Missourians like George Caleb Bingham.

Bingham’s outspoken defense of loyal Missouri slaveholders earned him the enmity of the Radicals. For example, following the death of Missouri’s Union war hero Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, the House of Representatives introduced a resolution to commemorate Lyon with a portrait in January, 1863. Much to his surprise, Bingham was not immediately granted the commission, despite his artistic fame and his position in the provisional government. Bingham’s wife blamed the intransigence on Bingham’s expose of Jennison. Historian Nancy Rash agrees: “The Radicals in the General Assembly apparently took Bingham’s attack on Jennison as an assault on a Union officer who had done his best to wage war against the proslavery south. They may have interpreted this stance as a proslavery position, though Bingham’s anger had been motivated by the injustices perpetrated on civilians by the military.”<sup>65</sup> For Bingham and other Conservative Unionists like him, it was not a contradiction to support the federal government and condemn brutality, but that distinction was not always clear to his more radical contemporaries.

Finally, in August, Bingham received the commission. The final portrait, entitled *General Nathaniel Lyon* (1865), depicted Lyon on horseback, leading his troops into battle at Wilson’s Creek just moments before his death. Although the battle ended in Confederate victory, it was the last real victory for the Confederacy in Missouri. Even in the midst of the war, Bingham

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<sup>64</sup> Bingham to Rollins, February 16, 1863, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>65</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 178-179.



FIGURE 1: George Caleb Bingham, *Gen. Nathaniel Lyon*, 1865. In Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham*, 110.

understood the powerful symbolism of the painting in the emerging Unionist memory of the war. Lyon may have lost at Wilson's Creek, but had already driven Claiborne Fox Jackson's secessionist government from the state capital and forced it into exile. By identifying themselves with Lyon, the provisional government was justifying its position as the legitimate state government. The *Liberty Tribune* voiced its confidence "that all who see this portrait of the lamented Lyon will regard it as a most successful representation, creditable alike to the artist and the State. . . . A work which so fully meets the commemorative purposes for which it was intended can not be otherwise than duly prized by those in whose hearts the memory of its great subject is enshrined."<sup>66</sup> Bingham's bright and heroic portrait of Lyon, however, was a far cry

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<sup>66</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, "Portrait of Lyon by Bingham," March 22, 1867. This was not his only painting featuring Lyon. He also completed one entitled *General Nathaniel Lyon and General Francis Preston Blair, Jr., Starting from the Arsenal Gate in St. Louis to Capture Camp Jackson* (1862/1865). Bingham gifted this painting to Rollins, however, and there is no evidence was never publically exhibited.



from his shadowy and subversive depictions of federal soldiers in *Order No. 11*, but at this stage in the war, he had little cause for disillusionment.

That all changed in August, 1863. As a part of General Thomas Ewing's plan to eliminate the guerrillas' base of support in western Missouri, Ewing seized Bingham's Kansas City studio, a three-story brick building he had inherited from his father-in-law at 1425 Grand Avenue, and transformed it into a crude jail in which he imprisoned the female friends and family members of known guerrillas. On August 13, the building collapsed, killing and maiming the women inside.

Bingham openly accused Ewing's men of sabotaging the building. Far from an accident, Bingham described the collapse as "a most brutal and atrocious murder."<sup>67</sup> In part, his anger may have cloaked his own sense of guilt. Bingham had modified the building, adding the top story on himself and perhaps damaging its structural integrity.<sup>68</sup> His rage, however, was also fueled by financial concerns. Because Ewing denied having any responsibility for the collapse, the federal government refused to compensate Bingham for his lost property. Bingham's resentment towards the general only grew. "Had I been a Kansas horse thief he would have certified to all the facts, . . . or he would have ordered his Quarter Master to pay me," Bingham wrote Rollins, "but he was not capable of doing justice to an honest Missourian."<sup>69</sup> This incident set the stage for a personal vendetta between the two men that ultimately blossomed into their own private war and heavily colored Bingham's memory of the Civil War.

The conflict between Bingham and Ewing escalated several days later when Ewing issued General Order No. 11, which ordered the depopulation of western Missouri. Upon hearing

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<sup>67</sup> Bingham, "Reply of G. C. Bingham Esq.," *People's Tribune*, December 23, 1868.

<sup>68</sup> Joan Stack, "The Fashioning of a Frontier Artist," introduction to Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 13; Charles F. Harris, "Catalyst for Terror: The Collapse of the Women's Prison in Kansas City," *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. 89, No. 3 (April 1995), 296.

<sup>69</sup> Bingham to Rollins, December 21, 1863, James S. Rollins, Papers. Bingham never did receive compensation for the loss of his studio, even though he pursued the matter throughout his life, all the way to the National Senate Committee on Claims. See Bingham to Rollins, March 9, 1876, James S. Rollins, Papers.

news of the edict, Bingham left immediately for the District of the Border. There, Bingham later remembered, “I witnessed successive procession of dejected and despairing women, with their bareheads [*sic*] and bare footed children, as they fled half clothed from their burned dwellings and desolated farms. I subsequently passed across the desolated district. It was a drear and melancholy waste, marked by ruin and devastation, in whatever direction the eye might turn. Where recently had stood elegant mansions, the homes of comfort and wealth, seared and blackened chimneys only could be seen.”<sup>70</sup> The terrible nature of General Order No. 11 and its aftermath made it the pinnacle of Civil War atrocities in Missouri and also a critical point in Bingham’s life.

The trauma of General Order No. 11 branded itself on Missouri’s Civil War memory and Bingham’s response has become the stuff of state legend. According to the most common version of the story, Bingham decided to use his influence to urge Ewing to rescind the order.<sup>71</sup> Upon arriving at Ewing’s Kansas City headquarters, Bingham pled his case. The conversation became heated; Bingham recounting various outrages committed under the order, Ewing defending them as military necessities. Frustrated, and sensing he was gaining no ground, Bingham supposedly jabbed a finger at Ewing. “If you persist in executing that order, I will

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<sup>70</sup> Bingham, “Bingham-Brown: The Late Gen. Bingham’s Reply to Ex-Gov. Gratz Brown,” *Kansas City Journal*, July 25, 1879.

<sup>71</sup> In the earliest version of the incident, Bingham challenges General John Schofield, commander of the Department of the Missouri. According an account in *The Jefferson City Daily Tribune*, February 27, 1877: “We remember very well that General Bingham . . . followed General Schofield to Kansas City in order that he should have the benefit of the counsel of the best and most prominent Union men of that city and section. He did see General Schofield, and when asked his opinion in relation to the order, gave it in his fearless, honest way, that it was unnecessary, cruel, and infamous, and . . . when at last Schofield told him that the order would have to stand, he told him to his face, ‘If God spares my life, with pen and pencil I will make this order infamous in history.’” For other versions of the story see Curtis Burman Rollins, “Some Recollections of George Caleb Bingham,” *Missouri Historical Review* Vol. 22, No. 4 (July 1926), 480; Curtis Burman Rollins, “Letters of George Caleb Bingham to James S. Rollins,” *Missouri Historical Review* Vol., 33, No. 1 (October 1938), 65-6; Rusk, *George Caleb Bingham*, 82; and Ronald D. Smith, *Thomas Ewing, Jr.*, 204.

make you infamous with my pen and brush as far as I am able,” he exclaimed.<sup>72</sup> Ewing refused to comply and Bingham began contemplating his reprisal: a painting that would highlight the despicable nature of Ewing and his order, aptly titled *Order No. 11*.

Finally finished in 1868, *Order No. 11* was Bingham’s last great painting.<sup>73</sup> Critics have called it a “polemic” painting, an overly dramatic attack on the implementation of martial law in Missouri, and have almost unanimously criticized it as falling short of Bingham’s artistic abilities.<sup>74</sup> *Order No. 11* is different for a reason, however. Bingham was no stranger to using art as a tool to challenge and even to inform politics, a technique that earned his genre paintings national acclaim, but *Order No. 11* became deeply invested in the contentious historical memory



FIGURE 2: George Caleb Bingham, *Order No. 11*, 1868.  
Courtesy, *The State Historical Society of Missouri*.

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<sup>72</sup> Curtis Burman Rollins, “Some Recollections of George Caleb Bingham,” 480.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*; There are actually two, nearly identical, versions of the painting. The first, begun in 1865 and completed in 1868, was sent off to be engraved so Bingham did another version, completed in 1870, in order to continue to exhibit the painting.

<sup>74</sup> Albert Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham: Frontier Painter of Missouri* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1975), 53.

of the Civil War in Missouri. Bingham's experiences during the Civil War, including his concerns with the abuse of federal power, the loss of his studio, his outrage at General Order No. 11, and his personal conflict with Ewing, drove him to create a truly provoking painting. "Its purpose, I freely admit," he confessed, "is to arouse and keep alive popular indignation."<sup>75</sup>

The creation of Civil War artwork was part and parcel of the national process of Civil War commemoration, in tandem with the commemoration of the war dead, battlefield preservation, the construction of monuments, and the creation and histories of the war. "Just as thousands of pages had been devoted to the subject, so too acres of canvas had been covered with Civil War scenes," historian Steven Conn observes.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, historians do not often acknowledge history paintings as a part of the memory-making process.<sup>77</sup> This oversight may be due to the fact that, as Conn points out, these paintings are mostly "terrible." They are not renowned masterpieces, they do not reside in major art museums, and are largely panned by critics. Even Conn acknowledged, however, that Bingham's *Order No. 11* might be one of the few exceptions to the rule.<sup>78</sup>

Art historians have underestimated Civil War paintings like *Order No. 11* because they have failed to understand them in their historical context, outside of their artistic merits. As Michael Kammen explained, "we must see such paintings simultaneously as works of art . . . and as icons that reveal national or sectional values and assumptions."<sup>79</sup> Bingham was fully aware of

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<sup>75</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 5.

<sup>76</sup> Stephen Conn, "Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting, or Why Are These Pictures so Terrible?" *History and Theory* Vol. 41, No. 2 (June 2012), 19.

<sup>77</sup> Exceptions include William Ayers, ed., *Picturing History: American Painting, 1770-1930* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1993); and Gary W. Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape what we Know about the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008). Neff also includes a discussion of Lincoln's deathbed imagery, Winslow Homer's *Veteran in a New Field*, and William De Hartburn Washington's *The Burial of Latané*. See Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 105, 151.

<sup>78</sup> Conn, "Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting," 20.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Kammen, foreword to William Ayers, *Picturing History*, 15.

the potential of art to influence historical memory. Reflecting on *Order No. 11*, he once wrote: “Art being the most efficient hand-maid of history, . . . I . . . became impressed with the conviction, that, . . . I could not find a nobler employment for my pencil, than in giving to the future, . . . truthful representations . . . of the character of . . . military rule. . . . By such and similar means only can our bitter and tragical [*sic*] experience give due warning to posterity.”<sup>80</sup>

*Order No. 11* is certainly provocative in its imagery. The principal figures in the painting are a family being evicted from their home by “redlegs,” Unionist guerrillas from Kansas known for the distinctive red leggings they wore. The family stands amidst a scattered pile of their belongings, while the soldiers continue to loot their home. The scene is made more tragic, however, by the still-bleeding body of their son, lying in the dirt before his family. His widow clings to his body, while his mother has collapsed in grief. The father is in the act of confronting his murderer, while his two daughters plead for mercy. Behind them, a stream of refugees on foot and in wagons speaks to a hundred similar tragedies that doubtless unfolded at the still burning homes in the distance.

The eerie shadows cast by the smoke of the burning homes and farms are one of the most striking characteristics of *Order No. 11*. Bingham deliberately used the contrast between light and shadow to illustrate the characters of his figures. For example, the father, who stands squarely in a ray of light, appears resolute and noble; while the soldiers, who cling to the shadows of the mansion, exemplify cowardice. Bingham confessed to carefully planning this arrangement. “I present virtue and vice in my picture,” he said, “the brightness and divinity of

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<sup>80</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 3.

the former appearing only the more conspicuous as relieved by the dark and satanic features of the latter.”<sup>81</sup>

It was also no coincidence that those “satanic features” strongly resembled those of General Ewing, who is depicted on horseback, immediately behind the bereaved family. Bingham could hardly have omitted him, as one of the painting’s objectives was to make Ewing infamous. According to Rollins Bingham, the artist’s son, “in all [Bingham’s] pictures there is but one intentional likeness of place and person and that is the likeness of Gen. Thomas Ewing in *Order No. 11*.”<sup>82</sup> However, critics have pointed to the presence of one more notorious personality in the painting. On the left hand side is a man on horseback with a basket on his lap. Some art historians claim this man is the infamous Jim Lane, a ruthless jayhawker sometimes credited with persuading Ewing to issue General Order No. 11.<sup>83</sup>

Bingham believed his painting accurately portrayed the atrocities of General Order No. 11 and that after viewing it, no one could ever forget the destruction Ewing wrought on Missouri. Merely completing the painting was not enough, however; he had to exhibit it. Bingham held exhibits in St. Louis, Jefferson City, and as far afield as Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>84</sup> On these occasions, he worried that the painting would provoke strong reactions. “It is a work that will likely be attacked on political grounds,” Bingham anticipated, and it certainly proved to be the case.<sup>85</sup> The audiences that gathered to see his work were deeply divided in their opinions. While some hailed it as a work of genius, others insisted bygones should be bygones and criticized the

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<sup>81</sup> Bingham to Editor of the *Missouri Republican*, March 17, 1869, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 299.

<sup>82</sup> Rollins Bingham, “Bingham and His Missouri Art,” *Kansas City Star*, December 5, 1909. Rollins Bingham was exaggerating slightly, he evidently forgot about his father’s paintings *The Emigration of Daniel Boone* and *Washington Crossing the Delaware*, not to mention his many portraits of famous statesmen.

<sup>83</sup> Larkin, *Bingham*, 246.

<sup>84</sup> Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham*, 222-5.

<sup>85</sup> Bingham to Rollins, January 7, 1872, James S. Rollins, Papers.

painting as an attempt to rekindle old grievances. In the intervening 150 years, the controversy has scarcely abated.

*Order No. 11* quickly drew national notice. “My picture of Martial Law attracts great attention,” Bingham wrote, describing crowds that “constantly [pressed] before it” during exhibitions.<sup>86</sup> In fact, according to Bingham scholar E. Maurice Bloch, “it rapidly became one of the most publicized paintings of its day.”<sup>87</sup> The painting’s popularity indicates that many people found Bingham’s interpretation of General Order No. 11 compelling. Completed in 1868, at the height of Radical Reconstruction, *Order No. 11* arrived on the scene at a time when the nation was still in turmoil. After the impeachment of President Andrew Johnson and the division of the South into military districts, many Americans felt keenly the now uncontested power of the victorious federal government. Fearing the loss of state sovereignty, *Order No. 11* served as a caution against the arbitrary nature of federal, specifically military, power.

Although Missourians escaped the strictures of Radical Reconstruction, they endured martial law themselves and remained sensitive to the intrusiveness and even vindictiveness of the federal government and its allies. For many Missourians, *Order No. 11* was not merely a painting, it was irrefutable evidence of the brutality of their Civil War and a testament to the fragility of civil liberties. Frank James, notorious guerrilla and brother to outlaw Jesse James, is supposed to have said of it, “that is a picture that talks.”<sup>88</sup> As the *Columbia Missouri Statesman* put it: “In the most vivid and expressive light has the atrocious history of that time been transferred to canvas, and whatever of other merit the picture may possess it cannot be denied by those who remember the horrid scenes enacted under the auspices of that order, and by many who were witness to these atrocities, that it certainly contains the merit of fidelity of perfect

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<sup>86</sup> Bingham to Rollins, September 9, 1873, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>87</sup> Bloch, *The Evolution of an Artist*, 221

<sup>88</sup> Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham*, 55.

truthfulness to facts. . . . To appreciate its merits it must be seen. No pen of ours can speak its language.”<sup>89</sup> *Order No. 11* held a particular appeal because it encapsulated their wartime suffering in a way that could be communicated to outsiders and to future generations.

Almost immediately, however, Bingham’s intentions behind *Order No. 11* were misunderstood. In people’s minds, the painting became associated with a pro-Confederate perspective. Bingham anticipated the painting would be controversial, but he did not expect to find himself branded a rebel. Infuriated by these claims, Bingham spent the remainder of his life challenging them, often driving himself to the point of exhaustion.

In particular, Bingham and *Order No. 11* came under an intense attack from the Radicals. They accused Bingham of everything from a “departure from moral law,” to harboring pro-Southern sentiments, to marring the reputation of Union troops, to stirring post-war resentment, to the perpetration of a massive falsehood intended to indict Kansans, and giving “undue prominence to outrages perpetrated by Union soldiers, omitting those perpetrated by rebels for which they were a just retaliation.”<sup>90</sup> Bingham had plenty to say in his own defense and drafted scorching rejoinders, usually in the form of open letters, which he published in various newspapers. These letters were highly effective, causing one friend to remark that they “were not only a fine vindication of his great picture but gave irrefutable proof of his ability as a controversialist.”<sup>91</sup> Their publication also contributed to Bingham’s reputation as a great defender of the people and helped his *Order No. 11* achieve celebrity status.

His most cogent defense of *Order No. 11* came in a pamphlet called *An Address to the Public, Vindicating a Work of Art Illustrative of the Federal Military Policy in Missouri During*

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<sup>89</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, March 19, 1869.

<sup>90</sup> Bingham, “Reply of G.C. Bingham Esq. to, the Thanksgiving Discourse of Rev. R. S. Johnson,” *People’s Tribune*, December 23, 1868; Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Curtis Burman Rollins, “Some Recollections of George Caleb Bingham,” 480.





FIGURE 3: George Caleb Bingham in his Kansas City studio, c. 1870.<sup>92</sup>  
Courtesy, Paul Worman.

*the Late Civil War* (1871). In it, Bingham detailed his justification for his now-famous painting. Besides exposing Ewing's cruelty, Bingham hoped his painting would serve as a warning to future generations of the tenuous nature of civil liberties. This purpose could only be served by keeping the memory of the war alive, as Bingham explained: "That we should treat them as things of the past, and even exorcise from our minds every lingering feeling prompting to revenge or retaliation, which may have been engendered thereby, may readily be conceded; but as we value the welfare of future generations which are to succeed us, we dare not exclude them from our annals. . . . The history which fails to record the . . . crimes which convulse society and sap the foundations of civil liberty, leaves future generations exposed to like evils from like fatal

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<sup>92</sup> Another stereographic image, which depicts the same view of Bingham's studio without the artist, was dated 1870 and was captioned "Interior of Bingham's studio over Shannon's store at Third and Main streets in Kansas City." See Gentzler, "*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*," 488; McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham*, 261.

causes.”<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Bingham stressed his disapproval of portraying events in an unfaithful manner in order to orchestrate an effect. “The design of my picture is not ‘to perpetuate a diseased idea of an historical event,’” Bingham insisted, “but to . . . hand over to eternal infamy the perpetrators and defenders of outrages which scarcely find a parallel in the annals of the most barbarous ages.” He admitted art could sometimes serve as a balm to heal old wounds, “but it will never be able to do this by making crime respectable,” he argued.<sup>94</sup>

Of all the attacks made against his painting, however, the insinuation that it cast aspersions on Union troops probably upset Bingham the most. Pointedly, he signed his “Vindication” “by the artist, George C. Bingham, early an officer in the Federal Army.”<sup>95</sup> Bingham went on to stress his patriotism and respect for Union soldiers in the strongest terms: “I deny that I have pictured those entitled to be called ‘Union military men’ as ‘brutal, repulsive, soulless beings. . . .’ I was myself a Union soldier . . . and would, therefore be the last man to libel a class, either with pen or pencil, who were my comrades in arms. . . . Such men are entitled to and have my highest respect.”<sup>96</sup> Bingham insisted he only meant to slander the “prompters, abettors and perpetrators” of the order in his painting and pointed out that “a little blue cloth and a few brass buttons neither make a soldier nor unmake a thief, and that the characters of men are to be determined by their deeds, not by the color and trappings of their coats.”<sup>97</sup>

Bingham was relentlessly clear who the true villain in his painting was: General Ewing, not the federal army. Bingham’s critics made the mistake of separating *Order No. 11* from Bingham’s personal enmity for Ewing. Following the end of the war, Bingham devoted himself

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<sup>93</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Bingham to Editor of the *Missouri Republican*, March 17, 1869, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 296, 299.

<sup>95</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 2.

<sup>96</sup> Bingham to Editor of the *Missouri Republican*, March 17, 1869, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 298.

<sup>97</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 8, 6.

to fulfilling his legendary promise to make Ewing infamous. No matter how busy he was defending and exhibiting *Order No. 11*, Bingham never lost track of Ewing. Ewing had great plans for a political career in the post-war years and Bingham made no secret of his determination to keep Ewing out of power. He even planned exhibits around elections to maximize the damage to Ewing's reputation. In fact, Bingham's obsessive hatred for Ewing was so widely known that even Ewing's political opponents in his native Ohio asked Bingham for assistance in defeating him. During one election in particular, Ewing's opponents used photographs of *Order No. 11* to turn favor against him.<sup>98</sup>

For Bingham, it was possible to make a distinction between an individual officer and the federal army writ large. In fact, Bingham's enmity for Ewing was a logical extension of Missouri's wartime experience, in which each Missourian in some ways fought their own private war—locked in a cycle of retaliatory violence mostly divorced from the larger issues of the Civil War. Criticizing Ewing was not the same things as criticizing federal soldiers or sympathizing with Confederates—on that Bingham was adamant.

Nevertheless, *Order No. 11* does encourage sympathy for the family in the painting, who are clearly slaveholders—a criticism that would resurface throughout the life of the painting. As a Conservative Unionist, however, Bingham understood that not all slaveholders were Southern-sympathizers. Indeed, his closest friend James Rollins owned slaves yet served in the pro-Union provisional government. Bingham insisted the “helpless victims” of General Order No. 11 were “anything but rebels.”<sup>99</sup> In fact, its most problematic feature was that “it was not directed against rebels or bushwhackers, nor against any persons charged with crime, but against *all persons* who were so unfortunate as to reside within the doomed district. That it spared neither age, sex,

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<sup>98</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 4, 1871, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>99</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 9.

character nor condition. That it operated upon a people who had voted as a unit against secession, and who, during the entire period of the war, furnished their full quota of troops to the Federal army without the compulsion of a draft.”<sup>100</sup> In fact, Bingham argued, slaveholding only increased Missourians’ loyalty to the Union. They realized secession would isolate Missouri among the free states and jeopardize slaveholding. “They also saw,” he continued, “that it would deprive them of the advantages of their central position in the grand American Union” which protected them from attack and put them at the heart of national commerce.<sup>101</sup>

*Order No. 11*’s association with the “Lost Cause” stemmed less from the imagery of the painting and more from Bingham’s opposition to the Radical Republicans in Missouri at the end of the war. The Drake Constitution put Conservatives like Bingham in an awkward position. He supported abolition and African American voting rights, but riled at punitive measures like the Iron Clad Oath. “It is somewhat difficult for one now to see clearly his political duty,” Bingham confessed. He believed “the enfranchisement of the negroes is an accomplished feat which marks the beginning of a new era in our history,” but he also suspected the motives of the Radicals who pushed it through. “The proper enlightenment of the new sovereigns cannot be safely neglected” he warned Rollins. “Even if their skulls are as thick as they are supposed to be we must find means to penetrate them, or Sklawags [*sic*] and low demagogues will be uppermost.”<sup>102</sup>

All in all, Bingham was much more concerned by the disenfranchisement of white Missourians under the Iron Clad Oath—in particular, the idea that public officials, teachers, and ministers could be arrested for refusing to take it. This was the fate of one Baptist minister, Major Abner Holton Dean, a former chaplain in the Union army. His military service was no

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<sup>100</sup> Bingham to B. Gratz Brown, June 26, 1879, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 519.

<sup>101</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 9.

<sup>102</sup> Bingham to Rollins, March 8, 1870, James S. Rollins, Papers.

guarantee of protection from the oath. Dean refused to take it, insisting that his allegiance belonged to God and not to the Radicals. Despite such protestations, the Radicals ordered Dean arrested. Bingham was outraged over Dean's imprisonment—not only because it constituted a major violation of Dean's rights, but also because he was a deeply religious man. Bingham recoiled at the idea that a minister could be imprisoned for preaching the gospel. "Nothing is law," he said, "which does not accord with the law of the Kingdom of Heaven. But these Radicals . . . do not regard that as a law which condemns roguery, house-burning and murder." "The highest crime in their catalogue," he added sardonically, "is the crime of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ."<sup>103</sup>

Bingham's anger over Dean's imprisonment led him to produce his last political painting: *Major Dean in Jail* (1866). Though it certainly carries a political message, *Major Dean in Jail* is not a polemic painting in the vein of *Order No. 11*. In the former painting, Bingham did not resort to over-dramatization, but rather portrayed Dean sitting quietly in his jail cell, reading what looks like a Bible. The resulting effect is one of quiet indignation, rather than latent aggression. The painting nevertheless reflects Bingham's disapproval for the Iron Clad Oath and, by extension, the Radical Republicans who put it into effect. Missourians responded to its imagery. "It will be a picture that every family should possess," the *Liberty Tribune* proclaimed, "and it should bear the name 'Missouri under Radical rule in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.'"<sup>104</sup>

In 1868, Bingham again changed his political identification and joined the Democratic Party. It was not that Bingham's values had changed, but rather the political landscape around him. Bingham had supported the Republican Party from its inception, but its increasing

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<sup>103</sup> Bingham, "Phelps' Resolutions. The Radical Standing Army," *People's Tribune*, July 11, 1866, in Gentzler, "But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician," 285.

<sup>104</sup> *The Liberty Tribune*, "The Parson in his Cell," July 6, 1866.



FIGURE 4: George Caleb Bingham, *Major Dean in Jail*, 1866. In Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham*, 112.

radicalism disenchanted him. This presented a quandary for Conservative Unionists like Bingham, Rollins, and their cohort. “Many Conservatives of Whig origin, . . .” William Parrish observes, “showed little initial enthusiasm for coalescing the opposition, under a party label that had been a curse to them in prewar years, it became increasingly obvious that a rejuvenated Democracy offered the best hope for success against the triumphant Radicals.” As a result, Missouri Democrats were a breed apart from the Democrats of the Solid South. In fact, Parrish notes, they “sought to keep off their ticket anyone ‘who was not thoroughly identified with the Government during the rebellion.’”<sup>105</sup> Although some expressed white supremacist politics characteristic of the Democratic Party of this period, their principle platform was opposition to the exclusionary practices of the Radicals, loyalty to the Union, and adherence to the moderate policies of the wartime provisional government.

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<sup>105</sup> Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 238, 243.

Bingham quickly rose to prominence in the party. In fact, in 1871 and again in 1876, he was named as a candidate for governor, though he never earnestly pursued the office. “I would accept the office [of governor] if properly tendered,” he continued later, “although I am certain that its possession would not increase my happiness.”<sup>106</sup> In 1874, despite talk of running for Congress, Bingham settled for serving on the board of police commissioners in Kansas City and became the adjutant general of Missouri in 1875. As adjutant general, Bingham petitioned the federal government for war damage claims for both the state of Missouri and for private citizens, including his own futile claim for the destruction of his Kansas City studio.<sup>107</sup> He also spearheaded an effort to compile a roster of all Missouri Union soldiers and assisted the national cemetery commission in identifying Missouri’s Union dead. He also used his position to combat the Ku Klux Klan and similar vigilante groups in southeast Missouri.<sup>108</sup>

In keeping with the Democrats’ efforts to bridge sectional divisions in opposition to the Radicals, Bingham voiced a desire for reconciliation with law-abiding former Confederates. He joined his party in advocating for the restoration of full citizenship to former Confederates but that did not mean he now sided with them. Bingham clarified his position in the press: “I desire a reconciliation which will array the intelligence of the nation against oppression in every form, and in favor of law, order and peace. Such a noble end cannot be accomplished by discarding the best men of our country and elevating to the highest official positions those who have abused the power with which they have been entrusted.” “For . . . men . . . who embraced the Confederate cause under the influence of honest convictions,” he continued, “I entertain the highest respect,

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<sup>106</sup> Bingham to Rollins, April 13, 1876, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>107</sup> Bingham to Rollins, March 9, 1876, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>108</sup> “Biennial Report of the Adjutant General, Acting Quartermaster General, and Acting Paymaster General, State of Missouri, for the years 1875 and 1876,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 28th General Assembly, Appendix, 1877, 4-5, 19-20, 24-25.

and, had their convictions also been mine, I would have been earnestly associated with them.”<sup>109</sup> His sympathy for the honest men of the Confederacy, however, did not mean he had forgotten what they fought for. As former Confederates returned to public office in Missouri, Bingham regarded them with no small degree of irony: “I cannot but observe . . . that those who endeavored to destroy our government are zealously bent upon getting possession of its offices, for which a sixteen year fast has not diminished their appetite.”<sup>110</sup> Far from letting bygones be bygones, however, Bingham continued to resurrect painful memories of the war—even from his deathbed—and remained unequivocal in his defense of *Order No. 11*. “While it becomes men like . . . Gen. Ewing to urge forgetfulness of the past, . . .” Bingham wrote, “no honest man who wore either the blue or the gray will ever desire to have a single page of history expunged.”<sup>111</sup>

In 1879, Bingham died of cholera morbus at the age of 68. Just prior to his death, Bingham drafted one final letter in defense of *Order No. 11*. It was a reply to a published letter written by Ewing’s friend and noted Liberal Republican, B. Gratz Brown. Brown praised Ewing and insisted General Order No. 11 was a military necessity. With characteristic indignation, Bingham drafted a cutting reply. Published posthumously under the heading “A Voice From the Grave,” Bingham challenged Brown’s claims that the order was a military necessity. Bingham cited the opinions of Ewing’s superior officers, who decried the order as “an act of imbecility.” If Brown doubted the terrible extreme the order had reached, Bingham suggested he see for himself the charred remains of homes, “some of which yet remain as memorials of the great military achievement of your hero Gen. . . . Ewing.” Bingham then proceeded to accuse Ewing of “intimate association with the basest criminals, whose robberies and murders were perpetrated

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<sup>109</sup> Bingham to Brown, June 26, 1879, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 518, 521.

<sup>110</sup> Bingham to Rollins, June 29, 1876, James S. Rollins, Papers.

<sup>111</sup> Bingham to Brown June 26, 1879, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 519.



almost in his presence, and which, if he did not approve, he at least permitted.” It was an inspired defense. “You did not dream when you thrust yourself into this controversy,” Bingham sneered at Brown, “that these ghosts of the dead past would rise up to confront you like that of Banquo, ‘refused to down.’”<sup>112</sup>

Indeed, the ghost of Bingham and *Order No. 11* would be invoked many times following his death. While Bingham’s memory faded from the national scene “those were not lacking,” one art historian noted, “who, through the years, had kept the candles burning at the Bingham shrine.” “Sectionally at least,” he continued, “Bingham was remembered and paid honor.”<sup>113</sup> In fact, in 1910, *The Columbia Statesman* spoke of the pride Missourians still felt for their “Statesman-Artist”: “so many of our citizens still remember Bingham and his career in Missouri that his name is still one to conjure by.”<sup>114</sup> Missourians continued to identify with his paintings as representative of their experiences. “Whenever there is an exhibit of them it attracts Missourians,” Bingham’s son Rollins reflected with satisfaction.<sup>115</sup>

In 1910, the city of Columbia played host to the largest exhibition of Bingham’s paintings up to that point, including *Order No. 11*, which was undoubtedly the chief attraction. Its popularity, and infamy, had not faded with time. Rollins Bingham, for one, expected it to draw a crowd: “It appeals most strongly to every Missourian that has a recollection of the times and circumstances.”<sup>116</sup> So much so, he claimed, that homes all over Missouri proudly displayed engravings of the painting.<sup>117</sup> Rollins Bingham recognized that some still regarded *Order No. 11* as sympathetic to the Lost Cause, but he refuted it in no uncertain terms: “Many there are who

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<sup>112</sup> Bingham, “Bingham-Brown,” *Kansas City Journal*, July 25, 1879.

<sup>113</sup> Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham of Missouri*, 136

<sup>114</sup> *The Columbia Statesman*, “Bingham Exhibition of Paintings,” April 8, 1910.

<sup>115</sup> Rollins Bingham, “Bingham and His Missouri Art,” *The Kansas City Star*, 1910.

<sup>116</sup> *The Columbia Statesman*, “Bingham Exhibition of Paintings,” April 8, 1910.

<sup>117</sup> Rollins Bingham, “Bingham and His Missouri Art,” *The Kansas City Star*, 1910.

consider the picture as a representation of the artists sympathy with the principles and causes of secession. George [C]. Bingham was no more in sympathy with the principles of secession than was Abraham Lincoln. He gave . . . his whole devotion to the cause of the Union. He served that sacrificial purpose loyally [*sic*] and devotedly. Order No. 11 was his protest against a wrong under the pretense of serving a just cause.”<sup>118</sup>

Over time, however, Bingham’s true intensions for *Order No. 11* became obscured. *Order No. 11* became increasingly popular with the Lost Cause set. Following Bingham’s death, his widow auctioned his paintings on behalf of the Missouri Home for Confederate Veterans.<sup>119</sup> John Newman Edwards’s famously sympathetic account of Missouri guerrillas *Noted Guerrillas, or The Warfare of the Border*, used Bingham’s painting as evidence of the kind of brutality that justified guerrilla warfare. “The genius of a celebrated painter, Capt. George C. Bingham, of Missouri,” he wrote, “has been evoked to give infamy to the vandalism of the deed and voice to the indignation of history over its consummation.” Edwards predicted “Bingham’s picture . . . will live longer than the memories of the strife, and keep alive after Guerrilla and Jayhawker are well forgotten.”<sup>120</sup> The Missouri United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) cited *Order No. 11* as evidence of Missouri’s “Dixie Affinity” in two separate essays published in the *Confederate Veteran* magazine. Both pieces praised Bingham’s skill and made particular note of his Southern ancestry. “The greatest artist ever produced by the State was George C. Bingham

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<sup>118</sup> *The Columbia Statesman*, “Bingham Exhibition of Paintings,” April 8, 1910; Rollins Bingham, “Bingham and His Missouri Art,” *The Kansas City Star*, 1910.

<sup>119</sup> According to Rusk, the auction was held at Findlay’s Art Store in Kansas City, March 25, 1893. See Rusk, *George Caleb Bingham*, 107.

<sup>120</sup> John Newman Edwards, *Noted Guerrillas, or The Warfare of the Border* (St. Louis: Bryan, Brand, & Company, 1877), 205-206.

. . . and Bingham was a Virginian.”<sup>121</sup> “All have seen copies of his famous picture, ‘Order No. 11, or Martial Law.’”<sup>122</sup> In fact, *Order No. 11* resonated so strongly with the UDC that some anticipated their support in an effort to preserve Bingham’s home in Arrow Rock. “The United Daughters of the Confederacy in Missouri will probably aid in the movement,” *The Columbia Missourian* speculated, “even if Bingham did serve in the Union Army during the Civil War.”<sup>123</sup> Their appropriation of Bingham as Confederate hero would have no doubt mystified the man himself, who always imagined himself as a defender of the Union and civil liberties, not the Lost Cause.

In the twentieth century, Bingham returned to national prominence, in part due to a resurgence of interest in regionalist art and the popularity of another western Missouri artist, Thomas Hart Benton. Benton actively encouraged a revival of Bingham’s work, prompting a wave of exhibitions across the country and the rediscovery of *Order No. 11* on the national scene.<sup>124</sup> After 1958, it appeared as a standard illustration in virtually every book on Missouri’s Civil War.<sup>125</sup> Around the same time, a number of new biographies and catalogs of Bingham’s artwork were published, all featuring *Order No. 11*.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Mrs. Virginia Creel, “Missouri, Dixie’s Affinity,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXI, No. 2 (February 1923), 53.

<sup>122</sup> Mrs. George D. Baxter, “Contributions of the South to the Civilization of Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (April 1924), 135.

<sup>123</sup> *The Columbia Missourian*, March 11, 1927.

<sup>124</sup> The artist Thomas Hart Benton was the grand-nephew of the famous Missouri politician by the same name. For more on exhibitions of Bingham’s work see Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham*; Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham of Missouri*, 136-38; Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 146.

<sup>125</sup> *Order No. 11* appears in Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic*; Astor, *Rebels on the Border*; Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*; Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*; Robert Dyer, *Jesse James and the Civil War in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994); James W. Erwin, *Guerrilla Hunters in Civil War Missouri* (Charleston: The History Press, 2013); Donald L. Gilmore, *Civil War on the Missouri-Kansas Border* (Gretna, La.: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 2006); John McCorkle, *Three Years with Quantrill: A True Story Told by His Scout* (1998; repr., Armstrong, Mo.: Armstrong Herald Print, 1914); James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Ralph A. Monaco, II, *Scattered to the Four Winds: General Order No. 11 and Martial Law in Jackson County, Missouri, 1863* (Monaco Publishing, LLC, 2014); Paul C. Nagel, *George Caleb Bingham: Missouri’s Famed Painter and Forgotten Politician* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2005); Neely, *The Border between Them*; Christopher Phillips, *The Civil War in the*

Although this was the first time *Order No. 11* drew due attention from scholars, the art historians most interested in Bingham's work failed to understand its importance as an expression of Civil War memory. These critics almost universally condemned *Order No. 11* as rather more melodramatic than inspiring or realistic.<sup>127</sup> E. Maurice Bloch, probably the most important of Bingham's critics, entirely overlooked the significance of the painting. "In view of the unconvincing treatment of the subject," he wrote, "it is difficult to understand . . . how the painting could have aroused the strong emotional reactions it did when first brought before the public."<sup>128</sup> Michael Edward Shapiro, another art historian who studied Bingham's work, also wondered over the popularity of *Order No. 11*. "This may be because it focused on a painful, specific, well-known episode in Missouri history," he mused, "because the artist promoted it so vigorously at the end of his life, or simply because it depicted an event that was much more recent."<sup>129</sup> Barbara Groseclose, another Bingham scholar, dismissed *Order No. 11* outright as "mere melodrama;" adding, "the painting sinks under the weight of Bingham's own intensity of feeling."<sup>130</sup>

Steven Conn, in his analysis of the impact of Civil War art, also saw *Order No. 11* as "unsuccessful," describing it as "heavy-handed rather than powerful" and falling far short of Bingham's earlier genre work. "Gone . . . is any sense of Bingham's characteristic humor," Conn laments, "his irony, his smirk. . . . All he manages here is a raging anger." The ultimate failing of *Order No. 11*, Conn says, was that the moment it preserves was not as weighted with memory as

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*Border South*; and Siddali, *Missouri's War*. It is also featured on the Missouri Civil War Heritage Foundation website.

<sup>126</sup> This group of scholarship features many of the books cited in this work, including Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*; Bloch, *The Paintings of George Caleb Bingham*; Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham*; Christ-Janer, *George Caleb Bingham of Missouri*; Constant, *Paintbox on the Frontier*; and McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham*.

<sup>127</sup> Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 129.

<sup>128</sup> Bloch, *George Caleb Bingham*, 221.

<sup>129</sup> Shapiro, *George Caleb Bingham*, 132.

<sup>130</sup> Groseclose, "The Missouri Artist' as Historian," in Shapiro et al., *George Caleb Bingham*, 89.

Bingham hoped it would be. According to Conn, “Bingham chose poorly when he painted *Order No. 11*. While he regarded the order as unconscionable, it has not assumed the place of high significance in our memory of the Civil War that Bingham believed it would. As a result, the act of vengeance which this painting represented for Bingham rings hollow. . . . Alas, for Bingham, what has not become famous, cannot be made infamous, nor can it be made to serve the didactic purpose of history painting.”<sup>131</sup> *Order No. 11* may represent a scene particular to Missouri’s Civil War, but to assume it is not remembered because it is not a part of the standard narratives of Civil War memory is to seriously misjudge the cultural significance of the painting. Bingham cannot be blamed for scholarship that has only recently privileged Missouri. For their part, Missourians vividly remembered General Order No.11 and passionately debated its meaning. It may be an obscure moment for Conn, but it was a seminal moment in the lives of Missourians like Bingham.

More recently, scholars have also demonstrated a misunderstanding of the historical context of Bingham’s depiction of African Americans in *Order No. 11*. There are three African Americans represented in the painting, presumably slaves—a woman, a man, and a young boy. Far from welcoming the “redlegs” as liberators, Bingham depicted the man and boy as turning from the scene in evident horror and disgust, while the woman cradles the senseless mother of the slain man. It is as emblematic of the “faithful slave” narrative of the Lost Cause as it is possible to be and marred Bingham’s painting with the taint of paternalist racism. The same taint

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<sup>131</sup> Conn, “Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting,” 30, 31, 34. For Conn, the problems with *Order No. 11* are not entirely Bingham’s fault, but are rather representative of the problems that defined Civil War history painting in general. According to Conn, the modernity of the Civil War defied traditional painting practices. “Put simply,” he says, “the rules of the battlefield, the previous ‘narrative invention’ that defined the practice of war, changed fundamentally and irrevocably. The narrative conventions of history painting that worked in tandem with the earlier conventions of warfare itself to create meaning out of violence simply did not work anymore. Modern, industrialized, total war, of which the Civil War was the first, simply did not or could not produce many Washington-Crossing-the-Delaware moments. Grand manner history painting, therefore, could not represent a battlefield it could no longer comprehend.” See Conn, “Narrative Trauma and Civil War History Painting,” 33.

of racism emerged in Bingham's defense of the painting as well. In his *Vindication*, Bingham again recounted the humiliation of whites by Jennison's African American soldiers as indistinguishable from the other atrocities of martial law. For Bingham, General Order No. 11 was merely the culmination of these and similar outrages.

Nevertheless, there is little evidence that Bingham intended *Order No. 11* to forward a white supremacist agenda. Art historian Joan Stack persuasively argues that *Order No. 11* has been consistently and willfully misunderstood. In fact, she argues Bingham's depiction of African Americans in *Order No. 11* was quite sympathetic. By modeling the African American man after the Biblical Adam in Masaccio's *Expulsion from Eden*, for example, Bingham portrayed him as a "new Adam," and evoked a sense of "spiritual equality" between whites and blacks.<sup>132</sup> Stack's perceptive reading of *Order No. 11* is in stark contrast to the established scholarship on Bingham's most controversial painting.

In particular, Stack challenges an interpretation voiced by Albert Boime in *Art in the Age of Civil Struggle*.<sup>133</sup> Boime uses *Order No. 11* as evidence that Bingham was a white supremacist. It is a short-sighted claim, based more on misunderstandings of Bingham's painting and contemporary politics than on the artists' true sympathies. "It is not surprising," Boime remarks, "that some reviewers understood the work as sympathetic to proslavery secessionists." Bingham may have claimed his anger arose from General Order No. 11's blatant violation of civil liberties, but according to Boime's analysis, "he could not envision African Americans as citizens protected by the very constitutional guarantees that he invoked." Furthermore, Bingham's expression of "delight" at the end of Reconstruction, Boime says, reveals his

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<sup>132</sup> Stack, "Toward an Emancipationist Interpretation of George Caleb Bingham's *General Order No. 11*," 213.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

“delight” over “ending the commitment of the nation to giving equal rights to newly enfranchised African American citizens.”<sup>134</sup>

For his part, Bingham regarded the depiction of slavery in *Order No. 11* as irrelevant. As a Missourian and one-time slaveholder himself, he did not view slaveholding and loyalty as mutually exclusive. Bingham believed the blame for slavery, as he put it, “rests as much with the people of one section of the Union as the other.”<sup>135</sup> He insisted the family in his painting were merely representative of “that large class of law-abiding men who are known as honest and thrifty cultivators of the soil, standing where they have a right to stand, at their own homes.”<sup>136</sup> He frequently pointed out that General Order No. 11 was “directed not against rebels or rebel sympathizers, but against ‘all persons,’” just as the order stated. “None can say,” Bingham continued, “that they were not entitled to all the protection which [the Federal government’s] power and its laws could afford.”<sup>137</sup>

Projecting white supremacist views on *Order No. 11* betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of Bingham and his context. Bingham’s attitudes towards race seem to have remained consistent over the years and in keeping with the philosophy of many of Missouri’s Conservative Unionists. He harbored stereotypical views of African Americans, but he had no tolerance for inequality. Bingham blasted one politician in the press because, Bingham claimed, this individual “ridiculed our fellow-citizens of African descent, as intellectually but slightly above the monkey tribe, fit only for the cotton fields of the South, and boldly declared that they

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<sup>134</sup> Albert Boime, *Art in the Age of Civil Struggle, 1848-1871* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 410.

<sup>135</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, “Majority Report of the Committee on Federal Relations,” March 16, 1849.

<sup>136</sup> Bingham to Editor of the *Missouri Republican*, March 17, 1869, in Gentzler, “*But I Forget That I am a Painter and not a Politician*,” 298.

<sup>137</sup> Bingham, *An Address to the Public*, 12, 10.

should be deprived of the rights [of] citizenship and remanded to serfdom.”<sup>138</sup> Bingham applauded both the enfranchisement of former slaves and the restoration of political rights for former Confederates. In Bingham’s eyes, the triumph of one was the triumph of the other. His delight at the end of Reconstruction was his delight at the end of Radical hegemony. Bingham, like many of his era, was not always racially progressive, but he was a humanitarian and a firm believer in justice.

Boime is not the only scholar to perpetuate this misunderstanding, however. In Aaron Astor’s *Rebels on the Border*, Astor classes Bingham with a group he calls “belated Confederates,” who abandoned their wartime Unionism and “helped legitimize the construction of a southern regional identity in the postwar border states” because of “the deep sense of shame they felt at watching their once conservative Union succumb to radicalism and biracial citizenship.” Astor says Bingham’s work was perfectly illustrative of this phenomenon and that *Order No. 11* was little better than “neo-Confederate propaganda.” In fact, he claims, “former Unionist George Caleb Bingham offered one of the starkest examples of belated Confederatism in the form of a single painting, titled simply *General Order Number 11*.”<sup>139</sup>

The distinction that Astor and other scholars have failed to appreciate was that Bingham was not trying to perpetuate a Confederate view of the Civil War, but a distinctly Western one. Bingham was not a “belated Confederate,” he was a Conservative Unionist, like the majority of Missourians—racially conservative, politically conservative, but committed to the Union and to gradual emancipation. *Order No. 11*, just like Bingham’s earlier paintings, cultivated a vision of Missouri that reflected distinctly Western values, including a commitment to economic

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<sup>138</sup> Bingham, “Bingham-Brown,” *Kansas City Journal*, July 25, 1879.

<sup>139</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 5, 198, 197.



development, internal improvements, the protection of private property and personal liberty, the institution of slavery, and to the Union.<sup>140</sup>

Bingham was not a Southern apologist or a neo-Confederate, but only one deeply conflicted Westerner among many, negotiating the fine line between slavery, Union, and social justice. Because Bingham so clearly understood the complicated and conflicted loyalties of his adopted state and so effectively translated them onto canvas, he became one of the state's most respected and beloved citizens. The *Independence Sentinel* said of him: "His dauntless warfare against the tyranny of [the Civil War] period, and fearless vindication since of the plundered people: his well known devotion to principle and courage in the performance of duty: his contempt of the arts of professional politicians and merciless execrations of the demagogues are in all the memories of the people."<sup>141</sup> Bingham's impassioned crusade against the injustice of martial law, however, came at a heavy price. Bingham sacrificed his health, political opportunities, and artistic reputation to *Order No. 11*, but he left Missouri its most important touchstone of Civil War memory. In fact, that legacy became his epitaph: "The inimitable creations of his exalted genius, which so fully illustrate Western life and manners, as well as the character of our free institutions . . . constitute the monuments of his great and lasting fame."<sup>142</sup> Although critics have expressed surprise that such an "unconvincing treatment" continues to resonate, what *Order No. 11* lacks in artistry it makes up for with powerful imagery.<sup>143</sup> After all, Bingham never intended *Order No. 11* to be enjoyed, but to instruct; lending the painting a practical, rather than aesthetic, purpose: exposing abuses of political and military authority. In light of its continued use and the discussions it still prompts, it was successful in achieving its

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<sup>140</sup> Rash, *The Painting and Politics of George Caleb Bingham*, 206.

<sup>141</sup> Bingham, "Bingham-Brown," *Kansas City Journal*, July 25, 1879.

<sup>142</sup> *Missouri Statesman*, September 16, 1881.

<sup>143</sup> Bloch, *The Evolution of an Artist*, 221.

ends. The ways in which *Order No. 11* has been used and misused over the years reveals the multiplicity of Civil War memory in Missouri.

## CHAPTER 3

### A “Commonwealth of Compromise”: Marginalization and Reconciliation in Missouri’s Civil War Memory

“The victor and the vanquished have for a quarter of a century worked together to promote the weal and enhance the glory of a common country. . . . Northern and Southern push and pluck have become associated in advancing the Western frontier toward the setting sun, and here the ingenuity of the puritan and the chivalry of the cavalier, harmoniously blended . . . with the liberal and progressive spirit of the growing West.”<sup>1</sup>

-Governor David R. Francis (1891)

Widespread commemorative activities swept the nation like a tide in the years following the Civil War. Across the North and South, Americans made provisions for their dead, erected monuments, observed Memorial Days, founded veterans’ organizations, and hosted reunions in an attempt to memorialize the sacrifices made by their communities during the war. Intent to ensure their efforts would not be forgotten by future generations, Americans generally commemorated the war according to one of three narratives: the Lost Cause, the Cause Victorious, and the Emancipation Cause.<sup>2</sup> For former Confederates, the Lost Cause narrative depicted the war as an honorable, if ultimately hopeless fight, which exemplified the skill of Confederate commanders, the bravery of Confederate soldiers, the fortitude of Southern women, and the loyalty of enslaved African Americans. Northerners, on the other hand, celebrated the Cause Victorious—confident in the conviction that their victory had secured the Union and

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<sup>1</sup> *Secretary’s Annual Report of the Ninth Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, Held at Kansas City, on August 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 1891* (St. Louis: Slawson Printing Company), 9.

<sup>2</sup> While the Lost Cause is a ubiquitous term used to understand Southern memory of the Civil War, historians have categorized Northern memory according to several different terms including the Cause Victorious, the Union Cause, and the Won Cause. I prefer to use the term Cause Victorious because it captures the duality of Union commemoration—the idea that this was a war for both the preservation of the Union and the end of slavery. Although Northerners increasingly believed that the destruction of slavery was essential to the preservation of the Union, thus inextricably linking the two, Cause Victorious better encapsulates this nuance.

accomplished emancipation, eliminating the greatest threat to democracy and fulfilling the promise of American liberty. Finally, African Americans not only remembered the Civil War as a war for emancipation, but also emphasized the contributions of black soldiers to the Cause Victorious. The Emancipation Cause demonstrated the capacity African Americans had for citizenship, belying the centuries-old stereotypes at the foundation of racial inequality.

In an eastern context, these narratives emerged virtually uncontested. While veterans of both sides were aware of their former enemies' attempts to shape Civil War memory, they rarely intruded on one another's efforts.<sup>3</sup> Missourians, on the other hand, faced a unique set of challenges as they struggled to undertake commemorative projects within the same, very limited space. Both Confederate and Unionist Missourians felt a similar imperative to remember the war, but the meaning they invested in it was dramatically different depending on race and allegiance.

By examining the experiences of Confederate and Union veterans in Missouri, it becomes clear that Missourians had difficulty reconciling their Civil War to the national narratives of Civil War commemoration. Although they approached this problem from two completely different perspectives, they faced broadly similar challenges. Not only did they both work around the contentious atmosphere of their state, they also encountered frustration in their search for recognition from their Northern and Southern comrades. As Missourians worked through these challenges, they arrived at the conclusion that their Civil War experience had been entirely different. As Westerners, Missourians shared a sense of marginalization from the national project of Civil War commemoration. This prevalent, if sometimes uneasy, understanding created a distinctive form of Civil War memory in Missouri.

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<sup>3</sup> Only in the course of sporadic and poorly attended Blue-Gray reunions did Unionists and Confederates have the opportunity to take stock of the opposing memory of the war. Even in the other border states of Maryland and Kentucky, Confederate commemoration emerged with little contestation. That said, however, white Southerners often violently suppressed African American efforts to commemorate the Civil War and emancipation.

African Americans' feelings of marginalization, however, had as much to do with race as with region. Interestingly, while Union and Confederate Missourians struggled to organize in the aftermath of the Civil War, African American veterans emerged from the war with clear goals and marked determination. Rather than being mired in an effort to memorialize Missouri's complicated and divisive relationship to the Civil War, black veterans devoted themselves to building a foundation of equality for newly-freed people through education. This was the fulfillment of the Emancipation Cause, a memory of the Civil War that placed the institution of slavery at the heart of the conflict. For African Americans, this was a war of liberation and victory was determined not only by the emancipation of four million enslaved individuals, but also by their entrance into the rights and privileges of free society.

The efforts of African American veterans of the Union army to champion their cause in Missouri began as soon as they donned their uniforms. Despite slaveholders' persistent and sometimes violent attempts to block their enlistment, Missouri fielded at least 8,000 African American troops—perhaps as much as 39% of eligible African American males in the state.<sup>4</sup> In reality, that number was probably higher. During the course of the war, many enslaved Missourians fled to Kansas and other neighboring free states to join the Union army and consequently served in regiments from those states, most famously the First Kansas Colored Volunteer Infantry. Others joined the United States Colored Troops (USCT), a branch of the federal army created by President Lincoln in 1862. The service of African Americans was incredibly symbolic and powerfully demonstrated that the war for the Union had become a war to end slavery.

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<sup>4</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 126; Lorenzo Greene, Antonio F. Holland, and Gary Kremer, "The Role of the Negro in Missouri History, 1719-1970," in *Official Manual of the State of Missouri, 1973-1974* (Jefferson City: Missouri Secretary of States' Office, 1974), 9. Burke puts the number of African American soldiers from Missouri at 8,344. See Burke, *On Slavery's Border*, 297, n46.

Like USCT troops in other states, however, Missouri's African American soldiers faced discrimination in pay and duty. Forced to serve in segregated units, under white officers, and relegated to the most menial and most dangerous tasks, they endured some of the worst conditions of the war. Their service, however, did open some avenues towards equality for African Americans. Over the course of the war, their conduct earned them the respect and admiration of many of their white comrades, who increasingly supported emancipation as a Union war aim as a result. In the USCT, African American soldiers also had access to instruction in reading and writing, something that had long been denied enslaved people.

One of the African American units from Missouri was the Sixty-Second USCT. While serving in Texas at the conclusion of the war, Richard Baxter Foster, a white officer in the Sixty-Second, worried about what the future held for his black comrades. "It was a pity these men should find no schools when they returned to Missouri," he opined, "and that the education so happily commenced should cease."<sup>5</sup> Foster continued:

I had thought much, during the months that followed Lee's surrender, of the prospect of the country. I felt that the past was dead and must soon be buried; that an era had commenced in which all things should become new. 'The war' I said to myself, 'has given us opportunity. It has been a grand iconoclast, breaking down idols and clearly away rubbish. . . . No more shall the auction block be mounted by human chattels. No more shall education be forbidden and virtue be impossible for any part of our population. The fugitive slave law is behind us. Universal suffrage is before us.'<sup>6</sup>

Foster and his men fully understood that providing education for freed people was the essential first step in achieving all the things Union victory had promised African Americans.

As a result, Foster and the veterans of the Sixty-Second conceived a plan to establish a school for newly emancipated slaves in Missouri. It was to be called the Lincoln Institute, in

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<sup>5</sup> R. B. Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute, Jefferson City, Missouri. And Speech of Col. David Branson, Upon the Dedication of the New Building, July 4th, 1871* (Jefferson City: n.p., 1871), 6. See also Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 166-9.

<sup>6</sup> Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 6.

honor of the “Great Emancipator” himself. All together, the enlisted men raised \$1,034.60 and their officers raised another \$3,966.50 on behalf of the school, while the Sixty-Fifth, another Missouri USCT unit, contributed an additional \$1,379.50. They also received support from the Freedman’s Bureau and the Western Sanitary Commission.<sup>7</sup> In fact, donations came in from a wide variety of Missourians; legend has it that notorious outlaw Jesse James even donated to the cause.<sup>8</sup> “But two conditions were made to the gifts,” Foster explained: “that the school should be established in Missouri, and that it should be open to colored people. The fundamental idea was indeed that it should be for their special benefit; but special does not necessarily mean exclusive. . . . It is not for the benefit of the colored people to encourage the spirit of caste that would make one school white and another black; that would mark the race inferior. . . . The caste spirit is the legitimate child of slavery.”<sup>9</sup>

Funding, however, was only one of the obstacles facing the veterans and the Lincoln Institute. The enterprise also faced intense racism from white Missourians. After all, even Missouri’s Unionists had defended the institution of slavery and many had been slaveholders themselves. *The Weekly Caucasian*, for example—a notoriously vitriolic Democrat paper—called the Lincoln Institute “a gorilla school.” “It is a sweet-scented African college,” the paper continued, “named after the late lamented.”<sup>10</sup> The editors of the *Caucasian* were enraged to think that federal dollars would be invested in such a place. “One of those dubious institutions, called the Freedmen’s Bureau,” it commented, “has donated \$2,000 to a Lincoln Institute . . . for the benefit of worthless negroes. The right of these bureau officials to give away the people’s money, in making their boasted charities, is without law or profit, and is nothing short of down-

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<sup>7</sup> Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 9, 12.

<sup>8</sup> “A Soldier’s Dream: The History of Lincoln University and the Men of the 62nd and 65th Colored Infantry,” Missouri State Archives, 2010, <http://www.sos.mo.gov/mdh/soldiersdream/> (accessed March 12, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 7.

<sup>10</sup> *The Weekly Caucasian*, February 29, 1868.

right stealing.”<sup>11</sup> This racism was not only expressed in strong language, however, but through violence as well.

African American schools throughout the state faced the threat of violence, not just the Lincoln Institute—particularly in rural areas. Although the Drake Constitution had called for the creation of segregated, though equally funded, schools for African Americans, they did little to enforce the law. Freed people mobilized the Freedman’s Bureau and the American Missionary Association to assist them in establishing schools, but they faced serious challenges from white Missourians.<sup>12</sup> “But few schools have thus far been established,” one newspaper reported. “The landholders, who were once slaveholders, are still Democrats, and will only allow schools to be established in their midst when they are compelled to do so by law.” A number of schools were attacked and burnt.<sup>13</sup>

Despite such violence, Foster continued to work on behalf of the Lincoln Institute. In 1866, he acquired a property for the school in Jefferson City. Foster still had a daunting task before him, though, and not just because he hoped to establish a school for African Americans, but because he hoped to establish a school at all. Before the Civil War, Missouri had no public education system in place. “There was then no public school in the Capital of Missouri,” Foster remembered, “no board of education, no public school house.” Foster, however, was not one to be daunted. “There was a shell, a wreck, a ruin of the house that before the war had supplied, with two rooms each 22 feet square, the wants of the free school system of Jefferson City. I obtained this ruin from the township directors,” he wrote, “and on the 17th of September, commenced the active educational work of Lincoln Institute with two pupils.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Maryland Free Press*, January 17, 1867.

<sup>12</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 150; Parrish, *A History of Missouri*, 158-66.

<sup>13</sup> *Semi-Weekly Louisianian*, “The Freedmen of Missouri,” July 27, 1871.

<sup>14</sup> Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 10.



In spite of the accomplishments of the Sixty-Second and Sixty-Fifth in establishing the Lincoln Institute, financial challenges soon hindered its growth. Foster knew that the only way to secure the future of the school would be to have it assumed by the state. There was no legal obstacle to such a measure. “The new Constitution of this State of 1865, provides,” Foster explained, “that separate colored schools *may be* established, and the statute law of a later date requires that they *shall be*; but they both require an equal distribution of funds.” Nevertheless, a couple of attempts to gain state funding for the Lincoln Institute failed, although Foster insisted that was “not by hostility to the measure.” Eventually, he reported, the veterans submitted “the draft of a bill to endow Lincoln Institute as a State Normal School for training colored teachers. That bill was taken up by the Legislature, passed without amendment and approved by Gov. [Joseph W.] McClurg, February 14th, 1870.”<sup>15</sup> This was a triumph not only for the veterans of the Sixty-Second and Sixty-Fifth, but for every freed Missourian who would benefit from the training the Lincoln Institute would provide to African American educators.

At the formal dedication of the Lincoln Institute on the Fourth of July, 1871, there was every reason to be proud of the school. In his dedicatory address, Col. David Branson, a former officer in the Sixty-Second, related to the crowd the progress that had been made. Since the Lincoln Institute’s humble beginnings in that ramshackle old house, Branson reported, they had constructed more permanent buildings. Enrollment had “increased to 150 and more constantly applying for admission who cannot be received for want of funds, to employ teachers and to build a boarding house.”<sup>16</sup> Although there was still plenty of work ahead, Branson envisioned the Lincoln Institute as the embodiment of the Emancipation Cause. “Looking in the faces of my old comrades . . . here to-day,” Branson said, “memory goes back to the past . . . and emotions fill

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<sup>15</sup> Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 11, 12 (emphasis in original).

<sup>16</sup> Col. David Branson, “Speech of Col. David Branson,” in Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 18.

me that no language can express. . . . Our enemies predicted, that upon the disbanding of our volunteer army—particularly the colored portion of it—it would turn to band of marauding murderers and idle vagabonds, and this Institute was our answer.”<sup>17</sup>

The creation of the Lincoln Institute was the most profound achievement undertaken by African American veterans in Missouri in the aftermath of the Civil War. More than any oration, parade, or monument, this school represented what the war had been about for Missouri’s African American soldiers. Even its very name—the *Lincoln* Institute—connected this school to what the Union army accomplished through the abolition of slavery and the service of black soldiers. It symbolized the fulfillment of emancipation and the promise of equality for all African Americans, which had been so hard-won.

While the racial marginalization of African Americans drove them to employ Civil War memory for the purpose of racial uplift, white Missourians experienced a very different kind of marginalization—particularly former Confederates. In the years following the Civil War, Missouri followed a path that diverged politically, economically, and demographically from the Deep South, leaving Confederate Missourians feeling excluded from the Lost Cause narrative of the Civil War. Missouri, a predominately Unionist state that underwent a self-imposed version of Radical Reconstruction, actively disenfranchised Confederates and curbed their power to cultivate a Southern identity. The westward orientation of the state both geographically and economically further hindered the development of the Lost Cause in Missouri. As Missourians embraced industrialization and westward expansion after the war, they also encouraged an influx of immigrants from New England, the old northwest, and Europe, diluting the state’s traditionally Southern heritage with a diverse range of ethnicities. As a result, the Lost Cause

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<sup>17</sup> Branson, “Speech of Col. David Branson,” in Foster, *Historical Sketch of Lincoln Institute*, 15.

interpretation of the Civil War failed to gain traction and left Confederate Missourians isolated from the Solid South.

If Confederate Missourians expected to follow the trajectory of their sister border state Kentucky in “becoming Confederate,” they were mistaken. Kentucky, historian Anne Marshall argues, had always been Southern, but only embraced a Confederate identity in the twentieth century through the adoption of Southern cultural ideas about violence, honor, and racism. In short, Confederate commemoration made Kentucky more Southern. Marshall acknowledges, however, that her case study does not necessarily apply to other border states—especially Missouri. “While Maryland, Delaware, and Missouri each had strong proslavery, antifederal factions,” she says, “they all, for various reasons, came under Republican control by the end of the war.”<sup>18</sup> Not so Kentucky, where the Democratic Party quickly reasserted itself and white supremacist extralegal violence derailed efforts by local Republicans to affect Reconstruction in their state. After nearly a decade of Radical Rule, however, Missouri did not prove fertile ground for the Lost Cause. Missouri was simply too politically and culturally diverse to follow Kentucky’s path toward “becoming Confederate.”

This is not to suggest that Missourians did not express fervent Lost Cause sympathies. “We have no apologies to make,” former Confederate Senator George Graham Vest remarked, “and we don’t intend to make any.”<sup>19</sup> “You never were disloyal,” another Confederate reassured his comrades. “You were not guilty of treason.”<sup>20</sup> Even more provocative was Capt. Porter’s poem “A Missourian’s Feelings on the Surrender,” which he submitted to the *Confederate Veteran*: “Who can portray the deep disgust/Missourians feel when they are told/To lay their

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<sup>18</sup> Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 3, 37.

<sup>19</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, Held at Higginsville, on August 27th and 28th, 1889* (St. Louis: Slawson & Co., Printers, 1889), 8.

<sup>20</sup> “Reunion of Missouri Confederates,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XI, No. 11 (November 1903), 490.

banners in the dust,/Lay down their arms and be paroled? . . ./March backward through this land of flowers,/All covered o'er with bloody graves,/Again to seek our Western bowers/And tell our mothers we are slaves.”<sup>21</sup> For disaffected Missourians like Capt. Porter, their identity as Westerners existed alongside a deep emotional connection to the South, and they mourned the defeat of the Confederacy.

In order to propagate the mythology of the Lost Cause, Missouri's former Confederates organized into societies. The first of these was the Southern Benevolent Aid Society, founded in St. Louis in 1867. This organization was formed to provide for needy Confederate veterans in the city. In 1882, it evolved into the Southern Historical and Benevolent Association.<sup>22</sup> While it still maintained an interest in caring “for the poor and disabled surviving Confederate soldier,” it also expanded its mission to include “collecting, preserving and publishing authentic records and information showing the true history and action of the south in the late Civil War, and vindicating the motives and character of our people in that contest.”<sup>23</sup>

At roughly the same time, in 1881, a state-wide organization for Confederate veterans formed called The Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri. The Ex-Confederates claimed their purpose was both “for social enjoyment, and the preservation of our history,” but they insisted they had no desire to perpetuate wartime hostilities.<sup>24</sup> “We have accepted the results of the issues of the late war in good faith,” they asserted, “and from the arbitration of arms, sealed with the blood of a million martyrs, there is no appeal; . . . the often repeated assertion that we are only

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<sup>21</sup> Capt. Porter, “A Missourian's Feelings on the Surrender,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XII, No. 9 (September 1904), 430.

<sup>22</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> *The Sedalia Weekly Bazaar*, August 22, 1882.

<sup>24</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, in its Second Annual Meeting, at Sedalia, Pettis County, Missouri, August 15th and 16th, 1882* (St. Louis: Woodward and Tiernan, Printers, 1883), 5.

awaiting another opportunity to reopen the issues of the war and again bathe the land in blood, is untrue and not warranted by any conduct of any Confederates.”<sup>25</sup> Instead, the Ex-Confederates devoted themselves to providing relief for surviving Confederate veterans and to the public commemoration of the Lost Cause. Indeed, this was one of the most important aspects of their organization, as they explained: “The erection of trophies, monuments and statues to commemorate great events and perpetuate the memory of their heroes and statesmen . . . serve a double purpose, evincing the patriotism, virtue and heroism of the people themselves by this evidence of their appreciation of those qualities, and by their silent but visible appeals inspiring them and their posterity to emulate the examples of those in whose honor they are raised.”<sup>26</sup> By 1882, the Ex-Confederate Association boasted 1,000 members.<sup>27</sup>

In 1895, United Confederate Veterans (UCV), a national organization founded in 1889, absorbed the Ex-Confederate Association into its ranks. Under the leadership of General Jo Shelby, appointed commander of the Missouri Division, the UCV established at least 80 camps in the state.<sup>28</sup> Membership required proof of service in the Confederate army or navy and evidence of an honorable discharge. The mission of the UCV was “Social, Literary, Historical and Benevolent.” The UCV sought “to cultivate ties of friendship,” “to gather . . . material for an impartial history of the Confederate side,” “to see that the disabled are cared for; that a helping hand is extended to the needy, and that the Confederate widows and orphans are protected and assisted.” The UCV also committed itself to “the erection of enduring monuments . . . and to

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<sup>25</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, in its Second Annual Meeting*, 6.

<sup>26</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, at its Fourth Annual Meeting, at Louisiana, Mo., October 14-15, 1885* (St. Louis: Slawson & Co., Printers, 1886), 9.

<sup>27</sup> *The Sedalia Weekly Bazaar*, August 22, 1882.

<sup>28</sup> *The Butler Weekly Times*, April 4, 1865; *Official Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Reunion and Convention of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans Held at Joplin, Missouri, September 26th and 27th, 1906* (Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Co.), 13.

mark with suitable headstones the graves of the Confederate dead wherever found.”<sup>29</sup> The UCV disavowed any connection between their organization and the established churches or political parties. Like the earlier Ex-Confederate Association, they also professed a desire to heal the divisions between Union and Confederate veterans. “Let the country know,” they proclaimed, “that our inclination and desire as well as duty demands at our hands whenever we find the Union veteran in distress or need of aid to extend to him the same relief that we would tender to one who may become a member of this organization.”<sup>30</sup>

The creation of Unionist memorial organizations in Missouri occurred simultaneously and suffered similar, if opposite, frustrations. As residents of a formerly slaveholding state, one that had even toyed with secession, Missourians occupied an uneasy place within the Cause Victorious. The Cause Victorious depicted the Civil War as a struggle not only for the Union, but for emancipation as well. This represented a contradiction for Missourians who initially defended the Union in order to protect slavery. Emancipation, however, was not the only aspect of the Cause Victorious that left Missourians out of step with the predominant Union memory of the war. The Cause Victorious was also predicated upon the belief that Union victory accomplished an immediate reconciliation and that the Union was stronger than ever. The continuation of guerrilla violence in Missouri, however, revealed that the full and complete reunification of the nation had not yet been achieved.<sup>31</sup>

According to Aaron Astor, these failings were so insurmountable they led border state Unionists to abandon the Cause Victorious altogether. Astor argues that their reluctance to

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<sup>29</sup> *Official Proceedings of Fifth Annual Reunion of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans and Dedication of Monument Springfield, Mo., August 8, 9 and 10, 1901* (St. Louis: C. C. Rainwater, 1901), 100.

<sup>30</sup> *Kansas City Daily Journal*, April 14, 1895.

<sup>31</sup> Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 8-9; Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten*, 2, 18; Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2; Barbara Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 7-8; Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 105, 111-2.

endorse emancipation and their frustration with Radicalism transformed Unionists in Missouri and Kentucky into zealous champions of white supremacy and led them to join ranks with the Lost Cause. They became “belated Confederates,” Astor says, who “constructed their own memories of the war based on the deep sense of shame they felt at watching their once conservative Union succumb to radicalism and biracial citizenship.” As a result, Astor argues, “they yielded public space to former Confederates and made little or no effort to present a pro-Union narrative in response.” In fact, he points to the “near total absence of white Unionist commemoration,” citing only two “instances of border state public commemoration or celebration of the Union.”<sup>32</sup>

While Astor has rightly identified the deeply conflicted identities of border state Unionists, he has overlooked important details—perhaps because he is looking for Union commemoration in the wrong places. His study focuses on the “Little Dixie” region of Missouri, where Confederate sympathies were deeply entrenched. Union commemoration was certainly complicated in Missouri, not least because Unionists shared commemorative space with their former enemies, but they in no way abandoned the Cause Victorious nor did they become “belated Confederates.” Through the creation of organizations like the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), Missouri’s Unionists sought to assert the loyalty of their state and endorsed the Radical Republican agenda.

The earliest Union veterans’ organizations in Missouri were the Soldiers’ Leagues, which boasted camps throughout the state. The Soldiers’ Leagues were an organ of the Radical Republican Party in Missouri. According to historian William Parrish, “the ostensible purpose of these associations was twofold: to secure the ex-soldiery its full share of benefits in postwar

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<sup>32</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 5, 195, 199.

times and to make certain that the general citizenry fully appreciated their military services.”<sup>33</sup>

The Soldiers’ Leagues employed the memory of the war to mobilize the veteran vote against the return of Copperheads and former Confederates to public office.<sup>34</sup> They warned that if Radicals were defeated: “The graves of our comrades, mouldering in the Southern sand, would be desecrated; the rebel soldiers would receive pensions and bounties out of the Federal treasury; the rebel debt would be paid; the Union declared bankrupt; our cripples would be outcasts; our families abandoned to the bitterest misery, and we ourselves would be insulted and ridiculed.”<sup>35</sup> Soldiers’ League gatherings were little more than forums for Radical stumping. For example, on May 10, 1866, at a rally celebrating the anniversary of Camp Jackson, the soldiers carried a banner reading “Loyal men shall rule, not rebels.”<sup>36</sup>

The longest-lasting and most prolific Union veterans’ organization in Missouri was the GAR. Founded in 1866, the GAR was a national, fraternal, quasi-military club for honorably discharged Union veterans. It was also a charitable organization, dedicated to providing assistance to fellow veterans.<sup>37</sup> The GAR fought for pensions, patriotic education, and advocated for political rights for African American veterans. Missouri established its first chapter in 1867.<sup>38</sup>

In the first phase of the organization, despite its claims to being nonpartisan, the GAR was overtly political. During the tumultuous years of Reconstruction, the GAR committed itself to supporting the efforts of the Radical Republicans. In this sense, the Missouri GAR was representative of the national organization. According to the *Missouri Democrat*, “ninety-nine

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<sup>33</sup> Parrish, *Missouri Under Radical Rule*, 86.

<sup>34</sup> James N. Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri, 1866-1870,” *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. XX, No. 3 (August 1954), 357-61.

<sup>35</sup> *Missouri Democrat*, July 13, 1866, quoted in Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 87.

<sup>36</sup> Parrish, *Missouri under Radical Rule*, 83.

<sup>37</sup> Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 24-5.

<sup>38</sup> Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 368.



out of every hundred of the G.A.R. are staunch Republicans.”<sup>39</sup> This led some Missourians to regard the GAR with suspicion. They feared it was mobilizing to become an actual army to enforce Radical Reconstruction and undermine President Andrew Johnson’s lenient Reconstruction program—a program that left the Democratic Party in the South intact and relegated freed people to a position of quasi-slavery. In September, 1867, for example, the GAR turned out in a public show of force to welcome General Philip H. Sheridan upon his visit to St. Louis. As many as 4,000 marched in a parade to welcome the Union war hero, displaying pro-Radical banners, including “Loyal Missouri will stand up by their Commander.”<sup>40</sup>

Racial politics also played an important role in the GAR. The presence of African American veterans within their ranks only confirmed the suspicions of conservative Missourians that the GAR was little more than a “Radical front group.”<sup>41</sup> While there was internal opposition to African American membership, specifically to the integration of posts, the GAR was nevertheless one of the few organizations in the nineteenth century where white and black Americans met on terms of relative equality.<sup>42</sup> For the sake of the Cause Victorious, it was important that the GAR was seen to bridge the “color line.” If the GAR failed to recognize the contributions of African Americans to Union victory, “it would be interpreted . . . as a significant retreat from the ideals for which the war had been fought and . . . as an acceptance of the Southern social system.”<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the GAR’s association with the Radical Republican Party was troubling to Missourians for political and racial reasons. On one occasion, James Primm demonstrates, “the *Missouri Republican* issued a bitter denunciation of the G.A.R. as a ‘Praetorian Guard’ which

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<sup>39</sup> *Missouri Democrat*, November 5, 1866, quoted in Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 367 .

<sup>40</sup> *The Weekly Caucasian*, September 21, 1867, quoted in Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 368-9.

<sup>41</sup> McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 213.

<sup>42</sup> Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 5-6.

<sup>43</sup> McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 217.

threatened to undermine the Constitution and liberties of the people.” The *Republican*’s editors also joked “that the letters G.A.R. stood for ‘Great Array of Rascals.’”<sup>44</sup> On still another occasion, “the *Republican* likened the Grand Army to the Ku Klux Klan, and on another . . . an armed band of Radicals, ‘revolutionary bandits’ who would start a civil war if [not] foiled in their dark plots.”<sup>45</sup> “Far from denying such accusations,” Primm argues, “the *Democrat* advertised the Grand Army as the military and vigilante wing of the Radical party.”<sup>46</sup> Their fears were realized when, during the fifth anniversary of the Battle of Wilson’s Creek in southwestern Missouri, the GAR unanimously adopted a resolution offering “the services of fifty thousand Missouri Grand Army veterans ‘to carry out the action of Congress’” and remove President Johnson from office.<sup>47</sup> This overtly political move alienated Missourians and resulted in the collapse of the departmental organization after 1868.

Not until 1880 was another attempt made to reestablish the GAR, this time in St. Louis.<sup>48</sup> The GAR’s earlier association with Radicalism, however, hampered its growth. “Missouri was slow to appreciate the importance and advantages of a union of its veterans in a fraternal society,” Department Commander Leo Rassieur later observed, “but when her citizens fully recognized the merits of the organization, they took upon themselves the duty of placing their Department where their State stood during the War of the Rebellion, among the first upon the list

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<sup>44</sup> *Missouri Republican*, April 7, 1867, July 1, 1867, quoted in Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 368.

<sup>45</sup> *Missouri Republican*, August 25, 1868, August 26, 1868, quoted in Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 373.

<sup>46</sup> Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 373.

<sup>47</sup> *Missouri Republican*, March 2, 1868, quoted in Primm, “The G.A.R. in Missouri,” 370.

<sup>48</sup> “A Brief History of the Organization of the Grand Army of the Republic in Missouri,” *Proceedings of the Second Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, G.A.R. Held at St. Joseph, Mo., March 22nd, 1883* (St. Louis: H. Rauth, Printer, 1883), 3.

of the faithful, strong and reliable.”<sup>49</sup> It was not an auspicious beginning, however. Two years later, there were only fourteen posts and 777 members in the state.<sup>50</sup>

This “poor showing” encouraged GAR leaders to publicly distance themselves from the Radical Republicans. “For months it seemed to be a struggle for existence—” one member remembered, “a fight to dispel prejudice as to its objects and purposes, many associating it with . . . an earlier organization of the Grand Army of the Republic in this state, which stranded upon the tempestuous shores of politics.”<sup>51</sup> Department Commander William Warner was anxious to change the popular perception of the GAR. “There seemed to be a feeling that the organization was, in some way, political in its tendencies. Circulars were distributed throughout our borders, wherein we set forth, in brief, the grand principles upon which our Order rests: that . . . no question of a political or sectarian character could enter a Post of the Grand Army of the Republic.” He also emphasized the “spirit of soldierly fraternity and charity,” which guided the organization’s efforts. “We clasp hands with those who wore the grey across the grave of the buried rebellion; that while we cherish the memories of the past, it is not that these memories may be an element of discord, but on the contrary, that they may be ‘an ever-living influence for good in all our hearts.’”<sup>52</sup> To further its appeal, Warner emphasized the egalitarian nature of the organization: “Let every old Soldier and Sailor in Missouri know that in the Grand Army of the Republic there are no generals or privates, no distinction of race, but all are comrades; that no

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<sup>49</sup> Leo Rassieur, “Address of the Department Commander,” April 1, 1891, in *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Moberly, Missouri, April 2d and 3d 1891* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1891), 56.

<sup>50</sup> William Warner, “Report of Department Commander,” in *Proceedings of the Second Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, G.A.R. Held at St. Joseph, Mo., March 22nd, 1883* (St. Louis: H. Rauth, Printer, 1883), 20.

<sup>51</sup> “Address of Department Commander,” *Journal of the Third Annual Encampment, Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at St. Louis, Mo., April 10-12, 1884*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Warner, “Report of Department Commander,” 20.

question of a political or sectarian character can enter the Post, and Missouri will lead the van, in increase and membership.”<sup>53</sup>

This new emphasis on fraternalism and nonpartisanship was carried out by GAR posts throughout the country and helped change the popular perception of the organization, both at the national and local level.<sup>54</sup> “In the short space of ten months,” the Department of Missouri reported, “the number has increased from nine Posts, with an aggregate number of five hundred and ninety-six, to sixty-eight Posts, with a membership of two thousand six hundred.”<sup>55</sup> Comrade E. E. Kimball proudly proclaimed: “The Grand Army to which we belong, and of which are proud, is an organization that has now entered upon an era when it needs no excuse for its existence, or apology of any sort. We need no longer to stand before the people with tears in our eyes, and our hands upon our hearts, to convince them that our purpose is a peaceful one.”<sup>56</sup> “There were ‘doubting Thomases’ there;” Commander-in-Chief William Warner recalled, “there were some weak-kneed representatives that thought that the Grand Army of the Republic would not flourish and prosper upon the soil of Missouri; I believed then to the contrary, and what I expected then has been more than realized by the years that have passed.”<sup>57</sup> The GAR, however, was not content to stop there. “Let the good work go forward,” one officer encouraged his comrades, “and let us not relax our efforts until every worthy honorably discharged Union

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<sup>53</sup> Warner, “Report of Department Commander,” 21.

<sup>54</sup> McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 86; Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 208.

<sup>55</sup> *Proceedings of the Second Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, G.A.R.*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> “Unofficial Proceedings,” in *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Trenton, Missouri, March 14th and 15th, 1888* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1888), 198.

<sup>57</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Sedalia, Missouri, March 13th and 14th, 1889* (St. Louis: A Whipple, 1889), 154-5.

soldier in the State is enrolled in the ranks of the Grand Army of the Republic.”<sup>58</sup> By 1893, the Department of the Missouri reached its peak membership at 18,611.<sup>59</sup>

Still, that was only a fraction of the eligible Union veterans in the state. “Why our Department should run from fourteen to fifteen thousand when we ought to have from twenty-five to thirty thousand,” Department Commander John Platt mused, “is the question which . . . I have tried to solve.”<sup>60</sup> A number of different problems no doubt frustrated their recruitment efforts, including the 1897 depression. The depression hit rural Americans hardest and few Missourians had the extra money to pay organizational dues or travel to meetings. “Hard times and scarcity of money may account for a part of the loss,” Department Commander Thomas B. Rodgers acknowledged, “but the main cause may be found in the increasing age and infirmities of the comrades, many of whom find it difficult to keep up their interest in the Order by attending Post meetings and thus become suspended.”<sup>61</sup>

Missouri’s divided loyalties presented another complication. In Missouri, it was not always clear which Union veterans were truly eligible for membership. This was particularly problematic for veterans of the Unionist state militias, which included the Missouri State Militia (MSM), Enrolled Missouri Militia (EMM), Home Guards, Provisional Militia, and the Paw Paw Militia. Under the Rules and Regulations of the GAR, veterans of state regiments were only eligible if they served under U. S. officers and had never taken up arms against the

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<sup>58</sup> Thos. B. Rodgers, “General Order No. 6,” September 9, 1890, in *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 196.

<sup>59</sup> Louis Grund, “Address of Department Commander,” in *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 21.

<sup>60</sup> John P. Platt, “Address of the Department Commander,” April 30, 1898, in *Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Carthage, Missouri, May 19 and 20, 1898* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Company, 1898), 21.

<sup>61</sup> Thos. B. Rodgers, “Address of the Department Commander,” May 10, 1897, in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Warrensburg, Missouri, May 13th and 14th, 1897* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1897), 20.

government.<sup>62</sup> Because the provisional government conscripted many men into the militia, not to mention the fact that the Paw Paw Militia recruited their men from the ranks of paroled Confederates, the loyalty of the militia was often regarded as suspect. GAR Department Commander Nelson Cole recognized this difficulty. He explained that Missouri was

different from any other Department, having been a battle ground, in many localities equally divided, where of necessity all bore arms, and while many who were in these organizations, and who wore the blue, had little or no sympathy for our cause, but sought them either from policy or because they were compelled to espouse one side or the other, still others entered this service through pure love of country and a feeling of loyalty which we should recognize. . . . While many of those who composed these organizations, . . . are entitled to membership, many others are not.<sup>63</sup>

For the time being, veterans of the militia remained ineligible for admission into the GAR.

The GAR did, however, extend membership to African American veterans and fought, in some measure, for black equality. In keeping with the national organization, the Department of Missouri included African American veterans. This, no doubt, helps explain the difficulty the GAR had in convincing Missourians that their organization was strictly nonpartisan and fraternal. The presence of African American comrades within their ranks would have inescapably associated the GAR with Radicalism. All told, there were at least eight African American camps in the state and an additional four integrated posts, but according to historian Barbara Gannon, the majority of chapters in Missouri did not admit black veterans.<sup>64</sup> As a result, African American membership was low; especially compared to other states. Some African American Missourians, however, understood the importance of the GAR and worked to

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<sup>62</sup> *The Grand Army Blue-Book: Containing the Rules and Regulations of the Grand Army of the Republic, and Official Decisions and Opinions Thereon, as Reported to and Approved by the National Encampment to September 13, 1895* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1896), 22.

<sup>63</sup> Nelson Cole, "Report of Department Commander," February 17, 1886, in *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Mexico, Missouri, February 17th and 18th, 1886* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, 1886), 24-25.

<sup>64</sup> These included the following posts: Candler, Collie, R. G. Shaw, Capitol City, Clay Shaw, Tipton, Whaling, Perrill, and Fletcher (possibly an integrated post). Integrated posts included: Custer, Dix, and Nichols. See Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 89, 95, 205, 217.

encourage memberships. In one instance, the *National Tribune* reported, “the colored people of St. Louis are making preparations to participate in the reception to the G.A.R. . . . Their plan, which comprises the singing of National anthems by 1,000 children as the procession passes.” They hoped this display would “induce colored soldiers and colored members of the Grand Army to attend the Encampment.”<sup>65</sup>

The Missouri Division of the UCV suffered from their own membership woes. UCV meetings were held rarely and were reportedly poorly attended. UCV members complained about the seeming disinterestedness on the part of other Confederate Missourians in the pages of the *Confederate Veteran*. “As a Missouri ex-Confederate,” one veteran wrote, “I appeal to my old comrades to support and write for the Veteran. Wake up, old boys in gray!”<sup>66</sup> “Missouri is not lacking in appreciation of the Confederate soldiers,” another insisted, but he could only point to “one visible token that Missouri honored and loved the memory of her . . . sons”—a Confederate monument in Springfield.<sup>67</sup> This caused tremendous concern amongst the Missouri Division of the UCV. John C. Landis, adjutant general of the Missouri Division, lamented “the very serious lack of organization there is with the Confederate Veterans of the state of Missouri, and which lack is fast burying a great mass of Missouri Confederate Soldiers beneath the waves of forgetfulness and oblivion.”<sup>68</sup>

The Missouri Division was not alone in feeling that their fellow Confederates were underappreciated. Other UCV organizations in the Trans-Mississippi Department expressed similar frustrations. “Am sorry to see so few items from this side the Father of Waters,” one

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<sup>65</sup> *The National Tribune*, June 30, 1887.

<sup>66</sup> W. L. Morrison, “From Across the Father of Waters,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. III, No. 4 (April 1895), 107.

<sup>67</sup> *Official Proceedings of Fifth Annual Reunion of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans*, 69.

<sup>68</sup> *Official Proceedings of Sixth Annual Reunion of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans, St. Joseph, Mo., Sept. 9 to 12, 1902* (n.p., n.d., ca. 1902), 9.

veteran opined in the *Confederate Veteran*. “From reading the VETERAN, one would almost conclude we had no war west of the Mississippi, while, in proportion to our numbers, we held as many Federals in check, when protecting Texas and western Louisiana, as any portion of the Confederate forces had to contend with.”<sup>69</sup>

The Missouri Division of the UCV also struggled with their state’s divided loyalties. At its height, the Missouri Division had 81 camps and roughly 1,200 members.<sup>70</sup> It is not possible to offer more comprehensive membership numbers at this time, but it is safe to assume they remained lower than the GAR’s, due to the comparatively greater enlistment of Missourians in the Union army and the impact of Radical Rule in Missouri—particularly the disenfranchisement of former Confederates under the Iron Clad Oath—which stunted the immigration of Confederate veterans from the South. Not to mention the fact that so many of the Confederate-sympathizers in Missouri served as irregulars, either in the State Guard or as guerrillas, and were therefore ineligible for UCV membership.

In fact, the guerrillas represented a significant challenge to the emergence of the Lost Cause in Missouri. After all, they were not regular soldiers and had operated outside of the Confederate government. The Ex-Confederate Association deliberately distanced themselves from the guerrillas, explicitly linking them to post-war vigilante violence in the state. They expressed disdain for “the prevalence of crime in all parts of the country, and with especial detestation that phase of lawlessness known as train robbing. All efforts . . . for the suppression

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<sup>69</sup> Morrison, “From Across the Father of Waters,” 107.

<sup>70</sup> The membership numbers of fourteen camps were left unreported and are not represented in this total. See *United Confederate Veterans of Missouri. Adjutant General’s Report of the First Annual Reunion and Convention, Held at Moberly, Missouri, September 28th, 29th, 30th, 1897* (St. Louis: Geo. D. Barnard & Co.); *United Confederate Veterans, Missouri Division. Proceedings 1907 and 1908 and Twelfth Annual Reunion Nevada, Mo., Oct. 1 and 2, 1908* (n.p., n.d., ca. 1908); *United Confederate Veterans, Missouri Division. Proceedings 1908-09 and Thirteenth Annual Reunion Mexico, Mo., September 28-29, 1909* (n.p., n.d., ca. 1909), 3-4.



of highwaymen and murderers have our emphatic approval, and we will be content with nothing less than the extermination of this class of enemies of society.”<sup>71</sup>

The UCV never reached out to former guerrillas to bolster the ranks of their organization, although guerrillas often appeared on the periphery of Confederate commemoration in Missouri. According to historian Jeremy Neely, this was because the guerrillas sought to position themselves as legitimate veterans. They worked to incorporate themselves into the Lost Cause, Neely says, and to “rescue” their reputation from what they perceived to be “the undeserved fates of historical obscurity and villainy.” These efforts gave Missouri a “distinctly local flavor of Lost Cause history.”<sup>72</sup> In the collective memory of Missouri’s Civil War, historian Michael Fellman argues, the guerrilla evolved into a Robin Hood-type figure he calls the “noble guerrilla,” who was acknowledged to be a desperado, but was nevertheless celebrated as a hero.<sup>73</sup> Matthew Hulbert has also touched upon this phenomenon. Hulbert credits the construction of this “noble guerrilla” mythology to journalist John Newman Edwards. Edwards developed what Hulbert terms the “irregular Lost Cause”—referencing “both a literal guerrilla movement within the broader context of a conservative Lost Cause . . . and as a counter-narrative strain of Civil War memory that revolved around the Missouri bushwhacker.”<sup>74</sup> In particular, Edwards is responsible for fostering popular sympathy for Jesse James by publishing a series of letters from the outlaw in his paper, the *Kansas City Times*.

In order to make themselves more suitable candidates for the Lost Cause, former guerrillas emphasized their honor by claiming they never harmed women and justified their

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<sup>71</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, in its Second Annual Meeting*, 6.

<sup>72</sup> Jeremy Neely, “The Quantrill Men Reunions: The Missouri-Kansas Border War, Fifty Years on,” in Earle and Burke, *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri*, 249.

<sup>73</sup> Fellman, *Inside War*, xix.

<sup>74</sup> Hulbert, “Constructing Guerrilla Memory,” 62-64.

brutality as retaliation for outrages committed by Union soldiers under martial law. Their war, they claimed, was one of self-defense. Guerrillas made another important justification of their conduct through the assertion that they were, at heart, law-abiding men—as exemplified by their post-war lives. Since the end of the war, W. J. Courtney wrote in the *Confederate Veteran*, “no charge of crime or violation of the law has ever been laid at their doors. They have been law-abiding, industrious citizens since the close of hostilities.”<sup>75</sup> For the most part, he insisted, the guerrillas blended in to society, their outlaw ways forgotten. They “exhibited ‘no evidence of the old spirit’ and had ‘successfully lived down the bad repute of years ago.’”<sup>76</sup> The guerrilla’s perception of themselves as peace-loving members of society, however, was directly at odds with the infamous conduct of former guerrillas like Jesse James and his gang, who continued to terrorize Missourians in the aftermath of the Civil War.

Guerrillas also sought to legitimate their place in Confederate memory by holding regular reunions. Surviving members of Quantrill’s band gathered for the first time on September 11, 1898. This was relatively late compared to other memorial organizations, but as historian Richard Brownlee explains, “at first it was not safe for them to gather in a group, and later a great many of their number, for various reasons, were in hiding and on the run. It was not until 1889 that they began to toy with the idea of holding their own private reunion.” By 1905, however, “an association had been perfected, and annual two-day meetings were held each August in Jackson County.”<sup>77</sup> To outward appearances, the guerrilla reunions were much like those held by the UCV—they emphasized many of the themes of the Lost Cause, including white

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<sup>75</sup> W. J. Courtney, “Guerrilla Warfare in Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXIX, No. 3 (March 1921), 104.

<sup>76</sup> *St. Louis Republic*, October 2, 1898; Neely, “The Quantrill Men Reunions,” 254.

<sup>77</sup> Brownlee, *Gray Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 245. See also Donald R. Hale, *The William Clarke Quantrill Men Reunions, 1898-1928* (n.p., n.d). Copy available in *The State Historical Society of Missouri Reference Collection*, Columbia.

supremacy, honor, the sacrifices of women, and the faithfulness of slaves. “These comrades are hale specimens of Confederate veterans,” the *Confederate Veteran* observed, “ever rea[d]y to reminisce and tell anecdotes, as are all comrades when they meet after long separation.”<sup>78</sup>

Like UCV often did, the guerrillas also invited Union veterans to their reunions. Former guerrilla and notorious outlaw Frank James once remarked: “I believe that if we expect to be forgiven, we must forgive. They did some very bad things on the other side, but we did, too.”<sup>79</sup> There is no evidence to suggest Union veterans ever took them up on their offer. In fact, responses to guerrilla reunions, particularly from neighboring Kansas, were sometimes vitriolic. Kansans were not oblivious to the fact that guerrilla reunions often fell near the anniversary of the Lawrence massacre. As a result, Neely claims, they “received news of the guerrilla picnics with outrage and disgust.”<sup>80</sup> “A number of Kansans,” one paper commented, “still would listen to a proposal to swoop down upon the reunion of the survivors of Quantrell’s band . . . and wreak a belated vengeance for the blood which was shed in Lawrence fifty years ago.”<sup>81</sup>

As much as they sought to adapt their unique wartime experience to the broader themes of the Lost Cause, the guerrillas remained on the outside of Civil War commemoration in Missouri. Although they adopted the forms and customs of regular veterans, founding their own association and holding reunions, they never earned the stamp of legitimacy from their fellow Missourians. Hulbert argues that the press in Missouri, particularly Edwards’ paper, did successfully transform the guerrilla into the more romantic and heroic “Southern cavalier” by

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<sup>78</sup> “Survivors of Quantrell’s Band,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXI, No. 11 (November 1923), 438.

<sup>79</sup> Edward E. Leslie, *The Devil Knows How to Ride: The True Story of William Clarke Quantrill and His Confederate Raiders* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996), 426.

<sup>80</sup> Neely, “The Quantrill Men Reunions,” 254.

<sup>81</sup> *Topeka Daily Capital*, August 22, 1913, quoted in Richard B. Sheridan, “A Most Unusual Gathering: The 1913 Semi-Centennial Memorial Reunion of the Survivors of Quantrill’s Raid on Lawrence,” *Kansas History* Vol. 20, No. 3 (Autumn 1997), 189.

emphasizing shared archetypal symbols: the revolver, the horse, and the notion of vendetta.<sup>82</sup>

Despite their best attempts, however, there is no evidence the guerrilla ever fit comfortably into the mythology of the Lost Cause in Missouri as far as regular veterans were concerned. Actually, the guerrilla was an overtly western character, ill-suited to the archetype of the Southern cavalier. The guerrillas far better embodied the mythos of the West—individualistic, anti-establishment, hostile to government intrusion, resourceful, flamboyant and romantic, but deadly. Their brutality and their role in post-war violence deepened Missouri’s association with the “Wild” West, further marginalizing Missouri’s Civil War memory from the national commemorative landscape.

The presence of the guerrillas also presented a complication for the Cause Victorious. Guerrilla activity contributed to the overall perception of Missouri as a disloyal state, both during the Civil War and after, and the threat of violence it posed led Unionist Missourians to go about the process of Civil War commemoration with trepidation. The GAR in particular thought of themselves as outnumbered and, occasionally, as occupying a dangerous position within Missouri. “It took courage to stand up for Old Glory in Missouri in the years of the war,” A. N. Seaber reminded his comrades. “With neighbors and friends going the other way; with danger of fire and sword if he stood by his colors, it took a tried and true man to stay with us.”<sup>83</sup> Even decades after the war’s end, Commander-in-Chief Frank Lawler acknowledged, “It costs more . . . here in Missouri, . . . to be a member of the Grand Army of the Republic than it does in . . . States differently situated.”<sup>84</sup> Indeed, Missouri’s unique position exacerbated the challenges facing the GAR, as one departmental commander explained: “Ours is a peculiar Department. . . .

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<sup>82</sup> Hulbert, “Constructing Guerrilla Memory,” 62-64.

<sup>83</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Boonville, Missouri, May 13 and 14, 1903* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1903), 49-50.

<sup>84</sup> *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 89.

The people of Missouri were divided. . . . Battles not a few, and lesser conflicts innumerable, were fought upon her soil. Guerilla warfare was waged, and many acts of robbery, rapine and murder were committed, . . . leaving in their wake feelings of discord and hate not to be eliminated during this or a succeeding generation. Amid such an environment was organized and has been maintained the Department of Missouri.”<sup>85</sup>

Operating within such a divided state, the GAR was hardly unaware that not all Missourians were friendly to their efforts. “Grand Army men are accustomed to all sorts of sneers and abuse,” Comrade John T. Clarke remarked, “but they can congratulate themselves that they suffer no greater calumny now than did loyal Missourians in 1861.”<sup>86</sup> In choosing locations for their annual encampment, for example, GAR comrades often voted on the basis of how loyal that particular locale had been during the war. Others, however, thought the GAR had a responsibility to act as missionaries of the Cause Victorious in less friendly portions of the state—particularly in the south. “We may be able to reform them down there,” one comrade offered optimistically.<sup>87</sup>

When considering where to hold the annual departmental encampment, African American comrades broached an additional level of concern. For example, during a debate over whether to hold the 1898 encampment in Hannibal, in the northeastern part of the state, or Carthage, in the southwest, an African American comrade named Edwards remarked: “I must say that in Hannibal I was better taken care of than at any other place. I had money in my pocket to pay for what I got, but the people made me keep it. We colored comrades take money enough

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<sup>85</sup> *Proceedings of the Thirty-Third Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Sedalia, Missouri, May 12 and 13, 1914* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1914), 41.

<sup>86</sup> “Unofficial Proceedings,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Jefferson City, Missouri, April 10th and 11th, 1890* (St. Louis: A Whipple, Printer, 1890), 152.

<sup>87</sup> *Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Nevada, Missouri, May 16 and 17, 1901* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1901), 65.

to pay for everything we eat, and I don't want to go down into the Southern country and starve to death with money in my pocket." Speaking in defense of Carthage, another comrade assured Edwards: "we are as patriotic, and have as much love for the old colored soldiers as they have in any other section of the State. We have a good many colored people among us and they are treated properly, and I can assure the colored comrades that they will be treated just as well as though they were white comrades."<sup>88</sup> Carthage won the vote, but there is no evidence to determine how Edwards or the other black comrades ultimately fared.

Because of the potential of holding an encampment in a hostile portion of the state, the GAR often had to tread cautiously in their interactions with their fellow Missourians. During the encampment in Hannibal, for instance, Department Commander Louis Benecke expressed gratitude for the kind welcome shown by the city, acknowledging that Union men had not always been so well-received there. "Some thirty-four years or thirty-five years ago a regiment entered your city without any special invitation," he remarked. "This regiment came here with the sword in one hand and the olive branch of peace in the other. . . . to-day we are here without sword, but we have the olive branch of peace for all citizens; to every one, though he may have been on the opposite side to us during the time that the fierce struggle was going on."<sup>89</sup>

On another occasion, however, the GAR contended with a more potent reminder that they were unwelcome. At the 1904 encampment in Lexington, a county seat in Missouri's "Little Dixie," the GAR found Confederate sentiment still survived. Mayor Oswald Winkler welcomed the GAR, but added with an air of sarcasm: "We extend to you an apology for the wrecked and ruined appearance of our streets . . . caused by your instruments of war in 1861. The ruin of your

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<sup>88</sup> *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 81.

<sup>89</sup> *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Hannibal Missouri, May 20 and 21, 1896* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1896), 6.

shot and shell are yet to be seen, and you should be proud of the glory of marching the same old streets and seeing the same old mud holes with here and there an old canteen to remind you of the past.”<sup>90</sup> The festivities continued, but as the GAR paraded through Lexington, the veterans noticed one private home prominently displaying a Confederate flag. A GAR committee produced the following account of the incident:

The boys in blue looked at it with curiosity and interest as they marched by, but not with any disposition to disturb it. With equal interest they gazed at the white haired old ladies who sat beside it, and thought of the care with which they had treasured that relic . . . so as to preserve it for exhibition forty years after its use had ceased; and they thought of the mother’s love which may have been entwined with its preservation, but they thanked the God of Battles . . . that every citizen of Lexington joined with them in loyalty to one flag and to one country, and holding themselves a little more erect they marched on with a little firmer step, and the incident closed.<sup>91</sup>

Despite the reconciliationist overtones of the GAR report, the incident revealed the challenges the GAR faced in perpetuating the Cause Victorious in Missouri. Clashes over memory were unavoidable in such a deeply divided state, where both Confederate and Union veterans operated in close quarters.

The GAR acted magnanimously in this case, but in general they felt any exhibition of the Confederate flag was “in bad taste and . . . an insult to the G.A.R.”<sup>92</sup> In fact, in 1892 the Department of Missouri passed a resolution declaring the Confederate flag an “emblem of treason and rebellion.” “To publicly display the Rebel flag,” they argued, “may well be regarded . . . as a public insult to every patriotic son and daughter of the Republic.”<sup>93</sup> For those who claimed the Confederate flag served “‘as a sweet memory’ or ‘as a sad reminder,’” the GAR had an unequivocal response: “It can never be a ‘sweet memory’ to the survivors, nor to the friends

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<sup>90</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Lexington, Missouri, May 18 and 19, 1904* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1904), 5.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>92</sup> *The Cape Girardeau Democrat*, September 19, 1891.

<sup>93</sup> *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Chillicothe, Missouri, March 23d and 24th, 1892* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1892), 115, 117.

of the non-survivors of those in Blue who beheld it floating over Libby Prison, or beheld it gloating over the horrors of Andersonville, nor to the patriotic people of this great nation that made such terrible sacrifices in blood and treasure that this ‘sweet memory’ might be swept from the face of the earth.” Although they were willing to acknowledge the bravery of Confederate soldiers and desired no further violence, they insisted “there can be no reconciliation between the antagonistic and irreconcilable principles for which they, respectively fought—the one side triumphant and eternally right; the other defeated and eternally wrong.” “It was a war to the death of the principle of secession,” they insisted, “and the emblem of secession—the flag of the Rebellion—went down, and, by the uncompromising verdict of battle, was furled, surrendered and abandoned until bad faith or bad taste prompted its quarter of a century post-mortem re-display.”<sup>94</sup>

Despite the GAR’s perception that they were undertaking commemoration in a hostile, pro-Confederate environment, the UCV faced challenges of their own. An important part of the struggle for Confederate identity in Missouri was rooted in problems stemming from having to contend with the fact that Missouri was, after all, a Union state. In fact, the preponderance of Union sentiment hampered Confederate efforts at commemoration. On one occasion, UCV official James B. Gantt complained, “a bitterly partisan newspaper only last week gloated over the fact that the master of these ceremonies could not purchase a single Confederate flag in St. Louis.”<sup>95</sup> “It is a recognized fact,” another UCV member complained in the *Confederate Veteran*, “that the large foreign and Northern population in St. Louis is an opposing element that retards the raising of funds to erect in St. Louis a suitable monument to the soldiers and sailors of

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<sup>94</sup> *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 116.

<sup>95</sup> *United Confederate Veterans, Missouri Division. Proceedings 1907 and 1908 and Twelfth Annual Reunion*, 64.



the Confederacy, some having carried it to the point of making a public protest against our being allowed to do so. No Chapter in the South has this obstacle to contend with.”<sup>96</sup>

Confederate veterans resented the GAR’s attempts to undermine the Lost Cause in Missouri. Upon the death of Governor John Sappington Marmaduke, for example, tempers flared. Marmaduke had served as a major general in the Confederate army and had a reputation for violence, having killed his superior officer in a duel and later permitted the massacre of African American soldiers at the Battle of Poison Spring in Arkansas. Marmaduke returned to Missouri after the Civil War and served as governor from 1885 until his death on December 28, 1887. As the state went into mourning, one observer could not fail to notice that the superintendent of the national cemetery in the capital city, a GAR member, had failed to show due deference. “For some reason, easily to be surmised,” he wrote his senator, “the superintendent of the National Cemetery here has ignored any respect usual under such sad circumstances as have befallen our state, and neglected or refused to place the national flag at half-mast.” “The superintendent of the cemetery, is a prominent man locally in the Grand Army of the Republic,” the letter continued. “He has been opposed to the Governor and the Governor’s friends on account of the part he took in the late war, and now declines to bury his malice.” For his part, the superintendent swore there were no ill feelings between him and the late governor, but that the pulley on the flag pole had frozen and did not thaw until the morning of the burial, at which time he said “it was raised at half-mast, draped in mourning.”<sup>97</sup> Clearly, tensions were still high and in the contested commemorative terrain Missourians shared, insults were easily given.

Another such incident occurred when the GAR invited Confederate veterans to an event in Cassville. The Confederates were less than pleased with their reception. “It was in exceeding

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<sup>96</sup> “An Appeal for St. Louis Monument,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIX, No 5 (May 1911), 216.

<sup>97</sup> *Missouri State Times*, January 6, 1888.

bad taste to invite ex-confederates to the re-union at this place,” one old Confederate fumed, “and then insult them by singing ‘hang Jeff Davis on a sour apple tree.’ . . . If you invite a man to your house it is your duty to treat him courteously as long as he behaves himself, and no one has intimated that the confederates misbehaved.”<sup>98</sup> As a result of episodes like this, one GAR member observed, “there is a pent-up feeling of wrath and indignation which prevails over the State, not only of our own comrades, but also of the veterans of the gray.”<sup>99</sup>

As challenging as Missourians found it to navigate the internal divisions within their state, they perhaps found it more difficult to relate their Civil War experience to outsiders. Both the Missouri Division of the UCV and the GAR Department of Missouri struggled to earn recognition from their respective national organizations. As a result, Union and Confederate veterans in Missouri worked earnestly to adapt their experiences to the national narratives of Civil War commemoration.

Confederate Missourians sought legitimacy within the Lost Cause by asserting their state’s close affiliation to the antebellum South and their dedication to the Confederate war effort. “By blood and culture and tradition, by similar customs, ideas, ideals, and aspirations,” one Missourian wrote in the *Confederate Veteran*, “Missouri has always been as close to the heart of the South as any State below the Mason and Dixon line.”<sup>100</sup> “Missouri,” another contributor concluded, “owes her very existence to the South.”<sup>101</sup> They had to acknowledge, however, that not all Missourians shared this sense of obligation. “When the dark hours of the War between the States came and these great Southerners had to make a choice,” Mrs. George

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<sup>98</sup> *The Intelligencer*, September 14, 1889.

<sup>99</sup> Henry Fairback, “Address of the Department Commander,” in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Jefferson City, Missouri, May 23rd and 24th, 1906*, 23-30. (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1906), 25.

<sup>100</sup> Creel, “Missouri, Dixie’s Affinity,” 53.

<sup>101</sup> Baxter, “Contributions of the South to the Civilization of Missouri,” 135.

Baxter confessed to the *Confederate Veteran*, “not all of them (the pity of it) chose to go with the State of their nativity.”<sup>102</sup> Still, the *Missouri Republican* insisted, Missourians “were not backward when the crisis came. . . . No braver or truer men followed the fortunes of the lost cause to its ultimate issue.”<sup>103</sup>

Home-grown Unionists, however, were not Missouri’s only impediment to secession. Southern-sympathizing Missourians also blamed the challenges presented by Missouri’s geographic position in preventing her from whole-heartedly joining the Confederacy. “With the outbreak of the War between the States,” one Missourian maintained, “Missouri’s position became painful in the extreme.”<sup>104</sup> “The geographical situation of the State made it in the beginning one of the most important places for military occupation in the Confederacy,” Confederate veteran L. B. Valliant elaborated, “while at the same time the inclination of the people was such as would have given it easily into the possession of Confederate forces. But, unfortunately, our people hesitated, and . . . before the people of the State realized that there was to be a war, they were in the hands of a Federal garrison.”<sup>105</sup> Once the Union army won control of the state in the summer of 1861, the Confederate cause in Missouri was well and truly lost. “The Missouri boys who went out to battle for the South knew that even if the South was successful,” Mrs. W. R. Milan wrote in the *Confederate Veteran*, “Missouri, owing to her peculiar surroundings, would never be on the south side of the Mason and Dixon Line.” Even so,

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<sup>102</sup> Baxter, “Contributions of the South to the Civilization of Missouri,” 135.

<sup>103</sup> *Missouri Republican*, August 30, 1886, in *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, at its Fifth Annual Meeting, at Marshall, Mo., August 31 and September 1, 1886* (St. Louis: Slawson & Co., Printers, 1886), 12.

<sup>104</sup> Creel, “Missouri, Dixie’s Affinity,” 53.

<sup>105</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri, in its Second Annual Meeting*, 13.

their commitment never wavered. “Wherever fighting was done,” she continued, “Missouri blood flowed like water.”<sup>106</sup>

Missouri may not have seceded, but Confederate Missourians took a great deal of pride in emphasizing the sacrifice they made of the defense of their state in order to serve where the Confederacy needed them most. James B. Gantt, a distinguished judge and prominent member of the UCV, asked his comrades to remember the “men who left their homes here in Missouri without arms or ammunition . . . and made the name of Missourians forever glorious.”<sup>107</sup>

Another Confederate veteran explored a similar theme at a reunion in Mexico. “After the first few months of war the Missouri Confederate was put to the front to fight for Arkansas, Texas and the other states,” he said, “while Missouri, his home, with his family exposed, was left for the most part without any protection. The game cock fights better on his own dung hill, but the Missouri Confederate, forgetting self, sacrificed his state and family in his loyalty to the general cause.”<sup>108</sup>

In order to further demonstrate their martyrdom on behalf of the Confederate cause, Southern-sympathizing Missourians also pointed out the destruction wrought by Union soldiers in Missouri during the absence of the Confederate army. Emphasizing the destructiveness of the war was intrinsic to the Lost Cause because it depicted the Civil War as a war of annihilation against Southerners, during which the North brought all its industrial might and tremendous resources to bear in order to destroy the South’s cities, institutions, and way of life. Rather than allow the South to peaceably leave the Union, the story went, the North preferred to reduce it to

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<sup>106</sup> Mrs. W. R. Millan, “A Confederate Association of Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXII, No. 8 (August 1924), 317.

<sup>107</sup> Gen. J. B. Gantt, “Gen. J. B. Gantt’s Tribute to Missourians,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIV, No. 12 (December 1906), 537.

<sup>108</sup> *United Confederate Veterans, Missouri Division. Proceedings 1907 and 1908 and Twelfth Annual Reunion*, 57.

ashes. In this way, the mythology of destruction allowed Southerners to depict themselves as the victims of the war, rather than its instigators.

Most importantly, however, the emphasis on destruction was a badge of great sacrifice to the Confederacy. It was this spirit which moved Confederate Missourians to emphasize the destructiveness of General Order No. 11—surely one of the reasons Bingham’s painting found such popularity with former Confederates. They remembered General Order No. 11 as a vicious and unnecessary edict solely devised to drive out Missouri’s Confederates. As private citizens of an overtly loyal state, their only crime was their Southern heritage—at least in their minds. In reprisal, their homes were looted and burned, their crops destroyed, and their lives ruined. Meanwhile, the dispossessed refugees from the region began the long journey back to their ancestral homeland. “What these women and children suffered on that trip southward into Arkansas and into the Confederate lines will never be known,” one Missourian testified in the *Confederate Veteran*. “Many of them never recovered from the breaking up of their homes. Some of them never returned to Missouri or ever saw their homes again. . . . These people were banished for no offense but for sympathy with the Confederacy.”<sup>109</sup> These Missourians suffered immense personal loss because of their fidelity to the Confederacy. “As long as Missouri is Missouri,” Mrs. Virginia Creel swore, “it is the South that will command her spiritual allegiance and devotion.”<sup>110</sup>

In their attempt to earn recognition of their own service to the Confederacy, however, Missourians were careful never to slight the juggernaut of the Lost Cause—the Army of Northern Virginia. “I yield to no man in admiration of what the Army of Northern Virginia accomplished,” Confederate veteran Bennett H. Young promised his comrades during one

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<sup>109</sup> Mrs. B. A. C. Emerson, “Vandalism in Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XX, No. 6 (June 1912), 283.

<sup>110</sup> Creel, “Missouri, Dixie’s Affinity,” 53.

reunion. “Western soldiers make no claim of being better than the men who fought in the East,” he insisted. “All these men . . . ask is to have it known that they exhibited the same heroism, the same gallantry, the same readiness to suffer and die, the same unselfish patriotism.” Confederate Missourians admitted that the Western Confederacy was far removed from the active eastern theater and lacked distinguished commanders, but took pride that their soldiers fought with unrivaled bravery and won the admiration of their comrades in Virginia. “Western men were their equals in all that makes soldiers,” Young reflected.<sup>111</sup> It was a concession some Eastern veterans were happy to make. In fact, one veteran of the Army of Northern Virginia acknowledged, he and his comrades

occupied a more favored position in that we fought with the consciousness nearly all the time that our loved ones were largely shielded from the scenes of desolation that swept over Missouri. . . . It seemed to me then, and it does now, that it took yet stouter hearts than ours to remain faithful as the Star of Hope grew dim and final success seemed impossible, and yet such was the record of the Missourians who fought as gloriously at Franklin, and . . . Mansfield as their comrades did at Lexington and Wilson’s Creek in the early days of the war.<sup>112</sup>

Nevertheless, Missourians remained overlooked in the pantheon of the Lost Cause. “No man in the West envies them a single laurel,” Young concluded, “or would take from them one ray in that luminous glory which gathers round their heads; but the Western Confederate soldier . . . says: ‘We too bear the Confederate name.’”<sup>113</sup>

It was certainly true that Missourians did not always earn recognition from their fellow Confederates. This became particularly obvious during the planning for the monument to Confederate President Jefferson Davis in Richmond, Virginia. In the grand design, a bronze statue of Davis was to be surrounded by thirteen columns—one representing each of states of the

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<sup>111</sup> Col. Bennett H. Young, “The Western Army,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. IX, No. 7 (July 1901), 312, 313.

<sup>112</sup> *Official Proceedings of Fifth Annual Reunion of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans and Dedication of Monument*, 79.

<sup>113</sup> Young, “The Western Army,” 316.

Confederacy, including Missouri. This resulted in a controversy when formerly slaveholding border state Maryland felt excluded.<sup>114</sup> As a solution, some suggested the border states should not receive columns on the Davis monument at all because they were only “step-sisters to the Confederacy.” Missourian S. R. M’Cutchen responded angrily in the *Confederate Veteran*: “Only eleven columns! No! no! a thousand times no!” “None were braver or more loyal to the Southern cause than grand old Missouri’s sons and daughters,” M’Cutchen insisted. She continued: “There are some dark memories for Missouri when the trouble was beginning. With the Federals pouring into the State on three sides, old men, young men, and boys, whose last memories were their mothers’ kisses and tears, started through dangers innumerable to fight . . . because their principles and sympathies urged them to aid the South, while they hoped for better conditions for Missouri.” “The spirit that would oppose the ‘thirteen columns,’” M’Cutchen concluded, was “a spirit that is too narrow for a generous people to comprehend.”<sup>115</sup> Ultimately, Missouri was recognized with a column on the Davis monument, but their quest for “Confederate credibility” was hopeless.<sup>116</sup>

Not Confederate enough for the Lost Cause, Northerners regarded Missouri as too Confederate for the GAR. Within the national organization, the GAR Department of Missouri was something of a pariah. In addition to dispelling the old perception of their state as disloyal, the GAR also had to challenge its post-war reputation as “Poor Old Missouri,” a Redeemer state home to roving bushwhackers. As a result, the Department of Missouri embraced every opportunity to change the perception of their state within the spectrum of Union commemoration.

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<sup>114</sup> See Amanda M. Myers, “‘Glory Stands Beside our Grief’: The Maryland United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Assertion of their Identity,” (master’s thesis, University of Mississippi, December 2010), 52-8.

<sup>115</sup> S. R. M’Cutchen, “They Want More than Eleven Columns,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XII, No. 2 (February 1904), 79, 80.

<sup>116</sup> Hulbert, “How to Remember ‘This Damnable Guerrilla Warfare,’” 148.

The GAR believed Missouri's conflicted identity was chiefly responsible for the popular misperception of its loyalty. Missouri was, after all, as one member admitted: "A border State rent asunder by internal dissensions, brother arrayed against brother, father against son—often meeting in deadly conflict—with a traitor for Governor, and with treason rampant throughout the length and breadth of our State."<sup>117</sup> In light of the subsequent history of the state, however, her loyalty had once again come under renewed scrutiny. GAR member David Murphy encouraged his comrades to act as ambassadors for Missouri's Unionists:

It became a cause of regret that they had allowed the desperadoes and outlaws of Missouri to give such a character to our State as they have and terrorize its peaceable and law-abiding people. . . . Bringing down the memories of the war let us conduct ourselves in a manner to be worthy of the deeds of the glorious past. Let us so carry ourselves that our personal conduct may speak for us; that it may speak for us in every walk of life, and that although Missouri, which has gone somewhat awry and strayed from the great encampment of States, may be brought into line in the forward march of progress, and her good name be once more redeemed.<sup>118</sup>

Union veterans like Murphy expressed frustration that outsiders misunderstood Missouri. "We can point with pride to the history of those times which shows how her loyal citizens rallied around the old flag. . . . Don't let it be said that the loyal soldiers of Missouri—the Grand Army of the Republic—are not as invincible in peace as they were in war."<sup>119</sup>

As a result, the GAR hoped to redeem Missouri's national reputation, depicting her as a progressive Western, not a Southern state. Speaking on behalf of his comrades, Leo Rassieur explained: "We want to go forward and place this State as high in the estimation of citizens elsewhere as it is in our own estimation. We want to . . . dispel from the minds of our Eastern

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<sup>117</sup> Nelson Cole, "Report of Department Commander," February 1, 1887, *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Springfield, Missouri, February 2d & 3d, 1887* (St. Louis: A. Whipple, Printer, 1887), 44.

<sup>118</sup> *Proceedings of the First Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Kansas City, April 22, 1882* (St. Louis: A. Whipple Printer, 1898), 7.

<sup>119</sup> Cole, "Report of Department Commander," 44.



friends the idea . . . that we are merely ‘bushwhackers.’”<sup>120</sup> To that end, the Missouri GAR took great pride in its representation at national GAR encampments—not only because it reflected the vitality of their organization, but also because it demonstrated Missouri’s loyalty. At the national encampment in Milwaukee, for instance, the Department of Missouri encouraged members to turn out to “show to our brethren of the East, and of the West, and of the North, that the Grand Army of the Republic in this state is second to none.”<sup>121</sup> “Such public demonstrations,” one departmental order read, “tend to remove all improper and unfounded unfavorable impressions regarding the people of this State, which have thus far hampered Missouri in her progress, by withholding from her a fair share of the surplus population of the East, seeking homes in the West, and a due proportion of the capital seeking investment in this country.”<sup>122</sup>

The Department of Missouri’s best opportunity to change the popular perception of their state came in 1887, when St. Louis hosted the national GAR encampment. The news that St. Louis would host was not met with optimism in other departments of the GAR, especially when stories spread that crowds in St. Louis “hissed and hooted” at a band playing the national anthem.<sup>123</sup> Department Commander E. E. Kimball remembered: “When it was determined . . . that the next Encampment would be held at St. Louis, a feeling was freely expressed that the Grand Army would not be received with . . . hospitality. . . . It was feared that the experiment of holding our great Reunion in a city, where the ex-confederate element was so pronounced and strong, would be, at least, hazardous; that something might occur to cause the old feelings of

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<sup>120</sup> “Unofficial Proceedings,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 155.

<sup>121</sup> *Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 155.

<sup>122</sup> Rodgers, “General Order No. 6,” in *Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 195.

<sup>123</sup> Cole, “Report of Department Commander,” 44.

bitterness to break out afresh.”<sup>124</sup> These fears mounted when President Grover Cleveland declined an invitation to attend the encampment after “certain important members of the [GAR]” persuaded him he “would be an unwelcome guest” in St. Louis.<sup>125</sup> Apparently, however, this had more to do with Cleveland’s unpopularity within the GAR than with any fear that Missourians cherished resentment towards the federal government. During the Civil War, Cleveland avoided conscription by hiring a substitute and was the first Democrat to serve as president since Reconstruction. That same year, he vetoed the dependent pension bill, rousing the animosity of the GAR.<sup>126</sup> Even though there were a variety of factors at play, Cleveland acknowledged that some of his concerns with visiting St. Louis had to do with the location of the encampment. This was to be the first held “in a Southern state” and Cleveland feared “that the least discord . . . might retard the progress of the sentiment of common brotherhood which the [GAR] has so good an opportunity to increase and foster.”<sup>127</sup>

The Department of Missouri, however, welcomed the opportunity to change their comrades’ minds. “Let us give our comrades from the older and larger Departments such a welcome to Missouri that it will forever set the stamp of falsehood on the malicious slanders which have been spread broadcast throughout the entire country,” Department Commander Nelson Cole urged.<sup>128</sup> Cole’s optimism was not misplaced as the encampment closed without any serious incidents. “I am glad to say that these feelings and fears were not entertained by Comrades in this Department,” Kimball reported. “We had a better knowledge of the disposition

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<sup>124</sup> E. E. Kimball, “Address of the Department Commander,” March 12, 1888, in *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 45.

<sup>125</sup> *The Butler Weekly Times*, July 13, 1887.

<sup>126</sup> McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 150-1; Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 328-337. For more on the controversy surrounding Cleveland’s plans to attend the St. Louis encampment, see Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 337-42.

<sup>127</sup> *The Butler Weekly Times*, July 13, 1887.

<sup>128</sup> Cole, “Report of Department Commander,” 44.

and temper of the citizens of St. Louis. . . . Not a word was said nor a symbol exhibited calculated to offend any one.”<sup>129</sup>

The fact that the St. Louis encampment went so smoothly reveals how misplaced the concerns that accompanied its announcement were. It also indicates the great degree of misunderstanding outsiders had of Missouri’s Civil War. This presented a monumental challenge not only for Missouri’s Union veterans, but for former Confederates as well. As both sides met with frustration in their attempts to assert their legitimacy within the Cause Victorious and the Lost Cause, white Missourians took consolation in their shared feelings of marginalization. Their western identity may have alienated them from the national narratives of Civil War memory, but in truth, it helped foster reconciliation within Missouri.

Many historians have expressed dubiousness about the extent of reconciliation in Missouri. Neely, for instance, argues that “reunion came more slowly and unevenly there than elsewhere in America.”<sup>130</sup> Astor is also skeptical. “For true reconciliationism to make sense in a border context,” he insists, “there would have to have been an equal number of Unionist reunions, memorials, and celebrations as there were Confederate—perhaps more so.”<sup>131</sup> First and foremost, Astor is mistaken about the lack of Union commemoration in Missouri. The GAR Department of Missouri was particularly active and extremely passionate about redeeming Missouri’s Unionism. Furthermore, reconciliation is not simply a matter of quantification. It is important to take context into consideration as well. It is likely that Missourian’s efforts at reconciliation were hampered more by expense and by the difficulty in overcoming sectional partisanship than by any lack of sympathy with their respective causes.

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<sup>129</sup> Kimball, “Address of the Department Commander,” 45-6.

<sup>130</sup> Neely, “The Quantrill Men Reunions,” 257.

<sup>131</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 199.

In fact, Missourians' shared sense of marginalization helped foster a spirit of reconciliation. Both Union and Confederate Missourians came to recognize that their war was different and that provided a sense of commonality. "Here in Missouri," James B. Gannt remarked, "where we have lived together, we understand each other."<sup>132</sup> As Confederate General Jo Shelby told an assembly in Higginsville, Missouri: "There were only two sets of people on earth that understood civil war—those from Kansas and those from Missouri." "And as his audience was quick to grasp his meaning," a witness reported, "they greeted his remark with the most deafening applause."<sup>133</sup> At a GAR encampment in Macon, Missouri, Union Major General Benjamin M. Prentiss expressed a similar sentiment: "We are different up here from most of the people. . . . We had a different warfare in Missouri from what they had down there." Now, however, Prentiss saw "a changed Missouri, the State getting better and better."<sup>134</sup>

Recognizing that overcoming their prejudices was essential to forward progress, Missourians cooperated peacefully in the development of their state. In so doing, they provided an example of the value of reconciliation to the rest of the country. "When the soldiers of Missouri met each other in battle," former Confederate and Congressman William H. Hatch noted, "there was a desperate fight. But now the animosities are buried and the Northern and Southern soldiers are partners together in every avocation of life." "We have shared with Federal soldiers the honors," he continued, "the benefits and the prestige in the rehabilitation of this most grand domain of the United States of America."<sup>135</sup> In a welcome address to the GAR in Jefferson City, Governor David Francis spoke of "the recuperative powers of Missouri." "Here," he

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<sup>132</sup> *Official Proceedings of Sixth Annual Reunion of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans*, 32.

<sup>133</sup> *Report of the Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 10.

<sup>134</sup> *Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 90, 92.

<sup>135</sup> *Secretary's Annual Report of the Ninth Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 17-8, 11.

explained, “in this commonwealth of compromise, our fields were laid waste, our homes were pillaged, and arrayed in hostile strife were father against son, and brother against brother.”<sup>136</sup> Nevertheless, he continued, “the victor and the vanquished have for a quarter of a century worked together to promote the weal and enhance the glory of a common country. . . . Northern and Southern push and pluck have become associated in advancing the Western frontier toward the setting sun, and here the ingenuity of the puritan and the chivalry of the cavalier, harmoniously blended and inspired with the liberal and progressive spirit of the growing West, constitute a representative type of American manhood.”<sup>137</sup> Missourians may have fought on different sides, Governor Joseph Folk acknowledged: “Some are ex-Federals now, some are ex-Confederates—all are Americans. There is now but one heart in all, North, East, South, West—and that is the heart of America.”<sup>138</sup>

This is not to say that all Missourians remembered the war in a cohesive or harmonious fashion. Oftentimes, Missourians walked a fine line between accommodation and overt hostility. Even so, Unionist and Confederate Missourians did accomplish unique things together. Most notably, they founded an unusual organization known as the Veterans of the Blue and Gray.<sup>139</sup> The organization formed in St. Louis in 1896, when “a party of six old soldiers who had fought on opposite sides in the Civil War met at the Planters [Hotel] one evening. The fact of the warm friendships that had sprung up among them, both in a business and social way,” the *St. Louis Republic* reported, “led to the suggestion being made that some sort of a fraternal society should

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<sup>136</sup> “Unofficial Proceedings,” in *Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 156.

<sup>137</sup> *Secretary’s Annual Report of the Ninth Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 9.

<sup>138</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 5-6.

<sup>139</sup> There were at least two other similar organizations in Missouri, the Taney County Veteran Association and the Old Soldier’s Association. See *The Taney County Republican*, September 21, 1899; *Kansas City Journal*, October 2, 1898.

be formed.”<sup>140</sup> They envisioned the creation of “a Military Corps, composed of those, who during the War of the States, wore the ‘Blue and the Gray.’”<sup>141</sup> Their stated objective was “to cultivate feelings of friendship and fraternity between those who were once opposed in arms; to extinguish all animosities which were engendered by the late Civil War; to eradicate sectional jealousies; to prevent civil convulsions and future conflicts between the various sections of our common country; and finally to unite the surviving soldiers and sailors of the Union and Confederate Armies and Navies more closely in support of good government, and in defense of the Constitution and Laws of the United States.”<sup>142</sup>

The primary avenue for reconciliation within this organization was through the cooperation of the economic elite of St. Louis. The founding members included bank directors, insurance magnates, investors, and politicians. For these men, political and economic pillars of their community, reconciliation was built upon mutual prosperity.<sup>143</sup> In a letter of invitation to other prominent veterans in the city, founding members Charles G. Warner and Joseph Boyce spoke of the “processes of political, commercial and industrial evolution” in restoring national harmony. “In business and in the professions the soldiers of the sixties are now the leaders,” the letter continued. “Dead issues belong to impartial history. To be true to our past we must stand for liberty, law and order, so that our beloved country may fulfill her mission in the van of humanity’s progress.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *St. Louis Republic*, October 19, 1896, in *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 1896-1900 (A1691)*, Vol. 1, 4, Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

<sup>141</sup> Minutes, October 10, 1896, *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 1.*

<sup>142</sup> “Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Banquet,” in *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 47.*

<sup>143</sup> John W. Leonard, ed., *The Book of St. Louisans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of the City of St. Louis* (St. Louis: The St. Louis Republic, 1906).

<sup>144</sup> Chas. G. Warner and Jos. Boyce to “Dear Sir,” October 15, 1896, in *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 3.*

In response to the invitation to new members, the veterans convened another meeting at the Planters Hotel. According to one newspaper report, “peace, good fellowship, fraternity and cigar smoke permeated the assembly. . . . Everybody agreed to everything anybody else proposed, and antagonism, even of the most amiable kind, for once found itself out of a job.” The fifty men in attendance, with both Confederate and Union veterans fairly represented, “were . . . business men of St. Louis,” the paper continued, “who have seen battle lines fade away among the memories of the past to be replaced by the commercial and social intercourse of the present.”<sup>145</sup> “We do not flatter ourselves when we say that our organization is comprised on the best citizens of the City of St. Louis,” the Veterans of the Blue and Gray reported with pride.<sup>146</sup>

Not only did they think of themselves as the class most able to accomplish reconciliation, they also felt that Missouri was the logical home of this new, progressive organization. Like other Missourians before them, the Veterans of the Blue and Gray recognized that Missouri had a different perspective on the Civil War. Not only did they keenly feel the full tragedy of sectional division, they were also uniquely suited to be the greatest champions of reconciliation. During the annual banquet of the Veterans of the Blue and Gray Missouri’s unusual situation was perfectly explained: “People who lived in the far South, or in the far North at the beginning of the War could not understand the situation in which brave and conscientious men were placed in Missouri, where the line of division was of necessity sharply drawn, and those of us who lived here only could understand how the truest and the best of friends had to separate according to their honest convictions.”<sup>147</sup> “It followed naturally, therefore,” the toastmaster proclaimed, “that on the soil of this State should be taken the first practical step toward the entire rehabilitation in

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<sup>145</sup> *St. Louis Republic*, October 20, 1896, in Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 6.

<sup>146</sup> Unsigned letter, June 10, 1897, in Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 60.

<sup>147</sup> “Minutes of the Annual Meeting,” February 22, 1897, Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 38.

citizenship of the fighting men on the losing side at the hands of the fighting men on the winning side.”<sup>148</sup> “To St. Louis will be given the credit of having inaugurated a new social order that has for its cardinal principle good fellowship and the wiping out of every vestige of embitterment that remains to mar the peaceful relations of men who would have them obliterated forever.”<sup>149</sup>

The Veterans of the Blue and Gray made every attempt to appeal to both Union and Confederate Missourians. They asked for “no abatement or surrender of self respect, no apologies for convictions which any man honestly held and maintained at the peril of life and all that he held dear.”<sup>150</sup> As their uniform, the Veterans of the Blue and Gray adopted a dark blue coat, with buttons modeled on the Missouri state seal, and gray trousers.<sup>151</sup> Their emblem depicted a shield quartered into blue and gray segments behind the United States flag, giving both sides “equal prominence to show that we meet on common ground and in a fraternal feeling of equality.”<sup>152</sup> Such gestures appear to have worked. At its height, the organization numbered about 100 members—with only marginally more Union than Confederate veteran members—and claimed James Longstreet, John M. Schofield, John B. Gordon, and Oliver O. Howard as honorary members.<sup>153</sup> Although they hoped to expand into a national organization, and had contact with a similar organization in Florida, the organization never grew beyond St. Louis.

They envisioned the Veterans of the Blue and Gray as restoring peace and patriotism amongst all citizens, but their mission was fulfilled from another quarter. In February, 1899, the *Globe Democrat* observed, “the last twelve months of our history . . . have done more to unite us than any events that have heretofore intervened since the war of the rebellion. Our sons have

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<sup>148</sup> “Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Banquet,” 51.

<sup>149</sup> *St. Louis Republic*, October 22, 1896, in *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book*, 7.

<sup>150</sup> “Report of the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Banquet,” 47.

<sup>151</sup> Minutes, November 26, 1896, *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book*, 11.

<sup>152</sup> Minutes, December 10, 1896, *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book*, 18.

<sup>153</sup> Unsigned letter, June 10, 1897, in *Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book*, 60.



fought side by side against a common foe for liberty, justice and humanity.”<sup>154</sup> In the minds of the Veterans of the Blue and Gray, the Spanish-American War had reunified the country in a real and permanent sense. Still, they took pride in having laid the groundwork. “As is so often the case,” founding member Edward Meier wrote, “St. Louis was a little in advance of the rest of the country in feeling and voicing the patriotic sentiments which found their full expression at Santiago and Manila.”<sup>155</sup> As far as the Veterans of the Blue and Gray were concerned, the Spanish-American War obviated the need of their organization. They suspended their annual banquet and closed their organization. “The chief purposes for which . . . this organization was formed,” they insisted, “have been accomplished: That the late war with Spain, in the brilliant and patriotic services rendered under the flag of a common country by those who were once opposed in arms, affords the crowning proof that former animosities are extinguished, and that the survivors of the Union and Confederate armies and navies . . . are now true comrades in arms, united in defense of the Constitution and laws of the United States.”<sup>156</sup> The short history of the Veterans of the Blue and Gray, however, speaks to the unique nature of Civil War memory in Missouri.

Missourians may have begun the long and difficult process of reconciliation at home, but they still felt they had something to prove within the larger project of Civil War commemoration. In particular, Missourians felt underrepresented on national battlefield parks. As late as 1906, neither Union nor Confederate soldiers from Missouri were memorialized by any battlefield monuments. This, GAR official Leo Rassieur believed, reflected poorly on their state. He expressed his frustration that “Missouri . . . had thus far been unmindful of its duty in this matter

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<sup>154</sup> *Globe Democrat*, February 14, 1899, in Veterans of the Blue and Gray, Records, Minute Book, 83.

<sup>155</sup> E. D. Meier to Col. Henry Hitchcock, January 6, 1900, in Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book (A1084), Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.

<sup>156</sup> “Report of the Executive Committee,” February 12, 1900, Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book, 99.

and such of our citizens as had visited these fields of battle had been compelled to hang their heads in shame; that the time had come for the Blue and Gray in this State to make an effective appeal together for the recognition of the services of their fallen comrades by the General Assembly and thus remove the blemish of ingratitude which seemed, at present, to rest upon the people of this great State.”<sup>157</sup> The GAR encouraged the General Assembly to provide funds to place monuments at battlefields not only in Missouri, but also at national military parks across the Trans-Mississippi theater.<sup>158</sup>

At first, the Missouri General Assembly seemed receptive. The timing was also nearly perfect as the federal government disbursed roughly \$500,000 to the state of Missouri in payment of an outstanding war claim. Members of the GAR and the UCV felt it would be particularly appropriate to spend that money on Civil War commemoration. They petitioned the General Assembly to allocate the money to a monument fund. Instead, GAR Department Commander John M. Williams reported, “the entire half million dollars . . . was given to the road fund. The old soldier, his services and his sacrifices were forgotten. Years hence these monuments may be erected,” Williams added, “but I have no hope of seeing them in this present life.”<sup>159</sup>

Undeterred by the state government’s lack of interest, veterans continued to press them to take action. Their efforts took on a new sense of urgency as other states began staking their claims to the Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. The Battle of Vicksburg held a special place in the memories of both Union and Confederate Missourians because Missouri

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<sup>157</sup> *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 7.

<sup>158</sup> Henry Fairback, “Address of the Department Commander,” in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fifth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 25.

<sup>159</sup> John M. Williams, “Address of the Department Commander,” in *Proceedings of the Twenty-Sixth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri Grand Army of the Republic held at Moberly, Missouri, May 22 and 23, 1907* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1907), 22.

committed more troops to the battle than any other state, Mississippi excepted. During the siege, Union and Confederate Missourians actually fought one another, perfectly illustrating the tragedy of a war that pitted “brother against brother.” Even so, Missouri was not represented by any monuments on the battlefield.

Leo Rassieur, former commander of the GAR Department of Missouri, spearheaded the effort to create a Vicksburg monument commission. In one particularly moving letter, he reminded the General Assembly of the significance of such a measure for the people of Missouri:

The great State of Missouri, the fifth state in population and wealth, cannot afford to remain inactive any longer in a matter of so much moment. Nor will you, as the legislative body of our State, postpone action when such postponement will constantly expose our State to a comparison with other States which will reflect upon the good name and patriotism of our State, which was represented by the second largest number of organizations in that siege. The present generation will gladly bear this small burden and have the great satisfaction of erecting a monument which will be unique, inasmuch as it will manifest equal gratitude for the courage and valor displayed by those who wore the Gray as well as those who wore the Blue, and thus still further heal the wounds wrought by the Civil War.<sup>160</sup>

In 1911, Rassieur’s appeal finally met with success.

To pay tribute to the efforts of the Missourians who fought at Vicksburg, the state formed the Missouri-Vicksburg National Military Park Commission. It consisted of five members, including two Union veterans and two Confederate veterans—all of whom were veterans of the battle.<sup>161</sup> Its purpose: “to commemorate and perpetuate the heroic service, the unselfish devotion to duty, and the exalted patriotism of the Missouri soldiers, Union and Confederate, who were engaged in the campaign, siege and defense of Vicksburg.” They planned to construct a monument at the very site where Missourians met in battle. The monument would commemorate both sides, the commission decided, “in order to foster the atmosphere of brotherhood and

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<sup>160</sup> *Proceedings of the Thirtieth Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri Grand Army of the Republic, Held at Jefferson City, Missouri, May 24 and 25, 1911* (St. Louis: Commercial Printing Co., 1911), 45.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*; Leo Rassieur to Capt. William T. Rigby, November 18, 1914, Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book.

reconciliation” cultivated by the Vicksburg National Military Park. It was a remarkable and almost entirely unprecedented idea. At that time, no other state monument at Vicksburg commemorated both sides.<sup>162</sup>

The Missouri-Vicksburg National Military Park Commission invited a design competition for the completion of the monument. They confined the contestants to a budget of \$40,000.00 and instructed them to “give fitting artistic expression to the gratitude of the State to its sons, both Union and Confederate, for their heroic services and sacrifices in contending for their honest convictions.”<sup>163</sup> Sixteen designers from around the country sent scale models of their prospective monuments to the commission, but the winning submission came from St. Louis architects Hellmuth & Hellmuth and sculptor Victor S. Holm.<sup>164</sup>

Holm imbued his design with powerful symbolism pertinent to Missouri’s role in the Battle of Vicksburg. Finished in Missouri red granite, the completed monument stands forty-two feet high, an acknowledgment of the number of Missouri units engaged on the battlefield—twenty-seven Union and fifteen Confederate. The central shaft is topped by a relief carving of the state seal and fronted by an allegorical personification of the “Spirit of the Republic.” This figure is flanked by two bronze panels depicting Missouri soldiers engaging one another in battle. The back of the monument is inscribed: “To commemorate and perpetuate/The heroic services/The unselfish devotion to duty/And the exalted patriotism/Of the Missouri soldiers/Union and Confederate/Who were engaged in the/Campaign, siege and defense of Vicksburg.”<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Steve Walker and David F. Riggs, *Vicksburg Battlefield Monuments: A Pictorial Record* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1984), 44.

<sup>163</sup> “Program for a Competition for the Erection of a Missouri Monument on the Vicksburg Battlefield by the State of Misosuri,” December 30, 1911, Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book.

<sup>164</sup> “Report of the Missouri-Vicksburg National Military Park Commission,” Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book, 4.

<sup>165</sup> Walker and Riggs, *Vicksburg Battlefield Monuments*, 44.



FIGURE 5: The Missouri monument at Vicksburg. Photograph from author’s collection.

The monument was completed in time for the Vicksburg “Peace Jubilee” in the fall of 1917. The organizers hoped the “Peace Jubilee” would be for the armies of the Trans-Mississippi what the 1913 Gettysburg reunion was for those of the East, though much smaller in scale. They wanted “to give the Western veterans an opportunity of coming together on a Western battlefield of like importance.”<sup>166</sup> On the afternoon of October 17th, a small group of Missourians gathered to celebrate the dedication of the state monument along with fifty smaller markers locating the various positions of Missouri troops during the siege. This occasion brought a profound sense of closure to Missourians who worked so long for the recognition of the Civil War in the West.

For Missourians, Civil War commemoration was a fraught undertaking. Complicated by questions of region, loyalty, and race, neither Confederate nor Unionist Missourians were able to fully integrate their experience into the national narratives of Civil War commemoration. In an

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<sup>166</sup> “Report of the Missouri-Vicksburg National Military Park Commission,” Missouri—Vicksburg National Military Park Commissioner’s Minute Book, 10.

effort to lay claim to a Confederate identity, Southern-sympathizing Missourians cultivated a unique brand of Civil War memory within the confines of an otherwise western and Union state. They emphasized the martyrdom of Confederate Missourians under martial law and Radical Reconstruction and depicted the guerrillas as symbolic Confederates. Still, it proved an unconvincing narrative that left Confederate Missourians feeling distanced from their Southern kindred. Meanwhile, Missouri's Unionists worked earnestly to redeem Missouri's tarnished reputation, earn recognition for the loyalty of their state, and divest it of Confederate symbolism. They were certainly not "belated Confederates," but they shared with their former enemies a sense of marginalization from their Eastern compatriots. By contrast, African American Missourians were unquestionably the most successful in establishing a foundation for the Emancipation Cause in Missouri. Despite the fact they were beset with significant financial and racial challenges, African American veterans left a profound legacy for their state by providing an opportunity for equal education in Missouri.

## CHAPTER 4

### “Tender of Both Uniforms”: Missouri’s Homes for Civil War Veterans

“Our Missourian . . . went under two flags—both ways—went at once. . . . When he came home from the war his mighty mother, the state of Missouri, with a great heart, claimed him as her son, proud of his deeds, resolute to cherish his memory, magnanimous to forget his quarrel, tender of both uniforms, and mourning over the dead of war-worn and desolate confederate and federal.”<sup>1</sup>

*-Missouri Supreme Court Justice Henry Lamm (1906)*

As Missourians struggled to find their place within the national project of Civil War commemoration, they also worked to maintain harmony amongst their divided population. While they negotiated the difficult terrain of their border state, they regarded overtly partisan demonstrations as distasteful, expressing a view that the work of Civil War memorial organizations should be practical and serve a real need, not merely aggravate old wounds. As a result, Missouri lagged far behind other states in terms of the scope of its commemoration. They built few monuments and maintained only a discreet presence in the national military parks. They did, however, invest heavily in recovery—particularly on behalf of their surviving Civil War citizens.

Missourians committed themselves to providing fair and equitable care for the aging and disabled veterans from both sides of the conflict in their state. They raised private funds to construct two separate veterans’ homes—one for Confederate soldiers in Higginsville and one for Union soldiers in St. James. Few historians have recognized the role of these soldiers’ homes

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<sup>1</sup> *Mexico Missouri Message*, “Entitled to a Vote,” July 12, 1906.

as “sites of memory,” yet they quite literally kept the memory of the war alive.<sup>2</sup> Part nursing home and part shrine, they served as “living monuments” that can reveal new insight into how Americans remembered their Civil War.<sup>3</sup> For Missourians, they provided a testament to the long process of personal and national healing, but more specifically, to the uniqueness of Missouri’s wartime experience. No other state commemorative project ever rivaled the veterans’ homes in longevity, expense, or popular support. Their management was complicated, however, not only by practical difficulties, but also by lingering tensions and the competing perspectives of Missouri’s men and women, the people and the state, and veterans of the Union and the Confederacy.

The idea of providing care to war veterans was not unique to Missouri. While Americans as a whole directed most commemorative efforts around remembering the dead, they also turned attention toward caring for the war’s survivors by establishing homes for needy veterans. In fact, the Navy established the first veterans’ home in 1811, and in 1851 the U. S. Soldiers’ Home opened in Washington, D.C.. The unprecedented size of Civil War armies, however, threatened to strain the existing system. During the course of the Civil War, the U. S. Sanitary Commission and patriotic private citizens maintained convalescent homes for wounded soldiers.

Unfortunately, this provided only a temporary solution.<sup>4</sup> As early as 1864, President Abraham Lincoln understood something more needed to be done. In his Second Inaugural Address, he urged Americans not only “to finish the work we are in,” but also “to bind up the nation’s

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<sup>2</sup> The only work on this subject is R. B. Rosenberg, *Living Monuments: Confederate Soldiers’ Homes in the New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993). Others have addressed the veterans’ homes in the course of a longer story of veterans’ memorial activity, including McConnell; James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Rosenberg, *Living Monuments*, 3.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.



wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan.”<sup>5</sup> In response, the U. S. Soldier’s Home expanded into a nation-wide enterprise, the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. With ten branches across the United States, it was the culmination of Lincoln’s vision.

The National Home only extended eligibility to Union veterans, however, and no branches existed in Missouri. Missourians felt a duty to provide for their Civil War veterans, but understood this to be a contentious proposition in a border state. Missouri sent troops to both sides of the war, fielding at least 100,000 Union soldiers, including more than 8,000 African-Americans, and perhaps 30,000 Confederate soldiers.<sup>6</sup> Missourians also enlisted in various Union militia units, including the MSM and the EMM, the southern-sympathizing State Guard, and unknown numbers joined the ranks of the guerrillas. This presented Missourians with a complicated political situation. How could the state justify providing for some of its veteran citizens, but not all? As a result, the construction of veterans’ homes in Missouri depended upon the funding of private individuals.

Missourians’ desire to maintain independent funding was in part a political necessity, but it also lessened the pervasive stigma of institutionalization in the nineteenth-century, which was fraught with classist and gendered overtones. Most Americans regarded needy individuals as either “deserving” or “undeserving.” Only those in desperate circumstances beyond their control “deserved” charity. A patriotic regard for military service assured assistance for most veterans. Even so, committing themselves to institutional care served as a tacit admission of their inability to provide for themselves, which called into question their masculinity and character.<sup>7</sup> Advocates

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<sup>5</sup> Abraham Lincoln, “Second Inaugural Address,” March 4, 1865, in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln Vol. III, 1864-1865*, ed. Ray P. Basler (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 332-333.

<sup>6</sup> Greene, et al., “The Role of the Negro in Missouri History,” 9.

<sup>7</sup> Rosenburg, *Living Monuments*, 14.

of Missouri's veterans' homes therefore felt private funding would demonstrate popular "gratitude . . . and true sympathy" for the veterans without making "them a charge upon the public and a burden to the community."<sup>8</sup> These veterans would not be "charity cases" or wards of the state, but rather charges of their loving comrades.

Missouri's former Confederates mobilized on behalf of their veterans first. They regarded the exclusion of Confederate veterans from the National Home as one of the bitterest legacies of their defeat. "While they endured all the hardships, faced all the dangers and fought as bravely as any soldiers who ever marched to the field of battle," one Confederate Missourian lamented, "their cause was lost, and no Federal Home awaits their coming, when old age and poverty overtakes them."<sup>9</sup> As a result, when the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri formed in 1881, they committed to building and maintaining a Missouri Home for Confederate Veterans.<sup>10</sup> They regarded the care of Confederate veterans as "a sacred charge" and believed they "should be cared for, just as the federal soldier has been cared for." The Ex-Confederates clearly saw that the duty of care in this case fell on them. For, while the Federal soldier "belongs to the government," Confederate soldiers belonged now only "to the people, whom they represented so nobly." They thought of the Home as more than a necessity; for them, it was "justice which has been too long delayed."<sup>11</sup>

They struggled to gather financial support among war-weary Missourians, but "gradually," Ex-Confederate W. P. Barlow remembered, "as public confidence increased, and as the helpless increased in number, grew the sentiment that we must have a Home, and agitation

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<sup>8</sup> *Boonville Weekly Advertiser*, January 2, 1891, January 5, 1894.

<sup>9</sup> "Report of State Confederate Home, Higginsville, Lafayette County," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 42nd General Assembly, Appendix, 1903, 65-6, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>10</sup> W.P. Barlow, "History of the Missouri Confederate Home," *Confederate Veteran* Vol. I, No. 10 (October 1893), 302.

<sup>11</sup> *The Sedalia Weekly Bazaar*, June 9, 1891.

began.”<sup>12</sup> With the help of Missouri schoolchildren, the Ex-Confederates organized a state-wide fundraising campaign and raised \$13,000.<sup>13</sup> With these funds, the Ex-Confederates purchased roughly 360 acres of farmland near Higginsville as a prospective site for the Home.

Situated in Lafayette County, about fifty miles east of Kansas City, Higginsville lies at the heart of Missouri’s “Little Dixie”—a unique region marked by its cultural and economic ties to the plantation South. Extending along the rich Missouri River bottoms, Little Dixie offered prime farmland for the cultivation of tobacco and hemp. As a result, it acted as the hub of the state’s slave-based economy.<sup>14</sup> The heaviest concentration of slaveholders in the state called Little Dixie home; the enslaved accounted for roughly 37% of its population.<sup>15</sup> During the Civil War, Little Dixie served as the hotbed of Confederate sentiment and the main hunting ground of the state’s notorious guerrillas. One contributor to the *National Tribune* described Lafayette County as “the hottest hole of rebellion” in Missouri and possibly “the hottest place on God’s green earth for loyal and patriotic people to exist in (except Charleston, S.C.).”<sup>16</sup>

Despite Lafayette County’s reputation as a bastion of the Lost Cause, the Ex-Confederate Association could not raise enough money to begin construction on the Home. O. H. P. Catron, one of the Ex-Confederates, complained there were too “few Confederates in this portion of Missouri” to support the home.<sup>17</sup> In fact, work stalled until 1890, when a group of women in St. Louis calling themselves the Daughters of the Confederacy (the founding chapter of the national organization known as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, or UDC) launched a renewed

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<sup>12</sup> Barlow, “History of the Missouri Confederate Home,” 302.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Stiles, *Jesse James*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 12-13; Burke, *On Slavery’s Border*, 48, 95; McCandless, *A History of Missouri*, 59-60. See also R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri’s Little Dixie* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Jas. T. Phillips, *The National Tribune*, November 10, 1892.

<sup>17</sup> O.H.P. Catron, “Confederate Home in Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. IV, No. 2 (February 1896), 61.

fundraising campaign on behalf of the Confederate Home. The UDC proved dramatically more successful than their male colleagues. “In two counties, where the men could not raise a dollar,” the *Confederate Veteran* pointed out, “the local [Daughters of the Confederacy] raised over a thousand dollars each.”<sup>18</sup> The UDC left no stone unturned. They continued to raise collections in schools, hosted dances, picnics, socials, and sold bricks.<sup>19</sup> They even petitioned the state government, proposing a resolution that every state employee donate a day’s pay on behalf of the Home. According to Barlow, the measure passed unanimously, with “a large audience of ladies being given woman suffrage for that occasion.”<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, the UDC raised as much as \$100,000, enough to start work on the main building of the Home.<sup>21</sup>

The UDC owed a portion of its success to the generosity of Missouri’s Union veterans. Across the state, members of the GAR helped raise money and even hosted fundraising initiatives in their communities on behalf of the Confederate Home.<sup>22</sup> As one Ex-Confederate reported: “In many counties ex-Union soldiers have accepted the position of treasurer and of township collectors, modesty alone preventing their taking higher positions. It has been no unusual thing to see the members of a G. A. R. Post come marching to our meetings in full uniform, taking reserved seats, while their officers came upon the platform and introduced the speakers in words that cheered the hearts of every ex-Confederate present.”<sup>23</sup> In fact, the Higginsville site belonged to a Union veteran, Grove Young, who reduced his asking price by

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<sup>18</sup> Barlow, “History of the Missouri Confederate Home,” 302.

<sup>19</sup> Mary B. Poppenheim, Maude Blake Merchant, Mary M. Faris McKinney, Rassie Hoskins White, Eloise Welch Wright, Anne Bachman Hyde, Susie Stuart Campbell, Charlotte Osborne Woodbury, and Ruth Jennings Lawton, *The History of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, Inc., 1938), 3. See also Karen L. Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), 15-6.

<sup>20</sup> Barlow, “History of the Missouri Confederate Home,” 302.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Wade F. Ankesheilm, *The Heart is the Heritage: The Story of the Founding of the Confederate Home of Missouri* (Coral Springs, Fla.: Llumina Press, 2007), 15.

<sup>23</sup> *Secretary’s Annual Report of the Ninth Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 23.

\$5,000 as a goodwill gesture towards the Ex-Confederates.<sup>24</sup> Young also left a small endowment to help support the home. According to the UDC, “the actions of carpetbaggers and other Northern actions after the war had made him sympathetic for the South.”<sup>25</sup> The local press enthused over the contributions of Union veterans like Young. “Past differences of opinion are having no influence in the matter,” the *Boonville Weekly Advertiser* proclaimed, “but the old Union veteran and his friends are coming with open hands and cheerful liberality to help those who started the enterprise.”<sup>26</sup> Despite the fact they had once been bitter enemies, they “now remember only that they were soldiers and by their bravery won a right to a haven of rest in their old age.”<sup>27</sup> Such generosity, the *Confederate Veteran* observed, transformed the Confederate Home into “a monument attesting peace and Christian charity in a State where war was waged more bitterly than ever before on American soil.”<sup>28</sup> It gave at least one Missourian reason to hope, nearly thirty years after its conclusion, that “the war is about over.”<sup>29</sup>

The cooperation of Union veterans seemed to promise the reconciliation not just of the North and South, but of fellow Missourians as well. Some, like Young, may have joined the ranks of the “belated Confederates,” but many Missourians remained unable to forgive or forget and lingering hostilities sometimes strained their tolerance for one another. While the GAR sympathized with the plight of needy Confederate veterans, they wanted it to be clear they did not support the cause for which those veterans fought. They warned their comrades against responding to calls for help from the Ex-Confederates “when such solicitations are accompanied

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<sup>24</sup> *Boonville Weekly Advertiser*, July 10, 1891; “History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, Missouri,” 1, Missouri. Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records, n.d. (C3498), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia; Mrs. Bernard C. Hunt, “The Confederate Home of Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXVI, No. 8 (August 1928), 299-301.

<sup>25</sup> “History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, MO,” 1. Missouri. Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records, n.d..

<sup>26</sup> *Boonville Weekly Advertiser*, July 10, 1891.

<sup>27</sup> *The Sedalia Weekly Bazaar*, June 9, 1891.

<sup>28</sup> Barlow, “History of the Missouri Confederate Home,” 302.

<sup>29</sup> *Chariton Courier*, December 25, 1890.

with a manifest attempt to honor the Lost Cause, or by a display of the folds or figure of the rebel flag.” In fact, the GAR condemned the use of the Confederate flag, expressing regret “that those most prominent and active in behalf of the home seem either unable or unwilling to separate feelings of charity towards worthy living persons from feelings of esteem for the unworthy dead cause for which they so gallantly fought.”<sup>30</sup> One GAR post called the Confederate flag an “emblem of *treason* and Rebellion” and insisted “it is in bad taste and ill advised zeal to come in Charity’s name, flaunting that flag in any form or manner, and however small, it is an insult to the G. A. R..” They promised, however, to “cheerfully aid and assist the Ex-Confederate Soldiers as far as we are able, to secure a home under our flag.”<sup>31</sup> In St. Louis, another GAR post went even further, publicly condemning the UDC and the Confederate Home.<sup>32</sup> Then, at a state encampment in neighboring Illinois, the GAR refused to donate to the Missouri Confederate Home, reminding their members “the department had enough old veterans at home to take care of.”<sup>33</sup> In one Sedalia newspaper an anonymous contributor voiced his “disapprov[al] of the mingling of union soldiers with ex-confederates” and “discourage[d] contributions to the ex-confederate home by speaking contemptuously of it.” “Sectional hatred is not quite dead, yet,” the paper acknowledged. “But it is rapidly dying out.”<sup>34</sup>

Focusing solely on the contributions of Union veterans, however, obscures the critical role played by the UDC in the creation of the Confederate Home. “The women, God bless them! have nobly done their part in building and maintaining it. Without them,” Catron confessed, “the

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<sup>30</sup> *Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Encampment of the Department of Missouri, Grand Army of the Republic*, 115.

<sup>31</sup> *The Cape Girardeau Democrat*, September 19, 1891 (emphasis in original).

<sup>32</sup> Ankesheilm, *The Heart is the Heritage*, 88.

<sup>33</sup> “The Illinois Grand Army,” *Rock Island Daily Argus*, April 11, 1891.

<sup>34</sup> *The Sedalia Weekly Bazaar*, May 5, 1891.

Confederate Home of Missouri would never have been built.”<sup>35</sup> Their devotion to the Missouri Confederate Home aligned with the benevolent and historical mission of the UDC. Like other Progressive Era women’s clubs, historian Karen Cox writes, the UDC “strongly committed to providing for the aging and indigent . . . in their midst” and they “were vehemently opposed to placing their ancestors in almshouses or on poor farms.”<sup>36</sup> The Missouri UDC in particular wanted to provide a place where, as they put it, “destitute comrades and their families can pass the remainder of their lives, secure from the ever-present danger of the poor-house.”<sup>37</sup> It is important to remember, however, that the UDC envisioned veterans’ homes not only as charitable institutions, but also as testaments to future generations of their reverence for the Confederacy.<sup>38</sup>

The Missouri Confederate Home served as a shrine to the Lost Cause, which the UDC gave substance in its very architecture. At its dedication on June 8, 1893, guests sat on its wide porches, deliberately designed to evoke a Southern aesthetic. Inside, they circulated in rooms named in honor of Missouri’s Confederate heroes, including General John Sappington Marmaduke and Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson, while portraits of Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee, and Stonewall Jackson decked the walls.<sup>39</sup> It was an interesting juxtaposition—one that illustrated Confederate Missourians’ struggle for relevance within the Lost Cause. Most of

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<sup>35</sup> Catron, “Confederate Home in Missouri,” 61.

<sup>36</sup> Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 73-4.

<sup>37</sup> *Boonville Advertiser*, January 2, 1891.

<sup>38</sup> Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 73-6.

<sup>39</sup> There were cottages named in honor of John S. Bowen, William Y. Slack, Mosby M. Parsons, Henry Little, Martin E. Greene. See Hunt, “The Confederate Home of Missouri,” 299; “History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, Missouri,” 3, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records; Ankesheiln, *The Heart is the Heritage*, 44; “Third Biennial Report of the Board of Managers for the Years 1901 and 1902 of the Confederate Home of Missouri,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 42nd General Assembly, Appendix, 1903, 41.



FIGURE 6: Main building of the Confederate Home, c. 1906. In *Official Proceedings of the Tenth Annual Reunion and Convention of Missouri Division United Confederate Veterans*, 73.

Missouri's Confederates served very little time within their home state. Instead, they emphasized the service of Confederate Missourians in upholding the larger Confederacy.

The administration also went to pains to position itself within the narrative of national reconciliation. Expressions of pride in the residents' Confederate service were often accompanied by acknowledgments of the bravery of Union soldiers. In one report, the administration of the Confederate Home spoke with respect for "the brave Federal soldier." "It was the admiration and wonder of the on-looking world," they continued, "to note how quickly the bitter feelings and wounds engendered by this internecine strife were healed by the men who wore the blue and those who wore the gray, being chivalrous and magnanimous enough to revere and recognize the strength and purity of their adversaries' principles."<sup>40</sup> As a testament to their renewed patriotism, the "stars and stripes" flew over the Home, not the "stars and bars" or the

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<sup>40</sup> *Journal of the House and Senate*, 44th General Assembly, Appendix, 1907, 44, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.



Confederate battle flag. The U. S. flag signified that the Confederate veterans saw themselves as “a great army of now loyal American citizens.”<sup>41</sup> In 1896, administrators “erected a flagstaff on the highest top of the main building of the home,” they explained, “so that the flag of our united common country can be unfurled to the breezes.”<sup>42</sup> This tradition continued throughout the life of the Home. In 1922, the *Kansas-City Journal* reported with pride:

one of the sights at the home is to see J. R. (Rocky) Moore . . . raise the American flag each morning and haul it down at sunset. Never greater love shown in a man’s face than in his when he takes Old Glory out to let the breeze caress her colors. Never greater reverence glows in any man’s eyes than in his when he carefully lifts her from the staff, keeping her hem from touching the round, and bears her away to her resting place for the night. Hero of a bitter war, enemy of the flag he now guards so carefully.<sup>43</sup>

In fact, it seems use of the Confederate flag was reserved for special occasions, particularly funerals.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, Missouri’s Union veterans busied themselves in planning their own Federal Soldiers’ Home. The GAR proposed the idea in 1890, but like the Ex-Confederates, they depended on Missouri’s women to make their vision a reality. Founded in 1881, the Department of Missouri Woman’s Relief Corps (WRC), the official auxiliary of the GAR, took chief responsibility for the completion of the Missouri Federal Soldiers’ Home. A national organization like the UDC, the WRC vowed not only “to aid and assist the Grand Army of the Republic and to perpetuate the memory of its heroic dead,” but also “to assist such Union

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<sup>41</sup> Samuel B. Shirky, “Fourteenth Biennial Report of the Confederate Soldiers’ Home of Missouri,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 53rd General Assembly, Appendix, 1925, 6, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>42</sup> *The State Republican*, February 6, 1896.

<sup>43</sup> *Kansas City Journal-Post*, “Establishing a Real Home for Missouri Confederate Veterans,” November 12, 1922, in Gubernatorial Series, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1922, Arthur Mastick Hyde (1877-1946), Papers 1932-1937 (C7), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia.

<sup>44</sup> “Flags at the Confederate Home,” Confederate Memorial State Historic Site, Missouri State Parks, <https://mostateparks.com/page/55052/flags-confederate-home> (accessed May 14, 2015).

veterans as need our help and protection, and to extend needful aid to their widows and orphans. To find them homes and employment, and assure them of sympathy and friends.”<sup>45</sup>

Although they were an auxiliary organization, committed to honoring the sacrifices made by men, the WRC also operated as a women’s organization *for* women. Amongst their achievements, the WRC believed they had “contributed largely in making this a Woman’s Age, an age in which woman, in her proper sphere, extends to the old, respect and gratitude; to the young, encouragement and sympathy.”<sup>46</sup> As a result, the WRC devoted itself to preserving the legacy of Union women, particularly army nurses. They swore “to cherish and emulate the deeds of our Army Nurses, and of all loyal women who rendered loving service to our country in her hour of peril.” Distressed by the fact that the National Home excluded women, a provision they believed prevented many married veterans from applying, the Missouri WRC “determined on establishing a Home, where Veterans and their Wives might spend the remnant of their lives together.”<sup>47</sup> For a generation that bore so much suffering, the WRC believed separating husbands and wives to be unnecessarily cruel. With that purpose in mind, the WRC established the Missouri Soldiers’ Home Association in order to begin raising money for the home.

The WRC regarded the prospect of building a more inclusive home in Missouri with optimism. With only a modest donation from every sympathetic citizen, the WRC believed “a grand building, a monument . . . and shelter and home for those who have born the burden and heat of the day when the nation was in peril, would be built somewhere in this great state.”<sup>48</sup>

Progress came slowly, however. Continually frustrated by a general lack of interest, the WRC

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<sup>45</sup> Alice Mae Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home and the Work of the Department of Missouri Woman’s Relief Corps* (Kansas City: 1925), 37.

<sup>46</sup> Adah Goss Briggs, “Circular Letter, No. 1,” November 1, 1895, Benecke Family, G.A..R.—Woman’s Relief Corps., 1894-1896, Benecke Family Papers, 1816-1989, n.d. (C3825), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia.

<sup>47</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 159, 37.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

increasingly suspected Missourians of harboring a bias against Union veterans. “Grand old Missouri ought not to be an exception” to “patriotic sentiments,” GAR Commander Louis Benecke wrote. “Yet . . . not one cent is appropriated to provide a home for the aged and infirm Veterans by our State.”<sup>49</sup> Not to be discouraged, the WRC spurred its members to greater action. “We must remember,” one woman later acknowledged, “we are living in a state that does not sympathize with our boys in blue as they do in the East; thus there is more need for the Woman’s Relief Corps to do in this state for the Union veterans than in any of the Eastern states.”<sup>50</sup> What Unionist Missourians mistook for the Confederate sympathies of their state, however, actually proved to be a symptom of its deep divisions. Neither the Confederate nor the Federal Home received Missourians’ unqualified support. Each side attended to its own.

Out of desperation and with the prospect of yet another winter approaching without a Federal Home, the GAR proposed modifying an abandoned St. Louis arsenal into a temporary shelter, but the WRC held out for a more fitting home.<sup>51</sup> They realized, they said, “every undertaking of this proportion requires time, thought and energy to get it started.”<sup>52</sup> In 1895, the WRC finally received the help it needed when the citizens of Phelps County offered to purchase the thirty-four room Dunmoor mansion in St. James, at the price of \$20,000, on behalf of the Federal Home. Situated on nearly sixty acres with rooms ready for immediate occupancy, it seemed an ideal solution, but the mansion needed extensive repairs and there were other cities vying for the location of the home.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Louis Benecke to Scon. Sherman Esq., November 20, 1895, Benecke Family, G.A.R., Dept. of Mo.—Letterbook, 1895-1903, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>50</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 98.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>53</sup> Dr. Clair V. Mann, “The Story of Dunmoor: Former Home of the William James Family,” 1963, 3, Clair V. Mann (1884-1974), Collection, 1821-1973 (C3556), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia; “First Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the Federal Soldiers’ Home, at St. James, MO,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 40th General Assembly, Appendix, 1899, 4, General Assembly, State



FIGURE 7: The Dunmoor mansion, undated. Courtesy, Missouri Digital Heritage.

Indeed, the proposition of locating the home in St. James garnered a great deal of criticism. If nothing else, St. James was an inconvenient location for the Home, far removed from any major cities and nearly 100 miles from the Unionist stronghold of St. Louis. Established in 1857 and nestled amongst the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, Phelps County was only sparsely populated at the outbreak of the Civil War. It was a predominately rural area, mostly made up of small farms with little reliance on slave labor. Phelps County experienced some unrest in the aftermath of the war, as the remnants of local guerrilla bands turned to terror campaigns of looting and robbery. As a result, the Bald Knobbers—an anti-vigilante counterinsurgency largely made up of Union militia veterans—formed to curb the lawlessness of the guerrillas and the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). By 1890, however, the violence had subsided.

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Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City; Briggs, “Circular Letter, No. 1,” Benecke Family, G.A.R.—Woman’s Relief Corp., 1894-1896, Benecke Family Papers; *The National Tribune*, “The Relief Corps, Gleanings from National Headquarters—Notes from Departments,” August 22, 1895.

In the spring of 1895, the Federal Soldiers' Home Association called a meeting in Macon, Missouri, to finally decide on the location of the Home. Because the Association only required \$1 membership in order to vote, a large delegation arrived from nearby La Plata, hoping to turn the vote in favor of a 100-acre property in their community. Fearful the St. James mansion would be voted down, WRC President Hollen E. Day preemptively forced the meeting to adjournment and accepted the deed for Dunmoor before all the proposals had even been heard. While a slightly underhanded move, one WRC member explained, "for years, we had thought and hoped and planned and worked for a home for aged veterans and their dependent ones . . . was it strange, that we should take this munificent gift? The sentiment was that we would at least have a home!"<sup>54</sup>

The Soldiers' Home Association, however, did not agree. For nearly a year they stubbornly refused to take the property over from the WRC. Meanwhile, the WRC footed the entire financial burden of maintaining it. "I began to be seriously worried as to our ability to even pay taxes and insurance on this Home of ours," WRC President Adah Goss Briggs wrote.<sup>55</sup> She admitted the WRC exceeded its authority in accepting the deed, but she urged the Home Association to cooperate: "Having accepted the gift, we owe it to the good people of St. James, who have exemplified their patriotism [l]oyalty and gratitude in so striking a manner, to fit it as soon as possible for occupancy. We owe it also to the old soldiers to whom a month's delay may mean privation and suffering. What the Woman's Relief Corps expects to do for the Union

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<sup>54</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*, 38, 65, 61.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

Veterans, must be done quickly, kindly and generously.”<sup>56</sup> Finally, on July 1, 1896, the Soldiers’ Home Association agreed to the transfer.<sup>57</sup>

The Federal Home formally opened on October 25, 1896, at a lavish dedication ceremony. The WRC planned for thousands of guests and even booked a special excursion train for the convenience of guests travelling from St. Louis. That morning, the excursion train left St. Louis and barreled through its first stop, unaware the mistake put them on a collision-course with another train coming full-speed from the opposite direction. Near Kirkwood, barely thirteen miles outside the city, the two trains crashed head-on. According to the *St. Paul Globe*, “the collision was terrific, both engines being demolished and a number of cars telescoped. The wreckage was piled high on the track, and above the sound of the escaping steam could be heard the cries of the frightened and injured passengers.”<sup>58</sup> News of the tragedy soon arrived in St. James by telegraph, as well as the grim pronouncement that the wreck left eight passengers dead and at least twenty injured.<sup>59</sup> “This had a tendency to put quite a damper upon the occasion,” the *St. James Journal* reported dryly, “and for a while it was a question whether the dedication should take place or not, but the crowd was so great, and had come so far to take part in the opening of the home that, after deliberation, it was decided to proceed with the ceremonies.”<sup>60</sup> A crowd of 5,000, led by 300 school girls marching in the shape of a “human flag,” formed a mile long parade to the Home.<sup>61</sup> As they marched, the crowd sang favorite Union war songs like “Marching Through Georgia” and “The Battle Cry of Freedom” and, strangely, the rebel anthem

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<sup>56</sup> Briggs, “Circular Letter, No. 1,” Benecke Family, G.A.R.—Woman’s Relief Corp., 1894-1896, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 65.

<sup>58</sup> *St. Paul Globe*, “Death List Eight, Railway Horror Follows the Dedication of the Missouri Soldiers’ Home,” October 26, 1896.

<sup>59</sup> Mann, “The Story of Dunmoor,” 7, Clair V. Mann, Collection; *St. Paul Globe*, “Death List Eight,” October 26, 1896.

<sup>60</sup> *St. James Journal*, “Soldiers Home Dedicated,” October 30, 1896.

<sup>61</sup> Mann, “The Story of Dunmoor,” 6, Clair V. Mann, Collection.

“Dixie.”<sup>62</sup> As a matter of course, officials gave speeches, vaunting patriotism and praising the WRC, then the new superintendent accepted the keys, raised the United States flag, and the Home opened.<sup>63</sup>

Not all the bitterness surrounding the location of the Home had passed, however. The citizens of St. James had raised all the money necessary for the purchase of the Dunmoor mansion, but their motives remain unclear. The Federal Home promised to attract business in an otherwise economically depressed region. Even still, one newspaper observed, “the town is not very friendly to the home, and does not care much for the inmates outside of their pension checks.” “It was mistakenly located here in the first place,” they complained, “in the wrong town, in the wrong county, among a people who never had much sympathy for the old federal soldier.”<sup>64</sup>

Perhaps it was an inconvenient location, but the home quickly filled to capacity nevertheless. The Federal Home offered admission to any honorably discharged U. S. combat veteran as long as they had lived in the state for one year. They also had to demonstrate an inability to support themselves due to disability—“not the result of any vicious habit or illegal act,” chronic disease, or insanity.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, applicants to the Confederate Home only had to prove two years of residence in Missouri, in addition to demonstrating their inability to support themselves and submitting to a medical examination. Confederate veterans also had to present evidence of an honorable discharge, but not necessarily from a Missouri regiment. In fact, the population of the Confederate Home included individuals from nearly every former Confederate state.

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<sup>62</sup> Mann, “The Story of Dunmoor,” 6, Clair V. Mann, Collection.

<sup>63</sup> *St. James Journal*, “Soldiers Home Dedicated,” October 30, 1896.

<sup>64</sup> *The Taney County Republican*, January 24, 1907.

<sup>65</sup> “The Federal Soldiers’ Home of Missouri,” Federal Soldiers’ Home—Benecke Correspondence, 1897, Benecke Family Papers. The Federal Home changed their residency requirement to two years in 1923.



FIGURE 8: Residents of the Federal Home, undated. In Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*.

While the rules made it clear the Confederate Home only accepted applications from veterans of the regular army, even to the point of excluding veterans of the State Guard, they nevertheless discretely admitted ex-guerrillas.<sup>66</sup> As a matter of fact, the Home's first superintendent, Mark Belt, rode under guerrilla chieftain Dave Pool.<sup>67</sup> Some guerrillas, Belt included, claimed eligibility based on previous service in the Confederate army. Many served under General Sterling Price during his failed 1862 campaign and remained in the state following his departure; some deserted, others were paroled as prisoners of war before joining a guerrilla band. The exact number of guerrilla residents at the Confederate Home remains unclear,

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<sup>66</sup> State Guard veterans were only admitted if they were physically disabled. Able-bodied State Guard veterans were refused admission as late as 1904. See "Rules for Admission of Inmates," in "Biennial Report, Confederate Home," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 45th General Assembly, Appendix, 1909, 6, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>67</sup> Darryl Levings, "How William Quantrill Wound up with Three Graves," *Civil War One Fifty*, *Kansas City Star*, October 3, 2011, <http://civilwar150.kansascity.com/articles/how-quantrill-wound-up-with-three-graves/> (accessed September 10, 2012).



although the *Kansas City Star* claims as many as fourteen lie buried on the grounds today—including notorious guerrilla William Clarke Quantrill, interred long after the Home closed.<sup>68</sup>

The Federal Home, however, was more particular. They excluded veterans of the pro-Union EMM on the basis that they served as state, not federal soldiers, and received no pension from the Federal Government. Increasingly, however, the Federal Home board regarded this as unfair. After all, they insisted: the EMM had “performed valuable service and were exposed to the hardships incident to the war in border states. . . . We have a number of cases where the members of the [EMM] were on active field duty for more than ninety days, and are now infirm, indigent and subjects of charity. As they were Missourians serving in a Missouri Military organization it seems to me that amendment to the law should be enacted providing that such ex-members of the [EMM] . . . may be permitted to enjoy the benefits of our Missouri Home.”<sup>69</sup> In 1915, the board admitted the first EMM veterans, though they did not necessarily enter on equal terms. One EMM veteran complained he and his wife received unfair treatment because they came from Higginsville, the site of the Confederate Home. The superintendent admitted “some one may have referred to him, questioning his loyalty or calling him a rebel,” but he attributed it to this man’s service in the militia and not the regular army.<sup>70</sup> This was an expression of the old prejudice against Missouri’s Union militia men, many of whom were conscripted and found their loyalty under constant scrutiny.

African Americans were also excluded from the veterans’ homes. According to the 1875 state constitution, Missouri only officially segregated its school facilities. *De facto* segregation

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<sup>68</sup> Levings, “How William Quantrill Wound up with Three Graves.”

<sup>69</sup> “Seventh Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, Mo,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 46th General Assembly, Vol. I, Appendix, 1911, 6-7, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>70</sup> W. F. Henry to Louis Benecke, December 20, 1911, Benecke Family, Federal Soldiers’ Home—Benecke Correspondence, December 1911, Benecke Family Papers.

existed in most public spaces, however, including the veterans' homes.<sup>71</sup> Remarkably, there is no evidence of the presence of African Americans at the Federal Home either as staff or residents—even though Missouri had fielded more than 8,000 black troops.<sup>72</sup> The Federal Home rules never explicitly excluded black veterans, but in 1900, a staff member reported that the local KKK actually made its headquarters in the home.<sup>73</sup> The extent and efficacy of their organization is unclear, though they did threaten to lynch two employees for an unspecified offense.

Doubtless, the threat of intimidation and violence posed by the KKK kept black veterans out. Years later, in 1921, the Missouri State Board of Charities and Corrections conducted a report on the conditions of black citizens in state eleemosynary institutions. At that time, the Federal Home informed the board, they had “no arrangements or quarters” for black residents.<sup>74</sup> This kind of policy put black veterans in an incredibly difficult position. In addition to the many problems facing aging Civil War veterans, they had to navigate a system which neither prohibited nor accommodated them. According to the state report, it was an all too common problem: “In Missouri there is no statute which restrains negroes from receiving the benefits from all its public institutions, but there is a sort of indifference which permits many embarrassing handicaps. Somehow, men and women, white and black, must develop conviction, courage, faith and vision to tackle the problems for the general welfare as human problems,

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<sup>71</sup> Greene, et al., “The Role of the Negro in Missouri History,” 21. For more on the experiences of black veterans in the National Home see Donald R. Shaffer, *After the Glory: The Struggles of Black Civil War Veterans* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004).

<sup>72</sup> Greene, et al., “The Role of the Negro in Missouri History,” 9. The population of the Missouri Veterans Home remains almost exclusively white. In a phone conversation with the staff, I was made aware of only one black resident, who stayed no more than a couple of weeks.

<sup>73</sup> [?] Keller to Louis Benecke, November 14, 1900. Benecke Family, Federal Soldiers' Home—Benecke Correspondence, November 1900, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>74</sup> F. T. Lane, “State Eleemosynary Institutions—What They Provide and What They Do Not Provide for the Negro,” *Monthly Bulletin: State Board of Charities and Corrections* Vol. 24, No. 3 (January 1922), 89, Record Group 000: Department of Corrections Documents Collection, 1879-present, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

regardless of the color or social standing.”<sup>75</sup> Until that time, some black veterans may have sought admission to branches of the National Home, which maintained segregated facilities, but it is likely they depended upon the strength of their own communities, churches, and fraternal organizations for support.

There is no evidence the Confederate Home admitted black residents either, though other state Confederate homes occasionally did, but African Americans did serve on the staff.<sup>76</sup> In 1932, the superintendent woefully reported the accidental death of Sam Benton, an African American who worked at the Confederate Home for nearly thirty years until he was struck by a train. “Sam Benton was loyal to the Confederate Home and faithful to the members and never failed to assist any of them in any way possible,” he wrote. “[Benton] was admired by every man and woman here.”<sup>77</sup> Mired in the mythology of the Lost Cause, which emphasized the supposedly benevolent nature of slavery, former Confederates celebrated the service of men like Benton as evidence of their harmonious relationships with African Americans. There can be no better example of this point than an account of a special event on the Confederate Home grounds, during which a visitor watched “a colored woman supporting her lame mistress to a comfortable chair, and then tenderly [minister] to her wants.” This scene “carried me back to the black mammy days,” the visitor wrote. “She is a Confederate, . . . and proves her allegiance by her works. . . . ‘One left! . . . of the many faithful.’”<sup>78</sup> The Confederate Home hardly offered a

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<sup>75</sup> Lane, “State Eleemosynary Institutions,” 88.

<sup>76</sup> Rosenburg, *Living Monuments*, 136.

<sup>77</sup> “Reports and Minutes,” June 1, 1952, Missouri. Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records, 1897-1944 (C0066), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia.

<sup>78</sup> Mrs. B. R. Ireland, “Another Account of the Dedication,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIV, No. 7 (July 1906), 295.

model of racial tolerance, however. On another occasion, the board expelled a veteran for insisting “a Negro was as good as a white man.”<sup>79</sup>

Both homes did, however, welcome the wives and widows of veterans, with some stipulations. At the Federal Home, only wives over fifty and widows over sixty were eligible for admission. Remarkably, the Federal Home also extended applications to soldiers’ mothers and to army nurses.<sup>80</sup> States often provided for veterans’ wives and widows, though they typically resided in separate homes. The inclusion of army nurses showed extremely progressive thinking, however, especially considering the National Home did not admit nurses until 1928.<sup>81</sup>

Only the Confederate Home provided for veterans and their entire families, including children under the age of fourteen.<sup>82</sup> This policy arose from a stigmatized view of poverty that equated financial and moral bankruptcy. The UDC could not allow needy and delinquent children to besmirch the reputation of their Confederate heritage. To that end, the UDC told the *Boonville Advertiser*, “we have resolved that the future criminals shall not be recruited from the descendants of men who braved death for a point of honor.”<sup>83</sup> Allowing them to accompany their parents into the home seemed the best solution. For the privacy and comfort of these families, the UDC built a number of small cottages on the grounds and “encouraged [them] to live just as if their little home belonged to them.”<sup>84</sup> The possibility of maintaining a normal family life in spite

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<sup>79</sup> Ankesheiln, *The Heart is the Heritage*, 102.

<sup>80</sup> “Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 63rd General Assembly, Appendix, 1945, 59, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>81</sup> “History of the National Home for Disabled Soldiers,” National Park Service, [http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/veterans\\_affairs/History.html](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/veterans_affairs/History.html) (accessed February 8, 2014).

<sup>82</sup> Minutes, Confederate Home Board, January 2, 1932, 6, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records.

<sup>83</sup> *Boonville Advertiser*, January 2, 1891.

<sup>84</sup> “Second Biennial Report of the State Board of Charities and Corrections,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 40th General Assembly, Appendix, 1901, 47-8, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

of their disadvantages must have been tremendously appealing to Missouri's Confederate veterans.

While both homes sustained and cultivated competing versions of Civil War memory, they nevertheless operated in a similar fashion. Of course, caring for the veterans themselves served as the underlying purpose of both homes. To that end, they made provisions to meet their residents' every need. Each home grew into a large campus with multiple buildings including dormitories, hospitals, and chapels. The staff provided meals, health care, and laundry service. They also organized entertainment, maintained libraries, and arranged visiting hours. In all, they strove to create a comfortable atmosphere. Superintendent Captain F. P. Bronaugh pronounced the Confederate Home "the grandest charity in the country," while the Federal Home proudly proclaimed: "Who enters here—leaves care behind."<sup>85</sup>

Like most nursing homes, however, veterans' homes earned a reputation as places where once brave men went to languish away, suffering what one veteran described as "a *death-in-life* in a Soldiers' Home." In an open letter to the nation's veterans' homes, including the Missouri Federal Soldiers' Home, he articulated the fears many veterans had of institutionalization: "A Soldiers' Home! There, my keen sympathies would be harassed, for my associates would be dear fellows who have lost their grip on life, having only one remaining purpose—to slide down a buttered plank into the grave. And what will I do with my mental activity? May I not well fear that, like many others, I will drivell into insanity? . . . Better, it now seems to me, that I had met a

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<sup>85</sup> "History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, Missouri," 1-2, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records; "General Information at Confederate Memorial State Historic Site," Missouri State Parks, <http://mostateparks.com/page/54952/general-information> (accessed March 20, 2013); *Boonville Weekly Advertiser*, July 13, 1894; "Eighth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Federal Soldiers' Home, St. James, Missouri," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 47th General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1913, 5, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City; "Seventh Biennial Report of the Federal Soldiers' Home, St. James, Mo.," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 46th General Assembly, Appendix, 1909, 5, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

soldier's fate where our unnamed demi-gods yielded their lives."<sup>86</sup> In a climate of Civil War commemoration that venerated the war dead, survivors like this man often felt like outcasts—reduced to the ignominy of dependency alongside “undeserving” criminals, the disabled, and the mentally ill. Veterans' homes were really a last resort for individuals without better options.

Both the Confederate and Federal Homes were conscious of the perception that their inmates were forgotten and neglected and worked to correct it. “I know what idleness will do,” Ex-Confederate and Senator George Graham Vest remarked. “I have for years in Washington seen one of the most successful Federal Homes for G. A. R. men in the country, and there is not a month that the inmates do not escape from the Home as they would from a jail. . . . What they want is to be well-cared for, but they must not be kept idle.” Ultimately, neither home allowed veterans to remain idle. On the model of most Progressive Era charitable institutions, the homes maintained a self-sufficient operation by utilizing resident labor. The grounds of both homes largely remained open farmland, where veterans raised livestock, tended orchards, and grew crops. This not only served as a practical way to run such large institutions, but also helped the residents feel useful. “There are no drones in Missouri's Confederate Home,” Ex-Confederate President James Bannerman reflected with pride. “The rough-and-ready lessons of the war made self-reliant, industrious men, and the boys who have turned their swords into plow-shares, and their bayonets into pruning hooks have . . . shown that they can do a little foraging of the peaceful kind.”<sup>87</sup>

As the living embodiments of Civil War memory, administrators professed reverence for their charges, but often handled them with arbitrary discipline. Staff at both homes referred to

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<sup>86</sup> “Kindly Regard this as a Veteran's Personal Message to You,” May 1903, Benecke Family, Federal Soldiers' Home—Benecke Correspondence, 1903, Benecke Family Papers (emphasis in original).

<sup>87</sup> *Secretary's Annual Report of the Ninth Annual Reunion of the Ex-Confederate Association of Missouri*, 16, 12.



FIGURE 9: Residents of the Confederate Home donning their uniforms, undated. Courtesy, Missouri State Parks.

their residents as “inmates” and required the veterans to wear uniforms, gray in Higginsville and blue in St. James.<sup>88</sup> They also held veterans to a strict code of rules, prohibiting everything from profanity and fighting to skipping church and leaving without permission. Veterans who failed to cooperate with such rules faced expulsion.

The threat of expulsion, however, did not always serve to prevent problems. Louis Benecke, now president of the Federal Home Board, acknowledged that “among a lot of men there are always some who are not satisfied with their surroundings and the old Veterans at the Home are no exception to this rule.”<sup>89</sup> In his monthly report, one Confederate Home superintendent admitted the residents constantly argued with one another. “You cannot force them to respect each other,” he wrote, “and it is out of the question to attempt to try it.”<sup>90</sup> In some cases, misbehavior was quite trivial. For example, the Federal Home Board expelled one

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<sup>88</sup> Jacob A. Roof to G. W. Roof, February 18, 1902, in *St. James Journal*, “Missouri’s Soldiers’ Home,” Federal Soldiers’ Home—Newscippings, 1899-1902, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>89</sup> Louis Benecke to Hon. B. Russell, September 24, 1898, Federal Soldiers’ Home—Benecke Letterbook, 1897-1901, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>90</sup> “Reports and Minutes,” May 2, 1932, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records.

resident for refusing to participate in prayer before meals.<sup>91</sup> Other disputes arose from the typical problems between individuals living in close quarters, as when one Confederate veteran struck his roommate over the head with his cane because he left his light on too late at night. A more serious incident occurred at the Confederate Home, however, when two residents disagreed over the election of officers at the State Reunion of Confederate Veterans and one attacked the other with a knife. Upon recovery, both men faced expulsion.<sup>92</sup>

Some of the friction between residents at the Federal Home arose between native-born American residents and those of German heritage. Because the state experienced a tremendous influx of German immigration before the war, this was a problem particular to Missouri. Anxious to prove their patriotism and generally opposed to slavery, they rallied to the Union cause during the Civil War and served with distinction. Nevertheless, old stereotypes that cast Germans as drunken and brutish persisted after the war. Even though German-born veterans made up roughly a quarter of the population of the Home and German-born Louis Benecke even served as president of the Board of Trustees, they were not immune from nativist racism. One resident complained he overheard a staff-member telling the superintendent's wife "she ought to poison all the ---- dutch."<sup>93</sup>

Both homes experienced persistent problems with alcoholism, despite the fact that the rules expressly prohibited alcohol—except for medicinal purposes. There is some evidence that veterans at the Federal Home even ran their own moonshine ring, distributing alcohol to the

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<sup>91</sup> Louis Benecke to Mrs. Frances M. Wheeler, July 12, 1898, Federal Soldiers' Home—Benecke Letterbook, 1897-1901, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>92</sup> "Reports and Minutes," April 1, 1932, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records; "Reports and Minutes," November 1, 1932, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records.

<sup>93</sup> C. H. Anthony to Louis Benecke, November 6, 1900, Federal Soldiers' Home—Benecke Correspondence, November 1900, Benecke Family Papers (expletive removed in original).



surrounding community, though the administration quickly denied such rumors.<sup>94</sup> “We cannot afford to have the report to go out that our Home is the resort of drunken men,” Benecke wrote.<sup>95</sup> In spite of their best efforts, however, the biennial reports of both homes reveal the constant battle administrators waged against alcohol and, occasionally, against opium as well.<sup>96</sup> Substance abuse among the veterans may have been a response to the dull routine of institutional life, chronic pain, depression, or even post-traumatic stress disorder.<sup>97</sup> Unprepared to treat such psychological conditions, both Missouri’s veterans’ homes immediately expelled or transferred mentally ill residents to the one of the state’s mental hospitals.

In truth, life at the veterans’ homes could be quite bleak. Despite the administrators’ attempts to provide comfort, structure, and a sense of self-worth, death loomed before the veterans at all times. “These old men *come to stay*,” one Confederate Home staff member observed frankly. “They have nothing but the graveyard before them.”<sup>98</sup> This reality did not escape the veterans either—death was a part of their routine. Surgeons at both homes dutifully recorded the deaths of every one of their residents, usually citing natural causes including old age, heart disease, and cancer. More suggestive entries, however, appeared as well. For example, over the course of several years Confederate Home surgeons listed two separate men as “killed by train,” while two more “fell from porch,” another “died from a fall,” and still another death

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<sup>94</sup> “Rusty-Cuss” to Arthur Mastick Hyde, Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, 1921-1922, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde (1877-1947), Papers, 1913-1954 (C7), *The State Historical Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia; Fred M. Tate to Hon. Jesse W. Barrett, March 22, 1922, Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, 1921-1922, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

<sup>95</sup> Louis Benecke to Mrs. Frances M. Wheeler, July 14, 1900, Federal Soldiers’ Home—Benecke Letterbook, 1897-1901, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>96</sup> “Third Biennial Report of the Board of Managers for the Years 1901 and 1902 of the Confederate Home of Missouri,” 38.

<sup>97</sup> See Eric T. Dean, Jr. *Shook over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

<sup>98</sup> “Third Biennial Report of the Board of Managers for the Years 1901 and 1902 of the Confederate Home of Missouri,” 33 (emphasis in original).

was reported simply as “suicide.”<sup>99</sup> The frequency of suicides in the Missouri veterans’ homes can only be speculated at but, given the neglect of the psychological well-being of these men, it certainly occurred.

The most prevalent problem afflicting the veterans’ homes, however, was much more mundane. From the time they opened, both homes suffered persistent financial problems. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the onset of a national economic crisis and the advancing age of veterans made it more difficult for them to support themselves. Both homes filled to capacity and neither could afford to run efficiently on private charity. “Depending entirely upon voluntary contributions, our need for funds increased, while the receipts decreased,” one Confederate veteran explained. “This condition grew steadily worse until it became unbearable.” As a solution, the General Assembly drafted two bills, proposing the transfer of the veterans’ homes to the State of Missouri. It was an incredibly symbolic measure: “There is a pathetic beauty and touching appropriateness in the fact . . . that the two acts . . . were companion bills,” one veteran remarked.<sup>100</sup>

After receiving approval from the House, the issue came to a vote in the Senate in February 1897. The two delegates from Phelps and Lafayette counties, Senators Henry H. Hohenschild and Charles Vandiver, both Democrats, delivered speeches in favor of the bills. Born in St. Louis in 1865, the child of German immigrants, Hohenschild recognized the importance of providing for Civil War veterans, though too young to remember the conflict

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<sup>99</sup> “Third Biennial Report of the Board of Managers for the Years 1901 and 1902 of the Confederate Home of Missouri,” 8; “Eighth Biennial Report of the Board of Managers of the Confederate Soldiers’ Home of Missouri at Higginville,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 47th General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1913, 20-1; “Tenth Biennial Report of the Board of Managers of the Confederate Soldiers’ Home of Missouri at Higginville,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 49th General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1917, 19, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City; “Eleventh Biennial Report of the Board of Managers of the Confederate Soldiers’ Home of Missouri at Higginville,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 50th General Assembly, Vol. III, Appendix, 1918, 18, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>100</sup> Hon. C. H. Vandiver, “Soldier’s Homes in Missouri,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. V, No. 4 (April 1897), 179.

himself. “A great state like Missouri,” he reportedly said, “should care for all its dependent soldiers without regard for which side they espoused in the late war.” By all accounts he gave an impassioned speech. According to one report, “many members of the house, hearing of the speech in progress, left their seats and went to the senate chamber. State officers and others about the capitol building also crowded around to listen.”<sup>101</sup> It was “one of the most beautiful orations that has been heard in that historic chamber for years.”<sup>102</sup>

Vandiver, a disabled Confederate veteran, spoke next. A native Virginian, Vandiver did not settle in Missouri until 1880. Nevertheless, he actively participated in the creation of the Missouri Confederate Home.<sup>103</sup> “I want to say now,” Vandiver began, “as one who was a Confederate soldier, who followed Lee from Manassas to Gettysburg, from the Wilderness to Petersburg, was thrice wounded with his face to the foe, and left an arm to moulder in the Old Dominion, that I cast my vote for this bill.”<sup>104</sup> The press recognized the powerful symbolism of the occasion. “When a one-armed soldier like Senator Vandiver stands up in a Missouri legislature and appeals for the perpetual union of the blue and gray,” one paper observed, “it is convincing proof that the war is over and that sectional sentiment[s] are rapidly being lost sight of.”<sup>105</sup> Such optimism was not misplaced. The bills passed with only one dissenting vote, leaving Missourians feeling encouraged about the prospect of reconciliation in their state. For Vandiver, it “was like laying a joint tribute on the altar of forgetfulness and forgiveness.”<sup>106</sup>

Missouri’s deeply conflicted identity, as personified by the two senators most responsible for the passage of the bills, made this legislation all the more profound. Hohenschild and

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<sup>101</sup> “Homes for the Veterans,” *Mexico Weekly Ledger* (Mexico, MO), February 25, 1897.

<sup>102</sup> “Souvenir of the Missouri Legislature,” 39th General Assembly, Vol. I (Sedalia, MO: Sedalia Printing Company, 1897).

<sup>103</sup> “Charles H. Vandiver,” *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. XX, No. 2 (February 1912), 78-9.

<sup>104</sup> Vandiver, “Soldier’s Homes in Missouri,” 180.

<sup>105</sup> “Homes for the Veterans,” *Mexico Weekly Ledger* (Mexico, MO), February 25, 1897.

<sup>106</sup> Vandiver, “Soldier’s Homes in Missouri,” 179.

Vandiver embodied the complicated dynamic of Missouri's population. Despite the vast differences in their personal histories, however, they banded together in support of maintaining equitable treatment for both the state's Union and Confederate veterans. "I am proud of grand old Missouri that has shown a spirit broad enough and a liberal policy in this respect," Vandiver said. "She is the first State in the Union to become mother of 'Twin Soldiers' Homes.' Old soldiers without shelters are provided for in our glorious State, whether they wore blue or gray."<sup>107</sup> "The passage of the two bills at one and the same time constituted a significant object-lesson," the *Iron County Register* proclaimed. "The war is over. Nowhere did it range with more desperate fierceness than in Missouri. It is Missouri that now sets the example of forgetting the bitterness and helpfully remembering the claims of the brave soldiers who fought faithfully and well under either flag."<sup>108</sup>

Significant legal and financial challenges, however, clouded the harmonious feelings engendered by the state's adoption of the homes. Now in competition for funding, staff at both homes expressed suspicion over official partiality. Administrators at the Federal Home believed the state appropriated more money for the Confederate Home—a fact which Missouri's Confederates did not deny. "The State of Missouri is not only doing something for the relief of Confederate soldiers," the *Confederate Veteran* observed, "but is being very liberal in its appropriations, so that the Confederates have been kindly treated by the State at large."<sup>109</sup> In his biennial report, however, Federal Home Superintendent W. F. Henry complained: "It seems quite reasonable that appropriation for salaries for this Institution should be nearly or quite as much as for the Confederate Home at Higginsville. While the membership of that Institution is slightly

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<sup>107</sup> *United Confederate Veterans of Missouri, Adjutant General's Report of the First Annual Reunion and Convention*, 20.

<sup>108</sup> *Iron County Register*, "The War is Over," February 18, 1897.

<sup>109</sup> J. W. Halliburton, "Aid by States to Confederate Survivors," *Confederate Veteran* Vol. X, No. 6 (June 1902), 254.

greater than ours, yet with the same officers and help we now have we could care for as many as are in the Confederate Home.” He begged “the Legislature . . . to treat these institutions fairly.”<sup>110</sup> In their defense, the Confederates pointed out that while they did receive a larger state appropriation, the Federal Home got additional support from the Federal Government amounting to \$100 a year for every Union veteran in residence. That federal money did not extend to women or militia veterans residing at the Federal Home, however, so they still depended on state funding. Regardless, as the Federal Home later admitted, evidence of favoritism towards the Confederate Home could not be found.

Once transferred to the state, the two homes fell under the control of the eleemosynary board—which governed the state asylums, schools for the deaf and blind, and reform schools—effectively making the veterans wards of the state. As such, a question emerged over whether the veterans could legally retain their right to vote. According to the 1875 Missouri constitution, “No person, while kept at . . . public expense, . . . shall be entitled to vote at any election under the laws of this state.”<sup>111</sup> Upon the acquisition of the two homes, the Missouri General Assembly immediately passed a revised “qualification of voters” bill to protect the franchise of the veterans’ homes residents, but they did not amend the constitution itself.<sup>112</sup>

This oversight prompted a controversy in Phelps County in 1904 during a race for the office of county collector. Republican candidate William Stimson initially won, but the Democratic candidate, A. B. Hale, contested his victory. W. N. Evans, local circuit judge and state Democratic Party chairman, discounted all the votes cast by the veterans in the Federal

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<sup>110</sup> W. F. Henry, “Report of Superintendent, Federal Soldiers’ Home of Missouri, St. James, December 31, 1912,” in “Eighth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, Missouri,” 10.

<sup>111</sup> Missouri Constitution (1875), art. VIII, sec. 8.

<sup>112</sup> “Elections: Qualifications of Voters,” sec. 4670, *Laws of Missouri*, 39th General Assembly, 1897 (Jefferson City: Tribune Printing Company, 1897), 109-110, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

Home because, according to the state constitution, they were kept at “public expense” and were therefore “government paupers and not entitled to vote.”<sup>113</sup> “It was not the intension [*sic*] of the framers of the constitution to humiliate the inmates of eleemosynary institutions,” Evans explained by way of justification, “but for the purpose of protecting the public against an inclination that would naturally grow up in these institutions to control local affairs.”<sup>114</sup> Evans then ordered a recount and the Democratic candidate emerged victorious.

Missourians followed the unfolding case with interest. One paper said it “is receiving more consideration at this time than any other public matter in the state.”<sup>115</sup> Evans’ decision immediately drew suspicion over party favoritism and reawakened simmering Civil War hostilities. “We understand the confederates at Higginsville voted,” one paper noted bitterly.<sup>116</sup> In reality, however, the decision affected both homes and the veterans worked together to seek its reversal. Colonel Henry Fairback, commander of the Missouri GAR, insisted the matter concerned “every . . . old soldier in the state” and their “comrades who may now be, or who may hereafter become members of either of the homes. Therefore, the question is not a partisan one to be made a football of between contending political parties.”<sup>117</sup> At one reunion, veterans publicly condemned it as “an outrage against every American soldier who has fought in any war since the foundation of our free government; and we call upon every soldier . . . to join . . . in resenting

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<sup>113</sup> *The Rich Hill Tribune*, December 8, 1904. See also “Restored Honor to Outraged Veterans,” *The Montgomery Tribune*, July 13, 1906.

<sup>114</sup> W. N. Evans, quoted in unidentified newspaper article. Federal Soldiers’ Home—Newsclippings, 1899-1902, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>115</sup> J. W. Farris to the Editor of the Post-Dispatch, “Farris Defends Soldiers’ Right to the Ballot,” Federal Soldier’s Home—Newsclippings, 1903-1910, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>116</sup> *The Rich Hill Tribune*, December 8, 1904.

<sup>117</sup> “Claim Right to Vote,” Federal Soldiers’ Home—Newsclippings, 1903-1910, Benecke Family Papers.

this cowardly decision that the wretch who uttered it may be made odious in the minds of all right-minded, honorable Americans.”<sup>118</sup>

Both candidates formed legal teams and prepared to take the case to the state Supreme Court. The veterans’ opponents seem to have been motivated by a strange mixture of political partisanship and racial animosity. Ex-Missouri Supreme Court Justice Thomas A. Sherwood, defending Evans’ decision in the pending trial, reportedly said: “The inmates of the federal soldiers’ home at St. James have no rights which a white man is bound to respect.”<sup>119</sup> This was almost a direct quote of Roger Taney’s opinion in the landmark U. S. Supreme Court case *Scott v. Sandford* (1857), in which Taney ruled that enslaved African Americans had no claims to citizenship and therefore could not bring cases before the court. It was a curious remark, not least because there were no black veterans in the Federal Home. Sherwood racialized the veterans, perhaps because of their status as wards of the state or because of their affiliation with the “Black Republican” Party. Because Republicans advocated emancipation and later championed political equality for African American men, their Democrat rivals often regarded them as traitors to their race. Perhaps Sherwood was suggesting that because some Union veterans recognized the equality of their African American comrades, they should share their status as second-class citizens. At any rate, Sherwood’s remark reveals that while the GAR may have distanced itself from Radical Republican politics, Union veterans in Missouri still symbolized the party of Lincoln and emancipation.

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<sup>118</sup> Undated, unidentified newspaper article, Federal Soldier’s Home—Newsclippings, 1899-1902, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>119</sup> T. A. Sherwood, quoted in unidentified newspaper article, Federal Soldiers’ Home—Newsclippings, 1899-1902, Benecke Family Papers.

The Supreme Court of Missouri finally heard the case two years later in 1906.<sup>120</sup> In his opinion, Justice Henry Lamm recognized the sensitivity of the case by acknowledging that in these circumstances, “memories obtrude themselves of no light significance.” He went on to insist the State of Missouri had taken on the veterans’ homes out of “patriotic duty” and “sentimental beauty” and owed them an obligation. The veterans had earned “the privilege of a home in the evening of their days,” and reminded the court their “right to vote was bought and paid for with a great price.” He consciously failed to acknowledge that half of those veterans had once willingly renounced their citizenship. “Nor do we care to split hairs over the question of which cause the inmates of these homes fought for,” he continued. “Our Missourian . . . went under two flags—both ways—went at once. . . . When he came home from the war his mighty mother, the state of Missouri, with a great heart, claimed him as her son, proud of his deeds, resolute to cherish his memory, magnanimous to forget his quarrel, tender of both uniforms, and mourning over the dead of war-worn and desolate confederate and federal.”<sup>121</sup> In the end, Lamm overturned Evans’ decision and restored the veterans’ right to vote.

Of course, the female residents of the two homes found the controversy surrounding the veterans’ vote a non-issue. In fact, the women at the Federal Home faced problems of their own. Now under the control of the state eleemosynary board, each home still maintained separate governing boards, comprised of veteran office-holders, who supervised the management of both facilities. Despite their long-standing dedication to the Federal Home, however, the WRC found themselves excluded under the new management. On March 9, 1903, the General Assembly and the governor voted to remove the WRC from the Federal Home Board of Trustees.<sup>122</sup> In light of

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<sup>120</sup> It is not clear whether the veterans were allowed to vote in the intervening two years.

<sup>121</sup> *Mexico Missouri Message*, “Entitled to a Vote,” July 12, 1906.

<sup>122</sup> It appears that women did continue to serve on the board of the Confederate Home. See unsigned to Genl. Frank M. Sterrill, Federal Soldiers’ Home—G.A.R. Committee Reports, 1904, Benecke Family Papers.



all their work on behalf of the home, the WRC not only felt tremendously insulted by this action, but also deeply concerned about its consequences for women at the Federal Home. “The purpose for which it was created has been defeated,” President Hollen E. Day lamented. “We are denied any voice in the management of an institution which was created by us by long years of earnest endeavour.” When President Francis H. D. VanSlyke wrote Governor Alexander Dockery in 1904 asking him to reconsider, “he replied that there were no vacancies on the Board of Managers of the Federal Soldiers’ Home at St. James, and would not be during his administration; therefore, we should present our views to his successor.”<sup>123</sup>

This complication only escalated as a flood of new admissions taxed the Confederate and Federal Soldiers’ homes to their limits. Both homes had backlogs of applications and the Federal Home still had more residents than beds. “If all our members were present at one time,” they confessed, “we would not have room enough to accommodate them.”<sup>124</sup> Administrators understood this problem would only get worse with the passage of time. “When we take into consideration the number of old veterans, their wives, widows in the State . . . and that each year is adding to their infirmities,” they pointed out, “the time is near by when they can no longer keep the wolf from the door but will be forced to accept help from some other source.”<sup>125</sup>

As the WRC feared, the administration delayed and rejected female applicants as an attempt to lessen the strain on the Federal Home. In one case, the WRC independently cared for a widow for an entire year before the board finally admitted her. “The main object of establishing this home was to have a refuge for the Union veteran, his wife and widow,” the WRC complained, “and now we can hardly get a woman into the home; they don’t want the

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<sup>123</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 103, 114, 110.

<sup>124</sup> “Seventh Biennial Report of the Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, Mo.,” 12.

<sup>125</sup> “Third Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers, Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James, Mo.,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 42nd General Assembly, Appendix, 1903, 8, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

widows because the national government pays \$100 per year for the support of each veteran in the home.”<sup>126</sup> The WRC became convinced this extra financial incentive only served to privilege the applications of men over women. Their ultimate fear was realized in 1910, when the Federal Home refused to accept any more applications from widows. In fact, they claimed, the home never technically had the authority to do so. While the board promised “those widows now in the home will not be turned out,” they insisted “no more will be accepted.”<sup>127</sup>

The disenfranchisement of women persisted throughout the life of the Federal Home. In part, the higher proportion of male to female residents—less than two to one—made this a practical necessity.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, due to limitations on space, the Federal Home could not provide dedicated hospital or dormitory room for women. The board also defended itself by insisting women abused the benefits of the home. They claimed women often married elderly veterans just to qualify for admission. In one case, after obtaining permission for a short visit to St. Louis, an eighty-year-old resident married a woman twenty years his junior. Shortly thereafter, he passed away and “his ‘widow’ applied promptly for membership in the Home.”<sup>129</sup> Wary of the “machinations” of such “a designing woman,” the board revised the rules, now requiring a couple to be married six years before they could apply for admission together.<sup>130</sup> “No one is likely to question the right of any sound man to become a husband,” they conceded—“if he finds that to be in his interest. Very few will have the hardihood to maintain that a man . . .

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<sup>126</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 107.

<sup>127</sup> *Scott County Kicker*, “Why Widows are Excluded,” August 27, 1910. In 1903, widows were admitted; in 1910 they were prohibited, but in 1923 they were welcomed back. That policy stayed in place at least until 1945.

<sup>128</sup> At the Confederate Home, the ratio of men to women was more five to one. See “Confederate Soldiers Home,” in “Report of the Committee Appointed by Governor Elliott W. Major to Visit the State Institutions of Missouri,” 48th General Assembly, 1915, 40, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>129</sup> S. D. Webster, “President’s Report,” in “Fourteenth Biennial Report of State Federal Soldiers’ Home,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 53rd General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1925, 6, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>130</sup> Webster, “President’s Report,” 6.

has either a moral or a legal right, by entering the bonds of matrimony, . . . to confer upon her an eligibility to membership in such an institution.”<sup>131</sup>

Change came fast following the state’s assumption of the homes and Missouri’s Civil War generation felt their control slipping away. The Federal Home felt the effects of new management acutely as the state not only curtailed the influence of the WRC, but also expanded admission to include Spanish-American War veterans, and, eventually, their wives and widows. Despite the diminishing presence of veterans in the management of the homes, Missouri’s memorial organizations worked even more feverishly to preserve the legacy of the Civil War at the veterans’ homes. By hosting reunions on the grounds, maintaining cemeteries, and erecting monuments, they anchored the veterans’ homes to Missouri’s Civil War memory.

The WRC in particular refused to abandon their charges at the Federal Home, despite their exclusion from the board. “I wish to remind the Woman’s Relief Corps,” President Carrie R. Sparklin wrote, “that this Home is of their creation, and while it has been turned over to the state . . . our responsibility by no means is ended.” “It is true,” another member acknowledged, “that the wants of the living should be looked after. . . . Yet, we should not stop there, but should by every means in our power perpetuate their patriotic sacrifices. We not only live in the present, but should so live and so work that our deeds may live on.”<sup>132</sup> To that end, the WRC organized special events on the grounds, including celebrations of Lincoln’s birthday, Memorial Day, and the Fourth of July and infused them with the mythology of the Cause Victorious.<sup>133</sup> On these occasions, they celebrated the preservation of the Union and reified the Union soldier as the guardian of America’s founding principles. During one Fourth of July celebration, for instance,

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<sup>131</sup> Webster, “President’s Report,” 6.

<sup>132</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers’ Home*, 93, 104.

<sup>133</sup> B. Falkenhaimer to Louis Benecke, February 18, 1911, Federal Soldiers’ Home—Benecke Correspondence, February-March 1911, Benecke Family Papers.

veterans heard speeches “on what the G.A.R. had accomplished for the veterans their wives [sic] and army nurses” and reflected on “the old war time both Continental and rebellion.”<sup>134</sup>

The WRC also devoted its attention to the Federal Home cemetery, which remained in their hands following the state transfer. Badly neglected, it apparently more closely resembled a cornfield than hallowed ground.<sup>135</sup> The WRC relished this kind of project. “Now, my sisters,” the WRC president proclaimed, “here is work for the Woman’s Relief Corps to do . . . to make the place where the men [rest] . . . beautiful with flowers and walks where . . . people will love to go, and the Union soldier and what he did will be brought to mind.”<sup>136</sup> To that end, the WRC manicured the cemetery lawn, paved paths through it, and erected a new fence around the



FIGURE 10: Federal Home cemetery, c. 1925. In Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*.

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<sup>134</sup> Henry Fairback to Louis Benecke, July 9, 1911, Federal Soldiers' Home—Benecke Correspondence, July 1911, Benecke Family Papers.

<sup>135</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*, 101.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

perimeter.<sup>137</sup> They also built a memorial fountain on the grounds.<sup>138</sup> Such efforts ensured the Federal Home remained a testament not just to Missouri's Cause Victorious, but also to the WRC. "The Soldiers' Home at St. James will ever be to your memory," WRC President Lucinda A. Scott proudly told her members, "a monument that you conceived, reared and constructed to the noblest type of manhood, the maimed and decrepit Union veteran."<sup>139</sup>

The UDC also maintained its commitment to caring for Missouri's Confederate veterans following the state transfer. The UDC continued to send the veterans reading material, snacks, tobacco, clothing, and linens, which they received with gratitude. "These donations are expressive of the spirit of fraternity which exists toward the inmates of the Home, and often cheer a sad heart," one staff member wrote.<sup>140</sup> Every year, the UDC prepared special holiday dinners for the veterans, brought them Christmas presents, and decorated their Christmas tree. The highlight of the year, however, was the annual Confederate reunion held on the grounds every fall. At one such reunion, in 1895, the *Kansas City Daily Journal* estimated as many as 8,000 people attended—including prominent local Confederates, who delivered "enthusiastic addresses on memories of the past." "The city was beautifully decorated. The stars and stripes floated from nearly every business house in the city."<sup>141</sup>

Like the WRC, the UDC also turned its attention towards caring for the dead. They raised \$5,000 for the beautification of the Confederate Home cemetery and for the construction of a

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<sup>137</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*, 104.

<sup>138</sup> "Sixteenth Biennial Report of the State Federal Soldiers' Home," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 55th General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1929, 11, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>139</sup> Armstrong, *History of the State Federal Soldiers' Home*, 79.

<sup>140</sup> "Third Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers, Federal Soldiers' Home, St. James, Mo," 8.

<sup>141</sup> *Kansas City Daily Journal*, "Ex-Confederate Reunion," August 22, 1895.



FIGURE 11: Monument to Confederate dead, 1906. In *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIV, No. 7 (July 1906), 293.

monument in honor of their fallen heroes.<sup>142</sup> They hired Kansas City sculptor M. H. Rice to design the monument, who drew his inspiration for the work from the famous Swiss monument, the Lion of Lucerne. According to the *Confederate Veteran*, “Mr. Rice rightly conceived that if a lion wounded unto death well represented the brave Swiss who fell defending a foreign place, better would it represent the deathless courage of the Confederates.” As many as 5,000 people attended the dedication of the monument on June 2, 1906. One resident said of it simply: “We ought to be proud of it. It is good enough for anybody.”<sup>143</sup>

As time wore on, however, the Confederates struggled to retain a presence on their board of managers. During the 1920s, the Republican Party came to power in the state, causing the Confederates to be especially wary of government oversight. In that period, some believe

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<sup>142</sup> J. W. Halliburton, “Missouri Daughters to Build Monument,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIV, No. 4 (April 1906), 179.

<sup>143</sup> T. R. Carr, “Confederate Monument, Higginsville, MO.,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XIV, No. 7 (July 1906), 294.

“disinterested representatives” in the Republican administration “stinted” and “neglected” the Confederate Home.<sup>144</sup> They also accused the state government of appointing board members who were less than “honest to God ex-Confederates.”<sup>145</sup>

In 1921, their fears became realized when Governor Arthur Mastick Hyde proposed consolidating both veterans’ homes under the direction of a single board. Hyde’s advisors cautioned him about the sensitivity of this issue: “We cannot afford to make a mistake about this Home. It is a delicate question for Republicans to handle and we should proceed carefully with changes.”<sup>146</sup> “I realize,” Hyde conceded, “that there are certain sentimental attachments applying to the Confederate and Federal Homes, which do not apply to other Institutions in the state;” but he urged Missourians to “realize that the class of those qualified under the present statutes to be Trustees of these Homes is rapidly narrowing and . . . there will be few, who can . . . act on these boards.”<sup>147</sup> Missouri’s Ex-Confederates refused to hand over their last vestige of control of the Confederate Home, however. They continued to insist that only known Confederates, preferably members of the Confederate Home Association, could serve on the board. “The Board of Managers of these two institutions should be made up of men who had served with them as

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<sup>144</sup> “General Suggestions: Confederate Home, Higginsville,” in “Report of the Committee Appointed to Visit the State Institutions,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 51st General Assembly, 1921, 38; F. H. Chambers, “Superintendent’s Report,” December 1, 1922, in “Thirteenth Biennial Report of Confederate Soldiers Home of Missouri,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 52nd General Assembly, Appendix, 1921-1922, 16-19, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>145</sup> “Eighth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees and Officers of the Federal Soldiers’ Home, St. James,” 10; Howard Gray to Arthur Mastick Hyde, May 27, 1921, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1920-May 1921, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

<sup>146</sup> Howard Gray to Arthur Mastick Hyde, May 27, 1921, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1920-May 1921, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

<sup>147</sup> Arthur Mastick Hyde to Hon. M. E. Benton, March 2, 1921, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1920-May 1921, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

soldiers,” they insisted, “on the theory that they would better understand than men who had not been soldiers in either army.”<sup>148</sup>

The Confederate Home board also mobilized on behalf of Confederate pensions. It was a long-standing fight, one that reached back to the conclusion of the war. While elderly and disabled United States veterans were eligible for a federal pension, Southern states paid pensions for former Confederate soldiers out of their own treasuries. Missouri never paid a regular pension to its Confederate veterans, however, much to the disappointment of Missouri’s ex-Confederates. “Practically every Southern state except Kentucky and Missouri now give pensions to needy Confederate veterans,” Secretary H. A. Newman complained. “Missouri has provided a home for them, but there are some of the veterans who do not want to go there and they could be supported as cheaply at their own homes.”<sup>149</sup> It was not until 1913 that Missouri’s Confederate veterans finally received a pension, but it proved to be a fiasco. Any “honorably discharged” and “deserving” veterans who had served six months in the Confederate army or State Guard, resided in Missouri for at least two years, and who suffered a disability were eligible to apply—residents of the Confederate Home were not. They were to be paid \$10 a month and the assembly appropriated \$30,000 for that purpose.<sup>150</sup> That appropriation was a dramatic under-estimate, however; nearly \$200,000 more had to be appropriated from the next budget. Governor Elliot Major explained the mistake: “It is evident that the Legislature was under the impression that there were only one hundred and twenty-five (125) indigent Confederate Soldiers in the state. The Legislature, no doubt, intended for this pension to apply

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<sup>148</sup> M. E. Benton to Governor A. M. Hyde, March 1, 1921, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1920-May 1921, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

<sup>149</sup> *Iron County Register*, October 24, 1907.

<sup>150</sup> “Appropriation: Pension Ex-Confederate Soldiers,” [C.S.H.B. 465], *Laws of Missouri*, 47th General Assembly, 1913 (Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company), 88-90, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.



only to Confederates who had enlisted from Missouri; but, unfortunately, this stipulation was omitted from the bill, and . . . Confederates residing in the State, but who may have enlisted from other states, are receiving this pension. This has grown year by year until it has become a great drain on the state treasury.”<sup>151</sup> The legislature approved an appropriation including \$200,000 for back payments and an additional \$240,000 for paying pensions in the 1917-1918 biennial period, but the governor vetoed the pension. The Confederate veterans revived the pension debate in 1923-1924, but the governor quickly dismissed it. “This subject has been a vexatious one for every governor since the law was enacted,” he complained; adding that the pension had only ever “been passed grudgingly.”<sup>152</sup> It was paid briefly in 1927-1928 and again in 1929-1930, but never again.

The Confederates found the government more receptive to their plan to create a new Confederate memorial park. As the Confederate Home aged and enrollment declined, the institution threatened to fall into disuse and neglect. As a result, the Confederate Home board and the UDC proposed turning a portion of the grounds into a memorial park. It was a unique idea, especially fitting because it would commemorate Confederate soldiers and on “lands which for years have been devoted to the care of Confederate Soldiers.”<sup>153</sup> In effect, it would be a memorial to the Confederate Home as well. It was another first for an already unique place, as Superintendent F. H. Chambers proudly reflected: “Missouri was the only state in the Union which furnished its full quota to both the Union and Confederate armies, and that by the establishment of this park she is the first of all the states to attempt any such pretentious

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<sup>151</sup> “Items Vetoed in Approved Bills,” sec. 78, *Laws of Missouri*, 49th General Assembly, 1917 (Jefferson City: The Hugh Stephens Printing Company, n.d.), 590, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>152</sup> “Memoranda,” sec. 109, *Laws of Missouri*, 52nd General Assembly, 1923 (n.p., 1923), 399, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>153</sup> “Board of Trustees of Confederate Home,” in *Higginsville Advance*, November 21, 1924, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1924-1925, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

recognition of the Confederate soldier's valor. . . . To Missouri belongs the distinction of maintaining the best Confederate Home in this re-united country."<sup>154</sup>

The 53rd General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution converting ninety-two acres of the grounds into a memorial park for Confederate veterans.<sup>155</sup> The UDC believed "a more beautiful location, with rolling knobs, shining lakes, winding drives, trees, shrubs, and flowers could never have been selected for a park."<sup>156</sup> Not content with the natural beauty of the grounds, however, the UDC planted thousands of shrubberies and native trees and dug at least six new lakes which they stocked with fish. They imagined it as a place Missourians would come for generations, both to enjoy the outdoors and pay tribute to the Lost Cause—a kind of "historical playground."<sup>157</sup> "The park will be a constant drawing card to those lovers of nature in the great out door [*sic*] life," they explained, "who by their very coming to the park itself, throughout the ages to come, will be reminded of the valor which was unquestionably exhibited during the years of 1861 to 1865."<sup>158</sup> "We feel that as time goes on and this beautiful landscaped park, with its circling drives and shaded lanes, comes to its full maturity," they continued, "it will express increasingly our love for these veterans and our reverence for the memory of those who have gone."<sup>159</sup> The more time passed, the more imperative that mission became. During the dedication of a stone gateway to the park, one visitor remembered, "as the crimson Missouri sun sank into the purple hills, and the first cool shades of night began to stretch along the ground, the

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<sup>154</sup> "Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Confederate Soldiers' Home of Missouri," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 54th General Assembly, Vol. II, Appendix, 1927, 11, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>155</sup> "Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Confederate Soldiers' Home of Missouri," 11.

<sup>156</sup> Hunt, "The Confederate Home of Missouri," 301.

<sup>157</sup> "Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Confederate Soldiers' Home of Missouri," 11.

<sup>158</sup> "Board of Trustees of Confederate Home," in *Higginsville Advance*, November 21, 1924, Confederate Soldiers Home, Higginsville, 1924-1925, Gubernatorial Series, Arthur Mastick Hyde Papers.

<sup>159</sup> Hunt, "The Confederate Home of Missouri," 301.



FIGURE 12: Surviving veterans, wives, and widows at the Federal Home, c. 1929. In “Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Federal Soldier’s Home.”

Missourians sang ‘Dixie’ with all the fervor of their souls.”<sup>160</sup> In effect, it was the requiem of the Confederate Home.

The hey-day of Missouri’s veterans’ homes was nearing its end. “In a few years,” the *University Missourian* lamented, “homes for Civil War veterans will be uninhabited. . . . Soon the stories of famous battles of the sixties’ will be but memories and will be superseded by wild tales of the Argonne and the Marne.”<sup>161</sup> That prediction was surprisingly accurate. At the Federal Home, Civil War veterans fell into the minority by 1929 and finally, in 1944, the last Union veteran passed away. Meanwhile, more and more Confederates died every year and few remained to take their place. In the fall of 1940, with only four surviving male residents, the

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<sup>160</sup> “Missouri Confederates in Reunion,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XXXVII, No. 11 (November 1931), 409.

<sup>161</sup> *University Missourian*, “Old Soldiers Contented in State Homes,” August 6, 1924.

Confederate Home converted some of its space for use as a hospital for disabled children.<sup>162</sup>

Continual budget and staff cuts, however, led to deteriorating conditions. Veterans complained falling plaster in the dormitories struck them in their beds and eventually the board voted to shutter the main building and administration building entirely.<sup>163</sup>

In 1945, the General Assembly passed a bill to transfer the Confederate Home property to the federal government for the purpose of creating a United States Veterans' Facility.<sup>164</sup> The prospect met with support from some of Missouri's veterans, including President Harry Truman. One veteran wrote: "I firmly believe governor if Grove Young the public spirited citizen who gave this land for this home were living he would want the war veterans to have it, and after all vetoed the proposed legislation, saying it would be a breach of the state's promise to maintain the Confederate Memorial Park."<sup>165</sup> Donnelly believed the Confederate Home property would be better served to provide care for the overflow of inmates from the state hospitals. The UCV wrote Donnelly, expressing their gratitude: "In so doing, not only do you maintain the contractual obligation of the State of Missouri but also preserve a landmark significant of high human value."<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> "History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, Missouri," 2-3, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records; "Reports and Minutes," September 28, 1940, 1-2, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records; *The Columbia Missourian*, May 9, 1950.

<sup>163</sup> "Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Confederate Soldiers' Home of Missouri," 10; "Report of Confederate Home," *Journal of the House and Senate*, 63rd General Assembly, Vol. I, Appendix, 1945, 13, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>164</sup> "Senate Bill No. 113," 63rd General Assembly, Legislative Correspondence, Phil M. Donnelly (1891-1961), Papers, 1944-1957 (C2151), *The State Historic Society of Missouri Manuscript Collection*, Columbia.

<sup>165</sup> J. E. Taylor to Governor Donnelly, "Memorandum," July 28, 1945, Legislative Correspondence, Phil M. Donnelly Papers.

<sup>166</sup> W. Scott Hancock to Phi M. Donnelly, August 3, 1945, Legislative Correspondence, Phil M. Donnelly Papers.

Finally, the board disbanded and turned the management of the Confederate Home over to the Board of Managers of the State Eleemosynary Institutions.<sup>167</sup> The State of Missouri then made plans to convert a portion of the property into a permanent state park. They chose to preserve “one suitable building closely associated with the care of the Confederate veterans and their survivors as a memorial building, in addition to the Memorial Park, . . . and to select and purchase a suitable commemorative stone to be erected upon the grounds of the Memorial Park, which . . . shall stand as a perpetual memorial to the valor of those who served the Confederacy in the war between the States.”<sup>168</sup> Only a few years later, in 1950, the last Confederate veteran passed away and the state transferred the surviving widows to nearby nursing homes.<sup>169</sup>

Though born of competing impulses, Missouri’s homes for Confederate and Union veterans shared many similarities. First and foremost, both owed their existence to the instrumental contributions of Missouri women in not only creating, but sustaining them. At their most basic level, they served as nursing homes governed through sentimental devotion and strict discipline—illustrating the tension between administrative efficiency and nurturing care. The residents of both homes struggled with old age, alcoholism, and the physical and mental scars of war.<sup>170</sup> More than merely refuges for needy veterans, however, Missouri’s veterans’ homes were important sites of Civil War memory. Missourians looked upon them as a source of pride: “Our old veterans of both the ‘blue and the gray’ are cherished by the people of our State, and they

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<sup>167</sup> “Report of Confederate Home,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 63rd General Assembly, Vol. I, Appendix, 1945, 9, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>168</sup> “Soldiers’ Homes,” [S. B. 178], Section 15131, *Laws of Missouri*, 62nd General Assembly, 1943 (n.p., 1943), 954-5, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>169</sup> “History of the Confederate Home of Higginsville, Missouri,” 1-2, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, History and Cemetery Records; “Reports and Minutes,” September 28, 1940, Missouri, Confederate Home, Higginsville, Records; *The Columbia Missourian*, May 9, 1950.

<sup>170</sup> Rosenberg, *Living Monuments*, 4.

take delight in seeing them kindly cared for.”<sup>171</sup> As a result, they remain an important reminder of Missouri’s attempts to facilitate recovery from its divisive and brutal Civil War.

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<sup>171</sup> “Second Biennial Report of the State Board of Charities and Corrections,” *Journal of the House and Senate*, 40th General Assembly, Appendix, 1901, 48, General Assembly, State Documents, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

## CONCLUSION

### You Say “Missour-uh,” I Say “Missour-ee”: Missouri’s Conflicted Relationship to the Civil War

“A stranger would never know, from what he sees and hears, that this county was torn by internal strife and made uninhabitable by the fierce passions of neighbors, kindred, and friends during the bloodiest war ever waged.”<sup>1</sup>  
-*Confederate Veteran* (1903)

Missouri’s Civil War experience was defined by its Westernness, as was its memory of the conflict. Although a slaveholding state, Missourians were vastly different from their forebears in the plantation South. Missourians encouraged an influx of industrious individuals of all backgrounds into their state and soon emerged as the “Gateway to the West,” the haven of immigrants drawn by the lure of wealth and opportunity in the West. Missouri’s politics and culture reflected this blending of different peoples and they took pride in the fact that, especially considering their contentious admission into the United States, their state bridged sectional divides. They viewed their central position between the North and South as an opportunity to facilitate compromise and mutual prosperity.

During the Civil War, however, Missourians’ professions of neutrality disintegrated into factionalism. Divided as they were over the issue of slavery, Missourians nevertheless repudiated secession and remained loyal to the Union. Because Missouri was a slaveholding state however, many in the federal government and the Union army regarded Missouri’s loyalty with suspicion. Their concerns were not unfounded, especially as the prevalence of guerrilla warfare required them to implement repressive measures to control this disloyal element of the population.

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<sup>1</sup> “Warrensburg, MO,” *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XL, No. 3 (March 1903), 132-133.

This put Missouri Unionists, like George Caleb Bingham, in a complicated position. By speaking out in defense of the civil liberties of the ostensibly loyal population of Missouri, particularly through his painting *Order No. 11*, Bingham was castigated as a Confederate apologist. In truth, he was anything but. Accustomed as he was to the unique dynamic of life in the West, Bingham understood that being a slaveholder did not make one a Confederate and that resisting abuses of federal power did not mean one loved the Union any less. These distinctions, however, were lost on outsiders. These same misunderstandings have clouded Bingham's reputation ever since.

Bingham was not alone in feeling that his perspective on the Civil War and on the nature of loyalty was misunderstood. As Missourians struggled to overcome their own racial and political differences in the aftermath of the Civil War, they also sought to have their experiences recognized by their Eastern comrades. Veterans' organizations, specifically the UCV and the GAR, dedicated themselves to this mission. Increasingly, however, these Missourians discovered that they had a distinct perspective on the Civil War—one that actually provided a sense of commonality between former enemies based on their shared exclusion as Westerners. As a result, despite their differences, both Unionist and Confederate Missourians worked together to compromise for the prestige of their state and to earn legitimacy for their contributions to the war as a whole.

Their greatest accomplishment was the creation of Missouri's Confederate and Federal soldiers' homes. Although they originated from competing narratives of Civil War commemoration, they served similar purposes. Both homes served as sites of memory—testaments to Missouri's wartime sacrifices, sacrifices quite literally embodied by the disabled, impoverished, and elderly veterans who resided there. Quietly, but diligently, Missourians



invested in equitable care for these individuals, rather than erecting expensive and potentially contentious monuments. Thus, Civil War memory in Missouri was couched in practicality and in an effort not to antagonize neighbors.

After the passing of the Civil War generation, an uneasy silence pervaded Missouri regarding the Civil War. Any hostilities that still lingered simmered below the surface, only becoming evident in sporadic debates over Civil War symbolism, particularly the Confederate battle flag. Otherwise, Missourians largely distanced themselves from Civil War commemoration. Despite the bloody, ferocious, and all-consuming experience of the Civil War in their state, Missourians' sense of their identity was, as it always had been, far more rooted in their contributions to westward expansion. "A stranger would never know," one contributor to the *Confederate Veteran* observed, "from what he sees and hears, that this county was torn by internal strife and made uninhabitable by the fierce passions of neighbors, kindred, and friends during the bloodiest war ever waged."<sup>2</sup>

Missouri remained divorced from the national project of commemoration at the Civil War centennial. In 1958, the state created the Civil War Centennial Commission of Missouri for the purpose of recognizing an important part of the state's history and, as Governor John T. Blair Jr., put it, fostering "a new understanding of the importance of the preservation of the American Union as an instrumentality of freedom."<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, however, Missourians invested very little in the centennial. The state only appropriated \$10,000 for the first two years, a miniscule amount compared to other states. Neighboring Arkansas, for example, budgeted twice that amount while Virginia allocated \$1,387,000.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> "Warrensburg, MO," *Confederate Veteran* Vol. XL, No. 3 (March 1903), 132-133.

<sup>3</sup> Proclamation of Governor John T. Blair, Jr., July 2, 1958, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

<sup>4</sup> Joseph Jaeger, Jr. to James Fuchs, April 10, 1959, Correspondence, Jan-Dec 1959, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City; John Alexander, "Lofty Motive for Civil

Civil War Centennial Commissioner James R. Fuchs complained of a lack of publicity surrounding the centennial project and expressed his intention to attract more attention to it, but admitted his work was likely “doomed to failure.”<sup>5</sup> This was the age-old problem. In order to avoid offending the sensibilities of Missourians of either side, it was sometimes easiest to remain silent. Whether it was a consequence of this vexed silence or simply a lack of interest, the centennial commission was hampered in its plans, as evident in this excerpt from Fuch’s schedule of “Commemorative Events for the First Civil War Centennial Year in the State of Missouri”:

- 1) May 10, 1961 – Capture of Camp Jackson, St. Louis—ceremony dedicating marker (now because of a controversy involving site this event may not be held[.]). . . .
- 2) May 18, 1961 – Battle of Lexington re-enactment. . . .
- 3) July 5, 1961 – dedication of memorial to Union Gen. Sigel and Confederate governor Claiborne F. Jackson—this event, which requires the raising of some \$23,000 may not reach fruition?? . . .
- 4) Aug. 10, 1961 – Ceremony dedicating Wilson’s Creek Battlefield National Park—if money for land not forthcoming, park may not actually be a reality by then. . . .
- 5) Oct. 21, 1961 – Meeting of rump session of Mo. Legislature—passing of Act of Secession on Oct. 28— . . . appropriate ceremony no doubt will be held—plans haven’t jelled yet.<sup>6</sup>

The Commission was evidently making an effort to bridge Missouri’s internal divisions. Perhaps because of the difficulty of such a proposition, the commission focused primarily on collecting

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War Buffs,” *Kansas City Star*, May 8, 1960, Newspaper Clippings File, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

<sup>5</sup> Fuchs to Jaeger, October 7, 1960, Correspondence, Feb-Nov 1960, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

<sup>6</sup> Fuchs, “Commemorative Events for the First Civil War Centennial Year in the State of Missouri,” November 17, 1960, Correspondence, Feb-Nov 1960, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

and preserving archival material. “This,” Fuchs believed, “will result in a very lasting effect of the commemorative effort that we expect to put forth.”<sup>7</sup>

Despite their challenges, the Civil War Centennial Commission of Missouri did accomplish some things. They helped dedicate a museum for the Lone Jack battlefield near Kansas City. They also held observances of the Battles of Lexington, Carthage, and Pilot Knob, the Lawrence Massacre, and General Order No. 11. Their most important objective, however, was to have the Wilson’s Creek battlefield recognized as a National Military Park. This would be the fulfillment of an ambition long cherished by Missourians and would lend a stamp of legitimacy both to Missouri and to the Western theater as a whole. Nevertheless, there were no Civil War National Military Parks west of the Mississippi, until the creation of Pea Ridge National Military Park in northwest Arkansas in 1956. Even still, one park official warned the commission not to be overly hopeful about the prospect of establishing a national park in Missouri.

You probably know that because of the Service’s feeling that its present holdings are top-heavy with Civil War areas, it has responded negatively in recent years to proposals to bring Wilson’s Creek . . . into the System. . . . My own view is that your best chance of getting Wilson’s Creek included in the National Park System . . . is the one you have suggested—authorizing legislation by Congress, including acceptance of lands to be donated to the Federal Government. This approach, I believe, would be wiser than one that should leave it up to the Federal Government to purchase the land, especially at this time.<sup>8</sup>

Following this advice, the Missouri General Assembly “appropriated \$351,800 for the purpose” and the citizens of Springfield donated nearly forty acres of battlefield land, including Bloody

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<sup>7</sup> Fuchs to Dr. Bert Maybee, November 6, 1958, Correspondence Jun-Dec 1958, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

<sup>8</sup> Edmund G. Gass to Maybee, undated, Correspondence, Jan-Dec 1959, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

Hill—the site where revered Union General Nathaniel Lyon fell.<sup>9</sup> President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the legislation creating the park on April 26, 1960, ending, as commissioner John K. Hulston observed, “75 years of almost continuous effort to gain proper recognition by Congress of one of the significant battles of the War.”<sup>10</sup> It was the kind of recognition veterans of the Western theater and Missourians in particular had sought for so long. Roughly 50,000-60,000 people attended a parade commemorating the anniversary of the battle in nearby Springfield the morning of its dedication on August 11, 1961, while 3,000 attended the ceremonies at the park itself.<sup>11</sup>

The Civil War, however, was not the only thing on Missourians minds during the centennial. It is telling that while the centennial dominated the attention of the rest of the nation, Missourians devoted their energy and money to the construction of the Gateway Arch in St. Louis. As the focal point of the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, which encompasses the historic French settlement at St. Louis, the arch commemorates the Louisiana Purchase and St. Louis’ role as the “Gateway to the West.” While the creation of the memorial was not a centennial project, having been conceived in the early 1930s as a part of plan for the revitalization of the St. Louis riverfront, the arch itself was constructed between 1963 and 1965. At this, one of the most important anniversaries in American history, Missourians did not exclusively reexamine their Civil War history, but rather continued to focus on their state’s key place in the narrative of westward expansion.

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<sup>9</sup> “Throng for Wilson Creek Event,” August 11, 1961, Newspaper Clippings Files, Centennial Events in Missouri, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

<sup>10</sup> John K. Hulston to Fuchs, November 9, 1960, Correspondence, Feb-Nov 1960, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

<sup>11</sup> “Throng for Wilson Creek Event,” August 11, 1961, Newspaper Clippings Files, Centennial Events in Missouri, Record Group 403: Civil War Centennial of Missouri.

On November 10, 1996, the Federal Soldiers' Home, now the Missouri Veterans' Home, celebrated its centennial, though local newspapers largely ignored the occasion and its connection the Civil War went entirely unmentioned. As the Federal Home admitted veterans from other wars, its significance as a monument to Missouri's Civil War experience faded with time. It became, instead, a testament to the restoration and continued defense of the Union. Missouri's Confederate Home, on the other hand, "remained forever Confederate"—inextricably linked to the Civil War.<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the Confederate Home still represents an uncomfortable reminder for some Missourians of their state's Southern sympathies. Now known as Confederate Memorial State Historic Site, the Home serves as the focus of debates over the appropriate use of Confederate symbols in Missouri. As recently as 2003, the park garnered national attention in a controversy which forced the removal of a Confederate flag that flew on the grounds. At that time, Representative Richard A. Gephardt, looking for the Democratic nomination in the 2004 presidential race, weighed in on the long-standing controversy surrounding the display of the Confederate flag on the state house grounds in South Carolina.<sup>13</sup> "My own personal feeling," Gephardt said, "is that the Confederate flag no longer has a place flying any time, anywhere in our great nation."<sup>14</sup> Gephardt was unaware that the Confederate flag flew at two historic sites in his home state of Missouri, at the Confederate Home and at Fort Davidson Historic Site in Pilot Knob. After this fact was brought to public attention, a prominent Missouri Democrat contacted

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<sup>12</sup> Rosenburg, *Living Monuments*, 5.

<sup>13</sup> See John M. Coski, *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2005).

<sup>14</sup> "Missouri Removes Rebel Flag at Historic Sites," *New York Times*, January 16, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/16/us/missouri-removes-rebel-flag-at-historic-sites.html> (accessed May 21, 2015).

the director of the Department of Natural Resources and suggested the flags should be removed. With the endorsement of Governor Bob Holden, the historic sites complied.<sup>15</sup>

Predictably, Southern heritage organizations like the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) regarded this move as “political correctness” gone awry. They insisted the use of the Confederate flag at these two state parks was in keeping with its proper historical context. In protest, they held a demonstration before the governor’s mansion in Jefferson City and placed small Confederate flags on each individual grave in the cemetery at Confederate Memorial Historic Site. Governor Matt Blunt yielded some ground in 2005, allowing the Confederate flag to be flown on Confederate Memorial Day, but the SCV continues to press lawmakers to allow the flag to return permanently.<sup>16</sup>

In all, the flag controversy spoke to the prevailing confusion Missourians continued to feel about their relationship to the Civil War. Many Missourians, like Gephardt, were surprised to learn the Confederate flag flew anywhere in the state. Others, as many as 45% according to one poll, believed Holden made the wrong decision in removing the flags.<sup>17</sup> The press expressed some confusion over the situation as well. When the *Los Angeles Times* reported on the controversy, almost as an afterthought, they added: “Missouri was a slave state under the 1821 [*sic*] Missouri Compromise, but it did not join the Civil War confederacy.”<sup>18</sup> Clearly, Missouri’s vexed and conflicted place within the narrative of the Civil War and its memory continued to confound not only outsiders, but also Missourians themselves.

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<sup>15</sup> “Missouri Officials Take Down Confederate Flags After Gephardt Complaint,” January 14, 2003, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/2003/01/14/missouri-officials-take-down-confederate-flags-after-gephardt-complaint.html> (accessed May 21, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> “Group seeks to fly Confederate flag at Higginsville cemetery,” KMBC (Kansas City), May 12, 2014, <http://www.kmbc.com/news/group-seeks-to-fly-confederate-flag-at-higginsville-cemetery/25935578> (accessed May 21, 2015).

<sup>17</sup> “Missourians Back Confederate Flag, Poll Finds,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, February 7, 2003.

<sup>18</sup> “Confederate Flags Return to Graveyard,” *The Los Angeles Times*, June 2, 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jun/02/nation/na-flag2> (accessed May 21, 2015).

In 2014, Missouri became the epicenter of a much more serious national controversy over racism and police brutality that again revealed the complicated internal dynamics of the state. When police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown, an unarmed African American teenager in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, the response was immediate. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People organized a protest march, called the Journey for Justice, from St. Louis to Jefferson City. There, they planned to press state leadership for measures against institutionalized racism and for recognition that “black lives matter.” Along their march, in the tiny mid-Missouri township of Rosebud, the protesters met with a jeering, all-white crowd, who left a carton of fried chicken and a watermelon in the street, and waved a Confederate flag from the roadside in an effort to mock and intimidate them.

Perhaps in hope of facilitating some form of healing for his city in the wake of so much discord, Mayor Francis Slay asked St. Louisians to consider removing a Confederate monument erected by the UDC in the city’s famous Forest Park, site of the 1904 World’s Fair. The monument had always been controversial and Slay asked “whether, with the benefit of a longer view of history, the monument is appropriately situated in Forest Park—the place where the world was asked to meet and experience St. Louis at its best and most sublime—or whether it should be relocated to a more appropriate setting.”<sup>19</sup> For Slay, Confederate symbolism did not represent the state as he knew it. One of the monument’s defenders wrote the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, however, asking its readers to remember that “Confederate lives matter, too.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> “Should Confederate memorial be removed from Forest Park?” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, April 22, 2015, [http://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/columns/joe-holleman/should-confederate-memorial-be-removed-from-forest-park/article\\_ba334819-f41c-53c3-854f-614bbcaa0d8c.html](http://www.stltoday.com/lifestyles/columns/joe-holleman/should-confederate-memorial-be-removed-from-forest-park/article_ba334819-f41c-53c3-854f-614bbcaa0d8c.html) (accessed May 21, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Deal, “Confederate lives matter, too,” *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, May 16, 2015, [http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/mailbag/confederate-lives-matter-too/article\\_45549244-5977-5943-8ae3-85d0e1b930eb.html](http://www.stltoday.com/news/opinion/mailbag/confederate-lives-matter-too/article_45549244-5977-5943-8ae3-85d0e1b930eb.html) (accessed May 21, 2015).

The tragedy of Brown's death, compounded by months of civil unrest, and the controversies inspired by Confederate symbolism attracted the attention of the national news media. One article, complete with a blood-spattered graphic of a Confederate flag shaped like the state of Missouri, reminded its readers Missouri was a former slave state and that St. Louis had a long and checkered history of segregation and racial violence.<sup>21</sup> *Aljazeera America* explicitly traced these current events to the state's turbulent Civil War history. "The rifts that plague [Ferguson] originate," it insisted, "from Missouri's long-standing identity crisis, still unresolved 150 years after the American Civil War." Missouri was two places at once, the piece concluded, evident even in the different ways Missourians pronounce the name of the state: "Missour-uh," a Southern state marked by persistent Confederate commemoration and racial tension, and "Missour-ee," a Northern state which celebrates the accomplishments of its African American citizens. In the news coverage, Missouri emerged as a deeply conflicted place, one where "every imaginable divide—urban/rural, black/white, rich/poor—can be found."<sup>22</sup>

Missouri has long been a place of conflict and contradictions. Even today, historian William Foley observes, "It is little wonder that confusion still exists concerning Missouri's proper identity. . . . Not clearly situated in any of the four national geographic sections, and yet a part of all, Missouri and its people personify American pluralism."<sup>23</sup> As a result, Missouri should not simply be tailored to fit our current, limited understanding of Civil War memory. As Anne Marshall rightly points out: "Civil War memory was not always geographically defined, . . . it was pluralistic and subject to myriad nuanced interpretations, and, most important, it was, and

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<sup>21</sup> Denise Oliver Velez, "'Show Me' Missouri racism," *Daily Kos*, August 17, 2014, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2014/08/17/1321204/--Show-Me-Missouri-racism> (accessed 26 March 2015).

<sup>22</sup> Ryan Schuessler, "In Missouri, flames of the Civil War and fires of Ferguson are linked," *Aljazeera America*, January 10, 2015, <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/1/10/in-missouri-the-flamesofcivilwarandthefiresoffergusonarelinked.html> (accessed 26 March 2015).

<sup>23</sup> Foley, *The Genesis of Missouri*, 300.



still is, greatly contested.”<sup>24</sup> This is the beauty of Civil War memory in Missouri, it reveals the intersection between region, politics, loyalty, culture, race, and memory, not in the context of the North or South, but in the West.

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<sup>24</sup> Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky*, 7.

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## VITA

### EDUCATION

MA, University of Mississippi in Oxford, Mississippi (2010)

*Thesis:* “The Atomic Bombings in American Memory and their Representation at the Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, 1957-2009, or How Museums Learned to Stop Interpreting and Love the Bomb”

*Advisor:* Dr. Sue Grayzel

*Committee:* Dr. John R. Neff and Dr. Chiarella Esposito

BA, *summa cum laude*, Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri (2008)

*Senior Thesis:* “Missouri’s ‘Statesman-Artist’: The Changing Political Values of George Caleb Bingham, 1811-1879”

*Advisor:* Dr. Richard L. Lael

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Graduate Instructor, History Department, University of Mississippi (2013-2015)

*Courses Taught:* History of the U.S. to 1877; History of the U.S. since 1877; History of the Civil War Era, 1850-1877

Graduate Teaching Assistant, History Department, University of Mississippi (2008-2012)

*Courses:* History of Europe to 1648; History of the U.S. to 1877; History of the U.S. since 1877; The Second World War: The History of a Global Conflict

Tutor, History Department, University of Mississippi (2009)

### SCHOLARSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

- ◆ Dissertation Fellowship, University of Mississippi (2013)
- ◆ McMinn Fellowship, University of Mississippi Center for Civil War Research (2012)
- ◆ Research Grant, Harry S. Truman Library and Museum (2010)
- ◆ Graduate Research Award, University of Mississippi (2010)
- ◆ Graduate Teaching Assistantship, University of Mississippi History Department (2009)
- ◆ Honors Fellowship, University of Mississippi History Department (2008-2010)
- ◆ Westminster College Trustee’s Award Scholarship (2004)
- ◆ Westminster College Dean’s List (2004-2008)

### RESEARCH AWARDS & MEMBERSHIPS

- ◆ Lynn and Kristen Morrow Missouri History Student Prize (2014)
- ◆ University of Mississippi Graduate Achievement Award in History (2013)
- ◆ William Winter Scholar (2013)

- ◆ University of Mississippi Tennin-Alexander Prize for Outstanding Graduate Research Paper (2010)
- ◆ Westminster College Remmel Prize for Outstanding History Senior Thesis (2008)
- ◆ Best Undergraduate Paper, Midwest Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference (2007 and 2008)
- ◆ Alpha Chi Alfred H. Nolle Scholarship (2008)
- ◆ Phi Alpha Theta A. F. Zimmerman Scholarship (2008)
- ◆ Member of the American Historical Association, Organization of American Historians, Society of Civil War Historians, Phi Alpha Theta, and The State Historical Society of Missouri

#### PUBLICATIONS

- ◆ *World of the Civil War: A Daily Life Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO, 2014, entries on “civilian death” and “photography”
- ◆ Review of *Bleeding Kansas, Bleeding Missouri: The Long Civil War on the Border*, by Jonathan Earle and Diane Mutti Burke, eds. H-CivWar, H-Net Reviews. December, 2014.
- ◆ Review of *A Field Guide to Gettysburg: Experiencing the Battlefield through Its History, Places, and People*, by Carol Reardon and Tom Vossler. *North Carolina Historical Review*, April 2014.
- ◆ Review of *Guerrilla Hunters in Civil War Missouri*, by James W. Erwin. *Civil War Monitor*, 14 August 2013, <http://civilwarmonitor.com/book-shelf/erwin-guerrilla-hunters-in-civil-war-missouri-2013>.
- ◆ Review of *The Battle of Carthage, Missouri: First Trans-Mississippi Conflict of the Civil War*, by Kenneth E. Burchett. H-CivWar, H-Net Reviews. July 2013.
- ◆ “‘The Grandest Charity in the Country’: The Missouri Home for Confederate Veterans.” *Civil War Monitor*, 29 April 2013, <http://civilwarmonitor.com/front-line/the-grandest-charity-in-the-country-the-missouri-home-for-confederate-veterans>.
- ◆ “Long Live Freedom: The White Rose, 1942-43,” *Alpha Chi Recorder* (April 2009).

#### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- ◆ “‘To Know What War Is’: Understanding ‘Total War’ through Civil War Photography” University of Mississippi Center for Civil War Research, Oxford, Mississippi (2014)
- ◆ “‘We Cannot Live on Memories’: Missouri’s Homes for Civil War Veterans, 1890-1950” Missouri Conference on History, Jefferson City, Missouri (2014)
- ◆ “How Museums Learned to Stop Interpreting and Love the Bomb” Aftermath: Conflicts and Consequences Conference, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia (2010)
- ◆ “Missouri’s ‘Statesman-Artist’: The Changing Political Values of George Caleb Bingham, 1811-1879” Westminster College Undergraduate Scholars Forum in Fulton, Missouri (2008)
- ◆ “Long Live Freedom: The White Rose, 1942-43” Midwest Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference, Parkville, Missouri (2008)
- ◆ “Portrait of a Painter: George Caleb Bingham’s Martial Law” Midwest Regional Phi Alpha Theta Conference, Parkville, Missouri (2007)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Research Assistantship, University of Mississippi Center for Civil War Research (2009-2012)

*Director:* Dr. John R. Neff

Conducted research on Civil War memory, including veteran reunions, the construction of monuments and cemeteries, and other forms of commemoration for the website. Used Dreamweaver software to develop and post web pages. Helped organize the annual Conference on the Civil War and the Burnham Lecture. Currently co-editing an ongoing research project on the creation of the Shiloh National Military Park.