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I, Matthew E. Stanley , hereby submit this original work as part of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History.

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"Between Two Fires": War and Reunion in Middle America, 1860-1899

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"Between Two Fires": War and Reunion in Middle America, 1860-1899

A dissertation submitted to the

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By

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Abstract

From its post-Revolutionary position as the First West to its current status as a political bellwether, the Ohio Valley has always been a liminal space in American history. This dissertation centers on the Civil War, Reconstruction, and sectional reconciliation in the Lower Middle West, with particular emphases on identity, memory, and race. Indeed, if the antebellum West acted as balance between North and South, then the Lower Middle West, a nominally free region dominated by conservative upland Southern political culture, represented a median with the median. The Lower Middle West—part of a vast border area stretching from southern Pennsylvania and northern Virginia along the Ohio River Valley and into Missouri and Kansas that I term 'Middle America'—was a political and cultural middle space typified by white conservative Unionism. Wartime conservative Unionists—those whites who supported compromise measures, desired only the political restoration of the Union, and who *persisted* rather than *embraced* emancipation—are central to understanding the dissent (Copperhead) movement, the Northern white backlash against liberalizing war measures, the Northern rejection of Congressional Reconstruction, the national movement toward sectional reconciliation among whites, and the legacies of white supremacy in the Middle West (labor violence, exclusion laws, sundown towns, lynching, the second incarnation of the KKK).

This conservative and Unionist wartime coalition had immense postwar political and commemorative ramifications as third vein of memory arose. Scholars have overlooked this "Loyal West" narrative, which was rooted in animus toward both Southern "traitors" and the Eastern "Yankees" and was based on the belief that Western

armies and leaders had won the war. The Loyal West was also a way to reconcile

antebellum regionalism with postwar sectionalism and balance the revolutionary aspects

of emancipation and the Union cause with the political and cultural conservatism of the

white Middle West. Focusing on the Lost Cause, the Union Cause, and the

Emancipationist Cause, historians have neglected this alternate Civil War narrative. In

short, an imagined West existed prior to the Civil War, Westerners fought their own war

(and divided over it), and that white Western veterans constructed their own memory

during the postwar period. The adoption of a new understanding of Western identity

during the war era—one synonymous with "loyalty"—set the stage for postwar political

and commemorative divisions in the Ohio Valley, influencing, eventually, how

Americans came to construct both the Midwest and a North-South duality, with the Ohio

River as its dividing line.

Acknowledgments

A historian's work is nothing if not dependent. As such, this dissertation is only half mine. The other half belongs to the effort and influence of others.

Chris Phillips deserves first mention. I thought I had a bearing on what an academic mentor should be, and then I met Chris. His professional and personal advice, careful editing, and willingness to continuously go above and beyond greatly enriched my graduate experience and made me a much better historian. He is a beau ideal mentor, and a friend. Many thanks also to Wayne Durrill, Willard Sunderland, Bill Freehling, and Jennifer Weber for rounding out an exemplary dissertation committee.

Thanks extend beyond my committee. The wonderful teaching of John Lynn, John Buckler, and Lorman Ratner at the University of Illinois first inspired me to take on graduate school. Tom Mackey, Glenn Crothers, and Wayne Lee taught my first seminars at the University of Louisville. Tom and Glenn have provided support and friendship ever since, and for that I am grateful. The faculty at Cincinnati has been equally exceptional, and David Stradling, Martin Francis, Geoff Plank, Mark Lause, and Tom Lorman have been particularly helpful. Hope Earls has been indispensible. I have also received generous time and wisdom from beyond the walls of my alma maters. John Neff, Anne Marshall, Stephen Ash, Bruce Levine, Louis Gerteis, Gary Gallagher, LeeAnn Whites, Michael Fellman, Pete Carmichael, Stanley Harrold, Mark Neely, and James McPherson helped me in conceptualizing this project. Their comments and emails have been more useful and rewarding than they could possibly know.

I've also benefited from wonderful academic friendships, beginning with Jacob Lee at Louisville. Cincinnati brought an even more expansive bedrock of intellect and

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Introduction

> I am the Ohio River,
> From the north I beckon to brooks, creeks, rivers in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.
> Countless are the other streams flowing from east, south, and north as they come to join me.
> You have used me to fight your wars, as a barrier between North and South, as a boundary between some of your richest states.
> If rivers carry the life blood of a continent, then I am an artery to the heart of America.
> —J. Robert Smith, 1962[1]

The mood in the nation's capital was foreboding on March 4, 1861. Seven states had already withdrawn from the Union and the soon-to-be inaugurated president-elect, Illinoisan Abraham Lincoln, faced the daunting task of how to entice them back in while concurrently preventing more from seceding. As the greatest shock the nation's federal system had ever felt evolved swiftly from political debate to pervasive violence, two U.S. congressmen from Illinois visited the president-elect at his room in Washington's Willard Hotel. They were proslavery Democrat John A. Logan, whose district comprised much of southern Illinois, and antislavery Republican Owen Lovejoy, of the state's northwestern counties, brother of the nation's first martyred abolitionist, Elijah P. Lovejoy. Though both of the congressmen believed a solution was possible in the winter and spring of 1861, only one of them thought it could be achieved through compromise and without the use of force.

No one knows precisely what was said during the March 4 meeting. Neither Lincoln nor Lovejoy ever discussed the particulars of the discussion. What is clear is that Logan, like a majority of his voters in southern Illinois, deplored the election of Lincoln and rebuffed the idea of coercing the seceded states back into the Union. Writing after

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[1] *Evansville Sunday Courier and Press*, August 12, 1962.

the war as a Republican and decorated Union general, Logan appeared to have remembered the meeting differently. In his polemic on the coming of the Civil War, *The Great Conspiracy,* Logan maintained that he had always supported the preservation of the Union unconditionally and that he and Lovejoy urged Lincoln "to protect the property of the country, and put down the Rebellion no matter at what cost in men and money."[2] This vow of unqualified support was almost certainly not the case given Logan's personal and public words in early 1861. Likely he urged compromise.[3]

The divergence of Logan's pre-war deeds and postwar writings is unsurprising. The intriguing question is not why the conservative Logan favored compromise during the secession crisis or deified Lincoln after the war, but rather how Logan and others on the north bank of the Ohio River came to modify or disown their middle ground, politically and geographically, between North and South.[4]

This study begins with the proposition that the Civil War Era represented a conflict among regions and within sections. Historian William A. Freehling maintains correctly that the "Border North"—the free states adjoining slaveholding states—were just as different from the Upper North as the Border South was from the Deep South, and that too little attention has been given to diversity within such states.[5] This work focuses on how the Lower Middle West—part of a vast border area stretching from southern Pennsylvania and northern Virginia along the Ohio River Valley and into Missouri and Kansas—adopted a sectional Unionist identity and retained its regional border identity.

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[2] John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy: Its Origin and History* (New York: A.R. Hart & Co., 1886)*,* 142.
[3] Jones, *Black Jack,* 74.
[4] Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and religion in Southern Indiana, 1810-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 215.
[5] William A. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant 1854-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97.

This "third side" is crucial to understanding the nineteenth century United States, as a unique set of national and regional visions, moral systems, and mentalities existed between Kentucky and the Great Lakes.[6]

The concept of conservative Unionism is central to understanding the Civil War in this "Middle America." Conservative Unionists—those who supported compromise measures, desired only the political restoration of the Union, and who persisted rather than embraced emancipation—comprised the white majority in the region.[7] Conservative Unionism was often compatible with free soil principles, but strongly favored the flexibility of antislavery reform over the uncompromising moral agenda of abolitionism. This conservative and Unionist wartime coalition, especially in the lower reaches of the Middle West, espoused antebellum political moderation, formed the wartime dissent movement as a backlash against liberalizing measures, led the rejection of Congressional Reconstruction, and ultimately spearheaded national reconciliation. White western veterans constructed the narrative of the Loyal West during and after the war, which reconciled antebellum regionalism with postwar sectionalism and balanced the revolutionary aspects of the Union Cause with the political and cultural conservatism characteristic of the white population of the Middle West.

As such, this study addresses three historical literatures: antebellum regional studies, which emphasize the importance of upland southern culture to the creation of the Middle West; wartime social studies, soldier studies, and Reconstruction topics, all of

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[6] Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2-3.
[7] Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 43-50. Astor defines "conservative Unionism" as moderate and compromise-oriented. Pragmatism, rather than moral absolutism or honor, was the most important virtue within conservative Unionist political culture.

which have failed to chart and examine conservative Unionism; and memory studies, which have not accounted for conservative Unionism in understanding how the war was remembered and the social consequences of that remembrance. Although historians of the Civil War period have largely failed to incorporate the Lower Middle West and the Ohio Valley in particular into broader histories of the war era, this project is indebted to those scholars who have paved the way for a fuller examination of what Joan Cashin terms the "border regions."[8]

The concepts of political and cultural space are central to this narrative of stasis and reform, dissent and loyalty, and discord and reunion. Early migration into the Middle West was marked by relative homogeneity, with large percentages of migrants from the slaveholding South. According to Freehling, the "Border North's southernmost areas differed little from the Border South's northernmost areas." These "border Northerners" were startingly different than "Yankees." Comprised heavily of upland southerners, the region held overwhelmingly Democratic political loyalties, voted for southern proposals more frequently, and was more fervently anti-black yet held a deeper support for slavery.[9] Upland southern political culture fostered racial aversion, agnosticism toward slavery, and antipathy toward African Americans.

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[8] James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 284. For studies of the border regions, see Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1927); Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000); William W. Freehling, *The South vs. the South: How Anti-Confederate Southerners Shaped the Course of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates: Upper South Unionists in the Secession Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989); Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 219; and Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001).
[9] Freehling, *The Road to Disunion*, 97.

Yet by the 1830s cities such as Cincinnati, New Albany, and Evansville drew significant numbers of people from the Middle States, New England, and Europe. This "Yankee invasion" led to what historian Richard Lyle Power termed a "thirty years war" between the Ohio Valley and the Great Lakes for political and cultural supremacy in the Middle West. As historian Eric Foner alleges, "The southern parts of the states of the lower West—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa—were inherited by migrants from the slave states, while the northern areas were settled by easterners. The hostility between the two groups of settlers was proverbial."[10] Moderation prevailed in the Ohio Valley as antislavery politics matured in the Yankee belt.[11] Although, as historian Nicole Etcheson maintains, the crisis of the 1850s in many ways reawakened the Lower Middle West's identification with the slaveholding South, political and cultural division between the region's slave and free states proved vast enough to lead to civil war, as conservative Unionism affirmed itself in the Ohio Valley after the firing on Fort Sumter.

As the war progressed, the Ohio River—a nucleus of Union supply, contraband camps, raids and other forms of violence—became a perforated line within popular imagination. Although conservative Unionists in the Middle West were slow to accept emancipation and black enlistment—and many never did—liberalizing war policies undermined conservative Unionism in Kentucky, further dividing the antebellum West.[12]

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[10] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 48.

[11] See Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: The Civil War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2003); and Nicole Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest: Upland Southerners and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1787-1861* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

[12] Although the lower free states boasted some of the highest enlistment rates in the nation, a far higher percentage of Civil War soldiers in the Lower Middle West were slower to embrace liberalizing war aims. For evidence as to why a relatively homogeneous, conservative, and rural region might draw a disproportionate numbers of military volunteers, see Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008). Costa and Kahn

Despite dissent and the refusal of many soldiers to embrace emancipation and black enlistment, conservative Unionism in the Middle West proved flexible throughout 1863 and 1864 just as it was eroding in Kentucky, and Middle Westerners increasingly "Confederatized" the Border South.[13] The Ohio Valley was the last place in the United States where sectionalism, a form of geographic identity associated with the politics of slavery and civil war, undermined regionalism, a form of geographic identity linking a perceived common cultures, kinship and economic networks, political allegiances, ethno-cultural attitudes, anti-federal sympathies, and even autonomism. White supremacy remained intact in this regionalism.

In a region that defined itself against both its slaveholding and Yankee neighbors, the Civil War fused sectional and regional identities. The Republican Party, and its association with the Union Cause, won many converts in Lower Middle West between 1864 and 1872. (Of the fourteen Republican presidential nominees chosen between 1860 and 1912, all but two were from Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois.)[14] Yet Reconstruction failed first in the Lower Middle West, the region where it was most vulnerable, as wartime dissent and western sectionalism rematerialized during postwar political debates. Moreover, southern Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio remained committed to antebellum-style segregation and white supremacy, becoming nuclei of extralegal violence, the sundown town movement, and, eventually, the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan. Just as prewar understandings of "the West" faded, the creation of

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argue that there is often a correlation between homogeneity and community cohesiveness in wartime; For southern Illinois enlistment rates by county, see John Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical Comprising the Essential Facts of Its Planting and Growth as a Province, County, Territory, and State* (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1892), II: 735-737.

[13] On the disintegration of conservative Unionism in Kentucky, see Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 94-120.

[14] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 141.

Confederate identity in Kentucky and Missouri worked in tandem with the creation of Union identity in the Lower Middle West. Even so, soldiers who had espoused emancipation out of "military necessity" remained adamant that the restoration of the Union was their primary war aim, and Union veterans defined themselves against both former Confederates and their Eastern counterparts. Anti-Confederate *and* anti-Eastern attitudes characterized the Loyal Western identity—a highly politicized identity perpetuated by the war effort, Union military and political leaders, and veterans' groups.

Yet this Loyal Western identity itself proved incapable of facilitating sectional reconciliation. By the 1880s the Loyal West narrative had divided the West itself, as Lower Middle Westerners emphasized longstanding bonds with the Border South— regional identity—in order to hasten sectional unification. Even as the Lost Cause and a dominant nationalist narrative or reunification, embodied by the Spanish-American War and the 1913 Gettysburg Reunion, undermined the more provincial Loyal Western story, societies on the north and south banks of the Ohio River were among the first to reconcile, and they used regional commonalities and their shared identities as white men to do so. Indeed, reconciliation succeeded first where it was most probable, along slavery's border.

In this sense, Kentucky and the Lower Middle West represented harmonious regions, drawing on their shared antebellum identities, but oppositional sections, owing to the collective memory of their war experiences. White supremacy was integral to this conservative consciousness, first as an endorsement of free labor and critique of slavery, then an expression of conservative Unionism and general rejection of Radical Reconstruction measures, and, finally, as an embrace of sectional reconciliation.

Secession, war, commemoration, reunion and the ultimate undermining of the Loyal West narrative were fundamental to the popular construction of a clear-cut sectional divide, as a North-South binary developed within the national imagination. By the turn of the century the Lower Middle West proved integral to the mental construction of the nascent Midwest, a politically median region north of the Ohio River characterized by ethnic heterogeneity, ascendant capitalism, and intense nationalism.[15]

Overwhelmingly Unionist and conservative, Middle America was thus a political and cultural barometer. The last place to support war and the first region to endorse reunion, the border was ultimately where regional commonalities proved the strongest where former Unionists and Confederates were forced to interact and live amongst one another. This had the dual effect of both prolonging sectional animus and forcing peoples with different Civil War loyalties to accommodate, prefiguring the national trend. The Lower Middle West—a place "between two fires"—was where sectional discord and sectional reconciliation existed simultaneously.

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[15] Richard N. Current, *Northernizing the South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983).

Chapter 1

"The Progeny of Jamestown": Region and Identity in the First Middle West

In 1874 aging Indiana planter and politician Eli P. Farmer sat down to write the

story of his life. As a veteran of both the War of 1812 and the Civil War and a witness to

Reconstruction and nascent industrialization, his years ran the gamut of the nineteenth-

century experience in the Ohio Valley. Farmer's father was born in Loudon County

Virginia "of revolutionary stock" and fought with General Anthony Wayne in the spring

of 1788 to drive the Indians from "the West"—the First American West between the

Appalachians and the Mississippi River.[1] The Farmers soon traveled down the

Monongahela and Ohio rivers, "taming" the trans-Appalachian "wilderness" along the

way. The family helped settle Franklin County, Kentucky, where Eli was born in 1794.

The Farmers were "frontier" people, and the Franklin County of Eli Farmer's youth

possessed a western identity centered on mobility, available land for white families, and

anti-Indian sentiment. It was a place of hardscrabble survival and brutal violence. Yet

the frontier vanished quickly, first with the cultivation of farms and the "improvement" of

land. The appearance of large-scale slavery in Kentucky and the commercialization of

the Ohio River, and later the rise of railroads marked the transition from frontier to settled

society.[2] Serving in Virginia during the War of 1812, Farmer bore witness to an

emergent nation growing beyond its regional roots. Though he was already a westerner

with particularly western attitudes regarding space, land, and distance, the war instilled in

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[1] Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), ix.
[2] On western identity and the transition from a frontier to a commercial slave economy in Kentucky, see
Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay*
(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Farmer an ardent nationalism by the time he returned to Shelby County, Kentucky, in 1817.

Some time around 1820, just as the Kentucky's frontier stage was passing, Farmer's business ventures took him northward across the Ohio River to Marietta, Ohio. Although he found the Ohio Valley and the "whole country" to be "deeply excited" by "patriotic feelings" following the War of 1812, he witnessed something so disturbing that it still resonated over half a century later. An attorney and slaveholder from New Orleans attempted to bring "Dutch servants," whose freedom he had "ransomed," into Ohio at Marietta. This act brought "fierce indignation of the citizens of Ohio," Farmer remembered, "while just across the river there were hundreds of Virginians who sympathized with their southern friend." The citizens of Marietta considered the man's servants "slaves" and drove him back into Kentucky. Though just a local dispute between "the free shore of Ohio" and the southerners in Kentucky, this was Eli P. Farmer's first taste of something new in the Ohio Valley—sectionalism. Because he appeared to side with the grievances of the Ohioans, this was a pivotal instant in the formation of Farmer's sectional identity.

A few years later, at age twenty-nine, Farmer left Kentucky forever. Leaving behind a widowed mother and several brothers and sisters, Farmer hoped to own land and become a preacher in Indiana. In 1822 he crossed the Ohio River at New Albany and eventually settled in Bloomington, in the south-central part of the new state. There he farmed, preached itinerantly, interacted with whites and Creek Indians, and traveled throughout the Ohio Valley and the South. He also became active in Whig politics, serving one term in the Indiana state senate. Farmer witnessed the rise of sectional

politics, and when war erupted in 1861 Farmer never doubted his devotion to the nation and the Union. Although Farmer never displayed any ill feelings toward the institution of slavery and expressed many of the white supremacist attitudes so typical of his era, he had never owned slaves and never considered himself a southerner. Above all, Farmer was a venerable nationalist and a "patriotic union man." He sent five sons and two son-in-laws to fight for the Union and became a chaplain and sometime nurse with the 82nd Indiana Infantry. As a nationalist, a commercially oriented westerner, and a racial conservative, Farmer's war service afforded him "infinite satisfaction" as, essentially, a conservative Unionist. Years later, he looked back with a heavy heart and tear-filled eyes at the "tramp through Georgia," the "capture of Virginia" and, above all, the Grand Review in "The National Capital." He appeared to hold high hopes for national reconciliation and expected that Union "victory" would "bless the generations yet to come."[3]

Thomas Alexander also came of age during the early national period. Born in North Carolina in 1797, Alexander moved to Kingston, Tennessee, in 1810, and worked as a farmer on his brother's land during his teenage years. Like so many upland southerners during the antebellum period, Alexander sought to acquire of his own land. He finally found such an opportunity north of the Ohio River and migrated to south-central Indiana in 1827. Crossing mountains and traversing Kentucky hillsides with all his possessions packed in an ox cart, Alexander settled at last in Johnson County's Hensley Township, which was populated almost entirely by families from the slaveholding South. There he married Betsy Burke, started a family, became one of the

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[3] Eli P. Farmer handwritten autobiography, Eli P. Farmer Papers, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as LL).

first organizers of the county's Democratic party, and worked as a farmer and a Methodist preacher. Other members of the Alexander clan also fanned out across the West, from Tennessee to Missouri to Iowa.

Like many Democrats in the Lower Middle West, Alexander appears to have downplayed sectional politics or advocated compromise during the crisis of the 1850s. Indeed, his critical moment of self-identification coincided with the outbreak of war itself. Thomas had remained particularly close with his relatives in Tennessee and, with sectional hostilities imminent, he remained openly loyal to the South. As a southerner and a conservative, Alexander looked on Abraham Lincoln with contempt and believed that the differences between North and South could be sorted out without resorting to bloodshed. Feeling against the war was strong in Hensley Township, even drawing the attention of Indiana governor Oliver P. Morton who purportedly sent Union troops into the area to survey the loyalty of its inhabitants. Too old to fight, Alexander became a leader within his community. He acted as chairman on a cooperative committee in charge of hiring substitutes so that local men who opposed the war would not be forced to serve, occasionally making trips to Indianapolis to purchase substitutes. Local lore held that no men from Hensley Township went to war either as draftees or volunteers thanks in part to the work of Thomas Alexander. Although his wartime dissent seemed to be a cause of some embarrassment during the postwar period and Hensley Township itself was later connected to the infamous Knights of the Golden Circle, Alexander lived out his days peacefully and died near Samaria, Indiana, in 1878.[4]

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[4] Thomas Alexander Genealogy (typescript), Thomas Alexander Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as IHS).

The lives of Eli P. Farmer and Thomas Alexander reveal much about regionalism, sectionalism, and nationalism nineteenth-century Middle America. As white small-scale farmers in the Lower Middle West who were born in the slaveholding South and experienced the sectional conflict as members of northern society, the narratives of Farmer—who represented the standard conservative Unionist in the Lower Middle West—and Alexander—whose dissenting political position grew ostracized by 1865— were familiar. Both saw the United States grow beyond its provincial roots; both came of age during an era of rapid economic growth and population movement in the emerging Middle West; both saw the rise of sectionalism slavery and war associated with slavery; and, with the outbreak of war, both wrestled with dual identities as westerners, southerners, northerners, and Americans. As living witnesses to the pre-sectional and post-sectional order in the West, both Farmer and Alexander possessed a sense of belonging to a region, a family, a political heritage, and a nation. This concept of overlapping and shifting identities—regional identities as westerners and sectional identities as northerners or southerners—is central to understanding the complicated, sometimes chaotic nature of loyalty, divisions, and reunion during the Civil War Era.[5]

The sectionalism that interrupted and ultimately defined the region and times of Farmer and Alexander came slowly to the Lower Middle West. As historian Richard C. Wade observes, the entire Ohio Valley, including slaveholding Kentucky, possessed a strong western identity from the outset of white settlement, and, in some sense, it was the last place in the United States where sectionalism undercut regional ties. Just as historian

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[5] On overlapping identities and cultural hybridity as historical concepts, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991); and Eric Hobsbawm, "The Opiate Ethnicity," *Alphabet City* 2 (Toronto: 1992): 8-11. For a discussion of the social need to define one's self or group (the "universal classification impulse"), see John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and Historical Imagination* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992), 51.

Christopher Phillips insists that the border slave states of Missouri and Kentucky saw themselves as "both geographically and ideologically between the polar extremes of northern abolitionism and southern secessionism," the antebellum Lower Middle West too saw itself as a western region of moderates. Indeed, despite historian Stephen Aron's claim that the confluence of the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi rivers—the West—was, ironically, the place where America came apart in 1861, the bonds of political and cultural restraint associated with Western regionalism actually held sectionalism at bay longer in the Ohio Valley than anywhere else in the nation. Although the banks of the Ohio River—the "spine of the new country"—were marked by political delineation during the Early National Period, with the Old Northwest segregate from Kentucky, they were also socially, culturally, and environmentally ambiguous—and thoroughly Western.[6]

Upland Southerners

Although antebellum Middle America combined frontier and southern and, eventually, urban, Yankee, and ethnic elements that, coupled with demands of adapting to a new milieu, resulted in a gradual and nebulous but conscious Western identity—one centered on political moderation and territorial expansion—the first wave of settlement was dominated by upland southerners. The decades between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution saw the transition of the area north of the Ohio River from

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[6] Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959); Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 188, 240. Unlike the border slave states, however, Lower Middle Westerners did not have to vindicate the virtue of their economic system. See Stephen Aron, *American Confluence: The Missouri Frontier from Borderland to Border State* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 243.

frontier to borderland, then to bordered land after the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

Trickles and then floods of Virginians, North Carolinians, Tennesseans, and

Kentuckians began populating the area between the Ohio River and the National Road

west of Pennsylvania, creating a "butternut belt" of mass white settlement that soon

developed into its own identifiable cultural region.[7] As historian R. Douglas Hurt insists,

agricultural-minded uplanders from the Virginia panhandle and Kentuckians were "the

most important cultural group" to migrate to the Ohio frontier, which closed in roughly

1830.[8] Primarily descended from the British folk group historian David Hackett Fischer

terms the northern British "border people" of the backcountry, they arrived on "Kentucky

boats" via the Ohio River in search of economic opportunity.[9] Historians Stephen Aron

and David Waldstreicher maintain that these early white inhabitants intended this new

region to be a new epicenter of American nationalism.[10] Imbued with the expansionist

ethos of the Early Republic and the Old Northwest and continuously inheriting social

traits from the slaveholding South, these first Anglo communities were simultaneously

western, intensely local, and disproportionately sympathetic to southern political

positions during the antebellum period.

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[7] Michael Fellman, *Views from the Dark Side of American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011), 64. Fellman terms "butternuts" as "descendents of Anglo-Saxon migrants from the upper South" living in either the Middle West or the border slave states of Missouri and Kentucky. The deprecating term referred to the dye used by upland southerners to dye their homespun clothes. During the Civil War the term was often used by Unionists to characterize Middle Westerners of southern descent who were perceived as sympathizing with the Confederate cause. On the southern origins of the early Middle West, see James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 159-166.

[8] R. Douglas Hurt, *Frontier Ohio: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 249.

[9] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[10] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 246-293.

Historians including William E. Dodd, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Henry C. Hubbart note the governing influence of southern culture on the Old Northwest.[11] As geographer William N. Parker posits, rather fixed, homogenous immigrant settlement patterns arrayed east-west in the Old Northwest, with Kentuckians, Tennesseeans, and Virginians from hill and valley environs populating the north bank of the Ohio River in search of cheap and fertile land.[12] These first pioneers of the southern frontier were, essentially, the people historian Frank Owsley describes as "plain folk" and practiced a *Gemeinschaft* culture of tight kinship networks and face-to-face economic relations.[13] According to geographer Douglas K. Meyer, upland southerners penetrated farther north of the National Road than scholars had previously recognized. Rather than clinging to the north bank of the Ohio River, upland southerners, and Kentuckians in particular, used the Lower Middle West as a "way station" through which to settle in central Indiana, western and central Illinois, and eastern and southern Iowa. As Meyer insists, places such as southern Illinois were just as often traversed as infilled by Kentuckians, with large numbers of Tennesseeans, North Carolinians, and Deep South peoples from South

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[11] William E. Dodd, "The Fight for the Northwest, 1860," *American Historical Review* 16 (July 1911): 774-788; Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Frontier in American History," (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 1920); Henry C. Hubbart, "Pro-Southern Influences in the Free West, 1840-1865," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 20 (June 1933): 45-62.

[12] William N. Parker, "From Northwest to Midwest: Social Bases of a Regional History," in *Essays in Nineteenth-Century Economic History*, David C. Klingaman and Richard Vedder, eds. (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1975), 12-13.

[13] Arguing for southern distinctiveness, historian James M. McPherson alleges that gemeinschaft culture "persisted in the South long after the North began moving toward a gesellschaft culture with its impersonal, bureaucratic, meritocratic, urbanizing, commercial, industrializing, mobile, an rootless characteristics." McPherson perhaps underestimates the extent to which southern "folk culture" existed in the North in 1860. James M. McPherson, "Antebellum Southern Exceptionalism: A New Look at an Old Question," in McPherson, *Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 12. For a discussion of the commonalities of Northern and Southern culture, see David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1979), 8-34. See also Daniel T. Rodgers, "Regionalism and the Burdens of Progress," in J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds., *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 3-16.

Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi quickly filling the area south of the National Road.[14]

Poor white Kentuckians had taken the Northwest "without firing a shot," as the expression went, and their political leaders spearheaded statehood and dominated state politics in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois during their formative years.[15] Jeffersonian politics dominated early Ohio, as did Jackson's Democracy in early Indiana and Illinois.[16] According to historian Richard F. Nation, plain folk settlers possessed a general "ambivalence toward progress and integration" and a strong defense of local and opposition toward public schools, believing that moral regulation should take place through local institutions such as the family and the church.[17] Anthropologist John Solomon Otto alleges that these traits were centered on rural and local upland southern traditions.[18] As such, it is historically true that Illinois, for example, consists of a liberal-voting northern tier, a conservative-voting southern tier, and a centrist middle portion that typically acts as a battleground in most national elections. This southern subregion soon stood in contrast to both the central and upper free states—what became in the twentieth century the Midwest, a place associated with ascendant capitalism and intense nationalism—and the border slave states. Conservative and local, the region was

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[14] Douglas K. Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt: A Geographical History of Settlement and Migration in Early-Nineteenth-Century Illinois* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 137, 146. Meyer concludes that upland southerners, New Englanders, Middle State peoples, and foreigners all formed "regional way stations" in Illinois through which they populated states further north and west.

[15] Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 272; Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 161.

[16] Hurt, *Frontier Ohio*, 283, 376. Hurt also maintains that Federalists in early Ohio wielded disproportionate influence due to party organization and concentration in the Western Reserve.

[17] Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and Religion in Southern Indiana, 1810-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 2-3.

[18] John Solomon Otto, "The Migration of Southern Plain Folk: An Interdisciplinary Synthesis," *The Journal of Southern History*, 51 (May 1985): 183-200.

populated predominantly by the people historian Frank L. Klement terms the "Butternut Democracy" of the Middle West.[19]

The Ohio River itself was central to how new settlers imagined space and identity within the region, proving far more a connector than a divider during the Early National period.[20] Whereas the course of the Mississippi River ran from north to south, flowing from one section into another and, at some indeterminate point, from a land of ore and wheat and timber to, by the 1830s, a land of cotton and rice slavery, the Ohio River spanned a more unified region. Traveling the Ohio River in 1795, Baptist minister David Barrow thought the "western countries" the richest and most promising land "in the whole of North America." "A vessel may go from the rapids of the Ohio and is capable of sailing anywhere in the world," he explained. The "western waters" offered the great promise for American government and development, in both agriculture and manufacturing and game was plentiful "in the borders" of western settlement. "Boundary lines," Barrow insisted, were only between Indians and whites.[21] Travel books, business pamphlets, and booster guides such as Edmund Dana's *Geographical Sketches on the Western Country* (1819), George Hall's *Letters from the West* (1828), and George Conclin's *New River Guide, or A Gazetteer of all the Towns on the Western Waters* (1850) described a unified river valley of fluid intercourse and populations.[22] Conclin

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[19] Frank L. Klement, "Midwestern Opposition to Lincoln's Emancipation Policy," *The Journal of Negro History* 49 (July 1964): 169-183.

[20] Geographers Douglas K. Meyer and John C. Hudson make this argument discretely, particularly with regard to the Ohio River. Hudson claims that "transportation routes, whether water, road, or rail are far more effective homogenizers than segregators." Hudson, "North American Origins of Middle Western Frontier Populations," *Annals, Association of American Geographers* 78 (September 1988): 395-413.

[21] David Barrow Diary, June 24 and July 30, 1795, Kentucky Library and Museum, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky (hereafter cited as KLM).

[22] George Conclin, *Conclin's New River Guide, or A Gazetteer of all the Towns on the Western Waters* (Cincinnati: H. S. & J. Applegate, 1850), 66. See also James Hall, *Letters from the West* (London: Henry Colburn, 1828).

considered Cairo, Illinois, at the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, one of the "finest points . . . in the West; being placed so as to command the immense and incalculable trade of the whole west, north-west, and south."

Western Bondage

Slavery only gradually became the single most glaring feature separating the north and south banks of the Ohio River. Traveling in North America in the second decade of the nineteenth century, for instance, Englishman John Bradbury had lofty expectations for the "western country" of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and saw bright prospects for "the interior": Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, and Tennessee. With slave society not yet maturing south of the Ohio River, Bradbury and others viewed this "western interior" was a unified region. Sensing a regional middle within the West, he also noted that the "northerly parts" of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois possessed a "different character in its natural state" than the rest of the region. He also foreshadowed the impending sectional divide. "Cotton," Bradbury insisted, "does not become an object of culture" somewhere between 36 and 39 degrees latitude, presaging the boundary of the nascent slaveholding South as somewhere between northern Arkansas and central Illinois. The culture of this "western interior," Bradbury rightly suggested, would eventually be determined by agriculture and labor.[23]

While the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and early state laws had formally outlawed slavery in the region, human bondage was practiced intermittently and in

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[23] John Bradbury, Travels in the Interior of America, in the Years 1809, 1810, and 1811 (Liverpool: Smith and Galway, 1817), 289, 307, 295.

various forms during the antebellum period.[24] Immigrants were brought into Cincinnati

as indentured servants during the 1820s; "free" towns such as Mt. Vernon, Indiana, and

Cairo, Illinois, engaged in slave sales; and salt miners in Gallatin County, Illinois, hired

out slaves from Kentucky into the 1830s.[25] The kidnapping and re-selling of former

slaves and free blacks into slavery was big business along the Ohio River in what

amounted to a "Reverse Underground Railroad."[26] Illinois and Indiana saw more of a

concerted push to introduce slavery into the state than Ohio.[27] Antebellum Illinoisans,

who nearly introduced slavery into the state constitution in both 1818 and 1824, practiced

contract apprenticeship, a form of de facto slavery.[28] As historian James Simeone

explains, like southern slaveholders, proslavery Illinoisans saw the institution of slavery

as compatible with their understandings of republicanism and political equality.

According to Simeone, a cohesive identity developed around whiteness in early Illinois.

As proslavery Illinoisans felt increasingly threatened by the more antislavery impulses of

newly arrived "Yankees" from the East by 1830, the slavery issue would come to be

associated with identity politics in what was essentially an early nineteenth-century

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[24] See Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance: A Study in Ambiguity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 6 (Winter 1986): 343-370; For a discussion of blacks in the Northwest during the Early National period, see Dennis Frank Ricke, "Illinois Blacks Through the Civil War: A Struggle for Equality," (MA Thesis, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 1972), 1-23; For political debates over slavery in early Illinois, see Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 166-168, 287-301.
[25] *History of Posey County Indiana* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1886), 266.
[26] See Carol Wilson, *Freedom at Risk: The Kidnapping of Free Blacks in America, 1780-1865* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1994); Andrew R. L. Cayton, *Frontier Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 298; and Jon Musgrave, *Slaves, Salt, Sex & Mr. Crenshaw: The Real Story of the Old Slave House and America's Reverse Underground R.R.* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2004).
[27] Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State* IV (New York: The Century History Company, 1912), 119. Ryan's state history claims that although antebellum Ohioans debated the role of slavery in the territories, most were simultaneously antislavery (within Ohio) and anti-black.
[28] Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 49.

culture war in which class was of secondary importance.[29] Yet not only was the line

between slavery and freedom porous between the Early National period and the Age of

Jackson, but also the boundary between northern and southern influence was not

necessarily associated with the institution. In fact, many of the region's first migrants

maintained that the boundary between North and South was the National Road rather

than the Ohio River, a belief that held on until the Civil War and after. Although the last

vestiges of slavery had virtually disappeared from southern Ohio and Indiana by the

1820s and southern Illinois by the 1840s and the region became increasingly anti-black in

its laws and customs, some Lower Middle Westerners continued to support the extension

of slavery into their states.[30]

Yet most Lower Middle Western whites remained agnostic about slavery and

disinclined toward the presence of African Americans, slave or free. The region's most

obvious continuity was its aversive race relations, relations that turned violent when

encountered with black independence.[31] The Lower Middle West was a slaveless society,

but free of paternalism and black dependence, its white residents loathed blacks all the

same.[32] This general desire to neither own blacks nor live among them, observed by

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[29] James Simeone, *Democracy and Slavery in Frontier Illinois: The Bottomland Republic* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 3-15. See also Arthur Clinton Boggess, *The Settlement of Illinois, 1778-1830* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1908), 176-190.

[30] Kim Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790-1850* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 142. Gruenwald reminds that the sectional origins of residents did not necessarily determine their feeling toward the extension of slavery, as some easterners supported such measures and many upland southerners left the South to avoid slave labor competition.

[31] Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961); Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967); Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

[32] Historian Eugene Genovese describes "paternalism" as accommodation, resistance, and a set of reciprocal obligations between masters and slaves, insisting that neither can be understood apart from the other, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 3-7.

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historians Leon Litwack and Eugene H. Berwanger, is explained in that the antebellum

Lower Middle West was largely a part of the political and ethnocultural, though not the

geopolitical, South. Its intense sense of localism also led them to believe that the

condition of the slave was "beyond their moral horizon," according to Richard F.

Nation.[33] Southern cracker (poor white) folkways and Jacksonian political culture

resulted in a negative understanding of federal power. As such, politics on the north bank

of the Ohio River were conservative and Democratic compared to the rest of the free

states (even the region's Republicans later championed themselves as the true

conservative inheritors of Jefferson and Jackson). The seeds of racial aversion were sewn

in poor and non-slaveholding southern localism and, in many ways, the Upper and

Border South became a seedbed of the Middle Western experience.

  The antebellum Lower Middle West was also unique in how its citizens viewed

themselves. Citizens in Corydon, Indiana, and Shawneetown, Illinois, self-identified as

variously as westerners, middle staters, and border staters during the antebellum period.

James Fenimore Cooper explained in his 1821 novel *The Spy* that there was a distinct

western character type, "the long shaggy boatmen '*clear from Kentuck'*,'" that differed

from both easterners and southerners.[34] The popular image of the westerner or border

man was an enterprising and independent yeoman, controlled politically by neither

section and possessing few of either the civilizing traits of the East or the aristocratic

tendencies of the South. Middle American heroes such as Daniel Boone and David

Crockett typified this myth as the representation of a third sectional stereotype served as a

metaphorical alternative to both the Roundhead and the Cavalier prior to the sectional

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[33] Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*.

[34] William R. Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: Braziller, 1961), 20-21.

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crisis.[35] This regional identity differed from southern and northern (sectional) self-concepts in that it was centered on social and political moderation and compromise, whether interpreted through Republican or Federalist or, by the 1820s, Whig or Democratic politics.

The region also held entrenched upland southern dispositions toward localism. The term "Hoosier," used to refer to residents of Indiana beginning in the 1830s, suggested an unrefined people who opposed progress. As historian Andrew R. L. Cayton explains, much of rural southern Indiana resisted the emerging capitalist marketplace and educational and social reform. Conversely, it retained some elements of what might be termed a southern "honor culture" centered on drinking, gambling, fighting, and adherence to the patriarchal household. This brand of honor culture was particularly acute in male-dominated river towns and isolated ruralities. Many counties had literacy rates of barely 50 percent into the 1850s, on par with the Appalachian South.[36] This upland southern culture was distinct from emerging "Yankee" identity of the urban and upper Middle West in that it was republican, generally local, often anti-capitalist, homogeneous, and almost uniformly white supremacist. Citizens relied on markers of regional identification—geo-cultural identification—to express political loyalties and ideas. Although they were self-articulated westerners, people in the Lower Middle West fully understood the diversity of region and localism along the Ohio River Valley and beyond. Kentuckians and Missourians were neighbors and kinfolk; the emerging Great Lakes cities representative of "northern Illinois" and Yankee interests; and ascendant

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[35] See also Alan Taylor, *William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995); and Stephen Aron, *How the West was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).
[36] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 288-296.

cities in Tennessee, such as Nashville and Memphis, were metropolises of the great "Southwest."[37] All, in some sense, were western.

Antebellum Lower Middle Westerners had particularly deep-seated social and economic ties to the slaveholding South. Western and southern political coalitions had supported the Louisiana Purchase, fought the War of 1812, elected westerners Andrew Jackson, William Henry Harrison, James K. Polk, and Zachary Taylor, and backed the Mexican War. As late as 1846, border resident and western booster William Gilpin even gave the South primary credit for the creation of the West, stating that "the progeny of Jamestown" had "given the Union twelve great agricultural States," presumably including Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois.[38] Although by the 1850s slavery had only recently died out north of the Ohio River—Illinois did not abolish the practice until 1848—many in the Lower Middle West left the South because of their spurn for or failure to rise within the slave system.[39] Yet many citizens nonetheless detested the antislavery movement, especially its attacks on the South.[40] Cities such as antebellum Cincinnati and Evansville were ethnically diverse, with increasingly large numbers of Germans and Irish by the 1840s. French, Swiss, Scandinavian, Quaker, and African American settlements dotted other parts of the Lower Middle West.[41] Still, a plurality and perhaps most of the region's population had roots in the South. They were, according to one writer, a "burned-over people," emanating from the Atlantic seaboard across Virginia and the

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[37] *Evansville Daily Journal,* May 31, 1860.
[38] Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier*, 316-317.
[39] Finkelman, "Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance," 343-370; Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, 72.
[40] Nicole Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest: Upland Southerners and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1787-1861* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 107.
[41] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 268.

Carolinas, through the Cumberland Gap, into Tennessee and Kentucky then across slavery's divide into the free West.[42]

Indeed, the majority settlers north of the Ohio River were middling folks who had not been invested in the slave society and distrusted the slaveholding elite despite sharing their white supremacist attitudes. Above all else, upland southerners sought land within a free labor system, but their local institutions often mirrored those of the societies from which they hailed. In places such as southern Illinois, they also set up southern-style patterns of government, with county seats, precincts, justices of the peace, and overseers of the poor. Settlers organized militias and relied on dense kinship networks. Newly arriving easterners often viewed the southern tiers of their states—where "proverbial for the intellectual, moral, and political darkness which covers the land"—as backward due in part to what they perceived as foreign local institutions.[43] This stereotype of upland southerners as primitives who were unable or unwilling to improve their economic condition would increase as the region became more politically stratified with the collapse of the Second Party System and the zenith of sectional debates.

Western Political Culture

Despite increasingly apparent political and cultural divisions within the Middle West in the late 1820s, sectionalism in the Ohio Valley was particularly muted as a new identity grew around western political interests and candidates within the Second Party System, such as Andrew Jackson and William Henry Harrison. In fact, sectional

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[42] Baker Brownell, *The Other Illinois* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1958), 132.
[43] Richard Lyle Power, "The Hoosier as an American Folk-Type," *Indiana Magazine of History* 38 (June 1942): 107-122.

perception reached its nadir during the Jacksonian era.[44] Westerners saw themselves as

expansionists and nationalists, as evidenced by their mass volunteerism during the

Mexican War, and described themselves in ideal terms as especially "manly, politically

astute, and egalitarian."[45] Moreover, the concept of a "violent border"—a perception that

by 1861 was coming not only to define the political divide between Confederate and

Union, but also the symbolic divide between slave state and free—also held a far

different place in the Jacksonian western mind. Popular literature such as Joseph Pritts's

Incidents of Border Life depicted violent racialized borders and white migrations into

what became the "middle and western" states prior to the "intellectual advancement of

the West." This first west of trans-Appalachian Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana,

and Illinois—the Ohio River Valley—was a region of brave pioneers, epic battles, and

untamed land, and inevitable Anglo-Saxon progress. The region was also deeply tied to

national destiny. The "inevitable passing though the mountains" and "migration to the

West . . . like the rushing of fluid into a void," Pritts predicted, "cannot be stayed until the

great Central and Western voids are filled." Even at the height of the national debates

over slavery in Kansas and Nebraska, John Frost's *Border Wars of the West* also related

to a mass audience the gallant exploits of "border heroes of the West" such as Daniel

Boone, Simon Kenton, George Rogers Clark, and Benjamin Logan. The "western wilds"

of Pritts and Frost's lore was an already "lost," romanticized border of the individualist

and small landholder, before it was tainted by commerce, in the form of slavery or

eastern enterprise. Their bloody border—one that had all but disappeared by the time

Pritts and Frost published in post-Jacksonian America—was not slavery's border or even

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[44] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 1-9.
[45] Ibid., 10.

white man's border, but a region beyond civilization; an ethnic-racial frontier borderland somewhere west and northwest of white settlement. Unified in its ruggedness and lack of development, the highly mythologized, pre-sectional border was defined by themes of Indian savagery and white courage, fortitude, and the certainty of white victory and progress. This specific type of border was central to western identity and—with its emphasis on bushwhacking and indiscriminate tactics—laid the foundations for a "violent border" narrative later associated with sectionalism.[46]

Despite the broad appeal of western identity and, as historian Lacy K. Ford and others acknowledge, a fragile regional consensus between the Upper South and the Lower North around colonization as the best means toward gradual emancipation.[47] Founded in Washington D.C. in 1816, the American Colonization Society was particularly popular and remained relevant longest in the Middle West and in the Ohio Valley—Henry Clay was a prominent member—due to its moderate and trans-sectional appeal.[48] By the 1840s, however, the slave system fully divided Kentucky from southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois just as culture and politics increasingly divided Lower Middle Westerners from their northern neighbors of Yankee stock. Although many people in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois supported slavery, and significant numbers of Kentuckians opposed it, southern slaveholders, especially the slaveholding elite, looked

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[46] Joseph Pritts, *Incidents of Border Life, Illustrative of the Times and Condition of the First Settlements in Parts of the Middle and Western States* (Chambersburg, PA: J. Pritts, 1839), 491, 465; John Frost, *Border Wars of the West: Comprising the Frontier Wars of Pennsylvania, Virginia, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Tennessee, and Wisconsin* (Cincinnati: H.W. Derby, 1854).

[47] Lacy K. Ford, "A Civil War in the Age of Capital," in Lacy K. Ford, ed., *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 2.

[48] On the American Colonization Society's particular longevity in the Middle West, see Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery*, 4, 54. Berwanger points out that much of the support for colonization in the Ohio Valley was due to fear of black migration into the free states. See also Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 24; and Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005).

at those north of the Ohio River with a degree of suspicion, often despite their common roots and politics. By the 1840s and 1850s national questions over slavery began to divide institutions and peoples in the Ohio Valley, as historians Kim Gruenwald and Kenneth H. Wheeler explain, challenging the notion of a coherent "West" for the first time.[49]

Yet men such as Warner Lewis Underwood continued to embody the self-conscious western identity of the Ohio River and the entire western waters system, centered as it was on sets of values neither northern nor southern. Underwood, a Virginia-born Kentuckian, insisted in 1850 that the nation comprised of "Northern, Middle, and Southern states." A border state Whig, Underwood viewed the Ohio Valley—"the middle"—as both within and apart from the rest of the political nation. Traveling the Ohio River in 1850, the Kentuckian labeled Evansville, Louisville, and Cincinnati as the "Cities of the Ohio" and hoped to see the Ohio Valley united with "the Lakes" through the "enterprise and public spirit" of canals, railroads, and industry of one united West. Underwood felt Cannelton, Indiana, on the Ohio River, best represented this idealized vision of not only American unity through cultural and economic accord. He deemed Cannelton's cotton yarn manufactory the ideal American enterprise in the supreme location because "the Southern stockholder can easily and cheaply furnish the raw material, the Middle the labor, and the Northern the market"—a model of the desire

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[49] Kim Gruenwald, "Space and Place on the Early American Frontier: The Ohio Valley as a Region, 1790-1850," *Ohio Valley History* 4 (Fall 2004): 31-48. Gruenwald argues that the unified economy of the West, so unified during the Early National period, was altered by new modes of transportation in the 1830s, thus changing regional identity in the Ohio Valley. See also Kenneth H. Wheeler, "Higher Education in the Antebellum Ohio Valley: Slavery, Sectionalism, and the Erosion of Regional Identity," *Ohio Valley History* 8 (Spring 2008): 1-22. Wheeler examines changes in the region's higher educational institutions as evidence of sectionalism undercutting regional identity along the Ohio River,

for western integration and a window into the border mind.[50] Underwood's political

moderation, sense of geo-cultural centrality, and white expansion were the hallmarks of

antebellum western identity. Indeed, even as sectional issues materialized in the late

1840s—with the Deep South was seen as a ferment of fire-eaters and the northern

portions of the Middle West considered "abolitionized"—self-described moderates in the

Ohio Valley ever more viewed themselves as part of a broad belt of social and political

moderates caught increasingly between sectional extremes.[51]

The Racial Politics of Space

Perhaps the most universal experience in the Ohio Valley from the Early National

period through the 1850s was a sense of individual and family movement.[52] Western

families sometimes crossed and re-crossed the Ohio River multiple times over the course

of their lives, developing true trans-regional and, eventually, trans-sectional identities in

the process. Samuel B. Crewdson was born in 1802 Louisa County, Virginia, and was

eight years old when he left the Old Dominion and moved to Logan County, Kentucky,

with his father. His son, the reverend J. W. Crewdson was born near Adairsville in 1829,

one year before the Crewdsons moved north to Illinois. Settling in Cass County on the

Illinois River, the younger Crewdson recalled the Illinois of his youth as "the western

frontier of civilization"—a commercial frontier still inhabited by Native Americans and

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[50] Warner Lewis Underwood Diary, June 16 and 19, 1850, Henry Lewis Underwood Collection, KLM.
[51] James Addison Cravens to Colonel John L. McNaugh, February 22, 1863, James Addison Cravens Papers, LL.
[52] "Reminiscences of my Life as a Master and Pilot on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers," Folder 3, Captain Sobieski Jolly Papers, Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati, Ohio; For a thorough discussion of frontier fluidity in Illinois, see Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 178-198. Sobieski Jolly, a river captain of Ohio, Kentucky, and Tennessee lineage who became a Unionist during the Civil War and suggested that the three sections of the country—East, South, and West—became two by war's end. For a thorough treatment of frontier fluidity in Illinois, see Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 17778-198.

wild game. When Samuel died suddenly, leaving a young mother and three children, the Crewdson family recoiled on its kin support system and moved yet again, back to Logan County. J. W. Crewdson lived with his uncle, a small slaveholder, and developed strong pro-slavery beliefs. Crewdson saw himself as a border man—a true product of western Kentucky and southern Illinois. Although he came to regret his support of the institution of slavery, he insisted that the system was only "infamous" in the "extreme south." "Slavery was not so abused on the border as in the cotton states," he maintained, and avowed that it was more of a crime in theory than in practice. Nevertheless, Crewdson moved to Illinois again just prior to the Civil War where he lived and preached in Hardin County, on the Ohio River, and supported the Union.[53] The Crewdson family odyssey illustrates the fluid nature of what became, with the onset of civil war, a sectional divide. It also reveals the often-chaotic miscellany of the time, place, movement, family political proclivities, and kinship networks on the development regional and sectional identity and loyalty.

Such mobility was restricted by race. By the 1830s the expanse north of the Ohio River, long a region of black exclusion, was being increasingly legally designed as, in the words of one historian, a "democracy of white males." Blacks had never been able to vote. Indiana's 1816 convention voted against black enfranchisement by a margin of 122 to one. Nor could African Americans legally intermarry with whites or sit on juries in trials involving white people. In Indiana and Illinois black children were legally barred from attending public schools.[54] In Ohio, they were barred by custom. In addition to

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[53] Doris Nelson, ed., *Memoirs of Elder J. W. Crewdson (1828-1896), Including his Journal as a Baptist Minister in Southern Illinois and Western Kentucky, 1876-1884* (n.p.: n.d.), 1-4, 35, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as NL).
[54] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 296-300.

reinforced state exclusion laws in the early 1850s, making it illegal for blacks to cross

into the states of Illinois and Indiana (Ohio overturned its exclusion law in 1849), local

authorities often arrested migrant blacks for vagrancy, jailed them, and auctioned them

off or hired them out to white farmers for their labor.[55] Although white residents detested

free blacks, most also opposed the expansion of slavery. While this simultaneous support

for white supremacy and opposition to bondage in their own communities would manifest

politically through free labor and the principles of restrictionism (among Free Soilers and

Republicans) or popular sovereignty (among most Democrats), nearly all citizens

eventually determined that their interests, local or otherwise, were best preserved within

the Union. White supremacist, anti-slavery, local, and pro-Union, the Lower Middle

West also represented a migratory divergence in the first half of the nineteenth-century.

As historian Richard F. Nation relates, because it saw so many families moving from

south to north, the Lower Middle West was "the endpoint for the greatest deviation from

the prevailing east-to-west pattern found east of the Rockies." Though the prospect of

cheap and arable land was also a factor, Nation reminds that the breaking of this east-

west pattern suggested the extent to which upland southerners strayed from their southern

neighbors on the slavery issue. As one resident of Vevay, Indiana, on the Ohio River

explained, "[The non-slaveholding emigrants from Kentucky] would have remained [in

Kentucky], had it not been for the insolent behavior of their more wealthy neighbors"

who "treated them as slaves" and disliked "having paupers as neighbors."[56]

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[55] Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 263. On Illinois's exclusion laws, see Ricke, "Illinois Blacks," 53-94. On arrests of "vagrant" blacks, see The Wabash County Bicentennial Commission and the Wabash Public Library, *History of Wabash County, Illinois, New and Updated, 1976* (Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, Inc., 1977), 495. Illinois Democrat Stephen Douglas reasoned that because his state was surrounded on two sides by slavery, exclusion was necessary to prevent the white prairie from becoming "an asylum" for escaped slaves. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery*, 124.
[56] Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 188.

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Pro or antislavery, the region's upland southern majority brought their political culture and folkways with them. Although they shared few of the Tidewater pretensions of places such as Henderson, Kentucky, on the Ohio's south bank, many migrants from the Border South considered themselves southerners even decades and, on occasion, generations after their departures. As historian Emory Thomas maintains, "When Southerners moved, they tended to recreate in a new location the same sort of society and folk culture they left."[57] Although Whig politics flourished in developing border cities such as Cincinnati, Louisville, Evansville, and Paducah, communities less exposed to the market economy retained more of their Upper and Border South roots and remained averse to taxes and public projects and education.[58] More rural enclaves, such as Indiana's Hill Country and Egypt in Illinois, held intensely local worldviews and veritable fears of dependency associated with capitalism and the market economy. According to historian Michael Morrison the political economy, demographic trends such as per capita income, and the general worldview of the rural Old Northwest typically resembled more closely that of the slaveholding Southwest than it did the East, particularly New England.[59]

Yet divisions within the non-slaveholding West—divisions between rural upland southerners and emerging ethnic enclaves and rising cities—also complicated the relationship between geographical space, culture, and politics and fed intra-regional stereotype and separation. Heterogeneous cities brought what Richard Wade termed the "seeds of culture" to the West, alienating its rural areas and cosmopolitanizing its cities,

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[57] Emory Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), 9.
[58] See Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, 89-97.
[59] Michael Morrison, "The Road to Secession," in Ford, *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction*, 164.

particularly those settled by easterners near the Great Lakes.[60] The increasing presence

of Yankee influence made border cities appear "foreign" to upland southerners, according

to historian Stephen Aron.[61] Rural Lower Middle Westerners, meanwhile, retained

southern folkways in the face of budding regional change. As a resident of Perry County,

Indiana, later recalled, "It could not be expected that merely moving across Mason and

Dixon's Line would work any mysterious sea-change in the temperament of the

Virginians, Marylanders or Carolinians who had transplanted their family stock to

Hoosier soil," where "cavalier and Puritan faced each other."[62] Although the sectional

gap widened after the axis of national political conflict began to shift from Jacksonian

issues to debates over slavery following the Wilmot Proviso and, as historian William

Taylor alleges, by the late 1850s "most Americans had come to look upon their society

and culture as divided between North and South, a democratic, commercial civilization

and an aristocratic, agrarian one," this divide was subdued in the Ohio Valley.[63] Despite

cultural and political differences between the urban and rural West, the region remained

overwhelmingly conservative, and far more antebellum border people stressed their

mutuality and dependence on slavery and accepted its resultant political culture rather

than their differences arising from it.

African Americans in the Free West

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[60] Wade, *The Urban Frontier*, 129-157.
[61] Aron, *American Confluence*, 236.
[62] Thomas James De La Hunt, *Perry County: A History* (Indianapolis, IN: The W.K. Stewart Company, 1916), 204.
[63] Taylor, *Cavalier and Yankee*, 15.

African Americans during the antebellum period held different conceptions of the Ohio River.[64] To free blacks in cities such as Cincinnati, Ohio, isolated and mixed-race farming communities in southern Ohio and Indiana, and peripheral hamlets such as South America, Illinois, the West was perhaps more starkly divided, slave and free.[65] Family movement was conditioned by the internal slave trade, and the Ohio River itself represented a connector only in the sense that it was a conduit to liberation. Although the northern media and abolitionist propaganda likely overstated the starkness of contrast between freedom and slavery on the north and south banks, the Ohio River nonetheless held symbolic value to slaves as a reminder of the division between slavery and freedom. For all the Middle West's white supremacist social underpinnings, parts of Ohio offered escaped slaves asylum, and even the opportunity for settlement and education. Indeed, men and women such as James M. Stone, a biracial slave who escaped from Kentucky and later enlisted in an Ohio regiment in August 1861, possessed a different understanding of the antebellum border and risked all to achieve the idea of freedom.[66] Free blacks living in the Roberts Settlement in Hamilton County, Indiana, the state's first free black settlement, certainly viewed the Ohio River as a sectional divide. Comprised of free blacks and former slaves from the South, the rural community was settled in the

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[64] Matthew Salafia, "Searching for Slavery: Fugitive Slaves in the Ohio River Valley Borderland," *Ohio Valley History* 8 (Winter 2008): 38-63. Salafia argues convincingly that the antebellum Ohio River represented a less clean boundary between slavery and freedom to African Americans than was previously supposed

[65] P.T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County Illinois* (Herrin, Illinois: Press of the Herrin News, 1925), 156. See also Stephen A. Vincent, *Southern Seed, Northern Soil: African-American Farm Communities in the Midwest, 1765-1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999). Vincent's work sheds considerable light on the existence of previously unstudied nonwhite rural settlements in the nineteenth-century Middle West (of which there were thousands), particularly in southern and central Indiana. See also Kenneth W. Goings, "Blacks in the Rural North: Paulding County, Ohio, 1860-1900," (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1977).

[66] M. Harris Letter, January 2, 1973, KLM. Stone was a former slave who escaped to Ohio, married a white woman, and raised a family before enlisting in the Union army as a white man in August 1861, an enlistment that pre-dates the official enrollment of black soldiers by seventeen months.

1830s in the face of the state's deeply discriminatory laws and racial mores. Yet the

presence and aid of local Quakers made it appealing to free blacks. Born in North

Carolina, community founder James Roberts saw the region south of the Ohio River as

"an old country that is worn out." He maintained that slavery had spoiled the land and its

people. "I cannot do myself justice to think of living in such a country," and urged others

never to return to the South even though some members of the Roberts Settlement were

sold back into slavery by local whites.[67]

Despite a real but largely forgotten legacy of African American independent land

ownership in the Lower Middle West, the black experience in the region was daunting.

Antislavery Indiana politician George W. Julian was not entirely amiss when he labeled

Indiana, particularly its southern tier, "an outlying province of the empire of slavery."[68]

Comparatively few blacks lived in the southern parts of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, a

region that was more anti-black than pro or antislavery. Most that did subsisted on

meager wages and inferior housing at the bottom of society in the region's cities. A

proportional and real majority of the region's black population lived in Cincinnati and the

Indiana cities opposite Louisville. Virtually no blacks lived in large swaths of southern

Indiana and Illinois.[69] The small numbers of free blacks that lived in the Ohio Valley

were subject to the racist attitudes of their white neighbors and various forms of both

legal and de facto discrimination. State constitutions denied blacks the right to vote,

possess firearms, intermarry with whites, sit on juries, and testify against whites in court.

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[67] Roberts Family Papers Bound Volume of Letters, undated, unpublished, p. 432, Roberts Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[68] Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 13.

[69] African Americans represented a mere 2.6 percent of the population in Illinois's six Ohio River counties. The numbers of blacks in many southern Indiana counties were lower still. Even the population of Evansville, Indiana, one of the largest and most ethnically diverse cities on the Ohio River, was less than one percent black in 1860. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 319-322.

In Indiana and Illinois—where scores of "black codes" existed—black children could not attend public school, and educational opportunities were extremely limited in Ohio.[70] The Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 threatened black communities along the border as "front line" towns along the Ohio River became rife with slave catchers. Indiana and Illinois passed black exclusion laws in 1851 and 1853, respectively, which forbade blacks from settling in or travel through the state. Slaveholders traveling through Illinois, however, were allowed to retain their slaves. Although blacks formed the Repeal Association in Illinois and the Colored American League in Ohio to contest Black Codes, real and relative African American populations shrunk as black communities that dated the earliest European American settlement disappeared almost overnight.[71]

Black movement was criminalized and black property was unprotected throughout the Ohio Valley. White town-dwellers, such as those in Portsmouth, Ohio, in 1828, often forcibly removed free blacks from their towns. White farmers, including those in Ohio's Scioto Valley, violently drove black farmers from their lands. Race riots in urban areas, such as Cincinnati's in 1829, were a direct response to black migration and labor competition.[72] Black freedoms were also more limited and black communities more rare the further down the Ohio River one went. Southern Illinois, where many white citizens there opposed slavery simply because it encouraged blacks to migrate northward, was the core of anti-black feeling in the Middle West. Underground Railroad activity was negligible, and by the 1850s some citizens profited immensely from the Fugitive Slave Law and made a living capturing runaways and returning them to the South. This led to free blacks being capturing and sold into slavery. It also facilitated the

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[70] On African Americans and schooling in early Ohio, see Hurt, *Frontier Ohio*, 386-388.
[71] Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 264; Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 192.
[72] For incidents of white-on-black violence in early Ohio, see Hurt, *Frontier Ohio*, 387-388.

rise of regulator violence and vigilantism against blacks in southern Illinois. In 1857, for

instance, local whites attempted to expel every black living in Mound City, Illinois.[73]

Despite scathing white supremacy and limited opportunity in Ohio, Indiana, and

Illinois, many slaves continued to view the Ohio River not as a connector of oppressive

regions, but as a sectional division and real pathway to liberty, an authentic partition

between slavery and freedom, long foreshadowing the imagined North-South binary

constructed by whites during and after the Civil War. Indeed, with the onset of war and

its commemorative aftermath the slaves' border vision of the Ohio River as a dividing

line between free and slave would become transmuted into the white border vision of the

Ohio as a dividing line between loyalty and treason. The southern tiers of Ohio, Indiana,

and Illinois would slowly represent slavery's border between 1830 and 1860, despite

their regional connection with Kentucky; the region became a stark geopolitical border

during the debates over the future of slavery in the 1850s, although it continued to view

itself as part of the West; and it developed into a sectional border too during the war and

the political battles and commemoration of the postwar period, yet it remained very much

in regional solidarity with the Border South.

In 1830 sectionalism was still a distant and unlikely prospect to the average white

resident of Middle America. Just as historian Edward L. Ayers observes the "deep

contingency" at play in his study of rural northern Virginians and southern

Pennsylvanians on the eve of war, sectional issues might have turned out differently and

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[73] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 40.

the people living day-by-day had no idea how events would turn.[74] Indeed, southern-

born political and cultural machinery governed Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois in 1830,

reflecting the composition of each state's population. By the presidential election of

Andrew Jackson, most of Ohio and Indiana still lived in the southern river valleys. Only

Cincinnati, the chief regional market of the Ohio Valley, could be called a city, as the

region remained overwhelmingly rural and agricultural, and southern in culture and

politics.[75] The farthest west of the three young states, Illinois in 1830 was still partially

unsettled and southern-dominate, and Chicago, the future regional nucleus, was but a

cluster of huts on the banks of Lake Michigan. Yet an alternate vision of the West—one

based on increased federalism and stronger antislavery principles—had already emerged

by Andrew Jackson's presidency and began to threaten the rough cohesion between

slavery and freedom that had developed in the Ohio Valley. The passing of the frontier

saw the era of the steamboat and upland southern cultural domination cede before a

second migration of northerners and foreigners between the Black Hawk War and the

election of Abraham Lincoln. These new migrants came west not on rivers and wagons,

but on railroads and plank roads and through canals, bringing with them transportation

and communication innovation, and massive ecological change. They also brought

northern cultural identification that contrasted sharply with the southern inclinations of

most Ohioans, Indianans, and Illinoisans. This long and contested creation of the Middle

West—the "emerging Midwest" as historian Nicole Etcheson terms it—saw tensions

between upland southerners and easterners, each of which sought to remake the West in

their own cultural imprint. Ultimately, despite the claims of historians Richard Lyle

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[74] Edward L. Ayers, *In the Presence of Mine Enemies: War in the Heart of America, 1859-1863* (London: W. W. Norton, 2003).
[75] Hurt, *Frontier Ohio*, 375.

Power and Kim Gruenwald, neither demographic changes, transportation innovations, nor economic transformations were sufficient to disrupt the intense bonds of western unity with Kentucky and slavery felt in the Ohio Valley and throughout the Middle West. The revolutionary acts of civil war and reunion were necessary to form a distinct type of conservative Unionism in the Middle West and culturally reorient the free West away from the South and integrate it into the nation-state.

Chapter 2

The Minds of the Middle West: Political Cultures of the Dixie and Yankee Frontiers

By the end of the 1850s, as political leaders on both sides of the Ohio River attempted to consolidate conservative Unionism, it was obvious that there were two Middle Wests—one comprised primarily of southern-born Democrats who downplayed or acquiesced on slavery, and the other of eastern-born Republicans who more aggressively opposed slavery.[1] As one Cincinnatian recalled after the war, change in the regional and sectional outlook between the "formation of territories from the close of the Mexican War to the close of the Southern rebellion, was rapid without precedent," dividing the region unlike any other part of the nation.[2]

Reverend Littlebury B. Deaton noted the stark political and cultural divide in the Middle West, suggesting that proslavery upland southern Democrats had become overrun by antislavery Republicans. A conservative Unionist from west Tennessee, in the winter of 1861 Deaton traveled to southern Illinois to live with his brother. A Methodist minister urging sectional restraint, Deaton documented his time in Williamson County, Illinois, and his notes were eventually published as a short work entitled *Eleven Months of Exile in Southern Illinois*. The pamphlet shed light on the experiences of expatriates like himself and sought to convince readers north of the Ohio River of the folly of "the

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[1] See *Speech of Hon. F. M. Bristow, of Kentucky, on the Election of Speaker, Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 25, 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863).

[2] John W. Barber and Henry Howe, *The Loyal West in the Times of the Rebellion* (Cincinnati: F. A. Howe, 1865), 4-5.

fiery demon of secession."[3] "It is my design," he explained, "to give the public, especially in southern Illinois, what I think the people so greatly lack, that is, the true cause of the great Southern rebellion, and its outrageous and tyrannical character."[4]

Deaton considered himself both a southerner *and* a Union man. Although he thought Illinois constituted "the North," Deaton was taken aback at the extreme conservatism that marked southern Illinois. He found the southern tier of the state to be a place of "southern sympathies" and "blind partyism" that held virtually no sympathy for blacks.[5] Black equality, he maintained, was more common in the South than in the region immediately north of the Ohio River.[6] Deaton warned the secessionists and anti-government men of Little Egypt that they were "hedged in to the North by true and patriotic men." To the South, he cautioned, "two hundred thousand well armed men intercept between you and any help you can get from the rebel army; neither can you get any help from the east or the West."[7] Although Deaton overestimated the strength of active resistance in the Lower Middle West, his fears of dissent were genuine. Increasingly, men and women in the Ohio Valley were pressed to choose between two foreign and extremist sections.

Deaton remained in southern Illinois into 1862 and his son, Martin, eventually enlisted in the 18th Illinois Infantry, a unity comprised almost exclusively of men from Illinois's southern reaches. Writing home to his mother in Tennessee in early 1862, Martin Deaton expressed the typical sentiments of a soldier from the Lower Middle West.

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[3] Rev. Littlebury B. Deaton, *Eleven Months of Exile in Southern Illinois* (Chicago: By the author, 1862), 10.
[4] Ibid., iii.
[5] Ibid., iii, 14.
[6] Ibid., 14.
[7] Ibid., 88.

Private Deaton asked his mother to give his respects to their neighbors in Tennessee, and to make sure and let known that he had no ill will nor did he have any desire to fight against them. Simply, Deaton thought secession a grave mistake. Concerning allegations that he would be fighting to "free negroes," Deaton responded that southerners held too many misconceptions regarding racial opinion in Illinois. Deaton affirmed his white supremacist convictions, maintained to his mother that blacks in Illinois had no rights, and assured her that all runaways that made contact with Union lines would be sent back to their masters.[8] Deaton's conservative Unionist hopes for political compromise and a swift, bloodless war and a speedy reunion with the South proved unattainable. Yet Deaton was correct in his view that the Lower Middle West—particularly the area historian Richard Lyle Power termed "Egypt-Hoosierdom," which was never fully integrated into the "corn belt culture" of the Middle West—remained starkly different from the remainder of the free states on the eve of war.[9]

Southern Illinois was not "the North" as Deaton had imagined it. Rather, the upland southern Ohio Valley was a place of political moderation, intense white supremacy, and national coexistence with slavery. Despite the emergence of a distinctive and unifying western identity during the Early National period, the Ohio Valley soon became a borderland, the front line of the boundary between the cultural North and South where settlers of southern and eastern stock vied for political and economic supremacy.[10]

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[8] Ibid., 101.
[9] Richard Lyle Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture: The Impress of Upland Southerner and Yankee in the Old Northwest* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1953), viii-ix.
[10] Robert R. Alvarez, Jr., "The Mexican-U.S. Border: The Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 447-470. Whether a "zone of interpenetration" or a region "characterized by conflict and contradiction," the borderland north of the Ohio River was a "divided ground" in American settlement and politics and perhaps a cultural "middle ground." See also Alan Taylor, *The Divided Ground: Indians, Settlers, and the Northern Borderland of the American Revolution* (New

Indeed, Deaton's observation of a divided Middle West was the product of a second migration into the region—a "Yankee invasion"—followed by two decades of gradually intensifying debates over the future of slavery within the nation.

Prior to 1832 most settlers north of the Ohio River had been born in the slaveholding South—mostly from the "parent states" of Kentucky, Virginia, and Tennessee—and came "over the mountains" through the Cumberland Gap or down the Ohio River. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 saw waves of Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders flooded into the middle and upper parts of the Northwest. The subjugation of American Indians and transportation improvements spurred settlement from the East. In Ohio, New Englanders clustered in Connecticut's Western Reserve, contrasting with large numbers of upland southerners in the Virginia Military District in its south and southwest portions. And in Illinois, where approximately 75 percent of Illinoisans had been born in the South when it attained statehood in 1818, nearly 75 percent of all new residents were northern-born by 1830.[11] Although historian Nicole Etcheson describes the antebellum period in the Middle West as one of "balance" between Whigs and Democrats, that "balance"—which mirrored the national political equilibrium—was achieved through conflicting political cultures.[12]

York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[11] James Ernest Adams, "An Analysis of the Population of Southern Illinois in 1850," (M.A. thesis, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 1967), 5.

[12] Nicole Etcheson, *The Emerging Middle West: Upland Southerners and the Political Culture of the Old Northwest, 1787-1860* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 11-12.

Yankee Migration

"Yankee" influx generated an immediate cultural shock in the frontiers and borderlands between upland southern and eastern settlement.[13] The introduction of large numbers of easterners just as slavery was dying in the Northwest led to increased social tensions between the agnostically proslavery attitudes of most upland southerners, antislavery and reform impulses of many easterners, and the Yankee critique of the Ohio Valley. Together they sectionalized the Middle West between 1830 and 1860.[14] Claiming that many upland southerners migrated north in order to flee slavery, historian Richard N. Current asks, "If *they* constituted a threat to Northern [Yankee antislavery] civilization, how much greater a menace must have loomed from the Southerners who demanded to migrate with their slaves," or slaveholders themselves.[15] According to historian James E. Davis, the Yankee penchant for reform, order, formal contracts, education, and belief in progress (as well as their desire to transplant those views) clashed with upland southerners' Gallic-Celtic and Jeffersonian notions of honor, family, yeoman independence, and the desire to be left alone.[16] Describing the period from 1830-1860 as a "thirty years' war" for cultural influence over the region, historian Richard Lyle Power insists that arriving easterners possessed a "cultural imperialism" based on a "northern gospel" of moral and economic superiority, hoping to remake the Northwest in their image.[17] Davis refers to these masses of eastern-born clergy, teachers, physicians, and

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[13] See John C. Hudson, "Yankeeland in the Middle West," *Journal of Geography* 85 (September 1986): 195-200 and "The Middle West as a Cultural Hybrid," *Transactions, Pioneer America Society* 7 (1984): 35-46.
[14] James E. Davis, *Frontier Illinois* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 3.
[15] Richard N. Current, *Northernizing the South* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), 38.
[16] Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 247-249.
[17] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 5-25.

social reformers as "cultural missionaries."[18] Using what Power terms "moral

geography," easterners tended to view their new neighbors local, rural, uneducated, and

poor, contentedly isolated and inadequately lacking their own zeal for improvement and

reform.[19] Although Power perhaps overstates the breadth of an eastern imperial agenda,

both groups sought to exert their political influences and retain cultural preeminence in

the region. Kentuckians and southern-born Middle Westerners noted the political and

cultural differences of these "Yankees."[20] Easterners, meanwhile, complained that

"Western men" were "largely of Southern origin" and "full of prejudice against

'Yankees.'"[21] One New Englander visiting Leavenworth, Indiana, on the Ohio River, in

1847, was more blunt, calling its southern-born inhabitants "lazy worthless scum."[22]

Geo-cultural background influenced voting habits, highlighting the discrepancy between

the Dixie frontiers, notably southern and western Ohio, Little Egypt in Illinois, and

Indiana's Hill Country, and Yankee frontiers, notably Ohio's Western Reserve, and

northern Indiana and Illinois.[23]

The eastern inhabitants of what geographer John C. Hudson terms a Middle

Western "Yankeeland" quickly adopted a host of derogatory nicknames for their uncouth

downstate neighbors: "Buckeyes" in Ohio, "Hoosiers" in Indiana, and "Suckers" and

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[18] Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 185.
[19] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 83; Charles Sydnor, "The Southerner and the Laws," *Journal of Southern History* 6 (February 1940), 16.
[20] Everett William Kindig II, "Western Opposition to Jackson's 'Democracy,'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1974). As Kindig explains, this label was derogatory and could include any northerner.
[21] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 2.
[22] Ibid., 125.
[23] Kindig, "Western Opposition to Jackson's 'Democracy,'" 38; On cultural differences between Ohio's Western Reserve and the upland southern portions of the state, see Eugene Holloway Roseboom and Francis Phelps Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), 172.

"Egyptians" in Illinois. Easterners termed Kentuckians "Corncrackers."[24] Newspapers in Chicago and throughout the western region commonly used sectional rhetoric against the heavily Democratic "southern counties."[25] Cultural slurs had deep political resonance. Like Kansas a generation later, historian Daniel Walker Howe insists that the exertion of New England influence into the Northwest in the 1830s resulted in a "clash of cultures" that often reinforced party expectations—Whig "development" and Democratic "egalitarianism" and individualism.[26] Whigs and later Republicans used moral geography as a political tool to label "Hoosier" and "Egyptian" areas culturally retarded and therefore politically stunted. These monikers meshed with preexisting stereotypes of upland southerners being particularly poor, illiterate, and landless. Data on landed wealth in the Middle West in 1850 reveal that the poorest parts of the Middle West— southeastern and western Ohio, southern Indiana, and southern and western Illinois— correlated with the upland southern belt of settlement.[27] Easterners disparaged upland southern speech as representing "the lower class of people in the South."[28] Recently arrived on the Illinois prairie in 1833, New Yorker Sarah Aiken referred to her new neighbors as "a low set of people, from Kentucky, Tennessee."[29] Such epithets and speech patterns conjured not only southern versus northern, urban versus rural, and pro versus antislavery contrasts, but also contrasting worldviews. These divergent national visions—one rooted in the river and proslavery thought and the other in the railroad and

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[24] Kim Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise: The Commercial Origins of Regional Identity in the Ohio Valley, 1790-1850* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 146-147.

[25] *Illinois State Register*, January 23 and 30, February 13 and 20, 1846.

[26] Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 162.

[27] For maps on the correlation between land wealth and settlement, see Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 26-30.

[28] *Great Republic Monthly*, June 1859, 635.

[29] Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 1-3.

antislavery thought—spurred new debates about the compatibility of slavery and freedom within the region and the republic, leading by the 1850s to a starkly divided Middle Western political culture.

Upland southerners commonly used the term "Yankee" to refer to specific areas of their own states and to anyone born northeast of Ohio, but especially those from New York or New England. According to historian James E. Davis, the expression carried with it a host of negative connotations, and most upland southerners understood Massachusetts and Connecticut to be the "hearth of Yankeedom." According to one source, "Southerners regarded the Yankees as a skinning, tricky, penurious race of peddlers, filling the country with tin ware, brass clocks, and wooden nutmegs." Settlers in Woodford County, Illinois, for instance, deemed the "genuine Yankee" a "miserly, dishonest, selfish getter of money." Thus, to be "Yankeed" was to be swindled by a New Englander shyster.[30] This southern-based image of the "Yankee" as a greedy and sanctimonious hypocrite contrasted with easterners' own understandings of the term. Many eastern-born authors who came to dominate the writing of county histories in the Middle West saw the term "Yankee" as an accolade. Edward White's *Evansville and Its Men of Mark*, for example, described early Yankee entrepreneurs as products of "good old English stock, propagated for generations in New England, and then transplanted to the rich soil of the West."[31]

This cultural divergence was not relegated to name-calling. Frederick Jackson Turner's image of "cow milking Yankee Puritans" and "bowie-knife Southerners" held

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[30] Ibid., 254-255.
[31] Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance: A Study in Ambiguity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 6 (Winter 1986): 343-370; Edward White, *Evansville and Its Men of Mark* (Evansville, IN: 1873), 328; Bigham, *Towns and Villages of the Lower Ohio*, 72.

true in debates over policy, politics, and public memory, and nowhere so much as in the popular imagination of the easterners who later dominated the writing of county histories in the Middle West.[32] Yankees and most upland southerners were highly acquisitive, typically looking to engage in the ascendant market economy following the War of 1812, but they differed over the role and administration of government. Whereas easterners tended to favor taxation and state support for public schooling and internal improvements, upland southerners saw taxation and public schools as intrusive and contrary to their more localized worldviews. According to historian R. Douglas Hurt, while public schools had a deep and important history in New England, "immigrants from the Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky frontiers usually were less educated and more concerned about making their way on the new land, and they had little formal education, time for it, or willingness to pay for schooling."[33] This departure over schooling, internal improvements, and the proper role of government exposed a host of other cultural divides.

Just as they constructed their own self-serving myths, idealizing the New England yeoman and the village green, easterners constructed a regional folklore by linking the perceived inferior culture, inferior land, and inferior politics—the backwards and the backwoods—of the rural and upland southern Middle West. Easterners critiqued the lack of industry evident in upland southern homes, farmsteads, and animal husbandry, which included the absence of fruit and dairy cultures common to New England and a fondness for crude housing. Observers also remarked on upland southerners' literary habits (or lack thereof) and simple foodways, including inclinations for pork, coarse cornbread, and

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[32] Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History*, (New York: 1920), 349.
[33] R. Douglas Hurt, *Frontier Ohio: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 382.

biscuits.[34] The two groups even differed in how they buried their dead, with easterners

preferring town or common graveyards and upland southerners "scattering" their dead in

single or family plots. Easterners also commented regularly on the strangeness of upland

southern behavior, especially political behavior that included, according to one Vermont-

born man living in Urbana, Ohio, a penchant for violence, mobs, nocturnal caucuses,

slander, and the carrying of weapons.[35] As one New Englander expressed on an 1852

visit to Wabash County, Indiana: "Great Western waste of bottom land/I'd rather live on

a camel's rump/And be a Yankee Doodle beggar/Than where they never see a stump/And

shake to death with fever n' ager."[36]

Cultural discrepancies illuminated political division in the Middle West.

Questions of internal improvements dominated the Jacksonian period, and studies by

historians Everett William Kindig and Kim Gruenwald suggest that migrants from the

Middle States and especially New England tended to favor Whig politics, protective

tariffs, and greater federal investment in canals and railroads.[37] Kentuckian Henry Clay's

American System sought in part to cultivate national cultural integration through an

integrated economy. This Whig desire for a mental and material harmony of interests

through "salvation by technology" was especially pronounced in the developing West,

particularly the regions dependent on both northern capital and southern markets.[38]

Moreover, Lower Middle Western Whigs tended to be conservatives in the vein of Clay

and not morally antislavery. Whigs such as Ohioans Thomas Corwin and Thomas

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[34] For the best examination of cultural differences and stereotypes between easterners and upland
Southerner s in the Middle West, see Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 92-135.
[35] Calvin Fletcher to Jesse Fletcher, November 21, 1818, Fletcher Papers, Indiana Historical Society,
Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as IHS).
[36] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 86.
[37] Kindig, "Western Opposition to Jackson's Democracy," 65.
[38] Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, 138, 101.

Ewing, for example, blurred the line between Whigs and Democrats concerning slavery throughout the 1840s, and Whigs in the Great Lakes region continued to view their downstate party members as unreliable on slavery issues.[39]

Yet as historians Andrew R. L. Cayton and Richard F. Nation remind, federal activism challenged the region's localism, including preferences for the authority of the white male household, local controls over restriction of peoples and ideas, and local controls over cultural questions. Moreover, as historian Donald J. Ratcliffe maintains, the market revolution was resisted most fiercely where people were most isolated from market forces.[40] Although parts of Ohio, such as the Western Reserve, became known as models of western progressiveness and educational enlightenment—a true "Yankee state" according to one Kentuckians—other areas, particularly southern Illinois and most of Indiana, remained anti-reformist and almost universally conservative in the politics.[41] This resulted in an acceptance of Clay's American System by Lower Middle Western Whigs, with a concurrent desire among many to relegate federal activism strictly to the economic realm.[42] As with slavery, Lower Middle Westerners in the second quarter of the nineteenth century hoped to strike a balance with the more federally oriented political culture espoused by many eastern migrants.

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[39] Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 494, 570, 658.

[40] Donald J. Ratcliffe, "The Market Revolution and Party Alignments in Ohio, 1828-1840," in Jeffrey P. Brown and Andrew R. L. Cayton, eds., *The Pursuit of Public Power: Political Culture in Ohio, 1787-1861* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1994), 99-116. Ratcliffe argues that market and infrastructural developments in Jacksonian Ohio resulted in less predictable party patterns than historians have credited. He alleges that debates over internal improvements realigned the electorate according to their preference for economic change, often cutting across ethnocultural lines, and sometimes resulting in urban Democrats championing internal improvements and rural Whigs denouncing the market.

[41] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 75.

[42] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 281-287, 300; Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and religion in Southern Indiana, 1810-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 1-3.

This sectionalization of the Middle West mirrored the national political scene. In Washington D.C., as Congress debated the constitutionality of Nullification, Nat Turner's slave rebellion in southeastern Virginia incited racial fear in the South, in Boston, abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison began publishing his immediatist newspaper, *The Liberator*. Although most westerners viewed these events as far away problems brought on by political radicals and cultural "others," their impact kindled, if only marginally, the new debates over slavery that were occurring for the first time *within* the communities of the free West. The culmination of this newfound tension between slavery and freedom occurred in Alton, Illinois, in 1837 when abolitionist Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered by a proslavery mob. For the first time in the West, white men had murdered another white man over issues concerning black people. Beginning in 1836, Cincinnati abolitionist James G. Birney was regularly threatened by mob violence, demanding he cease publication of *The Philanthropist*.[43] In 1837, Ohio abolitionist Marius Robinson was tarred and feathered in Trumbull County.[44] Although abolitionists were truly marginal throughout large parts of Ohio and Illinois, and citizens denounced antislavery radicalism and preferred overwhelmingly to retain cohesion with the institution of slavery, violence over slavery incidents were represented broader cultural clashes on the Dixie and Yankee frontiers. Like the rest of the nation, the Middle West had begun to fight the Civil War.

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[43] Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State* IV (New York: The Century History Company, 1912), 126.
[44] On the rise of violence targeting abolitionists during the 1830s, see Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 110-112; and Stanley Harrold, *Border War: Fighting Over Slavery before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

The Politics of Slavery

Although racial exclusion and the desire for mutuality with slavery had been topics of relative agreement and legal codification, slavery slowly became the most agitating issue in the Lower Middle West after the eastern migration.[45] Ohio's antislavery movement was the earliest and strongest in the Lower Middle West, gaining traction after the Missouri Compromise. Before he became the peripatetic editor ooof *The Universal Genius of Emancipation*, Quaker Benjamin Lundy organized the state's first abolitionist society at St. Clairsville in 1815. By 1834 the *Ohio State Journal* in Columbus issued a gag rule on the slavery issue. Southern-born radicals, including Quaker Levi Coffin and former slaveholder Birney, gave authority to Ohio's abolitionist cause and angered the state's conservatives.[46] With the onset of intense antislavery sentiment white males of southern descent increasingly found themselves ensnared between eastern and foreign-born settlers, whose antislavery commitment they feared, and their longtime neighbors in Kentucky. Though white supremacy and opposition to black migration and citizenship was nearly universal, sectional politics had mostly been restrained in the Ohio Valley and emerging Middle West contained a veritable and vocal antislavery presence.[47]

Immigrants born in northern free states inflamed sectional issues by challenging the relative white harmony that had existed *within* the West. One settler recalled that the Whitewater Valley area in central Indiana had been a boundary between competing political cultures of antislavery New Englanders and "Kentucky men" from the

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[45] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 296.
[46] Roseboom and Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio*, 206-232.
[47] Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 258.

slaveholding South.[48] Union veteran Thomas Sullivan of Franklin County, Illinois,

remembered that unlike the many Yankee families who were moving into the West prior

to the Civil War, his Tennessee-born family was "infatuated with the idea that the black

man was created for a slave" and thus remained proslavery and pro-southern until the

outbreak of war in 1861.[49] This association of moral geography and political allegiance

with sectional background and sectional politics happened in conjunction with the

national sectional debates of the 1850s and during the war itself. As one New Englander

avowed, referring to proslavery sentiment in Illinois, "A Northern State is better than a

Southern State, and the North end of a Northern State is better than the South end of the

same State."[50]

Such geo-cultural differences manifested themselves at the ballot box throughout

the 1830s and 1840s. Racial issues in the Middle West had a noticeably regional

dimension based largely on settlement patterns.[51] Although the "southern counties"

showed greater support for proslavery measures and Black Codes, voting margins in

Jacksonian Democratic strongholds such as Cincinnati began to shrink as this Yankee

voting bloc reverberated even in the Lower Middle West.[52] Although this cultural

"frontier" blurred as southern-born conservatives streamed north and northern-born

newcomers made their way to Ohio River such as Cincinnati and Evansville. Yet while

the Ohio Valley continued to attempt to reconcile freedom with slavery, the Great Lakes

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[48] J. C. Fletcher, "Early Indianapolis," *Indiana Magazine of History* 2 (1906): 73-78. See also John D. Barnhart, "The Southern Influence in the Formation of Illinois, *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 32 (1939): 385-387.

[49] Thomas Sullivan, "Reminiscences of an Old Veteran," in Franklin County War History, 1832-1919, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois.

[50] *New England Farmer and Gardner's Journal*, July 25, 1838.

[51] Brown and Cayton, eds., *The Pursuit of Public Power*, ix.

[52] Ryan, *History of Ohio*, 121. On the sectionalization of the Whig Party in 1830s Ohio, see Stephen Graham Carroll, "Thomas Corwin and the Agonies of the Whig Party," (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1970), 16-17.

region remained overwhelmingly antislavery.[53] Indeed, as early as the 1830s border Whigs viewed antislavery thought as threatening to the unity of their party.[54]

The Second Party System did not in fact break down in 1854 with the Kansas-Nebraska Act, but with the rise of antislavery Liberty and Free Soil parties in places such as Ohio's Western Reserve in the 1840s.[55] Although Indiana remained on the whole more "southern" than its free state neighbors, due largely to its lack of urban development, and southern Illinois remained a bastion of conservative rurality, antislavery politics also changed party dynamics within those states prior to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.[56] Yet the Ohio River counties stayed overwhelmingly conservative, and, despite its influx of anti-Jackson voters, Cincinnati kept its place as the "dynamic heart" of the western Democracy until 1860.[57] Although Gruenwald maintains that that regional identity in the Middle West began to shift dramatically in the 1830s in response to commercial ties brought on by the transportation revolution—the region's transfer away from river and toward canals and railroads—she also focuses mostly on western merchant families of New England background.[58] Even as the Mexican War and questions over slavery's extension dominated the national political conversations, the rural and upland southern portions of the Middle West overwhelmingly sought to retain mutuality between their conservative free labor visions and those of their slaveholding neighbors.

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[53] Kindig, "Western Opposition to Jackson's "Democracy,"' 33, 46.

[54] Carroll, "Thomas Corwin and the Agonies of the Whig Party," 20-22.

[55] Stephen E. Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism: The Transformation of Ohio Politics, 1844-1856* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1983), xii-xiii. Countering ethnocultural school downplaying the primacy sectional concerns in the destruction of the Second Party System, Maizlish argues that the slavery issue dominated Ohio politics during the 1840s and 1850s, beginning with the expansion issue brought on by the Mexican War. By 1848 sectionalism had come to dominate the state's political considerations, and slaveholder Zachary Taylor's presidential nomination in 1848 led many antislavery Whigs to abandon the party in favor of the Free-Soil platform, beginning the antislavery coalition in Ohio.

[56] Cayton, *Frontier Indiana*, 271-275.

[57] See Marion T. Trew, "A Study of the Growth of the Population of Ohio from 1790 to 1850," (M.A. thesis, University of Cincinnati), 1928.

[58] Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, xiii-xiv.

Despite party differences, both conservative Democrats and Whigs acted as sectional conciliators in the Lower Middle West. In his examination of antebellum Kentucky and Missouri, historian Aaron Astor maintains that Whigs sought a balance between nationally popular party platforms and regionally popular proslavery policies within a "border state political culture." Slavery—or at least the right of slavery to subsist—*was* democracy to such westerners, Democrats and Whigs, according to historian Christopher Phillips.[59] Defining democracy as *harmony with* but not the *adoption of* slavery, Lower Middle Western Whigs either supported or, more often, expressed a non-committal attitude toward slavery. As in the Border South, both Democratic and Whiggish whites in the Lower Middle West mostly emphasized the preservation of the status quo.[60] For instance, Indiana Whigs such as Richard W. Thompson and Edward W. McGaughey might simultaneously support pro-southern policies and express Free Soil sentiments, a western balance that historian Leon F. Litwack refers to as "Whig double talk" or "Whig apathy."[61] Indeed, Nicole Etcheson insists that most Hoosiers viewed support for William Henry Harrison in 1840 or Zachary Taylor in 1848 less as a partisan referendums or victories for southern slaveholders than as support for western moderates.[62] By concurrently supporting national economic planks and local social mores under the banner of western mutuality, border Whigs

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[59] Christopher Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate: Claiborne Fox Jackson and the Creation of Southern Identity in the Border West* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 48.

[60] Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 38-39.

[61] Leon F. Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 87-90.

[62] Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 28. Etcheson also claims that Whigs in Putnam County, Indiana, professed a similar desire to Democrats to quell sectional animosity and "cultivate feelings of mutual forbearance," 92.

proved the ultimate sectional conciliators in a region whose political culture was rooted in sectional conciliation.

By 1850 the relative rate of immigration to the Lower Middle West was declining, along with its relative Jeffersonian-Jacksonian political influence.[63] Changing demographics, notably the flood of Yankees and, by the 1840s and 1850s, huge numbers of foreign-born, particularly Germans and Irish, changed the ideological landscape of the West.[64] According to Phillips, "While the first migrants who had populated the southern portions of the states above the Ohio had accepted slavery as a part of the natural order, a second stream of migration from New York and New England states into the northern parts of those states had changed the complexion of their people and the tenor of their politics."[65] Even as the Middle West became oriented less toward the slave states and more toward the East, its political culture remained patently divided between its rural and conservative southern tier, its more urban and liberalizing upper tier, and its changeable middle tier. Although Democrats remained the dominant party in the Lower Middle West, the Free Soil movement, particularly in northern Ohio and eastern Indiana, and the rise of Know-Nothingism in 1854 undercut their influence on state politics. By 1856 vast numbers of "Yankee Democrats" split with the old Democracy on both ethnocultural issues and over slavery and began converting en masse to the newly formed Republican Party. As political historians Stephen L. Hansen, William E. Gienapp, and James L.

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[63] By 1850 Illinois saw a two-to-one ratio of northern-born to southern-born residents, and by 1860 that ratio jumped to three-to-one. See Dennis Frank Ricke, "Illinois Blacks Through the Civil War: A Struggle for Equality," (M.A. thesis, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, 1970), 24-35. On mobility and voting in antebellum Ohio, see Kenneth J. Winkle, *The Politics of Community: Migration and Politics in Antebellum Ohio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[64] Although there had always been a non-Anglo European presence in the Lower Middle West—French in Kaskaskia and Vincennes, Swiss in Vevay, and Germans in Harmony—the 1840s saw huge numbers of German and Irish settlers into the region, in addition to group migrations into the upper Middle West from Germany and Scandinavia.

[65] Phillips, *Missouri's Confederate*, 132.

Huston have explained, geography and sectional settlement became the most accurate indicators of political loyalty, with tripartite divisions in Ohio, Indiana, and especially Illinois. As Huston alleges, Illinois had "three divisions – the southern counties, which voted Democrat, the middle counties, which had strong party competition, and the northern counties, which by the 1850s was going anti-Democratic."[66] Elections laid bare regional cleavages within the Middle West, with the "southern counties" a shrinking though powerful minority.

Western Democrat and Whig politicians became symbols of sectional moderation. The aftermath of the Mexican War and the debates surrounding the Compromise of 1850 saw attempts by prominent Lower Middle Westerners to use regional identity and representations of Jackson, Harrison, and Clay to subvert sectionalism in the region as debates over slavery intensified in national politics. Hoosier Whig Richard W. Thompson of Terre Haute expressed the region's prevailing "conservative" opinion in the midst of the Mexican War, asserting that the "ultra feelings of neither of these parties have yet—to any great extent—reached the West." Democrats also urged "a great middle conservative course" and the state's party platform of 1848 insisted the "Democratic part of the Mississippi Valley knows no North, nor South, but like her noble rivers they comprehend both extremes." Indiana Governor Joseph A. Wright, a moderate Democrat born in southwestern Pennsylvania, expressed a similar opinion in 1850 when he

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[66] James L. Huston, "The Illinois Political Realignment of 1844-1860: Revisiting the Analysis," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 4 (December 2011), 508. Huston maintains that Democratic voters in 1856 and 1860 strongly correlated not only with the southern tier of the state, but also with native-born Illinoisans. This suggests that earlier Illinois settlers, those who came from the southern states, were more likely to vote Democratic and were losing their relative population and voting strength by the 1850s. In other words, geography, political loyalties, and regional identity were all intertwined. Huston, 513; Arthur Charles Cole also describes the political tripartite in Illinois in *The Era of the Civil War, 1848-1870*, 2nd ed. (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1971), 148-149; See also Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Wiley, 1978); and William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

denounced the "ultra-isms" of both "southern destiny" and "northern destiny."

Concerning himself only with "American destiny," Wright counseled, "The time has now arrived when the influence of the West, in her conservative spirit, should be felt in the settlement of all our national questions."[67] Thompson and Wright's vision of the West as a region capable of striking a conservative balance between southern and northern and northeastern extremists due to the intercourse brought on by her "noble rivers" was rooted in retaining its political, cultural, and economic links to both sections.

The Persistence of Western Unity

Western unity remained strong in the Ohio Valley into the 1850s. In addition to migration patterns and the professed cultural and political similarities of residents, another indication of the interrelation between the Lower Middle West and Kentucky lies in how cultural geographers have categorized the "southern counties" of the Middle West. Wilbur Zelinksy, the dean of modern cultural geography studies, posits that the entire region of Illinois south of the National Road and the Vincennes-St. Louis Trace belonged to the cultural Upland South.[68] Geographer John C. Hudson proposes that the Upland South ended at the thirty-ninth parallel of latitude, with an east-west "Yankeeland" extending from southern Michigan across northeast Illinois and into Wisconsin.[69] Craig M. Carver, in his study of regional speech dialects, and Henry

[67] Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 3, 46-47, 26.
[68] Wilbur F. Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 118-129. Zelinksy contends that the Middle West represented a fusion of many regional cultures that created a distinctive subculture, and therefore a "national average." He also insists, like Meyer, that the Lower Middle West constituted a core of upland southern migration and represented an extension of upland South culture.
[69] John C. Hudson, "North American Origins of Middle Western Frontier Populations*," Annals, Association of American Geographers* 78 (1988): 395-413; Douglas K. Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt: A*

Glassie, in his work on folk material cultural, conclude discretely that parts of the Lower Middle West were extensions of the Upland South.[70] In his more recent and thorough study of cultural geography in Illinois, Douglas K. Meyer goes even further, maintaining that the southern Illinois in 1850 was in fact part of the Upland South, with its "core" in Little Egypt and its "domain" spreading well north and west of the Illinois River. Moreover, Meyer insists that the upland southern core was often a place of New England and Middle State "avoidance," with southern Illinois being a place of striking "regional cultural conformity." Likewise, upland southerners generally avoided "Yankee northern Illinois". Although, according to Meyer, New Englanders, Middle State peoples, and foreigners eventually "won" the Middle Western settlement competition with upland southerners, the rural expanses of the central Middle West—the area between the National Road and the Great Lakes—were highly mixed and the Lower Middle West remained rather "culturally coherent," dominated by upland southerners leading up to the Civil War.[71]

Many historians have underestimated the cultural bonds between the Lower Middle West and the Border South during the 1850s, often discussing the Middle West as a unified whole or focusing on atypical abolitionists or New England-born merchants rather than upland southern farmers. Citing East-West commercial links as responsible for a shift from western to northern identity in the Middle West, Kim Gruenwald maintains, "When the foundation of the connections between westerners north and south

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Geographical History of Settlement and Migration in Early-Nineteenth-Century Illinois (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000), 284-286.

[70] See Craig M. Carver, *American Regional Dialects: A World Geography* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1987); and Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968). For a map comparing the limits of the Upland South among various cultural geographers, see Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt*, 293.

[71] Meyer, *Making the Heartland Quilt*, 165-168, 296.

of the Ohio weakened, the swelling freshet of abolition would be able to sweep away ties that had once bridged the river."[72] Yet abolition—which remained highly marginal—was thoroughly insufficient to destroy western unity. Although economic, demographic, and political reorientations were crucial, as Gruenwald asserts, war and reunion were ultimately central to the rupture of the Ohio River and the northernization of the Middle West. Indeed, most families and business partners north and south of the Ohio River tried desperately to maintain common ground by reiterating their anti-sectional identities, many church denominations proclaimed their allegiance to their southern branches, and politicians espoused national, conciliatory measures.[73]

Sectional issues continued to create considerable rifts *within* the free states. Although Richard Lyle Power emphasizes the extent to which "southern" and "Yankee" cultures fused, assimilating to one another to create a common "corn belt culture" and a "third type of American" by the 1850s, the political culture of the Middle West had in fact never been more starkly divided than it was in 1850.[74] The Lower Middle West remained deeply anti-abolitionist. F. W. Woollard of Lawrence County, Illinois, recalled a virtual absence of open abolitionists in the "extreme Southern part of the state" through the Civil War. The region was settled by "people of the middle class, from the South,"

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[72] Gruenwald, *River of Enterprise*, 140. On commercial links as they related to political loyalty and secession in southern Indiana, see Daniel W. Snepp, *Evansville's Channels of Trade and the Secession Movement, 1850-1865* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1928).

[73] Ralph E. Morrow, "Methodists and "Butternuts" in the Old Northwest," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 49 (Spring 1956): 34-47. Morrow insists that sectionalism did not sever the bonds of all denominations in the region, as Methodist churches in Southern Illinois continued to proclaim their allegiance to and affiliation with Southern Methodism during and after the Civil War.

[74] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 136. Power focuses on assimilation through intersectional marriage and migration; Regarding cultural blending in the mid-nineteenth century Middle West, travel writer Timothy Flint, *Recollections of the Last Ten Years: Passed in Occasional Residences and Journeyings in the Valley of the Mississippi, from Pittsburgh and the Missouri to the Gulf of Mexico, and from Florida to the Spanish Frontier; in a Series of Letters to the Rev. James Flint, of Salem, Massachusetts* (Boston: Cummings, Hilliard, and Company, 1826), 51. Flint noted that antebellum Cincinnati was a place of "Yankee dialect, Southern peculiarity, and Irish blarney."

according to Woollard, who migrated either "because they did not wish to rear families where slavery existed" or "because they were unable to own slaves" themselves. The latter were "intensely proslavery" and "against the nigger." "Few people would have voted for slavery [but] all abominated the abolitionist."[75] Mobbings of abolitionists were common throughout the 1820s and 1830s in cities from Dayton, Ohio, to Cairo, Illinois. Pro-slavery enclaves in the deeper parts of the Middle West, such as the southern counties of Illinois, even associated anti-slavery thought with abolitionism. As *the* cosmopolitan center and commercial hub of the Lower Middle West, Cincinnati was the region's most abolitionized city. Yet most citizens of southern Ohio and especially southern Indiana and Illinois associated abolitionism with eastern radicalism and viewed it as equivalent to secessionism, linking it to "Yankeeism" and "Oberlinism."[76]

The Fugitive Slave Law underscored this cultural and political division.[77] Although most citizens saw the Fugitive Slave Law as a concession necessary to the maintenance of sectional equilibrium, it proved most popular (and was most defended) in Democratic strongholds where southern identity and anti-abolitionist feeling was the strongest. Democrat, and future Union general and Republican, John A. Logan, for instance, earned the nickname "Dirty Work" for his support of the "dirty" business of re-capturing runaway slaves in southern Illinois.[78] Logan boasted in 1859: "Every fugitive slave that has been arrested in Illinois, or in any of the Western states, and I call Illinois a

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[75] James B. Woolard to E.L. Bost, April 22, 1909, James B. Woolard Papers, ALPL.

[76] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest,* 112-113.

[77] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 166-167.

[78] James Pickett Jones, *Black Jack: John A. Logan and Southern Illinois in the Civil War Era* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 33-51; Gary Ecelbarger, *Black Jack Logan: An Extraordinary Life in Peace and War* (Guilford, CT: The Lyons Press, 2005), 62-66; For overviews of the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, see Stanley W. Campbell, *The Slave Catchers: Enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, 1850-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1970); Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Harrold, *Border War*, 137-158.

Western state, for I am ashamed longer to call it a Northern state, has been made by Democrats."[79] While Lower Middle Western Whigs such as Edward W. McCaughey might support the Fugitive Slave Law, most Upper Middle Western Whigs (and later Republicans) opposed the law on legal or moral grounds.[80] Indiana representative David Kilgore spoke for much of his state when he claimed that all supporters of the Fugitive Slave Law in his state were southerners in the Ohio River counties.[81]

While antislavery whites in places such as northern Illinois or Ohio's Western Reserve could afford to openly critique the South and the Fugitive Slave Law, Lower Middle Westerners remained far more cautious. The ultraconservatism of the Lower Middle West on racial issues, even among Whigs and Republicans, was due to white supremacy rooted in racial panic. Conservatives feared black migration into the free states, and thus a desired to keep the slave system in place, or they feared black migration into the territories, and thus sought adopted the anti-extension platforms of the Republicans.[82] Highlighting the sectional divide within the region, "rekindled all the fires of fanaticism" in the Western Reserve, and culminated in the election of antislavery Whig Benjamin F. Wade to the Senate.[83] Meanwhile, conservatives in the southern counties, exemplified by Whig Thomas Corwin of southwestern Ohio, believed in conciliating moderate southerners and curtailing the slavery issue by advocating other measures, including a protective tariff.[84]

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[79] Jones, *Black Jack*, 44.
[80] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 28. McCaughey was one of only three Whigs from non-slaveholding states to vote in support of the Fugitive Slave Law.
[81] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest,* 115.
[82] Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 16.
[83] Roseboom and Weisenburger, 236-237.
[84] Ibid., 253.

Yet debates over the slavery issue led increasingly to violence between whites as conservatives vied with antislavery Whigs and later Republicans for political control of the more fluid central districts and the states. Pro and antislavery citizens living in close proximity to one another around the National Road produced social tension and occasional hostility. In central Illinois proslavery citizens formed "Anti-Negro Stealing Societies" in response to their antislavery and abolitionist neighbors involved in the Underground Railroad.[85] Despite the marginality of abolitionism in the Middle West and the prevalence of political moderation in the Ohio Valley, there were many clashes between pro and antislavery forces along the Ohio River between 1830 and 1860.[86]

The Third Party System

By the 1850s, the Second Party System was crumbling in the face of a national political realignment over slavery. Calling themselves the "National Conservative" party, Middle Western Whigs had already commenced an intraparty break from antislavery Sewardites following the presidential defeat of Winfield Scott in 1852.[87] In 1854 the issue of slavery's expansion into the western territories shattered the "sectional repose" of border Whigs and Clay acolytes—"doughfaces" according to their hard-line enemies— had sought to foster, isolating the party's "moderate core."[88] Their party collapsing,

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[85] Davis, *Frontier Illinois*, 292.
[86] Harrold, *Border War*, 10-12.
[87] Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 768-769.
[88] Arthur Charles Cole, *The Whig Party in the South* (Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, 1914), 285; Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 865; Stephen Graham Carroll, "Thomas Corwin and the Agonies of the Whig Party," (Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1970), 230. Carroll argues that slavery issues bankrupted moderate Whiggery (and ultimately moderates in general), displaced moderate Whigs such as Fillmore, Crittenden, Ewing, and Corwin, and hastened civil war; On the collapse of moderate Whiggery in one border state, see John Vollmer Mering, *The Whig Party in Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1967).

conservative and border Whigs soon gained control of the trans-sectional but short-lived

Know-Nothing Party and, to a lesser extent, fled to the emerging Republican Party.

Formed partly in opposition to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, a measure Lower Middle

Westerners largely supported, the Republicans were comprised of northern Whigs,

antislavery and anti-Nebraska Democrats, and nativists.[89] While Democrats and many

Whigs supported, avoided, or compromised on slavery's "extension question,"

Republicans had a clear party platform—anti-extensionism—that now defined the terms

of the political debate.[90] Despite party radicalism among Yankees and Germans,

Republicanism in the Lower Middle West was "composed of men who favored

conciliating moderate southerners" by strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.[91]

Most Lower Middle Westerners supported practical and sectionally moderate

compromise solutions, notably popular sovereignty, which supporters viewed as a local

and conservative antislavery doctrine.[92] Popular among sectional moderates, Illinoisan

Stephen Douglas's brand of popular sovereignty was culturally appealing to upland

southern Jacksonians, as it was essentially "a confirmation of the ability of poor white

males in the West to control their local communities," according to historian James

Simeone.[93] One Rockville, Indiana, man insisted that popular sovereignty was "the only

[89] On support for the Kansas-Nebraska Act in Evansville, Indiana, see Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletarians, and Politicians: Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850-87* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 114.

[90] Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 224.

[91] Carroll, "Thomas Corwin," 264.

[92] Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1978), 73; The most vocal champion of popular sovereignty and the most popular politician in the Lower Middle West by 1858, Stephen Douglas maintained that self-government was "the principle in defense of which the revolution was fought. It is the principle to which all our free institutions owe their existence, and upon which our entire republican system rests." See Michael Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 146-147.

[93] James Simeone, *Democracy and Slavery in Frontier Illinois: The Bottomland Republic* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2000), 10-11.

principle upon which the North & South can ever amicably settle the slavery question."[94]

Others agreed, and saw self-determination on the matter of slave ownership as the

ultimate demonstration of white, western liberty. "In leaving to the people of a territory

the settlement of the 'domestic institutions,' wrote another Hoosier, "something more is

understood than mere *niggers*."[95] Democrats were not the only Lower Middle

Westerners resisted political breakdown. Conservative Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois Whigs

were "not yet prepared to burn all bridges to their erstwhile southern allies" even as their

party was disintegrating.[96]

The presidential contest of 1856 was a litmus test on the future of slavery in the

western territories. Although settlement patterns, economic issues, racial attitudes, and

ethnocultural differences all played a role in determining party loyalty, the 1856 contest,

the first involving a Republican candidate, centered on the slavery issue. The term

"Black Republican" was popularized amid a range of racially charged language and

Republican candidate John C. Fremont, "the Pathfinder" of California, made immense

gains among antislavery voters, building a coalition of former Whigs, Know-Nothings,

and antislavery Democrats. Running strongest among antislavery voters in the Western

Reserve, Fremont won a closely contested Ohio in 1856, along with the Northeast and the

Upper Middle West. He lost a highly sectionalized Indiana and Illinois, with the central

parts of those states going for Democrat James Buchanan. Yet with a majority

antislavery coalition, Ohio entered into nearly a century of Republican dominance at the

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[94] W. H. Noel to John G. Davis, February 23, 1854, John G. Davis Papers, IHS; As James L. Huston claims, although Democrats supported popular sovereignty, most viewed it as an antislavery measures, insisting that the number of slaveholding settlers would never surpass the number of free settlers in the trans-Missouri West. Huston, "The Illinois Political Realignment of 1844-1860," 523.
[95] Austin H. Brown to John G. Davis, December 20, 1857, John G. Davis Papers, IHS.
[96] Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*, 865. Most of these Whigs became conservative Republicans or continued to seek political alliances with southerners through Know Nothingism.

presidential level.[97] As the Whig-Democrat party system transitioned to the Democrat-

Republican party system, Ohio, Indiana, and particularly Illinois mirrored the growing

North-South divide in national political allegiance.

The Republican-ascendant Upper Middle West continued to slander the Lower

Middle West as a place of social and cultural degradation.[98] "One thing is certain,"

declared one migrant and free labor adherent, "that where New England emigrants do not

venture, improvements, social, agricultural, mechanic, or scientific, rarely flourish, and

seldom intrude."[99] A Presbyterian minister traveling through antebellum southern Illinois

agreed, remarking, "not half the adult population can read their own names, and not one

in fifty can repeat the Ten Commandments." Lamenting that "enterprising people" from

New England did not settle the Lower Middle West, Yankee settlers compared foreigners

favorably to upland southerners, claiming, "Immigration from the South has brought into

the free states more ignorance, poverty, and thriftlessness than an equal amount of

European immigration."[100] An observer from central Illinois wrote to his eastern in-laws

that southern Illinoisans "sneer in this country at every thing of a Yankee origin."[101] One

Indiana politician understood this cultural segregation quite well. "The enterprising

Yankee of northern Indiana despises the sluggish and inanimate North Carolinian,

Virginian, and Kentuckian in the southern part of the state," he maintained, and

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[97] Vernon L. Volpe, "Ohio of Republican Dominance: John C. Fremont's 1856 Victory in Ohio," in Jeffrey P. Brown and Andrew R. L. Cayton, eds., *The Pursuit of Public Power: Political Culture in Ohio, 1787-1861* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1994), 155-168.

[98] "Remarks of John A. Logan of Franklin County in the House of Representatives of Illinois, January 12-13th, 1857, Upon Gov. Bissell's Inauguration" (Springfield: Lanphier and Walker, Printers, 1857), 16. John Alexander Logan Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

[99] Jane Adams, *The Transformation of Rural Life, Southern Illinois 1890-1990* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 44.

[100] Current, *Northernizing the South*, 38.

[101] Mark Wyman, *Immigrants in the Valley: Irish, Germans, and Americans in the Upper Mississippi Country, 1830-1860* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1984), 10, 17.

southerners were equally hostile to their northern neighbors.[102] Republicans used moral

geography to describe areas of Democratic voting. As one Republican observed during

the presidential election of 1856, "[Where] a State, county or even village is civilized,

enterprising, virtuous and intelligent, Fremont's majority is increased."[103]

The Civil War was being waged on the stumps of the Middle West in the late

1850s, owing to the region's representative blend of Yankee, foreign, and southern

voters. Whereas Democrats sought to avoid sectional issues and emphasized bonds with

the South, the nascent Republicans, advocates of free labor who rejected slavery's

expansion, were more willing to underscore differences between the free and

slaveholding states, differences they explored through a discourse on place and

identity.[104] Making a speech in Putnam County, Indiana, in 1860, Henry S. Lane

"appealed to the large number of Kentuckians around him" to explain why they had come

north and not remained in the Bluegrass State. "It was not because the soil was any better

than Kentucky," Lane explained, "but because they loved a free State better than a Slave

State."[105] Upland southerner and 1858 senate candidate from Illinois Abraham Lincoln

was more direct, predicting a war between slave and free states over the future of human

bondage in America. His Democratic opponent, Stephen Douglas—who avowed that the

American government had been formed "on the white basis, by white men, for the benefit

of white men and their posterity forever"—used the perceived aggression of the

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[102] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 48-50.
[103] Power, *Planting Corn Belt Culture*, 83-84.
[104] Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System*, xv-xvi. Hansen chose Illinois to trace the destruction of the Second Party System and the rise of the Third Party System because of its political representativeness. Hansen concludes that the Second Party System in Illinois broke in the 1850s over sectional issues, and that by 1876 it was fully replaced by two parties centered not on personalities but on organization, continuity, and uniformity within party structures.
[105] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 40.

Republican policy of restrictionism to paint Lincoln as more a northern "Yankee" than an

American or a westerner.[106] In a speech in Springfield in June, Douglas, whose

popularity was unmatched in the Lower Middle West, excoriated the idea Illinois making

war on Kentucky and denounced the state's Republicans because they "stand on this side

of the Ohio and shoot across. They stand in Bloomington and shake their fists at the

people of Lexington; they threaten South Carolina from Chicago."[107]

Yet African Americans found little solace within the Republican Party.[108] Despite

their organization and influence throughout the region, particularly in cities and among

Protestant Germans, Republicans in the Lower Middle West were a decided minority

during the 1850s and they remained overwhelmingly anti-black. Both parties were, in the

words of one black Illinoisan, "barren and unfruitful" on the race issue.[109] The measures

adopted at the first Republican Party convention in Johnson County, Illinois, in 1860

championed free labor opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories. They likened

their cause to that of past southern and western national heroes, including Washington,

Jefferson, and Clay. Like all "conservative" Republicans, they also denounced

abolitionism, emphasized the inferiority of blacks and espoused the separation of the two

races. Their platform was, in essence, racial aversion and free labor for white men.

Many also continued to support colonization, an old idea introduced by border state

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[106] Roy F. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Springfield, IL: The Abraham Lincoln Association, 1953), 3: 9; Stephen L. Hansen claims that Douglas Democrats had much to lose by emphasizing slavery and sectional issues and thus sought to avert realignment by sidestepping or claiming neutrality on slavery issues. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System*, 103.

[107] John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy: Its Origin and History* (New York: A.R. Hart & Co., 1886), 66-67.

[108] Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 267-270.

[109] Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery*, 135; Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 708.

moderates and the most conservative possible solution to America's racial gridlock.[110] In

fact, racial antipathy and exclusionary impulses among white western settlers—fear of

job competition and social mixing—led to the popularity of antislavery sentiment and the

growth of the Republican Party as exclusion became the surest way to ensure an all-white

free labor society. Although African Americans possessed some abolitionist and Quaker

allies in cities such as Cincinnati and areas north of the Ohio Valley, racism mostly went

hand in hand with free labor and the confinement of slavery.[111]

Free Labor White Supremacy

Virtually no northerners—Democrat or Republican—desired to live among

blacks, and this white supremacist ideology rooted in racial aversion permeated the

consciousness of white workingmen.[112]   A mass meeting of workers in Quincy, Illinois,

for instance, passed a resolution supporting black exclusion because it benefited "the free

white working men of Illinois" and undermined efforts to "bring free negro labor into

competition with white labor."[113] Such white supremacy formed the consciousness of

nearly all white working men, as historians W.E.B. Du Bois and David Roediger posit,

and white workers linked whiteness to republican citizenship.[114] As one Ohio

Republican maintained, "the 'negro question' is a *white man's question*, the question of

free white laborers to the soil of the territories. It is not to be crushed or retarded by

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[110] Donald R. Wright, *African-Americans in the Early Republic, 1789-1831* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1993), 176-177.

[111] Chapman, *A History of Johnson County Illinois*, 215-217.

[112] Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 110-111; Lipin, *Producers, Proletariats, and Politicians*, 5.

[113] Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War: The Story of the Copperheads* (New York: The Viking Press, 1942), 100.

[114] W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction 1860-1880* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 17-31, 700-701. See also David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991).

shouting 'Sambo' at us. We have no Sambo in our platform . . . we object to Sambo. We

don't want him about. We insist that he shall not be forced upon us."[115] The further

south one went in the Lower Middle West the more conservative and white supremacist

free labor rhetoric became and the more Republicans attempted to depict their candidates

as in regional terms as conservative westerners or border men.[116] White exclusion and

what sociologist Pierre L. van den Berghe terms *herrenvolk democracy*, a situation in

which democracy only applies to the master race, predominated in the antebellum Ohio

Valley.[117] Whereas scores of Middle Westerners divided over slavery, fewer divided

over race.

White free labor led to Republican support for proslavery legislation. Thomas

Corwin, best known for his proposed Corwin amendment to the Constitution in 1861 that

sought to forestall war by forbidding the federal government from interfering with

slavery in the territories, proclaimed that not only was the Fugitive Slave Law legal and

constitutional, but that any man who resisted it was guilty of treason and should be

subject to execution.[118] Republicans such as Corwin generally agreed with Kentucky

Democrat and future Confederate officer William E. Simms, who maintained that refusal

to comply with the Fugitive Slave Law threatened to "bring the Canada shores to the

borders of the Ohio River," and most proslavery Kentuckians possessed a general faith in

the maintenance of the law north of the Ohio River.[119] Kentucky Whig Francis Marion

Bristow explained this shared faith in early 1860, "We still believe that on our border,

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[115] Litwack, *North of Slavery*, 270.

[116] Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 40.

[117] Pierre L. van der Berghe, *Race and Racism* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967), 126. Similar to the proslavery "mud-sill" theory of the Old South, *herrenvolk democracy* assured that white men, fearing downward mobility, would never fall to the lowest economic or political rung due to their whiteness.

[118] *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 24, 1859.

[119] *State of the Union. Speech of Hon. Wm. E. Simms, of Kentucky, Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 9, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863), 4.

thus exposed, a large majority of our neighbors are our friends, opposed to interfering with our rights, and ready to assist us in repelling aggressions."[120]

Even as Margaret Garner's court case and Harriet Beecher Stowe's fictional melodrama captivated the antislavery North and highlighted the Ohio River as a cultural boundary, Lower Middle Western Republicans underscored the social conservatism and political moderation of their region.[121] No event of the 1850s revealed the extent of conservatism and anti-abolitionism among Ohio Valley Republicans like the Tory response to John Brown's Raid on Harper's Ferry. Whereas as Republicans in Ohio's Western Reserve held protest meetings on the day of Brown's execution and 1,500 Brown supporters, mostly blacks and antislavery Germans, gathered in Cincinnati to honor the "new saint," the editor of the Republican *Evansville Daily Journal* warned that the raid "damns, by a single deed, the ultra, fanatical faction of the Republican party, and renders then odious and infamous to the country as conspirators, traitors, and rebels."[122]

The sectionalism brought on by Harpers Ferry led both Democrats and Republicans north of the Ohio River to emphasize common regional bonds with Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee.[123] Conservatives and upland southerners in particular sought to daunt the impending sectional breach by drawing on a vocabulary of mutual place and culture with the slaveholding South. In a message delivered at Charlestown, Virginia, November 8, 1859, just days before the hanging of John Brown, conservative Democrat and future war opponent Judge Daniel W. Voorhees of Terre

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[120] *Speech of Hon. F. M. Bristow, of Kentucky, on the Election of Speaker, Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 25, 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863), 3.

[121] On the Ohio River as freedom's boundary in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, see Willie Lee Rose, "Race and Region in American Fiction: Four Episodes in Popular Culture," in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 121-123.

[122] Roseboom and Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio*, 259; *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 25, 1859.

[123] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 108.

Haute, Indiana, revealed during the Harper's Ferry trials the complicated nature of

regional identity among upland southerners:

> I come from the sunset side of your Western mountains – from beyond the rivers that now skirt the borders of your great State; but I come not as an alien to a foreign land, but rather as one who returns tot the home of his ancestors, and to the household from which he sprung. Nor do I forget that the very soil on which I live in my Western home was once owned by this venerable Commonwealth as much as the soil on which I now stand. Her laws there once prevailed, and all her institutions were established there as they are here. Not only my own state of Indiana, but also four other great States of the Northwest, stand as enduring and lofty monuments of Virginia's magnanimity and princely liberality.

Voorhees's words betray the earnest desire of western conservatives to emphasize

the nation's interconnectedness and curtail sectional feeling in the years leading up to the

war, but they also reveal something more. His image of "rivers" and "borders" disclose a

border identity that was developed and honed in response to perceived aggression on the

part of the abolitionist North and secessionist South.[124]

Voorhees's feeling of regional separateness— "western sectionalism"—was

rooted in the Northwest's ties to the antebellum South and animosity against the East

linked to political and cultural attitudes, often connected to race, and economic

development.[125] Western sectionalism had strengthened compromise positions, as a

"Convention for the Protection of Western Interests" had met at Evansville in 1850. By

1860 western sectionalism was being used to stave off the potential dangers of war and

secession. Jacksonian alliances, emphasizing a western political economy over the

moneyed aristocracy of the East and championing moderate solutions to the question of

slavery in the territories, held firm in the Ohio Valley.

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[124] "Argument of Hon. D. W. Voorhees, of Terre Haute, Indiana, Delivered at Charlestown, Virginia, November 8, 1859" (Indianapolis, IN: Daily State Sentinel Print, 1859).
[125] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 9, 4.

Conservatives in the Lower Middle West clung desperately to the regional unity they shared with the Border South. Indiana Governor Ashbel P. Willard, who made his political name in Indiana supporting the Fugitive Slave Law, states' rights, and slavery, spoke to a crowd of Hoosiers, Kentuckians, and Tennesseeans at a political banquet in Louisville in January 1860. He maintained that the Ohio River had always been amicable, and that her residents were willing to compromise on the slavery issue for the sake of national harmony. "Kentucky has no right to say to Indiana, you shall be a slave state; Indiana has no right to turn upon the other side and say Kentucky shall be a free state."[126] Willard's call to regional unison was well received by the border state crowd, highlighting the growing desperation of many in the Ohio Valley to hold the West together. Lower Middle Westerners and Kentuckians increasingly believed they represented a socio-cultural and political "center" or "middle" region between the two sectional extremes of secession and abolitionism—a "section apart."[127]

The Middle West was a product of two seedbeds that, by the late 1850s, had become noticeably sectionalized. Although both conservative, anti-black, and based in part on free labor among white men, Yankee Republicans and upland southern Democrats by 1860 offered competing national visions—one based on slavery's containment, the other on popular sovereignty—and they articulated dissimilar understandings of place in order to identify with such visions. Republicans possessed a more national vision of the future, yoked to eastern capital and industry. Democrats, meanwhile, a disproportionate number of who hailed from below Mason-Dixon,

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[126] *Indiana Daily Sentinel*, January 27, 1860.
[127] James Addison Cravens to William H. English, January 26, 1861, William H. English Papers, IHS; *Evansville Daily Journal,* January 24, 1861.

possessed stronger attachment to the slaveholding South. Lamenting this rift in 1856, the *Ohio State Journal* longed for the days when regional political debates centered on "our internal and industrial affairs . . . the era of banks, tariffs, and internal improvements." The editor grieved that, "the great and absorbing questions have been territorial expansion and slavery propagandism."[128] Despite historians' arguments for cultural assimilation, these seedbeds still resulted in two strikingly different cultural minds—two different Middle Wests.

In 1860, even as a decade-long series of political turning points and the emergence of the Republican Party increasingly highlighted sectional cleavages, conservatives in the Lower Middle Westerners continued to assert a western identity— rooted in political moderation, cultural centrism, and white supremacy—compatible with both North and South. Although historian Allan Nevins argues that by 1857 the North and South were becoming "separate peoples," this divergence was minimized along the Ohio River as conservatives continued to portray the nation's overriding political conflict as one between the extreme periphery and the moderate center.[129] The presidential election that fall, however, betrayed not only the increasing North-South political stratification in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois and the social divisions between the Upper and Lower Middle West, but also the degree to which the slavery issue had undermined border unity and the possibility of moderation, widening both the Ohio River, and transforming it, despite resistance by its white populace, into an avenue of war.

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[128] Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 233-234.
[129] Allan Nevins, *Ordeal of the Union* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), 553-554.

Chapter 3

"The boundary between contending nations": Political Crisis, Border War, and Restraints on Western Unity

In the fall of 1860, Jacob Hughes of Evansville, Indiana, looked to hold to political center as long as practicable. As the only region where all four self-described "western" candidates—John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, John Bell of Tennessee, and Stephen A. Douglas and Abraham Lincoln of Illinois—were competitive at the county level, the Lower Middle West proved to be the political and geo-cultural "center of the sections," according to Jacob's father, John N. Hughes of Hawesville, Kentucky.[1] Hughes and his family were prominent slaveholders, owning land in Jefferson County, Kentucky, Evansville, Indiana, and Mt. Carmel, Illinois, prior to the Civil War. With material and kinship investments in both sections and various members of the family living north of the Ohio River prior to 1861, the Hughes unit represented the mobile and migratory white western family. As early as 1859 the family seemed to support a border Democrat for president in 1860, from either Indiana or Kentucky, and hoped such a candidate would offer the best odds of a "conciliatory course." "Neither the North nor South, the East nor West would have anything to fear" from a border Democrat, a friend in Indiana reminded.[2] Yet with split of the Democratic Party in the spring of 1860, Democrats along the Ohio River were made to reconcile competing national visions within their party.

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[1] John N. Hughes to Lucy Hughes, June 7, 1861, Hughes Family Collection, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky (hereafter KHS).
[2] Friend to John N. Hughes, June 21, 1859, Hughes Family Collection, KHS.

Jacob N. Hughes, one of the Hughes family sons, had moved to Evansville in the mid-1850s and witnessed the evolution of divided sentiment along the Ohio River. Invested in the slave system, Hughes backed proslavery southern Democrat and Kentucky native John C. Breckinridge. Hughes believed that, even though "every Breckinridge vote east of this state would be equivalent to a Lincoln vote," Democrats could win Indiana if Breckinridge supporters consolidated with Douglas men. By that fall, Hughes began to realize the true divisions between the region's slave and free state Democrats. "The political world is all astir here, and Douglas and Lincoln rule the day," Hughes warned. Breckinridge, "the Noblest Roman of them all," has few or no friends in this place, and Bell is nearly as unfortunate." Although he was willing to accept Bell or Douglas, who many of his family members supported, Hughes was more alarmed by the number of "Lincolnites" in Indiana, which he contrasted with Kentucky. Hughes returned to Kentucky after Lincoln's election and continued to espouse political compromise. "It is folly for the South to reject 2 friends in the North for every friend she has in the South," he wrote his father, "It is simply <u>suicidal</u>." Hughes remained optimistic that southern allies existed in the Middle West and hoped that western moderates would "force republicans to abandon their position [of containment]." Yet by the outbreak of war, Hughes championed the southern Confederacy and Kentucky's "sister states of the Glorious South." Ultimately, he and his father became outright secessionists and several other Hughes men fought in the Confederate army. Annie Hughes, who had remained in Mt. Carmel, Illinois, through much of the war, became increasingly alienated from her adopted state as the war progressed. "There are positively no Union people in [Kentucky] compared with those we meet in Illinois and

Indiana," she later explained, "I thought my hatred of the North knew no bounds before I left Kentucky, but I find it increased twofold. I can positively see nothing to admire in the people here; nothing that is not utterly despicable." For the Hughes family, the imaginative fissure of the Ohio River region began with the presidential election of 1860.[3]

Citizens of the Ohio Valley responded to the election of 1860 and secession in a variety of ways that ultimately revealed the political and cultural separation between the north and south banks of the Ohio River. But it also suggested the divergence between the Ohio Valley and the rest of the Middle West.[4] Overwhelmingly, border people sought sectional moderation and political compromise, asserting their identities as westerners or border people. Republican free soilers, Constitutional Unionist compromisers, and Democratic Unionists and proslavery people such as Hughes family continued to espouse political moderation and conciliation during the secession winter. The presidential election of 1860 betrayed that there were multiple "Wests" and, although western identity and white supremacy were hallmarks of all four candidates, those concepts were interpreted differently north of the National Road and south of the Ohio River. Indeed, despite conservative edicts of western unity and mutual white supremacy, the presidential election of 1860 offered confirmation of how far apart the north and south banks of the Ohio River really were. The Border South's practice of slaveholding dominative race relations and the Middle West's culture of aversive race relations led in part to divergent moral systems and national visions in spite of mutual white supremacy.

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[3] Jacob N. Hughes to John N. Hughes, July 12, 1860, August 21, 1860, February 21, 1861, and March 10, 1861, HFC, KHS; Annie Hughes Letter, December 25, 1865, HFC, KHS.
[4] Douglas R. Egerton, *Year of Meteors: Stephen Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, and the Election that Brought on the Civil War* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2010).

These conflicting national aspirations and interpretations of whiteness were laid bare by the presidential election that fall.

The Election of 1860

The presidential election of 1860 proved that the Ohio Valley was less a "borderland" than many of its citizens were willing to admit.[5] The voting patterns and language surrounding the election reveal that sectionalism began to supersede the regional bonds in the Ohio Valley. Still, political loyalty along the Ohio River was more ambiguous than historians have credited. The election represented a veritable four-way race in the Ohio River counties, undermining the traditional interpretation that the campaign was thoroughly sectional. In fact, Lincoln and Douglas faced off in the free states and Breckinridge and Bell in the slave states. A popular sovereignty majority coexisted with free soil and positive protection of slavery platforms, even as voting patterns revealed how much the "southern counties" of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois differed not only from Kentucky, but also from the central and northern tiers of their respective states. Republicans made great gains over 1856 in areas with high percentages of eastern and immigrant voters.

Western identity played a principal role in the election of 1860 north of the Ohio River, as each party portrayed its candidate as consummately western in an attempt to downplay their inherent sectionalism, and each candidate had some claim to the title. Illinoisan Abraham Lincoln had been born in Kentucky, lived in Indiana, and came of age in Illinois. Although born in Vermont and raised in New York, Democratic candidate

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[5] The term "borderland" was sometimes used contemporaries to describe the Ohio Valley during the Civil War era. The introduction of the term into historical discourse was in Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1927).

Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois pitched popular sovereignty as an appeal to white western localism and had championed a transcontinental railroad with a western terminus.[6] John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, and John C. Bell of Tennessee each claimed the mantle of "westerners" among their supporters in the Lower Middle West.[7]

The supporters of each of these westerners trumpeted their respective candidate as a racial conservative. Although Republicans were virtually non-existent in some Ohio River counties in 1856, they transmuted what historian Eric Foner terms "free labor ideology"—their desire to replicate the idealized northern world of the white self-sufficient farmer and the small producer in the West—into a deeply conservative philosophy.[8] Republicans slowly won converts in Democratic centers by professing white supremacy, including warning against an antidemocratic "Slave Power" that would populate the West with black bodies and introduce a degraded form of aristocratic, slaveholding society by populist appeals, such as their emphasis on public land policies

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[6] For biographical treatment of Stephen Douglas, see Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973); and Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 199; The two Illinoisans—who represented the two Illinoises—had experience painting one another in sectional terms. During one of their famous 1858 senate debates at Jonesboro, Illinois, Lincoln proclaimed his southern roots and reminded his mostly upland southern audience that his opponent Stephen A. Douglas was a northerner from Vermont. Robert W. Johannsen, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates of 1858* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), 152; On the 1858 Lincoln-Douglas debates, see Harold Holzer, ed., *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates: The First Complete Unexpurgated Text* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993); David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); and Allen Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates that Defined America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

[7] Breckinridge's proslavery stance proved popular among upland southern Buchanan Democrats. Bell proved most popular in former Whig strongholds such as Cincinnati and southern Indiana and Breckinridge garnered his greatest support in southern Illinois's Little Egypt, the cockpit of racial conservatism and upland Southernism in the Lower Middle West.

[8] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 11; For additional examinations on the Republican party that elected Lincoln in 1860, see Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots for Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States, 1837-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976); Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978); and William E. Gienapp, "Who Voted for Abraham Lincoln," in John L. Thomas, ed., *Abraham Lincoln and the American Political Tradition* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986), 68-72.

for white men.[9] Former Whigs, antislavery Democrats, and nativist Know-Nothings who

joined the Republican ranks after 1856 took with them not only their western beliefs in

limited government, and local and states' rights, but also their commitment to white

supremacy. By 1860 Republicans in the Ohio Valley opposed "Africanizing" either the

western territories or the Middle West and firmly declared themselves the true "white

man's party."[10] Although Democrats painted "Black Republicans" as soft on racial

issues, Lower Middle Western Republicans responded by staunchly defending their

credentials as white supremacists.[11] As historian Stephen E. Maizlish explains, most

Republicans in the Lower Middle West were one-time conservative Whigs, and they

never stopped trying to court their former allies.[12]

     The language and platforms adopted at the proceedings of the first Republican

Convention in Johnson County, Illinois, on April 6, 1860, offer some insight into the

conservative nature of the Republican Party among upland southerners in the Ohio Valley

immediately prior to the transformational presidential election that fall. In addition to

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[9] Yet the new Republican party also remained weak in some places and virtually non-existent in others, especially those dominated by people of southern stock. As one amateur historian of Williamson County, Illinois, would later explain, the region was intensely Democratic in 1860, with perhaps fewer than 100 Republicans in the county, due largely to the fact that "the people of this county were nearly all emigrants, or the children of emigrants, from the Southern States."; See *History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin and Williamson Counties* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887), 488; Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980). Hansen explains divisions over political ideology in Civil War era Illinois; and Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

[10] Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967), 132-133. Berwanger cites Republican politicians including Iowa's James Harlan, Ohio's Thomas Corwin, and Illinois's Lyman Trumbull as championing the white supremacist tenets of the Republican party in order to appeal to downstate conservatives. Lower Middle Western Republicans often warned state leaders to keep extremists quiet, for fear of "losing the conservative vote . . . in southern Ohio and southern Indiana," 133.

[11] Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 268-269.

[12] Stephen E. Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism: The Transformation of Ohio Politics, 1844-1856* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1983), 238.

opposing the extension of slavery into all territories, Johnson County Republicans sought an all-white society not only in the western territories, but also throughout Illinois and the nation. Reasoning "the Negro and white races equally free cannot live in the same government," they championed the old border state position of colonization and resolved to remove African Americans, slave and free, to western Africa. They also reassured they had "no sympathy whatever with Abolitionists" and condemned John Brown and his raid on Harper's Ferry as "reckless madness." Claiming they were "down on Douglas like a darkey on a roasted possum," the county's Republicans insisted their position of preserving the open West exclusively for white men was consistent with the ideological positions of Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson. Despite the fact that Johnson County ultimately voted for Stephen Douglas over Abraham Lincoln by a margin of nearly forty to one, attempts by Republicans in the Ohio Valley to paint themselves as the more conservative of the major political parties speaks to the near-universality of conservatism and white supremacy in the rural Lower Middle West in 1860.[13]

Lower Middle Western Democrats had a similar vision of a West based on white free labor. Although Douglas supporters were staunch Unionists, believing that the Union offered the best protection of local autonomy and that popular sovereignty, rather than Republicans' advocacy of containment, was the most local and democratic solution the slavery question. Expressions of intense localism denied the federal government had the right to regulate slavery in the territories. Democratic popular sovereignty differed from the Republican free soil position over how best and most constitutionally to recreate Lower Middle Western society in the western territories. As Republicans saw it,

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[13] P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Press of the Herrin News, 1925), 216-219.

preserving the West exclusively for white men was foremost in protecting the *status quo*.[14] Emphasizing Republican limitations on the issue of race, historians such as Paul Finkelman, Robert F. Durden, and Eugene H. Berwanger have explored the degree to which northern Republicans were driven by racial prejudice, especially in the Middle West.[15] Most Lower Middle Western Republicans offered no moral argument against slavery, the antislavery quarrel being dominated by race-central "Slave Power" or economic and developmental concerns. Racial antipathy within the Republican Party in the Lower North, like its Democratic counterpart, was so deeply entrenched and internally consistent as to constitute a racial ideology. The editor of the Republican *Evansville Daily Journal* trumpeted the Republican Party as the true "white man's party" because, unlike the Democratic platform, it was centered on racial aversion.[16] As one Middle Western editor defended the Republican party against charges of racial egalitarianism: "The party which favors the preservation of the territories for the white settler, that takes the ground against the extension of slavery, that does not wish to extend

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[14] In a revision of Eric Foner's free labor thesis, historians Michael Holt, William Gienapp, and Joel Silbey argue that Republicans and northern Democrats mostly agreed on the fundamentals of capitalism and democracy and traditional Jacksonian economic issues and that ethnocultural issues such as temperance, immigration, and sabbatarianism were the primary sources of division in northern society leading up to the Civil War. While there were deep ethnocultural rifts in the Lower Middle West, which account in part for the Republican Party's success in heterogeneous cities such as Cincinnati and Evansville and its relative absence in rural enclaves, the real source of division between Lower Middle Western Republicans and Democrats was not the absence of free labor among the latter, as most northerners agreed on the superiority of free labor, but divergent interpretations and strategies regarding how best to legally achieve it. Intense localism and anti-federal traditions in the region and particularly among upland southerners are central to this thesis. See Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* New York: Wiley, 1978); Joel Silbey, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

[15] Robert F. Durden, "Ambiguities in the Antislavery Crusade of the Republican Party," in Martin B. Duberman, ed., *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965); Eugene H. Berwanger, *The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1967); Paul Finkelman, "Slavery and the Northwest Ordinance: A Study in Ambiguity," *Journal of the Early Republic* 6 (Winter 1986): 343-370.

[16] *Evansville Daily Journal,* May 17, 1860. Racial equality and inclusion, black suffrage, and other "visionary schemes" were viewed as radical and associated with New England, Yankees, and easterners.

niggerdom and niggers, is certainly the white man's party . . . Persons who oppose this party must be the nigger or black party."[17] Racial contempt was the fulcrum behind both Republican and Democratic visions of the West.

The Republican aversive platform—containing slavery in the South and restricting African American migration to the free states—diverged from the racial control prevalent in the Border South.[18] Many Democrats and Bell men likely agreed with one Carlisle, Indiana, resident who maintained that the border region "south of the National Road will secede and unite its fortunes with the South when Lincoln is elected." Yet the one-sided election underscored the extent to which the Middle West, although intensely white supremacist, remained agnostic or antagonistic toward the slave system and culturally divorced from the Border South.[19] Douglas won a clear majority in the Lower Middle West, with Lincoln winning several counties in southern Indiana and Ohio.[20] In the southernmost and rural parts of the region, support for Lincoln was minimal. In Johnson County, Illinois, for example, Douglas received 1,563 votes to Lincoln's 40.[21] Southern slaveholders Bell and Breckinridge, meanwhile, were very

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[17] Michael Morrison, *Slavery and the American West: The Eclipse of Manifest Destiny and the Coming of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 230.
[18] Slaveholders noted the divergence between race aversive and race dominative political rhetoric. See Anonymous, *An Authentic Exposition of the K.G.C., Knight of the Golden Circle, or, A History of Secession from 1834 to 1861* (Indianapolis, IN: C. O. Perrine, 1861), 25-26.
[19] Anonymous, *An Authentic Exposition of the K.G.C.*, 23.
[20] Lincoln won a plurality in the one-time Democratic bastion of Hamilton County, Ohio. In John A. Logan's Ninth Congressional District, Douglas won seventy-five percent of the votes and Logan himself defeated his Republican opponent with nearly eight percent support. Lincoln won only four counties in southern Illinois, three of which—St. Clair, Madison, and Bond—were adjacent to St. Louis and contained large German populations. Only in Edwards County, in the southeastern part of the state whose county seat was settled by New Englanders, did Lincoln score a victory among native voters. For returns in southern Indiana counties, see Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1922* (Dayton, OH: Dayton Historical Publishing Company, 1922), II: 663-665. Although Lincoln defeated Douglas in several counties with large foreign-born populations, including Perry, Switzerland, and Vanderburgh counties, Douglas won the region handedly and fared particularly well in southern Indiana's Hill Country, settled largely by upland southerners. For returns in Illinois, see Allen and Lacey, *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990*.
[21] Chapman, *A History of Johnson County Illinois*, 219.

competitive in the "southern counties."[22] The failure of this nonalignment strategy regarding slavery revealed that the Lower Middle West was out of step with the rest of the nation. As historian Stephen L. Hansen claims, the slavery issue was the most polarizing national issue in 1860, and attempts by Douglas and his followers in Middle America to downplay or remain neutral on slavery failed to resonate among slaveholders or in the Upper Middle West. Douglas had become a border candidate, and the moderate belt he represented was being increasingly destabilized between two sectional fires.[23]

Triumphant Lincoln supporters responded to his nomination by defending his conservative credentials and western moderation. "The Republican Party . . . is a *conservative* party," Evansville's *Daily Journal* declared, and Cincinnati's *Gazette* assured its readership that Lincoln was more Henry Clay than William Seward.[24] Lincoln "conservatives" claimed that theirs was more a white man's candidate than either Democrat owing to the Illinoisan's insistence that whites and blacks were incapable of coexistence.[25] In the eyes of such conservatives, Lincoln was a white supremacist, a protector of slavery and southern interests, and a bona fide nationalist who possessed the to skillfulness to keep the Union from dissolving.[26] Supporters innately linked these

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[22] Though Breckinridge polled well in Southern Indiana, winning as high as twenty-three percent in Daviess County, he fared best in "Little Egypt", whose higher concentration of upland southerners and more recent settlement patterns led its voters to possess stronger political ties to the slaveholding South and weaker free labor commitments, *The Evansville Daily Journal,* November 10, 1860; In Union County, Illinois, he won forty percent, with Douglas winning nearly the entire remaining sixty percent, Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War,* 69. See also Darrel Dexter, *A House Divided: Union County, Illinois, 1818-1865* (Anna, IL: Reppert Publications, 1994), 90.

[23] Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1978), 125.

[24] *The Evansville Daily Journal,* May 22, 1860; Stephen E. Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 238.

[25] *The Evansville Daily Journal,* November 14, 1860; *Evansville Daily Journal,* June 1, 1860.

[26] Evansville's *Daily Journal* received a letter to the editor from "a conservative Republican" who, in his correspondence with friends in Kentucky, was shaken by the way Lincoln had been "misrepresented" there. Lincoln's victory, he asserted, was not a victory for the North, but a victory over all sectional extremists who sought to "foment discord between North and South." The expected the Republican administration under Lincoln to be "extremely conciliatory towards the South" and predicted that it would soon "make all

racial views to Lincoln's westernness, his "Jeffersonian standard."[27] In southern Indiana, where backers claimed him as "one of the people . . . grown up and fully identified with the North-West," newspapers ran testimonials of older citizens who claimed to have known and admired Lincoln during his frontier days.[28] Yet conservative Republicans also understood what his victory meant for the future of slavery. A revolution had taken place, according to the *Cincinnati Gazette*. "Such revolutions never go backward," the editor maintained. "No pro-slavery party can ever again be successful in the United States. It has had its day."[29]

Despite conservative attempts to portray the nation's overriding political conflict as one between the extreme periphery and the moderate center, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois all went for Lincoln; neither southern candidate won a single county north of the Ohio River. The Lower Middle West *was* politically distinct from both the South and much of the Middle West in its desire to circumvent the issues of section and slavery. The transfer of political power in Illinois from "Egypt to Israel" accentuated the Middle West's political partition in 1860.[30] Douglas's victory in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois proved both a testament to the preference of popular sovereignty over the perceived radicalism of Republicans and southern slaveholders. The Lower Middle West was not, as it had feared, flanked by two extreme and far away sections of secessionists and abolitionists; rather, it was ensnared between the slaveholding Border South and the Republican-leaning Middle West.

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lovers of the Union in the South rejoice over the election of Mr. Lincoln," *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 14, 1860.
[27] *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 5, 1860.
[28] *Evansville Daily Journal,* June 7, 1860; *Evansville Daily Journal,* June 5, 1860.
[29] Stephen E. Maizlish, *The Triumph of Sectionalism*, 239.
[30] Etcheson, *The Emerging Midwest*, 115.

Yet Lower Middle Westerners did not view the presidential election as a sectional mandate or as "the final political contest between the sections."[31] Between ingrained party allegiances and fusionist and vendetta voting, a vote for Lincoln was not necessarily considered a vote against slavery, just as a vote for Breckinridge was not necessarily a vote for slavery's expansion or separatism. Often, neither communicated a sectional point of view. On the contrary, a vote for Breckinridge might represent, as it did throughout the Lower Middle West, a vote against the corrupt local Douglas faction, a memorandum to county abolitionists, or a vote in opposition to the urban manufacturing classes. Moreover, both Republicans and Democrats interpreted the strength of Bell and Douglas support on both banks of the Ohio River as a sign of western moderate solidarity and a victory of conservative Unionism.[32] The north bank of the Ohio River proved the last region of the free states where nationalizing influences broke down. Yet there was no sense of impending doom in November 1860. Citizens on the ground level in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois were most attuned to their day-to-day lives, maintaining cautious optimism about the prospects of restraint. Conservative Unionists throughout the Ohio Valley denounced equally the afflictions of abolitionism and secession and emphasized common social bonds along the border as disunion materialized.

Secession Winter

Political leaders on both sides of the Ohio River made efforts to consolidate conservative Unionism through the language of shared border and mutual western

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[31] Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War,* 75.
[32] *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 12, 1860.

identity in the face of national disintegration.[33] As historian Richard Franklin Bensel

argues, the areas of the North most committed to industrial development were also the

most ready to support coercion of the seceding states. By that measure, regions such as

the Lower Middle West proved slow to embrace an aggressive policy toward the new

Confederate states.[34] This moderation—nascent conservative Unionism—defined the

Ohio Valley, although it took on several forms. Comprised primarily of Republicans and

Douglas Democrats, unconditional Unionists linked the West with the white free labor

and militant Unionism—a "Jacksonian method," associated with Indiana Governor Oliver

P. Morton, Kentucky abolitionist Cassius Clay, and the editor of the influential

Cincinnati Gazette.[35] A majority camp of moderate Democrats and conservative

Republicans, compromise Unionists initially supported granting concessions to the

seceding states or letting them secede peacefully. Conditional Unionists, dissenters

("Copperheads") and western sectionalists who recognized the Confederacy but did not

actively aid it, comprised a third faction. Secessionists, who sought to either engage in

secession or actively aid the Confederacy, were marginal.[36] As time went on, however,

turning points—Douglas's endorsement of Lincoln, the Confederate attack on Fort

Sumter, Lincoln's re-election—led most of compromisers and many conditionalists to

abandon their conciliatory positions. This transference between conditional and

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[33] *Speech of Hon. F. M. Bristow, of Kentucky, on the Election of Speaker, Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 25, 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863).

[34] Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 78-85.

[35] *The Evansville Daily Journal,* December 5, 1860.

[36] On southern Illinois secessionists, see Ed Gleeson, *Illinois Rebels: A Civil War Unit History of G Company 15th Tennessee Regiment Volunteer Infantry* (Carmel, IN: Guild Press of Indiana, 1996). Gleeson examines one company of southern Illinoisans—mostly southern-born farmers from Williamson County—who joined Confederate army. Symbolic defiance was more common than physical resistance, and secessionist flags were hoisted in various southern Indiana counties in the days following Fort Sumter, including in Sullivan and in Dubois, and one allegedly flew over Marion, Illinois, as late as June 1. *Evansville Daily Journal,* April 25, 1861; Ecelbarger, *Black Jack Logan,* 75.

unconditional attitudes, between challenging the administration and embracing it blurred

unconditional, compromise, and provisional Unionism into a fluid concept that was

essentially variations of conservative Unionism.

Variances of conservative Unionism were typified by men like Thomas Minton, a

native of Rockport, Indiana, living in Missouri in the winter of 1861. Concerned about

the safety of his relatives in Kentucky and Indiana, Minton feared "a division of our great

and glorious union" would split his border family. Although he hoped war might be

prevented, Minton would eventually go back to Indiana to enlist in a Union regiment and

expected "Union loving men" on both sides of the Ohio River to "contend for the

constitution."[37] Men like Minton opposed both secession and the Lincoln administration

and supported compromise to a certain degree, but they were Unionists. Initially

claiming that the federal government did not possess the authority to quell the rebelling

states, often believed in the constitutionality if not the wisdom of secession, most saw

secessionists as "brethren," figuratively and often literally; others earnestly believed the

South could not be conquered.[38] Republicans echoed Minton's initial position. Even as

an editor in Henderson, Kentucky, just across the Ohio River, advocated secession,

Evansville's Republicans were resolved to conciliate the seceding states by letting them

"go in peace." "They should separate themselves from us," the Republican editor of the

Daily Journal confessed, "and "we believe that no human power can prevent it."[39]

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[37] Thomas Minton to Brother, January 23, 1861, Seay Family Letters, Kentucky Library and Museum, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky (hereafter KLM).
[38] *Jonesboro Weekly Gazette*, June 1, 1861.
[39] *The Evansville Daily Journal,* December 18, 1860; The editor believed that "peaceable secession" might rid the West of "the clog of slavery" and allow the "two systems to work out their respective destinies untrammeled by each other." Writing in late November, a Republican from Vanderburgh County, Indiana, asked, "What will the South Gain by Secession?" and advocated a "conciliatory spirit" and a belief that the East's abolitionist fanaticism and the South's secession were equivalent evils. If the states must separate, he maintained, "let them separate as did Abraham and Lot—let them part in *peace*." Ibid., December 5, 1860.

The initial inclination of most compromise Unionists—a majority of Lower Middle Westerners between Lincoln's election and Fort Sumter—was to champion solidarity with the Border South. Conservative newspapers, such as the Republican *Madison Courier* and the Democratic *New Albany Ledger* in southern Indiana, called for joint meeting of Indiana and Kentucky legislators and expressed hope that moderates along the border might serve as sectional arbitrators between North and South.[40] In mid-December, the *Louisville Courier-Journal* called for a "Convention of the Central States of the Union" to propose solutions and discuss the roles of their states during a hypothetical war. The "Central States," according to the editor, were Virginia, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. These eleven states, with generally moderate views on slavery and secession where two-party competition still existed, were "linked together in destiny and as a region" and formed the "Keystone of the Union." The *Journal*'s proposal was supported by Democrats and Republicans north of the Ohio River as many citizens in the Lower Middle West demonstrated a "neutrality at all costs" posture.[41]

This compromise Unionism was rooted in collective regional identity. Writing to a conservative southern Ohioan in support of the Crittenden Compromise, Kentucky congressman and future Lincoln confidant Garrett Davis underscored the regional unity of the Ohio River Valley: "Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois are our immediate neighbors and our kindred in blood as well as in country is scattered over them. We wish to live with

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[40] Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 100.

[41] *The Evansville Daily Journal,* December 17, 1860. Although the event struck a more anti-secessionist chord, similar language was used when the governors and general assemblies of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Ohio met in Columbus in January in hopes of growing border Unionism. Daniel J. Ryan, *History of Ohio: The Rise and Progress of an American State* IV (New York: The Century History Company, 1912), 152

them not only on terms of peace, but of the closest friendship. We estimate your

friendship more than we do that of South Carolina, Alabama, and Florida; but this

question between us, we desire to be fairly, justly, and finally settled." Davis explained

that if the middle region could only work out a compromise "excluding the extreme

North and the extreme South—I think that country would live together." John Allen

Trimble responded, "We in Southern Ohio can perhaps appreciate the proposition of

Kentucky of a national conservative state [in opposition to] extremists North and South"

that would "cement the bonds of Union." He advised that the "border free states . . . form

a coalition with KY, VA, and TN."[42]

Union meetings across the Lower Middle West endorsed a variety of responses to

secession, but public reaction—including peaceable compromise and peaceable

secession—was rooted in gradations of conservative Unionism. Cloverdale, Indiana,

held a Unionist gathering "irrespective of party" in which residents championed the

Crittenden Compromise and proposed a convention of Border State delegates to mediate

between northern and southern extremists.[43] Citizens in southern Indiana endorsed the

resolutions of a mechanics and workingmen's meeting in Louisville in late December that

blamed politicians and "extremists of the South and fanatics of the North" and assured

that the common working men of the border states would "soon make the North and

South clasp and shake hands across the Ohio River."[44] The editor of the Paoli *American*

Eagle wondered whether Indiana could possibly "cut loose from her natural [southern]

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[42] Garret Davis to John A. Trimble, January 14, 1861 and John Allen Trimble to Garret Davis, January 18, 1861, John Allen Trimble Family Papers, Ohio Historical Society, (hereafter OHS).

[43] Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 101. Etcheson maintains that many Putnam County Republicans saw the Cloverdale Union meeting as a Democratic function because Lincoln had already rejected the Crittenden Compromise. Still, many so-called conservative Republicans continued to support to compromise, some as a last resort, up until Fort Sumter.

[44] *Evansville Daily Journal,* December 31, 1861, and January 1, 1861.

allies" and "go with the Northern states."[45] Drawing on a shared western identity dating

back to the Early National period, Hoosiers summoned the legacy of Tippecanoe.

"Kentucky and Indiana had been brothers in other days," one Indiana speaker harked

back. "If the day ever comes that Kentucky and Indiana should be alien to each other,"

he continued, "if he were a Kentuckian he would be asked to visit these shores once

more, not as an armed host, but in the funeral garb, and gather from the battle fields of

Indiana the bones of her patriotic dead, and bury them on friendly soil where they could

rest in peace."[46] Meetings from Londonderry, Ohio, to Boone County, Indiana, and

Marion, Illinois, expressed similar sentiment, with attempts to find common ground with

the Border South and parts of the crowd identifying themselves as mutual westerners or

border people.[47] Yet the fact that participants labeled these gatherings "Union meetings"

suggests an explicit desire to see the Union preserved.

Meanwhile, secessionists and conditional Unionists asserted southern identities.

Citizens at a Union meeting in Cannelton, Indiana, maintained that Perry County, being

on the north bank of the Ohio River, was in fact "between North and South" and

explained that their sympathies would remain with the South, "no matter how much she

might be in the wrong." "If a line is to be drawn between the North and South," they

maintained, "that line shall be found North of us."[48] A Union meeting in New Albany,

Indiana, was so divided that one speaker, Judge Thomas L. Smith, denounced

"Yankeedom" and warned that he would kill any Hoosier before they marched across the

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[45] Paoli (IN) *American Eagle*, January 17, 1861.
[46] *Indiana Daily State Sentinel*, January 9, 1861.
[47] *Scioto Gazette*, April 30, May 21, 1861; *Evansville Daily Journal,* February 14, 1861.
[48] *Evansville Daily Journal,* January 10, 1861.

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Ohio to quell any seceding state.[49] Conservatives in southern Illinois, geographically,

culturally, and politically the southernmost part of any free state, were even more openly

southern.[50] "Let her [South Carolina] in God's name go peacefully," the *Cairo City*

Gazette declared in early December, "the sympathies of our people are mainly with the

South."[51]

Western sectionalists advocated the creation of a new nation along the Ohio

River. Their ultimate hope of preserving the Union lay less in recognizing the

Confederacy than in preserving the white West.[52] Newspapers such as the *Cairo City*

Gazette pushed for the legal division of Illinois and the creation of southern Illinois as a

separate state.[53] "There is a wide difference between the wants, the habits, the manner of

life, and the modes of thought of the people of North Illinois and those living in South

Illinois," the editor pronounced.[54] On April 9, 1861, just three days before the firing on

Fort Sumter, Virginia-born Indiana Democrat James A. Cravens urged compromise to his

fellow congressman, William H. English. Wishing to divide Indiana and Illinois along

pro and anti-war lines, Cravens named the imaginary state Jacksonia.[55] Although calls

for a Jacksonia-like secession of the Lower Middle West were few, Cravens and others

saw the northern half of their own states as not only different regions, but also different

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[49] *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, January 5, 1861.

[50] Many southern Illinoisans continued to display their "devotion to Southern rights" by actively engaging in slave catching and the supervising of southern "property" after secession. *Evansville Daily Journal,* January 19, 1861.

[51] *Cairo City Gazette,* December 6, 1860.

[52] The *New Albany Ledger* and other separatist mouthpieces explained that if the border West aligned itself with the South it could maintain its lucrative and historic river routes whereas an alliance with the Northeast meant dependency on Yankee railroads and capital. See Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 100.

[53] *Cairo City Weekly Gazette,* February 28, 1861; and March 3, 21, 28, 1861.

[54] *Cairo City Weekly Gazette,* March 7, 1861; The *Salem Advocate* also spoke of the possibility of the secession of Little Egypt and declared that an army marching through southern Illinois to attack the South would not make it to the Ohio River, *Salem Advocate,* January 31, 1861.

[55] James Addison Cravens to William H. English, April 9, 1861, William H. English Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as IHS).

and irreconcilable sections. Even as most Lower Middle Westerners prepared for war following Fort Sumter and Lincoln's call for volunteers, western sectionalists such as Cravens clung tenaciously to separateness for their region.

Kentucky-born Democrat John A. McClernand spoke for the typical conservative Unionist in the Lower Middle West in January 1861. Writing to his friend Mason Brayman in January 1861 regarding the secession predicament, McClernand insisted that politicians north and south had become unmanageable and that radical voices were drowning out moderate majorities, he warned that it was important for "the West" to "redeem the tone and energy of the debate." The "Northwestern Democracy" should keep "fanatics and factionists, whether pro-slavery or anti-slavery, at a distance." Rather, he claimed, western Democrats should "appeal to the conservative sense." "Affiliation, either with abolitionism or disunion, would be an affiliation with political death," he warned. Although concession, conciliation, or compromise might be offered, McClernand considered it paramount that he "stand by the Union," even in the event of civil war. Disunion would not be tolerated.[56]

Upper Middle Western observers attacked conservative Unionist sentiment in the Ohio Valley. The *New York Times* painted Little Egypt as practically a southern region rife with secessionists where Republicanism "scarcely ever got a foothold."[57] Even border Unionists questioned the patriotism of southern Illinois. A correspondent for the *Evansville Daily Journal* traveling there in early June called Williamson County "an awful place, and full of secessionists" who "hollow for Jeff Davis and the Southern

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[56] John A. McClernand to Mason Brayman, January 27, 1861 (typescript), Mason Brayman Collection, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as CHS).
[57] *New York Times,* May 11, 1861.

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Confederacy" and expected federal troops to be called in to suppress the dissension.[58]

Speaking to sentiment in Little Egypt after Fort Sumter, the *Chicago Tribune* reported in

late April that "the southern portion [of Illinois] may be tacked on to the Southern

Confederacy."[59] Newspapers and citizens in Indianapolis and Cleveland were equally

certain that large numbers of peoples, perhaps even majorities, in the lower portions of

their states sought to attach themselves to the Confederacy.[60] Indianapolis Republicans

mocked the "Kingdom of Posey" as metaphor for all lower county conservatives.[61]

Reporting on Vanderburgh County's "unwarlike citizens," the *Indianapolis Sentinel*

explained, "The business and social interests of the people of South-western Indiana are

largely identified with the South, and as a consequence their sympathies are strongly

enlisted in whatever may affect that section of the nation." The editor went on to

demagogue that the men of Vanderburgh and other "border counties" were raising

military companies not to assist in any suppression of rebellion, but to aid their Kentucky

neighbors in the case of a slave insurrection or invasion by any other state.[62] The

construction of an unambiguous North and South in which loyalty and treason were

absolute was taking hold.

This misreading of sentiment in the Lower Middle West by northerners *and*

southerners was attributable to a deep misunderstanding of conservative Unionism.

Despite ties to the slaveholding South rooted in deep commitments to politics, kinship,

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[58] *Evansville Daily Journal,* June 5, 1861.
[59] *Chicago Tribune,* April 30, 1861.
[60] *Evansville Daily Journal,* December 21, 1860.
[61] *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, November 9, 1860.
[62] *Evansville Daily Journal,* December 21, 1860. The citizens of Vanderburgh County emphatically denied the charges. The editor of the *Journal* responded: "It is true the people of Southwestern Indiana are on friendly relations with the people of Kentucky, and to yield to the South all its constitutional rights, and to aid in maintaining them. But these friendly relations do not grow out of any sympathy with or attachment to the institution of slavery. The people of Vanderburgh County and Southern Indiana are unalterably attached to free principles, free institutions, and free labor."

culture, and localism, and economic and political bonds with the North, Lower Middle Westerners understood the nation and their role within it through a language of place and identity—distinct from both North and South. One Evansville Republican avowed that separation be done peaceably and the "great rivers" never obstructed as to encumber "mutual dependence" and "Western trade." The two new nations could "agree to disagree" on slavery issues. If forced into war, he predicted, Hoosiers would go decidedly with the North. "The Ohio River—a well-defined mark by nature—would be the desirable and proper line of demarcation between two antagonistic forms of civilization."[63]

Border War

The firing on Fort Sumter on April 12 and President Lincoln's call for volunteers three days later eroded compromise and anti-coercionist majorities in the Lower Middle West. A patriot-traitor binary emerged, precluding neutrality. "Who will hesitate to declare himself *unconditionally* in favor of the Union?" the *Evansville Daily Journal*, which had been pro-compromise. "Nobody, unless he is of the same mold as Benedict Arnold or the Tories of the Revolution." "Men are divided into Unionists and Disunionists," the paper explained, "Recent events have drawn the line of demarcation plainly. We must be for the Union or against it. There is no middle ground."[64] This "widening" of the Ohio River led Middle Westerners to target slaveholding Kentucky, even with its Unionist majority.[65] Upland southerners quickly shed their southern identities. One Indiana man explained, "I WAS a Kentuckian, but when to be a

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[63] *Evansville Daily Journal,* January 10, 1861.
[64] *Evansville Daily Journal,* April 17 and April 16, 1861.
[65] *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, April 17, 1861.

Kentuckian is to be a traitor to my country, and her glorious old flag, I am no longer a Kentuckian – henceforth I am an AMERICAN." Advocating an immediate and coercive response to secession, the man maintained, "The thousands of Kentuckians in the Northwest cannot look upon these degenerate sons of noble sires, but with mingled feelings of pity, contempt and loathing."[66]

Despite conversions such as thus, palpable antiwar sentiment remained, particularly in heavily Democratic counties. Citizens of river towns such as Cannelton, Indiana, and Hawesville, Kentucky, held public meetings with neighboring Kentuckians to espouse peace and restraint. The editor of the *Cairo City Weekly Gazette* claimed in late April that the region's citizens were a "distinct race" of "mediators" caught between hard-liners on both sides.[67] Locals in Shawneetown continued to fight and even kill one another over "conflicting opinions as to who would support the government and who would not" well into the summer.[68] Citizens in Marion, meanwhile, held a public meeting calling for the formal division of Illinois.[69] "A bad streak is running through southern Illinois," wrote Evansville's *Daily Journal*, "which is very annoying to the great majority of union-loving people."[70] Civilians "feared that the approaching war would cause marauders and ruffians to flock to the towns and cities along the borders of the contending sections of the country."[71] A growing sense emerged that the region's border—so long a bond of unity and connection with the slaveholding states—would be

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[66] Ibid., April 29, 1861.
[67] *Cairo City Weekly Gazette,* March 28, 1861, and April 25, 1861.
[68] *Evansville Daily Journal,* June 19, 1861.
[69] Ecelbarger, *Black Jack Logan,* 70; *Chicago Tribune,* April 25, 1860.
[70] *Evansville Daily Journal,* June, 19, 1861.
[71] *Cairo Evening Citizen,* April 10, 1933.

perforated by war. As one resident avowed, "The Ohio River must never be the boundary between contending nations."[72]

Stephen A. Douglas soon gave full expression to conservative Unionism by articulating a position that came to define the parameters of political rhetoric during the war and the language of politics and commemoration after. On May 1, Douglas delivered a rousing speech in support of the prosecution of the war in Chicago's Assembly Hall. Condemning secession and throwing the weight of his support behind the Lincoln administration, Douglas proclaimed, "Every man must be for the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war, only patriots and traitors."[73] Although the speech failed to persuade some conservatives along the border, he insisting that neutrality—though not vocal dissent—was tantamount to treason. As historian Bruce S. Allardice notes, Douglas's stance, in which he simultaneously supported the use of force to preserve the Union and opposed specific policies of the Lincoln administration, laid the groundwork for future Democratic opposition to the war.[74] As Douglas's governing sentiments led prominent neutralists and compromisers, such as John A. Logan, to declare in favor of war, it became evident that most Lower Middle Westerners had far more at stake in the preservation of the Union than the preservation of the slave system.

Volunteers flocked to recruitment stations in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois as war sentiment manifested.[75] Staunchly Democratic southern Illinois also proved a

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[72] Thomas James De La Hunt, *Perry County: A History* (Indianapolis: The W. K. Stewart Company, 1916), 208-209.
[73] Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 867-868.
[74] Bruce S. Allardice, "'Illinois is Rotten with Traitors!': The Republican Defeat in the 1862 State Election," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 104 (Spring 2011), 98; For Douglas's "Patriots and Traitors" speech, see Johannsen, *Douglas*, 867-868.
[75] Despite assertion of historian Thomas E. Rodgers that political ideology was a major motivating factor for Union volunteers in west-central Indiana, heavily Democratic counties in Illinois saw substantial enlistments. See Rodgers, "Republicans and Drifters: Political Affiliation and Union Army Volunteers in

Unionist stronghold by late summer and went on to fill its quotas and enlist a higher percentage of soldiers than any other region in the Union.[76] By August, 1861, the *Jonesboro Gazette* addressed the role of southern Illinois Democrats in the war effort: "The Democracy of Egypt are most evidently in favor of strengthening the hands of the President in putting down the rebellion. Every Constitutional effort of the Administration to sustain itself meets their [southern Illinois Democrats] almost unanimous approval."[77] A similar trend occurred in Ohio, where the lower Scioto Valley, which contained "more people of Southern blood than any other portion of the state," was the first section to fill its quotas.[78] As town bells chimed out for war, Lower Middle Westerners began to adopt a new political identity centered on the Union cause. As efforts to "make the North and South clasp and shake hands across the Ohio River" failed, societies that had opposed sectional conflict on the grounds of a professed border state mutuality were embroiled in a war that challenged familial, political, racial, and geo-cultural loyalties.[79]

One of the more distinguished border crossers in the summer of 1861, Kentuckian Joseph Holt, spoke to these loyalties as he traversed the Ohio River from Louisville to

West-Central Indiana," *Indiana Magazine of History* 92 (December 1996): 321-345. See also Gilbert R. Tredway, *Democratic Opposition to the Lincoln Administration in Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1973). Tredway notes that predominantly Democratic congressional districts often outperformed Republican districts in recruiting. For southern Illinois enlistment rates by county, see John Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical Comprising the Essential Facts of Its Planting and Growth as a Province, County, Territory, and State* (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1892), II: 735-737. Edward Conrad Smith notes the swell of volunteers from the heavily Democratic belt stretching from Pennsylvania to Iowa. See Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War Era* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1927), 184. Addressing the high volunteer turnouts in his district, one Crawford County, Indiana, resident proclaimed, "Southern Indiana is a vigorous prosecution of the war, and we show our faith by our works." *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 15, 1861.

[76] Coles, *The Era of the Civil War,* 279; In Massac County alone, a staggering five-sixths of the total voting population served in the Union army by war's end. Some Egyptian counties, such as White and Hamilton, went on to exceed their quotas by nearly 50 percent. Victor Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 5.

[77] *Jonesboro* [Illinois] *Gazette,* August 17, 1861.

[78] Eugene Holloway Roseboom and Francis Phelps Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), 275.

[79] *Evansville Daily Journal,* January 1, 1861.

Jeffersonville, Indiana. Holt, who served as Postmaster General and Secretary of War under James Buchanan, was a staunch Unionist, undergoing his wartime transformation from Democratic slaveholder to Republican.[80] Speaking at the Union camp named in his honor—a camp that was built on the Indiana side of the Ohio River for fear that recruitment camps in Kentucky would serve to encourage the Bluegrass State to secede— Holt addressed a unit of Kentucky volunteers as an unconditional yet conservative Unionist. Espousing conciliation toward the South, Holt reiterated that the primary war aim was to "deliver" the South, not to "conquer" or "subjugate" it or "exterminate" its "institutions." Speaking to the contradictions of slavery's borderland, Holt admitted: "Indiana and Kentucky, it is true, are separated by a broad river, but in their history it has provided only a thread of light and beauty, across which their hands and their hearts have forever been clasped in friendship and in faith . . . these states so long allied, will not be divided." Yet the two riverbanks were ever more becoming the margins of a perforated line—first by slavery, then by political affiliation, and eventually by the strident puncture of wartime violence. By the summer of 1861 notions of a "violent border" had begun to dictate popular imagination.[81]

Indeed, Middle Western Union soldiers exoticized, stereotyped, and demonized the Bluegrass State from the first shots of 1861, imposing what historian Reid Mitchell terms a "Yankee vision of the South."[82] Although conservative Unionism of the north and south banks of the Ohio River mostly mirrored one another through war's first

[80] For an excellent biography of Holt, see Elizabeth D. Leonard, *Lincoln's Forgotten Ally: Judge Advocate Joseph Holt of Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
[81] Joseph Holt Speech (transcription), July 31, 1861, Joseph Holt Papers, KLM.
[82] Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 109. See also James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 148-162.

eighteen months, and conservatives used a shared regional identity to oppose radical war

aims, by the summer of 1861 scores of Middle Western soldiers were stationed in

Kentucky, coming face-to-face with slavery for the first time.[83] As historian Victor B.

Howard explains, the very presence of free state soldiers on Kentucky soil inflamed

proslavery positions, often leading to quarrels over policy between free and slave state

Unionists. This "Yankee vision" also included a free labor rhetorical critique—one

shared by Republicans and Democrats—that linked social degradation and ignorance to

the practice of slavery, facilitated hard war, and led Union soldiers, many of whom were

conservatives or had been born or raised in the South, to disparage the Bluegrass as

antithetical to progress. They widely described its inhabitants as "secessionist" or

innately "ignorant."[84]

Recording their first "border crossings" of the war, Union soldiers communicated

the imaginative power of formal political boundaries turned hostile. Drawing partly on

antislavery rhetoric, countless Middle Western soldiers quickly labeled Unionist

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[83] Indiana Democrat Joseph A. Wright explained in early 1862 that emancipation would disrupt the equilibrium between western free and slave states, warning radicals not to "destroy the peaceable relations between the people of Indiana and the people of Kentucky." "Although separated alone by the beautiful Ohio, we are essentially one people," Wright explained. *Speech of Hon. J. A. Wright, of Indiana, on Slavery in the District of Columbia, in United States Senate, April 1, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1862), 1-8.

[84] Victor B. Howard, *Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1862-1884* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), 12-28; Much of this critique of the South is manifest in antebellum Republican rhetoric. See Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 40-72; Watson Goodrich to Alvin, November 11, 1861, Watson Goodrich Papers, Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as NL); William Jefferson Helsley to Wife, November 18, 1861, William Jefferson Helsley Papers; and Johnson W. Culp Diary, September 7, 1863, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS); Alfred West to Wife, July 5 and August 22, 1861, Alfred West Papers, KHS. West was a traveling musician from Cincinnati who played in bands in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and other southern cities before the war began. He enlisted as a musician in the Sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the spring of 1861 and, like countless lower free state Union soldiers, he demonized the Border South and associated secession with slaveholding, despite the fact that his politics were not antislavery; F. N. Kellogg to parents, November 27, 1862, James B. Plessinger Letters, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as ISL); W. J. Green to Brother, January 26, 1862, W. J. Green Letters, KLM; George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 18, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, KLM.

Kentucky, a "godforsaken country" or "enemy" terrain and linked slaveholding with perceived social decay.[85] Ohioan Milton T. Carey was shocked by western Kentucky's social blight. "After you leave the Ohio River there is scarcely a civilized inhabitant for 500 miles." With virtually no "holy civilized white people," Carey deemed the "Sunny South . . . scarcely worth fighting for."[86] Encountering Kentucky for the first time, Indiana soldier William S. Bradford depicted the predominantly Unionist Green River Country as a blighted, unenlightened land. "I would have you understand that in Ky we see no churches (only in towns), no schoolhouses, and no barns," he explained, "but on all occasions you will see the nigger quarters as they call them in abundance."[87] Fellow Hoosier James Nathaniel Hill, a committed white supremacist who deplored emancipation, noted the stark contrast between Kentucky's "negrofied appearance" of "careless negligence and ignorant slaves" and Indiana, a society he believed was "kept in order by free labor." "The more I see of slavery the more I become disgusted by it," Hill vented, "Its tendencies are to debase both races."[88]

This appropriation of abolitionist rhetoric by non-radical Union soldiers altered their understandings of region and section. Despite conservative racial attitudes, these Western soldiers' linkage of slavery with social decay and disloyalty led to their eventual

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[85] See Alfred West to Wife, July 5 and August 22, 1861, Alfred West Papers, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky. West was a traveling musician from Cincinnati who played in bands in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and other southern cities before the war began. He enlisted as a musician in the Sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry in the spring of 1861 and, like countless lower free state Union soldiers, he demonized the Border South and associated secession with slaveholding, despite the fact that his politics were not antislavery.

[86] Milton T. Carey to Wife, March 4 and 27, 1862, April 1, 1862, October 10, 1863, December 25, 1863, Milton T. Carey Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky. Although he doubted the usefulness of the Emancipation Proclamation, Carey came by 1863 to champion hard war out of his disdain for the South and its institutions.

[87] William S. Bradford Letter, February 15, 1862, William S. Bradford Papers, ISL.

[88] Mary Elizabeth Steele to James Nathaniel Hill, December 3, 1862, James Nathaniel Hill to Sister, October 31, 1861, James Nathaniel Hill Papers., Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as LL).

acceptance of emancipation and hard war. The adoption of this "Yankee vision" by soldiers who rejected the very term "Yankee"—associating it with much-despised abolitionism—was a byproduct of encounters with the slave system, Confederate raids, guerrilla violence, attrition, and the perception that white Kentuckians were undermining Union aims. The widening of this "vision" also signaled a momentous step in the "long war" in the Ohio Valley—the slow sectional rupture along the Ohio River and the erosion of the antebellum West. Long a symbol of western unity and national expansion and possibility, the Ohio River was in the process of becoming a metaphorical partition not simply between slave and free, but between North and South. Indeed, sectionalism trumped regional bonds only as the war and its policies drove a figurative wedge between Kentucky and the Middle West. Thus a true "border war" emerged only after the connection between slavery, treason, and social stagnation gained widespread currency.[89]

Efforts to push the boundaries of the Confederacy to the Ohio River facilitated a sense of distance from the Border South for many Lower Middle Westerners and reinforced perceptions of Kentucky as a hostile, savage, and increasingly foreign place.[90] Although Republicans' charges of disloyalty in the region may have had the paradoxical

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[89] For a slightly dissenting view, see Stanley Harrold, *Border War: Fighting Over Slavery before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). Harrold maintains that antebellum pro and antislavery violence along the sectional border helped initiate the Civil War.

[90] Between 1861 and 1865 illustrated newspapers such as *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's* published dozens of mass-produced illustrations of border attacks and crossings that fueled the violent border narrative and Starling's image of "two Americas." H. Mosler's *Shelling the Rebels on the Kentucky Banks of the Ohio River*, which depicted a Union gunboat firing upon a dark and ominous Kentucky shoreline, was one of many illustrations that perpetuated the violent border narrative. H. Mosler, *Shelling the Rebels on the Kentucky Banks of the Ohio River*, printed in *Harper's Weekly*, KLM; On the "paper blockade," see Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 91-122. On examples of Ohio River watercraft seizures in southern Illinois, see Matthew E. Stanley, "'Purely Military Matters': John A. McClernand and Civil Liberties in Cairo, Illinois, in 1861," *Ohio Valley History* 8 (Spring 2008), 30. For examples of how Confederate guerilla activity led local officials to halt river traffic in Jefferson County, Indiana, see H. A. Koehler Letter, August 19, 1864, Hutchings-Koehler Papers, ISL. Koehler describes the river "coming to a halt." *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 4, 1862.

effect of enticing Confederate troops to overrun the Lower Middle West, fears of

invasion began before the first guns sounded, as local militias, or "Union Guards," stood

ready at every free state river town in April 1861.[91] In 1862, guerrilla raids on

Newburgh, Indiana, and Caseyville, Illinois, (where it was reported that sixty guerrillas

invaded the state and began looting murdering along the Saline River) fanned the flames

as local Unionists feared that the "ravenous wolves" of Kentucky might "ravage the

entire border."[92] The border war rekindled in the spring of 1863 as a diminutive force

under Confederate Thomas Hines invaded southern Indiana near Cannelton and

Stovepipe Johnson raided Shawneetown, Illinois.[93] Middle Westerners charged guerrillas

as "marauders," "highwaymen," "plunderers," and claimed that hit-and-run tactics

violated the rules of war and honor.[94] The day after the Newburgh raid, the state

surveyor's office in Evansville issued a public proclamation declaring that the State of

Kentucky was "overrun with robbers," all "acting under rebel authority."[95] Drawing on

the Bluegrass State's frontier mythology, the *Evansville Daily Journal* claimed Kentucky

truly was a "dark and bloody ground" which bred a "murderous style of warfare."[96]

The Confederate threat against Cincinnati in the fall of 1862 provoked the greatest

outpouring of invasion hysteria in the West to that point. Although the armies of Braxton

Bragg and Kirby Smith never seriously threatened the "Queen City of the West", the

panic and the rush to defend the city roused Union sentiment all along the border, the

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[91] Mary Burnett to Jacob Burnett, October 3, 1861, Edgar Jones Collection, KLM.
[92] *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 4, 1862.
[93] Jon Musgrave, *Slaves, Salt, Sex & Mr. Crenshaw: The Real Story of the Old Slave House and America's Reverse Underground R.R.* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2004), 453-454.
[94] *Evansville Daily Journal,* July 19 and 28, 1862. "They dare not meet an equal number of men in an open, manly fight," announced the editor of the *Evansville Daily Journal*, as it was part of their savage and depraved character.
[95] *Evansville Daily Journal,* July 21, 1862.
[96] Ibid.*,* July 31, 1862. With all loyal men serving in Union armies, the editor posited that Kentucky was full of either guerrillas or wealthy planters who countenanced them.

Ohio River became a veritable battle line in the public imagination. Cincinnatian J. Harper remarked, "If the Rebels attack and attempt to take this "Queen City of the West," then there will be such a scene of blood as earth never before witnessed. The "dark and bloody ground" will be made a thousand fold more bloody" causing the "true men of the North to pour down upon the border." "It is enough to make any white man, who is loyal, sick, to go to Kentucky and see her men," Harper opined, "hell is altogether too good for most of them."[97]

If conservative Unionism had galvanized sentiment against the Border South by the fall of 1862, John Hunt Morgan's incursion into southern Indiana and Ohio in the summer of 1863 contributed more to the "violent border" narrative than any other. Civilians responded by censuring Kentucky's inability to defend itself and, having formerly prevented local blacks from organizing their own militia unit (citing a desire for "d---d niggers to keep out of this is a white man's war"), arranging hundreds of African American laborers for Cincinnati's defense.[98] Members of Ohio's "Squirrel Hunter" militia, who had been waved goodbye with handkerchiefs and flags and the playing of *John Brown's Body*, disdainfully recalled being jeered and cursed on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River.[99] Although Morgan was turned back, the raid strengthened Unionist resolve and underscored the Ohio River as a hostile sectional border. Writing from central Kentucky, southern Indiana soldier Francis P. Houser complained about Morgan

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[97] J. Harper to William Single, September 12, 1862, J. Harper Letter, KLM; For another letter discussing civilian fears of a Confederate invasion into the Cincinnati area, Sarah Hendricks to Abram W. Hendricks, September 12, 1862, Abram W. Hendricks Papers, IHS. See also Isaac Newton McMillan Letter, June 21, 1863, Isaac Newton McMillan Papers, ISL. A southern Ohio soldier, McMillan explains how a "Rebel raid into Indiana" had galvanized the local population against the South. See also Joseph Latshaw Horr to Edward C. Washington, September 15, 1862, Joseph Latshaw Horr Papers, FHS.

[98] *Cincinnati Commercial*, April 19, 1861; William Martin Dickson, *Enrollment and Report of the "Black Brigade" of Cincinnati* (Cincinnati: N.p., 1864).

[99] Louis Leonard Tucker, *Cincinnati During the Civil War* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 1962), 30.

and local support for his raiders: "I am satisfied there is not a union man this side of Green River . . . I am willing to Burn every thing in Dixie."[100] Hoosier soldier John Lucas Harding agreed, and considered Morgan's Raid "the best thing that had happened to the North since the breaking out of the war." It fostered a common purpose against secession and the slaveholding South, he alleged, and "let out Northern citizens know what war was."[101]

The border war of 1862-1863 altered Ohioan Rudolph Williams's perceptions of the Ohio River and led him toward practical abolitionism and the Republican Party. A private in the 111th Ohio Infantry, Williams's initial impressions of Kentucky were overwhelmingly negative. "You cannot imagine the difference between Kentucky and Ohio and Indiana," he wrote home. Kentucky, he maintained, was "the land of the traitor and the home of the slave," contrasting sharply with the loyal, free labor society north of the Ohio River. Williams's regiment pursued John Hunt Morgan into Indiana in the summer of 1863, and, crossing the Ohio into New Albany, Indiana, he delighted at the prospect of "following the enemies of our country into the Glorious North" and "getting into America once again as the boys call this side [of] the Ohio." Shuffling on campaign between New Albany and Portsmouth, Ohio, Williams came to view the Ohio River as not only a sectional partition between slave society and free, but as a barrier between two antagonistic civilizations, one loyal and one disloyal. By late 1863 he deemed Bluegrass slaveholders "the meanest class of humanity that ever Kentucky was infested with. I think if instead of colonizing the Negroes they would hang their masters Kentucky would be a reasonably fair place to live." Describing his own growing Republican sympathies

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[100] Francis P. Houser Letter, November 23, 1863, Houser Mss., LL.
[101] John Lucas Harding to Laban Harding, August 5, 1863, Harding Mss., LL.

and the intensity of pro-Confederate sentiment around Bowling Green, Williams explained, "I hope the President will call for more men or order a draft and increase the army to about twelve hundred thousand and then begin at the Ohio River and hang every man between there and the Gulf of Mexico."[102] .

The Conservative Unionist "Vision"

Confederate raids, guerrilla violence, encounters with the slave system, and the perception that white Kentuckians were undermining the war's aims conspired with wartime attrition to lead countless Union soldiers, even former Kentuckians, to demonize the Border South by the "Yankee vision."[103] Native-born Kentuckians, such as Ohio soldier George Henry Weeks, came to Confederatize their birth state as one of "prowling guerrillas."[104] Harry Virgil Smith, who was born in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and raised by his slaveholding grandfather before moving to southern Indiana in the mid-1850s, still considered the Bluegrass his "native state." Yet by 1863 he supported the Emancipation Proclamation and considered the Upper South "the most Godforsaken

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[102] Rudolph Williams to Sister, August 9, 1863, July 7, 1863, August, 1863, and December 29, 1862, Rudolph Williams Mss., LL; Years later, civilians and veterans alike remembered episodes such as Morgan's Raid into southeastern Indiana and southwestern Ohio as central to the galvanization of Unionist sentiment. See David Hastings Moore, *An Escape That Did Not Set Me Free: A Byproduct of Morgan's Raid, A Paper Read Before the Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion, April 7, 1915* (Cincinnati: N.p., 1915). Moore, a lieutenant colonel in the 125th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, claimed that Morgan's Raid counteracted war opposition in the Middle West during the apex of war disenchantment and galvanized the region and consolidated unionism. His paper is also a captive narrative and a reconciliatory paean; Benjamin Franklin Scribner, *How Soldiers Are Made; or, The War as I Saw It Under Buell, Rosecrans, Thomas, Grant, and Sherman* (New Albany, IN: Chicago, Donohue & Henneberry, 1887). Scribner, of New Albany, Indiana, recalled that Confederate raids into Indiana and Ohio, along with encounters with southern unionists and vitriolic southern women, played a role in turning his border men into "practical abolitionists," 131-138.
[103] Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers*, 109.
[104] George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 18, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, KLM.

countrys I have ever seen."[105] The reactions of Kentucky's civilians to Union mid-war

policies, particularly emancipation and black enlistment, also drove a wedge between

Kentuckians and their northern neighbors.

Hoosier John S. Applegate confessed, "I never thought that there was so much

ignorance and poverty in the state of Ky." Insisting slavery bred a society of "extortioners

traitors thieves and traitors."[106] William Allen Clark of Clinton County, Indiana, a self-

described "Negro hater," grew increasingly antislavery throughout 1862 and 1863 due to

what he deemed as slavery's uncivilizing effects on white society in Kentucky.[107] A

farmer from Owen County in the 33rd Indiana Infantry, James Nathaniel Hill, noted the

stark contrast between Kentucky's "negrofied appearance" of "careless negligence and

ignorant slaves" and Indiana, a society he believed was "kept in order by free labor."

"The more I see of slavery the more I become disgusted by it," Hill continued, "Its

tendencies are to debase both races."[108] Although he remained committed to racial

exclusion, James Nathaniel Hill and other conservative Unionists along the border came

to see a link between slavery and secession, between human bondage and disloyalty and

social and political degradation, that enabled them to make war on the institution in spite

of their professed white supremacy.

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[105] Harry Virgil Smith, ed., *Life and Letters of Pvt. Samuel Thomas Smith, 15th Indiana Regiment Volunteers, Civil War* (Bloomington, IN: Monroe County Historical Society, 1976), 7, 58, 77; Smith's belief in free labor for white men led him to denounce "most damnable" Copperheads, "traitors" on the home front, and the Kentucky's slaveholder "aristocracy" for making slaves of poor whites and "putting them on the equality with the Negro."

[106] John S. Applegate to Wife, September 21, 1862, April 26, 1864, Applegate Mss., LL.

[107] William Allen Clark to Father, October 15, 1862, November 9, 1862, August 9, 1863, William Allen Clark Mss., LL; See Margaret Black Tatum, ed., "'Please Send Stamps': The Civil War Letters of William Allen Clark," *Indiana Magazine of History* 91 (June 1995): 197-225.

[108] Mary Elizabeth Steele to James Nathaniel Hill, December 3, 1862, James Nathaniel Hill to Sister, October 31, 1861, Hill Mss., LL.

Other soldiers perceived physical differences between "degraded" Kentuckians

and free state men. "As a general thing KY soldiers are a dirty set of fellows their

officers don't seem to make them keep themselves clean," one soldier maintained.[109]

"We know a Kentuckian by his long hair," another insisted[110] Writing to his family in

Somerset, Kentucky, George Henry Weeks described the Kentucky "rebs" as the

"dirtiest, ragidest, filthiest set of human beings I ever saw."[111] This sectional antipathy

was observed and reciprocated not only by Kentucky's civilians, but also by Kentuckians

in the Union army. Samuel M. Starling was a slaveholding Unionist who, by 1862,

lamented that his native state had been "desolated" not by the Confederate enemy, but by

northerners, "unrestrained marauders who were for the most part indiscriminate in their

ruffiansism." "I have grave objections to the Yankees who compose our army, they

appear to believe there are no loyal men in our state, that they are all rebels & that they

should be so treated." By the second year of the war, Starling, who would ultimately lose

two sons fighting on opposite sides of the conflict, felt the nation "had better begin again

at Plymouth Rock, and Jamestown, than to have two republics in the United States." As

conservative Unionism began to erode in Kentucky, many agreed that it was better to

have always had a two Americas than fight what was, by late 1862, a "cursed war."[112]

The election of 1860 laid bare the political divisions caused by slavery; the

secession winter eroded compromise majorities; and the border war strengthened

conservative Unionism in the Lower Middle West even as conservative Unionism in

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[109] Letter from John (unidentified Union soldier), May 8, 1863, KLM.

[110] Williamson Dixon Ward, October 26, 1861, Williamson Dixon Ward Diary, KLM.

[111] George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 27, 1863, GHWL, KLM.

[112] Samuel M. Starling to Daughters, October 30 and November 14, 1862, Lewis-Starling Collection, KLM.

Kentucky began to diminish in the fall of 1862. Warning against "secessionists on the border," Evansville's *Daily Journal* warned there were increasingly "two sections" now, and patriots could best be identified by their faithfulness toward the federal government.[113] Indeed, the Ohio River Valley—the antebellum West—continued to sub-divide as communities north of the Ohio River ever more adopted a northern identity associated with the Union cause. Although Abraham Lincoln championed Unionism everywhere and spoke to the arbitrariness of sectional demarcations in his Second Annual Address to Congress— explaining the futility of such a line should it be placed either "between the Free and Slave country" or "South of Kentucky"—by late 1862 more and more residents of the Ohio Valley wrote and spoke of "the border" as if it was a monolithic, historic fact; as though it had always been.[114] In New Albany, Indiana, the *Daily Ledger* printed Sir Walter Scott's "Border Ballad" on the front page. Often associated with the moonlight and magnolias of the Old South, Scott wrote of a drama in which "banners spread," "war seeds bound," and "blue bonnets come over the border."[115] Yet Scottish poems that served as oblique paens to militarism and metaphors for Union glory did not fully replace the regionalism that so long linked the two banks of the Ohio. If the south bank of the Ohio River was where, according to one Kentuckian, "treason & loyalty overlap," then the north bank was increasingly where conservative Unionism reigned and, often, loyalty was challenged.[116] No issue stirred more dissension among

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[113] *Evansville Daily Journal,* July 31, 1862.
[114] John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy: Its Origin and History* (New York: A.R. Hart & Co., 1886), 444-448.
[115] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 19, 1862.
[116] Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 4.

loyal Middle Westerners or betrayed greater sectional and regional pliability than the

issue of black liberation.

Chapter 4

"The War Fattens on the Blood of Western Men": Emancipation, Regional Identity, and the Limits of Practical Abolitionism on Slavery's Western Border

As a professed Union man who hoped to do his duty for the cause, Robert Perry Hoge enlisted as a corporal in the 104th Illinois Infantry in New Rutledge in August 1862. Although the wheelwright, farmer, and preacher was middle-aged, a family man, and born in the now-seceded state of Virginia, as a second-wave volunteer he was motivated by many of the same impulses that led other, more typical soldiers to sign up—duty, manhood, and millennial-type destiny. His conservative political beliefs—political moderation, racial exclusion, and local attachments to place—were typical of Middle Westerners, especially the southern-born. He despised "Yankee Abolitionists" and the war's radical policies.[1] Hoge always carried a fondness for southerners and the South, feelings that surfaced when he was captured in Tennessee in December 1862. Writing of "friendly" southerners and Confederates' "acts of benevolence," Hoge was "sorry to war with such a noble people," lamenting that "once happy families [in the South]" were "made desolate by the ravages of war."[2]

Exchanged in January 1863, Hoge's dissent devolved into outright demoralization. "From what I see of the Southern Confederacy I must say I have little hopes of conquering them," Hoge explained. His criticism of the Lincoln administration and its liberalizing war aims grew. Although still a Unionist, Hoge also saw himself as a

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[1] Robert Perry Hoge, December 7, 1862, Robert Perry Hoge Diary, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as CHS). Hogue was born in 1821 in Loudon County, Virginia, moved to a farm near Rutland, Illinois, in 1840 at the age of nineteen.
[2] Ibid., December 26, 1862, and January 5 and 29, 1863.

border man rather than a northerner or a Yankee. "Tell my friends they are growing stronger every day and that Lincoln's Proclamation has done more in strengthening them than any one measure of the administration," he wrote. "Thousands of border state men were rather unconcerned and indifferent as to the rebels prior to this event, but since have become the most interested foes." Believing burning, conquering, and liberating slaves were counterproductive, Hoge defined himself in increasingly regional terms, detached from the "Yankee Abolitionists" and their outlooks. Hoge found himself fighting a war against an enemy he respected in a region he understood at the behest of far-off "radicals" using policies that conformed neither to his political or racial beliefs. In short, Robert Perry Hoge described a war that he no longer agreed with and that, by 1863, he could barely comprehend. "This war will never end by fighting, and the common soldiers are sick and tired of it," he confessed. "There is a great disposition to quit. Recognition is inevitable . . . it is morally certain."[3]

As an upland southerner living in the Middle West who confessed devotion to the South but fought in defense of the Union, Hoge's war experience reveals a host of ambiguities and contradictions inherent to the border experience that historians have often overlooked. As historian Amy Murrell Taylor explains, Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation "drew a new [physical] border between slavery and freedom," but its aftershocks also reoriented the perceived border between loyalty and treason.[4] The Emancipation Proclamation altered the practical, legal, and material conception of slavery's border, but scholars have failed to illuminate how popular responses to emancipation—particularly in the lower free states, with their slow

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[3] Ibid., January 29, 1863.
[4] Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 193.

acceptance of federal policy, and Kentucky, with its sustained rejection—shaped the

sectional divide as an intellectual construction.[5] Histories of military policy, dissent, and

politics in the Civil War North have failed to account for the "Lower North," as historian

William W. Freehling refers to the free state "border" or "middle" regions of the mid-

nineteenth century United States.[6] Indeed, although historians have recently addressed

the aftermath of emancipation in Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland, less work has been

done on how emancipation was received in the Lower Middle West.[7] By painting the

Middle West with broad interpretive strokes, scholars have neglected the political and

cultural stratification of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. For many Lower Middle Westerners,

whether Democrat or Republican, an overriding goal during the tumultuous war years

was to retain a white man's society. As historian Gary W. Gallagher suggests, most

white soldiers initially felt—and many continued to feel—that the racial configuration of

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[5] See William R. Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: Braziller, 1961); C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North/South Dialogue* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), 6-7; Susan-Mary Grant, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000). See also David Potter, *The Impending Crisis, 1848-1861*, comp. and ed. Don E. Fehrenbacher (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 62; On the Emancipation Proclamation, see especially Allen C. Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Louis P. Masur, *Lincoln's Hundred Days: The Emancipation Proclamation and the War for the Union* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2012); and John Hope Franklin, *The Emancipation Proclamation* (New York: Doubleday, 1963); For a legal analysis, see Burrus M. Carnahan, *Act of Justice: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Law of War* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2007); On the Emancipation Proclamation in popular memory, see Harold Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln: The Proclamation in Text, Context, and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).
[6] William A. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion Volume II: Secessionists Triumphant 1854-1861* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 97.
[7] For a valuable social account of post-emancipation society and blacks in the Lower Middle West after the Civil War, see Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2005).

the United States, particularly in their own communities, was secondary to the need to preserve the Union.[8]

Scholars have failed properly to account for the trajectory of white border people like Robert Perry Hoge from conservative Unionist to southern sympathizing dissenters as being largely a product of their wartime opposition to emancipation.[9] In constructing a progressive "practical abolitionist" narrative in which white Union soldiers came to embrace emancipation both as a strategic necessity and, ultimately, a moral good, recent scholars such as W. Sherman Jackson and Chandra Manning have overlooked the sustained backlash among white Union soldiers and civilians against emancipation and black enlistment. Anti-emancipation sentiment, they argue, was exaggerated and quenched by the fall of 1863.[10] In his groundbreaking study of soldiers' attitudes, historian James M. McPherson also largely neglects troops from the lower free states.[11]

In addition to those white Union soldiers who *pushed* emancipation, abundant dissenters, especially in the Middle West, used both rhetorical and active means to *pull* the revolution backwards and rein in its radicalism. Indeed, countless of these *pullers*— conservatives who, like Robert Perry Hogue, often had roots in the slaveholding South— never accepted the war's liberalizing aims, and revealed their discontent by a spectrum of

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[8] Gary W. Gallagher's assertion that "Union always remained the paramount goal" for white Union soldiers was particularly true in the Lower Middle West. See Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[9] See Andre Fleche, "'Shoulder to Shoulder as Comrades Tried': Black and White Union Veterans and Civil War Memory," *Civil War History* 51 (June 2005): 175-201; M. Keith Harris, "Slavery, Emancipation, and Veterans of the Union Cause: Commemorating Freedom in the Era of Reconciliation," *Civil War History* 53 (September 2007): 264-290; Robert A. Hunt, *The Good Men Who Won the War: Army of the Cumberland Veterans and Emancipation Memory* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010); and Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

[10] W. Sherman Jackson, "Emancipation, Negrophobia, and Civil War Politics in Ohio," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (July 1980): 250-260; Chandra Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over: Soldiers, Slavery, and the Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007).

[11] James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

means from personal protest to mass desertion. Although most white Middle Western

soldiers eventually *tolerated* and sometimes embraced emancipation and black

enlistment, conservative Unionism in fact strengthened in the Middle West just as it

eroded in the Border South. This perceived fracture along the Ohio River over military

policy had resounding and long-term political and commemorative consequences for both

regions, permanently altering white identity in the border region.

For many conservative Unionists, hostility toward emancipation abated with time

and Union victories even as white supremacy remained. Moreover, debates over

emancipation and the use of black soldiers were reckoned, validated, and rejected through

a diffuse but familiar language of place and regional identity that expressed geographic

concept, political allegiance, and racial attitudes. To most Republicans, for instance,

loyalty, the Union, and party affiliation all became part of the same political construction,

tied deeply to regional and sectional identity. Democrats, a majority in the region, were

more likely to express their opposition to emancipation and black migration in regional

rather than sectional terms. Neither Yankee abolitionist nor southern sympathizer, one

Indiana soldier spoke to the conundrum of the region's conservative Unionists when he

lamented,

> I am between two fires the democrats censures me and say I am abolitionist
> because I am for the prosecution of this war. Again Republicans are down on me
> and say I am secesh . . . because I am still a democrat.[12]

Emancipation changed the mental and physical understandings of the nation's

sectional border and identity in the Ohio Valley, a region caught between the two

sectional "fires." Although in the Border South emancipation and its aftermath led to

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[12] Richard F. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills: Agriculture, Politics, and Religion in Southern Indiana, 1810-1870* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 215.

"belated Confederatism," in Aaron Astor's words, and a sustained backlash against conservative Unionism.[13] The response to emancipation in the lower free states and throughout the Middle West took a different course. Along slavery's border in Middle America emancipation and black enlistment were met with more hostility—hostility that historians have not adequately addressed—than anywhere else in the free states, as opposing conservatives emphasized their regional identities as western men in opposition. Although most white soldiers eventually came to endure emancipation as necessary in order to preserve the Union, the triumph of conservative Unionism in the Middle West laid the foundation for new understandings of identity and collective memory in the region. What resulted was a new mental construction of the Ohio Valley, new "imagined communities" following the war that lent to the destruction of the antebellum West and the construction of a North-South in the heart of the American republic.[14]

Self-Emancipation

The movement of black peoples during the war's first eighteen months alarmed white Lower Middle Westerners. Cities and Union army camps along the north bank of the Ohio River were among the first places to feel the effects of the black exodus. As early as May 1861, locals in Ohio River towns such as Cairo, Illinois, and New Albany, Indiana, noticed larger than normal numbers of black newcomers among them.[15] Debates

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[13] Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 94-120.
[14] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
[15] *Evansville Daily Journal,* May 3, 1861; *Cairo Daily Democrat*, August 21, 1862.

soon began over the legality and enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law.[16] Soldiers who

had little desire either to appease white slaveholders or admit escaped blacks into the free

states applied contraband policy along the Ohio River in 1861. Contraband camps had

been the first encounter many Middle Westerners had had with large numbers of blacks,

and fear of slave "locusts" from the South and Republican plots to "Africanize" the

Middle West fueled the region's peace movement and underscored the Ohio as slavery's

border.[17] Union soldiers and local citizens attempted to prevent former slaves from

crossing the Ohio River. In Union County, Illinois, one of the counties in which the

secretary of war, Edwin Stanton, had ordered that all fugitive ex-slaves be shipped into

the Middle West to assist with the fall harvest in September 1862, former slaves were

beaten, killed, or driven off the land by enraged citizens. Meanwhile, the pursuit of

fugitive slaves north of the Ohio River continued.[18] Southern Illinois, with its "social and

business relations, friends and relatives in each section" and stock "sprung from the slave

states" deemed unacceptable the admission of blacks into the state. According to one

Cairo editor, Egypt was not "a nest of traitors," but simply "unwilling to compete with

black men for labor or position."[19]

Civilians throughout the Lower Middle West echoed fears of racial integration.

Crying "*No More Banks and No More Negroes in Illinois*," voters in June 1862

overwhelmingly supported two "black code" provisions to the state constitution banning

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[16] *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 8, 1863. For the best secondary works on the Confiscation Acts and the Emancipation Proclamation, see Silvana R. Siddali, *From Property to Person: Slavery and the Confiscation Acts, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); and Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*. For secondary works on the wartime migration of former slaves into the Middle West, see Leon Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); and Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*.

[17] V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), 60.

[18] Ibid., 88-89.

[19] *Cairo City Weekly Gazette*, October 23, 1862.

African American settlement and voting in the state.[20] Discontents employed a
politicized and racialized language of place to express their fury at the war's racial
consequences. Expressing that the East was orchestrating an "abolition war" at the
expense of "poor folks" in the West, B. Jamison of Wayne County, Indiana, wrote to a
soldier in the 4th Indiana Battery in 1862: "The negrowes are getting as think as
blackbeires here," he protested. "I hope you fellows will quit fighting to free the
negrowes and the ware will soon stop," he maintained. "This ware is for nothing but to
distroy the gavmt and free the negrowes."[21]

Black migration led western conservatives to a backlash against the East.[22] New
Albany's *Ledger* protested that while Hoosiers were attempting to remove contrabands
from the state of Indiana, sanctimonious New Englanders would probably attempt to turn
them into voters.[23] The *Vincennes Sun* explained that contrabands were happy in their
station as slaves but were "*forced* away from their masters" by invading Union soldiers.
Now, the newspaper deplored that the border was "cursed with large populations of
worthless Negroes," a result lamented by "every Democrat and four-fifths of the
Republicans in this county."[24] Indiana congressman and western sectionalist James
Addison Cravens agreed. By 1862, Cravens, a conservative Democrat whose position on
the war initially wavered, favored putting down the rebellion and restoring the Union to

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[20] Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876*
(Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1978), 134; Oliver Morton Dickerson, *The Illinois Constitutional
Convention of 1862* (Urbana, IL: University Press, 1905), 24. The settlement and voting measures passed
by margins of 70 percent and 86 percent, respectively.
[21] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 28, 1863. In addition to lamenting the influx of blacks into Indiana,
Jamison complained about the prices of everyday goods, extolled the Democratic Party, and encouraged his
addressee to desert.
[22] This diaspora of former slaves northward was part of a larger humanitarian crisis in the Lower Middle
West. A white exodus also occurred as thousands of economically or politically dispossessed southern
whites also fled to towns one the north bank of the Ohio River such as Marietta, Ohio, and Cave-in-Rock,
Illinois. *Cairo City Weekly Gazette,* May 30, 1861.
[23] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 5, 1863.
[24] Ibid.*,* November 6, 1862.

the status quo antebellum. Yet he opposed seizing southern property, interfering with slavery, and taxing white men to shelter or educate freed blacks. Most Lower Middle Westerners agreed, and many soldiers, particularly southern-born Democrats, continued to respect the property rights of slaveholders, associate confiscation and emancipation with abolitionism, and oppose hard war policies.[25] By the summer of 1862, as many Republican newspapers in the region supported the Confiscation Acts as a military measure to "relieve federal soldiers" to obtain labor advantages, Democratic publications continued to howl against the liberation of slaves in any form.[26]

Conscription—and the fear that it would "Africanize" the Middle West—divided border families, who one opponent termed loyal but "conservative people of the country."[27] The racial consequences of military policy assumed a new urgency with the War Department's relocation of freedpeople into southern Illinois, and rifts were common between civilians and soldiers who were likely to view liberalizing war policies as military expedients. Two Indiana soldiers typified these views. Writing to his brother, George, who apparently supported the war's shifting aims, Hardin Edwards of Boone County, Indiana, believed "damned abolitionists" like Lincoln in order to were waging

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[25] Speech of James Addison Cravens, undated, James Addison Cravens MSS, Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as LL).

[26] The *Terre Haute Journal*, *Indiana State Sentinel*, and the *Cincinnati Enquirer* all protested the Second Confiscation Act, issued on July 17, 1862, as an outgrowth of radical Black Republicanism. *Evansville Daily Journal,* July 19, 1862. The *Jonesboro Gazette* defiantly changed its masthead, adopting the infamous conservative axiom "The Constitution as it is – the Union as it was." George E. Parks, "One Story of the 109th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 (Summer 1963): 285.

[27] Judge John Law of Indiana pled with Congress, "In the name of *my* people—in the name of the conservative people of the country—in the name of humanity—in the name of justice, I appeal to you to pause before you pass these bills." *Evansville Daily Journal,* September 18, 1862.

the war "take others peoples' properties." "If I fight at all," he avowed, "I will be found to fight for principal and not for a damned Negro."[28]

Emancipation betrayed conflicting identities and divided kinships. Distraught that Kentucky's "borders" had been overrun by "Northerners," Kentuckian Bevie W. Cain accused her close friend James M. Davis, a native Kentuckian now living in the Upper Middle West, of being an "abolitionist" as a result of his support of emancipation. Cain, a student at Old Locust Grove Seminary with familial roots throughout the Border South and Lower Middle West, pled with Davis: "How you, a Kentuckian, can still be for the Union is an inexplicable puzzle to me, when you and everyone else can so plainly see that the Northerners are not fighting for its maintenance but for nothing but the abolition of slavery." Attending a Union rally in Mattoon, Illinois, after the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation, Cain explained that her uncle, although a strong Democrat who was a Union man "down on the Abolitionists and Pres. Lincoln." "He don't believe in freeing the poor Africans [and] thinks the Union and slavery can exist together." Cain also remarked that many southern Illinoisans self-identified as Kentuckians and abhorred Yankees. "You were wrong in supposing my rebel friends in Mattoon were Yankies," she wrote Davis, "no indeed, they are all Kentuckians. I should be astonished to see a Yankee turn rebel." Although Cain grasped her uncle's conservative Unionism, she could not comprehend the apparent shift undergone by her "rebel turned Yankee" friend, an outlook that underscores the broader, complicated questions of loyalty and identity brought on by emancipation.[29]

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[28] Hardin Edwards to George Edwards, December 28, 1861, George Edwards Papers, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as IHS).
[29] Bevie Waughn Cain to friend, October 24, 1861, and Cain to James M. Davis, January 10 and February 10, 1863, Bevie Waughn Cain Letters, KLM.

"Practical" or otherwise, little abolitionist sentiment existed among Lower Middle Western volunteers prior to the Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. Most agreed that Union and slavery might exist together. Indiana soldier F. N. Kellogg summarized a common racial attitude in the fall of 1862, noting that "all the boys [were] acquiring a profound hatred of niggers." "I never had any very great esteem for them myself," Kellogg admitted, and his distaste intensified with what he viewed as preferential policies and allocation of resources intended to assist former slaves.[30] Indeed, border soldiers in blue would have overwhelmingly accepted or preferred the restoration of the Union with slavery still intact. Most conservative Unionists equated liberalizing war aims with abolitionism and equivalent to the evils of secession, both of which many viewed as root causes of the war.[31]

Although the preservation of the Union was always the paramount aim for Lower Middle Western whites, soldiers espoused emancipation as a military measure, a necessary evil, or a way to punish the South.[32] Virginia-born southern Illinois soldier Cyrus T. Cochran advocated burning, stealing food, and "evacuating Niggers" purely to damage the rebel cause.[33] James B. Woollard, who was born in South Carolina and raised in Tennessee, saw slavery through a different lens when he encountered it as a chaplain in the 111th Illinois Infantry. "Slavery was worse than it was in my raising," Woollard insisted, punishment was more brutal, laws were more severe, sales were more

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[30] F. N. Kellogg to parents, November 27, 1862, James B. Plessinger Letters, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as ISL).

[31] Gallagher, *The Union War*, 5.

[32] On "hard war," see Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Grimsley defines "hard war" as the willingness to make war the enemy's resources and warmaking capacity, thus making "hard war" distinct from the more indiscriminate "total war."

[33] February 18, 1863, Cyrus T. Cochran Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois (hereafter cited as ALPL).

ruthless and inhumane. "I have been opposed to slavery, but opposed to meddling with it politically. But I am now convinced that the southern rebellion has opened the door themselves. I am now in favor of coming to the end the shortest way and declaring freedom to every slave," he continued, "and putting them in the field to help put down the rebellion and to obtain their own freedom."[34]

Hard war was often coupled with the adoption of sectional identity. Private Frederick E. Pimper of Clinton County, Ohio, soon invited the label "damned Yankey" as a term of endearment.[35] "It seems our force has stript Alabama of most of its niggers and cotton," Pimper wrote approvingly in September 1862.[36] His sanction of emancipation was facilitated by the fact that he had come to view the Deep South as a foreign and dangerous place that "seems to lie outside of the United States."[37] Writing to his sister from exotic Lawrence County, Alabama, Charles W. Gallentine of the 7th Illinois Cavalry revealed his practical views regarding emancipation and the enlistment of former slaves. "The slaves also imbibed freely of the idea that this war will eventually free them," he claimed. "If the government was to take the proper steps in arming or if they were insured their freedom they would seize arms with joy and fight like tigers."[38] Although soldiers often used the pejorative "turning black" to describe men such as Pimper and Gallantine, whose sentiments had changed regarding emancipation if not

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[34] June 3, 1863, and February 2, 1863, James B. Woollard Papers, ALPL. Though some of Woollard's regiment supported the practicality of emancipation, they insisted that Union was the paramount issue.
[35] Frederick E. Pimper to Sarah Parrot King, April 16, 1862, Pimper MSS, LL. Pimper predicted that "the Rebels will make desperate efforts to hold their ground before leaving the Border States, and it seems that the hardest battles will be fought here in the West." Frederick E. Pimper to Sarah Parrot King, April 11, 1863, Pimper MSS, LL.
[36] Ibid., September 7, 1862.
[37] Ibid., April 11, 1863.
[38] Charles W. Gallentine to Sister, August 4, 1862, Charles W. Gallentine Letters, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as NL).

about white supremacy, this association of slaveholding with rebellion became a hallmark of conservative Unionism in the Middle West.

The Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

Lower Middle Westerners offered white supremacist responses to Lincoln's Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation, issued on September 22, 1862. Coming on the heels of the War Department's contraband order and the debates over African American settlement, the Democratic majority felt a sense of betrayal, based on the president's past promises not to interfere with slavery where it existed. Emancipation confirmed fears that the war had become a crusade for racial equality. In anti-emancipation meetings held throughout the region and in army camps, conservative Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois soldiers, civilians, and state officials expressed opposition to the Proclamation owing to anti-black attitudes and fears of racial mixing and job competition from former slaves.[39] Speaking for "the white people of Illinois," Democratic congressman William J. Allen decried "contact and competition" from an "inferior race," explaining that his constituents would never have "negroes for neighbors, associates, or slaves."[40] Historian Bruce S. Allardice concludes from election and voting trends that anti-Proclamation

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[39] For an overview of the initial response among Middle Westerners, see Frank Klement, "Midwestern Opposition to Lincoln's Emancipation Policy," *Journal of Negro History* 49 (July 1964): 169-183; and W. Sherman Jackson, "Emancipation, Negrophobia, and Civil War Politics in Ohio," *Journal of Negro History* 65 (July 1980): 250-260. Many Republicans castigated anti-emancipation men on both sides of the river who denounced President Lincoln, declared secessionist sentiment, and proposed various schemes of resistance to the new policy. The reality was more complex, as the crowds that attended were comprised variously of Peace Democrats, anti-Lincoln men, and one-time war supporters who found southern sympathizers *and* the war's increasingly liberal methods equally objectionable. See *Evansville Daily Journal,* October 7 and 10, 1862.

[40] *Speech of Hon. W. J. Allen, of Illinois, on State Rights and Federal Wrongs. Delivered in the House of Representatives, Dec. 23, 1862* (Washington D.C.: Towers & Co. Printers, 1863), 4. Expressing typical Middle Western sentiments of racial aversiveness, Allen maintained that black migration into Illinois was a violation of states' rights, and that his native southern Illinois "must either be the home of white men of black men—they cannot dwell together."

citizens represented a majority in Illinois in the fall of 1862. Indiana and parts of Ohio saw similar majorities.[41] The Republican minority, most of whom were racial conservatives, remained divided, fearing political backlash.[42] Meanwhile, Radical Republicans such as Indiana's George Julian, who had long demonstrated impatience at the Lincoln administration's perceived slowness in adopting emancipation, hailed the proposal, but they were decidedly marginal in the region.

Most border people opposed emancipation on legal, moral, and practical grounds. Conservatives predicted that the Proclamation would divide and distract the nation, especially the border.[43] Illinois minister J. B. Husbands and other civilians feared the nation was headed down the path of New England "black fanaticism" and called for "the Union as it was and the Constitution as it is."[44] If military emancipation was deemed illegal or impractical, compensated emancipation was even more fervently opposed owing to the tax increases it was certain to bring upon the people of the free states.[45] Opponents feared that the freeing of southern slaves would lead to a "new social order" north of the Ohio River, in which a "Yankee" influenced of "Negro poison" would drive down white workingmen's wages.[46] The region's Republican minority either attempted to ignore the Proclamation or adopted a cautionary attitude toward the measure. Most people in the Ohio Valley wanted to sustain a conservative war for their preliminary

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[41] Allardice, "'Illinois is Rotten with Traitors!': The Republican Defeat in the 1862 State Election," 105.

[42] *Chicago Times*, November 7, 1862.

[43] *Chester Picket Guard*, reprinted in the *Cairo City Weekly Gazette*, October 16, 1862; *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 18, 1862. Democrat newspapers insisted that claims that emancipation would prove an element of strength for the Union cause were based on "abolitionist theories."

[44] J.B. Husbands to James B. Woolard, December 20, 1863, James B. Woolard Papers, ALPL.

[45] *Illinois State Register*, September 25, 1862; *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 2, 1863.

[46] *Illinois State Register*, October 24, 1862.

goal—the preservation of the Union.[47] More than anything, Lower Middle Westerners feared emancipation's diaspora would put them in direct contact with former slaves, forcing them to live among blacks for the first time. As one southern Illinoisan exclaimed, emancipation "degrades the white man's labor and the white man's patriotism by making this a miserable party war."[48]

Sense of place proved indivisible from residents' political and racial understandings, making regional identity central to their arguments against emancipation. Conservative Unionists drew on their identities as Westerners and white men to combat the policy. Loyal foes of emancipation deemed emancipation a "Yankee" scheme and charged the president and his policymakers with collusion with eastern radicalism, Jacobinism, and revolutionism. Politicians called for a western secession.[49] One newspaper editor agreed that Middle Westerners opposed "indiscriminate emancipation" because the "borders of the rebellion . . . whose soil is immediately threatened by the enemy" would "most feel the actual desolations of war, from which Massachusetts is, happily, too far removed." "If there is a general emancipation," he continued, "it is into these states, Ohio and Illinois, that the freed Negroes will most likely be thrown and not into Massachusetts."[50] Democratic politicians, especially those from the Lower Middle West, were most vocal in their belief that emancipation would either divide the West or drive segments of it into supporting the Confederacy. One southern Illinois soldier lamented that the "devilish negro war" was putting border people into "bloody conflict

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[47] Such opponents agreed with Kentucky senator and border state moderate John J. Crittenden that emancipation would serve to taint the purity of the cause and "convert this holy war for the defense of the Government and the Union into a mere anti-slavery party war," *New Albany Daily Ledger*, October 10, 1862.

[48] *Cairo City Weekly Gazette*, October 16, 1862.

[49] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 3, 1863.

[50] *Philadelphia Enquirer* reprinted in the *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 25, 1862.

with their own blood relations . . . father against son, brother against brother." "It is freeing the slaves and bonding the free man."[51] On the destruction of slavery, moderate Democrat Joseph A. Wright of Indiana maintained that his state "belong[ed] to no section of this country" and was "neither to the North nor to the South." "If there is any portion of this country that is loyal and conservative," he clarified, "it is the people of the state of Indiana. This results for their geographical position . . . they have interests both North and South." Wright then explained that emancipation would disrupt this equilibrium and warned Radicals not to "destroy the peaceable relations between the people of Indiana and the people of Kentucky." Conjuring traditional cultural ties, he reminded, "Although separated alone by the beautiful Oho we are bound together by ten thousand cords . . . we are essentially one people."[52]

Conservative Unionists in the Border South agreed. "We do not wish to separate from Indiana and Illinois and Ohio," affirmed Kentucky Democrat Charles A. Wickliffe. Citing a deep attachment to those "on the north side of the Ohio river," he reiterated that emancipation would create anti-Union feeling in Kentucky and thereby divide the West. "Ohio and Indiana and Illinois . . . will never consent to any adjustment on this question which will make that river a dividing line."[53] "There is a common interest and a common policy which unite the men south of the Ohio River with the men north of the Ohio River," Democratic Congressman William H. Wadsworth of Kentucky reiterated, "and these make the western border." That interest, he insisted, was a mutual support for the

[51] Larkin Cantrell Letter, February 3, 1863, Larkin Cantrell Letters, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois (hereafter cited as ML).
[52] *Speech of Hon. J. A. Wright, of Indiana, on Slavery in the District of Columbia, in United States Senate, April 1, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1862), 1-8.
[53] *Speech of Hon. C. A. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, on Emancipation, in the House of Representatives, March 11, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1862), 11-12.

Union. Wadsworth warned that emancipation might divide the region by arousing "the people south of the Ohio River."[54]

Emancipation thus sectionalized the Middle West into "abolitionist" and "anti-abolitionist" cultures and political constituencies. Editors insisted these sections were based on settlement patterns.[55] Others hoped Indiana, Illinois, or portions of those states that did not support a "crusade against slavery" might legally strike down the Proclamation, asserting that black liberation was a scheme supported by the "northern part of the state" at the expense of the "middle and lower parts."[56] Trumpeting the "welfare, peace, and safety of the white race," rural Hoosiers claimed that freeing slaves—a product of "Yankee intolerance and fanaticism"—directly threatened "Western interests and Western pride."[57] Western sectionalists such as Indiana Democrat James Addison Cravens insisted that the "pecuniary interests" of the "lower free states" were "mainly with the South" and proposed dividing the nation into three sections: the South, the East, and the West. Cravens advised that the northern parts of the Middle West simply go with the East. "The northern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois are already abolitionist and fully fraternize with the New England states."[58] Border identity—the

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[54] *Speech of Hon. William H. Wadsworth, of Kentucky, on the Enlistment of Negro Soldiers; Delivered in the House of Representatives, January 30, 1863* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863), 8.

[55] *New Albany Daily Ledger,* October 2, 1862. One publication reminded that the Union soldiers hailing from the Northwest— those who is claimed were responsible for most of the Union's victories to date— would also be the soldiers most likely to oppose emancipation. *Cairo City Weekly Gazette*, October 16, 1862.

[56] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 24, 1862. Sure to be filled by "slave apprentices" hired from Kentucky and Missouri, the editor warned that southern Illinois would become "practically a slave state." Moreover, black laborers would share a position of equality with laboring whites. Most feared that emancipation would render working whites "social outcasts . . . reduced, because they labor, to the social degradation of the Negro. Is that the verdict of a free people on free white labor? *Illinois State Register*, October 8, 1862.

[57] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 7, 1863.

[58] James Addison Cravens, February 22, 1863, James Addison Cravens MSS, LL. Cravens thought the West attaching itself to the South improbable owing to the presence of slave institution and the presence of Republicans in the Ohio Valley, who he deemed "an appendage" of the "abolitionist North." He maintained

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insistence that the region's interests lay neither with the North nor the South—

manifested even within the Union ranks. Although conservative Unionists commonly

linked regional identity to racial conservatism, the eventual tacit acceptance of liberal war

aims in the Middle West and their rejection in Kentucky set the stage for divergent

postwar memories at the collective level.

Anti-Emancipation and Military Desertion

Lower Middle Western civilians and soldiers generally believed emancipation

posed more of a threat to destroy what remained of the Union than to preserve it. In

January 1863, innumerable whites from New Albany, Indiana, to Jonesboro, Illinois,

agreed with Illinois private D. Myers, who wrote to his brother that the war had become a

"Dam Abolitionist Campaign" and insisted that emancipation would only aid the South.[59]

Thomas Minton of Rockport, Indiana, a town on the bluffs of the Ohio River with deep

ties to the Border South, predicted "rebellion" would be "raging in Indiana" during the

winter of 1863 in response to emancipation.[60] Fellow Indiana soldier Jacob J. Burnett

avowed that Union policy had turned him "as strong a Democrat as ever." Burnett,

whose northern Kentucky family migrated directly across the Ohio River to southern

Indiana prior to the war, denounced Republicans who insisted on a "reconstructed" Union

and were "bent on freeing the negroes or destroying the country in the attempt."[61] One

Indiana soldier expected emancipation to be only a temporary measure, insisting,

"Lincoln's nigger proclamation has a very powerful effect on the army. Thousands would

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that a confederation between the West and the slaveholding South would result in "civil war at our own
homes" unless the remaining states of the North consented.
[59] D. Myers to brother, March 8, 1863, D. Myers Letter, NL.
[60] Thomas Minton to Brother, February 8, 1863, Seay Family Letters, KLM.
[61] Jacob J. Burnett to Mary Burnett, January 7, 1863, and undated letter, Edgar Jones Collection, KLM.

lay down their arms if they dare do it."[62] Hoosier Andrew Bush feared that "Illinois and

Indiana and Ohio" might "take their soldiers home." Addressing rumors that

emancipation might induce soldiers from the Lower Middle West to desert, Bush

lamented, "I hope to god it isn't true. I don't want to come home without the war is

closed, the rebels driven into the Gulf of Mexico and the Negroes into hell."[63] Bush also

addressed rumors that his state, or at least a portion of it, might leave the Union in

opposition to emancipation. "It is reported frequently amongst us that Indiana is about to

form a government of her own with some other of the western states," he testified, and

maintained that soldiers do not belong to Indiana, but to the president. Still, Bush

confessed, "If I had thought that it was the idea to set the Negroes all free they would not

have got me to act the part of a soldier in this war. I don't think they are human."[64]

The staunchest opposition to emancipation came from heavily Democratic areas

with the highest southern-born populations and soldiers who hailed from those regions.[65]

No region within any free state saw as much resistance to emancipation as southern

Illinois. As historian Allen C. Guelzo attests, Egypt was "practically part of the Border"

and emancipation was met with great hostility within its regiments.[66] The female editor

of McLeansboro's *Vox Populi* summarized the conservative position: "I am

unconditionally and unequivocally for the union as it was, the Constitution as it is, and

the poor Negro right where he has been for the last one hundred and fifty years."[67] This

sentiment was not relegated to the civilian sphere. Although he personally supported the

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[62] David P. Craig Letter, January 25, 1863, David P. Craig Letters, ISL.
[63] Andrew Bush Letter, January 20, 1863, Andrew Bush Letters, ISL.
[64] Andrew Bush Letter, February 11, 1863, Andrew Bush Letters, ISL.
[65] Victor Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966), 129.
[66] Guelzo, *Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation*, 189.
[67] Scrapbook #3, H. K. S. O'Melveney Papers, ALPL.

measure, George F. Chittenden of the 16th Indiana Infantry admitted that the

Emancipation Proclamation was demoralizing the armies of the West. He claimed that

Union soldiers in Ulysses S. Grant's army at Vicksburg were deserting by the thousands

and many would rather be taken prisoner than fight to free slaves. "If [the feeling] at

other places is like it is here, Chittenden confessed, "we might as well acknowledge the

Rebel Confederacy."[68] Although Chittenden may have exaggerated such opposition for

political effect, emancipation did create decided rifts within western regiments, including

the 97th Illinois Infantry. "On Sunday night there were nearly thirty deserted from the

regiment, three from our company," reported Carlos W. Colby of Alton, Illinois, in early

1863. Comprised primarily of men from south-central Illinois, desertion in the 97th

Illinois was primarily politically motivated. "There is a great deal of dissatisfaction in

the army," Colby admitted, "not that they see hard times, as long as there was nothing to

do the [with slavery] the grumblers cold bear it, but now it is Nigger and Old Abe all the

time. They are not going to fight to free niggers."[69]

Indeed, many would not. Federal officials sensed that emancipation might induce

desertion among conservative Unionist military personnel from the Border States. As

Abraham Lincoln confessed to Charles Sumner in August 1862, "I would do it if I were

not afraid that half the officers would fling down their arms and three more states would

rise up."[70] Illinois Republican Senator Orville Browning and General Richard Oglesby

expressed similar reservations about free state soldiers from Illinois to Ohio, with the

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[68] George F. Chittenden Letter, February 8, 1863, George F. Chittenden Letters, ISL.
[69] Carlos W. Colby to Sister, January 21, 1863, Carlos W. Colby Letters, NL.
[70] Carl Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years and the War Years* (New York: Harcourt, Brace Co., 1954), 314.

soldier warning the statesman, "The soldiers cared nothing for the negro."[71] Union generals and politicians also suspected that desertion rates in Lower Middle Western regiments were increasing in response to liberalizing war aims. Many rightly sensed that soldiers were receiving morale-depressing signals from the home front and some officers resorted to surreptitious methods to quash the damage. In a speech before Congress, for instance, Ohio General James A. Garfield admitted that he and his staff in the Army of the Cumberland knew that soldiers from southern Illinois and southern Indiana units were being "corrupted" to desert. His response was to send secret service men into the southern parts of Indiana and Illinois to not only infiltrate anti-war circles, but also eventually gain permit as Confederate agents and infiltrate enemy lines to operate as spies in the Confederate army.[72] Such, however, methods did not prevent mass desertions within some Lower Middle Western regiments.

Soldiers also forecast mass desertions. Ohioan Townsend P. Heaton witnessed "a great deal of dissatisfaction and political clamor among soldiers" in the 70th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. "I look for an order to be issued prohibiting the discussion of politics among soldiers, subject to the penalty of death," he predicted. "This is fast [becoming] a despotic government if Mr. Lincoln intends to turn his proclamation into law."[73] Hoosier Thomas F. Miller considered himself "as much opposed to emancipating the slaves as any man" but felt it might be necessary in order to restore the Union. Yet he was worried about the possibility of dissent in regiments such as his, the 29th Illinois Infantry. "This emancipation bill of old Abraham has caused in some parts of the army

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[71] Allardice, "'Illinois is Rotten with Traitors!': The Republican Defeat in the 1862 State Election," 105, 108.

[72] Copied excerpts from the *Congressional Globe*, May 1864, Benjamin Wilson Smith Papers, IHS.

[73] Townsend P. Heaton to Jack Heaton, February 11, 1863, Townsend P. Heaton Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio (hereafter cited as OHS).

considerable disturbance," Miller confessed. "I don't think old Abe ever intended to free the Negroes or propose such a thing. He is the head of our government and he is compelled to adapt all plans that will be calculated to restore peace. I don't think it is the desire or wish of Mr. Lincoln to emancipate the slaves." Miller himself ended up deserting shortly after in April 1863.[74] A disheartened Indiana Unionist noted the same trend. The Proclamation, he acknowledged, had "demoralized this army until it is worthless for any good . . . soldiers are deserting every day." Officers from southern Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio resigned their commissions in protest.[75]

Some regiments all but disbanded. In early 1863, all but one company of the 109th Illinois Infantry was disarmed and placed under arrest on charges of disloyalty near Holly Springs, Mississippi. The unit, which was "superior . . . to any other regiment in the West" according to one southern Illinois newspaper, saw its first problems in the fall of 1862 when a military commission had forced Captain John J. McIntosh of Jonesboro, Illinois, to sign a sworn affidavit months before under suspicion that he was a "rebel sympathizer" and a Confederate spy.[76] By January 1863 the regiment had lost at least two hundred men to desertion and it was reported that some of the unit's officers were attempting to desert and surrender to Confederate forces rather than remain in the Union army. Though General John A. Rawlins's official report stated only that the regiment displayed "indications of disloyalty," regimental records reveal that several of the unit's

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[74] Thomas F. Miller Letter, January 21, 1863, Thomas F. Miller Papers, ALPL.

[75] W. H. Terrell, *Indiana in the War of the Rebellion: A Report of the Adjutant General* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Bureau, 1866-1869), I: 98-99; Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal*, 82.

[76] See George E. Parks, "One Story of the 109th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 (Summer 1963), 287. Nearly an apologia, Parks's piece maintains that the regiment was merely a scapegoat for the Confederate capture of Holly Springs, Mississippi. Parks, an amateur historian from Anna, Illinois, understood why the men of the 109th empathized with the South. "After all," he asked, "hadn't our people once been their people? Was this the sort of the thing the 109th had volunteered for, in the days before the Emancipation Proclamation?"

officers, including their lieutenant colonel, were dismissed for "encouraging [their] men to get paroled."[77] The regiment was disbanded on April 10, and the remaining troops were transferred to the 11th Illinois Infantry.

The Republican press quickly labeled the unit as being comprised of "notoriously proslavery" secessionists with longstanding members of the Knights of the Golden Circle. The *Chicago Tribune* even reported that men of the regiment entered the army as Confederate agents and "true southern men" who had always planned to abscond at the most politically opportune moment. Yet the "disloyal" companies were raised in the heart of conservative Little Egypt, in Williamson and Johnson counties, and, as the press was quick to highlight, many were born in the slaveholding states. In fact, nearly half of the deserting men of the regiment were born south of the Ohio River, with nearly a quarter born in Tennessee alone.[78] While some of the deserters may have supported slavery or harbored peace sentiments, their overriding cause appears to have been what they perceived as radical shifts in Union military policy. The regiment's history, as one Republican newspaper put it, of "catching and returning contrabands" and "swearing at the Abolitionists" represented more anti-administration than pro-Confederate feeling.[79] In postwar writings, residents of Union County, from which part of the regiment hailed,

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[77] Military Service Records of the One Hundred and Ninth Illinois Infantry, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington D.C. (hereafter cited as NARA); see also *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, (Washington D.C., 1880-1901), XVII: 523; See also Henry Bandy Letters, ALPL.

[78] According a large sample taken from the military service records of deserting soldiers available at the National Archives, most of the deserters were born in southern Illinois. Out of a sample of 175 deserters, 78 were born in southern Illinois, 40 in Tennessee, 13 in North Carolina, and 12 in Kentucky. See Military Service Records of the One Hundred and Ninth Illinois Infantry, NARA.

[79] "A Disloyal Plot Detected," *Chicago Tribune* reprinted in the *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 31, 1863; Milo Erwin, a Williamson County Republican, insisted that the 128th was raised "initially pro-Southern and some formerly vocal pro-secession Democrats, in order to prove their loyalty," and that some of the regiment were involved in a "plot" to assist Confederate forces in capturing Cairo, Illinois. John Musgrave, ed., *The Bloody Vendetta of Southern Illinois* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2006), 172, 183; and Erwin, *History of Williamson County* (Marion, IL: Williamson County Historical Society, 1876), 278-279.

defended its soldiers' loyalty and actions (One county history claimed that the unit's

officers were the casualties of ambitious higher-ups and victims of public "falsehoods

and slander"). Still, the notion that southern Illinois soldiers were disloyal became a

permanent part of wartime folk memory of the war in Illinois and throughout the Middle

West.[80]

Similarly, perhaps seven hundred men from another southern Illinois regiment,

the 128th Illinois Infantry, deserted in the days following the issuance the Emancipation

Proclamation, most on January 8, 1863.[81] Like those of the 109th Illinois, the bulk of the

deserters were born in the slaveholding South—a plurality in Tennessee—and, again, the

unit's officers were dishonorably discharged before the unit officially disbanded on April

1, 1863.[82] The coincidence with the Proclamation suggests that their choice to desert in

the first days of January was almost certainly politically motivated. As before, the pro-

war press sensationalized the incident. Even, the popular manipulation and

misunderstanding of the motives of southern Illinois deserters underscores not only the

extent to which wartime dissent was manipulated for political gain, it also demonstrates

how civil war along the border tested and fractured old political and racial attitudes and

regional loyalties, creating new ones in the process. As men with conservative racial

beliefs and personal ties to the slaveholding South, the soldiers of the 109th and 128th

Illinois regiments, like most dissenters in the Lower Middle West, were torn between

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[80] William Henry Perrin, ed., *History of Alexander, Union and Pulaski Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1883), 329-333.

[81] http://civilwar.ilgenweb.net/history/128.html; See also Hicken, *Illinois in the Civil War*, 140; and Coles, *The Era of the Civil War*, 306.

[82] According to data gathered from the military service records of men in one sample company, company E, twice as many of the regiment's deserters were born in slave states as in free. Out of the deserters from company E, twenty-two were born in Tennessee, only twelve in southern Illinois, and others in North Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia. See Military Service Records of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Illinois Infantry, NARA.

supporting a Union they felt perpetual and service in an army whose methods they saw as a fundamental betrayal of their belief systems and their identities as westerners, conservatives, and white men.[83] Though historian Chandra Manning claims that such anti-Proclamation desertions were "exaggerated" by the anti-war press and had "little basis in fact," her position is tenuous.[84] Deserting units did more than express the type of vocal opposition to emancipation that was common throughout the Union ranks. Rather, hundreds of men laid down their arms and walked away.

Pullers

Although many Lower Middle Western soldiers came to accept the liberation of slaves as a pragmatic war aim, others increasingly turned against emancipation. Though historians Chandra Manning and W. Sherman Jackson argue that anti-Proclamation sentiment had all but faded by the fall of 1863, the ideological trajectory of Indiana officer William Orr exemplifies the conservative reactionary and anti-progressive bent historians have ignored among free state Union soldiers.[85] The Orrs were upland Southerners, having moved to central Indiana from Greenbriar County, Virginia, by way of Green County, Ohio. William Orr was apparently a Republican when commissioned second lieutenant in the 19th Indiana Infantry on July 29, 1861, rising to colonel in 1864.

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[83] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 31, 1863. The Republican press in Evansville reported that most of the southern Illinois deserters were "Secesh natives" who distanced themselves from who they perceived as "Black Republicans" and "Abolition Democrats" in the Union army. The tabloid also alleged that the unit's officers, who had fraternized with Mississippi's "butternut natives," had grown weary of Union policy and sought to surrender to both retire from the war and aid the Confederate war effort.

[84] Manning, *What This Cruel War Was Over*, 93, 256-257 n14; T. Harry Williams, "Voters in Blue: The Citizen Soldiers of the Civil War," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 31 (September 1944): 200-201. Williams highlights reports that southern Illinoisans "deserted in large numbers" in response to the Emancipation Proclamation, but stops short of either validated or rejecting such reports. Williams also claims that several Iowa regiments stationed in Mississippi adopted resolutions denouncing emancipation as a war aim.

[85] Jackson, "Emancipation, Negrophobia, and Civil War Politics in Ohio," 250-260.

Orr initially opposed emancipation and defended the Lincoln administration. "Demagogues at Washington who have got control of the president, the secretary of war, and Gen. Halleck, who are running this <u>machine</u>, and they are running it into the ground in political matters," Orr explained to his wife. "Everything likely to promote the restoration of <u>peace</u> is ignored, the restoration of the union as <u>it was</u>. There is nothing thought of but abolition." Orr's animus toward the policy intensified throughout the fall of 1862. He predicted mutiny among his men and contemplated leaving the army. "I don't like to resign," he confessed, "but I don't like to stay to fight for freeing the darkeys." Throughout 1863 Orr was exceedingly interested in the opinions of his "Western people" toward the eastern Army of the Potomac to which he belonged. He damned "radicals" on both sides, particularly Peace Democrats Clement Vallandigham and Horatio Seymour, and Republicans Horace Greeley and George Julian. He also continued to oppose emancipation while simultaneously championing the Union cause and censuring those on the home front who refused to enlist. By 1864 he had turned away from Lincoln and the Republicans, owing primarily to his intense resistance to emancipation. "Be it treason or not I am for peace, an Honorable peace on the basis of <u>Union</u>," he explained in late 1864. "I do not choose to fight any longer under Mr. <u>Lincoln</u>. Not for the object for which <u>He</u> is now carrying on this war—I refer to the abolition of slavery."[86] William Orr was neither politically proslavery nor a Copperhead deserter. Rather, he was a loyal foe of emancipation

Scholars have largely overlooked the persistent opposition to emancipation exhibited by conservative Unionists such as William Orr, in part because it was most

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[86] William Orr to Wife, December 21, 1862, December 24, 1862, January 7, 1863, September 28, 1863, September 11, 1864, September 18, 1864, Orr Mss., LL; Additional biographical information in Frank D. Haimbaugh, *History of Delaware County* (Indianapolis: Historical Publishing Company, 1924), II.

common in the understudied border and in part because it represents a degenerative

narrative of racial and political attitudes. Countless border whites did not become

"practical abolitionists," nor did they conclude that "winning the war required the

destruction of slavery." Many deserters indeed became the scorn of "loyal" regiments,

but they also represented an opposition to emancipation that was real and continuous

within Middle America.[87] Not only did the restoration of the Union remain the

superseding war aim for white soldiers, many never conceded on the emancipation issue

and continued to oppose it on legal, moral, and practical grounds.

Many soldiers continued to view emancipation in purely political terms

throughout 1863 and 1864. Conservative Unionists and War Democrats such as Union

general Mahlon Dickerson Manson denounced emancipation as the work of "Black

republicanism" and "damned abolitionists." Manson, a southern Ohio-born Indiana state

congressman, lamented that the proclamation had turned nearly all Kentuckians into

"Rebs." They have left the Union cause on account of Uncle Abe's proclamation on the

Negro," he alleged. Manson also maintained that "the Proclamation has done a great deal

of harm in soothing relations between Kentuckians and the Union cause," thus widening

the sectional divide between Kentucky and its free state neighbors.[88] This sense that

Kentucky was gradually retreating from conservative Unionism influenced Lower Middle

Westerners who sought to decelerate the war's radicalism. Though a loyal volunteer,

Illinoisan John C. Dinsmore considered himself a "stronger democrat than ever" as a

result of emancipation. "I understand all those that doesn't agree with Abe and his gang

is called Copperheads," he protested. "If that is a Copperhead, 3 fourths of the men in

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[87] Manning, *What this Cruel War was Over*, 47, 93.
[88] Mahlon Dickerson Manson to wife, January 26, 1863, Mahlon Dickerson Manson Letters, ISL.

this army is Copperheads."[89] Viewing emancipation as poor military strategy, one

Illinoisan declared in the fall of 1863 the war would be over already "were it not for the

negro," and many soldiers maintained this belief throughout the war.[90] Indiana soldier

Luther Short agreed. Though he professed a "vigorous prosecution of the war" and the

use of "every means to put down the rebellion," Short's willingness to make war on the

Confederacy stopped short of emancipation, which he claimed was only prolonging the

conflict.[91]

Soldiers like William Orr continued to believe between 1863 and the end of the

war that emancipation had hindered rather than helped the Union war effort. Gideon

Viars of Gallipolis, Ohio, insisted that emancipation had sapped his will to fight. "I could

fight like the devil if it wasn't for freeing the negroes," he lamented. "I did not volunteer

to fight for nigers." Proclaiming the "abolition war" was only prolonging the conflict,

which he blamed on "hell deserving black abolitionists," Viars went on to support

McClellan in the 1864 presidential election and continued throughout the war to scorn the

influence of "damned abolitionists" on military policy. "What is white soldiers when the

freedom of the angelic nigger is to be considered?," he grieved.[92] Indiana soldier Bazzie

Boyce also derided the Proclamation long after its issuance, calling it "the worst sin in the

world" and declaring he would rather "put an end to [Lincoln's] life" than submit to a

"damned abolitionist" policy.[93] Fellow Hoosier Edwin Royce of Huntington, Indiana,

denounced "Nigger Sympathizers" in the ranks and those who would "sooner see every

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[89] June 8, 1863, John C. Dinsmore Papers, ALPL.
[90] *Illinois State Journal,* August 10, 1863.
[91] Luther Short Letter, May 1 and 10, 1863, Luther Short Papers, ISL.
[92] Gideon Viars to Sister, February 5, 1863, Viars to Mother, February 16 and 17, 1863, Viars to Sister, June 1, 1864, Viars Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS). Viars also apparently reconciled with his former foes and attended a Blue-Gray reunion in Loveland, Ohio, in September 1899 between the 7th OVC and John Hunt Morgan's raiders.
[93] Bazzil Boyce Letter, September 5, 1863, Leonard Perry Letters, ISL.

man cut down on the field than see a Nigger in bondage." Royce reiterated his support for the Union in 1863, but also desired to "put every Nigger in bondage" and "have the Constitution as it was."[94]

The opinion of southern Illinois soldier William H. Ross regarding emancipation went from apprehensive to hostile over the course of a few months. Ross, a corporal in the 40th Illinois Infantry from Vandalia, Illinois, wrote in the fall of 1862, "The President's Negro proclamation is getting to be and old thing. Some of the soldiers is in favor of it and a great deal many of them is not but they can not help them selves they are sworn to stand by Abraham and what he says must be law and gospel."[95] Sizing up the men in his mostly southern Illinois unit, Ross continued, "I think a majority of the volunteers is against the president's Proclamation but they have about come to the conclusion that they will have to submit to whatever old Abe says."[96] By early 1863 and the legal implementation of the Proclamation, Ross came to forcefully excoriate black liberation and the use of black soldiers. "The first Negro that I ever see carrying a musket I am going to shoot him as sure as there is a god," Ross claimed. Increasingly rejecting the war's aims and policies, he also urged his younger brother to "buy a substitute, for he must never come into this army as a drafted soldier or any other way and it is disgraceful enough for you to have one son fighting in this Negro war."[97] Despite his warnings to his brother not to join up and his disavowals of the war's prosecution, either the social pressure or the personal desire to see the war through proved too strong and Ross reenlisted in the regular army in 1864. Like so many soldiers

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[94] Edwin Royce to Dan Royce, May 10, 1863, Indiana History Mss., LL.
[95] William H. Ross to father, October 15, 1862, William H. Ross Papers, Chicago Historical Society, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as CHS).
[96] Ibid., November 2, 1862.
[97] Ibid., February 2, 1863, Ross Papers, CHS.

from the Lower Middle West, his politics and prejudices were not sufficient to compel him out of the army.

Southern Indiana soldier M. W. Rodman continued to condemn the belief that "we can't whip the South without her [using] her Negroes" as an "abolitionist" claim. "We of the West think this most degrading and miserably humiliating," and considered each new war policy either "radical, more radical, or most radical." Rodman, like so many conservatives, supported the war but opposed emancipation and the use of black troops. "We think if the war would have been conducted on the plan of the Crittenden land mark resolutions the rebellion might have been put down long ago," he affirmed.[98] Illinoisan John J. Lynch of the 1st United States Dragoons complained, "Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation is outrageous . . . had I my wish every nigger in the Union should be sunk in the Atlantic Ocean or else remanded back to slavery." Yet, like Ross, Lynch could not bring himself to leave the army. He explained, "Were I the most religious and exemplary young man in Massachusetts [Lynch deemed New England less patriotic than the West], it would not prevent me from enlisting in my country's cause."[99] Even in the autumn of 1865, Illinois soldier Wales Wood and others maintained that emancipation was not a war aim, but a "*war measure* to hurt traitors and kill the rebellion."[100] Although most Lower Middle Western soldiers came to tolerate emancipation, many did not. Vehemently opposed to the Lincoln administration's

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[98] M. W. Rodman to James Addison Cravens, March 1, 1863, James Addison Cravens MSS, LL.
[99] John J. Lynch to cousin, February 17, 1863, John J. Lynch Letter, CHS. Lynch's anti-proclamation sentiment blended regional chauvinism with conservative political and racial attitudes despite his service in the regular army. A private in Captain Read's Mounted Rifle Rangers unit, Lynch confessed in early 1863 that his ideas now were "different" than when he left home, "as the aspect of the war has changed." "It is now instead of a war to crush the rebellion, a war, the sole object being the freedom of the negroes," he protested.
[100] Gallagher, *The Union War*, 109.

policies emancipation and the arming of blacks, the attitudes of Ross, Lynch, and Wales were typical of conservative Unionists in the West.

Denunciations of emancipation continued to be reinforced through regional identity and understandings of place. Drawing on the West's long history of regional antagonism toward the East, conservatives north of the Ohio River such as William H. Ross and John J. Lynch exhibited western sectionalist views. As Ohio Democrat Samuel S. Cox reminded in 1863, at the peak of Middle Western discontent over emancipation, "Had the Central, Western and Border States been consulted, the proclamation never would have been issued; and by their help it never can or shall be executed."[101] Anti-black enlistment men in southern Indiana also blamed the situation on "the fanaticism of New England." "She ransacks the entire country for Negroes to fill her quotas in the army," claimed Indiana Democrat Thomas A. Hendricks, "and while crying for a vigorous prosecution of the war fattens on the blood of Western men."[102] Anti-Proclamation conservatives drew on western identity to support their positions.

The Resiliency of Conservative Unionism

Lower Middle Westerners had long predicted "imminent revolution" in Kentucky owing to its stronger anti-Proclamation attitudes.[103] Indeed, in a reverse trajectory of Kentuckians like Major Benjamin Buckner, who abandoned conservative Unionism following the Emancipation Proclamation, most Lower Middle Western soldiers came to *tolerate* or *abide* emancipation as a necessary tool for victory and many came to embrace

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[101] *Puritanism in Politics, Speech of Hon. S. S. Cox, of Ohio, before the Democratic Union Association, Jan. 13th, 1863* (New York: Van Evrie, Horton & Co., 1863), 7.
[102] Edward Conrad Smith, *The Borderland in the Civil War* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1927), 323.
[103] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 5, 1863.

it.[104] In a contrary philosophical shift from that of William Orr or M. W. Rodman, many

Border men, who increasingly associated slave labor with a degraded society and linked

social degradation with secession and disloyalty, did become "practical abolitionists."[105]

Ohio soldier John Dow initially thought emancipation too radical and strategically

counterproductive. He sought to "leave the negroes be" owing to the "great

dissatisfaction" among the soldiers and on the home front. Yet by early 1863 he

supported slave liberation, though only as "military necessity" and not as a moral course

of action.[106] Similarly, John Lucas Harding, a private in the 7th Indiana Infantry, initially

opposed emancipation and the Lincoln administration. "We started out we had a united

North and a divided South but how it is now a united South and a divided North,"

Harding wrote in the fall of 1862. "Abraham's proclamation was the worst thing that has

happened to the North since the breaking out of the war." Yet by mid-1863 Harding had

grown not only to accept emancipation, but also black enlistment and political rights. "I

would much rather be a Negro soldier after the war is over than be a Copperhead," he

explained, "I will vote for one for office before I would for a Butternut."[107] Echoing

Harding's tranformationn, fellow Hoosier William Allen Clark, Clark excoriated

emancipation at the outset, yet by coming into contact with slavery's "evil consequences"

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[104] Anne Marshall, Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 23-31.

[105] This connection of slavery with social deprivation and social deprivation with secession and disloyalty goes far in explaining the exoticization of Kentucky among free state soldiers.

[106] John Dow to Sister, November 25, 1862, December 14, 1862, January 31, 1863, February 7, 1863, Dow Family Letters, FHS.

[107] John Lucas Harding to Samuel Ede Harding, October 23, 1862; JLH to Laban Harding, December 24, 1862; JLH to Almira Harding, August 4, 1863, Harding Mss., LL; See also *Pictorial and Biographical Memoirs; Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (Chicago: Goodspeed, 1893), 365-366. Harding was wounded by a shell at Chancellorsville and died in Indiana in November 1865.

Clark came by 1864 to support emancipation.[108] It was not "abolitionist," according to

Ohioan Milton C. Crist—it was "the only way we can whip the rebels."[109]

Experiences with slaveholders and the aftermath of emancipation changed the

tactical if not racial assumptions of many Union soldiers, assumptions that, for a few,

even came to include limited black rights. Although many Union soldiers refused to

return runaway slaves since the beginning of the war, by 1863 even anti-black Union

soldiers repudiated the returning of runaways to professed Unionist slaveholders. Ohio

soldier George Henry Weeks witnessed one such incident near Somerset, Kentucky, in

May 1863, a testament to the fact that many were coming to associate slaveholding with

disunion in general. Proslavery Unionism was fast becoming an ideological

inconsistency in the mind of most Middle Westerners. Even white supremacists such as

Kentucky-born Weeks came to associate slaveholding with disunion and thus opposed

the institution of slavery. Writing to his sister in the spring of 1863, Weeks conjectured,

"Sarah did you ever think what a dreadful thing slavery is? Although I am not much of a

nigger man I must confess I like to see a man have his rights be he ever so black."[110] By

1864, the association of slaveholding with rebellion and social degradation, an

antislavery rhetoric that was common prior to the war, coexisted with entrenched black

antipathy within Lower Middle Western conservative Unionism.[111] Countless former

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[108] William Allen Clark to Parents, October 15, 1862, August 9, 1863, August 7, 1864, February 19, 1865, Clark Mss., LL.

[109] John E. Lane to Ellen Crist, February 9, 1863, September 21, 1864, Milton C. Crist to Ellen Crist, September 2, 1863, all in Crist Mss., LL.

[110] George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 18, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, KLM.

[111] Michael S. Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 269. According to Green, the Union ticket of 1864 offered War Democrats a method of supporting the preservation of the Union without supporting specific Republican policy.

pullers had grudgingly eased their grips of resistance to the war's most basic racial transformation.

Conservative Unionism was became more versatile in the free states just as it eroded in the Border South. Although Lower Middle Westerners were divided over the federal policy of black enlistment, like emancipation, the response to black enlistment in Kentucky was far more acute. As historian Aaron Astor explains, black enlistment, more than any other policy or event, led to a general retreat from conservative Unionism in Kentucky and the beginnings of racialized political violence that came to characterize the postwar period.[112] Its gradual acceptance, meanwhile, strengthened and made more flexible conservative Unionism in the Middle West. Yet, as with emancipation, many anti-black enlistment attitudes never receded in the free states. Although the use of black soldiers slowly gained approval as anti-Proclamation attitudes weakened and devotion to the war effort strengthened, western armies remained particularly segregated and the presence of contraband camps and black movement into the Lower Middle West intensified resistance on the home front. Civilians who had grown up either in the slaveholding South, with its dominative race relations, or the Lower Middle West, with its aversive race relations, now lived in a society in the midst of mobile free blacks. Black soldiers were attacked in Zanesville, Ohio, and New Albany, Indiana.[113] In southern Indiana, the Democratic *Cannelton Reporter* declared that black troops were

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[112] Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 121-145; On the impact of black enlistment in the Middle West vis-à-vis the Border South, see Michael Vorenburg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 168. Vorenburg argues that, unlike the Middle West, emancipation and conscription fused in the Border South because both were linked to black enlistment, creating an increased hostility.
[113] Howard Zinn, *The Other Civil War: Slavery and Struggle in Civil War America* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2011), 41.

nothing more than "pet lambs of the abolitionists" or a "monkey race" that, through

military service, "is to be elevated to a social, political, and civil equality with whites."[114]

Few white Middle Western soldiers desired racial equality and most either

rejected the use of black soldiers or met black enlistment as they had emancipation, with

a measure of racist practicality. Regarding his experience with some of the earliest black

soldiers in mustered Louisiana in 1863, one Evansville soldier confessed, "They will

fight to the death. As an old Democrat, I felt a little repugnance at having anything to do

with Negroes." However, the soldier came in time to believe that black troops were "just

as good tools to crush the rebellion with as any we have got."[115] Ohio soldier Charles

Atkin noticed a willingness of free state soldiers to accept black enlistment that Kentucky

Unionists did not share. "The Kentuckians are getting their backs up because the negroes

are being enrolled throughout the state," Atkin explained. "You can draft white men

without disturbing their minds any, but as soon as you undertake to make their negroes

into soldiers then you touch them in a tender spot."[116]

Countless white Middle Westerners supported the measure out of pragmatic white

supremacy. Mary P. Caplinger of Williamson County, Illinois, whose husband detested

blacks yet grew to support emancipation as a practical measure, explained her tacit

support of black enlistment: "If they do arm them I want them to be put before all the

whites. If there is any to be killed let it be them, for they are the very cause of this war.

If they had all been killed three years ago there would have been peaceable times here.

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[114] *Cannelton Reporter* reprinted in the *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 19, 1863.
[115] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 7, 1863.
[116] Charles Atkin Letter, March 12, 1864, Charles Atkin Letters, Huntington Library, Pasadena, California (hereafter cited as HL).

There would not have been so many good men killed."[117] Similarly, Indiana private

Andrew Bush, who had once vehemently opposed emancipation, grew to support black

enlistment out of racism. "At first I was awfully down on it," Bush confessed. "But at

the present time I am in for it, for I think it will put an end to the black population, for the

Secesh are killing the Negroes that are found in our employ as fast as they can get hold of

them."[118] As one Ohio soldier responded to the killing of black Union soldiers by

Confederates in Louisiana, "the only pity it is that they did not kill all of them for they

are fit for nothing but to eat up rations."[119] Even many Union soldiers who supported the

administration and emancipation fiercely resisted black enlistment and the migration of

former slaves northward throughout 1864 and 1865.[120] Although enlisted men such as

Private George Deal of Greene County, Illinois, rebuked "butternuts" and prided

themselves on voting the "clean ticket," they considered it a punishment to have to "live

among the Negroes" or fight alongside them.[121] Though many Lower Middle Westerners

tolerated or endorsed liberalizing wartime measures as policies of military expediency,

white supremacy remained, for the most part, the first, last, and only factor in the story of

race relations in Middle America. Loyal white soldiers still expected to come home to

the lily-white communities from which they hailed.[122]

The typical ideological trajectory of Lower Middle Western soldiers concerning

emancipation and black enlistment led to neither desertion nor espousals of abolition.

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[117] Mary P. Caplinger to Leonard T. Caplinger, April 22, 1863, Leonard T. Caplinger Papers, HL.
[118] Andrew Bush Letter, March 26, 1863, Andrew Bush Letters, ISL.
[119] Gallagher, *The Union War*, 101.
[120] For rich examples of loyal opposition to black enlistment late in the war, see Napoleon B. Bartlett to brother, August 2, 1864, Napoleon B. Bartlett Letters, CHS. See Allen B. Clough to Robinson Clough, August 13, 1863, February 15, 1864, Allen B. Clough Letters, CHS.
[121] George Deal to Sarah Cole Deal, September 11, 1863, and August 17, 1863, George Deal Papers, NL.
[122] On Middle Western attitudes toward and ultimate acceptance of black enlistment, see Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal*.

Most white volunteers exhibited the type of conservative Unionism expressed by Indiana soldier F. M. Pickens. "I <u>denounce</u> the Butternut Peace party in the North," Pickens explained in the spring of 1863. "I don't endorse the Emancipation Proclamation, never did, but that doesn't destroy the least part of my loyalty or devotion to my country. I am not caring much about what they get up about the "nigger" now. I shall stick to the service."[123] For racially aversive whites, Democrat or Republican, the policies, aims, and outcomes of the war represented a world turned upside down. Lower Middle Western whites mostly feared the possibility of a new racial order, regardless of their political loyalties. Private Oscar Easley's conservative Unionist response to emancipation and black enlistment was common. A miller in the 84th Illinois Infantry, Easley had enlisted to "preserve the nation" and the flag and considered himself a true Union man, but he did not understand what altering the natural racial order had to do with preserving the Union. "The negroes are better off where they are," Easley wrote in early 1863, "I don't want them around where I am but they are not to be blamed for being slaves."[124] "The cause," Easley grieved, had become "nothing but the black negro." He explained:

> There is nigger in the first degree, nigger in the second degree and so on until you arrive at nigger in the ten hundred thousand degree. What do our editors write about? Nigger. What do our preachers preach about? Nigger. What do our statesmen talk about? Nigger. What do abolitionists dream about? Nigger. And so we go its nigger for breakfast, nigger for dinner, and nigger for supper. Its nigger in the army and nigger out of the army, nigger upstairs, nigger downstairs, nigger in the White House, nigger in the cabin, nigger at home, nigger abroad. In fact every element of earth seems to form one black cloud so we cannot look east, west, north, or south without seeing nigger. I wish we had never heard tell of a nigger.

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[123] F.M. Pickens to James Nathaniel Hill, March 4, 1863, Hill Mss., LL.
[124] Oscar Easley Letter, Oscar Easley Papers, March 4, 1863, LL.

Easley was confused and angered by perceived radical changes wrought by the war and did not understand what blacks have to do with "the cause" in which he had enlisted.[125] Many white soldiers never would, as they continued to protest against emancipation, black soldiers, and the migration of former slaves, and emphasize the restoration of the Union denied the centrality of slavery during the postwar years.

Countless Middle Western conservative Union soldiers dissented, deserted, or were slow to even accept emancipation. Historians have recently downplayed all ranges of this conservative backlash against liberalizing war policies. Unionists foremost, men such as Oscar Easley *persisted* rather than *embraced* emancipation, which many saw as the first step toward racial equality.[126] Although shifting war aims eroded Unionism in Kentucky and Missouri, acceptance of those aims assisted a more flexible conservative Unionism in the Middle West.[127] Deviating trajectories of conservative Unionism on the opposite banks of the Ohio River—based largely on divergent responses to emancipation and black enlistment—heightened sectional differences in the long-term and set the stage for divergent wartime identities and modes of postwar commemoration. Conservative Unionists never saw emancipation as their reason for fighting, supported it as the key means of victory, or accepted it as the war's primary legacy. As postwar political debates and commemoration reveals, most Lower Middle Westerners held both during the war and after that they had fought for Union and Constitution. As white supremacists who formerly supported slavery, perhaps refused to embrace black liberation, and never acknowledged emancipation as a central war aim, many were never divided with their

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[125] Ibid., March 5, 1863, LL.
[126] See Michael S. Green, *Freedom, Union, and Power: Lincoln and His Party during the Civil War*, 154.
[127] See Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 94-120.

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Confederate enemies on racial issues. It never occurred to them that they were reuniting

over them either.

Chapter 5

"The Great Brotherhood of the West": The Demise of Western Sectionalism

Henry Lane Stone was born in Bath County, Kentucky, in 1842, and his family moved to Putnam County, in central Indiana, when Henry was nine. The household patriarch, Samuel Stone, whose ancestors were early pioneers of Virginia and Kentucky, was a Union man, and the family sent three sons to the Union army with the outbreak of sectional hostilities in 1861. Henry was not among them. Proclaiming he would rather align with the "despotic powers of Europe" than the "infernal Abolitionists of New England," the middle Stone son, who had supported the Breckinridge ticket in 1860, slipped through the Union lines south of Cincinnati and joined the 9th Kentucky Confederate Cavalry in his native Bath County. Riding with the famed John Hunt Morgan, Stone would cross into the Middle West for a second time during the war's third year, not as a migrant southerner to a common western region, but as an agent of sectional conflict. "The primary cause of this rebellion was Abolition," Stone later wrote, "I further believe that I ought to oppose Abolition more than secession, for one I the cause of our national dissension, the other the effect." This war, Stone reckoned, was for the "subjugation and extermination of the Southern white men" at the behest of easterners and New England radicals. As a white man and a conservative of southern birth, he refused to stand by as Yankee extremists tore the republic asunder.

By February 1863 Stone expected a prolonged war due to "the failures of the Yankee government" and "divisions at home [Indiana] & in the Border States." Like many Middle Westerners, Stone viewed the Emancipation Proclamation as

counterproductive, announcing that "any man who endorses that Proclamation is a demon . . . a fit disciple of Satan." In addition to his opposition to the North's liberalizing war policies and that emancipation confirmed his worst fears about the Union's intention toward his native South, the gradual acceptance of black liberation among northerners no doubt challenged Stone's one-time belief in residual western conservatism. By mid-1863 Stone's prior discrimination between westerners and eastern radicals seemed to dissipate, as all Hoosiers were "Yankees" and Indiana was "Abolitiondom" or "Yankeedom." "I can imagine how your feelings are," Stone wrote his father, "one son in the Northern and another in the Southern Army. But so it is . . ." The exigencies of war had not only divided one politically moderate western family, it had thoroughly sectionalized a one-time western conservative in Henry Lane Stone just as it had sectionalized loyalty throughout the Ohio Valley.[1]

The antebellum western identity of border families such as the Stones was undermined by wartime sectionalism. Although emancipation, black enlistment, the establishment of contraband camps, and the prosecution of a more severe and encompassing brand of military strategy grew increasingly popular north of the Ohio River, the majority of conservative Unionist citizens and especially soldiers simply never saw them as cause to terminate their support for the war, even as many loyal volunteers continued to eschew some of the same forces of radicalism and federalism feared by Stone. Rather, the war's perceived radicalism was gradually *tolerated*, thus contributing, unlike Kentucky, to a new northern identity rooted in devotion to the Union cause. The

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[1] Henry Lane Stone to Samuel Stone, February 13, 1863, July 8, 1863, "My Reasons for Evading a Draft" undated letter, Stone Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS). Stone fought until the war's end and was paroled near Augusta, Georgia, in 1865. He practiced law and entered politics in Kentucky after the war as a Democratic before converting to the Republican Party in 1896.

"western waters" of Harrison, Clay, and Douglas—a region rooted in conservative, Jeffersonian principles and support of or agnosticism toward slavery—was retreating in favor of a new "Loyal West" linked to Unionism and war.

Yet racial conservatism and political moderation—the very traits that defined the antebellum West—persisted throughout 1863 and 1864 in the form of "Western sectionalism," an acute form of conservative Unionism.[2] This conservative vision of the nation and peaceful alternative to war was an extension of antebellum western identity and a last, desperate expression of western distinctiveness before the war's finality. Although historians including Frank L. Klement and Jennifer L. Weber have lucidly and expertly examined antiwar conservatives in the North, scholars have often overlooked the extent to which geo-cultural identity was central to the parameters and language of wartime political identity and the degree to which wartime "Copperheadism" reasserted itself during the postwar period amid debates over the politics of loyalty and race.[3] *Place* was central to antiwar sentiment in the Middle West, constituting what historian Manuel Castells terms an "identity of resistance," a collectivity defined foremost by attachment to

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[2] Clement L. Vallandigham, *Speeches, Arguments, Addresses, and Letters of Clement L. Vallandigham* (New York: J. Walter, 1864), 211; Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 159. Klement also uses the term "western sectionalism" to describe western conservatives who opposed Yankee cultural, political, and economic domination. I use the term "region" to describe a place that transcends geography or political uniformity in its interconnectedness. A region features a set of dominant habits, customs, linguistic traits, and racial and political attitudes. Regional identity involves a "sense of place" based on location, landscape, economics, the relationship between the individual and the state, and a shared notion of customs, language, ideas, and attitudes. Sectionalism implies a deeper devotion and the perceived persecution by oppositional "others." In United States history, sectionalism is typically associated with slavery and the loyalty during the Civil War.

[3] Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27, 79. Although Weber rightly identifies the link between antebellum western identity and "Copperheads," historians have not fully explored the connections between regional and cultural identity and political identity among antiwar Middle Westerners. Unlike Weber and Frank L. Klement, I am less interested in whether or not dissenters posed a serious threat to the Union war effort than how they used geographic identity—expressions of place—as markers of political loyalty and whether or how dissent might be deemed an extreme form of conservative Unionism. See Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

a subnational locale or region rather than the nation. According to Castells, such identities challenge dominant definitions of community and citizenship.[4] Identities of resistance are inherently minoritarian and oppositional, rejecting federalism and the war's liberalizing turns in the case of western sectionalism. Although this resistance in the form of western sectionalism withered in the fall of 1864, the centrality of *place* and *region* in articulating conservative, anti-federal views persisted into Reconstruction and beyond.

Copperheads

As the nucleus of political conservatism in the free states, southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois saw intense war opposition by Copperheads, so-called owing to their donning of liberty heads clipped from copper pennies on their lapels. The paucity of direct Copperhead sources and the Republican interest in propagating "Copperhead conspiracies" have led scholars to debate whether their activities were primarily democratic dissent or whether most sought to aid the Confederacy.[5] Historian Frank L. Klement refers to disloyalty in the Middle West as "a Republican-constructed myth," "a political apparition which appeared on the eve of elections." Historian Jennifer L. Weber, meanwhile, claims that the anti-war movement posed a genuine threat to the Lincoln administration.

As both scholars acknowledge, the problem inherent in attempting to gauge disloyalty is that definition changed over place and time. Gradations of loyalty existed

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[4] Manuel Castells, *The Power Of Identity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 9; Rather than the postnational identities of resistance Castells studies, the conservatism of Western sectionalism represented a prenational definition of citizenship and community.
[5] See Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2011), 100.

and the anti-war movement went through several phases, ebbing and flowing according

to the exigencies of war, particularly following the Preliminary Emancipation

Proclamation and leading up to the elections of 1862 and 1864. As historian Mayo Fesler

reminds, a great middle ground existed between intense patriotism and active disloyalty,

between a Democrat and an active "Copperhead."[6] Although Republican-written

histories perhaps exaggerated the numbers of treasonous citizens, equating Democrat

with traitor, historians such as Weber have sought nuance. Whether a civilian opposed

the war because he or she sympathized with the Confederacy or a soldier failed to enlist

because his mother insisted he not, the connotations of markers such as "Copperhead,"

Butternut," or "Peace Democrat" changed over time and varied between groups. Each

label also held broader implications about region, section, and geographic identity.

Dissent became intertwined with one's sense of place, as antiwar men brandished

their conservatism in regional terms as westerners or border people—a political tactic that

survived the war. The vast majority of Copperheads in the Lower Middle West

comprised what one might deem "loyal opposition."[7] Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, with

their political and cultural stratification, perceptions of "loyalty" and "treason" collided.

The three largest antiwar organizations—the Knights of the Golden Circle, the Order of

American Knights, and the Sons of Liberty—were founded in Cincinnati, St. Louis, and

Indiana and Ohio, respectively. The war's two most infamous treason trials took place in

Indianapolis and Cincinnati. Conversely, the secret pro-war society, the Union League,

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[6] Klement, *Copperheads in the Middle West*, 205; Mayo Fesler, "Secret Political Societies in the North During the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 14 (September 1918), 184.

[7] For overviews of the nature of disloyalty arrests and the legal ramifications facing perceived Copperheads in southern Illinois, see Matthew E. Stanley, "'Purely Military Matters': John A. McClernand and Civil Liberties in Cairo, Illinois, in 1861," *Ohio Valley History* 8 (Spring 2008): 23-41; and Kellee Green Blake, "Aiding and Abetting: Disloyalty Prosecutions in the Federal Civil Courts of Southern Illinois, 1861-1866," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 95 (Summer 1994): 95.

had its most discernable roots in Illinois.[8] Dissent organizations, counterbalanced by

local Unionist orders called Union Leagues and Union Clubs, were not primarily pro-

Confederate outlets, but organizational instruments through which to resist Republican

policies.[9] Their demands, expectations, and perceptions of the war were rarely constant.

Their backgrounds and motives were wide-ranging, although nearly all were conservative

Democrats who were loyal to the Union but opposed the Lincoln administration and the

war effort. Diffuse fluid, local political violence was also a cycle in which Republican

policies, such as emancipation or conscription, often confirmed Democratic fears of

Republican despotism, which in turn encouraged further conservative resistance,

resistance that became "evidence" of Democratic "disloyalty," thus justifying Republican

policy.

From the war's outset, Yankees deemed war hubs such as New Albany, Indiana,

and Cairo, Illinois, as locales of Copperheadism. The *New York Daily Tribune* surmised

more than twenty thousand secessionists in, around, and "within a few hours sail" of

Cairo.[10] "We are surrounded by a community essentially Southern in interests and

feeling," a correspondent from the *New York Times* reported, "the great bulk of the

Egyptians are of Southern origin, from Virginia, and Tennessee and Kentucky, and a

large number are actually proslavery in sentiment."[11] Yet this perception was rooted in

some reality: the region's wealth of conservatives and upland southerners. Middle

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[8] Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 1-2. Klement claims historians have accepted Republican rhetoric at face value. See Fesler, "Secret Political Societies in the North During the Civil War," 183-286; and Wood Gray, *The Hidden Civil War: The Story of the Copperheads* (New York: The Viking Press, 1942).
[9] Union Leagues began as groups of loyal men in the Border South, especially Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri, and spread northward to Illinois. See Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 35-39. For a description of the Union League in Johnson County, Illinois, see P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Press of the Herrin News, 1925), 221.
[10] *New York Daily Tribune,* June 7, 1861.
[11] *New York Times,* May 11, 1861.

Westerners charged communities of political division—typically those to the south—with

sympathizing with the "enemy," typically identified with Kentucky and the south bank of

the Ohio River. Cincinnati newspapers, for instance, charged some in New Albany,

Madison, and Evansville as "sympathizers" who furnished provisions to "traitors" in

Kentucky.[12] Newspapers in southern Indiana, meanwhile, insisted that the real southern

sympathizers were in southern Illinois, and in many towns, according to one resident,

"Yelling for Jeff Davis or [Clement L.] Vallandigham was not entirely ccconfined to the

darkness of night." Intense political division often led to violence, particularly in

communities where the bulk of Union men entered the army.[13] Incidents of violence—

night raiding, theft, burning, and assassination—were local, political, and deeply

personal.[14]

Both Copperheads and their adversaries used geo-cultural language to express

loyalties and target their political enemies. Unionists labeled peace men "Confederates,"

"traitors," or "southerners."[15] War opponents, meanwhile, fiercely retained their regional

identities as westerners, southerners, and border men.[16] Western sectionalists most

desired to break away from "Yankee" manufacturers and speculators, who they blamed

for the war and believed were profiting from it.[17] Extreme conservatives insisted that

there were marked differences between "Yankee" and "Western" peoples that

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[12] *Evansville Daily Journal,* May 4, 1861.
[13] Ibid., April 22, 1863; James B. Woolard to E.L. Bost, April 22, 1909, James B. Woolard Papers, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois (hereafter cited as ALPL).
[14] Undated wartime reminiscence [ca. 1901-1904], Mrs. Henry Clay Freeman Papers, ALPL.
[15] See John Watts Hamilton Letter, July 1, 1861, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana (hereafter cited as IHS). Hamilton, a resident of Ripley County, Indiana, explained to a family member that local citizens of southern stock who opposed the war effort were in fact "southerners." Antiwar men were also commonly labeled "southerners." *Evansville Daily Journal,* July 4 and August 15, 1861.
[16] Anonymous, *An Authentic Exposition of the K.G.C., Knight of the Golden Circle, or, A History of Secession from 1834 to 1861* (Indianapolis, IN: C.O. Perrine, 1861), 22, 27-46, 56, CHS.
[17] *Evansville Daily Journal*, December 15, 1862.

undermined the conquest of the Confederacy and assured that the "Middle States" would inevitably be "cut loose" from the East.[18] Likewise, the Republican press thought it part of a scheme to "re-divide the country and attach the north-west to the Southern Confederacy" when Democrats made gains during the fall 1862 elections.[19] Treasonous citizens were simply "waiting to get the power to precipitate the Northwest out of the Union," the *Evansville Daily Journal* confirmed, "They are already declaring that the interests of the West are with the South."[20]

The antebellum West of the Copperheads slowly gave way to the "Loyal West," as many Unionists retained their western and border distinctiveness. "The North will never assent," claimed one Indiana Unionist, "even if the East would endure such a peace, we of the Great West would not for we claim as a birthright from God, free rivers, free seas from Lake Superior to the Gulf of Mexico. To talk of peace, therefore, is to talk of severing the valleys of the West from the East and North, and splitting the free states into two or three Confederacies."[21] Indeed, as the war progressed most Lower Middle Westerners came to associate their western characteristics with Unionism—an identity rooted not only in longstanding antislavery and white supremacist beliefs, as well as anti-Confederate and anti-dissent attitudes—even as western identity was used as an apparatus of dissent.

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[18] Ibid., January 20 and 22, 1863.

[19] Ibid., October 16, 1862.

[20] Ibid., October 11, 1862. Soldiers and citizens often made distinctions between Democrats who backed the prosecution of the war and those who either opposed the administration or advocated peace. Private George Deal of the 91st Illinois Infantry, for instance, regarded his commander John A. Logan an "old fasione genuine democrat," as opposed to a war opponent, and wished that "all the democrat[s] were like him." Yet the allusions to "true" or "old-fashioned" Democrats entailed more than simply an individual's support of the war. To be a "true" Democrat was to be in the political vein of Andrew Jackson—a conservative, but also an avowed anti-secessionist and nationalist. To be labeled a "butternut" or a "traitor" Democrat suggested that one advocated peace. George Deal to Sarah Cole Deal, November 15, 1863, George Deal Papers, The Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois (hereafter cited as NL).

[21] *Evansville Daily Journal,* August 15, 1861.

Western Sectionalism

The Ohio Valley—the middle ground between North and South—saw the sharpest divisions over "loyalty" in the free states. Although those who hoped to remove regions of the West from the East were a decided minority, and editors misrepresented or exaggerated separatism in order to build support for the war, anti-Yankee and anti-eastern sentiment had been acute during the late antebellum period. The editor of the *Chicago Times*, for instance, deemed the agrarian West and industrial Northeast "two distinct and warring sections," predicting that the sections would be "cut in twain on the line of Pennsylvania and Ohio."[22] Antiwar conservatives in the Lower Middle West long envisioned a "Great Brotherhood of the West," comprised of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and a reconstruction of the Union without New England or other parts of the East.[23] Stemming from longstanding regional tensions, cultural prejudices, and political differences, war opponents blamed the conflict on Yankee radicals and insisted that the Northwest and the Middle States were doing the bulk of the fighting while the East was accumulating untold wealth through soaring railroads rates and government contracts.[24] Many western sectionalists were members of formal organizations or secret societies; others were common soldiers or civilians, representing a subsection of the antiwar population. Citizens who denounced the "Yankee war" or discussed the political separation of East and West insisted they were loyal to the Constitution and the Union as it was, and conceptions of place and regional identity were central to their brand of opposition.

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[22] *Chicago Times*, December 10, 1860.
[23] *Evansville Daily Journal*, May 16, 1863.
[24] Ibid., January 22, 1863.

Western sectionalists' arguments were twofold—economic and racial, and often interconnected. The first argument was that, with their southern allies no longer in Congress, conservatives feared that the agrarian interests of the Middle West were now at the mercy of eastern capitalists. Conservatives trumpeted free trade with the South and feared tax increases, mounting national debt, tariffs, and the national banking system. In a precursor to the Populist movement three decades later, conservatives felt war was the result of "the mutual criminations of the section" and blamed the capital and credit system: the "banks, merchants, and professional men of . . . the big cities of the North" for aligning against the West.[25] Their separatist sentiment was most common among war opponents in areas that were most isolated from the market economy, fearing they would become the "hewers and drawers of water" for eastern capital, and those who saw the sharpest increases in the cost of living through tariffs and inflated freight rates and food prices. The president of the Illinois Central Railroad himself insisted that anti-war sentiment was, "not a question of loyalty, but . . . one of bread and butter." Alarmed by the growth of the federal government, many were also convinced that Republicans in Congress were implementing economic reforms that were mostly beneficial to the more rapidly industrializing East and Great Lakes.[26]

The second argument derived from antebellum black aversiveness and antislavery thought, condemning emancipation, black enlistment, and fears of black migration. Conservative Unionists viewed the war's racial changes as attempts "to degrade free

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[25] Anonymous, *For Peace and Peaceable Separation. Citizen's Democratic address, to the people of the state of Ohio, and the people of the several states of the West and North*. (Cincinnati: By the Author, 1863), 25.

[26] Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 190-196.

white men" of the West "to the level of the Negro."[27] Resisting emancipation and the

arming of slaves, Kentucky Union Democrat William H. Wadsworth accused New

England of attempting to undermine western racial solidarity. "Ohio, Indiana, Illinois,

Missouri, Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kentucky, and Tennessee have the will

and the might to put down the rebellion," he maintained, "and they will put it down,

without the assistance of the Negro or the Indian." Abolitionists, he maintained, were

"seeking to make this a contest between North and South" at the material expense of the

West.[28] Both of Wadsworth's fears—industrial interests and abolition—were

compounded by a long history of anti-New England prejudice in the Ohio Valley. The

rejection of sectional markers within the antiwar movement demonstrated a desire to

return to the *status quo antebellum*—to remain western rather than become northern or

southern.

Western sectionalism was deeply rooted in antebellum western identity and

mutuality with the South. In early May 1864, Indiana Congressman James Addison

Cravens delivered a speech in the House of Representatives explaining what he believed

to be the sentiments of his people. Born in Rockingham County, Virginia, Cravens's

family migrated to Hardinsburg in southern Indiana was he was a boy. Serving two terms

in the U.S. House of Representatives as a Democrat from Indiana's 2nd Congressional

District during the Civil War, Cravens considered himself neither a northerner nor a

Yankee and saw himself as a representation of conservative Middle Westerners who, like

him, had emigrated from the Upland South and retained many of those cultural practices

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[27] *State Governments in Republican Form, Speech of Hon. J. Proctor Knott, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives, March 18, 1868* (Washington, D.C.: The Congressional Globe, 1868), 7.

[28] *Speech of Hon. William H. Wadsworth, of Kentucky, in the House of Representatives, January 15, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1862), 4, 8.

and kinship ties. As such, Cravens explained in 1864 that he and the white citizens he represented demanded free navigation of the western rivers. "My people are mainly agricultural, living in the Great West, on the Ohio River," Cravens clarified, "they are compelled to have the markets of the South." He also asserted that his constituents opposed the war's revolutionary aims. "They went to fight for the Union, and the Union alone," he maintained. "They love their country, their whole country, and nothing else in this contest. They did not go into the army to elevate the negro, make him a voter, and place him on an equality with themselves at the expense of their own blood."[29]

Cravens spoke for countless conservative Unionists in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, but he also spoke for conservative states' rights men such as Ohioan John Allen Trimble. A native of Woodford County, Kentucky, Trimble migrated north as a child, married and had eight children with Lavinia Boys of Staunton, Virginia, and worked as a store owner, postmaster, and insurance agent in Highland County, Ohio. A Whig and later a Democrat, Trimble maintained familial relations throughout the slaveholding South and identified strongly with the region. Ideologically, Trimble believed in the "principles of Jeffersonian democracy" and the "sovereignty and independence of the states . . . as defined the KY and VA resolutions." This southern-type states' rights doctrine led him to support John C. Breckinridge during the election of 1860. A staunch conservative, Trimble espoused peace and Confederate recognition in during the secession winter and after, earning him the label of "Copperhead" throughout the war. One of his sons, John Alexander Trimble, even served in the Confederate army. Despising what he viewed as Yankee cultural and political imperialism of the South and

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[29] Speech of James Addison Cravens of Indiana, Delivered in the House of Representatives, May 2, 1864 (Washington, D.C.: Printed at the Office of the "Constitutional Union," 1864).

West, Trimble expressed strong separatist impulses through the idea of a "confederation" of western states.[30]

Although political separation was usually rhetorical or a "contingency plan, to be used only if the Union had peacefully divided," western sectionalism had been present since the winter of 1861 and was rooted in older cultural, political, and geographic identification.[31] As one rural Illinoisan hoped, "the Union is to be remodeled leaving out New England with all the abolitionists, the crazy priests, and radical politicians."[32] Ohio's Clement L. Vallandigham and other conservative Democrats had long maintained that the South and the "Middle States" would never separate by reason of natural ties.[33] Arguing for a constitutional slavery guarantee in order to avert war, Vallandigham argued in 1861 that the West had been "turned out of [its] natural course" by eastern canals and railroads and insisted that the "ancient and accustomed channels" of the West were the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and that those connectors must not be divided.[34] Similarly, John Allen Trimble, an upland southerner living in Ohio, spoke for many Middle Western anti-war Democrats by insisting that Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois had always represented a natural "confederation" of western states, dating back to the Northwest

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[30] John Allen Trimble to Clement Vallandigham, January 1864, and John Allen Trimble to Edwin Patterson, October 3, 1861, John Allen Trimble Family Papers, Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio (hereafter cited as OHS).

[31] Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 202.

[32] Charles Choate Letter, February 8, 1861, Charles Choate Papers, ALPL.

[33] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 29, 1863.

[34] *Speech of Hon. Mr. Vallandigham of Ohio, Delivered in the House of Representatives, July 10th, 1861* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Globe, 1863), 11. Vallandigham reminded Congress that secession had New England roots and insisted the war really began forty years ago with the influence of antislavery "provocation" in the West, beginning with the influx of Easterners around the time of the Missouri Compromise, 5-6.

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Ordinance. Trimble's southern Ohio was part of the "conservative Democracy" of the "Great West," not a part of the North, least of all New England.[35]

Hopeful southerners also predicted an alliance of western states during the war's first year. Accepting antiwar rhetoric at face value, Confederate leaders sought campaigns into the Middle West to stimulate its separation from the "accursed Yankee nation."[36] Although Kentuckian John Curd supported John Bell, Stephen Douglas, and the Crittenden Resolutions, and fully opposed the Confederacy, he backed a separatist movement among western moderates. Curd saw "an effort to form a middle confederacy out of the border Slave States & border free states including Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio" as preferable to joining the "reckless Southern Confederacy."[37] Border men reminded that the South had given birth to the free states "north and west of the Ohio."[38] Jacob Ditzler, a Kentucky minister who was traveling throughout Missouri and Illinois during the winter and spring of 1861, was uncertain how loyalties would divide in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys. Educated at Hanover College in southern Indiana, Ditzler expected a western-backed recognition of the southern Confederacy led by Ohio and Indiana Democrats.[39] Similarly, Kentuckian and secessionist John C. Breckinridge predicted in August 1861, "The already opening difference between New England and the Northwest

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[35] John Allen Trimble to Edwin Patterson, October 3, 1861, and John Allen Trimble to Horatio Seymour, March 17, 1863, John Allen Trimble Family Papers, OHS.

[36] Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 160.

[37] John Curd to Mr. Cornell, January 26, 1861, John Curd Letter, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS).

[38] *Speech of Hon. C. A. Wickcliffe, of Kentucky, on the Bills to Confiscate the Property and Free from Servitude the Slaves or Rebels, and Other Matters; in the House of Representatives, May 26, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: The Congressional Globe, 1862), 11

[39] Jacob Ditzler Journal, 83, 153-160, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky (hereafter cited as KHS). A secessionist sympathizer, Ditzler hoped for a federation of western states. "Ill and Ia are full of secessionists," he noted in 1862. "Democracy there now means recognition [of the Confederacy], and then the West to follow. They glory as much in rebel triumphs as do southerners." Ditzler continued to anticipate a break between the West and New England throughout 1863 before leaving the United States for Canada in 1864.

will develop themselves. You have two confederacies now. Fight twelve months longer and you will have three."[40] The editor of the Jackson *Mississippian* discussed a "reconstruction of the old Union" in which the political and social leanings of "Western Yankees" might lead to "dissensions, quarrels, and perhaps blows and bloodshed" among free state regions.[41] Even Mississippi native Jefferson Davis predicted the severance of the free West.[42]

Though early separatist prophecies never materialized, western sectionalists remained alarmed by the policies and growth of the Republican-controlled federal government, a "New York monopoly" against the "the interests of the interior states."[43] Indiana Democrat Lambden P. Milligan thought the war an effort to "separate the North from the South and tack the West on as the tail of the kite to New England." In terms of foodstuff production, Milligan avowed that the West "must cease to be a tributary to Pennsylvania, New York, and New England."[44] Ohio Democrat Samuel S. Cox explained this material divide, insisting that there were "two great classes" among the free states: the "Protected States" and the "Unprotected States." The former consisted of the "manufacturing states" of the East, particularly New England and Pennsylvania, for which war and sectional realignment was a boon, he made clear, while the latter included the western "agricultural states," which lost far more than they gained by making war on

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[40] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 29, 1863.
[41] Ibid., June 12, 1863.
[42] Weber, *Copperheads*, 81. "We see in the future the dawn," Davis explained in early 1863, "First separation of the north West from the Eastern States, the discord among them which will paralyze the power of both."
[43] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 190-196; *For Peace and Peaceable Separation*, iv.
[44] *Columbia City Republican*, July 28, 1862, "A Black-Hearted Lying Traitor," clipping in John Hanna Mss., LL.

their consumer base and former conservative political allies in the Confederate states.[45]

Fearing that eastern capitalists, merchants, and manufacturers were increasingly controlling Congress, Daniel V. Voorhees of Indiana made clear the economic grievances of most western sectionalists during the first half of the war:

> The people of the North and East make fabrics of cloth and manufacture all those articles which man needs and which do not grow. These constitute their wealth and their stock of merchandising for trade. The markets of the world are open to them, and of right out to be. The West is an immense consumer of those articles of which they have to sell. We are willing to buy of them of our own choice if we can buy there as cheap as we can elsewhere. But I aver that the unequal and unjust system of finance now adopted by the party in power now gives to the vast manufacturing interest of this country the arbitrary power to fix its own exorbitant prices, and the laboring agriculturalist is compelled to pay them. To this no people can submit. Against this the people of the West will cry out.[46]

Western sectionalism spiked after Democratic electoral victories and in times when new federal programs went into effect and during periods of economic setback.[47] James Addison Cravens championed the West's war-weary and financially despaired in the winter of 1863, perhaps the bleakest period for the Union war effort. Writing about the possibility that "the Western states go with the South," Cravens, who deemed emancipation both unwise and unconstitutional, understood that there were multiple Wests. "The northern portions of Ohio, Indiana, and Ill are already abolitionized," he maintained, "and fully fraternize with the New England states." The interests of the Lower Middle West were aligned more with the South than with the East, Cravens asserted, and separatism was the best way in which to preserve those interests.[48]

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[45] John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy: Its Origin and History* (New York: A.R. Hart & Co., 1886), 581-582.

[46] *Speech of Hon. D. W. Voorhees, of Indiana, in the House of Representatives, May 21, 1862* (Washington, D.C.: The Congressional Globe, 1862), 11.

[47] Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 188.

[48] James Addison Cravens to Colonel John L. McNaugh, February 22, 1863, James Addison Cravens MSS, LL.

The desire to restore the Union with the geographical West detached from the geographical East was mostly a response to liberalizing war aims. By 1863 racial fears—the specters of abolitionism, black enlistment, and the migration of former slaves into the free states—had become the primary source of western separatism for Middle Western whites. Ohio soldier John Robert Dow initially resisted emancipation before accepting it out of military necessity, yet he noted in early 1863 that some of his comrades "want the north western states to set a government independent of the New England states," a scheme he opposed.[49] Western sectionalists claimed that emancipation would have the effect of dividing the already fragmented Middle West and denounced home guard units and Union Leagues as "abolitionist" organs.[50] Thomas Joyes, whose family owned land in Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, and Indiana, opposed Lincoln's racial policies, blamed the war on "northern Puritans," and complained that "destructionist abolitionists" were "murdering and destroying the tribe and kindred of the middle and southern states."[51] Overall, conservative opposition to the war in the form of western sectionalism represented more than agitation toward any given wartime trend or Union policy. Rather, it was a repudiation of what Middle Western conservatives saw as a shift in the balance of national power from the Jacksonian alliances of the South and West toward the populous, urban, and developing and highly capitalized East.

Loyal Westerners in Blue

The conceptions of the Loyal West began as a means of reconciling simultaneous sectional and regional tensions that surfaced during the war. Animus toward the East was

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[49] John Robert Dow to Sister, February 7, 1863, Dow Family Letters, FHS.
[50] James A. Thomas to Mother, September 3, 1863, James A. Thomas Papers, FHS.
[51] Thomas Joyes to Patrick Joyes, September 12, 1862, September 1, 1863, Joyes Family Papers, FHS.

exacerbated by the belief among Middle Westerners that, despite what westerners

perceived as eastern and abolitionist control of the war's policies, by the middle of the

war, their region was doing more than its share of the fighting. Border free state citizens

felt that they had contributed great shares of manpower to the war effort even while being

perceived as the "treasonous" by the Republican press. Offering "some interesting facts

concerning the loyalty of Southern Illinois, the stronghold of the Democratic party," St.

Louis's *Missouri Republican* compared enlistment rates in southern and northern Illinois.

Every southern Illinois county sent enough soldiers to fill its draft quotas and the region

was sending proportionally more men to the Union armies than any other part of the state

and perhaps the entire North. "As you go north the war fever seems to get cooler," the

editor observed.[52] This seeming contradiction—an overwhelmingly Democratic region

that had voiced sizeable opposition to Union policies boasting unmatched enlistment

rates—reveals that, despite a shift in the war's purpose toward emancipation, most

soldiers in the Lower Middle West maintained intense support for the restoration of the

Union.[53] Indeed, despite the patterns of intense regionalism, localism, and "warm

opposition," statistics reveal that the Lower Middle West possessed among the highest

enlistment rates in the Union.[54]

A brand of exceptionalism also existed among the "armies of the West," rooted in

western distinctiveness, rurality, individualism, and anti-eastern attitudes, as even the

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[52] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 23, 1863.
[53] One might also attribute this phenomenon to a residual honor culture among upland southerners.
[54] This may have been linked the region's localism. As economists Dora L. Costa and Matthew E. Kahn suggest, there is often a correlation between ethnic homogeneity—places such as southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois in 1861—and higher enlistment rates. See Costa and Kahn, *Heroes and Cowards: The Social Face of War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008); For southern Illinois enlistment rates by county, see John Moses, *Illinois Historical and Statistical Comprising the Essential Facts of Its Planting and Growth as a Province, County, Territory, and State* (Chicago: Fergus Printing Company, 1892), II: 735-737.

most "loyal" westerners regularly "depreciated" eastern soldiers.[55] An upland southern

soldier from Rising Sun, Indiana, Jacob J. Burnett encountered easterners for the first

time while serving in Fredericktown, Virginia. "Our boys do not like Yankees very

well," he maintained, and considered eastern men soft compared to "we that have had the

marching and fighting to do."[56] "The feeling of hatred between the eastern and western

troops has become very intense," reported one Union officer. "No good can result from

their joint efforts in my opinion."[57] Illinoisan John C. Dinsmore observed, "Westerners

and easterners do not get along well together," highlighting the difference between

"[Nathaniel] Banks' Yankies" and "Western men" like himself. "The rebels say that it is

only fun to fight [Yankies]," Dinsmore noted, "They do not want to fight Western

men."[58] Similarly, Union soldiers from the South were curious to see the so-called

"Yankees" in Middle Western regiments.[59] Kentucky-born Ohio soldier George Henry

Weeks insisted that Kentucky guerilicas wanted to know where each Union regiment was

from because they "do not care about fighting any longer; they only want to kill off all

the Yankee Abolitionists and then they will stop fighting."[60] Even Republicans conceded

that there were discernable differences between "Western" and "Yankee" soldiers,

though both may be equally brave and "anxious to put down the rebellion."[61]

Even as western soldiers clung tenaciously to regional monikers they increasingly

supported the alteration of southern society—including emancipation and hard war—as a

militarily essential or a way to punish the South, which they deemed "not of the civilized

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[55] Benjamin Franklin Scribner, *How Soldiers Are Made; or, The War as I Saw It Under Buell, Rosecrans, Thomas, Grant, and Sherman* (New Albany, IN: N.p., 1887), 251.
[56] Jacob J. Burnett to Mary Burnett, May 23, 1862, Edgar Jones Collection, KLM.
[57] George Nichols Letter, April 29, 1864, George Nichols Quartermaster Reports, ISL.
[58] November 5, 1863, John C. Dinsmore Papers, ALPL.
[59] Letter from John (unidentified Union soldier), May 8, 1863, KLM.
[60] George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 27, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, KLM.
[61] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 20, 1863.

world."[62] Associating slaveholding with treason, even anti-black westerners utilized

antebellum antislavery rhetoric to critique the South.[63] By 1863 a connection had grown

between the demonization of the enemy and the enemy landscape, hard war, and

sectional identity, as Middle Western soldiers imposed what historian Reid Mitchell

terms a "Yankee vision of the South," one of degradation and ignorance stemming from

the practice of slavery.[64] Confederate raids, guerillas, black migration, and the war's

attrition estranged Middle Western soldiers from the Border South, and the approval of

the destruction of private property and, more controversially, emancipation, was were

byproducts of that estrangement.[65] By 1863 even anti-black Union soldiers mostly

repudiated the returning of runaways to professed Unionist slaveholders. Ohio soldier

George Henry Weeks witnessed one such incident near Somerset, Kentucky, in May

1863, as even white supremacists such as Weeks, a Kentucky-born upland southerner,

grew to associate slaveholding with disunion.[66] This linking of slaveholding with

rebellion permeated the Union ranks even as disdain for former slaves remained.

Virginia-born southern Illinois soldier Cyrus T. Cochran advocated burning, stealing

food, and "evacuating Niggers" purely in order to damage the rebel cause.[67] Such

sentiment undermined the bedrock of loyalty that exemplified Kentucky Unionism, as

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[62] Van H. Bukey to Celia, May 29, 1864, Van H. Bukey Papers, FHS.

[63] Christopher Phillips advances the thesis that "hard war" originated in the West. See Phillips, "Lincoln's Grasp of War: Hard War and the Politics of Neutrality and Slavery in the Western Border States, 1861-1862" *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3 (June 2013): 184-210.

[64] Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 109; See also James M. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 148-162.

[65] *Great Union Speech by major Gen. John A. Logan, Delivered in Chicago, Monday Evening, August 10th, 1863* (Chicago: Tribune Books and Job Printing Office, 51 Clark Street, 1863), 9. Logan's Chicago speech of August 1863 linked the prowess of Western soldiers with hard war practices.

[66] George Henry Weeks to Mother and Sister, May 18, 1863, George Henry Weeks Letters, KLM.

[67] February 18, 1863, Cyrus T. Cochran Papers, ALPL.

proslavery Unionism became an ideological inconsistency in the minds of most Middle Westerners.

Other western soldiers echoed the attitudes of Henry H. Geisy of Franklin County, Ohio, who learned to hate all auspices of "Southern chivalry" and by the Vicksburg Campaign "took great pleasure" in converting the stately residences of Mississippi planters into "smouldering ruins."[68] During the Atlanta campaign, Ohio private Frederick E. Pimper confessed that Georgia did not "look like civilization."[69] Although he resented the moniker of "Yankee" or being referred to as one of "Lincoln's hirelings," Ohio soldier Thomas C. Honnell also came to approve of the destructive war unfolding before him by 1864. "I don't pity them," Honnell explained of southern civilians, "they brought this misery upon themselves . . . they are now reaping what they sowed years ago."[70] This feeling that the slaveholding South was an alien and malevolent place was both a natural corollary to war and a gradual acceptance of antebellum antislavery rhetoric that associated bondage with social degradation. In adopting antislavery language, knowingly or not, even conservative Middle Western soldiers, many of whom had opposed emancipation and black enlistment, facilitated and rationalized hard war and became agents of political radicalism. In addition to promoting the Union cause, this "Confederatization" of the slaveholding South worked to undermine western identity by bifurcating the Ohio Valley.

Interaction between home front and battlefront probably resulted in a decline in the antiwar movement. Rumor, gossip, suggestion, and anecdote represented forms of

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[68] Henry H. Geisy, July 29, 1863, Henry H. Geisy Letters, KLM.
[69] "Seseshdom," Pimper explained, "ain't in any ways like a northern state," Frederick E. Pimper to Sarah Parrot King, May 20, 1864, Pimper MSS, LL.
[70] Thomas C. Honnell to Sally, May 22, 1864, Thomas C. Honnell Papers, OHS.

political agency on the part of soldiers and civilians, as both denounced "traitors" on the home front and in the ranks.[71] Like many soldiers, Sergeant Henry R. Strong of Greene County, Indiana, who also had family in Ohio, southern Illinois, and central Tennessee, warned his wife to avoid personal exchanges with friends and relatives with "Secesh inclinations."[72] Likewise, antiwar sentiment at home reinforced the pro-war convictions of soldiers.[73] By late 1863 anti-Copperhead sentiment reached a fever pitch within the Union ranks, as Lower Middle Western volunteers increasingly aligned their views with those of the Lincoln administration. "We are all attention for the coming election in Ohio," wrote a Buckeye State private in the fall of 1863, "I can safely say there isn't a Vallandigham man in our regiment and very few in the other regiments."[74] Private James A. Adams of the 45th Indiana Infantry explained to his father, William B. Adams, that Peace Democrats were more hated than the Confederates.[75]   Hearing anti-Proclamation sentiment while stationed in Nashville reinforced Hoosier Bergun H. Brown's contempt for Copperheads. Like many soldiers, Brown's convictions appear to have intensified as the war went on and he became more and more invested in its outcome, linking his own identity to that of the Union cause.[76]

Battlefield setbacks also reinforced the political will and anger of troops in the field, sometimes widening the existing gap between soldiers and the home front. "I suppose the Copperheads in Illinois would rejoice to hear of our being defeated at Vicksburg but there will be a day of reckoning for those vile traitors," soldier Charles W.

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[71] William Roberts Stuckey to Helen Stuckey, July 28, 1863, William Roberts Stuckey Letters, IHS.

[72] Henry R. Strong to wife, January 4, 1864, Henry R. Strong Letters, IHS; Jesse B. Connelly, September 23, 1861, Jesse B. Connelly Diary, IHS.

[73] Julius Fee to James F. Fee, January 22, 1863, James F. Fee Letters (microfilm), IHS; Mary W. Hoverstick to Augustus C. Fink, March 15, 1865, Augustus C. Fink Letters (microfilm), IHS.

[74] Frederick E. Pimper to Sarah Parrot King, October 6, 1863, Pimper MSS, LL.

[75] James A. Adams to William B. Adams, May 7, 1863, James A. Adams Letters, IHS.

[76] Bergun H. Brown, September 23, 1862, and March 7, 1863, Bergun H. Brown Letters, IHS.

Gallentine chided.[77] Conversely, victories often led to patriotic outpourings and waves of consonance between soldiers' attitudes, federal policy, and overall enthusiasm for the war. Loyalist fervor reinvigorated the Union ranks following the victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg and federal soldiers, especially volunteers determined the see the war through, excoriated Copperheadism more forcefully than ever.[78]

Increasingly, Lower Middle Western soldiers drew little distinction between Confederates and Copperheads.[79] Former conservative Democrat John A. Logan compared northerners who advocated peace or refused to enlist the Union armies to secessionists in the South because they were all "cowards" alike.[80] Private William R. Stuckey of Warrick County, a border county in southern Indiana, delighted by 1864 in hearing of local "Copperheads" and "traitors" being forced to serve the Union cause. Stuckey, who volunteered "to show love [of] country" and planned to "stay in until the war is over," also confessed that his hatred for war opponents extended to members of his own family.[81] Ohio private Frederick E. Pimper feared that "parts of Ohio and Indiana" would instigate a "war at home" and hoped to "give them Copperheads and Peace-men a lesson."[82] Veteran troops in the West ever more evaluated loyalty not on the basis of one's racial views or even their support for the Lincoln administration, but by their support for the continuation of the war and the subjugation of the slaveholding South.[83] As one Illinois veteran explained in late 1863, to the "old soldier," there was a difference between being a Democrat "up there" and being one in the army. A Democrat on the

[77] Charles W. Gallentine to Friend Charlie, March 9, 1863, Charles W. Gallentine Letters, NL.
[78] Ibid., August 18, 1863; James S. Thomas to sister, March 11, 1863, James S. Thomas Letter, IHS; George Deal to Sarah Cole Deal, April 20, 1863, George Deal Papers, NL.
[79] Ibid., June, 1863, and August 17, 1863.
[80] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 26, 1863.
[81] William Roberts Stuckey to Helen Stuckey, November 10, 1864, William Roberts Stuckey Letters, IHS.
[82] Ibid., September 1, 1864.
[83] John C. Dinsmore Letter, November 5, 1863, John C. Dinsmore Papers, ALPL.

home front often suggested disloyalty, but a Democrat in the army was a man of the "loyal West."

The Language of Loyalty

Unionism and dissent politicized cultural terms. Once used to describe poor Middle Westerners of southern birth stock who dyed their clothes with nuts rather than expensive pigments, the word "Butternut" had acquired increasingly political implications between the summer of 1861 and the fall of 1862 as it became vernacular for westerners who opposed the war.[84] Although Evansville's *Daily Journal* claimed that Republicans represented the true needs and values of the region's conservative "Butternuts" during the election of 1860, by October 1862 the editor took "Butternut" to be "an allusion to the butternut uniform worn by those doing service in the army of Jeff Davis."[85] As the Paoli, Indiana's *American Eagle* observed, "In some neighborhoods in this county there is some homes so intensely loyal that they denounce their neighbors as Southern sympathizers and traitors, because they wore brown Jeans—an article of clothing that has probably been worn, in the West, to a greater extent than any other. They denounce them thus, because they are Democrats, and that such colored goods are used by the rebels."[86] Anti-guerilla units along the border became known as "butternut hullers," many war opponents adopted the label.[87] Ohio Democrat John Allen Trimble submitted a poem, the "Song of the Butternut", to Dayton's *Empire* in the fall of 1862.

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[84] By not actively supporting the war, Evansville's *Daily Journal* claimed, "They contribute as much to the success of Jeff Davis as if they took up arms for the Confederacy. *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 8, 1862.

[85] *Evansville Daily Journal,* October 8, 1862.

[86] Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 207-208.

[87] *Evansville Daily Journal*, January 29, 1863.

Trimble explained that Butternuts opposed "the treason of Sumner of Seward and Chase, And all who adore the African race." Trimble, a native of Woodford County, Kentucky, maintained that, geographically, Butternuts could be found "North from Kentucky Main, To the Western afar o'er mountain and plain."[88]

Yet the term became more than a political descriptor. "Butternut," the *Vincennes Gazette* insisted, "is a peculiarly appropriate name, style and designation for that class of men who sympathize with the rebellion but lack the nerve to aid it in the battlefield." Butternuts represented "wood; soft, green, and worthless; the fruit shriveled and meager, and generally moldy or worm eaten." The editor also insisted that the idiom—reserved for dissenters and Kentuckians—held economic, moral, racial implications, as Butternuts were typically filthy, demonstrated "want of principle," and looked like "a sort of mulatto with dirt predominant." "Butternut" also conjured animalistic, dehumanizing notions. "We know of no living animal that affects the color," the *Vincennes Gazette* maintained, "except it be a yellow dog, and it is a singular fact in natural history that dogs of that color kill sheep and suck eggs, in fact are butternuts of the canine race?"[89] Republican newspapers branded themselves the "Union" Party in 1862, and labeled the conservative Democracy the "Butternut party" and its antiwar candidates "Butternuts".[90]

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[88] "Song of the Butternut", November 1862, John Allen Trimble Papers, OHS.
[89] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 28, 1863.
[90] Ibid*.,* October 5, 1862. Republicans and the Republican press often made the distinction between antiwar "Butternut" candidates and "true Democrats" who supported the Lincoln administration's handling of the war. War supporters also argued that antiwar were essentially "Jeff Davis Democrats" because both wanted to end the war at the expense of the Union. Others referred to them as "Dimycrats," as to accentuate the southern twang with which they enunciated the name of their political party, *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 6 and 11, 1862.

The denotation of the word "conservative" also continued to change throughout the war.[91] Although both Democrats and Republicans had declared themselves the inheritors of conservatism during the presidential election of 1860 and the secession crisis, throughout 1861 and 1862 "conservative" became increasingly associated with the war opposition and was often capitalized to signify a formal anti-war faction. "Conservatives of the north," the *Louisville Courier-Journal* explained, are "northern men who are opposed to the arbitrary and radical measures of the administration."[92] Others viewed "conservatives" as more straightforwardly disloyal. Though it had once championed itself as a "conservative" vehicle of the true conservative party, Evansville's *Daily Journal* avowed in November 1862, "Northern Secessionists – Conservatives they are called here – are a numerical majority" and used both terms interchangeably with the idiom "Peace Democrats."[93] Again, Copperheads adopted the brand. For instance, a branch of the "National Conservative Union Committee" met in Cincinnati in the fall of 1863 to promote what they called the "Kentucky Platform" of opposition to both "secession and abolition fanaticism," to preserve the "Union and Constitution unimpaired," and "attempt to unite the Conservative elements of the country."[94] By 1863, however, many northerners viewed this brand conservative Unionism as tantamount to treason. Indeed, the region's political and cultural vernacular was shaped by broader shifts in geopolitical outlook and regional identity brought on as a result of

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[91] Kenneth W. Noe, ""The Conservative": A Civil War Soldier's Condemnation of Illinois Copperheads," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 84 (Winter 1991): 268-272; Noe alleges that by early 1863—the "high point" of Copperheadism in the Middle West—war supporters came to associate "conservatism" with anyone who avoided military service, opposed the war on moral or political grounds, or criticized the policies of the Lincoln administration, thus alienating many Democrats.
[92] *Louisville Courier-Journal* reprinted in *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 12, 1863.
[93] *Evansville Daily Journal,* November 4, 1862.
[94] "Kentucky Platform", November 9, 1863, John Allen Trimble Papers, OHS.

war. Once simple markers of political outlook or social background, expressions such as "Butternut and "conservative" were now sectionalized.

The concept of "loyalty"—more specifically, the "loyal West" or the "loyal border"—gained increased political and cultural potency as political identity became synonymous with place. In the summer of 1863 the *London Daily News* published an article on Henry Ward Beecher, a former resident of Indiana. An abolitionist, Beecher assured that the entire North was more or less in support of the Union war effort. Dissenters, he maintained, were "political outcasts." However, Beecher did single out the southern portion of his former state—southern Indiana—as a haven of war opposition. Upland southerners populated the region, he reminded, and "not one in twenty can read." Naturally, citizens of Evansville resented being thought of disloyal simply because they were a "degraded population, derived from a Slave State" and responded in kind. "Did Mr. Beecher forget the stock from which Mr. Lincoln sprung?" asked the editor of the Republican *Evansville Daily Journal*, maintaining that the city was thoroughly modern, a commercial metropolis with public schools. He added that the region contained many foreigners who were all "loyal men" and supported the Lincoln administration and even the Emancipation Proclamation. Refusing for "the Pocket" to be viewed as a "political outcast," the editor's corrective represented an affirmation the region's loyalty and Unionist identity.[95]

By 1864 the notion that loyalty was incompatible with slaveholding had also gained currency among western troops, despite their continued antipathy toward blacks and frequent denouncements of the Emancipation Proclamation. Despite the howls of antiwar Democrats, "loyalty" was not synonymous with "Republican" for many Union

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[95] *Evansville Daily Journal*, July 30, 1863.

soldiers, especially given the region's deep-rooted attachments to the Democratic Party.[96]

Though nearly all soldiers precluded war opponents from their definitions of loyalty,

many understood that the Democratic Party was mostly a loyal entity and a necessary

component of the pro-war coalition. A Democrat soldier from Rising Sun, Indiana, who

did not like many of his fellow "Yankees," Jacob J. Burnett explained that neither

"Republicans or the Democrats" are necessarily "traitors" and that without Democrat

soldiers there would be no Union army.[97] More than political identity, adherence to the

Union cause and faithfulness to the slave system determined one's loyalty to the nation-

state.

This litmus test increased the figurative separation of Kentucky from the rest of

the Union. Writing a friend in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, one Union soldier insisted that he

had not "attacked the loyalty of Ky unjustifiably" by deeming the state disloyal. If

Kentucky were "truly loyal," he insisted, it would meet its enlistment quotas and not

place the slavery issue before that of the Union. I very well know what it is that

influences Ky. It is the inevitable nigger," the soldier explained. "People having such

views cannot be loyal, when that loyalty comes in conflict with the nigger." Although he

knew many Democrats that were "some of the most loyal men in the nation," anyone who

placed their devotion to the preservation of slavery over that of the defense of the Union

was a traitor.[98] Southerners also sensed this shift among Middle Western soldiers.

Writing to his father Samuel M. Starling, a proslavery Unionist in the Union Army,

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[96] Southern Illinois Democrat Judge A. D. Duff, who was arrested by federal authorities in 1862 for being a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle, alleged that "Union" had become synonymous with Republican. "We all know what it meant, in abolition parlance, by the term "Union man," or "strong Union man,'" Duff explained. "The first expresses a Republican, and the latter an abolitionist." See *Arbitrary Arrests in Illinois. Letter of Judge A. D. Duff, of Franklin County, to the Public of South Illinois, Relative to His Arrest and Imprisonment by the Abolition Despotism* (Springfield, IL: State Register , 1863), 5.
[97] See Jacob J. Burnett to Mary Burnett, February 24, 1863, Edgar Jones Collection, KLM.
[98] R. H. Kelly to Mary S. Payne, March 17, 1864, Lewis-Starling Collection, KLM.

Confederate George Starling cautioned to prepare to "make Abraham a present of every negroe you have" after which they would move to "north Ohio or some other northern state." The younger Starling predicted that, with proslavery Unionism was no longer compatible with loyalty, his native Kentucky would remain "a theatre of domestic broil . . . long after other portions of the north and the Confederacy are at peace."[99]

"Domestic broil" did not wait until after the war, as frequent violence over loyalty marked the Lower Middle West in 1863 and 1864.[100] Conscription, emancipation, black enlistment, the suspension of habeas corpus, military tribunals, the disruption of the freedom of the press, and military setbacks also continuously stimulated western sectionalism.[101] When general orders by Union generals Ambrose E. Burnside and Milo H. Hascall suppressed "disloyal" newspapers in the spring of 1863—acts that were intended to "save" the region for the Union—Copperheads targeted Union rallies and enlistment officers and their enrollment books were assassinated, perhaps systematically, in parts of the Lower Middle West. In Union County, Illinois, was a nucleus of sustained anti-draft violence, with five "Union men"—enlistment officers—murdered or assassinated over one eight month period in 1863.[102] Union soldiers retaliated with Copperhead lynchings in retaliation for war opposition.[103] Peace men also took justice into their own hands.[104] Street battles over local political control, such as the Battle of Pogue's Run in Indianapolis in April 1863, remained common, often overlooked by the

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[99] George Starling to Samuel M. Starling, May 26, 1864, Lewis-Starling Collection, KLM. Samuel M. Starling apparently agreed regarding prolonged civil strife in Kentucky. In the spring of 1864 he foresaw "counter revolutions" in response to black recruitment. See Samuel M. Starling to daughter, June 19, 1864, KLM.
[100] See Weber, *Copperheads*, 128-133.
[101] Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 103.
[102] *Evansville Daily Journal*, June 19 and August 11, 1863.
[103] William Tanner Letter, August 5, 1863, William Tanner Papers, FHS.
[104] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 201.

national press. In Olney, Illinois, in July 1863 a reported mob of several hundred

"butternuts" targeted enlistment officers and threatened to burn the town lest the draft be

terminated.[105] Federal authorities shut down the *Chicago Times* for "disloyal" editorials

and the *Jonesboro Gazette* in Union County, where Union soldiers sent in to "root out"

bands of deserters.[106] Although "secret plots" against the war effort mostly failed to

materialize, Unionists continued to fear a "general organization with the purpose and

power to assail loyal citizens" and instigate "violence, local riots, threats, and

disturbances."[107]

    Racial fear was often the primary motivation behind such violence, and local

political violence could also be a form of racial cleansing. The white citizens of

Washington County, Indiana, for example, systematically deported of nearly two hundred

African-Americans in 1864, a response to local anger over liberalizing war aims.[108]

Overall, "Southern Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky" were still viewed by Republicans and

many Democrats outside the region as an immutable bloc—formally loyal but politically

treacherous, particularly on issues such as emancipation and black enlistment.[109]

    A brief written by Judge Advocate General Joseph Holt, known popularly as the

Holt Report, claimed the West was inundated with traitors and reinforced the national

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[105] *Evansville Daily Journal*, July 27, 1863.

[106] George E. Parks, "One Story of the 109th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 56 (Summer 1963), 285; *Evansville Daily Journal*, June 2, 1863; For the "disloyal" quote, see Michael Vorenburg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 167.

[107] *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 14, 1863.

[108] Elliot Jaspin, *Buried in the Bitter Waters: The Hidden History of Racial Cleansing in America* (New York: Basic Books, 2007), 15-29.

[109] *Evansville Daily Journal*, June 17, 1863; See also John William Leech, "Civil War Southern Sympathies in Blackford County," Unpublished Typescript, ISL. Leech describes the "draft rebellion" of October 1862 in which 300 Union troops were called in to restore order and wartime political murders in Blackford County, Indiana.

perception of the Middle West as a hotbed of treason.[110] Holt singled out Illinois,

Indiana, and Ohio as the most treasonous states, claiming each had potentially over

100,000 members of antiwar secret societies..[111] Although the Holt Report and the

treason trials in Indianapolis and Cincinnati were part of a larger and successful

Republican propaganda campaign to counter Democratic political resurgence of the

summer of 1864, they succeeded in giving dissent a political face and permanently tying

it to a geographic locale. Historian Frank L. Klement suggests that Republican partisans

and newspaper editors dominated Middle Western war histories and the their postwar

works, including William H. H. Terrell's *Report of the Adjutant General of Indiana*

(1865) and Whitelaw Reid's *Ohio in the Civil War* (1868), discredited the war opposition

and entrenched the mythology of the treasonous Copperhead.[112]

Loyalty—which entailed either devotion to the Lincoln administration or to

Union, depending on one's politics—continued to be tied to geo-cultural identification.

"All our relatives are decided Copperheads and the idea of a Northwestern Confederacy

is freely talked of," James A. Thomas wrote, describing southern Indiana and Illinois in

late 1863, hoping to punish "the infernal Yankees of New England who have brought all

this trouble upon us."[113] "If this constitutes a Copperhead, then we altogether

Copperheads," one southern Illinois newspaper noted, claiming that the duty of every

Union man—save "pious, Massachusetts abolitionists"—was to "the Laws, to the Union,

and our race."[114] Kentucky Unionist L. W. Powell, exasperated by eastern claims of

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[110] See Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 179.
[111] Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 144, 151-217.
[112] Ibid., 234-244.
[113] James A. Thomas to Father, September 8, 1863, James A. Thomas Papers, FHS. A Confederate prisoner in Sullivan County, Indiana, James A. Thomas described southern Indiana and Illinois as on the brink of civil war, a political state much like divided Kentucky.
[114] Clipping, Scrapbook #3, H. K. S. O'Melveney Papers, ALPL.

western disloyalty, responded to charges of Copperheadism along the Ohio River in the spring of 1864. "We have given so far our children to the strife. So has my gallant neighbor, Indiana," Powell explained. "So has Ohio, Illinois, and the whole West; but New England men come here and talk against the patriotism of other States and against their divided allegiance." Alleging that western men should not bear the brunt of a "New England war," Powell urged Congress against conscription, black enlistment, and any other law that might "allow Yankee cupidity to buy western patriotism or southern slaves to fill their ranks."[115] Democratic congressman Samuel S. Cox of Ohio noted Old World biological differences between "Brahaminical" Puritans from western "Sooters," denouncing the "honey-tongued humanitarians of New England, with their coffers filled from the rough hands of western tell."[116] Cox lamented that his border states were "gradually being persuaded to yield before the genius of universal emancipation."[117]

The acceptance by Middle Westerners of the very war aims Cox eschewed altered the meaning of loyalty in the Ohio Valley, with conservative Unionism maturing in the lower free states just as it was eroding in Kentucky. According to historian Michael Vorenburg, "loyalty" issues deeply divided Peace and War Democrats throughout 1863 and 1864, opening the door to Republican electoral victories that fall.[118] Free blacks and antislavery whites overturned black codes in the Middle West even as proslavery

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[115] *Speech of Hon. L. W. Powell, of Kentucky, in the Senate of the United States, April 8, 1864* (Washington, D.C.: Office of "The Constitutional Union", 1864), 6-7.
[116] *Puritanism in Politics, Speech of Hon. S. S. Cox, of Ohio, before the Democratic Union Association, Jan. 13th, 1863* (New York: Van Evrie, Horton & Co., 1863), 3, 7. Cox eschewed the "arrogant, selfish, and narrow Puritan policies of New England" and insisted that the war was not "the South against the North; not slave against free states, but the North against itself."
[117] Cox claimed that Westerners were being coerced into accepting emancipation. *Speech of Samuel S. Cox of Ohio, Delivered in the House of Representatives, February 17, 1864* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the "Constitutional Union," 1864).
[118] Vorenburg, *Final Freedom*, 169.

sentiment augmented in the Border South.[119] The imagined widening of the Ohio River

that culminated with what Aaron Astor terms "the death of conservative Unionism" in

Kentucky over emancipation and especially black enlistment underscored the social

distance between free and slave states in the West despite mutual white supremacy and

professions of western or border mutuality.[120] Although one resident of Orange County,

Indiana, believed that emboldening antislavery thought in the area was making the

"Butternut brethren . . . very uneasy," he also damned Kentucky as "last in the Union to

abolish the nefarious practice" of slavery. Commenting on the Louisville Emancipation

Convention of early 1864, the Hoosier held out hope that the Bluegrass State might come

to embrace emancipation and the enlistment of black soldiers.[121] Conceptions of loyalty

as they related to place saw a new level of stability in the fall of 1864 due first to the

gradual acceptance of Union military policies that challenged proslavery Unionism and

made slavery incongruent with the aims of the Union, and second to the long-term

codification of those policies though the reelection of the Lincoln administration.

The Demise of Dissent

The presidential election of 1864 signaled the death knell of western sectionalism

and permanence of Union identity in the Middle West. As Republicans won the White

House, increased their majority in Congress, and took control of every statehouse and

governor's mansion north of the Ohio River, rumors about antiwar secret societies

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[119] Ibid., 288-289.

[120] Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 94-120. As Astor points out, the strengthening and flexibility of free state conservative Unionism, and its willingness to adopt certain radical measures, stood in direct contrast to the slow crumbling of conservative Unionism in the Border South during the second half of the war.

[121] Unidentified Civil War Letter to Brother Will, February 20, 1864, KLM.

virtually disappeared.[122] As historian Stephen L. Hansen explains, Republicans, running

under the Union party coalition, successfully fused patriotism and the Union cause with

party loyalty.[123] A referendum on the war and a litmus test for Union loyalty, the election

had divided Democrats throughout the summer and fall of 1864, with some, including

John A. Logan and former Indiana governors Paris C. Dunning and Joseph A. Wright,

already deserting the Democracy in support of the Union ticket.[124] Others, such as

Charles Augustus Eldredge of Wisconsin, maintained that the war was being wage in an

unconstitutional manner, but also insisted that Democrats were loyal supporters of the

war and remained embarrassed by the actions of dissenters and hardliners within their

party. Antiwar Democrats highlighted their western identities by holding two

conventions in Cincinnati in October in which they called for stronger antiwar and pro-

western planks in the Democratic platform, but lack of goals and organization led to their

chaotic disbanding.[125] War supporters, meanwhile, censured the shrinking number of

Lower Middle Westerners who sought "reunion" with the Confederates based on a shared

sense of "physical geography."[126]

The Republican Party's decision to support the Union ticket in the 1864

presidential election had the effect not only of making the Democracy appear more

partisan, but also more parochial in their detachment from the North and its national aims

of reunion and the destruction of the slave system. Pro-administration Republicans

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[122] Klement, *Dark Lanterns*, 33. Klement also alleges that Union Leagues played a significant role in the fall 1864 Republican successes, 62.

[123] Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1978), 142.

[124] John D. Caldwell to John A. Logan, August 3, 1863, John Alexander Logan Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.; *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 7, 1864.

[125] *Cincinnati Convention, October 18, 1864, for the Organization of a Peace Party* (N.p.: 1864); Weber, *Copperheads*, 174-175.

[126] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 12, 1863; Sarah McLean to Edgar McLean, December 1, 1863, and May 15, 1864, Edgar McLean Papers, NL.

changed their political label to represent Unionism, implying that anti-administration

Democrats represented disunion. According to historian Michael Vorenburg, Middle

Western Republicans shied away from antislavery rhetoric, having attributed their 1862

setbacks to unpopular racial policies.[127] Western troops also associated McClellan with

the Army of the Potomac, which was perceived by many within the ranks as militarily

inferior, a notion that dovetailed with the West's anti-eastern bias.[128] As such, Middle

Western soldiers—many of who felt antiwar Democrats were extending the war—went

overwhelmingly for the Union ticket.[129] In Indiana, nine thousand soldiers were

approved to return home to vote, and previously Democratic counties saw unprecedented

gains for Lincoln. With military victories by Sherman, Sheridan, and Farragut boosting

Unionist sentiment at home and veterans contemptuous of antiwar dissent, untold

Democrats either broke with their party on the presidential ticket or abandoned their party

altogether and joined the Union Party ranks.[130]

Even the stalwartly Democratic Lower Middle West saw a shift toward the Union

Party. Proclaiming "Egypt Redeemed," Republican newspapers marveled that southern

Illinois's ultraconservative Little Egypt had gone from an 18,000-vote majority against

Lincoln in 1860 to a 1,000-vote majority in favor in 1864.[131] In an act of "political

revolution" encouraged by its soldiers, Johnson County, in deep southern Illinois, where

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[127] Vorenburg, *Final Freedom*, 170.
[128] FEP to SPK, November 8, 1864, Pimper MSS, LL.
[129] Weber, *Copperheads*, 196-197, 216-217; See Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1922* (Dayton, OH: Dayton Historical Publishing Company, 1922), II: 821, 877.
[130] See William F. Zornow, "Indiana and the Election of 1864," *Indiana Magazine of History* 45 (March 1949): 13-38. Zornow credits military victories and the successful application of the "traitor" label by the pro-war faction as the key reasons the Lower Middle West went for Lincoln; Voting returns in southern Indiana suggest that many Hoosiers voted for Lincoln and Democratic gubernatorial nominee Joseph McDonald, as Lincoln won by far greater majorities than Republican governor Oliver P. Morton. *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 11, 1864. This trend of large numbers of Democrats voting for the Republican presidential candidate appears to have continued through the election of 1872.
[131] Former Democratic strongholds saw large majorities for Lincoln. *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 10-12, 1864.

Lincoln had received only forty votes in 1860, went in favor of the Union presidential ticket by approximately 1,000 votes.[132] One Evansville soldier, which saw a sizeable gain for Lincoln, serving in the Army of the Cumberland was blunt: "I don't believe there is a soldier in this army but what would rather shoot one of those vile godforsaken things [a war opponent] than they would a rebel."[133] A Democratic soldier from neighboring Posey County, Indiana, insisted that there were only two camps: loyal and disloyal. He maintained that true Democrats were war men. "The Butternuts say if it had not been for the Proclamation the war would have been over," he claimed. "I am no Abolitionist, but I am in favor of crushing this rebellion, let it cost what it will."[134]

By late 1864 support for the war in the Middle West had become fully synonymous with Unionism. Soldiers in the Ohio Valley understood the distinction between "loyal" and "disloyal" Democrats and one might be a Democrat and a Unionist, despite Republican efforts to paint Democrats as the party of treason.[135] Although he maintained that neither he nor his comrades were fighting to free blacks, Ohio soldier Thomas C. Honnell predicted, "We are going to elect Lincoln this fall by an overwhelming majority." "And when the "Lordly Southrons" see our Northern mud sill reelected" the war will soon end."[136] Long periods of military service led men such as Honnell to interact with peoples from other states, fostering national outlooks. Soldiers had reacquainted themselves with national symbols such as the Constitution and the Founding Fathers. As they saw it, they were responsible for the salvation of the Union

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[132] Ibid., November 15, 1864.
[133] Ibid., May 14, 1863.
[134] Ibid., May 2, 1863.
[135] Ibid., May 7, 1863.
[136] Thomas C. Honnell to Benjamin C. Epler, September 25, 1864, Thomas C. Honnell Papers, OHS; Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 165.

and were now the bearers of its symbols and traditions. Separatism had no place in this new order, and slavery was one casualty of Union victory. Despite the persistence of anti-black and anti-eastern attitudes, a newfound *loyal* identity, rooted in sectionalism and the Union war effort, had taken hold throughout the free West.[137]

Public sentiment and military fortunes had worn down Copperheads and western sectionalists.[138] The nationalizing forces brought on by the Civil War peaked when intellectual separation from the slaveholding South became a litmus test for Union "loyalty," betraying the flexibility of conservative Unionism in the Lower Middle West. The death of western sectionalism altered the meaning of place in the Middle West. With white migration westward and the emergence of Chicago and the Great Lakes as the nation's second urban and industrial center, the Middle West grew less western. Although western sectionalism was dead and Republicans and War Democrats branded antiwar Democrats traitors during the Bloody Shirt debates over Reconstruction, expressions of regional identity used by western sectionalists—who professed both Unionism and loyalty—continued to shape the postwar remembrance of the war, notably sectional reconciliation among whites. Indeed, Copperheadism did not expire so much as it evolved. Postwar conservatives transmuted the spatial, geo-cultural Copperhead and western sectionalist terms into their own form of commemoration and cutting critiques of Radical Republican policy, leading the charge away from Congressional Reconstruction and toward white reunion. While the Ohio Valley's antebellum regional identity—that of

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[137] Although she notes that peace men responded to Lincoln's election by "falling silent," Jennifer Weber accedes that there were still incidents of antiwar resistance in the lower free states after November 1864, particularly in Clearfield and Cambria counties in western Pennsylvania. Weber, *Copperheads*, 205, 195.
[138] Ibid., 202.

a western expanse with deep ties to the slaveholding South in which the Ohio River

mostly acted as a facilitator of peoples, goods, and ideas—had been undermined by the

unifying experience of sectionalism and war, western identity was repressed, not

vanquished.   Although the realities of war and the transference of sectional debates into

the political arena made immediate reunion with the Border South impossible, the

cultural and political impulses of reconciliation between the "Confederate" Kentucky and

the Loyal West proved inescapably strong.

Chapter 6

"Was it for this you fought?": Political Identity, Racial Continuity, and the Retreat from Reconstruction

Chillon Conway Carter was born in 1830 in Monroe County, Kentucky, and volunteered in the 9th Kentucky Infantry at the beginning of the Civil War Letter "to fight for his country" and "restore the government."[1] Carter served at the battles of Shiloh, Stone's River, and Chickamauga, where he was wounded and had his leg amputated and later became a member of the United States Maimed Soldiers League for Union invalids. Carter, a non-slaveholder, communicated a broad and national geo-cultural identity; his expressions of loyalty hearkened those of antebellum Unionism of fellow Bluegrass Staters Henry Clay and John J. Crittenden. His brother, John B. Carter, also a Kentuckian by birth, was living in White County in southern Illinois during the war and opted not to serve. A small-scale farmer, John Carter felt there was prejudice against servicemen of lower socio-economic status in the Union army—deeming it a "rich man's" war—and later displayed opposition to the draft. Although he supposed the Union cause one of "freedom and independence" and hoped for a "free country," Carter refused to join the army.[2] This conservative Unionism—disdain for slaveholding elites and northern radicalism, and intensely anti-black—was common throughout the Ohio Valley. John B. Carter's letters betray the negative reaction most whites felt against African American "integration" north of the Ohio River. The cause of "freedom" in the Lower Middle West applied only to white Americans.

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[1] Chillon Conway Carter to wife, December 5, 1861 and May 6, 1862, Chillon Conway Carter Collection, Kentucky Library and Museum, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky (hereafter cited as KLM).
[2] John B. Carter to Chillon Conway Carter, September 21, 1861, Chillon Conway Carter Collection, KLM.

By 1866 both brothers were concerned about the "Negro equality" generated by the war yet blamed different political camps for emerging African American civil rights. In a letter to his brother opposing black migration in the community and integrated schools, John B. Carter reported a "degraded state of affairs" in White County and insisted there was a cultural and geographic factor behind black assertiveness. Determined "not to let the darky sit by my side in the school house nor no where," Carter predicted, "The southern people would not suffer that [black equality], for they are too well acquainted with Mr. Sambo."[3] He also warned his Kentucky kinfolk that if they traveled "as far north as I have been" they would witness genuine support for "Negro equality," a terrifying specter. Chillon C. Carter, a former Democrat whose regiment "long[ed] to stand the Polls and cast a vote against old Abraham Lincoln" in 1864, blamed emerging black rights on dissenters who had opposed the war. John B. Carter, a Democrat and Andrew Johnson supporter, blamed the "abolitionist party" [who] never was the men that would enlist and go to war like the Democrats did." Instead they "persuaded boys and poor men off . . . to sacrifice their lives for the freedom of Negroes." Although John Carter defended himself against claims that he was "a rebel" he did not believe his brother Conway to be "an abolitionist," as the aim of black freedom was, in part, the reason the Illinois Carter "stayed out of the war."

That both brothers—one who served the Union cause and another who supported the Union but opposed the war—saw black assimilation as deeply problematic speaks the elasticity of conservative Unionism and the omnipresence of white supremacy in the region. John Carter's ruminations were not strictly partisan, Democrat or Republican;

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[3] On postwar school segregation in Lower Middle West, see William Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction, 1869-1879* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 194.

they represented broader attitudes among the region's white citizenry and the continuity of aversive race relations north of the Ohio River even as the Lower Middle West was coming to define itself through a Union cause that had sanctioned emancipation and black soldiers. Most conservative Unionists felt that the wartime *toleration* of liberalizing policies should not translate into postwar equality or social integration. Echoing the attitudes of conservative Democrats and Republicans across the Ohio Valley, Carter concluded straightforwardly, "I wish there was not a Negro in the world."[4]

But African Americans were to be part of Carter's postwar world. Some connected the region's antebellum white supremacy to its early repudiation of Congressional Reconstruction. Elias Polk, an ex-slave from near Nashville, Tennessee, who became free early in the war, recalled the vindictive insults and cruel taunts with which he had been greeted passing by race aversive southern Indiana. He could not believe he was in a so-called "free state," and thought to himself that he "would sooner live [in Tennessee] than in any state North of Mason and Dixon's line." At least in the South, he thought, "the white man was dependent on the colored man and the colored man was dependent on the colored man."[5] Although the policies of Radical Reconstruction had genuine proponents in the Lower Middle West, the region proved a nucleus of the type of racialized violence that doomed Reconstruction and, as in the former slave states, led to a reemergence of conservative Democrats.

The Lower Middle West was at the forefront of the North's retreat from Reconstruction, and its embrace of sectional reconciliation and conservative Unionism

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[4] John B. Carter to Chillon Conway Carter, December 9, 1866 and June 9, 1868, Chillon Conway Carter Collection, KLM.

[5] "An Ex-Slave's Story," in *Evansville Daily Courier*, October 6, 1876. Although Polk's recollection was of traveling on a steamboat with his former master during the 1830s, his story was a critique of continuing white supremacy and southern Indiana's anti-Reconstruction politics.

defined that development. Although most white Lower Middle Westerners embraced the

Union Cause, the majority also wished to maintain the region's longtime reputation as a

"white man's country."[6] Although Lower Middle Westerners commemorated their roles

as victors, many whites along the border also sought to turn back the war's unwanted

racial outcomes by means of a political reunification with the South. By the mid-1870s

most white Lower Middle Westerners sought to exclude freedpeople and "let the

prosperous South alone."[7]   This early political rejection of Reconstruction was

epitomized by the Liberal Republican movement, which had its roots in the Lower

Middle West. Just as emancipation and black enlistment was necessary for but not

central to their narrative of victory, racial equality was not part of their vision of postwar

society. Ultimately, Reconstruction failed as a set of national policies because it failed

first as a mental re-imagining of race relations in the part of the North where it was most

vulnerable: Middle America's white, conservative Unionist belt.

Veterans and the Politics of Loyalty

Racial equality was not a part of the political identity of most white Union

veterans, especially not in the Lower Middle West.[8] Although newborn Republicans in

particular linked their party to the Union Cause, that cause typically did not include an

emancipationist element during or immediately after the war. One Metropolis, Illinois,

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[6] On white identity among workingmen during the postwar period, see Alexander Saxton *The Rise and Fall of the White* Republic*: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth Century America* (London: Verso, 1990); and David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Formation of the American Working Class* (London: Verso, 1991).

[7] *Centralia Democrat*, September 19, 1885.

[8] Although the "West" implied regional identification, the moniker "Loyal West" was both sectional and regional, as "Loyalty" was associated with the Union war effort. See *Evansville Daily Journal*, August 6, 1866; On white identity among Union veterans, see James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 49, 73.

newspaper summed up the position of most Republicans in the Lower Middle West when it stated that the "Union cause" was nothing more or less than "the defeat of Copperheadism and secession" and ignored emancipation and a decisive stand on black rights.[9] There were really only two parties, the editor maintained in 1866, loyal men and "rebels"—those who "did not favor the suppression of the rebellion." He insisted that the line between loyal men in southern Illinois, Republican or Democrat, was very thin indeed, as all Unionists were "successors of Jackson" and Republicans such as Grant, Raum, and Logan had been the "great lights of the Democratic party in 1860."[10] Despite the rise of Bloody Shirt political rhetoric in which ascendant Republicans increasingly defined the parameters of loyalty, a Republican or a Democrat might be a man of the "Loyal West," so long as he supported the Union cause.

White Lower Middle Westerners insisted that the battles over Reconstruction and early commemoration of the war should center on the conflict's primary aim—Union. Delivering a speech to a convention of Ohio veterans in 1866, Union general Thomas Ewing was emphatic on this point: "What broke the ties which bound us to political parties, and moulded such diverse elements in one mass, moved by one sentiment and purpose?" Ewing asked. "Hatred of slavery? No. Love of war? No. Hatred of the Southern people? No. It was the . . . determination that the Union of the States should be perpetual," he maintained, "and that the Constitution . . . should be preserved." Union, Ewing affirmed, "was the only purpose of the war. All else was auxiliary. Every soldier and sailor recognized that purpose; none avowed another."[11] Despite Democratic

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[9] *Metropolis Promulgator*, September 6, 1866.

[10] *Metropolis Promulgator*, September 13, 1866.

[11] *National Convention of Union Soldiers and Sailors Held at Cleveland, Ohio, Monday and Tuesday, September 17 and 18, 1866* (Cleveland: N.p., 1866); *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 21, 1866.

accusations of Republican "mongrelization" and "amalgamation," racial supremacy was nearly universal among white men of both political parties.[12]

Overwhelmingly, white Union veterans in Middle America did not fit black advancement into their political worldviews—or commemorate the black experience during the war—because they never viewed blacks as equal wartime partners. Untold numbers of white Middle Western soldiers rejected the centrality of emancipation in their political agendas—and their memories—insisting that the war had been fought solely for the Union's restoration and that restoration should be the only immediate postwar plan. As one Democratic southern Illinois newspaper asked, "Are you, soldiers, prepared for the feast of Negro equality to which your leaders invite you? Was it for this you fought? Or did you fight for that glorious Union and Constitution?"[13]

Lower Middle Western veterans divided instead of political identity, particularly within budding veterans' organizations. Founded in 1866 in Bloomington, Illinois, by Benjamin F. Stephenson, the Grand Army of the Republic eventually became the largest and most influential veterans' organization in the country. Its early phase was intensely political, linked to Republican politics.[14] The first national convention was held in Indianapolis in 1866 and by the late 1860s and early 1870s the western-birthed organization was viewed primarily as a political vehicle for the Republican party and

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[12] *Chester Picket Guard*, November 7, 1866. Although the editor confirmed that Reconstruction was simply a question "of whether this government shall be administered by white men . . . or by a mongrel race, the Radical party would have us believe is superior to the pure blood of the Anglo-Saxon," conservatives in both parties often operated under similar racial assumptions.

[13] *Chester Picket Guard*, September 12, 1865. The newspaper had always emphasized Union and Constitution, reminding its readers in 1866 what it wrote in May 1862: "So long as the war is waged for the restoration of our glorious old Union as it was, so long as our army fights for the preservation and not the destruction of the Constitution, we give it our hearty support," *Chester Picket Guard*, October 24, 1866.

[14] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), xiii-xiv; Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the GAR* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952). Dearing argues that the GAR was Republican political organ from the outset.

became a point of attack for Democrats in the Lower Middle West. Separate societies of the western armies—the Ohio, the Cumberland, and the Tennessee—fought for regional interests and crafted a western narrative of the war. Veterans fought to keep wartime issues alive and proved vibrant political agents. Old soldiers accused one another of trumping up their own records, equating their political allegiances with wartime loyalty, and thus proverbially "waving the bloody shirt." Calling the GAR a "pernicious," "evil" tool used to "arouse sectional antipathies," one Democrat and veteran from Centralia, Illinois, opposed the organization and the Southern Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Association because they were "controlled by partisans of the most radical type and devoted to the advancement of party interests." Yet he also claimed that the rift between he and other Union veterans in the region was based on "more than mere political difference." "Anything which inspires animosity of sections," he explained, "is a cancer." The White Boys in Blue, a veterans' organization intended to moderate radicalism within the Republican Party and the GAR, formed in Ohio in 1868.[15] Other conservative Unionists resisted veterans' organizations, which they accused of "sowing the seeds of sectional discord."[16]

The GAR abandoned its overtly Republican allegiance after Reconstruction and became an increasingly conservative cult of patriotism. While often divided by politics and policy, by the mid-1870s most veterans in both parties felt it best to "let the prosperous South alone" and let it handle its own racial problems.[17] Whereas much of the nation viewed the former slaveholding states in increasingly romantic, nostalgic

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[15] Edward L. Gambill, *Conservative Ordeal: Northern Democrats and Reconstruction, 1865-1868* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1981), 126.
[16] *Centralia Democrat*, September 26, 1885.
[17] Ibid., September 19, 1885.

ways, Lower Middle Westerners referred to the South in brotherly and neighborly terms.[18] As the raw political issues of Reconstruction recoiled, mutual identities as old soldiers and defenders of the Union brought veterans of different political loyalties together. This increasing unity was evident not only at encampments and reunions, but also on political issues. Debates over pensions proved a major point of public political contention, but when Democratic President Grover Cleveland sought to veto pension bills and issued his notorious "flag order" for northern states to return captured Confederate battle flags as a gesture of national harmony, Democrat and Republican veterans in the Ohio Valley generally came together in opposition. As the *Louisville Commercial* reported, "Union soldiers in the democratic ranks in [Indiana] are disposed to make an issue of the flag episode, and in any disagreement between the GAR and the president they will not take sides against their army comrades."[19]

Party loyalties continued to create rifts in the GAR in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, both at the state and local levels well into the twentieth century. The politics of loyalty were often employed to classify party allegiances and designate sectional loyalties. Democrats often maintained that veterans' reunions were primarily "electioneering camps" and "thinly veneered vote factories."[20] In May 1902, for instance, in the midst of the heightened nationalism of the Philippine War, Indiana's GAR committee on resolutions divided over the issue of loyalty. A proposal that condemned as traitorous any citizen who opposed the current war was met with considerable backlash among

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[18] For an overview of how the postwar South was recreated in the northern imagination, see Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Cox links the rise of the romantic and sentimental South to the rise of mass consumption in the North.

[19] *Louisville Commercial*, reprinted in the *Princeton Courier*, September 29, 1887.

[20] *History of Wayne and Clay Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Globe Publishing Co., Historical Publishers, 1884), 355.

Democrats. Reviving the lexicon of the war era, proponents of the resolution, mostly

Republicans, called its opponents "Copper heads." "Such conduct [war opposition]

brings fresh to our memory like criticisms made by the Copperheads of 1860 to 1865,"

the committee explained.[21] Although a compromise regarding the language was

eventually struck, Democratic newspapers throughout the Lower Middle West were

incensed. While political division ran deep and veterans' reunions remained politicized,

distance from wartime political debates enabled veterans following Reconstruction to

overlook differences in party loyalty in the name of defending their legacies as loyal and

white western soldiers.

The Postwar Politics of White Supremacy

The divisive politics of loyalty in the Middle West made the politics of race there

appear relatively harmonious. There was a continuation between antebellum white

supremacy in the region and what Lyman Trumbull of Illinois called the "great aversion

in the West" to black rights following the war.[22] Despite relatively consistent racial

attitudes, the postwar Middle West was a time of great political change. Party loyalties

shifted, and the region declined in relative political influence.[23] Republicans gained

support between 1864 and 1872 by attacking the war record of their opposition and

winning the veterans' vote, while Democrats sought to retain support by playing on racial

fears. Identification of the Republican Party with the Union Cause was strong, winning

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[21] *Evansville Courier*, May 15, 1902.

[22] Avery O. Craven, *Reconstruction: The Ending of the Civil War* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1969), 262.

[23] The ratio of upland southerners in the Old Northwest continued to decline. See United States Bureau of Census, *Ninth Census* (1870) and *Tenth Census* (1880), I, 388-389; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society, 1965), 541.

countless converts. Unlike the Democratic Party's antebellum preeminence, both parties were competitive. Democrats and Republicans addressed the "southern question" of what to do with former Confederates, and most whites in the region initially expected some immediate form of reunion between the white North and the white South on northern terms. Yet the national backlash against Johnson's perceived leniency toward the defeated South reverberated through the Ohio Valley as Republicans and moderate Democrats accused Johnson of protecting traitors. Many former conservative Republicans came to support Radical measures, as the possibility of creating a Republican Party in the South led many to support African American enfranchisement and anti-Johnson Democrats switched their allegiances to the Republican Party, if only temporarily. Questions over how to reconstruct the South soon became saturated with the bloody shirt politics of loyalty and, to a lesser extent, the politics of race.[24] While Democrats ran to save the region from "niggerism," some Republicans—who were not racial egalitarians—countered that perhaps loyal black men were preferable to white traitors.[25]

This profusion of white supremacy was not the Democratic Party's alone. Despite an increased identification with the Union Cause and the augmentation of the Republican Party in the Lower Middle West between 1864 and 1872, Democrats *and* conservative Republicans retained much of their pre-war western ideas of white individual liberty, localism, and distrust of the East. Many Middle Western Republicans

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[24] Postwar bloody shirt rhetoric had its genesis in wartime anti-Copperhead rhetoric. See Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials During the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984), 234-244

[25] Eugene Holloway Roseboom and Francis Phelps Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), 298-299.

shared Democrats' opposition to the Civil War Amendments.[26] Indiana's George Julian,

the only prominent Republican to advocate black suffrage in 1865 (his state saw the most

prolonged debate over the effect of the Thirteenth Amendment and was the last northern

state to abolish its black laws), suffered withering attacks from leading Republican

newspapers, including the Indianapolis's *Daily Journal*.[27] Conservative Republicans

such as John Hanna—a southern Indiana politician who had promoted the Republicans as

the "white man's party" in 1860—insisted that although former slaves were citizens who

should be afforded federal rights and protection, state law could deny them suffrage

under the Fourteenth Amendment.[28] Republicans and Democrats alike repeated that

emancipation was a gift bestowed upon a lesser race by the largesse of white men—a

"war measure" or an act of "unintentional kindness." These assumptions that became

major tenets of the white Union cause in the Middle West.[29]

In July 1866, addressing a crowd in Evansville, Indiana, John Pilcher, a

"consistent Republican" who had "not one drop of Democratic blood in his veins,"

protested the political infighting in Washington, D.C. "When the war was over the cause

of war also disappeared," he complained. The Cause whose disappearance he lamented

was not the legacy of emancipation or the role of black soldiers, but the "restoration of

the Union." As Pilcher and others saw it, the sole purpose of the war had been to bring

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[26] Michael Vorenberg, *Final Freedom: The Civil War, the Abolition of Slavery, and the Thirteenth Amendment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001),211-221. Vorenburg claims that many Middle Western Republicans shared Democrats' belief that the Thirteenth Amendment should not affect the states' authority over African Americans. Many Republicans simply ignored the Thirteenth Amendment while campaigning or drafting state-level legislation.

[27] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 229-230. Julian later became a Liberal Republican and abandoned the party after 1872.

[28] Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2011), 175.

[29] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, September 22, 1866. On the Union Cause, see Gary Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011). Gallagher maintains that "Union always remained the paramount goal" for white Union soldiers.

the Confederate states back under federal authority. He and others were puzzled over debates over former slaves and as to why preconditions were part of the readmission of former Confederate states. He claimed that "supreme state sovereignty" had been the cause of the war, accused "Yankees" and New Englanders of introducing slavery into the land, and damned the "demagogues" who had used the war as an occasion to enact emancipation. Advocating a soft peace toward the South, Pilcher reminded his audience, "By degrading them [white southerners], we degrade ourselves, our own blood and race."[30] The region's African Americans understood Pilcher's brand of white supremacy quite well. As Reverend S. D. Fox explained to a black crowd during the 1865 Emancipation Day celebration in Clermont County, Ohio: "We are now looked down upon . . . and excite only the pity of the whites."[31] Though sectionalism had divided the West, fostering northern and southern sectional identities in the Middle West and Kentucky, respectively, the old bonds of region—politics, culture, and even race—still affixed the two banks of the Ohio River in complicated ways.

Democrats on both sides of the river resisted every aspect of Radical Reconstruction, in addition to opposing traditional Republican measures such as tariffs, national banks, and centralized government in general. Many conservatives still felt the war had been fought for "the protection of New England factories at the expense of Northwestern fields" and that the North had "become rich at the expense of the South and West," binding both regions to the industrializing, pluralistic East. They held out hope that the West and South might unite against what they perceived as tidal wave of "Yankee" cultural imperialism emanating from Union victory. "Revolutions do not go

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[30] Ibid., July 25, 1866.
[31] David A. Gerber, *Black Ohio and the Color Line, 1860-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 170.

backward," one southerner wrote Ohioan John Allen Trimble, "and you with the North

Western States where interests are deeply identified with ours will find that New York

and PA with the New England states have bound your hands and feet." Indeed, there was

recognition that the nation had been reoriented at the expense of southern and

conservative influence in the Middle West. In Kentucky, where postwar attachment to

slavery was part of a larger resistance to federal authority and had the effect of further

alienating the Bluegrass State, both politically and psychologically, from the Middle

West, Democrats insisted that sectional "hate" against the "Yankee race" was stronger

than ever.[32] Middle Western "Yankees," meanwhile, openly mocked the "loyalty" of the

Bluegrass State.[33]

  Yet Democrats defied any perceived change to the racial order. They viewed the

ratification first of the Thirteenth Amendment, and later the Fourteenth and Fifteenth, as

the death knells of white supremacy, defying Republican calls for limited black

advancement. Democrats focused more on local and regional issues and emphasized the

goals for which they fought the war: political restoration of the Union and the

maintenance of the Constitution. In 1866 the banner head of Chester Illinois's daily

newspaper, *The Picket Guard*, evoked the late Stephen Douglas: "I hold that this

government was made on the WHITE basis, by WHITE men and for the benefit of

WHITE men and their posterity forever, and should be administered by WHITE men, and

NONE OTHERS."[34] The editor also ran a poem entitled "Campaign Song for 1866,"

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[32] W. M. Conny to John Allen Trimble, January 18, 1865, G. M. Cochran, September 10, 1865, C. P. Harris to JAT, January 5, 1866, J. M. McClure to JAT, October 15, 1865, and M. H. Mitchell to JAT, January 22, 1866, JATFP, OHS.

[33] See Henry S. Lane, *Reconstruction on the Basis of Loyalty and Justice* (Washington, D.C.: Chronicle Print, 1866).

[34] *Chester Picket Guard*, November 7, 1866.

emphasizing Democratic positions of neighborhood and fraternity toward the former Confederacy: "Although our Southern neighbors/Once got us in a brawl/Yet still they are our brothers/With rights most dear to all."[35]

Both parties employed the rhetoric of section and loyalty to great effect. Democrats accused Republicans of "carpetbagging" fraudulent voters into certain counties, while Republicans condemned Democratic amnesty toward the Border South and charged Democrats with importing "butternut" votes from Kentucky.[36] Lower Middle Western Republicans tended to favor the national party line through 1868 as they backed the Fourteenth Amendment, displayed support for the Reconstruction Acts, and identified as the "Union Party" and the "party of loyalty."[37] The political reactivity surrounding the concept of "loyalty" led to postwar political contests that mirrored war itself. In order to counter Republican charges of disloyalty, Democrats organized companies of "White Boys in Blue." These groups emphasized both their fidelity to the Union through supporting the continued exclusion of former Confederate states and their whiteness by opposing all forms of "radicalism" and "revolutionary" policies. Republicans responded by forming groups of "Fighting Boys in Blue" and the two clashed both rhetorically and violently during election time.[38] This inside war after the war reverberated to every corner of postwar society.

As such, the between the fall of 1865 and 1877 the Lower Middle West also saw genuine support for Radical Reconstruction. Countless Union veterans who had once been Democrats converted to the Republican Party during the war, and others were won

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[35] Ibid., September 19, 1866.
[36] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 240.
[37] *Evansville Daily Journal*, March 25, 1867.
[38] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 240.

over during the immediate aftermath by "bloody shirt" tactics. Their identification with wartime policies, personalities, and ideas provided the core of their new political identities. Republican support grew both during the war and in response to Andrew Johnson's perceived amnesty toward the former Confederates and the South. "Southern counties" that had always been overwhelmingly Democratic had Republican majorities by 1868. Although the views of many new white Republicans shifted little regarding racial issues, white veterans constructed a Union identity during and after the war linked to sectionalism, military victory, veterans' organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic, and, to a far lesser extent, the Civil War Amendments and the Republican policy aims during Reconstruction.

The region's primary political divide was over loyalty, not race. Waving the bloody shirt, Republicans linked wartime loyalty with their own party and its leaders in an obvious attempt to co-opt the memory of the war in the process. An officer in the 57th Indiana Infantry and a veteran of Sherman's March, Mark Morris spoke for most postwar Republicans when he equated his former Democratic party with treason before a group of Union veterans. "My father's side of the house was naturally a democrat and I must say that I was somewhat tainted that way," he confessed. "But I loved my country." Morris explained that once the war began he "was not a Democrat anymore." As he reminded, "I am a republican and helped to put down the most gigantic rebellion that ever existed on the face of the Globe . . . All Democrats was not rebels, but show me a Johnnie and I will show a man who was a democrat."[39]

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[39] Mark M. Morris, undated speech to Union veterans, Morris Mss., Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as LL).

Debates over capital and labor also divulged the politics of loyalty. Anti-eastern conservatives connected Northeastern capital with white slavery. When an advocate of the eight-hour workday from St. Louis spoke in southern Indiana in late 1865 the Republican press insisted his message was "a Copperhead stump speech injected into a labor address." Democrats responded by explaining that Republican economic planks were aiding former slaves at the expense of white men—Yankee abolitionists turning workers into "white slaves."[40]

Even the Republican version of the Union Cause was not synonymous with the cause of the freedpeople. Although Republican convert John A. Logan insisted that Union veterans were the saviors of the Republic, the benevolent liberators of former slaves, and the inheritors of the republican traditions of the Greece, Rome, and the Founding Fathers, Lower Middle Western Republican support for former slaves was typically qualified in racial terms.[41] For instance, as an Ohioan living in Covington, Kentucky, in 1866, Jesse Root Grant (father of the famed Union war leader) typified the postwar border Republican. Although a Republican and lifelong slavery opponent who deemed the institution "a moral and financial evil," Grant also firmly opposed black enfranchisement, fearing that "incorporating the Negro into our government on an equality with the white race or make him "equal before the law"' would be ruinous for democracy because it was evident that "the Negro is an inferior race."[42] Though the war

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[40] *Evansville Daily Journal*, December 15, 1865; See also Lawrence M. Lipin, *Producers, Proletariats, and Politicians: Workers and Party Politics in Evansville and New Albany, Indiana, 1850-1887* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 132-134.

[41] John A. Logan Speech, "Reconstruction of the Southern States" undated, unpublished, John Alexander Logan Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as LOC).

[42] Jesse Root Grant Letter, May 11, 1866, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS)

nurtured the Republican Party, racial antipathy, a hallmark of the party's antebellum

ideology in the region, remained robust.

Still, many Republicans sanctioned the migration of freedmen into the free states.

Asking "Will They Come North?," one Republican newspaper in southern Indiana

maintained that the presence of former slaves in the Middle West would bolster their

political ranks in the region and undercut the electoral power of the South. Viewing his

position as one of northern interest, the editor continued, "Let them come to this side of

the Ohio river and assist in making a 'Solid North' against a 'Solid South.'"[43] Other

Republicans argued that the Lower Middle West was comprised primarily of southerners

anyhow, and that a fresh, albeit black, labor source would stimulate the region's

economy. Although support for African American migration was pragmatic, such

support fits into the arguments of historians Leslie Schwalm and Nicole Etcheson, who

allege that the greatest change in northern postwar society was that war forced

northerners to address at close range the nation's racial wounds. Yet wholesale

endorsement of black migration was rare, even among Republicans, and by the 1870s

much of the violence of Reconstruction had moved north as black mobility was violently

challenged by Middle Western whites.[44]

The presidential election of 1868 was the culmination of the politics of loyalty

and the Republican high water mark in the Lower Middle West.[45] Republicans identified

themselves as the party of loyalty, and political and racial violence in the South had

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[43] *Greencastle Banner*, December 12, 1878.
[44] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 241-259. Etcheson describes in detail the white response to black exodusters from North Carolina in Putnam County, Indiana.
[45] This changing political identity equated "loyalty" and Union with the North (and slavery's absence).

reinforced that image.[46] Lower Middle Western supporters of Republican Ulysses S.

Grant portrayed their candidate as both a true westerner—as opposed to his opponent,

New York Democrat Horatio Seymour—and identified him with the Union Cause.

Although Republicans officially abandoned the Union Party label, Grant supporters

commonly used it. Scores of war Democrats deserted the party of Douglas and threw

their support toward their old general. Speaking at Evansville's Turner Hall in July 1868,

former Indiana governor and War Democrat Paris Dunning avowed that he and other

former Democrats would vote Republican so long as it was the party of loyalty and

Union.[47] Union veterans also increasingly viewed Grant and the Republicans as

opponents of the rising Lost Cause cult within the former Confederacy. As one

Evansville man and former Democrat alleged, "A man who does not vote for Grant gives

a vote to the "Lost Cause.""[48] Moreover, Grant supporters acknowledged that

maintaining Republican gains along the Ohio River was crucial to winning the Middle

West and the election. Writing to a friend in Kentucky, one southerner was confident

that the results of the election would "depend upon the three states just north of you—

Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois," owing to their upland southern and conservative

proclivities.[49] Grant himself prophesized that his "great struggle" would be "between the

Alleghenies and the Wabash River."[50]

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[46] Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1978), 172-173, 179. Hansen claims that Democrat opposition to early Reconstruction legislation such as the Reconstruction Acts only divided Democrats and perpetuated their image as "copperheads."
[47] *Evansville Daily Journal*, July 28, 1868.
[48] Ibid., October 29, 1868.
[49] R. W. Walker to Thustin Luther Thayer, August 28, 1868, Thustin Luther Thayer Papers, FHS.
[50] "Grant as a Prophet," *Cincinnati Commercial*, reprinted in the *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 16, 1868.

Republicans exploited the politics of western sectionalism. Indiana Republican Oliver P. Morton indicted the New Yorker with attempting to "array the Western against the Eastern states." Like Indiana's antiwar factions of 1861-65 who sought a "Northwestern Confederacy," Republicans accused Seymour of representing easterners as Yankees as "enemies, commercially, financially, and socially to the people of the Northwestern States."[51] The linking of Seymour with wartime dissent and Grant with the Union Cause worked, as numerous Democrats resolved to vote for the war leader or not vote at all as a vote against Seymour. Charles Remelin, a German Democrat from southern Ohio, expressed his dissatisfaction in one of Cincinnati's Democratic newspapers, aptly named *South and West*:

> I will venture to say that not merely in Cincinnati, but throughout Ohio, not in Ohio only but everywhere west of the mountains, the coolness with which the nomination of Mr. Seymour was received by the members of his party has no parallel in American political history.[52]

Remelin's prognostication proved mostly correct. Democratic disappointment coupled with mass political conversion led to a new, competitive two-party dynamic throughout the Lower Middle West, a region once dominated by Stephen Douglas. Illinois's Little Egypt, for instance, which had been stalwartly Democratic in 1860, now saw veritable two-party competition. The city of Cincinnati, which went for Douglas in 1860, saw a nearly 5,000-vote majority for Grant, a Republican increase of over 2,600 from 1864.[53] Old Democratic strongholds in southern Indiana such as Posey County also

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[51] *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 28, 1868.

[52] Ibid., August 6, 1868.

[53] Historian Vernon L. Volpe reminds that although Republicans dominated Ohio's presidential races between 1856 and 1932, two-party competition was extreme. Between 1870 and 1892 the average Republican share of the statewide vote was 49.3 percent, compared to 47.4 for the Democrats, "Ohio of Republican Dominance: John C. Fremont's 1856 Victory in Ohio," in Jeffrey P. Brown and Andrew R. L.

went for Grant and those that went for Seymour still saw considerable increases in their Republican minorities.[54] Deeming Grant the candidate of "loyalty and peace," Evansville's *Daily Journal*, the self-proclaimed "largest and oldest newspaper in this section, equal to any paper in the West," described Grant's election as "Another Appomattox," only this time with Kentucky's "Ku-Klux Democracy Dead and Buried."[55] According to Lower Middle Western Republicans the election had not been a referendum on race—which War Democrats, former Whigs, and self-described "conservative" Lincoln supporters viewed as secondary—but on loyalty. As one Republican editor in southern Indiana alleged, Democrats in the region suffered setbacks because they had "too much negro on the brain, and treason at the heart."[56]

Grant's victory underscored the Middle West's political estrangement from Kentucky, and its growing attachment to the East. Grant supporters *expected* Kentucky to be the only state that did not see Republican gains and, although there were Republican gains in some areas, the state went for Seymour by a 75,000-vote majority. This absence of a two-party race, along with anti-Unionist Regulator activity in the Bluegrass State leading up to the election, affirmed Kentucky's disloyalty to many citizens north of the Ohio River. Middle Westerners reveled in their loyalty. One southern Indiana Republican bragged, "heretofore New England has stood at the head of the Republican column . . . but the Northwest has outstripped her in growth of Republican principles." These Northwestern "principles" did not include racial equality, just as they had not

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Cayton, eds., *The Pursuit of Public Power: Political Culture in Ohio, 1787-1861* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1994), 167-168.

[54] *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 4, 1868; For election returns from Illinois, see Howard W. Allen and Vincent A. Lacey, *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990: Candidates and County Returns for President, Governor, Senate, and House of Representatives* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

[55] *Evansville Daily Journal*, June 1 and November 4, 1868.

[56] Ibid., November 16, 1868.

included abolitionism prior to and during the war. Rather, the editor asserted that the Loyal West and New England were wedded in mutual faithfulness: "During the war it was the hardy yeomanry of the Northwest to whom the government looked for its sturdiest and most unflinching defenders. The people . . .have not forgotten the principles for which they fought. All honor to the glorious Northwest! She strikes hands with New England, and thus forever silences the mischief-makers who sought to foment jealousies and hostilities between the two sections." As the editor saw it, this political reorientation necessitated a mental re-drawing of geographical identifiers and he deemed any state that had voted for Grant—including Missouri—part of the loyal Northwestern States, perpetually linked to the East through the bonds of fidelity and war. Kentucky, having gone overwhelmingly for Seymour, was, by implication, southern, and part of the "Democratic Confederacy."[57] Even as Democrats hurled charges of "Black Republicanism" at Grant's supporters, most Republicans ignored fiery racial issues altogether and instead viewed their victory as a litmus test of Union, not racial, loyalty. Loyalty, the Union cause, and political identity were locked in an ever-evolving, symbiotic relationship with regional and sectional identity that would ultimately come to serve the cause of Union commemoration but not that of sectional reconciliation. As the politics of loyalty receded from their 1868 crest, the Republican Party began to weaken and anti-Reconstruction sentiment emanated from the Lower Middle West into the rest of the nation, setting the stage for reunion in the Ohio Valley that also prefigured the rest of the country.

Liberal Republicans and the Rejection of Reconstruction

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[57] Ibid., November 11, 1868.

Despite postwar Republican gains in the Lower Middle West, the region remained mostly committed to a conservative Unionist social and political vision. Considerable racial continuity existed among northern Democrats from the antebellum to the postwar years.[58] Nowhere was this truer than in the lower free states. As Republican defenses of Reconstruction became associated with the perceived racial radicalism of southern Reconstruction governments, many white Middle Western Republicans retreated from the party of Lincoln. Racial issues had mostly been ignored during the presidential contest and public celebrations between 1865 and 1868, as drives to support black suffrage by creating a Republican Party in the South lost momentum, and by the early 1870s even staunch Republican newspapers such as Evansville's *Daily Journal*, became mute on racial matters. Other Republican newspapers were more openly white supremacist, arguing that the use of legislation and federal power to protect freedmen was despotic.[59]

The passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in February 1870 signaled a sea change in Reconstruction's momentum in the Middle West. Most conservative Unionists opposed the controversial amendment, and even ardent Republicans viewed it as the war's capstone. Finally, they believed, it had taken the "Negro question" out of politics.[60] Driven by reports of political violence in the South, the Ohio River counties worried most openly about African American agency and migration.[61] The Republican *Evansville Daily Journal*, for instance, portrayed that the passage of the Fifteenth

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[58] See Joel H. Silby, *A Respectable Minority: The Democratic Party in the Civil War Era, 1860-1868* (New York: Norton, 1977); and Jean Harvey Baker, *Affairs of the Party: The Political Culture of Northern Democrats in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[59] Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 206, 211.

[60] Peter Camejo, *Racism, Revolution, Reaction, 1861-1877: The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction* (New York: Monad Press, 1976), 114.

[61] Felice A. Bonadio, *North of Reconstruction: Ohio Politics, 1865-1970* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 81. According to Bonadio, southern Ohio whites were most opposed to black suffrage because over two-thirds of Ohio's blacks lived in the southern half of the state.

Amendment as "striking off the last shackle of slavery" and representing the final fulfillment of the war's promise to African Americans.[62] One Ohio Republican explained the measure's political inexpediency: "A party in Ohio that would commit itself to Negro suffrage would inevitably be defeated." As historian Felice A. Bonadio argues, Republican support for the Fifteenth Amendment had always been highly tactical. Many of enfranchisement's first proponents abandoned it when politically advantageous. Democrats *and* Republicans, he claims, were interested in disenfranchising anyone who might vote for the other party.[63] Reconstruction issues in the Middle West "wore themselves out" after the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.[64] As early as the early 1870s Republicans in the Ohio Valley began refusing to endorse black political causes and candidates and wrote blacks out of their platforms in an effort to appeal more broadly to white voters and many whites apparently abandoned the Republican Party in favor of the Democracy over the Fifteenth Amendment.[65]

The Liberal Republican Party movement embodied the region's conservative Unionism.[66] Disenchantment with Reconstruction and hopes for civil service reform led countless Middle Western Republicans, including some of the party's founders, to "go Copperhead" and join the Liberal Republicans. Born in Missouri, the Liberal movement

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[62] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 7, 1870; Bonadio, 167.

[63] Bonadio, *North of Reconstruction*, 105-106. Bonadio argues that Ohio Republicans were mostly non-ideological, and insincere on matters of African American advancement, viii, 194.

[64] Eugene Holloway Roseboom and Francis Phelps Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1934), 300.

[65] Darrel E. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in the Ohio River Valley* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2006). 183-195; State and local "reform" tickets called for a scaling back or abandonment of federal Reconstruction and an end to political corruption associated with Grant Republicans. The movement foreshadowed the national Liberal Republican coalition led by Grant's presidential contender, former Republican and *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley; On abandonment of the Republican party in Kentucky over the Fifteenth Amendment, see Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 226.

[66] On a history of liberal republicans and the Liberal Republican Party, see Andrew L. Slap, *The Doom of Reconstruction: The Liberal Republicans in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).

espoused fear of corruption and centralized power as threatening to republican

institutions and highlighted western appeal by way of economic development and Second

Party style politics.[67] Ignoring sectional quarrels and focusing on economic issues,

Republican corruption, and the perceived excesses of Reconstruction, the Liberal

Republicans held their 1872 national conventions in Cincinnati, associating the Union

Cause not with Reconstruction or southern liability, but with sectional reunion and racial

conservatism. Indiana senator George Julian, one of the most radical members of

Congress during the war, joined the Liberals, as did Missouri Radicals Carl Schurz and

B. Gratz Brown, and Illinoisan Lyman Trumbull, and *Cincinnati Commercial* editor

Murat Halstead. Deeply rooted in the Lower Middle West, Liberals fused with New

Departure Democrats leading up to the presidential election of 1872. Thus Lower Middle

Westerners became the first northern bloc to support widespread amnesty for former

Confederates, and opposition to civil rights legislation—"home rule" and "conciliation"

ruled the day. Former Union generals and Republicans Jacob D. Cox, who had been

Grant's Secretary of the Interior, and Stanley Matthews joined former Radicals such as

Frederick Hassaurek to form a "Reunion and Reform" organization in Cincinnati, uniting

with Liberal Republicans and advocating conciliation with the South and the end of

"carpetbag rule."[68]

By the fall of 1872 Reconstruction ceased to be the primary division between

Democrats and Republicans along the Ohio River, as most party disagreements centered

on land policies, tariffs, finance, and old party loyalties. Both parties claimed the mantle

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[67] Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System*, 157, 201-209. Hansen claims that many Liberal defectors were dislocated by the new style of politics associated with the Third Party System, including sophisticated party machinery and the decline of "personality" politicians, stump speeches, colorful engineering, and brawling rallies. The end of the Liberal Republican movement solidified the Third Party system.
[68] Roseboom and Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio*, 301.

of the West and the Union veteran. By splitting the Republican Party and attracting New

Departure Democrats, Liberals drew sympathy even from those in the region who did not

break from the Republican ranks.[69] Although the Liberal Republican coalition's national

platform of "Grantism" proved unable to unseat the president, many Republicans adopted

Liberal Republican issues and the 1872 campaign terminally weakened Reconstruction.

Their attacks on Grant and Reconstruction tarnished permanently the legacy of both.[70]

Fears of black political and economic assertiveness that had always been so pronounced

in the Middle West coupled with the rise of new economic issues and fatigue of the

"negro question" had changed the political conversation.[71] At a Grant rally in

Greencastle, Indiana, for instance, a crowd of Republicans that included several blacks

from Vigo County allegedly mobbed two white Democrats, inciting "race war"

admonitions.[72] Driven by the financial downturn of the 1870s, longstanding white

supremacy coupled with economic instability and labor unrest, facilitating fresh anti-

black sentiment.[73] The very definitions of *radical* and *conservative* shifted in the Middle

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[69] Camejo, *Racism, Revolution, and Reaction, 1861-1877*, 115.

[70] Slap, *The Doom of Reconstruction*, xiii-xxv, 237. Although the Liberals were a bridge for many conservative Middle Westerners from the Republican to the Democratic Party, Slap contends that the Republican Party also adopted many Liberal issues, such as hard money and civil service reform,.

[71] Dale Baum, *The Civil War Party System: The Case of Massachusetts, 1848-1876* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 173. According to Baum, the Middle West as a whole (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin) saw only three percent of 1868 Grant voters switch to Greeley in 1872. As in the presidential election of 1864, there is strong evidence that Democrats voted for Grant throughout the Lower Middle West, associating the former general with the popular Union cause. In Indiana, for example, it appears that large numbers of voters chose Democrat Thomas A. Hendricks for governor and Republican Grant for president; *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 8, 1872; For southern Illinois election returns, see Allen and Lacey, *Illinois Elections, 1818-1990*; Mt. Vernon, Indiana, a traditionally Democratic city on the Ohio River that had shifted to the Republican camp during the war, moved back toward the Democracy and went for Horace Greeley in 1872. For Posey County in southwestern Indiana, see county election returns, *History of Posey County Indiana, From the Earliest Time to the Present; with Biographical Sketches, Reminiscences, Notes, Etc.; Together with an Extended History of the Northwest, the Indiana Territory and the State of Indiana* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1886), 352; For county returns in Indiana, see *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 9, 1872.

[72] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 177.

[73] Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction*, ix-xv.

West shifted from racial and sectional to economic as financial panic and debates over currency and monetary policy overshadowed wartime issues.[74] (Yet even at the height of Congressional Reconstruction, perceived racial *radicalism* had been more muted in the Lower Middle West than in any other portion of the free states, and digression from wartime political issues led to a condition in which freedpeople were increasingly abandoned by their one-time Republican allies, each party emphasizing its own vision as the most beneficial for white men). Overall, the years between 1864 and 1872 represented a temporary spike for the Republican Party in the Lower Middle West, a testament to the cult of the Union Cause and the success of the politics of loyalty. As Richardson explains, racism and anti-federalist sentiment ultimately fused in the Middle West as federal policy in the South confirmed what many northerners perceived as a far-reaching national government. Building on entrenched racism, "the impressions they formed of Southern African-Americans became part of the story of corruption, as well as part of the national fear of Populism, socialism, and communism."[75] By the mid-1870s economic and monetary questions, issues of political corruption, or the desire for trans-sectional political coalitions replace wartime issues of section, race, and loyalty in the Lower Middle West. Although many of newfound Republicans proved temporary fixtures, others, such as John A. Logan, underwent deeper ideological conversions and never returned to the party of Jackson. Yet many Lincoln and Grant supporters would return to the Democratic Party as the politics of loyalty faded and questions of region

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[74] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 171-172.

[75] Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction*, xv. In an expansion of C. Vann Woodward's argument that Reconstruction failed due largely to Northern racism, Richardson maintains that free labor Northerners came to resent the African-American demands for land, social services, and civil rights, which they saw as an exploitation of federal government that did not meet the traditional free labor model individualism and the sanctity of private property; See also C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955); My assertion combines Woodward's racism and Richardson's political economy theses.

replaced questions of section. As historian Peter Camejo notes, the Liberals had "served as a bridge for a sizable passage of Republicans into the Democratic Party."[76] Nowhere was this truer than in the Lower Middle West. Lower Middle Westerners possessed a conservative view of the nation's political economy and most were never quite able to overcome their antebellum racial attitudes, as racism was conceptualized after the war to meet different ends.

The end of Reconstruction must be understood through the dynamics of race and the context of place. As such, the rejection of Congressional Reconstruction at the ballot box came at different times in different places in the Middle West, but it was rejected earliest and most often in the Ohio Valley.[77] Ohio and Indiana saw the largest Democratic gains, and historian William Gillette cites civil rights legislation for turning the tide of Reconstruction so early in "lower North"—the conservative belt from New Jersey through Illinois. Radical Benjamin F. Wade and others explained that Senate racial policies had provoked border and Middle Western Republicans to the point of desertion. This "counterrevolution" in the "borderland" prefigured national changes.[78] Indiana, which had already seen its state legislature return to Democratic control in 1870, became the first free state to issue a direct voter referendum against Reconstruction at the state level when it elected former senator Democrat Thomas A. Hendricks as governor in 1872. Narrowly defeated in 1868, Hendricks was a conservative Democrat who voted against the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, arguing that it would override

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[76] Camejo, 122.
[77] See J. William Harris, *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont, and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
[78] Gillette, *Retreat from Reconstruction*, 236-258. Gillette maintains that the congressional elections of 1874 proved the ultimate referendum on Reconstruction in the Middle West, which was the first domino to fall in a national backlash. Although the Panic of 1873 played a role in Republican misfortune, Gillette cites Reconstruction and particularly racial policies and the primary impetuses behind Democratic gains.

Indiana's black laws.[79] Conservative Democrat and alleged Copperhead James D.

Williams succeeded Hendricks in 1876. Democrats Joseph E. McDonald and war

opponent Daniel W. Voorhees represented Indiana in the U.S. Senate in 1876, where

Voorhees served for two decades.[80] Ohio's political rejection of Reconstruction began in

1868 with the replacement of Radical Republican Benjamin Wade with Reconstruction

opponent Democrat and Virginia-born Allen G. Thurman in the U.S. Senate. The voters

themselves spoke in 1874 with the gubernatorial election of William Allen, Thurman's

uncle and another southern Ohio Peace Democrat and alleged Copperhead. Politics and

geographic domination in Illinois proved more lopsided, as Chicago's emergence as the

great metropolis of the Middle West alienated the southern tier of Illinois politically.

Even as the Democratic party reestablished itself in southern Illinois, a bastion of

conservatism and white supremacy, Illinoisans elected a succession of eleven consecutive

Republican governors between 1856 and 1892 and sent nothing but Republicans to the

U.S. Senate for decades after the war. Although the wartime Republican ascendancy and

demographic and commercial changes redirected political power away from the Ohio

River and toward the Great Lakes, the resurgence of former war opponents and the spirit

of sectional reconciliation that followed—the transition from Oliver P. Morton to Daniel

W. Voorhees—was fueled not only by new Democrat and labor alliances in the cities, but

white racism in the old butternut belt.[81]

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[79] Indiana had also been the only state not to repeal its black laws during the war. According to historian
Michael Vorenberg, the Hoosier State had the most intense and prolonged debate over the passage of the
Thirteenth Amendment. Vorenberg, *Final Freedom*, 113, 220-221.
[80] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 140-156.
[81] Cairo, Illinois, represented the historically Democratic Ohio River town that had voted Republican and
was moving back toward the Democratic party in 1876, as Democrats gained 230 votes from the
presidential election of 1872 to that of 1876. Vanderburgh County, Indiana, which had gone
overwhelmingly Republican every year since 1860, voted for a Democratic president for the first time in
two decades. *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 8, 9, and 10, 1876. Even Cincinnati, in Rutherford B.

Frederick Douglass no doubt sensed what he had referred to somberly the previous year as "peace among whites" when he visited Evansville in 1876.[82] Although Douglass, speaking to a mixed-race crowd, equated the Republican party with freedom and the Union and denounced Democrats as "the party of the South," Hoosiers went on to support Democrat Samuel J. Tilden in the presidential election, a referendum on Reconstruction that prompted one Evansville black to avow he would rather live in the South than Lower Middle West, "where the people treat the colored folks 'wusser than a dog.'"[83] Although the Republican Party made headway in the region in 1860 through the national elections of 1864 and 1866 due to its association with the Union cause, southern Indiana, particularly the southwestern Pocket, was again solidly Democratic by the fall of 1876. Indiana as a whole saw a Republican majority of over twenty thousand voters dwindle to nothing between 1866 and 1870.[84] By emphasizing economic concerns, Republican corruption, and the fatigue of Reconstruction and the "negroe problem," the Lower Middle West proved the lead domino in the northern conservative backlash against Congressional Reconstruction. Jim Crow had been born in places like southern Indiana during the antebellum period, and by the mid 1870s both *de facto* and *de jure* racial separation were ascendant.[85] The dim promise of Reconstruction represented only a momentary hitch in the status quo as black exclusion continued uninterrupted throughout the Lower Middle West well into the twentieth century. If Reconstruction

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Hayes's home state of Ohio, went for Samuel J.Tilden in what one Republican editor called a state of "political hell" in the Lower Middle West. *Evansville Daily Journal*, November 9, 1876.

[82] Frederick Douglass, "The Color Question," July 5, 1875, Frederick Douglass Papers, reel 15, LOC.

[83] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 7 and April 6, 1876.

[84] Logan Esarey, *History of Indiana from its Exploration to 1922* (Dayton, OH: Dayton Historical Publishing Company, 1922), II: 877, 821. Although Esarey does not delve into racial attitudes among Indiana conservatives, he explains that the Republican Party declined sharply between 1866 and 1870 due to infighting between a conservative majority, many of who shifted back to the Democratic party, and a radical minority.

[85] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 299.

was, as historians Laura Edwards and LeeAnn Whites claim, a "time of contestation" and "refashioning of identity," then it failed north of the Ohio River because even as Union identity materialized, whiteness and racial exclusion proved resilient.[86]

The Continuation of Racial Violence

Following Reconstruction the Lower Middle West saw race-aversive violence replace legal racial aversion through exclusion, segregation, labor bloodshed, and forced removal. As in the former slave states, racial violence was a common response to increased black freedom and mobility. Although postwar violence was often white-on-white and residential segregation in cities such as Cincinnati and Evansville reflected in part the desire to live near one's workplace, racial animus marked nearly every social exchange between whites and blacks in newly or increasingly integrated regions. As one resident of Johnson County, Illinois, an infamous sundown county, remembered, the "negro problem" following the war was minimal in the region, due in large part to the systematic absence of African Americans.[87] Bi-racial areas saw violence, too. In postwar Evansville, blacks were lynched, German workers drove blacks out of white neighborhoods and threatened to burn their homes.[88] As historian Lawrence Lipin alleges, incidents of racial violence along the border "arose out of economic and

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[86] See Laura F. Edwards, *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture of Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and LeeAnn Whites, *The Civil War as a Crisis in Gender: Augusta, Georgia, 1860-1890* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Quoted in O. Vernon Burton, David Herr, and Matthew Cheney, "Defining Reconstruction," in Lacy K. Ford, ed., *A Companion to the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005), 317.
[87] P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Press of the Herrin News, 1925), 225.
[88] Darrel E. Bigham, *We Ask Only a Fair Trial: A History of the Black Community of Evansville, Indiana* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 21-34, 56-60.

demographic changes" immediately after the war, but they were also rooted in antebellum patterns.[89]

Racism was a hallmark of all local, state, and national political contests, and local violence. Violence grew directly out of wartime animosities regarding loyalty and race and was exacerbated by the infiltration of outside markets and corresponded with a decline in community unit. With bonds of trust and localism unfastened by war and migration, vigilantism often replaced legal regulation in many southern Indiana communities.[90] For instance, prior to the 1866 elections, the town newspaper in Chester, Illinois, called on its readership to violently target a local man who had publicly endorsed emancipation and the importance of black soldiers. Making a speech at the Randolph County courthouse, Jehu Baker had insisted that the Union war effort was failing prior to emancipation and that the war could not have been won without the assistance of black enlistment. Consequently, Baker was labeled an "abolitionist demagogue" by the local press for his focus on "nigger bravery." This "emancipationist" view of the war was so unacceptable in Democratic-dominated southwestern Illinois that the editor urged local veterans to "spot" this man and others like him.[91]

This type of behavioral enforcement often took the form of "Regulator" violence, in which a group of local citizens sought to enforce, in the words of one contemporary, "all the social, moral and business affairs of the community."[92] Offenses included

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[89] Lipin, *Producers, Proletariats, and Politicians*, 129.
[90] Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 223.
[91] *Chester Picket Guard,* September 19, 1866.
[92] Quoted in Erwin and Musgrave, *The Bloody Vendetta*, 69; Vigilante violence in the Lower Middle West was practiced by whites of all political persuasions but typically centered on defending local autonomy.; See Arville L. Funk, *Indiana's Birthplace: A History of Harrison County, Indiana* (Chicago, IL: Adams Press, 1966), 59-60; and Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1830-1880*, 272.

drunkenness, wife beating, adultery, lying, or laziness.[93] Regulator violence in the Lower

Middle West was defended on the grounds that local law enforcement was lax or

nonexistent, and it was particularly but not exclusively anti-black.[94] Regulators, often in

conjunction with local authorities, arrested migrant African Americans for vagrancy, after

which they were jailed and auctioned off or hired out to white farmers for their labor.[95]

Other Regulator violence was purely political, as had their social and organizational roots

in wartime political groups and secret societies. Republican ascendancy brought

unprecedented two-party competition to regions that had once been solidly Democratic,

and elections often represented "miniature wars," often cloaked as feuds or vendettas in

which civilians attempted to violently suppress of affect political change.[96] Republicans

vigilantes sought to sure up postwar political power, and Democrats often used organized

violence to oppose the legal and social inclusion of blacks. Observers often sanitized

"feuds"—which represented referendums on loyalty and political identity—of their

political implications.[97] Regulator leaders were not vagabonds or career criminals, but

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[93] *Evansville Daily Courier*, September 21, 1887.

[94] Keith S. Herbert, "Reconstruction-era Violence in North Georgia: The Mossy Creek Ku Klux Klan's Defense of Local Autonomy," p. 65, n. 4, in Andrew L. Slap, ed., *Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010).

[95] The Wabash County Bicentennial Commission and the Wabash Public Library, *History of Wabash County, Illinois, New and Updated, 1976* (Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, Inc., 1977), 495.

[96] Chapman, *A History of Johnson County Illinois*, 224; For a cogent case study of how Reconstruction-era political violence can become depoliticized, see T.R.C. Hutton, "UnReconstructed Appalachia: The Persistence of War in Appalachia," in Andrew L. Slap, ed., *Reconstructing Appalachia: The Civil War's Aftermath* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2010); Southern Illinois saw wartime and postwar political violence branded a "feuds." Most notably, a series of incidents around Williamson County known as the "Bloody Vendetta" saw two groups of families, divided by political party, between 1868 and 1876. See Milo Erwin and John Musgrave, ed., *The Bloody Vendetta of Southern Illinois* (Marion, IL: IllinoisHistory.com, 2006). Erwin blames the vendetta on revenge yet acknowledges that the "vendetta" broke according to political affiliation, 35-43.

[97] The tendency to view violence as an outcome of social disorder does not acknowledge its inherent political implications. See Jule Skuriski and Fernando Coronil, eds., *States of Violence* (Lansing: University of Michigan Press, 2006); and Stathis Kalyvas, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

familiar community members.[98] Violence was strongest in areas that had no history of

federal presence, white paternalism, or black autonomy, including Little Egypt and

southern Indiana's Hill Country. Southern Illinois newspapers predicted violence,

anarchy, and spilled blood before a single measure of black equality was passed north of

the Ohio River: "This land will run bridle deep in blood before they even obtain a

nominal equality of political and social rights."[99]

Lynching was perhaps the most common form of retributive justice. Although

southern Indiana saw hundreds of racially and politically motivated lychings between the

end of the Civil War and turn of the century, the nexus of black assertiveness and

diminishing white support for Reconstruction led lead to a region "deep in blood" by

1871.[100] That year a mob stormed the jail in Charlestown, Indiana, and apprehended and

hanged three blacks who had been arrested on charges of murdering a white family. The

evidence was suspect and a grand jury failed to indict them, much to the disapproval of

the local white populous. Indiana Governor Conrad Baker threatened federal intervention

under the newly minted Force Acts and addressed organized extralegal groups throughout

the southern part of the state. As evidenced by Evansville's 1865 racial violence,

lynching was also often motivated purely by racial antipathy. In 1878 a mob surmounted

a jail in Posey County, Indiana, seizing five blacks who had been arrested for entering a

white house of prostitution. One of the victims was butchered by the mob while the other

four were hanged before a crowd of approving spectators on the banks of the Ohio River.

Local law enforcement was often complicit in such violence as local officials seldom

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[98] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 273.
[99] *Chester Picket Guard*, August 8, 1866.
[100] Richard F. Nation estimates that at least sixty persons were lynched in the hill country of southern
Indiana alone between 1865 and 1898. Nation, *At Home in the Hoosier Hills*, 223.

requested federal or state assistance.[101] Blacks were lynched in Oxford and West Union,

Ohio, in 1892 and 1894 and in Rockport and Sullivan, Indiana, in 1900 and 1902, and

Thebes and Cairo, Illinois, in 1903 and 1909.[102] Dozens more were lynched in other

communities along the Ohio River as the region transitioned from Middle West to

Midwest between 1890 and the First World War.

Although Democrats linked Republican Regulators to wartime tyranny and

African American misrule, Republicans associated rival vigilance groups to the southern

Ku Klux Klan and the Confederacy.[103] The backlash against the war's liberalizing

outcomes and the Republican reaction fostered the construction of a new geo-cultural

vocabulary in the region, as sectional language had embodied the local and regional

political dialogue. To Democrats, white Republicans were not only racially "black," their

political aims came at the behest of outsiders, Yankees and easterners; to Republicans,

conservative Democrats were southerners and vigilance groups were the "Ku-Klux,"

tantamount to Confederate guerrillas. National and regional newspapers, meanwhile,

continued throughout the 1880s and 1890s to stigmatize rural southern Indiana as the

"white cap region."[104] Patterns of postwar community violence betrayed the tension

between the conservative localist desire to enact personal, extralegal justice and the

Unionist desire to view the region as integrated into the nation-state. Just as political

labels—Yankee, Black Republican, Confederate, Copperhead Democrat—became

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[101] Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 271-273.
[102] See Michael J. Pfeifer, *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874-1947* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006).
[103] See Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1971); Hazen Hayes Pleasant, *A History of Crawford County, Indiana* (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clarke Company, 1926), 338; and Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 174-175, 256.
[104] *Du Quoin Tribune*, September 13, 1888.

connected to geographic identity, local violence represented not only contests political allegiance, but also disputes over social identities that were deeply rooted in place.

Place was linked to both white supremacy and political ideology, all of which formed the bedrock of racial bloodshed. There were striking correlations in this region between areas of upland southerners that voted heavily Democratic in the late 1850s and places that systematically expelled African Americans half a century later.[105] In fact, not only were there connections between culture, conservative political ideology (not necessarily party identity), and racial exclusion, but areas with longstanding conservatism and relative ethnic homogeneity tended to exhibit a white worldview—an ideology—in the form of customs, laws, and attitudes that fed violent white action against African American acts of self-determination. Upland southern areas later became hubs of Ku Klux Klan organizing, sundown laws, racial cleansing, lynching, and local exclusion and violence against blacks.

Violent campaigns segregated blacks from white society in the Lower Middle West, creating a region of sundown towns. Although free blacks had lived unmolested in Washington County, Indiana, white residents forcibly and systematically removed its African American population in 1863 as a response to wartime policies, spurring an exodus of nearly two-hundred blacks from the community. By 1880 the county's black population was down to three and on July 1, 1883, the *Salem Democrat* boasted that at last there were no blacks living in Washington County.[106] However, violence was most

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[105] James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York, The New Press, 2005), 148-149.

[106] Many of Washington County's blacks arrived in the company of white Quakers. Dubois, Orange, and Scott counties in southern Indiana saw similar trends. Crawford County had no black residents either before or after the war, with those attempting to settle being brutally driven away. Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 163; Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 543.

marked in counties where black populations were present but not significant. The black

community of Mt. Vernon, Indiana, just across from once-slaveholding Kentucky, was

large enough to draw notice and violent reprisal. But, unlike neighboring Evansville, it

was not large enough to cultivate near-total autonomy. Consequently, the town saw a

pattern of lynching and mob violence throughout the 1870s, including the 1878

prostitution house lynching. In the 1880s a black man named Redman was charged with

murdering his wife. Local authorities, aware of Mt. Vernon's racial antagonism, took the

man to an Evansville jail for "safe keeping." "The lower part of the county" was

indignant, according to a local newspaper, and soon formed a lynch mob who marched

for Evansville, some fifteen miles away. The mob forced its way into the jail and opted

to kill the man immediately, smashing his skull with a sledgehammer, before making

haste back to Posey County. By the 1890s the county seat of Mt. Vernon had become

notorious for its lynching practices.[107]

More populous and diverse communities sustained racial violence but rarely

enforced sundown laws. The case of two neighboring Illinois towns offers an example of

how politically and ethnically similar municipalities either adopted or rejected sundown

practices. Separated by only five miles in Saline County in Illinois's Little Egypt, the

bordering cities of Harrisburg and Eldorado shared common politics. Eldorado, however,

displayed all the signs of a sundown town, while Harrisburg remained integrated.[108]

Cities such as Harrisburg and nearby Carbondale and Mt. Vernon, Illinois, not only had

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[107] *New Harmony Times*, September 15, 1899. Posey County, Indiana, voted overwhelmingly Democratic in 1860, with Breckinridge carrying nearly twenty percent of the vote. The town's two newspapers, the *Democrat* and the *Western Star*, featured daily white supremacist appeals to its conservative readers. Commenting on a local trial of a black man in 1899, a newspaper editor in the nearby Republican leaning town of New Harmony noted, "Mt. Vernon citizens have a way of dealing with men of Thomas' [black] color when they show unusual brutality that saves the court costs."
[108] *New York Times*, June 17, 1902.

greater populations than neighboring all-white communities, they were also more diverse, with larger Republican voting blocks. Population control in the form of racial cleansing was not practicable. Cities with even larger populations and older, larger, and more deeply entrenched black communities such as Cincinnati, Evansville, and the river counties of southwestern Illinois saw sporadic racial violence, but wholesale banishment was not politically feasible. Traditional black communities in such areas guaranteed social and political dependency that normally developed into stark segregation and patterns of semi-autonomy. Areas with a history of black community, like those in Kentucky with a slaveholding cultural legacy, had also developed longstanding paternalistic attitudes toward blacks that partly subverted outright violence.[109] Cultural dilution in the form of migrants from New England and the Middle States sometimes mitigated the type of extreme racism found in the rural Middle West.[110] Racially and ethnically homogeneous communities were more likely to legally or violently banish blacks because black migration into uniformly white counties was more likely to upset the status quo.[111] Such towns typified the rural butternut belt between the Appalachians and the Mississippi River as upland southern political culture, conservative Unionism, Democratic voting patterns, and the embrace of sectional reconciliation correlated with racial cleansing.

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[109] Italian sociologist Antonio Gramsci developed the idea of paternalism as a historical concept. For American historian Eugene D. Genovese's groundbreaking theories on paternalism as a system of accommodation and reward between blacks and whites in the antebellum South, see *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon, 1974), 3-7.

[110] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 300.

[111] Another explanation for why some conservative towns did not become sundown towns may be that rapid increases in population during the late nineteenth century inhibited racial exclusion practices. For instance, Harrisburg's meager population of 453 grew to 15,659 by 1930, growing nearly 400% in certain decades. In places such as Cairo, Illinois, the population of which increased from 2,188 in 1860 to 15,205 by 1920, de facto segregation became a more feasible form of racial control. Yet Cairo's lack of racial cleansing did not preclude racial harmony as, in addition to race-based segregation, the city saw extreme white on black violence during the Nadir, the most infamous instance of which was a highly publicized lynching on November 11, 1909. See http://factfinder.census.gov.

In contrast, urban whites often used labor disputes and perceived community disorder to enact racial control.[112] For example, postwar Evansville, where Democrats were recapturing their antebellum control, pitted unionized Democratic workers against non-union black Republicans.[113] Tensions boiled over into Evansville's streets in the summer of 1899 as a strike at the Ingle and First Avenue Coal Mines resulted in street brawls between union and non-union miners, blacks and whites.[114] In early July 1903 a shooting between a white police officer and a black civilian in Evansville's African American neighborhood, Baptisttown, led to a weeklong series of riots, the deaths of twelve citizens, the wounding of scores more, and substantial damage to black property. Untold numbers of blacks fled the city and, in an unprecedented maneuver, Indiana Governor Winfield Durbin sent in the state militia.[115] All told, over 1,200 blacks left Evansville between 1900 and 1910 and the relative black population continued to decline for decades, a typical pattern throughout the Lower Middle West between 1880 and World War Two, and similar riots occurred in Springfield, Ohio, in 1904 and 1906 and Springfield, Illinois, in 1908. The real number of blacks living in most "southern counties" declined between 1880 and 1890 and the relative decline was even more pronounced. Although this exodus was due in part to "pull" factors further north, it was

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[112] For explorations of relations between working class whites and blacks during and after Reconstruction, see Nick Salvatore, *We All Got History: The Memory Books of Amos Webber* (New York: Time Books, 1996).

[113] Lipin, *Producers, Proletariats, and Politicians*, 74, 78.

[114] *Evansville Courier,* July 29, 1899; *Evansville Journal,* August 22, 23, 1899.

[115] Brian Butler, *An Undergrowth of Folly: Public Order, Race Anxiety, and the 1903 Evansville, Indiana, Race Riot* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2000). Butler argues that racial violence staged in the name of public order helped redirect the flow of black migration mid-sized to major cities in the Midwest.

also the result of systematic efforts on the part of white civilians to intimidate or forcefully remove blacks from their neighborhoods, towns, cities, and counties.[116]

The Lower Middle West saw continued resistance to the black presence owing to the Great Migration and what historian Leon Litwack refers to as "the refusal of blacks to keep their place."[117] The region's secondary status in the Middle West exacerbated social anxieties that fostered political and racial violence.[118] These incidents were also more than mere periodic spasms of racial antagonism; they were tied deeply to antebellum cultural and political custom, part of a decades-long systematic attempt in the Lower Middle West to expel African Americans through legal or extralegal means. This aversive white supremacy and the region' dearth of emancipationist memory fostered some of the nation's earliest drives for sectional reconciliation in the 1880s.[119] Though white racial superiority remained a national phenomenon, the "southern counties" of the Middle West were striking in their monoracialism and cities such as Evansville and Cincinnati became the nucleus of the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s.[120] The Lower Middle West ultimately proved a front line of racial antipathy in the free states as violence there foreshadowed the Midwestern race riots of the early

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[116] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 302-303. Concerning the effect of Evansville's 1903 Race Riot on the city's sudden decline of black population, Bigham concedes that although racial inequality was certainly a factor, "the "push" of inferior unemployment and the "pull" of job availability in the north" were "probably more important" in explaining this regional trend.

[117] Leon F. Litwack, *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 229, 237; See also Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Penguin, 2010).

[118] By 1870 it was clear that the center of gravity in the Middle West was no longer the Ohio Valley, but the Great Lakes. On the relative decline of Cincinnati as it related to the rapid rise of Cleveland. See Roseboom and Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio*, 314-316.

[119] For an overview of such gains in one southern Illinois community and the African-American struggles toward social permanence and advancement in the face of segregation, see Michael Tow, "Secrecy and Segregation: Murphysboro's Black Social Organizations, 1865-1925," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 97 (Spring 2004): 27-40.

[120] For a case study on the second incarnation of the Ku Klux Klan in southern Illinois, see Masatomo Ayabe, "Ku Kluxers in a Coal Mining Community: A Study of the Ku Klux Klan Movement in Williamson County, Illinois, 1923-1926," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 102 (Spring 2009): 73-100.

twentieth century in places such as St. Louis and Chicago and prefigured the violent

white response to the Great Migration throughout the North well into the next century.

Overall, Midwestern white supremacy of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries

cannot be understood without first understanding the conservative white reaction to

Union war policies and black migration and settlement during the Civil War Era.

Unlike white reconciliation, Reconstruction failed in part because it failed first

where it was most vulnerable, in the Lower Middle West. It failed not only as a matter of

policy, but also as a mental reconstitution and a matter of social identity. The Lower

Middle West's rejection of Radical Reconstruction allowed *conservatism* to become the

catalyst for regional consciousness (through early redemption and reconciliation) and

Unionism to facilitate integration into the nation-state. With Reconstruction rebuffed and

Jim Crow solidified, *conservative Unionism* became the foundation for new

understandings of identity and popular memory in the region, resulting in new "imagined

communities" in the Ohio Valley and the cleavage of the antebellum West.[121] Union

loyalty ultimately proved stronger than party loyalty. Unlike the Border South, whites

(especially Democrats) overwhelmingly promoted a conservative Unionist—but

undeniably Unionist—political understanding of the war.[122] Anti-Rebel and anti-black,

this conservative Unionist political heritage would ultimately come to serve the cause of

Union commemoration *and* sectional reconciliation. The combination of regional

exceptionalism, sectional superiority, and national white supremacy that politicians and

veterans' organizations increasingly fostered set the stage for an era of commemoration

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[121] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
[122] Astor, *Rebels on the Border*, 198-199.

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that reflected the Loyal West—uniting Union triumphalism with western superiority, political moderation, and white supremacy. This commemoration impelled the region's reconciliation movement of the 1880s and 1890s. Victorious Middle Westerners could embrace the Union Cause, and even identify as northerners, but they could not overhaul their localist moorings, their conservative visions of the nation's political economy, or decades of racial aversion and exclusion. With the political battles of Reconstruction dimmed but not doused, whiteness and loyalty were the only prerequisites for participating in postwar remembrance and the adoption of northern identity.

Chapter 7

"Never Checked—Always Victorious": The Construction of the Loyal West

The ink on Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox was barely dry in 1865 when John W. Barber and Henry Howe published *The Loyal West in the Times of the Rebellion* in Cincinnati. Intending the volume to become a "household book for the Western people," the authors distinguished the "Loyal West" from the antebellum West of both slaveholding and non-slaveholding states. Though "the West" was loyal, "the word West is not," Howe explained. "We here apply the title to those States of our Country's West which in the Rebellion were faithful to the Union. Can you think of any other word that so completely expressed the geography embodied?" Depicting the Loyal West through of words and engraved images—bountiful prairies and idyllic river valleys giving way to mountains beyond—Barber and Howe used western metaphors of "the spirit of Daniel Boone" and hunter-pioneers to emphasize the connectedness of the antebellum Ohio Valley.[1]

But change in the regional and sectional outlook between the "formation of territories from the close of the Mexican War to the close of the Southern rebellion, was rapid without precedent," and divided the region unlike any other part of the nation. The outlooks of the people north of the Ohio River changed after being threatened with invasion in 1862 and 1863: "The sensation of danger from the presence of the enemy on her soil," they claimed, created a new and acute enthusiasm for the war a new type of

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[1] John W. Barber and Henry Howe, *The Loyal West in the Times of the Rebellion* (Cincinnati: F. A. Howe, 1865), 4-5. For another account of the Loyal West during the war, see Stella S. Coatsworth, *The People of the Loyal North-west* (Chicago, Church, Goodman & Donnelley, printers, 1869). Coatsworth reveals the role of women in constructing the Loyal West narrative. Press reviews at the time noted as much. See *Chicago Times*, November 14, 1869.

heightened Unionism. The authors' intent was obvious. Civil war had divided the West and the new Loyal West based synonymous with fidelity to the Union.

Largely overlooked by scholars, The Loyal West narrative represented an alternative commemorative script during the postwar period. It held a distinct political meaning and by projecting a western-centered narrative of the war. Unionism was absolute and whiteness was assumed. Its soldiers claimed they fought solely for Union and the continuation of the government rather than for emancipation and sought culturally to divorce themselves from the slaveholding South and the East.[2] By constructing a counternarrative that was both sectional ("Loyal") and regional ("West"), Middle Westerners were responding to both the nationalized emancipationist narrative and the sectionalized Lost Cause narrative. Indeed, the construction of collective memory as a means of political and cultural power involves both social remembering and forgetting, and region and space are central to this process.[3] By overemphasizing emancipation, reconciliation, and the Lost Cause as modes of collective memory, Frances M. Clarke claims that historians have neglected the vitality and variation of the Unionist memory of the war. Historians have indeed forgotten that the North, as well as the South, was engaged in active mythmaking after the war. In the Loyal West that mythology grew up around western Union military and political leaders. Though historian John R. Neff concludes that the "Cause Victorious" included both a celebration of Union victory and

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[2] *New Albany Daily Ledger*, July 25, 1866. This notion that soldiers had fought for the Union and the Constitution became an important Democratic rallying cry during and immediately after the war. It served three purposes: it facilitated sectional reconciliation, it was a means of deleting emancipation as a primary means toward Union victory, and it minimized the significant role blacks soldiers played in Union armies, therefore undercutting their hopes at political gains.

[3] On the relationship between collective remembering and forgetting, see David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 2-3; Larry J. Griffin, "'Generations and Collective Memory' Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights," *American Sociological Review* 69 (August 2004): 556.

the end of slavery, commemoration of slavery's destruction was muted in the Lower

Middle West.[4] More, the Loyal West states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois moved to

commemorate the Union Cause just as Confederate identity was implanted in Kentucky

and Missouri, thus largely disqualifying these states from full membership in the Loyal

West despite their contributions to the federal war effort.

Commemoration of the war—monumentation, memorials, and public displays—

was the most common generator of collective memory in postwar society as citizens

demonstrated a heightened interest in their past in order to publicly express social

cohesion, order, identity, value, and meaning.[5] Postwar histories, memoirs, satire, and

other published and non-published narratives also reveal the parameters of regional and

sectional identity in postwar Middle America. Memory was linked to geo-cultural

identity, as veterans and civilians propelled the mythology of the Loyal West by touting

conservative war aims and racial exclusiveness and emphasizing differences between

eastern and western soldiers.[6]   "Invented traditions" looked to make sense of the

nation's unimaginable wartime slaughter, the chaotic aftermath of Reconstruction, and

the anxieties of industrial capitalism and new immigration from Europe.[7]   Although the

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[4] See Frances M. Clarke, *War Stories: Suffering and Sacrifice in the Civil War North* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); and John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2005).

[5] Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 94. The "assault" of public commemoration examined in this chapter both constructed and was constructed by the memories of 1861-1865 and helped to forge the historical memory of the war—the way individuals and societies valuate the past, personally or politically—in the region and the nation.

[6] On memory and identity, see Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 108. In the case of the Middle West, this entails western identity.

[7] Postwar changes in the relationship between the individual and the state and the social effects of Reconstruction led to a host of new devices for expressing social cohesion. See Eric Hobsbawn, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in Eric Hobsbawn and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 263; and Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 215; Soldier encampments, material culture,

dominant nationalist Union narrative insisted that there had always been "two America"—one slave and one free—Loyal Westerners insisted that there were in fact three. By separating itself from the "treasonous" South and the "Yankee" East, the Loyal West asserted its political and cultural distinctiveness, altering the course of national identity and sectional reconciliation.

The Cultural Relocation of Dissent

The "Cause Victorious" tenet that the nation had always really been two nations existed long before the Civil War, and has much occupied the work of historians since. Studies by Frederick Jackson Turner, C. Vann Woodward, Susan-Mary Grant and others have attempted to comprehend the creation of "the North" and "the South" as opposite and irreconcilable mental constructions.[8] All neglect the sectional borderland in favor of divided sections. As historian William R. Taylor explains, most Americans saw their society and culture as "divided between North and South, a democratic, commercial civilization and an aristocratic, agrarian one . . . Each section of the country, so it was believed, possessed its own ethic, its own historical traditions and even, by common agreement, a distinctive racial heritage." Charles Beard contended that the South was a divergent civilization from the North and West.[9] More recently, historian Stanley Harrold underscores the firmness of sectionalism in the Ohio Valley prior to the Civil

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print media, and mass commercialism were synonymous with the Gilded Age, as businessmen looked to exploit the memory of the war within the emerging consumer economy. See James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 126. These commercial inclinations eventually combined with older regional commonalities to drive sectional reconciliation in the Ohio Valley.

[8] See C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North/South Dialogue* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1971), 6-7; and Susan-Mary Grant, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

[9] William R. Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier: The Old South and American National Character* (New York: Braziller, 1961), 15.

War as communities fought over slavery, even alleging that no one during the 1850s really doubted which border societies were northern and which were southern.[10]

Yet the popular notion of "two Americas" possesses an essential constructedness and is an ahistorical product of hindsight. In fact, no consensus over the meaning of North and South existed in the Ohio Valley prior to the Civil War. When abolitionists such as William Lloyd Garrison alluded to "the South" or fire-eaters such as William Lowndes Yancey referenced "the North," more even than geography, they really meant were the political and cultural extremes of both sections. Eschewing abolitionism and slavery, secession and racial integration, most people in Middle America saw themselves as removed from both groups, neither Yankee nor Cavalier. They thought themselves westerners or middle people, part of the border, the Northwest, or even the South.[11]

Though slavery politics came slowly to Middle America, war brought to the borderland along the Ohio River a floodtide of sectional language and geo-cultural reorientation. Benjamin Franklin Scribner, a Union soldier from New Albany, Indiana, described this psychological division in his 1887 memoir. Lying on the Ohio River across from Kentucky, New Albany in 1861 was "essentially a Southern city" according to Scribner, and "share[d] with the South the same principles and prejudices." The majority opposed Lincoln and coercion and sympathized with the South and felt that "the dividing line should be drawn north of New Albany." Scriber claimed that Fort Sumter galvanized New Albany for the Union, creating "patriotic citizens.". In 1861, Scriber

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[10] Stanley Harrold, *Border War: Fighting Over Slavery before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 4-5.

[11] There was a unique national perception of the West during the antebellum period, apart from that of the North or the South. This characterization of the West was rooted in individualism and an enterprising spirit, but the region was also deemed wild, unruly, and often backward. Eventually it became recognized in the national imagination as the land of the small producer, aligning politically with either North or South, depending on the issue and the locale. Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier*, 21, 209-210, 246.

maintained, "Slavery cut no figure in the war and that the preservation of the Union was the cause we had espoused." "Had it been told my men in the beginning that the colored soldiers would be employed, that slaves would be taken as contraband of war, or that their freedom would be proclaimed, there would have been but few who would have enlisted. But as the war progressed we found the necessity of the changes in policy" and disowned their southern identities.[12] Loyalty to the Union Cause became synonymous with sectional identity and the cultural integration of the Lower Middle West—where citizens once brandished their southern identities—into the Unionist North facilitated Kentucky's adoption of Confederate identity.[13]

The fictive transplantation of Reverend Petroleum Vesuvius Nasby represented one construct of the adoption of northern identity in the Middle West. A scathing white supremacist, secessionist sympathizer, western sectionalist, and conscripted Union soldier who deserted and briefly joined the Confederate army, Nasby personified the stereotypical upland southern "Copperhead."[14] Ohio newspaper editor David Ross Locke, a native New Yorker, began publishing Nasby's "papers" in 1864 as a satire of anti-war conservatives in the Middle West, some of which were illustrated by famed Republican cartoonist Thomas Nast. An avid Lincoln supporter and editor of the Republican *Toledo Blade*, Locke created the Nasby alter ego and caricature in 1862 based on the culturally and politically southern element in the Middle West in order to lampoon the region's Democrats. But Locke's fictive Copperhead did more than parody as

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[12] Benjamin Franklin Scribner, *How Soldiers Are Made; or, The War as I Saw It Under Buell, Rosecrans, Thomas, Grant, and Sherman* (New Albany, IN: 1887), 11-15, 65, 131-132.
[13] Taylor, *Yankee and Cavalier*, 4.
[14] For discussions of Middle Western "Copperheads," see Frank Klement, *Copperheads in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); and Jennifer L. Weber, *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

southerners those Democrats north of the Ohio River; Nasby's passage mirrored shifting regional identity in the Ohio Valley war. He represented the undermining of antebellum western unity and the confirmation of the Middle West as part of the North and Kentucky as part of the South, and, to some extent, the Confederacy.

Writing from Wingert's Corners, Ohio, Nasby—who was only mostly literate—wrote in the vernacular style appropriated both by Artemis Ward and later by Mark Twain. Locke used phonetic spelling and grammar to indicate the nominal education of the western "butternut." Drawing on upland southern stereotypes, he portrayed Nasby as intensely racist and anti-eastern, with an affinity for whiskey. Nasby backed western secession and detested "Yankees," although he admired many Ohioans, Hoosiers, and Illinoisans and other northern "Dimekrats." Nasby's blamed black migration, emancipation, and the draft on the "tyranikle government." By the middle of the war his southern sympathies led him to desert from the Union army and join the Confederacy, espousing "reunion" between white men to combat "nigger equality." He assisted draft resisters in Hoskinville, in Noble County, Ohio, a real life hotbed of Peace Democrats, and, unable to fathom the western swing toward Lincoln, endorsed McClellan in the fall of 1864. "We hev bin defeated," he lamented in 1865, "but the great principle that a white man is better than a nigger for wich we hev so long fought, still lives."[15]

Given Locke's twin aims, he soon transplanted the clichéd upland southerner from the Middle West to Kentucky.[16] Moving from Wingert's Corner's to Kentucky's

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[15] Harvey S. Ford, ed., *Civil War Letters of Petroleum V. Nasby* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1963), 9, 16, 23, 25, 29-30.

[16] Petroleum V. Nasby (pseud.), *"Swinging round the circle"; or, Andy's trip to the West, together with a life of its hero. By Petroleum V. Nasby [pseud.] a Dimmicrat of thirty years standing, and who allus tuck his licker straight* (New York: The American News Company, 1866). The pamphlet of Johnson's western trip, told through political cartoons, is partisan Republican and Locke mockingly portrays Johnson as a

"Confedrit X Roads"—a "typical village in the unreconstructed South"—Nasby found

himself surrounded by former slave owners and idle Confederate veterans who shared his

fears of black equality and miscegenation. By physically relocating Nasby from Ohio to

the Bluegrass State, Locke exposed the nation's shifting political and cultural threat from

within his own region to the Border South, thus creating a uniquely southern problem

during Reconstruction. The "Dimekrat" from Wingert's Corner's had always had many

close friends and confidants in Kentucky, and when Locke published *Ekkoes from

Kentucky: Bein a perfect record uv the ups, downs, and experiences uv the Dimocrisy,

doorin the eventful year 1867, ez seen by a naturalized Kentuckian* in 1867 the author

was not only deliberately linking postwar Kentucky with Democratic political dissent,

racial violence, and a pro-Confederate understanding of the war, as historian Anne E.

Marshall illustrates. Locke was also, by contrast, associating the Middle West that Nasby

left with Union and military victory.[17] Locke's critique of the postwar South and his

triumphalist affirmation of the Middle West assumed that there were no unreconstructed

northerners and that the Border South was a strange wilderness of former slaveholders

and Confederate Democrats. Even if the antebellum West had not been completely

divided during the war, the logic went, it had certainly severed along the Ohio River

during the war's immediate aftermath. Nasby's transition from stereotypical

conservative Middle Westerner to, according to Marshall, "the prototypical Kentucky

Democrat in the national mind" signaled the division of the antebellum West and a

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drunk, incompetent, divisive, and illegitimate, and unpopular even in the West. Nasby, meanwhile,
reiterates his conservative views, claiming "conservatism . . . may be defined ez stayin' in the rear," 25.
[17] Petroleum V. Nasby (pseud.), *Ekkoes from Kentucky: Bein a perfect record uv the ups, downs, and
experiences uv the Dimocrisy, doorin the eventful year 1867, ez seen by a naturalized Kentuckian* (Boston:
Lee and Shepherd, 1867).

broader shift in Middle Western perceptions of the Border South.[18] Indeed, by 1866,

according to Locke's implication, most southern-born Middle Westerners were

thoroughly "reconstructed" and the "butternut" stereotype—the conservative upland

southerner—had retreated across the Ohio River and was residing safely—all too

safely—in the Bluegrass of Kentucky.

John A. Logan's "Two Americas"

While the cultural relocation of dissent was central to the creation of the Loyal

West, it was equally important to the construction of the more dominant nationalist

narrative and the idea that there had always been two rather than three Americas. Few

white Lower Middle Western reunion speakers linked emancipation to the rhetoric of

sectional superiority, but southern Illinoisan John A. Logan was one exception. A

proslavery Democrat turned Radical Republican who by 1886 had served two terms in

the Senate and run unsuccessfully for vice president, Logan venerated the

emancipationist legacy of Lincoln and the destruction of slavery as fundamental tenets of

Union memory.[19]

Perhaps more fully than any war narrative, Logan's *The Great Conspiracy*

embodied the "two Americas" thesis. Published in the winter of 1886, Logan's

rhetorically grandiose 800-page overview of the origins of the Civil War concluded that

the war was the result of a "great conspiracy" on the part of the southern elites to

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[18] Anne Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 49-50. Marshall aptly addresses what Locke's satire reveals about national perceptions of postwar Kentucky, but she emphasizes less what Nasby's sectional relocation suggests about white Middle Western perceptions of itself vis-à-vis the Border South.

[19] "Memorial Day Address" undated typescript, JALFP, LOC.

perpetuate and nationalize slavery. A polemic that suffered both negative reviews and meager sales, Logan's "spread-eagle" oratory nonetheless represented an affirmation of sectionalist thought, a vindication of Lincoln's wartime politics, and a calculated effort to disown any vestiges of so-called "treason" on the part of the author. Eschewing his former proslavery views *and* the conservative Unionism that both he and his region exhibited during the antebellum period and the secession crisis, Logan's tome was an overt pronouncement of the Union Cause—a broad expression of sectionalism and the centrality of emancipation to the Union war effort.[20]

Logan's arguments, which were echoed by countless Union veterans East and West, rest on the persistence of a historical North-South binary. His "preliminary retrospective" sets the tone for the book by blaming the war squarely on slavery, insisting that the rift between North and South began, as for Frank Baldwin, at Jamestown, "before Plymouth Rock was pressed by the feet of the Pilgrim Fathers," and ran westward, dividing the Ohio Valley, and "sowing the wind" for sectional conflict.[21] The Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, the Missouri Compromise, and Nullification all represented that divided slave states and free. Ignoring the fluidity of geo-cultural loyalties and fragile or deficient political consensuses of his native region, Logan, an upland southerner, sought to consciously erase the narrative of a common West—a narrative he had helped to sustain as late as 1861. A westerner, Logan was, ironically, writing out the western narrative of the war in favor of a nationalist story of "two Americas."

A one-time proponent of the Fugitive Slave Act, Logan had earned the nickname "Dirty Work" for his willingness to perform the "dirty work" of capturing runaway slaves

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[20] Gary Ecelbarger, *Black Jack Logan: An Extraordinary Life in Peace and War* (Guilford, CT: The Lyon's Press, 2005), 307.

[21] John A. Logan, *The Great Conspiracy: Its Origins and History* (New York: A. R. Hart, 1886), 1-2, 12.

in southern Illinois. However, Logan's 1886 discussion of the Compromise of 1850 and the Fugitive Slave Act attempted to disown his own past.[22] Rather, Logan maintained that when the "war-drum" cried, "the prairies of the West" and "the hills and cities of the East" all became part of the "Loyal North," all were bound by "an absolute unanimity of love for the Union."[23] Logan momentarily yet staunchly defended his own early war loyalty, greatly exaggerating the extent of his unconditional support for war. In truth, reiterating Stephen Douglas's assertion that neutrality was impossible, Logan reversed his position during the secession winter by maintaining that there was "no half-way ground betwixt Patriotism and Treason," and allegiance in the North was a matter of "copperheadism" and "union democracy."[24] Repeating the position that the war had been over slavery and instigated by slaveholders, Logan also implied that it could only have been won by freeing the slaves. He praised the Confiscation Acts, which represented "freedom's early dawn," and damned the border slave states for their opposition to black liberation.[25]

Notable as much for what it omits as what it declares, Logan's narrative intentionally obfuscates his (and is region's) former conservatism Unionism. Logan's national audience and contemporaneous political aspirations lent to a more partisan narrative that was far more morally stark and affirming of the Union Cause than Grant's *Personal Memoirs*. In *The Volunteer Soldier in America*, published the year after his death, Logan again highlighted millennial GAR rhetoric and insisted that slave South,

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[22] Ibid., 40-41. Logan went on to call the proslavery Lecompton Constitution a "fraud," and lambaste the Dred Scott Decision, despite his one-time support of these measures and their popularity in the lower free states.
[23] Ibid., 207-208.
[24] Ibid., 264-274.
[25] Ibid., 347-348, 406.

"the legitimate child of monarchy," had always been at odds with the egalitarian, free labor North. The Civil War had been an inevitable clash between a united North and a united South, with the two sides and the outcome never in doubt.[26] A child of the border, and one of the region's most renowned statesman and soldiers not only disowned his own proslavery past, but also adopted and constructed the basic tenets of Yankee mythology.

Logan repeated the major themes of *The Great Conspiracy* in print and at speaking engagements for the remainder of his life. Delivering a speech at a Soldiers' Reunion at Cairo, Illinois, in 1886, Logan insisted that there had always been "two sentiments" in America—one rooted in slavery and the other based on freedom. "There was a line, dividing ideas, drawn from east to west as far as our country extended . . . and that line dividing the country on the theory, on one side, that civilization was based upon slavery, and, upon the other side, that all civilization was based upon freedom to man."[27] Although this binary and foreordained sectionalism was a far cry from the ambiguity and indecision Logan, Cairo, and much of the Lower Middle West both before and during the war, its straightforwardness and clarity served a commemorative utility by bifurcating regions and making sense of war. Logan's assertion of sectional superiority—that there had always been "two Americas," presumably divided by the Ohio River—was a commemorative theme that often dovetailed with emancipationism and was fundamental to the popular nationalist version of the "Cause Victorious."

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[26] John A. Logan, *The Volunteer Soldier in America* (Chicago: R.S. Peale and Co., 1887); For an analysis of Logan's *The Volunteer Soldier in America*, see Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 193-200.
[27] "Speech Delivered at Cairo, Ill., at a Soldiers' Reunion, September 30, 1886," JALFP, LOC.

Emancipationist Memory and the "Two Americas"

Although highly marginal in the Loyal West narrative, the "two Americas" narrative often accounted for emancipationism.. Postwar writings of Union soldiers and African Americans often tied the "two Americas" theme to black freedom. Speaking at the annual reunion of the Army of the Cumberland in Cincinnati in 1883, General Smith D. Atkins reminded his audience that there has always been "two distinct types, or varieties, or civilization" in America, one agrarian and aristocratic and "peculiar," characterized by Jamestown, and another that "despised kingly power and caste," characterized by Plymouth Rock. The debate between these "antagonistic sections of the continent" could only be settled through " a war for mastery between Freedom and Slavery," Atkins asserted. "Rivers of blood washed the stain of slavery away," he recalled, and "the civilization of the North triumphed, and United States blazed in the light of universal liberty."[28] Similarly, at an Emancipation Day commemoration in Columbus, Ohio, in 1888, Bishop Benjamin William Arnett insisted that freedom and equality had been synonymous with the Northwest going back to the Ordinance of 1787. Striking a common commemorative theme—the Pilgrim-Cavalier dichotomy—Arnett insisted that there had always been two separate American civilizations, one emanating from Plymouth and Jamestown, with the Northwest was part of the former. The "north of the river Ohio," he suggested, had fostered literacy and progress, the other ignorance.

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[28] Society of the Army of the Cumberland, *Fifteenth Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, October 1883* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1884), 89-103. Atkins also recalled, somewhat mockingly, the role of Kentucky during the war. "Kentucky was "neutral"," he remembered. "The "dark and bloody ground" . . .was not a woman, and dare not be a man – in the first early months of the war, Kentucky was a mule! I have heard a story of a mule that starved to death between two hay-stacks, because it could not make up its mind which haystack to eat from! That was the condition of the State of Kentucky," 102-103.

The late domestic conflict was, therefore, was "the final battle for free soil, free men, free speech, free press, free homes, free schools, free ballot." Moreover, it represented a struggle between "slavery and freedom" and "right and wrong" and the North was central in bringing about "the great triumph of freedom."[29]

Yet African American veterans in the Lower Middle West often commemorated their own cause. Their victory was centered not on western identity, white supremacy, or even emphasizing "two Americans" and the North's historical cultural divergences from the South. Rather, the achievement of emancipation and the cause of black advancement was central to their emancipationist narrative. This counterhegemonic narrative challenged the region's dominant white belief that the war had been caused by but not fought over slavery. This "hidden transcript" insisted that emancipation was the primary legacy of the war, dealt openly with the war's causes, lamented the abandonment of Reconstruction, and in doing so defied the white-scripted hegemon. "Subaltern couterpublics," historian Nancy Fraser explains, offer "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs."[30] Prominent black speakers such as Frederick Douglass canvassed the Lower Middle West offering alternative social memories, sermonizing an emancipationist understanding of the war as thousands of black and white citizens turned out to listen in integrated

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[29] B. W. Arnett, Jr., *The Centennial Jubilee of Freedom, at Columbus, Ohio. Saturday, September 22, 1888. Orations, Poems, and Addresses* (Xenia, OH: The Aldine Printing House, 1888), OHS.

[30] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), xii; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* 25/26 (1990): 67; See also Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

forums.[31] Emancipation Days, commemorating the anniversary of the Preliminary

Emancipation Proclamation, and Juneteenth celebrations, which celebrated the ending of

slavery on June 19, 1865, became the primary public expressions of emancipationist

memory.[32] These fetes, which worked in tandem with schools, churches, and benevolent

organizations, quickly became the primary public expressions of the black contribution to

and memory of the Civil War and were used to agitate the state and federal governments

for expanded black rights.[33]

Emancipation Day was the most important annual holiday for most African

American communities. Unlike white commemorative displays of the late 1860s, in

which Union veterans regarded Kentucky as partisan and disloyal, black Emancipation

Day celebrations often traversed sectional lines as countless former slaves from the South

joined their Middle Western brethren in public observation.[34] Emancipation Day's

common emancipationist and trans-sectional themes suggest that the Ohio River

represented a different type of sectional divide among black citizens. This emphasis on

freedom was often at odds with the dominant narrative of white Union veterans and even

Radical Republicans who emphasized foremost the Union and its white political and

military leadership. Many black and white speakers found ways to combine both

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[31] *Evansville Daily Journal*, March 18, 1870.

[32] On Emancipation Day celebrations, see Mitch Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Day Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); and William H. Wiggins, Jr., *O Freedom! Afro-American Emancipation Celebrations* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1987). Kachun maintains that Emancipation Days were "used for the purpose of defining, revising, and retelling the collective history of African American people," providing blacks a platform through which to "congregate," "educate," and "agitate," 2-9. Such celebrations were central to the articulation of black identity, social concerns (enfranchisement, lynching, segregation, institutional development), and collective memory.

[33] On how Emancipation Days in postwar Virginia were invested with political content, see William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

[34] Bigham, *One Jordan's Banks*, 177; *Evansville Daily Journal*, September 23, 1869 and February 17, 1870. The Republican newspaper referred to Kentucky as a "paradise of Democracy."

messages, particularly during the early years of Reconstruction. At an Emancipation Day celebration in Grove City, for instance, Ohio's Republican Governor George K. Nash, a native of the Western Reserve and graduate of Oberlin College, addressed over three thousand black citizens of Columbus with a biracial message, identifying slavery as the cause of the war and tying the emancipation celebration to the current anti-lynching campaigns, thus delivering a biracial and activist message.[35]

Other African American celebrations mirrored those of white Union veterans by advancing the "two Americas" theme. At Emancipation Day in Columbus, Ohio, in 1888, Bishop Benjamin William Arnett insisted that freedom and equality had been synonymous with the Northwest going back to the Ordinance of 1787. Striking a common commemorative theme—the Pilgrim-Cavalier dichotomy—Arnett alleged that there had always been two separate American civilizations, one emanating from Plymouth and Jamestown, with the Northwest being part of the former. The "north of the river Ohio," he suggested, had fostered literacy and progress, the other ignorance. The late domestic conflict was, therefore, was "the final battle for free soil, free men, free speech, free press, free homes, free schools, free ballot." Moreover, it represented a struggle between "slavery and freedom" and "right and wrong" and the Northwest was central in bringing about "the great triumph of freedom."[36]

As support for Reconstruction faded by the 1870s, however, Emancipation Day celebrations became more and more segregated, mirroring the separate black and white observances associated with Independence Day and, later, Labor Day which reflected the

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[35] George K. Nash, *Emancipation Day. Governor Nash's Address at Grove City, Ohio, September 23* (n.p.: n.d.), OHS. Still, according to Nash's interpretation of the white master narrative, Lincoln was the benevolent patriarch, the black man's benefactor who had "struck the shackles from the limbs of four million slaves."

[36] Arnett, *The Centennial Jubilee of Freedom*, OHS.

region's racial hierarchy.[37] However, emancipationist memory remained central to community construction and black identity north of the Ohio River. On May 26, 1870 about fifteen hundred blacks from Vincennes and Princeton, Indiana, and Mount Carmel, Illinois, met in Evansville to celebrate the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment with the largest gathering of African Americans ever in southern Indiana.[38] In 1887 Evansville blacks organized a "grand excursion" to Paducah, Kentucky, via the Ohio Valley Railroad in order to celebrate the anniversary of emancipation with family members and former slaves in western Kentucky.[39] Such fetes were not only outlets of political expression; they also enabled African Americans to link their destinies to the North and the Republican Party despite the fact, for most, regional identity meant far less than conscious self-identification as Black or American.

African American communities continued to commemorate their war through public works even as white Republicans grew increasingly indignant at black assertiveness. Public schools, named after Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, marked black neighborhoods throughout the region. White Union leaders such as Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant were remembered as racial partners, not racial superiors. Whereas the white community celebrated the death of Illinoisan Robert G. Ingersoll as a benefactor of the black race, black communities, including Evansville Indiana's, drafted memorial resolutions in honoring him as an official ally.[40] The rise of the NAACP in cities such as Evansville, Louisville, and Cincinnati—in which blacks pressed for political equality through action as broad-based as pushing for desegregation

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[37] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 166.
[38] *Evansville Daily Journal*, February 23, May 7-27, 1870.
[39] Ibid., July 27, 1887.
[40] *Evansville Courier*, September 3, 1899.

or picketing the showing of *The Birth of a Nation* in 1915—ensured the continuity of the emancipationist legacy.[41]

      Although some GAR functions in the region became increasingly integrated after the First Word War, this trend was often a byproduct of practicality. Though emancipationist themes continued to have an alienating effect, by the 1920s there simply were not enough old soldiers left to fill reunion halls. Despite racially segregated GAR posts in Evansville, Indiana, a 1929 reunion of old soldiers at the city's Memorial Coliseum saw twenty-one white and three black veterans gather to greet and exchange war stories and Moses Slaughter, commander of Evansville's Wagner Post, received equal billing with the commanders of the all-white Farragut Post.[42] Over a decade later, in 1940, the city's few remaining black and white veterans met again for the 61st Annual Encampment of the Indiana Department GAR to champion increased defense spending in light of threats abroad. The interracial group championed a strong national defense, service to country and flag, and sought to make sense of the chaos overseas. As ninety-four year old O. M. Wilmington, a veteran of Shiloh and Missionary Ridge, explained, "War in 1861-1865 wasn't what it appears to be today, and there now seems to be little honor between nations."[43] With the Loyal West undermined by a nationalist narrative of "two Americas," and in an America increasingly disconnected from its domestic upheaval of the previous century, the region's old soldiers represented honor and service, and little else.

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[41] Bigham, *On Jordan's Banks*, 208.
[42] *The Evansville Press*, October 23, 1929.
[43] *Evansville Courier*, June 20, 1940; *Evansville Courier*, June 18, 1940.

The Cult of the Loyal West

Conservative Unionists in the West responded to the creation of nationalist and emancipationist narratives during and immediately after the war, asserting their separate identities as conservatives and westerners. Loyal Western exceptionalism was rooted in the belief that westerners were moderates who had won the war with "western brawn and pluck" and unflinching loyalty and, eventually, that they were particularly prepared to reconcile with former Confederates by virtue of being westerners.[44] Speaking in Cincinnati in 1866 at the Society of the Army of the Tennessee's first annual meeting, John W. Noble explicated the Loyal West. "Its soldiers came almost wholly from the Western and Northwestern states," he noted. "From Minnesota to Missouri, and from Ohio to Kansas, a common origin made our people one of common character, generally known as 'Western.'" The "broad Western land" had imbued residents with "an improved general nature" and an "increased originality of thought," rendering a "peculiarly Western" soldier. This "Western spirit," one of free labor and mobility and whiteness, translated to individual character, creating a distinct type of army.[45] In the words of soldier-poet John Tilson, national victory had been "borne by the soldiers of the West" and Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois veterans sought to carve out a cultural space based on this premise.[46]

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[44] *Fifth Annual Reunion of the Ninth Indiana Veteran Association, to be Held at the Grand Opera House, Valparaiso, Indiana, August 29th and 30th, 1888* (Wautseka, IL: Republican Print, 1888), 27. Such Loyal Western rhetoric reveals its nativist undertones.

[45] Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at the First Annual Meeting Held at Cincinnati, Ohio, November 14th and 15th 1866* (Cincinnati: Published by the Society, 1877), 459-476.

[46] Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at the Sixth Annual Meeting Held at Madison, Wisconsin, July 3rd and 4th 1872* (Cincinnati: Published by the Society, 1877), 250.

The swank of the Loyal West had been on full display at the Grand Review of the United States armies in Washington, D.C. in late May 1865. The columns of uniformed men who paraded down Pennsylvania Avenue were more than defenders of the nation-state—they belonged to various states, regions, and communities. Regional rivalries were still palpable, as onlookers noted especially stark dichotomies between polished eastern and rugged western men. Samuel Roper of Golconda, Illinois, marveled at banners that read "Welcome Our Western Heroes" and alleged that the loudest cheers arose for Sherman's men. Roper observed, "You could hear the people crying "This is the Grand Union Army that put down the rebellion . . . Hurrah for our Western Army."[47] Hoosier soldier Theodore F. Upson remarked how happily dissimilar he and the rest of Sherman's "bummers" were from polished rifles, white gloves, and "fuss and feathers" of the eastern armies.[48] "Many people had looked upon our Western army as a sort of mob," William T. Sherman admitted, "but the world then saw that it was an army in a proper sense, and there was no wonder that it had swept through the South like a tornado."[49] The *New York Times* reiterated its "old acquaintance" with the Army of the Potomac, but admitted a fascination with the armies of the West. Eastern observers found soldiers from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio especially ragged, dirty, and independent,

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[47] Samuel Roper Letter, May 25, 1865, Samuel Roper Papers, Huntington Library, Pasadena, California (cited hereafter as HL). See also Steven E. Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory: The Army of the Tennessee, 1861-1865* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 639.

[48] Theodore F. Upson, *With Sherman to the Sea* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1958), 175-177; See also Hugh Dalziel Duncan, *Culture and Democracy: The Struggle for Form in Society and Architecture in Chicago and the Middle West During the Life and Times of Louis H. Sullivan* (New York: The Bedminster Press, 1965), 31-32.

[49] William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 731-732.

in contrast with the discipline and uniformity exhibited by their own men.[50] Above all, however, they were loyal, and they were victors.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated assured that Sherman's veterans would carry "remembrance of the day" to their "far western homes" north of the Ohio River in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio.[51] But the meaning of those western homes had changed. New Albany, Indiana, soldier Benjamin Franklin Scribner noted the "sudden change" upon crossing the Ohio River from Kentucky into Indiana, as the north bank of the Ohio was lined with flags and crowds of "loyal citizens."[52] Homebound soldiers viewed the land far differently than they had on their war to war. With the deterioration of bonds with the Border South, Lower Middle Western veterans possessed vastly different identities as white, Union men within the nation state. Ohio private Frederick E. Pimper recalled making his way back to Clinton County, down the Ohio, with the "Kentucky rebel plantations" on one side of the river and "home" on the other.[53] A common region—the antebellum West—had become two oppositional sections. To veterans such as Pimper, Unionism characterized the North, while Kentucky was linked to hostility and slaveholding and was therefore traitorous, with the Ohio River representing a line of demarcation between the two.

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[50] On eastern attitudes toward western soldiers at the Grand Review, see Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 3-7.

[51] Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 23. Gallagher asserts that the Grand Review was notable for its racial exclusion, military triumphalism, and national pageantry, setting the pattern for postwar trends in the North.

[52] Scribner, *How Soldiers Are Made*, 218; "The Ohio River bids fair to receive more emigrants than the popular "other side of Jordan,"" wrote the *Louisville Courier Journal*. To many Unionists, the free states came to represent "the right side of the government." *Evansville Daily Journal*, May 12, 1863, "The River of Death."

[53] Frederick E. Pimper to Sarah Parrot King, June 16, 1865, Pimper MSS, Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana (hereafter cited as LL).

As with popular literature, the civic commemoration of Middle Western Union leaders was central to the construction of western Unionist identity. Although different groups created countermemories around public figures, a dominant white discourse soon developed around several Union leaders.[54] Sherman, Ulysses S. Grant, and John A. Logan all hailed from the Lower Middle West, and all quickly became bulwarks of white Union memory and a regional and exceptionalist understanding of the Union Cause. Unionist memory was also constructed around political leaders, "the great statesman of the West," and Lincoln and Grant—the great martyr and the great defender—became symbols of the Union cause in the West. Whites remembered Lincoln primarily, in the words of Frederick Douglass, as "the white man's President," the "Savior of the Union" who had bestowed freedom onto the slave.[55] Upon his death in 1886, John A. Logan was also celebrated as a consummate westerner and citizen-soldier. A one-time Democratic congressman and proslavery conservative, Logan energetically adopted the Union Cause, characterizing the Lower Middle West itself. Though Logan was a wartime hero to "the soldiers of the West," he developed a partisan and national reputation following the war by converting to the Republican Party, serving in the U.S. Senate, and running unsuccessfully for vice president in 1884.[56] James F. Jaquess, former colonel of the 73rd Illinois Infantry, explained that Illinois was the most Union of all states due to its

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[54] This phenomenon is related to what James M. Fields and Howard Schuman call "looking glass perceptions," or the tendency for a group or individual to see their values in others, including historical symbols. See Fields and Schuman, "Public Beliefs About the Beliefs of the Public," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40 (Winter 1976-1977): 435-442; On how marginalized groups craft distinct countermemories around public figures, see Barry Schwartz, "Collective Memory and History: How Abraham Lincoln Became a Symbol of Racial Equality," *The Sociological Quarterly* 38 (Summer 1997): 469-496. For instance, whereas white Middle Westerners might remember Abraham Lincoln as the savior of the Union and reluctant emancipator, black Middle Westerners were more likely to remember him as a champion of racial equability.
[55] *New York Times*, April 22, 1876.
[56] *Evansville Daily Journal*, December 30, 1886.

leadership contributions of Lincoln, Grant, and Logan.[57] As one group of Illinois

veterans later recalled, "In the war for the preservation of the Union" Illinois gave both

the greatest the Commander-in-Chief and the "ablest general of the age."[58]

More than any other figure, Grant became a symbol of the Union Cause and a

touchstone for the Loyal West. While his memory became a bulwark of Union

vindication, his legacy was politicized with his entry into public politics in 1868. To

Republicans, Grant and his party were the safeguards of the Union legacy. During a

speech in 1872, John A. Logan asked, "Who are the Grant men in this country?" then

responded, "Grant men are the men that went forward to fight in favor of this union."[59]

Despite Democratic denunciations of "black Republicanism," Logan equated Grant's

memory with Republican politics.[60] Logan claimed during a speech delivered at Grant's

Tomb in Riverside Park in 1886 that, more than anything else, three things won the Civil

War for the Union: emancipation, Lincoln, and Grant. Comparing Grant to Caesar and

Alexander and Washington, he likened his tomb to the great monumental works of Egypt

and Athens and Rome.[61] Although most Middle Westerners could identify with Logan's

sectional superiority and focus on the Slave Power as the war's cause, this former

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[57] *Minutes of Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Reunion, Survivors Seventy-Third Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry, Held Afternoon and Evening of Tuesday, Sept. 28 and Evening of Wednesday, Sept. 29, 1897 in the Supreme Court Room, State Capitol Building, Springfield, Ill.*, Box 16, Folder 9, Southern Illinois Collection, Morris Library, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Carbondale, Illinois (hereafter cited as ML).

[58] *To the Comrades of the G.A.R. and Other Civil War Veterans*, broadside, November 30, 1917, Box 16, Folder 7, Southern Illinois Collection, ML.

[59] John A. Logan Speech, Springfield, IL, March 17, 1872, John Alexander Logan Family Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter cited as LOC).

[60] According to such Bloody Shirt logic, those who were not Republicans were not Grant men; those who were not Grant men were not Union men; so, Democrats were not Union men. For charges of black Republicanism, see William McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 283.

[61] "Oration at the Tomb of General U.S. Grant, Riverside Park, N.Y. May 31st, 1886, by John A. Logan" (Washington: Gibson Brothers, Printers and Binders, 1886), 8, JALFP, LOC.

Democrat's championing of black rights and newfound Radical standing alienated conservatives.

Grant's memory became increasingly diffused as Reconstruction waned. As Grant biographer Geoffrey Perret reminds, "In the North . . . Grant remained the most popular man there was. There wasn't even a close second."[62] According to Joan Waugh, by the late 1870s he was the "most famous living American."[63] Renowned among old soldiers, Grant and celebrations of him were fixtures at veterans' reunions and commemorative occasions.[64] Published posthumously in 1886, Grant's *Personal Memoirs* were an attempt at so-called "truthful history" and became a vindication of the Union cause and a rebuttal of the emerging Lost Cause.[65] By the early mid-1880s the hero of Appomattox embodied John Neff's "Cause Victorious" within a Middle Western context. The idea for making Grant's gravesite a national monument may have begun in an Ohio GAR post, and Cleveland's Garfield Memorial served as the model for what became Grant's Tomb.[66] Middle Westerners also lobbied to secure Grant's final resting place, with the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette* expressing "undisguised indignation and disgust" at the decision to locate Grant's Tomb in New York City. As the editor of the *Indiana Enterprise* explained, "The feeling is pretty general in the West that the Empire City secured the remains of General Grant over the protests of 9/10th of the citizens of the

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[62] Brooks D. Simpson, *Let Us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction, 1861-1868* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 123-124.

[63] Waugh, *U.S. Grant*, 155-156.

[64] Ibid., 181-186.

[65] Ulysses S. Grant, *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885).

[66] On Hayes's speech advocating a national memorial for Grant's remains, see Rutherford B. Hayes, *The Diary and Letters of Rutherford B. Hayes, Nineteenth President of the United States*, ed., Charles Richard Williams, 5 vols. (Columbus: Ohio State Archeological and Historical Society, 1922) 4: 224; On the Garfield Memorial as a model for Grant's, see Waugh, 269.

United States."[67] Although Grant became a symbol of white reconciliation after his death

and his national standing faded with the onset of Jim Crow, the conscious pairing of

Ulysses S. Grant with either George Washington or alongside of Union leaders from the

West during the postwar period gave him what historian Victor Turner terms "positional

meaning" and placed him within a commemorative network from which it was

impossible to summon Grant without summoning the Loyal West.[68]

Like Grant and Lincoln memory in Illinois, Ohio's "cult of presidents" served to

reinforce that state's western and Unionist identity. Ohio Republicans—Civil War

veterans all—dominated the nation's highest office between 1868 and 1900. From Grant

to William McKinley, the last Civil War veteran to be president, Ohio saw five of its

native sons win the presidency. Two non-veteran Ohio Republicans, William Howard

Taft and Warren G. Harding, continued this political trend into the twentieth-century.

Even more so than Illinois, Ohio appeared less western than a bellwether of eastern and

western political currents. Cultural geographer James R. Shortridge argues that Ohio

represented the typical northern society during the postwar decades, using the broad

political appeal of its former soldiers as evidence.[69] With the litany of Union heroes and

presidents associated with the Union cause, the antebellum West had gone from the

geographic and cultural periphery to symbolic and literal center of Unionism in a

refashioned nation.

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[67] Quoted in the *New York Herald*, July 25 and 26, 1885; Grant's identification with the Middle West continued through the twentieth-century. Illinois's state legislature even offered to relocate Grant's Tomb to Chicago or Galena during the debates over its maintenance in the 1990s. Waugh, 263; See also U. S. Grant Association, *Land of Grant, Ohio-Kentucky* (Georgetown, OH: N.p., 1999).

[68] Victor Turner, *A Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 51; Waugh, *U.S. Grant*, 303-308.

[69] James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 108-109. The idea of Ohio as the "birthplace of presidents" was a regular theme in early twentieth-century promotional literature in Ohio. See also Melville Chater, "Ohio: The Gateway State," *National Geographic Magazine* 61 (April 1932): 525-591.

Veterans Sectionalize the West

Veterans' organizations became the primary means by which former soldiers exerted political influence and crafted their particular visions of the war's legacy, constructing, debating, and purifying the boundaries of the Loyal West.. The most recognizable of these was yet another Middle Western conception—the Grand Army of the Republic, founded in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1866. Its early incarnation was deeply political, gaining the nickname "Generally All Republicans," and, being rooted in a "unity of the trenches" *Frontideologie*, Democratic veterans were often turned away.[70] Conservatives feared the "large bodies of men in Indiana and Illinois thoroughly organized, partly armed, and drilled to the use of arms" would represent the interests of Radical Republicans.[71] Yet GAR numbers soon dwindled. In Ohio, posts shrunk from 300 to 19 and membership dwindled from 10,000 to 800 by 1873.[72] The organization was seen as too political and perhaps too radical, an organ of the Republican Party. The organization emerged from its former ashes in the early 1880s more fraternal and inclusive. One veteran insisted that though was a Democrat during the war and remained a Democrat, "We never knew the politics of anyone in the army, and we don't know the politics of anyone at soldiers' reunions." "In this free country every man may vote as he pleases," he continued, "especially an old soldier, who has earned the right to think and

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[70] Murat Halstead, March 25, 1867, Murat Halstead Letters, OHS; McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 97, 111.

[71] Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 106-107.

[72] According to one Ohio departmental commander in 1873, the cause of the loss of membership war the perception that "the recurrence of the political contests, and the political ambition of many of its members." T. D. McGillicuddy, *Proceedings of the Annual and Semi-annual Encampments of the Department of Ohio Grand Army of the Republic For the First Fourteen Years of Its Existence* (Columbus, OH: The F.J. Heer Printing Co., 1912), 78.

vote to suit himself without being questioned by anybody."[73] Yet the GAR continued to

make clear distinctions between loyalty and treason, North and South. Whereas the

loyalty of the Lower Middle West had once been questioned, according to Ohio veteran

George M. Finch the war proved that peace men were traitors and southern Ohio had

become part of the "loyal North."[74] The GAR assimilated communities throughout the

Lower Middle West into the North and the nation-state, into the twentieth century, and

into the emerging Midwest as northern sectionalism was in the process of becoming

American nationalism, northern identity became the national norm, and the vanquished

South a provincial abnormality.[75]

Even more than the national GAR, separate army societies in the West spoke for

the western veteran. The Society of the Army of the Tennessee, whose members had

fought with Grant, Sherman, and Logan from Fort Donelson to Savannah, deemed

themselves natural spokesmen for the triumphant West. As historian Steven E.

Woodworth reminds, the Tennesseeans "won the decisive battles in the decisive theater

of the war," and this fact was not lost upon its veterans.[76] As Richard S. Tuthill

reminded, "Success came not to the Union armies [in the] East until Grant" and others

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[73] Smith Dykins Atkins, *Wilder's Brigade Reunion, Effingham, Illinois, September 17, 1909* (Freeport, IL: Journal Print Company, 1909), 10.

[74] The Fred C. Jones Post No. 401 of Cincinnati was formed because "the causes of the terrible struggle were still fresh in the memories of all who participated." Fred C. Jones Post No. 401, *G.A.R. War Papers. Papers Read Before Fred C. Jones Post, No. 401, Department of Ohio, G.A.R.* (Cincinnati: N.p., 1891). Grand Army veterans also represented the societies from which they hailed. Posts were conscious of their regional roots, naming themselves after local or state figures, thus conveying a sense of local or regional identity within a national organization. W. H. Lytle Post No. 47, *The Twenty-fifth G.A.R. Anniversary. W.H. Lytle Post No. 47 of Cincinnati, Ohio, Commemorative exercises held April 6th 1891, Address by Comrade Frank Bruner* (Cincinnati: S. Rosenthal and Co., 1891). W.H. Lytle Post No. 47 of Cincinnati was named after a Cincinnatian of Kentucky descent who died at Chickamauga—a true family of "the West," according to one member of the post.

[75] Grant, *North Over South*, 153-172.

[76] Woodworth, *Nothing But Victory*, ix.

leaders of "the never-defeated Army of the Tennessee" came to the national fore.[77] At

the Annual Banquet of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee in Chicago in

November 1879, veteran William F. Vilas echoed such sentiment. "The long eye of the

North had been intently fixed on the eastern theater, unconscious of the new-found Army

of the Tennessee and its unknown general [Grant]," Vilas explained. Yet by war's end

this western army had "dismembered the vast rebellion . . . and never lost a battle with its

foes."[78]

Having never lost a campaign and spawned some of the Union's two great

generals, their regional pride reinforced their commemorative distinction from both South

and East. Other reunion attendees recognized and spoke against such "invidious

comparisons between the armies of the east and of the west." General Samuel Fallows

lamented that much had been made of "the superior quality of [the Army of the

Tennessee's] soldiery" and its "western men with their unconventional stride," and

warned against such verbal antagonism.[79] Yet the Loyal West narrative dominated

among western veterans until the apex of national reconciliation. As Illinois general John

Pope explained to Society of the Army of the Tennessee members in 1874:

> When the war was over we found that the President of the United States was a
> Western man; the Vice-President a Western man; the Speaker of the House a
> Western man; the Secretary of the Treasury a Western man; the Secretary of War
> a western man; the Secretary of the Interior a Western man; the Postmaster
> General a Western man; the Attorney General a Western man; the General of the
> Army a Western man; the Lieutenant-General a Western man; the Admiral of the

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[77] Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting Held at Indianapolis, Indiana, November 13-14, 1901* (Cincinnati: Press of F. W. Freeman, 1902), 96.

[78] William F. Vilas, *Selected Addresses and Orations of William F. Vilas* (Madison, WI: By the Author, 1912), 85-87.

[79] Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee Forty-Fourth and Forty-Fifth Reunions of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee Meetings Held at Chicago, Illinois, October 12tt 1916, and Washington D.C. April 26th 1922* (Cincinnati: The Ebbert and Richardson Company, 1922), 44-45.

Navy a Western man. The whole power of the government, both in its civil and military departments, had, in this great struggle, passed into the hands of men of the West.[80]

Although the societies of the Armies of the Cumberland, the Ohio, and Georgia shared the Tennesseeans' western-centric narrative, the army that Sherman proclaimed was "never checked—always victorious" and "the most magnificent army in existence" embodied the conservatism and regional hubris of the Loyal West.[81]

Union veterans' reunions were the primary means by which former soldiers expressed the meaning of the war.[82] Politics aside, loyalty formed the bedrock of Union identity. As veteran Isaac Clements maintained during a Southern Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Association reunion in Cairo in 1886, "However kindly we may feel toward the vanquished we must always remember and stoutly insist that in the great conflict of arms we were eternally in the right and our foes forever and ever in the wrong."[83] Former Union soldiers were often willing to forgive Confederates but refused to acknowledge any wrongdoing. "We now congratulate ourselves," explained Cincinnatian and future Ohio governor Thomas L. Young, for having supported the government, stamped out treason, and for continuing to fight for Union veterans.[84] Speaking to a group of Ohio veterans just four years after Appomattox, Joseph Warren Keifer, a former Union general, explained that the memory of the war in the Middle West was centered on Unionism and the "glorious examples set by sister states of the Northwest." Keifer also

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[80] Society of the Army of the Tennessee, *Report of the Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee at the Sixth Annual Meeting*, 267.

[81] Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman: Fighting Prophet* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1932), 381; Sherman, *Memoirs*, 731.

[82] *Olney Times*, September 3, 1890.

[83] *Cairo Citizen*, September 30, 1886.

[84] McGillicuddy, *Proceedings of the Annual and Semi-annual Encampments of the Department of Ohio*, 15-18. Young also insisted the nascent GAR was to be apolitical, with "no distinctions of rank, race or color" in which every man possesses a "diploma of patriotism." Finally, he hoped the organization would never cease offering grateful remembrance of dead comrades.

reiterated that the Confederacy fought "for slavery and against universal freedom" and hoped that the newly formed GAR would counter such ideas by promoting loyalty to the government and the Constitution, but also work to "secure *liberty, equality, and justice to all men*."[85]

Western loyalty was superior to its eastern counterpart. Western veterans compared their posts to those in New England and "the East," referring to their eastern comrades as "Yankees," and observers still made distinctions between eastern and western Union veterans at national encampments.[86] Addressing the societies of the armies of the Cumberland, Tennessee, and Ohio, in Chicago in 1868, Union general Alfred H. Terry claimed that the combination of "eastern blood" coursing through "western veins" within an environment of "western influence" produced the optimal American. The melding of East and West, Terry insisted, represented the ideal grouping of the prairie and the schoolhouse, the river and the church, and the great lake and the factory.[87] "Geographically," he explained, "our state is midway between the east and the west," an Ohio veteran spoke in 1876. "Bold comrades, let us command the center of the great battle line, and ever keep the flag proudly floating in the face of enemy loyalty."[88]

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[85] J. Warren Keifer, *Address of Gen. J. Warren Keifer, Grand Commander, Department of Ohio, Grand Army of the Republic, before the Department Encampment of Ohio, at Semi-Annual Session, at Sandusky, July 21ˢᵗ, 1869* (N.p.: 1869), 2-5.

[86] McGillicuddy, *Proceedings of the Annual and Semi-annual Encampments of the Department of Ohio*, 111, 140, 150; *Cairo Citizen*, December 22, 1887; One instance included southern Illinois newspaper editors making distinctions between eastern and western Union veterans at the national GAR encampment in St. Louis in 1887. Ibid., September 30, 1886.

[87] Societies of the Armies of the Cumberland, Tennessee, Ohio, and Georgia, *The Army Reunion; With Reports of the Meetings of the Societies of The Army of the Cumberland; The Army of the Tennessee; The Army of the Ohio; and The Army of Georgia, Chicago, December 15 and 16, 1868* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1869), 117-118.

[88] McGillicuddy, *Proceedings of the Annual and Semi-annual Encampments of the Department of Ohio*, 146.

Reunions of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland featured the theme of an exceptional Unionist—and thus American—identity in the West. Comprised primarily of soldiers from the Middle West and the Border South—Buckeyes, Hoosiers, Illinoisans, and Kentuckians—the Army of the Cumberland hailed from locales suspected of disloyalty. In the Society's first annual meeting in Cincinnati in 1868, William Tecumseh Sherman referred to the Army of the Cumberland and its "noble twin," the Army of the Tennessee, as "bound together all in one, the Grand Army of the West."[89] General Charles Cruft of Terre Haute, Indiana, insisted, "The Grand Army of the West was one of the great physical powers of the late civil war," citing the "bravery, hardiness and pluck of the Western volunteer." "The hundred battlefields of the South were reddened with the blood of the West," he reminded at the 1870 reunion in Indianapolis, recalling fondly when "the Grand Army of the West stacked arms and the survivors dispensed as if by magic, among the farms, workshops, stores, counting-houses, and professions of the great West."[90]

Cumberland veterans also used the Loyal West concept to counter both Lost Cause and eastern narratives of the war. General R. W. Johnson lamented during the first reunion that he could "not understand the nature of the material of those "loyal and patriotic" gentlemen who are also so anxious to exalt the performances of "late rebels in arms"—and their eastern counterparts.[91] Speaking at the 1872 reunion in Dayton, Ohio native Anson G. McCook affirmed that there were distinct differences between eastern

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[89] Society of the Army of the Cumberland, *First Annual Report, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, February, 1868.* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1868), 2, 78.

[90] Society of the Army of the Cumberland, *Third Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, December, 1869* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1870), 54-55.

[91] SAC, *First Annual Report,* 57.

and western soldiers; easterners being known for their "faultless discipline" and westerners for their "marked independence in thought and action."[92]

However much they disdained the eastern narrative of the war, Cumberlanders' celebrations of western manhood and military achievement expressed identities especially distinct from the South. Addressing a Camp Fire Meeting held by the George H. Thomas Post No. 13 at Cincinnati in the fall of 1880, General Frank Baldwin denounced southern "barbarities," avowing that the "bloody outrages of Hamburg, Coushatta . . . disgrace our land and civilization." Although he claimed to fight only for the "Union and the Constitution," Baldwin, a Michigander, insisted that the nation had always been two antagonistic and irreconcilable civilizations, "one originating in Plymouth, and the other, stretching across the southern half of the country . . . emanated from Jamestown." This imagined binary often rendered Kentucky, which was already adopting a postwar Confederate identity of its own, as "emanating from Jamestown." As Ohio Colonel S.A. Whitfield suggested at the meeting, Ohio was part of the North while the South extended from "the Ohio to the Gulf."[93]

Although soldiers such as Baldwin did not fight to free slaves, they continued to see slavery and southern intransigence as the primary causes of the war. Speaking to a crowd of southern Indiana veterans at Petersburg in 1886, General Mahlon D. Manson addressed similar themes. Born in Piqua, Ohio, Manson was a Mexican War veteran and served one term as a Democratic U.S. congressman from Indiana during

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[92] Society of the Army of the Cumberland, *Sixth Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, November 1872* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1873), 92.

[93] George H. Thomas Post No. 13, *Proceedings of a Camp Fire, Held by George H. Thomas Post No. 13, Department of Ohio, G.A.R., at Cincinnati, O., Oct. 5, 1880* (Cincinnati: Comrade Thomas Mason, Printer, 1880); For the best examination of Kentucky's Confederate narrative and identity, see Anne Marshall, *Creating a Confederate Kentucky: The Lost Cause and Civil War Memory in a Border State* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

Reconstruction—his Unionism burned bright despite his conservative values and Ohio

Valley roots. He explained to the old Hoosier soldiers the resentment he felt upon

hearing "Dixie" and the "Bonnie Blue Flag" and seeing the rebel flag. "If I was not

raised a Methodist, I'd say d---m the rebel Confederacy," Manson confessed." Yet

Victorian mores did not prevent Manson from admitting he had little sympathy for the

"Lost Cause" and reiterating the unjustness of the "secession cause," championing

instead the spirit of loyalty.[94]

As witnesses to and agents of emancipation, Cumberland veterans collectively

incorporated the theme of black liberation into their narrative. Historian Robert Hunt

argues that although most Cumberlanders were "practical abolitionists" and emancipation

was central to their remembered war, remaking southern society—Radical

Reconstruction—was simply not part of their narrative of victory.[95] Holding a

"practical" understanding of emancipation, New York Republican Henry A. Barnum

maintained, "The South struck for Slavery and at the Union. We struck for the Union,

and therefore necessarily at Slavery." Emancipation "was but the sequence of our

devotion to the Union. It was as logical as it was merciful."[96] Other Cumberlanders

drew on race to censure the Lost Cause. Speaking directly to southern Redeemers in

1874, Ohio Republican Stanley Matthews avowed that the "waste of war" was "more

than made up by the abolition of slavery." "Emancipation was the logic of the war," he

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[94] *Evansville Daily Journal*, October 10, 1886.

[95] Robert Hunt, *The Good Men Who Won the War: Army of the Cumberland Veterans and Emancipation Memory* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2010). Hunt agrees with James M. McPherson (1996) and Chandra Manning (2006) in asserting that white Union soldiers were pragmatic agents of change who mostly embraced rather than resisted emancipation. Yet Hunt also seems to agree with Gary Gallagher's (2010) claim that white Union soldiers viewed emancipation as more a war outcome than a war aim. He does not attempt to link regional identity to views toward emancipation.

[96] SAC, *Fifth Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, November 1871* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1872), 59-60. (Speech of New York Republican Henry A. Barnum.)

maintained, "Without that the struggle would have been a sorry failure. With it peace was the beginning of a new [racial and political] order." Mathews augmented this emancipationist position by denouncing "terrorism" and "cold-blooded and unprovoked murders" in the former Confederacy.[97] Despite the radicalism of Mathews and other reunion regulars, emancipationist themes remained rare, and were always secondary to the Loyal West narrative.

Upland Southerners Disown the South

The Loyal West was constructed by writing out southerners, defining loyalty, and dividing the nation after the fact. Speaking at Pike's Opera House in Cincinnati in 1890, one department commander reminded that there had always been a wrong side and a right side, divided, conveniently, by the Ohio River. "We meet in council on the banks of that beautiful river which for nearly a century was the border line of freedom in this land; but across which in that great struggle for the Nation's life the spirit of liberty broke like the waves of a mighty sea, sweeping on and on to the gulf, and leaving no boundary of freedom, no limit to free civilization on the face of the continent between the eastern and western seas." Yet the veteran also aroused reconciliatory language, something increasingly common at reunions in the Ohio Valley and around the country. "This old border line," he insisted, produces fraternal feeling between "the new free South" and the "old free North."[98]

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[97] SAC, *Eighth Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, September 1874* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1875), 72-80.

[98] *Annual Address of Department Commander Hurst, Delivered at the 24th Annual Encampment, Department of Ohio, G.A.R., at Pike's Opera House, Cincinnati, April 29th, 1890* (N.p.: N.d.); This marks an example of simultaneous sectional discord and sectional reconciliation, a common theme in the region. On the flexibility of Civil War language, see Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 10.

Veteran memoirists also spoke to the wartime division of Kentucky and the Lower Middle West. In his *History of the 72nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry of the Mounted Lightening Brigade*, regimental historian B. F. McGee mocked the "Loyal State of Kentucky" in comparison to Indiana, which he deemed "God's country." Although acknowledged that emancipation had not been "the object of the war" and that black liberation only became a "military necessity" over the course of the conflict, he also referred to Kentucky as "Dixie" and "rebeldom." The numbers of Confederate enlistments and "that every part of the State that we had operated in had been most thoroughly rebel, had bred within us the most thorough contempt for the loyalty of any part of Kentucky," McGee explained. That Kentucky was politically loyal yet produced so much internal disloyalty led many Middle Westerners to deem it the state-level embodiment of Copperheadism. "Indeed," McGee continued, "if there was any State we thoroughly hated, that State was Kentucky." Despite this enmity and the fact that many free state soldiers saw Kentucky as butternutism incarnate, by the time McGee published his memoir in 1882, he advocated remaking the South in the northern image. "All sectional feelings of bitterness are passing away," he marveled five years after the end of Congressional Reconstruction. "Johnny Rebs are now almost Yanks."[99]

Kentucky's Union veterans sensed hostility and neglect toward their cause on the part of northern writers, and that former Confederates had come to dominate the narrative of the war in the Bluegrass. Kentucky, which supplied twice as many Union as Confederate soldiers, dedicated more than forty Confederate monuments between 1865

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[99] B. F. McGee, *History of the 72nd Indiana Volunteer Infantry of the Mounted Lightening Brigade* (Lafayette, IN: S. Vater & Co., 1882), 3, 694, 454-455, 21.

and 1920, compared to just three Union monuments.[100] Thomas Speed of Louisville

blamed the "injustice to the Union troops of Kentucky by historians" and the "manifest

aversion of the Union cause" on partisanship, code for the re-emergent political power of

former Confederates in the Democratic Party, which intentionally obscured that

"Kentucky rejected secession and stood for the Union by a great majority." Blaming the

disregard for Kentucky Unionism on wartime bias and political vendettas, veteran

Colonel R. M. Kelly explained in 1897 that Kentucky was united to the South through

slavery, it was also the origin-source of the free West and had functioned nobly was a

loyal bulwark between the free states and their disloyal enemies. Indiana general Lew

Wallace echoed Speed and Kelly's concerns, confessing that virtually nothing had been

written about Kentucky's Union troops. Union veteran and Supreme Court justice John

Marshall Harlan also lamented the loss in historical status of loyal Kentuckians, "The

country at large has never properly understood what was accomplished by the Union men

of the border states." Seeking to "correct views concerning the position and conduct of

Kentucky Unionists," groups such as the Union Soldiers and Sailors Monument

Association of Kentucky and local GAR units attempted, if often feebly, to challenge the

dominance of the state's budding Confederate narrative.[101]

Just as reunion and discord occurred in concert, so too did sectional and regional

expression. Even as the sectional "two Americas" motif enabled Union veterans across

the nation to detach themselves from the "disloyal" South, the Loyal West narrative also

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[100] Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration,* 11.
[101] Union Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association, *The Union Regiments of Kentucky: Published Under the Auspices of the Union Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association* (Louisville: Courier-Journal Job Printing Company, 1897), 1-27, 700.

remained a fiercely regional expression.   There had not been "two Americas" but three. Emphasizing both Unionist and provincial elements, the adoption of the Loyal West proved a means of reconciling the sectional impulses of loyalty with regional anti-eastern impulses, becoming a supreme manifestation of conservative Unionism. The attitudes and regional reimaginings of David Ross Locke, John A. Logan, and Benjamin William Arnett emphasize how places and identities are constructed, how they subdivide, and the complexities and contradictions within these processes. If the popularity of the "two Americas" thesis betrayed the extent of the sectional discord described by John R. Neff, then western identity, white supremacy, GAR segregation, and early movements toward reconciliation in the Lower Middle West revealed the considerable scope of sectional harmony, as discord and reunion operated in chorus. The antebellum West had fractured permanently, giving rise to the Loyal West. But the pronounced conservative Unionism of the Lower Middle West—which manifested in postwar racial politics and, eventually, the nation's earliest Blue-Gray reunions—ultimately revealed the limits of commemorative cohesion in Middle America.

Chapter 8

"Solely to Suppress the Rebellion": Commemorating Conservative Unionism in the Loyal West

In December 1868, one month after the election of Ulysses S. Grant, an event

without parallel in the East or South convened in the West's new colossus, Chicago. The

respective Union veterans societies—representing the western armies of the Cumberland,

the Tennessee, the Ohio, and Georgia—gathered in joint assembly to commemorate *their*

war. With military and political victory secured, this "Reunion of the Western Armies"

included speeches from an elite officer corps, including William Tecumseh Sherman,

Jacob D. Cox, and John A. Logan. Western men were the decisive victors, proclaimed

Iowan William W. Belknap, and they had "won the victory in a manner peculiarly

Western." Among those who celebrated this singular accomplishment of these western

armies was Alfred H. Terry, a volunteer major general from Connecticut who spent most

of the war in the Eastern Theater but who near its end was transferred to the Army of the

Ohio and served with Sherman at the final surrender of Confederate troops in North

Carolina. Terry extolled the exceptionalism of the "young giant of the West," calling it a

new type of civilization based on progress and industry and whose people were marked

by an unflinching sense of loyalty to their country.[1]

The all-white reunion speakers and attendees were more likely to emphasize

"softening passions," "healing wounds," honoring the dead, and the regeneration of the

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[1] The Societies of the Armies of the Cumberland, Tennessee, Ohio, and Georgia, *The Army Reunion; With Reports of the Meetings of the Societies of The Army of the Cumberland; The Army of the Tennessee; The Army of the Ohio; and The Army of Georgia, Chicago, December 15 and 16, 1868* (Chicago: S. C. Griggs and Company, 1869), 27, 117-118; See also William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 784.

Union through bloodshed.[2] "The chief good of the war," Durbin Ward explained in his deeply reconciliatory speech entitled "The South—Let Us Have Peace," was not emancipation, but political restoration and the "sublime patriotism" it cultivated both North and South.[3] Yet their aim of reconciliation with the South may in fact have drawn down on a different target. This commemoration of the Loyal West gave significance to the white, western understanding of the war. Rooted in conservative Unionism, the Loyal West narrative was both anti-Confederate and anti-eastern and its disciples insisted that white western men had won the war at Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and Atlanta.

What these speakers did not celebrate was the emergent triumphalist trope of emancipationism. Indeed, in 1868, among a collective of battle-scarred, mostly Republican veterans at the pinnacle of northern support for Radical Reconstruction, the "Grand Army of the West" failed to commemorate emancipation as primary war aim. They had won the war, and they had won it without fighting to free slaves. As a series of fourteen "toasts" commemorated everything from loyal women to former Confederates, they entirely ignored emancipation and the contributions of black soldiers.[4] Of dozens of speakers, only one—Charles Cruft of Terre Haute, Indiana, a brigadier general in the Army of the Tennessee—affirmed "the great curse of slavery" as a cause of the war. Yet Cruft stopped well short of an emancipationist message. "As the contest deepened," he acknowledged, "the freedom of the negro and other matters assumed various proportions as war measures."[5] Cruft's sentiment about the military practicality of destroying slavery represented the extent of the reunion's emancipationist theme.

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[2] Ibid., 59.
[3] Ibid., 168-172.
[4] Ibid., 114.
[5] Ibid., 60, 39.

These Middle Western white veterans easily erased—rather than consciously forgot—the African American memory of the war because for them, and for many if not most in their region, emancipation had never been a primary war aim of conservative Unionists. In fact, many had opposed the measure throughout the war. This Loyal Western narrative was heightened in the Lower Middle West. The region's erasure of an emancipation narrative and its rapid embrace of reconciliation prefigured the rest of the nation's. Its continuity between antebellum racial aversion, wartime dissent and anti-black sentiment, and eschewing of the war's emancipationist memory did not constitute a "forgetting" of its primary legacy. Because conservative Unionists had *endured* rather than *embraced* emancipation and black enlistment as a means to victory, its spoils saw the rejection of emancipation as a wartime incongruity.[6]

The conservative Unionism of the Loyal West narrative informed the understandings of countless white Middle Westerners as they gave meaning to the war in its immediate aftermath. Yet Civil War scholars have largely failed to acknowledge discrete regional, political, and cultural identities within the broad lens of collective memory.[7] For instance, historian David W. Blight maintains that white northerners abandoned the emancipationist legacy of the war in order to reconcile with former Confederates. Other scholars suggest that the 1880s offered the possibility of

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[6] For a discussion of how Union veterans "forgot" the emancipationist legacy of the war, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

[7] Historians have inadequately examined this relationship between identity and collective memory. Sociologists Jeffrey K. Olick, Joyce Robbins, and Larry J. Griffin have stressed the primacy of identity to collective memory, Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-140; Larry J. Griffin, "'Generations and Collective Memory' Revisited: Race, Region, and Memory of Civil Rights," *American Sociological Review* 69 (August 2004): 544-557; Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102 (December 1997): 1386-1403. Although Confino's critique of how historians approach memory studies calls attention to Aby Warburg's assertion that the study of collective memory should be a study of collective mentality, Confino insists that scholars should focus comprehensively on culture and society.

commemorative harmony between black and white veterans.[8] Yet for countless Middle

Westerners, the primacy of white political reunion *was* the authentic war. Rather than

being, in the words of Carlos Fuentes, "amnesiac" toward emancipation and racial

justice, white Middle Westerners—who had been always been overwhelmingly

committed to an elemental white supremacy and remained so after the war—fought for

the preservation of the Union.[9] In her exhaustive study of the GAR, historian Barbara A.

Gannon argues rightly that white veterans often recalled emancipation while opposing

racial equality. Yet she underestimates how conservative Unionism fundamentally

shaped the Middle West's white veterans' exclusionary responses to African Americans,

and how race divided these veterans far more than "comradeship" united them. Her

claim that the GAR "welcomed" African Americans as their "social and political equals"

was not the case in much of the Middle West, and certainly not in its lower portions.[10]

Where Blight, Gannon, and others speak to a nationalist rather than western war

narrative, Civil War commemoration in the Middle West deeply reflected the identities of

its white soldiers and citizens as racially conservative Unionists.

By the Spanish-American War, this nationalist had co-opted all others, and the

language of the Loyal West largely faded from the commemorative landscape. Yet the

intensely conservative Lower Middle West had by then adopted its own commemorative

processes. In Cincinnati, and Evansville, and Cairo, white residents sought desperately to

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[8] William A. Blair points to President Grover Cleveland's first inaugural procession, in which white
Confederate and black Union veterans both participated, as evidence of biracial possibility. See Blair,
Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War South, 1865-1914 (Chapel Hill: University of
North Carolina Press, 2004).

[9] Michael Kammen, *The Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*
(New York: Knopf, 1991), 662.

[10] Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic*
(Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 2-6. Gannon underestimates the extent to which
Middle Westerners not only roundly opposed black equality, but also typically opposed the very presence
of blacks within their communities.

retain their conservative western identities in the face of a nationalizing war remembrance by drawing on their shared western and conservative identities with one-time enemies in Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee, becoming the first region to reconcile with the former Confederacy. Whiteness was necessary but not sufficient for sectional reconciliation. In a dual irony, the West saw a war within a war after the war.

Omitting Emancipation

Even at the zenith of Reconstruction partisanship between Republicans and Democrats, "emancipationist memory"—a mode of popular memory that insisted that emancipation was the primary legacy of the war—was a marginal and controversial commemorative theme in the Middle West. Its veterans defined their Union Cause as both western and white. Proclaiming that white southerners who "were wrong" about secession were now "right" on matters of race, a group of Union veterans met in Cleveland in September 1866 to commemorate the meaning of the war and excoriate Radicals whom they felt were impeding sectional reconciliation. Avowing that white Union men did not fight to free the slaves, Ohioan Thomas Ewing—whose General Order No. 11 in Missouri left him an infamous reputation in the Border South—now felt that the rights of former slaves should not divide white men. Warning against "Negro rule" and espousing a "prompt reunion"—both politically and economically—with southern whites, Ewing insisted that "the war was waged solely to suppress the Rebellion" and—not to free slaves—should be commemorated accordingly. The convention featured speakers from Tennessee and a public dispatch from ex-Confederates, signed by Nathan Bedford Forrest, endorsing the Union convention and its aims of white amnesty and the

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restoration of full rights to all white southerners.[11] Those whites who did acknowledge

emancipation—such as on New Year's Day 1866, the first peacetime celebration of the

Emancipation Proclamation—insisted that deliverance was a gift bestowed on

undeserving blacks by magnanimous white soldiers.[12] As a Cairo, Illinois, newspaper

avowed, "During the war not one blow was struck by the black race for its own freedom,

and emancipation resulted as an incident of the war."[13] This implication, felt by many

Middle Western whites, that blacks should be content with freedom alone and that the

liberalizing aims of Reconstruction were foolhardy undercut the possibility of a broad-

based commemoration of emancipation. Black liberation, while preferable to slavery,

should not be remembered as anything other than a coincidental gift—"an incident"—

from white western men to an inferior race.

Early Memorial Day celebrations embodied these racial tensions within emerging

definitions of regional identity. Although old soldiers partook in requiems, prayers,

songs, dirges, benedictions, and wreath layings, thus memorializing the Union dead and

their "remembered war," slavery and other causes of the war were rarely part of the white

public commemorations in the Lower Middle West.[14] Memorial Day (typically referred

to as Decoration Day) celebrations at the local and state levels were almost always

segregated events, celebrated separately by black and white communities. Although they

were essential to the construction of the Union Cause, Decoration Days also betrayed the

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[11] *National Convention of Union Soldiers and Sailors Held at Cleveland, Ohio, Monday and Tuesday, September 17 and 18, 1866* (Cleveland: 1866), 3, 7, 13-18. Ewing explained the motivation behind his desire for "prompt reunion" with southern whites, "Northern capital will have covered the South in manufactories; her towns will be filled with Northern artisans and merchants, and the press and the schoolhouse will break the last barriers which slavery built between us."

[12] *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, January 1, 1866. The *Journal* announced, "This anniversary will henceforth be the day of Passover to the millions who owe their freedom to the proclamation of Abraham Lincoln."

[13] *Cairo Daily Democrat*, March 20, 1866.

[14] *Evansville Daily Journal*, May 31, 1869, and May 31, 1885.

physical and thematic racial exclusion that had typified white commemoration in the region. Speaking to a crowd of eight to ten thousand spectators in Indianapolis on Decoration Day 1875, former Indiana war governor Oliver P. Morton alleged that although the Union Cause was just and rebels had been disloyal, former Confederates should be forgiven. Although a Radical Republican and scourge of the South, Morton argued that slavery was not the true cause of the war, but only a "pretext."[15] Though many veterans continued to insist on slavery as the war's root cause, even the most loyal war supporters maintained that the Unionism now entailed political restoration, not remembering divisive or unpopular policies. As such, Decoration Day in the border region afforded some of the first opportunities for former Union and Confederate soldiers to come together in mutual commemoration, some of the earliest examples of public sectional reconciliation. Blue and Gray veterans reunited at Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati in 1875.[16] That same year in St. Louis, old Union and Confederate soldiers decorated graves together in the National Cemetery at Jefferson Barracks.[17] Although Decoration Day commemorations increasingly emphasized reconciliationist themes after the region's rejection of Reconstruction in the mid-1870s, these local and regional celebrations prefigured national patterns of sectional reconciliation.[18]

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[15] Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 2011), 194-195.
[16] *Evansville Daily Journal*, May 29, 1875.
[17] Ibid., May 31, 1875.
[18] For an example of how Gilded Age Decoration Days used the theme of border and regional identity to mitigate sectionalism and foster reconciliation, see O. S. Deming, *Memorial Day Address of Judge O. S. Deming of Mt. Olivet, Kentucky. Delivered at Warren, Ohio, Saturday, May 29, 1897.* (n.p.: 1897), Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort, Kentucky (hereafter cited as KHS). Deming advocates, among other things, the decorating of Confederate graves by Union veterans in both Kentucky and Ohio in the name of "reconciliation and peace."

Monumentation in the Lower Middle West also reflected conservative

Unionism.[19] Efforts to commemorate the war aesthetically began during the war itself.

In the summer of 1863 a group of civilians from southern Indiana organized the Perry

County Monumental Association for the purpose of "collecting the remains" of the

county's veterans and the "erection of a suitable monument commemorative of their

patriotism."[20] By the late 1860s the desire to encode a "monumental" view of the past

saw Middle Western communities enlarge their commemorative sphere to include a

familiar monument type: a normative, ideal, and universally white citizen-soldier.[21] An

admiring public heralded local monuments for being ideal representations of the Loyal

West or, in the case of the *Indianapolis Journal*'s 1866 reaction to Greencastle, Indiana's

soldiers' monument, the "young Northwest."[22] By the war's end the normative definition

of western manhood was implicitly white and loyal, and monument forms in the Middle

West reflected this reality.[23] As monuments conveyed the political lessons of the

dominant culture, whiteness and loyalty were normalized in public space and

emancipationist themes were rare, and then as offshoots of white loyalty. Although

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[19] On the relationship between monumentation, public space, and power in the United States, see Edward Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Civil War monuments were what historian Sanford Levinson deems representations of the present frozen in time, Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 7.

[20] *Evansville Daily Journal*, July 20, 1863. Similar public organizations sprang up in towns and cities across the region. The citizens of Princeton, Indiana, erected the first regimental monument in the Hoosier state shortly after the war's end. Fifty-Eigth Indiana Regimental Association, *Journal of the Second Annual Reunion of the Fifty-Eight Indiana Regimental Association Held at Princeton, Indiana, Dec. 15 and 16, 1892* (Princeton, IN: Clarion Job Office, 1893), 46.

[21] On "monumental" history, see Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life," in *Unfashionable Observations*, Richard T. Tray, trans. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995), 98; Arguing that Reconstruction was a cultural as well as a policy failure, historian Kirk Savage insists that the white common soldier affirmed what it meant to be a soldier, a republican and a man in postwar America. See Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

[22] *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, December 28, 1866.

[23] On national Civil War monumentation in Washington, D.C., see Kathryn Allamong Jacob and Edwin Harlan Remsburg, *Testament to Union: Civil War Monuments in Washington, D.C.* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998).

monuments with abolitionist motifs were extremely rare in the Lower Middle West, local

elites erected abolitionist themed monuments in Alton, Illinois, and Cincinnati and

common form soldiers' monuments sometimes contained references to emancipation,

always in the form of white benevolence, abolitionism was likely disproportionately

represented in stone compared to its infrequency in public sentiment prior to or during the

war.[24]

Segregating Memory

Middle Western GAR chapters both reflected and constructed the region's

conservative Unionist vision. By the 1870s it was glaringly apparent that the war had not

brought about a revolution in race relations among GAR members nationally.[25] This was

especially true in the Lower Middle West, where emancipationist memory was

infrequent. Nearly all GAR posts in the region were segregated and, owing to

longstanding anti-black migration laws and continuing social pressure against blacks,

there were few blacks in many parts of the Lower Middle West and therefore few black

posts.[26] Grand Army posts were reflections of the local community in how the

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[24] W. T. Norton, *Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois, and Its People, 1812 to 1912* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), I: 318-321.

[25] Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 213; See also Wallace Evans Davies, *Patriotism on Parade: The Story of Veterans and Hereditary Organizations in America, 1783-1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955).

[26] Grand Army of the Republic Post Records, Department of Illinois, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois (hereafter cited as ALPL). In examining the post records of fifty-four southern Illinois G.A.R. posts, I found evidence of only two integrated posts, Harrisburg #454 and Carmi #296. Other apparently segregated post muster files consulted include: Cairo #533 and #598; Thebes #571; Breese #711; West Salem #222; Benton #341; Frankfort #328; Vandalia #273; Equality #726 and #351; New Haven #586; Omaha #523; Ridgeway #583; Shawneetown #337 and #735; Macedonia #469; McLeansboro #469; Cave in Rock #727; Elizabethtown #565; Carbondale # 279 and #297; Murphysboro #128 and #728; Vienna #221; Alton #441; Centralia #55; Metropolis #345 and #599; Pinckneyville #219; Du Quoin #106; Golconda #332; Mound City # 346 and #630; Villa Ridge #303; Chester #212; Olney #92; Belleville #443; Carrier Mills #771; Eldorado #527; Galatia #470; Alto Pass #459; Anna #558; Cobden

communicated the war's meaning and in their racial and demographic compositions. As

such, there were few black posts in rural areas and posts in places such as Illinois's Little

Egypt were comprised mostly of upland southerners. For example, Elizabethtown

Illinois's General Greathouse Post #565 had sixty-four members in January 1886. Of

those sixty-four, roughly one-third were born in Illinois, one-third were born in the

Border South, and one-third were born in the Upper or Deep South. By occupation, the

men were a mix of farmers, laborers, artisans, and professionals. [27] These figures were

typical in the region, with posts in the southernmost areas containing more southern-born

members. Although J. P. Foster Post #598 in Cairo, Illinois, boasted over seventy

members in September 1887, not a single one was born in Illinois.[28] These segregated

posts and their conservative Unionist veterans represented the dominant white political

actors and constructors of memory in the Lower Middle West.

Despite the evidence of historian Barbara A. Gannon that some posts integrated,

and perhaps even exhibited a level of "comradeship," the GAR in the Lower Middle

West could hardly be deemed an "interracial organization," nor did most white veterans

remember their service in a "war against slavery."[29] Although they fought to have their

voices heard by demanding inclusion and constructing counter-narratives to the white

memory of the war that focused almost exclusively on "Union," former slaves played

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#439; Dongola #608; Mt. Erie #480; Enfield #178; Grayville #373; Mill Shoals #570; Norris City #594; ; Marion #319; and Norris City #594; Shawneetown Illinois's Richard Suggs Post #735 (colored) an all-black post in southern Illinois.

[27] GAR Post Records, Elizabethtown Post #565, Box 41, ALPL. Of the post's sixty-four members, 14 were born in TN, 22 in Illinois, 11 in KY, 1 NC, 1 VA, 1 NY, 4 OH, 2 GA, 2 Ireland, 1 England, 4 Indiana.

[28] Most were native-born Kentuckians, Tennesseeans, Virginians, Alabamans, and Mississippians. GAR Records, Dept. of Illinois, Box 44, Cairo Post #598, ALPL. The birthplaces of the veterans of Cairo Post #598 broke down as such: 7 VA, 21 KY, 16 TN, 9 AL, 9 MS, 2 NC, 5 SC, 2 MO, 1 NJ, 2 GA, 1 LA, 1 MA, 1 MD, 1 Peru.

[29] Gannon, *The Won Cause*, 5. The GAR in the Lower Middle West represents the limits of biracial comradeship, as integrated posts were virtually non-existent, white posts devoted their political capital to "white" causes such as veterans pensions, and white veterans were more likely to reconcile with former Confederates than black Union veterans over notions such as bravery and shared sacrifice.

inferior roles even within the few GAR posts that were integrated. Having served in the United States Colored Troops (USCT), black veterans such as William Brown and David Stratton of White County, Illinois, and James Price of and James Barnett of Saline County, Illinois, were slaves from Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri who ran away during the war, joined the Union army (most in 1864), and worked as hired laborers or yeoman farmers in the North after the war's end. They did not hold officer positions, nor were they likely primary crafters of the war narratives within the white communities. Yet they attended meetings with regularity—their race demarked with a (c) in each post record—and no doubt served as constant reminders of the war's emancipationist legacy.[30] Even black veterans who had served in integrated Grand Army posts appear to have been excluded from official GAR burial internments, as they were buried in segregated and unmarked plots, outside the dominion of formal white remembrance.[31]

Shawneetown, Illinois, reveals how segregated societies fostered segregated institutional memory. Shawneetown's Richard Suggs Post #735 (Colored Post) represented black veterans, the town's M. K. Lawler Post #337 was exclusively white. Suggs Post #735 had only twenty members, all of which had been privates serving under white officers during the war, most in the United States Colored Troops. But as an organization of veterans Suggs Post held independent meetings, elected its own officers, and espoused its own meaning of the war on its own terms. At last, desperate for members and funds, Suggs Post was forced to close its doors in December 1900, leaving the town, like most others along the border, without a formal African American outlet for expressing an alternative to the dominant white supremacist-Unionist memory of the

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[30] GAR Records, Dept. of Illinois, Box 58, Carmi Post #296, Box 35, Harrisburg Post #454, ALPL.
[31] "Death Roll, Carmi Post #296, G.A.R. Department of Illinois," Ivan Elliot Papers, Box 3, Folder 41, ALPL.

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war.[32] This fissure between black and white memory—this breach between black and white society—was of course a national problem exacerbated by the demography, violence, and racial aversion of the Lower Middle West. Just as Shawneetown had two GAR posts, it created two memories of the war, the dominant of which championed the western soldier and the restoration of Union. Whiteness was mostly assumed. This combination of martial triumphalism, sectional superiority, and white supremacy provided the backbeat that shaped Reconstruction violence, Civil War commemoration, and eventual reconciliation in the Lower Middle West.

Other veterans' societies highlighted political division while maintaining their conservative Unionist tenor. Both Republicans and Democrats felt political candidates used reunions to trumpet their campaigns and popularity.[33] In early October 1876 a Democratic Soldiers' Reunion was held at Indianapolis. Boasting some 15,000 veterans and 125,000 civilian spectators, it was, according to admirers, "the grandest affair perhaps ever witnessed in a Western State" and the "largest, grandest and most successful political display the State had ever known." Comprised primarily of Samuel J. Tilden and Thomas A. Hendricks supporters, including a number of former Republicans, the anti-Radical attendees deemed themselves the "grand army of reform." The event drew legions of Union veterans from across Middle America, from Hoffman's Baltimore Band and the Seventh Kentucky Cavalry to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Club of Philadelphia and a large contingent of former soldiers from St. Louis. Prominent speakers included Joseph Pulitzer and Union generals John Palmer and John A. McClernand, all heralding the

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[32] GARPR, Folder 51, Shawneetown Post #735, ALPL.
[33] For example, each party labeled 1888's Southern Illinois Soldiers and Sailors Association Reunion in Du Quoin, Illinois, a "political demonstration" orchestrated by the other. *Du Quoin Tribune*, October 4, 1888.

overthrow of Reconstruction.[34] The Reunion had its desired effect as both Hendricks and

Tilden won Indiana in 1876.

Despite the persistence of the bloody shirt, the national GAR was becoming

increasingly fraternal, particularly in the Lower Middle West. By the late 1870s

Democrats were flooding the ranks of the GAR, successfully challenging Republican

influence in the organization throughout Middle America, from New York to Illinois.[35]

Many western veterans had begun to abandon the Republican Party in the 1870s in favor

of lower interest rates on government loans, equal taxation, and populist changes in

banking and monetary policy.[36] Immigration from Europe and labor unrest coupled with

the "negroe problem" in aggravated veterans' fears of social unrest. Nativist, anti-labor

sentiment, and Social Darwinism fused with the GAR's homogenous membership to

produce new displays of ultraconservative patriotism.[37] By 1887 the Indiana department

warned that "anarchists, nihilists, communists, socialists, and atheists" were the same

menace against which Union veterans had fought.[38] This political dilution of the GAR in

the Middle West was increased de-politicization, further undermined emancipationist

themes, and underscored sectional reconciliation.

The white veterans who had made war on slavery chose not to remember such

veteranhood. When members of the Society of the Army of the Cumberland summoned

emancipation, it was typically within the context of white military triumphalism and the

fetishization of the western citizen-soldier. Although early reunion speakers emphasized

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[34] *Evansville Daily Courier*, October 6, 1876.

[35] Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 245.

[36] Ibid., 423.

[37] On the national GAR's conservative turn in the 1880s, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 207-213.

[38] Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 326. GAR Commander William Warner claimed in 1885 to represent "the conservative element of the Nation" and recognize "the dignity of labor but [have] no sympathy for with anarchy or communism."

"just reconciliation" (or reconciliation on the North's terms) and urged to "let the dead past bury its own dead rivalries," sectional reconciliation did not become a fixture of these army reunions until the late 1870s. Ohio Republican Charles H. Grosvenor's deeply reconciliatory speech embodied the theme of the Society's 1882 Reunion in Milwaukee. "We did not go to war to defend or destroy slavery," Grosvenor made clear, "It was to destroy the idea and fact of National supremacy and indivisible union that the people of the South went to war. It was to establish, maintain, and make perpetual this idea that the North went to war." He suggested that both sides were valorous, slavery and emancipation were secondary, and one united people, equally loyal, were now indivisible. The nation's primary goal now, Grosvenor insisted, was to "advance reconciliation." Cincinnati native and Cumberland veteran Henry M. Cist followed by reading a letter written by Confederate general Joseph Wheeler praising the Society of the Army of the Cumberland. It was further decided that the "solution to the capital and labor problem" and "European ignorance" was national unity.[39] By 1883 Ohio veteran Joseph Benson Foraker exulted that there was ceasing to be a North and South and found it appropriate that Cincinnati—"the geographical center of this republic"—should facilitate such reconciliation.[40]

The role of African Americans within national veterans' reunions in the Ohio Valley remained marginal or non-existent. One year before *Plessy v. Ferguson*, the 29th National Encampment of the GAR, held in Louisville in 1895, was portended by outcries that "the color line would be closely drawn" or that African-American veterans would be banned altogether. The report originated in the black *Cleveland Gazette,* in which one

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[39] *Fourteenth Reunion, Society of the Army of the Cumberland, September 1882* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke and Co. Printers, 1883), 67-70, 125, 153.
[40] Ibid., 69, 75.

writer alleged of Kentucky that "Northern posts desiring quarters were refused when it was known they had colored members" and that "colored veterans who attended the encampment would be [put in] the Ohio River." Black and many white veterans from Middle Western cities such Youngstown, Ohio, and Indianapolis expressed similar fears as the report spread. The segregated Martin R. Delaney Post #40 of Indianapolis, the largest African American post in Indiana, raised the loudest opposition to such rumors, with considerable white support. The encampment's all-white committee ultimately offered integrated or segregated options to attending GAR departments. Despite their inclusion, black veterans and their white allies expected little hospitality from a GAR encampment in a former slaveholding city, underscoring the region's racial contradictions and limitations.[41]

Later reunions on the border struck a similar balance between inclusion and exclusion. The 32nd National Encampment of the GAR at Cincinnati in September 1898 boasted over six thousand Union veterans, mostly western men from a radius of Pittsburgh to Chattanooga to Chicago, from St. Louis to Cleveland. The massive reunion featured the typical entertainments—sham naval battles, riverboat excursions, fireworks, baseball, bicycle races, and cultural excursions—and parade scenes, including "The Landing of Columbus" and "Valley Forge". Despite Spanish-American War jingoism and white reconciliation, the encampment was formally integrated and featured African American monumentation, including an immense "Colored Citizens' Arch". Yet the reunion was also reconciliatory, as the "Arch of Peace" depicted a Union and

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[41] Grand Army of the Republic 1895 Encampment Records, newspaper clipping, "Colored Veterans Agitated, May be Refused Accommodations at the Louisville Encampment," Folder 13 (accommodations book), R. M. Smock Letters, July 9, 19, 20, 23, 24, 1895, Folder 179, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky (hereafter cited as FHS).

Confederate veteran shaking hands beneath Lady Liberty and in front of a backdrop of federal eagles and United States flags. It also contained regional themes. The "Triumphal Arch" adjacent to the city's post office square—adorned with the names Farragut, Sheridan, Sherman, Lincoln, Grant, Thomas, and Logan—was a monument to western heroes and value. National and Unionist, Cincinnati's 1898 encampment proved exceptional in its racial inclusion. Regional reunions or those that welcomed Confederate veterans were more likely to feature themes of white reconciliation and racial omission. Ultimately, the 1898 encampment proved both reconciliatory and racially integrated, regional and sectional.[42] In Cincinnati and throughout the Middle West, sectional reconciliation and sectional discord existed simultaneously.

Discord and Reconciliation on the Western Landscape

By the turn of the century Middle Western monumentation often conveyed multiple commemorative motifs simultaneously. No monument better represents the tensions between conservative Unionism, reconciliationism, and emancipationism on the postwar Middle West's cultural borderland than the Indiana Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in Indianapolis. Dedicated in May 1902 to "Indiana's loyal sons, black and white," the monument is perhaps the southern-most major commemorative public work in any free state to portray an emancipationist motif. One of the primary figures is of a slave holding his manacled hands to the sky, waiting to be liberated. Vulnerable and in need of deliverance, the slave, devoid of agency, is at the behest of benevolent and

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[42] Grand Army of the Republic, *Report of the Officers and Chairmen of Committees of the Thirty-Second national Encampment G. A. R. held September 5th to 10th, 1898, Cincinnati, Ohio* (Cincinnati: W. B. Carpenter, 1899). Spectators frequently described the spectacle as a western triumph or a reflection of western values.

racially superior white Union soldiers to grant him his freedom. Conservatives such as William H. English lobbied for a westward-facing statue, but the final product faced South, with Victory shining her torch, and a metaphorical light, on the darkness of the former slaveholding states. African American veterans played a prominent, if secondary, role in the dedication ceremony, amid calls to "Remember Fort Pillow," summoning the infamous Confederate atrocity in the West. Despite its self-congratulation and its reproduction the racial caste of the plantation, controversy surrounded the Monument for its anti-reconciliationist and emancipationist representations.[43]

Yet the shrine's dedication was also an occasion of sectional reconciliation. Erected at the outset of the nadir of American race relations and in the aftermath of the hyper-nationalism of the Spanish-American War, dedication speakers portrayed Indianapolis's Monument as a "tribute to the heroic dead" on all sides. Union veteran G. V. Menzies of Mount Vernon, Indiana suggested that although there had been partisan resistance to the proposal of such a monument in 1875, the wounds of the nation and the region were "at last healed." "North and South love and revere their heroic dead," Menzies explained. "Each section cherishes the survivors of the war. All honor the bravery and devotion of the South to her cause which although wrong, called forth the highest examples of self sacrifice, manhood and bravery." Downplaying political and cultural divisions not only between North and South but also between New England and the Middle West, Menzies insisted, "North and South, East and West glory in being citizens of the greatest and best government of the world."[44] In spite of its reconciliatory inauguration, the aesthetic form of the monument itself, with its emancipationist imagery

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[43] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 266-267.
[44] *Evansville Courier*, May 16, 1902.

and sectional and white supremacist overtones, represented a loyal civic identity and an idealized vision of the white citizen-soldier. Its emancipationist ornamentation—though significant in its infrequency—partly reinforced its Unionist and conservative themes.

Middle Western monuments in the South demanded reconciliatory gestures. In September 1899 a Wilder's Brigade monument was dedicated at the newly created Chickamauga National Battlefield Park. Comprised primarily of Indiana and Illinois troops, Wilder's Brigade was singled out for its bravery in defending Snodgrass Hill during the battle of Chickamauga in 1864. Over three thousand Hoosiers, Illinoisans, and Ohioans made their way south for the occasion, gathering at the base of the 105-foot limestone cylindrical shaft as Indiana Governor James A. Mount gave the dedication speech. Mount hoped to both "speak in memory of the brave men of a great state" and "endorse sentiment" that would foster Blue-Gray reunion in Indiana. He praised the patriotism and gallantry of the Indiana and Illinois men and, keeping with the reconciliatory zeitgeist, made equivalencies between Union and Confederate troops. Mount assured that there were "heroes from both sides" and all who fell died in defense of principles they believed in, as a band played both "The Star Spangled Banner" and "Dixie."[45] Although state pride and sectional equivalency became hallmarks of reunion across the nation, they were not the only markers of reconciliation in the Ohio Valley. Shared regional identity—a concept that was only implied at the reunion and dedication of the Wilder Monument at Chickamauga—became a driving feature of sectional reconciliation in the Lower Middle West.

The popularity of sectional reconciliation in the region was such by the turn of the century that sectional and reconciliatory symbols sometimes shared the same

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[45] *Evansville Daily Courier*, September 20, 1899.

commemorative space. Fluid loyalty and migration ensured that some cemeteries would serve as both Union and Confederate memorials, expected to meet a diverse set of commemorative needs. The professionalization of the public cemetery combined with Victorian spiritualism to heighten the utility of the postwar cemetery as a spiritual apparatus.[46] A Confederate monument dedicated in Alton, Illinois, in the fall of 1909 stands as one example. The forty-foot granite column was funded by Alton's Sam Davis Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy in remembrance of the 1,354 Confederate prisoners who died in the city's military hospital. Locals approved of the monument as a memorial to brave though "misguided" soldiers.[47] Similarly, Evansville's Fitzhugh Lee chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy erected a Confederate monument in 1903. Although there were only approximately thirty Confederate soldiers buried in the cemetery, the UDC opted to raise the monument—a southward-gazing granite Confederate—in Evansville's Oak Hill Cemetery, which also housed the remains of approximately 700 Union veterans. The local chapter of the Women's Relief Corps responding by undertaking a monument campaign of their own. In 1909 they raised a grander and more expensive generic Union statue in honor of Farragut GAR Post #27. Although the two forms—one wearing a slouch hat and the other donning a kepi—were sometimes referred to as "rival statues," most Evansvillians felt both sides were equally

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[46] On the national cemetery movement, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 211-249; and John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 107, 131-134.

[47] W. T. Norton, *Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois, and Its People, 1812 to 1912* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), I: 322-323.

deserving of their commemorative space, "side-by-side," despite the city's staunch wartime Unionism.[48]

Like fetes and public material culture, county histories also illuminated how identity shaped collective memory in the region. Written primarily by local elites between 1880 and 1910, county histories often depicted an idealized version of past events, a polemic defense of the region and its peoples, or insights into local remembrance of the war. The most striking theme of Lower Middle Western county histories as they relate to the Civil War was their conservative Unionism, in which emancipation was either ignored or viewed as a secondary aim. Mary Logan, wife of the famed Union general, remembered that Franklin County, Illinois, "arrayed themselves solidly for the Union" and contained an "inborn patriotism . . . for the defense of the Union" despite the fact that their forebears "were south of the Mason and Dixon line and enthusiastic secessionists."[49] Amateur historian John A. Wall explained that Jefferson County, Illinois, was "settled largely by people from the Southern slave states" who worshiped Jefferson and Jackson as "demi-gods," they were eager to fight a "war for the preservation of the Union."[50] Histories from across the region made similar claims, insisting that although their people were naturally southern and many even favored slavery, which resulted in marginal groups of southern sympathizers, their fundamental desire to preserve the Union was steadfast.[51] "The area was further south than the Mason-Dixon Line," one author explained of Saline County, Illinois. "A great many of

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[48] Joan Marchand Collection, Willard Library, Evansville, Indiana; Oak Hill Cemetery Newspaper Articles Scrapbook, Willard Library; *Evansville Courier*, May 2, 1903; See also *Evansville Courier*, June 1, 1993.
[49] Harry L. Frier, ed., *Franklin County, Illinois, War History, 1832-1919* (Benton, IL: Hal W. Trovillion, 1919), 11.
[50] John A. Wall, *Wall's History of Jefferson County, Illinois* (Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen & Company, Publishers, 1909), 121.
[51] P. T. Chapman, *A History of Johnson County, Illinois* (Herrin, IL: Press of the Herrin News, 1925), 219-221.

the early settlers came from Tennessee, the Carolinas, and other States with Southern leanings." It was only natural, he insisted, that questions of loyalty should be "more pronounced [in southern Illinois] than in places farther north." Nevertheless, "the sentiment of Saline County was that the Union must be preserved," although "it was not that the people were abolitionists."[52] W. T. Norton of Alton, Illinois, explained Madison County residents understood perfectly well the war was being fought for union and that only war opponents—many of whom "descended from the southern states"—claimed the war was to abolish slavery in order to weaken support for it.[53]

Other county histories recalled the Lower Middle West's perceived political and cultural isolation. One amateur historian of Gallatin County, Illinois, recalled a significant number of peace men in the area, some of whom even supported the secession of southern Illinois, owing to the fact that they were "originally from the Southern states" and "admirers of the chivalry of the South."[54] Writing in 1884, a chronicler of Clay County, Illinois, explained that southern Illinoisans in 1861 "could not understand the fire-eating idiots of the South, nor the canting agitators of the North. They simply loved freedom and justice, and in their eyes there was no divided interests in the country." Clay County citizens "could see no cause for war," he clarified, particularly a war fought over "the woes of a few "d---d stump-tailed niggers."" The author also denounced northerners who disparaged southern Illinois as "the land of ignorance and traitors." Clay County men were loyal "at a time when Massachusetts in her loud super loyal way was sending

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[52] Clarence Bonnell, et. al., *Saline County: A Century of History* (n.p., 1947), 302.

[53] W. T. Norton, *Centennial History of Madison County, Illinois, and Its People, 1812 to 1912* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), I: 277, 285.

[54] *History of Gallatin, Saline, Hamilton, Franklin and Williamson Counties* (Chicago: The Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1887), 78.

her rich emissaries even to Cairo, Ill., for negro substitutes."[55] William Henry Perrin,

writing the history of Alexander, Union, and Pulaski counties, in Illinois, also described

his region's wartime attitude as anti-black, anti-Yankee, and pro-Union. Perrin rebuked

"the slanders on Southern Illinois from those sections that raked the country for negro

substitutes to fill their ranks . . . made millions of themselves . . . waxed fat and great at

the public crib . . . hunted down their unarmed neighbors and arrested them, because they

were "off" in their politics, or sent them to the bastile or mobbed and killed them, and by

their cant and hypocrisy made the name "loyalty" a by-word and a synonym of all that is

detestable in human nature."[56] These fiercely conservative regional expressions and

professions of loyalty typified conservative Unionist memory, with its emphasis on

Union over emancipation.

Western Reconciliation

Political reunion with the white South—propelled by racism, the abandonment of

Reconstruction, fears of immigrants and populism, and Gilded Age anxieties of

urbanization, modernization, and industrialization—drove sectional reconciliation.[57]

Those national impulses were premature in the Middle West, accelerated by historic

political and cultural bonds with the South. Emphasizing its most western and

conservative elements, the version of the Loyal West espoused by Lower Middle

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[55] *History of Wayne and Clay Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: Globe Publishing Co., Historical Publishers, 1884), 356. "Union and Clay counties furnished the largest excess, and they were the continual targets for more slanders vituperation than any other portions of Illinois," the author complained.

[56] William Henry Perrin, ed., *History of Alexander, Union and Pulaski Counties, Illinois* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., Historical Publishers, 1883), 329.

[57] According to David W. Blight, reconciliationist memory was typically romanticized, commodified, deleted race and slavery and the role of black soldiers, based on sectional equivalency (each side is equally guilty and therefore free to heal), focused on battles and leaders, projected the attitude that "slavery was good while it lasted, good once it was gone; no Southerner fought in its defense and no Northerner died to end it." Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 91.

Westerners was increasingly conducive to sectional reconciliation. When Reverend F. C.

Inglehart impelled a crowd of Hoosiers on Decoration Day 1879 that, "the voices of war

ever be hushed by industry's hum," "the conflict of the races now and forever end," and

the "antagonism between the sections of the country now and forever cease," he was

speaking to New Departure Democrats in Louisville, Nashville, and Atlanta. Secession

had been a mistake, so the logic went, but southerners should now manage their own race

problems and all white Americans must reunite behind the mutual benefits industrial

capitalism, as even former Radicals were "prepared to concede the legitimacy of

reconciliationist sentiments."[58]

Nowhere in the free states was reconciliation more pronounced or emancipation

memory more negligible than in the Ohio Valley. Bloody shirt rhetoric lessened, and

emancipationist memory was often deemed subversive. In addition to common politics

and culture, the region saw institutional overlap between North and South. There were

GAR posts throughout the Border South and UCV and UDC chapters dotting the north

bank of the Ohio River; in 1887 and 1899 southern Indiana hosted the first and largest

national Blue-Gray reunions; and, in an decisive expression of sectional reconciliation,

Union veteran Theodore F. Allen of Cincinnati, Ohio, became the only federal officer

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[58] Etcheson, *A Generation at War*, 193-195.

ever elected a member of a Confederate veterans organization.[59] This proximity to former Confederates hastened reunion.[60]

Such border whites never broadly accepted the centrality of slavery to the war and Union Cause. Speaking to southern Indiana veterans in 1879, Republican congressman Richard W. Thompson betrayed the border Unionist narrative. Born Culpepper County, Virginia, Thompson was an antislavery Whig who supported John Bell in 1860 and became a Republican early in the war, partly out of his practical opposition to slavery. Thompson's "Address Made at Terre Haute at the Cemeteries over the Soldiers' Graves in 1879" explained, "The cause of the Union was victorious," a triumph for "free government" in both sections. Thompson blamed the war on both a "slave power" and "sectional fanaticism," North and South. He never mentioned slavery, maintained secession's illegality, and suggested that all white soldiers were equally brave and honorable. His words were a celebration of federalism, democratic government and the Constitution and white civilization. Despite the fact that he had been a pro-war Republican and was no doubt appealing to GAR members, Thompson's speech combined elements of both the Lost Cause and what Robert Penn Warren described as the "Treasury of Virtue," a deep sense of pride and a core belief that the Union Cause would be redeemed by history.[61] This combination of western pride and border moderation

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[59] Theodore F. Allen Diaries, FHS; *Frank Leslie's Weekly*, December 29, 1900. Allen's election was a reconciliatory motion between his Seventh Ohio Cavalry, was awarded this honor by Fourth Kentucky Confederate Cavalry, two regiments from "opposite sides of the Ohio." This gesture was also rooted in the border romance of Allen's story, in which he escaped from a Confederate prison camp only to be recaptured a "lovely Kentucky girl" who later became his wife. There was a reunion between the Seventh Ohio Cavalry and "Morgan's Men" in Loveland, Ohio, on September 14-15, 1899.

[60] Although GAR posts in the South had been the first to plea to "forget the past," civilians and veterans formed reconciliationist impulses relatively early in the Ohio Valley. On the early emphasis on reconciliation in GAR posts in the South, see Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 411.

[61] "Address Made at Terre Haute at the Cemeteries over the Soldiers' Graves in 1879," Miscellaneous Addresses, Volume II, Richard W. Thompson Mss, LL; Robert Penn Warren, *The Legacy of the Civil War*

characterized sectional reunion in the Ohio Valley. Whiteness was significant but assumed, a compulsory qualifier for reconciliation.

Ulysses S. Grant, who had been central to the construction of the "Loyal West" narrative, and his watchword, "Let Us Have Peace," became co-opted by reconciliationists in the Ohio Valley in the 1880s. As historian Joan Waugh asserts, Grant's death in 1885, following the presidential election of Democrat Grover Cleveland, and his funeral pageant embodied emergent white reconciliationist themes.[62] But white reconciliation in the Ohio Valley portended this national culture of reconciliation surrounding Grant. Grant's sixty-third birthday celebration in Louisville, Kentucky, in the spring of 1885 afforded westerners an opportunity to celebrate the life of the dying war leader "regardless of political affiliations or past services." Conceived by a group of former Union and Confederate officers, held at Louisville's Masonic Temple, and attended by the city's leading Democratic and Republican citizens, the public event was more than an attempt among local Bourbon Democrats to bridge political factions or a broadly conceived paean to American "progress." It was the realization of "let us have peace" in a border city. As Louisville's *Evening Times* hoped, a reunion would offer proof positive that a "Southern city" could celebrate a national hero "without regard to party affiliation or past differences of opinion."

The event commemorated the apolitical Grant, a man who belonged now "to no party, to no section," according to the Democratic *Courier-Journal*. Bennett H. Young,

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(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 59-60; An 1892 reunion of the Fifty-eighth Indiana Infantry in Princeton struck a similar theme, as dozens of speeches on the war and its meaning; slavery was never mentioned. Fifty-Eighth Indiana Regimental Association, *Journal of the Second Annual Reunion of the Fifty-Eighth Indiana Regimental Association Held at Princeton, Indiana, Dec. 15 and 16, 1892* (Princeton, IN: Clarion Job Office, 1893).

[62] Joan A. Waugh, *U.S. Grant: American Hero, American Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 215-259. Whereas Lincoln's funeral had been an exclusively Northern affair, Waugh insists that the mourning of Grant transcended section.

unable to attend, praised Grant's "conduct in the hour of defeat and capitulation" and other former Confederates underscored Grant's brilliant victories, his generosity toward the defeated South, and his legacy as a conqueror who surrendered his sword. Linking Grant to reunion in a message that was at once reconciliatory, Lost Cause-influenced, and anti-emancipationist, Confederate veteran John H. Leathers explained that the gathering presented an opportunity to "bury our differences" in honor of the nation's "most renowned living citizen." Judge Walter Evans, a Union veteran, agreed, declaring the event was moment of "healing." Reverend T. T. Eaton, pastor of Fourth and Walnut Baptist Church in Louisville, avowed that all sectional and political differences might be "obliterated" in reconciliation, which was sure to foster a "renewed and assured nationality . . . from fratricidal conflict." Applauding "cooled passions" and "strife forgotten," Union veteran John Mason Brown maintained that it was a "claim the glory" that what was "once sectional and local [reconciliation]" was now becoming national. Other speakers quoted Abraham Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address or linked reconciliation to national Manifest Destiny. All attendees, however, seemed conscious of the fact that, as border people who were hesitant for war in 1861, they would also be the first to reunite. Explaining that Grant had "secured the veneration of all the people North, East, West, and South," Confederate veteran and Alabama native Alpheus Baker insisted that the celebration was a "spectacle unexampled in history" and should only be held "in a great city on the borders of the South."[63]

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[63] *The Sixty-Third Birthday of General Ulysses S. Grant, April 27th, 1885. Louisville, KY.* (Louisville: Kentucky Lith. & Printing Co., 1885). The program cover artwork is deeply reconciliatory, depicting an image of Grant on a blue plain above two outstretched arms – one donning a blue officer's jacket and one a gray – shaking hands. See also Robert Bruce Symon, "'Child of the North': Louisville's Transition to a Southern City, 1879-1885," (MA thesis, University of Louisville, 2005).

By the mid-1880s Union and Confederate veterans were using the Ohio River as a reunion apparatus by imagining it not as a sectional boundary, but as cultural connector and instrument of reconciliation. Upon Grant's death the editor of the Evansville's *Daily Courier* called for North and South to "clasp hands across this loyal corpse and carry a truce to battle. Let the people who live on either side of the Ohio River inaugurate the movement."[64] The city welcomed former Confederates to its public funeral ceremonies for General Grant and many flocked from Kentucky across the newly opened Henderson Bridge, which connected Evansville with its "sister city" across the river.[65] Henderson, Kentucky, held its own services, in which the city mayor, though a "proud southerner at heart" who "loved his section with a jealous fondness," praised Grant as a national hero and servant of the people in the vein of Kentuckian Henry Clay.[66]

Elijah S. Watts addressed similar themes and spoke to the heart of region and memory during his many addresses to Union veterans. Watts, a tailor from Nelson County, Kentucky, joined the 2nd Kentucky U.S. Cavalry after the battle of Bull Run, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the war he moved to Illinois, where he was active in the GAR throughout the 1880s and 1890s, dying in Louisville in 1909. Watts identified the nexus of regional identity and private memory in an 1889 speech entitled "Kentucky Unionist." Recalling the antebellum border as a place where free institutions and commerce overlapped with slave traders and southern belles, planters, Creoles, vendettas, duels, and the customs of the "old world," Watts explained that the region "fully identified with the South." Watts's words betray a fundamental fear of radicalism in the heart of the American republic among citizens of the Ohio Valley during the

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[64] *Evansville Daily Courier*, August 2, 1885, "Let Us Have Peace."
[65] Ibid., August 7 and 8, 1885.
[66] Ibid., August 9, 1885.

antebellum period. Although the upland southerner emphasized the moral and economic evils of slavery, he also insisted that civil war a byproduct of such radicalism "beyond the borders" of his home region, and Watts, as a conservative Unionist, remembered a "wholesome dread" and "horror of the dissolution of the union into antagonistic fragments" and feared "constant warfare along a hostile border through the length of the land."[67]

The Union Cause, according to Watts, was indissoluble from white Christian nationalism and white reconciliation, and both were overarching themes of his 1893 and 1895 Memorial Day speeches. The Union itself was "an example in the history of the world" and ordained "by the providence of God." Sectional conflict was redemptive, part of a "common destiny." Although he insisted the war was a result of a "disdainful slave oligarchy," Watts also emphasized the role of sectional extremism. The "political complications" of the 1850s had been a result of "partisan politics" and fanatical "factions" that were overrepresented in both the free and slave states, Watts explained. Now, with "Northern and Southern as one," he championed "the great wreath of Peace and Reconciliation" and praised Confederate "excellent manhood." "The spirit of patriotism and self-sacrifice should be remembered and kept alive" without any "hatred" or "animosity" toward former foes. All former soldiers were now "one homogenous people" within a white, Christian republic.[68] It was for border people such as Watts to testify to this sectional resolution.

Watts's brand of western, white reconciliation was showcased at a Ohio Commandery of the Loyal Legion reunion in Cincinnati in 1898. Held at the Queen

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[67] "Kentucky Unionist," December 14, 1889, Elijah S. Watts Papers, FHS.
[68] "Decoration Day Speech," 1893, "A Memorial Address," December 30, 1895, Elijah S. Watts Papers, FHS.

City's Grand Hotel in the midst of the Spanish-American War, the affair revealed the causes and meaning of the war from the perspective of white Union officers from the Ohio Valley. Native Ohioan, Union general, and Republican "carpetbagger" Willard Warner left no doubt as to why he and his men fought. "Comrades," he addressed the aging audience, "I think we all remember, we will all recall easily what we thought when we went into the War in '61. There was but one end in view then; and that was the continued Union of the states." Emancipation was an unfortunate "war measure," Warner recalled, "not a liberty or humanitarian measure. Those are the cold facts of history." In yet another "cold fact" of history, Warner also avowed that and that most Confederates had always been Union men and that perhaps three-fourths of them had never lost their affection for the old flag. Drawing on arguments that were familiar in the Ohio Valley during the secession crisis and the postwar writings of John A. Logan, Warner alleged that, on the whole, southerners should not be indicted for the war because the conflict was precipitated by a conspiratorial band of secessionists from the Deep South. Citing common bravery and the mutuality of the soldiering experience, Warner claimed that the only southerners who had possessed any real disloyalty to the country were non-combatants.[69]

Others addressed not only why they had gone to war, but also what the war now meant. Recalling the "journey across the Ohio River to the land of the South," former Union officer and southern Ohioan Gates P. Thruston praised the region and claimed he and his western comrades had fought for the Union. The war proved that "the Anglo-Saxon of the North was the peer of the Anglo-Saxon of the South" and set the stage for

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[69] Ohio Commandery Loyal Legion, *15th Annual Dinner at Grand Hotel, Cincinnati, O, May 4th, 1898* (n.p.: 1898), 39-43, ALPL.

the nation's subsequent growth and patriotism, Thruston maintained, contrasting the war

of 1861 with that of 1898. Though honorable, the Civil War had been one of necessity

and national livelihood, he insisted. But the war with Spain was a "war for humanity . .

.unselfish and pure" and revealed the military might of "a united people" and the

benevolence of the white race. Speaking in the midst of two decades of unparalleled

immigration and during Jim Crow, Thruston reflected, "This is a great, splendid, a

conservative country which we live in.   There is something in this old Anglo-Saxon

blood, in this inborn Americanism of our that stirs the heart!" "Federal and Confederate;

Northerner and Southerner, we are marching side by side; we know no differences; the

dissensions and antagonisms of the past are buried in the completeness of our

reconciliation."[70] This fusion of regional cohesion with broader tones of nationalism and

white supremacy had always fueled the drives for reconciliation in the Ohio Valley

before, during, and after the war. Those impulses had now spread beyond the region,

becoming the dominant narrative throughout the emerging Midwest and across the

nation.

 The spring of 1895 saw the dedication of a monument at Chicago's Oakwoods

cemetery to Confederate soldiers who had died at Camp Douglas during the war—"a

monument erected on the soil of the victor to the memory of the vanquished." Held in

conjunction with the cities of Cincinnati and Fort Thomas, Kentucky, and the UCV

Division of the Northwest, the event was scheduled for Decoration Day 1895, seeking to

achieve "real reconciliation" and "true reunion" where is had failed before, particularly in

the East. Planned by Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, the event featured a

reception at the Palmer House attended by James Longstreet, Fitzhugh Lee, and Wade

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[70] Ibid., 11-14.

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Hampton, and a host of Union generals including John Schofield and John Palmer; a Confederate memorial parade and dedication ceremony at the cemetery; and intensely racialized and reconciliatory speeches.

Former Confederates bound for Chicago were first greeted with a reception and excursion options in Cincinnati after crossing the "placid waters of the Ohio." Southern attendees including Longstreet, Lee, and Henry Heth "laid siege" and "captured" the "Queen City of the West" on June 1 and were welcomed by a banquet at the Grand Hotel and assisted by black servants, which one observer deemed a "reminder of the halcyon period" before the war. Emphasizing the theme of western unity, the motif of all the city's events and dialogue was Cincinnati's unique economic, political, and cultural position as the "gateway between North and South." James M. Glenn, president of Cincinnati's Chamber of Commerce, stressed to the room of one hundred politically and commercially connected guests that his city was "the great point from which to reach those great states between the Ohio and the Gulf." U.S. Senator Matthew Butler of South Carolina agreed, hoped for "candid and honest . . . reconciliation," and blamed politicians for "keeping the breach between North and South open so long." Fitzhugh Lee, who, like Butler, later became a symbol of national reconciliation by commanding U.S. troops in the Spanish-American War, followed by reminding the audience that Ohio and the West were born out of Virginia and the South. In a toast entitled, "Cincinnati: The Gateway to the South", Union veteran H. P. Lloyd argued that this mutual identity and regional understanding should translate into further business relations, material investment, and political alliance. Enterprise opportunities between northerners and southerners in border

cities such as Cincinnati were, according to Colonel M. A. Cochran, "the key to the great

New South."

James Glenn and Confederate veteran and former lieutenant governor of

Kentucky John Cox Underwood underscored the importance of the West in facilitating

national reconciliation during their welcome addresses. Calling Cincinnati the "greatest

mart of trade in the central west," Glenn insisted there was no city that could better

entertain southerners. There was, he maintained, "no other place where northern veterans

and southern heroes could meet more cordially at the same board and grasping each

other's hands, say: 'Brother, ours was a family quarrel; both sides were brave; the past is

forgotten.'" Underwood spoke directly to the relationship between Ohio and Kentucky,

asserting that Cincinnati was a conservative city, that Kentucky was now a Bourbon

Democratic sister and no longer the 'dark and bloody ground.'" "The broad river,

flowing between the sister States of Ohio and Kentucky," he reminded, "does not bound

separate and foreign governments, but artery-like, courses its way with the life fluid of

natural commerce between sections of one people." Cincinnati's *Tribune* labeled the

banquet a "fitting climax" of reconciliation. "For is not this great municipality the

gateway through which the stern northerner passes to meet his soft-tongued hospitable

brother of the warm, langorous south?" the editor asked, sentimentally. "Is it not here

that they seem to meet on neutral ground? Here it is neither north nor south, east nor

west."[71]

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[71] John C. Underwood, *Report of Proceeding Incidental to the Erection and Dedication of the Confederate Monument* (Chicago: Wm. Johnston Printing Company, 1896), 157, 71-75, 159-163, 169-173, 193, 126-128, 28, 251. The racialized language associated with white veterans' reunion was apparent in Chicago, as speakers insisted that both "Northern Puritan" and "Southern Cavalier" were part of the "Arian race." It should be noted that there was one African-American noted guest. Harrison Terrell, a former slave who had worked as a cook on Robert E. Lee's staff during the war and worked for Ulysses S. Grant after, was a noteworthy guest, embodying racial servitude and white reconciliation and mutuality. The Ex-Confederate

The 29th Annual GAR Encampment in Louisville that fall also highlighted a common border identity. The movement to secure Louisville for the event began at a Blue and Gray gala at the city's Commercial Club on October 10, 1893, with former Union and Confederate veterans advocating that Louisville, a border city once firmly Unionist but now moored to the New South, would be an ideal locale. The Reunion, which coincided with reconciliatory events surrounding the opening of the National Military Park at Chattanooga, was to include former Confederates. Organizers cited Louisville's location as a reason to include former Confederates. All veterans, they argued, shared a "common [racial] origin" of "Anglo-Saxon and Scotch Irish stock" bound to a "common destiny and national aspiration."[72] Leading Louisvillians, including former Confederate, editor of the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, and Democratic congressman Henry S. Watterson welcomed the Union veterans to the "gateway to the South."[73] In a deeply reconciliatory message, Watterson announced that "historic distinctions" from that "sectional conflict" had "long been obliterated" and emphasized the city's commercial standing, its trans-regional transportation links, and its spatial situation as a central terminus not of "one section, but between the North, South, East, and West." "The Grand Army of the Republic has never met south of the Ohio River," explained mayor Henry S. Tyler, "and such a meeting would lead to a better understanding and a higher appreciation between the people of the various sections of our united country." Tyler championed Louisville's "central location" and "accessibility to

Association of Chicago, Camp No. 8 U.C.V., was formed during the reconciliatory aftermath of Ulysses S. Grant's death. For the feminine South in the Northern popular imagination, see Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion, Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1993). On how Northerners nostalgicized the Old South, see Karen L. Cox, *Dreaming of Dixie: How the South Was Created in American Popular Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).
[72] Grand Army of the Republic. Dept. of Kentucky. *Journal of the Twenty-Ninth National Encampment, Louisville, KY. 1895.* (Louisville: N.p., 1895), 438.
[73] Ibid*.,* 6-7.

all quarters of the country." But reunion was based on more than mere geography, and the border, he insisted, understood both the northern and southern mind. The city is located "on the loyal borderland between the two great contending sections pf the country in the late Civil War" where, he maintained, "the sentiment of North and South alike is drawn."

The Kentucky Department of the GAR and state political leaders linked both the city and the border with reconciliation. "We know the Southern people and we know the Northern people," one reunion publication explained, downplaying the very notion of section, "and we know that there is no material reason for calling the one Southern and the other Northern except for geographical designation." Kentucky, the department promotional literature explained in direct Lost Cause terms, "was last to surrender hope of peace in 1861." More, "it gave Lincoln to the North and Davis to the South"; "yielded thousands to death on either side in defense of honest convictions"; it was first to "proclaim amnesty and restore citizenship" to former Confederates; and "first to welcome back to the South as guests those who once came to conquer."[74]

State leaders, both former Unionists and Confederates, drew on the same rhetoric of shared region. Congressman A. J. Carroll urged veterans to come together "beside the noble river which in the darkest days watered alike the Northland and the Southland, and now bears upon its bosom the mingled traffic of a united people." "The Grand Army of the Republic has heretofore met exclusively in "the North,'" he explained, "but whereas, we recognize no sections in our country of to-day, no North and no South, believing that the bitterness of the past has died away." Carroll's prediction that reuniting on "what was

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[74] Ibid., 431, 458.

once the borderland between contending sections, but is now the middle land of America, will drive away forever the fading shadows of the great fraternal strife."

One of the Encampment's centerpieces—the "historic cannon" souvenir—reflected the motif of regional and white reconciliation. Given that the Encampment was "the first held south of the Ohio River," the committee deemed it appropriate that a commemorative delegates' badge should be "made from the metal of two guns—a Union and a Confederate one—blended, as peoples have blended, into harmonious unison. The historic cannon medal was endorsed by a resolution in Congress, approved by President Grover Cleveland, and became the material quintessence of using regional identity as a rationale for sectional resolution. Mary Logan, widow of John A. Logan, thought it "fitting that Louisville, the last Southern city to be occupied by the troops at the close of the war, should be the first to entertain the veterans so grandly."[75] GAR members agreed that "sectional animosities" had weakened owing to their willingness to "bridge the Ohio . . . and pitch their tents old Kentucky's hospitable shores and in the fairest city of the sunny South."[76] Despite its GAR origins, the 1895 Louisville Encampment—overtly reconciliatory, the first of its kind in a southern city, and sponsored and attended by influential former Confederates—marked a new era of sectional reconciliation in the West, leading to a nationally famous Union-Confederate flag exchange in the city a decade later.[77] But the 1895 Reunion was not wholly new; it was also the consequence of earlier social and cultural forces toward full-scale reconciliation along the border that

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[75] Ibid., 439.
[76] Ibid., 430-432.
[77] See *The Returned Battle Flags, Presented to the Confederate Veterans at their Re-Union, Louisville, Ky., June 14th 1905.* (St. Louis: Bruxton and Skinner, 1905). The 1905 event saw the return of dozens of Confederate battle flags by the federal government and was championed by the press an ultimate act of reconciliation in a most fitting setting, Louisville on the Ohio River.

began with western identity and conservative Unionism and culminated on the banks of the Ohio River in Evansville, Indiana, in the fall of 1887.[78]

White Middle Westerners remembered their war as they had fought, emphasizing western triumph and preservation rather than liberation.[79] Sectional discord and sectional reconciliation had coexisted. The emergence of the Loyal West narrative had also marked an increasing dichotomy between eastern and western narratives, the nationalizing elements of the former largely co-opting the provincialism of the latter. In a second war within the war, this one after the war, Lower Middle Westerners shifted from—or perhaps entrenched within—the Loyal West narrative to one even more conducive to sectional reconciliation. They used the Loyal West's most western and conservative elements to reunite with former Confederates along the border. This reconciliation in the Lower Middle West was hastened by political alliances between New Departure Democrats and New South propagandists in Kentucky—former Confederates such as Henry Watterson—and conservative Unionists in the Middle West. A shared western identity with former Confederates in Kentucky corroborated reunion. The Ohio River, a symbol of sectional division during the war, was again used as a symbol of regional connectedness. This manifest unity between the Lower Middle West and the Border South led one observer to remark in 1899, "While, geographically, the

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[78] Encampment Program, Folder 179, Grand Army of the Republic 1895 Encampment Records, FHS.
[79] I borrow the terms "preservationist" and "liberationist" as they relate to veterans' memories from Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 215.

Ohio River shirts the southern border of the Buckeye State, it runs, sociologically, historically, and politically, across the middle of Ohio."[80]

Just as the Lower Middle West had been the last place to break along sectional lines, so too was it among the first to reconcile. But despite the assertions of David W. Blight, race was not at the center of reunion for most white Middle Westerners, because it was not at the center of their war. White Union and Confederate veterans had indeed come to agree that the Union was sacrosanct and that *slavery* was a national regret, but racial views, including white supremacy, remained steadfast.[81] The result was conservative militarism and white nationalism facilitated by regional ties, with sectional interests muted for the sake of white reunion. Just as Reconstruction failed because it failed first as a reimagining where it was most vulnerable, in the Middle West, sectional reconciliation triumphed because it succeeded first where its impetuses were strongest and most natural, along the border. White Middle Westerners had not fought a war over race; it never occurred to them that they should be reuniting over it either.

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[80] James R. Shortridge, *The Middle West: Its Meaning in American Culture* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), 105.

[81] Blight claims that white veterans reunited over race, when in fact most Middle Westerners and southerners had always been in relative racial unison. Rather, they reunited under the rough agreement that the Union was sacred, that slavery was wrong (either socially or morally), and that both sides were equally brave and honorable, and they did so within the context of various social and political circumstances.

Epilogue

"No More Shall the Winding Rivers be Red": Reconciliation in the Lower Middle West

On October 5, 1899, just days before the professed first national Blue-Gray reunion was set to begin in the Ohio River city of Evansville, Indiana, a now-elderly group of Hoosier veterans crossed the old sectional divide—not in enmity, but as a gesture of peace. Their destination was Texas. Their goal: to return a bundle of tattered flags to the veterans of Terry's Texas Rangers, delivered ceremoniously on the Dallas fairgrounds amid brass bands and throngs of onlookers. Mounted "rough riders," fresh from the battlefields of Cuba, escorted the respective governors James Atwell Mount of Indiana and Joseph D. Sayers of Texas. In a rousing speech steeped in a new nationalist rhetoric, Mount called on Americans to "forget the past" and insisted that the significance of the current war with Spain was less about battlefield successes than about binding national wounds and constructing a new brand of patriotism that included both North and South. Indiana, he averred, "the center of population of this great nation," should play a special role in ushering reunion.[1] By returning its captured flags, the state had "set the pace of conciliation and concord."[2] Already the first state to host a regional gathering of Union and Confederate veterans in 1887 and to formally return captured Confederate battle flags, the Hoosier state would now be the first to organize a "national" blue-gray reunion.

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[1] *Evansville Journal,* October 10, 1899.
[2] *Indianapolis Courier-Bureau,* October 14, 1899; *Evansville Daily Courier,* October 14, 1899.

By the 1880s the Ohio River was fast becoming an epicenter of sectional reconciliation. The first reconciliatory impulses in the Ohio Valley began before the war itself as intersectional peace meetings and conciliatory political proposals to forestall the conflict. This crypto-reconciliation in the region led to political dissent during the war, hastened the rejection of Reconstruction after, and ushered in a new wave of racial exclusion. In the 1880s, it would facilitate large-scale reunion between former Union and Confederate soldiers. As one resident of Jefferson County, Illinois claimed, "after the war [sectional] feeling has entirely subsided, the boys in blue persist in saying that they have more respect for the boys that went and fought on the other side, than for those who were not brave enough to fight as they talked."[3] Although sectionalism was far from "subsided," Union spread eagle oratory proved an insufficient facilitator of sectional reconciliation. Longstanding commonalities had to be emphasized in order for citizens and soldiers on either side of the Ohio River to reunite in spirit and in flesh.

Conservative Unionism in the Lower Middle West—with its emphasis on political restoration and racial conservatism—was particularly suited to the task of reconciliation. Given that reunion between Union and Confederate veterans first occurred in the South, where former soldiers were forced to accommodate, such accommodation between blue and gray veterans occurred easily in the Ohio Valley, where sectional discord and sectional reconciliation had long coexisted.[4] In 1888 Union veteran George Kilmer published in *Century Magazine* a list of two-dozen blue-gray "reunions" between 1881 and 1887, most of which were small in scale, and of only local or perhaps regional

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[3] John A. Wall, *Wall's History of Jefferson County Illinois* (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Co., 1909), 122.
[4] Mary Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G.A.R.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), 410-411. On the blue–gray reunion in Knoxville, Tennessee, on October 7-9, 1890, see Henry-Bacon Family Papers, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.

significance.[5] By 1900 the triumphalist rhetoric of the old GAR was out of fashion and

blue-gray reunions were a salve for national social and economic woes and as a show of

unity in support of war with Spain.[6] By then, sectional reconciliation had long been

featured in the Ohio Valley, facilitated by a shared sense of place—a professed common

white western or border identity with former Confederates. Lower Middle Western

veterans saw reunion, rather than racial integration or emancipation, as the war's true

meaning and legacy because its primary aim they considered nothing other than the

restoration of the Union.

Evansville, Indiana, the urban center of the Lower Ohio Valley, staged perhaps

the first large-scale blue-gray reunion in 1887 and the first national one in 1899.[7] Local

GAR posts and big capital financed both, the latter as opportunities for profit and

political suasion among city boosters and railroad companies.[8] They proved tonics for

the city's intensifying urbanization, industrialization, labor and racial unrest. Thus racial

aversion was a mainstay of both reunions, validated on the belief that the Lower Middle

West constituted "a region apart."[9] Similar to one Confederate veteran, who, during the

1883 dedication of the Robert E. Lee Memorial in Lexington, Virginia, described the Old

Dominion as having been "On the border line, between two hostile empires," white

residents of the Ohio Valley authorized reconciliation by drawing on conceptions of

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[5] George L. Kilmer, "A Note of Peace: Reunions of the Blue and the Gray," *Century* 36 (July 1888): 440-442; See also David W. Blight, *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 178; and Stuart McConnell, *Glorious Contentment: The Grand Army of the Republic, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 190.

[6] McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 190, 201.

[7] Historians have overlooked these reunions, both of which were unique in scale and geography. See James Marten, *Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 131; and Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991).

[8] Marten, *Sing Not War*, 126.

[9] Andrew R.L. Cayton and Susan E. Gray, eds., *The American Midwest: Essays on Regional History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), 157.

border identity.[10] Their region was neither North nor South, but a place at once removed

and integrated with both sections.[11] Written out of an increasingly nationalist war

narrative, proponents of the Loyal West developed a tortured cultural response to the war

not entirely unlike the Lost Cause of former Confederates. On the border, in the heart of

Middle America, Loyal Westerners and southerners were able to reconcile in their

mutually perceived victimhood. Believing they had won the war and now anxious over

its national and local social transformation, white western veterans reached out to their

fellow westerners and former enemies.

Organized by the city's Farragut GAR post, Evansville's 1887 Reunion sought to

draw national attention to a city that had always been distinct from "fire-eaters," whether

from New England or the Deep South.[12] A hub of southern-produced tobacco houses and

northern-supplied furniture manufacturing, Gilded Age Evansvillians viewed their city in

exceptionalist terms: "the Natural Gateway to the New South," "the Great Gateway

between North and South," "The City of Northern Vitality and Southern Hospitality,"

"where the North and the South intermarried."[13] Veterans asserted Evansville's ideal

location for reunion because of this adjacency to Kentucky and its proximity to the

region's waterways.[14] Evansvillians believed their city was "practically a southern city"

where locals "hoped to knit the borders of the two great states even closer together."[15]

Although a number of social and economic forces spurred the 1887 Blue-Gray Reunion,

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[10] *Ceremonies connected with the Inauguration of the Mausoleum and the Unveiling of the Recumbent Figure of General Robert Edward Lee* (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell & Co., Printers, 1883), 26-82.

[11] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983).

[12] Frank M. Gilbert, *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County Indiana,* reprint (Evansville, IN: The Tri-State Genealogical Society, 1988),274.

[13] Gilbert, *History of the City of Evansville and Vanderburgh County Indiana*, 400, 275.

[14] *Evansville Daily Courier,* September 30, 1887.

[15] *Evansville Daily Journal,* September 24, 1887; *Evansville Daily Courier,* September 2, 1887.

Evansville ultimately "won the hearts of southern veterans" because many of its city leaders insisted that it was western in values and character.

Many Ohio Valley veterans viewed reunion more in terms of social and economic growth than as merely burying sectional hatchets.[16] Ohio Governor Edward Noyes called for "new northern invasion of the South . . . led not by bayonets, but by mills, factories, machines, and railroads." Although he confessed that slavery was in fact the root cause of the war, he expressed his desire to "remove the causes of the war" and replace slavery with "a new spirit of enterprise."[17] Indiana Governor Isaac P. Gray hoped for improved relations between the Old Northwest and "the southern country, stretching from the Ohio River to the gulf . . . the garden of America."[18] Former Indiana general James M. Shackelford envisioned a "New South" of "growth, enterprise, and prosperity" founded on reunion and reconciliation.[19] John F. Wheless of Nashville lauded the destruction of slavery because it facilitated a new era of "Anglo-Saxon" achievement through "industrial pursuits."[20] Renowned Kentucky Confederate Basil W. Duke echoed these remarks and expected the Reunion to foster "progress – South, East, West, and North."[21] Merging the Middle West and the New South—through rhetoric and capital—represented an evolutionary attempt to bind the West's war wounds. The Reunion's official logo, depicted blue and gray soldiers clasping a staff at a point where two rivers merge, betrayed these regional themes. Whereas a steamboat, bales of cotton, and barrels of bourbon appear behind the Confederate veteran, the Union veteran is flanked by a train

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[16] See Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).
[17] *Evansville Daily Courier,* September 22, 1887.
[18] Ibid., September 22, 1887.
[19] Ibid., August 20, 1887.
[20] Ibid., September 27, 1887.
[21] *Evansville Daily Journal,* September 24, 1887.

car and a railroad bridge, an anvil, and agricultural implements. The symbol expressed that Evansville and its hinterland—where the rivers come together—are where these two sections unite.[22]

This border identity proved *the* defining factor of Evansville's 1887 reunion. Yet "romantic regionalism," as historians Andrew Cayton and Susan Gray argue, did not achieve the "national" aims its organizers had hoped.[23] City leaders sensed that the rest of the nation lagged behind their reconciliatory goals. An 1899 editorial entitled "Reunion Twelve Years Ago" illuminated how Evansvillians conceived of their 1887 experience over a decade later. While the editor admitted that the 1887 Reunion was "almost the first of any magnitude" since the meeting between Grant and Lee at Appomattox Court House in 1865 and the first ever in the West, it was "not of national importance." Though it helped signal "the beginning of [the era] of good feelings between north and south" that "culminated" in the war with Spain, it lacked "speakers of national prominence" and a "generous response" from veterans outside the region. A second blue-gray gathering, it was decided, would not suffer the same shortcomings.[24] By the middle of the next decade, city leaders and veterans were already envisioning just such a reunion.

Like its predecessor, Evansville's 1899 Blue-Gray Reunion used regional identity to endorse reunion.[25] Yet 1899 promoters wanted reunion to be a didactic experience, not simply for Evansville and the region but for the entire country. As Evansville Mayor William M. Akin, Jr. explained to a group of veterans, "Several years ago a successful

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[22] Official Medallion of Evansville's 1887 Blue-Gray Reunion, author's personal collection.
[23] Cayton and Gray, eds., *The American Midwest*, 5.
[24] *Evansville Courier,* October 11, 1899, "Reunion Twelve Years Ago."
[25] See "Reunion of the Blue and Gray at Evansville," *Confederate Veteran* 7 (October 1899), 439.

reunion of this character was held, but yet it was notably local in its character. And now

it is deemed opportune to make it national."[26] Southern reconciliationists agreed. The

editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* thought a *national* reunion on Indiana soil would offer

proof positive that sectionalism in the North really was "dying out."[27] Reconciliation in

the West should serve as a national standard.

    Speakers, including President William McKinley, who hoped for a "reunion of

hearts" in the West, emphasized the equivalency between North and South. The

Secretary of the Navy, John D. Long, claimed that "the North never conquered the

South," that both sides were "right," and that the late Civil War was "not a war of

section" at all but of mutual heroism, and applauded "the best people of the western

states" for taking early steps toward reconciliation. This included thanking Indiana for

being the first northern state to elect a Democratic governor following the war. The

Reunion's official song, "The Reunion of the Blue and the Gray," affixed local meaning

to both war and reunion: "By the flow of the inland river/Where the fleets of iron have

fled/No more shall the war cry sever/Or the winding rivers be red." Lyricist Frances

Miles Finch used a local story about the war to convey her broader meaning of war and

reconciliation. Her "Reunion of the Blue and the Gray" located sectional healing in a

specific regional place, as the "inland river" portrayed "desolate mourners," "graves of

the dead, under the sod and dew" and the masses "waiting the judgment day," thus

contrasting postwar themes of death along a now-placid waterway with the once wartime

rivers of blood.[28]

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[26] *Evansville Courier,* October 11, 1899.
[27] *Atlanta Constitution*, August 31, 1899.
[28] Frances Miles Finch and W.A. Hester, *The Reunion of the Blue and the Gray* (Evansville, IN: *Evansville Courier,* 1899), Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana.

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Mutual white supremacy both bolstered, perhaps even speeded, reunion in the West. The racial exclusion that had always been a hallmark of the Ohio Valley now reinforced western distinctiveness, articulated as racialized bitterness over emancipation. Ex-Confederate Pollard B. Hall of Georgia explained what regional identity meant in the Lower Middle West. Cautioning that there was a "pall hanging over the southland as black as night," Hall predicted that a second civil war would erupt in which "the boys who wore blue would be called upon to come to the rescue of the boys who wore gray and defend them against the negro." Reminding that the United States was a "white man's country where none but an Anglo-Saxon shall rule," Hall's impassioned words were precisely what these veterans had been waiting to hear. The *Evansville Courier* reported that even amid scores of energetic speeches by a range of prolific orators, Hall's speech and its message of racial panic garnered a more enthusiastic response than any other during the entire Reunion.[29]

White supremacy as centerpiece to sectional reunion allowed western identity to serve as the Reunion's primary bond. Although the river had been a wartime border and an imagined boundary in the Loyal Western narrative, in October 1899 at least, attendees agreed that this "borderland between North and South" was a natural sanctuary for reconciliation.[30] "Once the Ohio served as a dividing line, now it flows on its placid way, with peace on either side," John D. Long maintained, greeting "the boys of the West."[31] "This great river which goes rushing through your lovely city," explained Georgian A. J. West, "pauses not to consider whose are the boundaries of the estates through which it

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[29] *Evansville Courier,* October 11, 1899.
[30] *Evansville Journal,* October 12, 1899.
[31] Ibid., October 12, 1899.

flows." Evansville, and its river, had "swept away every vestige of sectional feeling."[32] Shared westernness and shared racism enabled sectional discord and sectional reconciliation to coexist in Middle America. A full fourteen years later, these tenets of white reconciliation would at last bring eastern veterans together with their former Confederate foes for a national encampment at Gettysburg where they would claim that the nation's war wounds were healed.

If Middle America was indeed the compass of the war, conservative Unionists were its median. If the crux of the Civil War era was the contest between the slaveholding South and the free labor North for economic, political, and cultural supremacy of the nascent West, then the rise of sectional debates, war, commemoration and reunion in that region is central to understanding the triumph of the northern vision as the national vision. But this victory demanded the defeat of traditional alignments in the West. First punctuated by the "Yankee invasion," slavery and sectionalism interrupted a common western, conservative, white identity, and the events surrounding Lincoln's election and the war's first painful years revealed conservative Unionists as failed mediators. Three subsequent years of conflict, marked by violence and a grudging tolerance of liberalizing war aims, widened and deepened the Ohio River as a national symbol. Despite the paucity of emancipationist memory in the Middle West, public commemoration and ritual entrenched the growth of the Union Cause alongside Kentucky's postwar adoption of Confederate identity.

Yet sectional identity could not sufficiently facilitate blue-gray reunion. Middle Western veterans emphasized the common threads of western identity and racial

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[32] *Evansville Courier,* October 12, 1899.

conservatism in order to reconcile with their former foes. Whereas the region's calls for

political moderation and opposition to liberal wars aims had been belated and ineffective,

its early rejection of Reconstruction and embrace of sectional reconciliation prefigured

national trends. Middle America had been the last place to desire war, and the first place

to desire reunion.

Although a proper metaphor for a "house divided against itself," wartime Middle

America was, in reality, more hashed and pockmarked than torn clean. Like a bone

splintered and crudely reset, the wartime transformation of Middle America permanently

altered popular understandings of American place and paved the way in part for the

Midwest—an anti-section marked by civic exceptionalism and the values of the prairie

and main street, the river valleys and the urban polyglot.[33] Sectional discord and

sectional reconciliation coexisted. As one Ohio veteran explained during a GAR reunion

in 1930, Cincinnati had been "the leading city of the West—the Queen City of the West,

the Athens of the West" prior to the war. "Situated on the border of the South," he

explained, "its relations commercial and social with that section were close." But when

war came the city and the region proved itself "heartedly for the Union" and aligned with

the North, altering its identity and national orientation.[34] But theirs was also the Loyal

West, a distinctly western identity and commemoration. A physical if not emotional

distance persisted between the victors of Shiloh and both former Confederates and their

eastern and African American comrades. For the western men who had won a war

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[33] Shortridge, *The Middle West*, 1-12. Shortridge also claims Midwestern identity is, to some extent, a muddled or absence of identity in a region "inflicted with insecurity," 1-12; Susan-Mary Grant, *North Over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 172.

[34] Grand Army of the Republic, *Program, 64th National Encampment, Grand Army of the Republic and Allied Organizations, August 24 to 29, 1930, Cincinnati, Ohio* (n.p.: 1930), 6.

against treasonous southerners in defiance of their black and Yankee allies, William

McKinley's "reunion of hearts" remained elusive.

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