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CONFEDERATE ATROCITIES: THE NORTHERN PERCEPTION OF THE
CONFEDERACY'S CONDUCT OF THE WAR

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ABSTRACT

During the American Civil War, the Northern perception of the Confederate conduct of the war can be gleaned from the headlines and articles of the many Northern newspapers. With time, the Northern public narrowed its definition of what constituted an atrocity and its interpretation of the rules of war while simultaneously accepting the increasing cost of hard war. In the aftermath of the Union defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run on July 21, 1863, shock and hysteria gripped the North, leading to the first allegations of atrocities. However, in regards to conventional Confederate forces, later Confederate actions, such as the repeated and increasingly costly invasions of Chambersburg, PA, were reported with little of the provocative and condemning language used to describe First Bull Run. Eventually, the Northern public accepted what constituted as conventional military practices. The Northern public was similarly discerning with unconventional Confederate forces and recognizing the differing degrees of irregulars by their military objectivity and conduct. While guerrillas in Missouri were seen as merely blood-thirsty criminals courting terror, partisans, such as John Singleton Mosby, was depicted as an effective scout behaving with decorum and military discipline. Lastly, with the formation of African American units in the Union Army, the issue of race and retaliation come to the forefront. It was only late in the war, following the Fort Pillow Massacre in April 1864, that the general Northern public joined the African American community in discussion of race affected the rules regarding prisoners of war and in demanding retaliation for violations of the rules of war.

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Introduction

When I began researching a topic for my thesis, I started by looking at how the Civil War, more specifically the Confederate invasion of south-central Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863, affected my hometown of Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Carlisle was shelled by the Confederates and the military post, Carlisle Barracks, was burned to the ground. Following up, I sought to discover what had happened to the rest of south-central Pennsylvania during that campaign (Gettysburg excluded). What I found was the multiple Confederate visits to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. From 1862 to 1864, the city experienced the escalating cost of war, from being raided to occupied to plundered and burned to the ground. I had never known that Chambersburg was burned to the ground and from there I began my search for the Northern perception of Confederate atrocities.

Today, the word “atrocious” invokes twentieth-century histories of genocide and extermination. Within the context of the American Civil War, “atrocious” stirs memories of slavery, the Fort Pillow Massacre, and the starving, dying prisoners at Andersonville. This thesis sets out to discover the wartime Northern perception of the word “atrocious.” At the start of my research, I anticipated that the Northern public would maintain a broad interpretation of what constituted an atrocious, as well as occasionally apply the word carelessly. In reality, the Northern perception of atrocious evolved throughout the war. While the earliest application of the term “atrocious” in the aftermath of the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 confirmed my initial hypothesis, subsequent research proved that the Northern public refined and narrowed its application of the label. The following thesis, using contemporary newspapers and context,

teases out the subtleties of the use and definition of atrocity by the Northern public throughout the war.

Current Civil War scholarship lacks an overview of Confederate atrocities. Most literature on the subject focuses on one particular part, like racial atrocities or Missouri guerrillas.¹ In addition, the scholarship fails to provide a general Northern perception of Confederate atrocities, instead focusing on those committing the atrocity and the response of the Union leadership. In this thesis, I follow the Northern perception of Confederate atrocity, finding in newspapers and other public discourse a more sophisticated understanding of these issues than one might expect.

The discussion of Confederate atrocity, and the proposed Union responses to such acts, fit into the larger debate regarding whether to define the American Civil War as a “hard war” or “total war.” Some scholars propose that the Civil War should be categorized as a “total war” alongside the World Wars of the twentieth century.² Other scholars propose a new way in which to interpret the Civil War, “New Revisionism.” This framework echoes the 1930s revisionists who saw the darker side of war—and characterized the conflict as needless—but that today understands the importance of the conflict for ending slavery. New Revisionists take a seemingly antiwar stance, while focusing on such things as guerrilla warfare and other atrocities instead of portraying the conflict as limited and played within the rules of conventional warfare.³ Another interpretation of the Civil War argues that the Civil War was a limited, yet hard war and cannot be likened to conflicts in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries.⁴ In this view, the Union’s

¹ Gregory J. W. Urwin, “*Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*,” (Southern Illinois University, 2004), & Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict on Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

² James M. McPherson, “Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era,” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

³ Yael A. Sternhell, “Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 2 (June 2013), 239-256.

⁴ Mark E. Neely, “*The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*,” (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

objective was to defeat the South and reunify the country, not destroy it. My research into Northern perceptions has supported the more limited interpretation of the war. The Northern public at first considered the enemy as breaching the limits of warfare, but they came to understand that there were boundaries within which the soldiers operated.

In order to investigate the Northern perception, three different “categories” of war were chosen: conventional warfare, unconventional warfare, and race and retaliation. The chapters also correlate with Northern perception as it evolved throughout the war.

The first chapter discusses atrocities by conventional Confederate forces, a neglected area in the current literature of the conflict. While the attack on Fort Sumter in April of 1862 opened hostilities, the first major battle was First Bull Run in July 1861. What the North expected to be an overwhelming Southern defeat and a quick end to the rebellion became instead a national humiliation. What arose from the embarrassing Union defeat were the first allegations of Confederate atrocities. Confederate soldiers were accused of defiling the dead and murdering the wounded. The matter was investigated by the newly formed Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, which concluded that the atrocities had indeed been committed. There was little hard evidence to these allegations. But the political context and inexperience among politicians in military affairs lent itself to exaggeration. However, later in the war, the use of the word “atrocities” and similar words became less applied when describing the operations of conventional Confederate soldiers. This can be seen in the media coverage of the costly Confederate visits to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, whose destruction certainly could have elicited commentary about the barbarity of the enemy. But it did not. While atrocity allegations surfaced following the First Battle of Bull Run, nothing similar emerged later in the conflict in northern reactions to the regular operations of the enemy.

In the middle years of the war (summer 1862 to spring 1864), the use of the word “atrocities” changed to describing unconventional warfare. Northern newspapers began to consign

their use of such vocabulary to guerrillas, or irregular forces that did not wear uniforms, that melted into the countryside, and that struck down unarmed civilians. But even here the newspaper accounts did not lump all guerrilla action in the same category. They distinguished between two types of irregulars, guerrillas and partisans. Guerrillas, like those murdering and plundering in Missouri, were depicted as bloodthirsty criminals. In contrast, partisans—irregular troops sanctioned by the Confederate government such as John Singleton Mosby--distinguished themselves from guerrillas because they retained a sense of military objectives and discipline.

The last phase of northern perceptions of Confederate atrocities began in the aftermath of the Fort Pillow Massacre in April 1864. Despite the previous lack of attention to African American troops should they be captured by Confederate forces, the massacre of African soldiers this late in the war brought the issue of retaliation to national attention. In this case, when the Confederate forces failed to respect the rules regarding surrender and prisoners of war on account of race, the use of “atrocious” once again became relegated to conventional forces. It was then that the Union demanded retaliatory measures against the Confederates, which served as a prelude for the well-known cry for an eye-for-an-eye for the treatment of white Union prisoners at places such as Andersonville Prison in Georgia. . However, cooler heads prevailed and no official strategy of reprisal became implemented.

The Northern perception experienced a sharp learning curve regarding the use of “atrocious” to describe Confederate conduct throughout the Civil War. It was a learning curve that mirrored that of the soldiers in the ranks. And it was a learning curve that until now has not been described.

Chapter 1

Atrocities Committed by Conventional Confederate Forces

The Northern newspaper accounts of the behavior of Confederates after the Union loss at the First Battle of Bull Run in July 1861 sounded outrageous. As a case in point, one correspondent offered this incredible accounting of reputed grisly acts: “Some of the residents at Centreville say that members of the Sanitary Commission and other soldier-visitors to Manassas, assert positively that there is evidence so strong as to force the belief that the Mississippi soldiers have been in the habit of digging up bodies of National soldiers buried at Bull Run, boiling off the flesh and making the bones into trophies.”⁵ Other incredulous accounts described the use of skulls as drinking cups, bodies burned, unclothed, buried face-down, and headless. Eventually, a Congressional Committee that had formed in the fall of 1861 investigated the question of Confederate atrocities at First Bull Run as an official inquiry, with a final report issued in April of 1862.⁶ What was the purpose behind these accounts? How did Confederate atrocities by conventional forces factor into the Northern perception of the Civil War?

While it highly unlikely that Confederate soldiers actually dug up Union dead to take bones as souvenirs, the coverage that this particular topic received was representative of the public’s general shock at their defeat and highlighted their sense of what constituted an atrocity in the earliest stages of the war. The First Battle of Bull Run proved that the Confederacy was not going to be defeated with a single battle. However, there was much less speculative indignation when Confederate forces were operating in Maryland and Pennsylvania during two Northern invasions in the fall of 1862 and summer of 1863. Not even in 1864 when a retaliatory raid left much of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, burned to the ground was the word used to describe the

⁵ “Rebel Atrocities” *Salem Observer*, March 29, 1862

⁶ Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War, “Rebel Barbarism,” April 4, 1862

actions of the conventional Confederate forces. As the war continued, the newspapers described the actions of Confederate soldiers less and less as atrocities, suggesting that civilians underwent a hardening similar to that described by studies of soldiers.⁷ This hardening contributed to the Union victory in 1865. Just as soldiers had to toughen their resolve and continue fighting, despite devastating losses, so too did the civilians, who sent off their men and whose labor and money supplied the soldiers. The Northern public's change in the use of the word indicated maturing attitudes as they learned what to expect from conventional armies fighting a civil war.

There has been no extensive study on how the Northern public perceived "atrocities," or "outrages," another word used to describe deplorable practices committed by Confederate forces. Most of the recent research regarding atrocities or outrages focuses on the actions of irregulars, such as partisans in Virginia or guerrillas in Missouri, or the atrocities visited by conventional soldiers against black soldiers.⁸ As the war progressed, the Northern population narrowed their application of the terms "atrocious" or "outrage" to the actions of irregulars or the depredations against black soldiers. At one point, however, the actions of conventional Confederate troops were also labelled as atrocities. These were generally actions committed against the Northern civilian population; the one exception to this was the treatment of the wounded and dead following the First Battle of Bull Run. This categorization of actions eventually waned as the war dragged on because the realization was made by both the military authority and the public that complete victory required a hard war. As the war progressed, atrocities dropped from the northern lexicon as early as the Confederate Maryland Campaign in 1862 which occurred after

⁷ Gerald F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: The Free Press, 1989) and Mark Grimsley *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians 1861 -1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

⁸ Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict on Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989) and US Congress. (2006). *Fort Pillow Massacre: Joint Select Committee on the Conduct of the War*. Adena

the Union command had started to move from what one scholar has termed a period of reconciliation to one of greater pragmatism.

Historian Mark Grimsley describes in his book, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians 1861 – 1865*, the change the Union military leadership strategy underwent, from one of reconciliation in the early years of the war to one of pragmatism and hard war following frustrating defeats and obstacles. The Union Army unofficially declared war on Southern civilians in the name of military necessity, but with the limitations that kept the Civil War from devolving into a “total war”. Private property was confiscated and destroyed, but the civilians were not (officially) to be harmed. For example, the 1864 campaign of Major General Philip Sheridan’s campaign in the Shenandoah Valley was called “The Burning” by Southerners. Sheridan destroyed barns containing wheat and the railroads in the valley. His purpose was to deprive Southern armies of wheat for bread; the Shenandoah was aptly named the “bread basket” of the Confederacy. What Sheridan did not do was burn the homes of the civilians or purposefully destroy food meant for their own consumption. Although this was a strategy developed by the top tier of the Union Army, it took the soldiers to carry it out, and they did so effectively. At that point many of the regiments had their three-year terms of enlistment expiring. A good portion of the men re-mustered into service and would not have done so if they did not believe in their cause or how the Union strategy for achieving it. The Northern civilians gave their support at the ballot box. President Lincoln was reelected over his opponent, George B. McClellan, who sought reconciliation and an end to the fighting, in 1864. These affirmations demonstrate that the Northern people supported the practice of pragmatism and hard war and would continue until unconditional surrender.

The recognition by northerners of Confederate atrocities—and what constituted the difference between “atrocities” and “outrages”—arose from searches of various databases: America’s Historical Newspapers, Pennsylvania Civil War Newspapers, Harpers Weekly 1857 –

1912, New York Times Historical, and African American Newspapers. Several trends emerged. The words “atrocities” and “outrages” were typically attributed to different types of actions. An atrocity was an act of violence, usually involving death. For example, the murder of Unionists in Missouri by guerillas was an atrocity. The massacre of colored troops after they had surrendered, simply because of their race, was also labeled an atrocity. This was violence beyond that of soldiers simply following an order and referred to practices that seemed to go against the laws of war as understood by the public. An atrocity was a depraved and purposeful act of violence against an individual, unarmed, outnumbered, or incapacitated, which was more than just an act of violence. Guerrillas killed Unionists because of their political convictions and to incite terror. Confederates gave no quarter to colored troops because they recognized the soldiers as insurrectionists, inciting racial violence, instead of as legal combatants. Conversely, an outrage was usually described as a violation of one’s person or property rights. The confiscation of property owned by professed Unionists in Northern Virginia was decried as an outrage. The destruction of railroads and telegraph wires in Missouri was an outrage. When a soldier’s wife was put out of her house to watch the guerrillas burn it to the ground, that was depicted as an outrage. Simply, an atrocity was an act that was committed against soldiers and outrages were suffered by the civilians.

The only time where this pattern did not fit was with the rumors surrounding the incidents in the aftermath of First Bull Run during the summer of 1861. This was probably the result of the hysteria surrounding the unanticipated loss. The North had predicted an easy victory and a quick end to the war on account of the moral superiority of their cause of Union. Instead, the Confederate Army soundly routed the proud Union Army, inflicting heavy casualties when compared with previous American battles. From this surprise loss, and the realization that the South would not be so easily defeated, stories of Confederate atrocities and outrages committed against the Union wounded and dead began to circulate in Northern newspapers. This was

necessary for conceptualizing the Southerners as the enemy; with each horrific deed reported, Confederates became more despicable.

In the first year of the war, the newspapers devoted considerable ink to the aftermath of the First Battle of Bull Run, particularly sensational stories concerning the treatment of the Union dead by Confederate soldiers. The search terms <rebel atrocit* Bull Run> and <rebel outrage* Bull Run> brought up hundreds of articles. The words “outrage” and “atrocitiy” were not only within the article, but also were a part of the headline. As headlines are meant to grab a potential reader’s attention, the provoking combination of “rebel” and “atrocitiy/outrage” were associated before the following article was even read. The combination of Bull Run and atrocitiy/outrage in the newspapers peaked throughout the summer of 1861 in the aftermath of the battle and returned once more in the spring of the following year when a Congressional Committee reviewed the alleged actions of rebel soldiers.

While doing preliminary searches, two types of violent acts, murder and rape, did not yield hits with the terms atrocitiy and outrage. Using the databases, <murder*> brought 65,097 hits during the years of the Civil War. When a more specific search was done, using <rebel atrocit* murder*>, only 456 articles came up and <rebel outrage* murder*> only 1070. Murders, of both soldiers and civilians, were reported frequently during the war, and some were committed by Confederates, but they were not labeled as atrocitiies or outrages.⁹ The term <rape*> resulted in 11,140 hits. However, like with murder, when the search is narrowed using the words “Rebel” and “atrocitiy/outrage” there were drastically fewer results. The combined terms <rebel atrocit* rape> came up with a mere 30 hits and <rebel outrage* rape> with 116. None of the 116 hits had

⁹ “From Alexandria. Execution for Murder-Burning of a Rebel Lieutenant’s House-a Soldier Shot,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 8, 1861. In this article, a Virginia girl was brutally murdered by a Union soldier, who was found guilty and executed for the crime, but there was no passionate language to describe the event, just a write up of the order of events.

the three terms within the same article.¹⁰ Rape was most often used metaphorically to describe the violation of something else, like individual rights. Rape describing the violation of women was also reported in articles, but never described as an atrocity or an outrage committed by a conventional Confederate soldier. However, it should be noted that rape was notoriously underreported, especially during the nineteenth century. The results of these searches are significant because it pinpoints what was *not* considered an atrocity or an outrage by the Northern public. Murder and rape are deplorable acts of violence, but ones that also occur during times of peace. Whenever murder and rape were reported to have been perpetrated by Southerners, the items generally dealt with guerrillas in Missouri, not conventional Confederate soldiers.

Neither were the Confederate actions during the Gettysburg campaign, nor their several raids on Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, categorized as a rebel atrocity or an outrage. Extensive searches using a variety of terms provided these results:

Table 1. Search Terms

Search Terms	Number of Results
<rebel atrocit* Chambersburg>	8
<rebel outrage* Chambersburg>	36
<rebel atrocit* Gettysburg>	41
<rebel outrage* Gettysburg>	184
<rebel atrocit* Pennsylvania>	243
<rebel outrage* Pennsylvania>	1111

¹⁰ A handful of subjects received considerable attention from the press and are the focus of this thesis. As a disclaimer, the search results of the newspapers are on full pages, not necessarily articles. Two keywords might be on the same page, but not within the same article. For example, an article about an atrocity committed in Missouri might run next to one about the Maryland Campaign. This hit would appear if the search terms were <Maryland atrocit*>, but it would not be a relevant when writing about atrocities committed by conventional Confederate forces in Maryland.

The chart represents the number of hits each search produced; articles with all three terms generated far fewer hits. For example, the words “rebel,” “atrocious,” and “Chambersburg,” did not appear together in a single article.

But the more enlightened view on how the Northern public internalized the actions of conventional forces lay ahead. For now, we need to turn to the opening of the conflict, when the Northern public still tried to define its enemy and what those men were capable of. In the aftermath of the First Battle of Bull Run, newspapers reported that Confederates were killing wounded Union soldiers or digging up the bodies of the dead for mementos. Surely this was nothing more than rumor and hysteria, possibly strengthened by a Radical Republican minority who opposed reconciliation, but it was decried as an atrocity. However, as the war progressed, the newspapers gradually stopped calling the practices of conventional Confederate soldiers atrocities or outrages. The actions of the Confederate Army during campaigns in Maryland and Pennsylvania were not classified as atrocities or outrages. With time, the popular notion of atrocities and outrages went beyond commonplace violence and military campaigns. But in the summer of 1861, following the loss at the Battle of First Bull Run, stories about Confederate outrages and atrocities abounded.

The “Atrocities” and “Outrages” from First Bull Run

One of the most prevalent stories in the first summer of the war featured the “atrocities” committed by Confederate soldiers on the Union wounded left on the First Bull Run battlefield. Considerable reporting dealt with rumors that Confederate soldiers dug up the Union dead to collect their bones as souvenirs. These sensationalist claims were reviewed by a Congressional Committee the following year, garnering more news coverage. These accounts received considerable attention; it was republished every time some captured Confederate “confessed” to having seen the atrocities committed or a letter between Southerners was intercepted by Union

authorities and then reprinted in full.¹¹ This was the first major battle of the war and its coverage in newspapers in the aftermath would have made a considerable impact on the Northern perception of the war.

The First Battle of Bull Run, called First Manassas by Southerners, occurred on July 21, 1863. The Union Army was 35,000 strong, its mostly inexperienced soldiers volunteering for a ninety-day period. The army was commanded by Major General Irvin McDowell. After considerable pressure from Washington to move quickly, McDowell had led his army to the Manassas Railroad Junction with the hopes of capturing it. The North planned to capture Richmond and bring the rebellion to a swift end. In anticipation of a spectacular victory, citizens of Washington D.C., including congressmen, went out with picnic lunches to watch the battle. Few of the civilians or the green soldiers believed that the Confederate troops could stand up to the loyal Union soldiers. On July 21, early Union gains were lost when Confederate reinforcements arrived. McDowell's men faltered, and began to retreat. A disorderly retreat soon became a rout and McDowell's men skedaddled back to Washington D.C. over twenty miles away, trampling over the picnicking civilians.

The North was utterly shocked – what should have been an easy victory had resulted in a humiliating defeat and therefore began the search for an explanation. It was not that Union armies were incapable of victories. In other parts of the country, Union forces had defeated the Confederates. Earlier that same month, in what would later become West Virginia, volunteers led by General George McClellan had defeated the Confederate forces stationed in that area, soldiers commanded by General Robert E. Lee. These two officers would lead opposing armies in Virginia in 1862. An obvious, but overlooked answer, was that the battle was brought about prematurely. Lacking patience, the Northern government wished for a quick reconciliation after a

¹¹ "The Rebel Atrocities," *Sandusky Register*, April 3, 1862

decisive defeat of the Confederate forces, which contributed to the Union Army in Virginia advancing before it was ready. Throughout the war, the civilian authority in Washington tried to direct where and when the Union Army should move, as much for military victories as for political gains. Prior to First Bull Run, McDowell had warned President Abraham Lincoln that the Northern volunteers were too inexperienced, and needed more time to drill, but Lincoln refused. There was also considerable pressure from the general Northern public. There was no censorship of sensitive information like troop movements. All action, as well as inaction, was published in newspapers around the country, North and South. “On to Richmond!” had been a rallying cry in newspapers prior to the First Battle of Bull Run; it would reappear for the next four years as numerous campaigns attempted, from every conceivable direction, to take the Confederate capital. Northerners also believed in their cause of Union and that that conviction would insure them a sound victory. This was not the case. And not only were the celebrated Union volunteers soundly defeated, the cost of battle was staggering. Although relatively insignificant compared to later battles, the Union suffered nearly 3,000 casualties on July 21. In the end, the explanation propagated was not that the Union had been at fault (despite McDowell being relieved), but that the loss was the result of the depraved Confederates. It was the unexpected loss, which was inconceivable to the Northern government or populace, and the devastating casualties that would contribute to the conceptualization of the Southerners as the enemy.

Although the South had seceded and fired on Fort Sumter, it was the First Battle of Bull Run that transformed the entire Southern populace into the “enemy.” Rumors quickly began to circulate about the conduct of Confederate forces immediately following the battle. Southerners were no longer viewed as misguided, guilty of rejecting the United States and its Constitution; they had now become the enemy. Following the Battle of First Bull Run, Confederates were viewed as barbarous or savage and capable of committing unspeakable atrocities and outrages.

This characterization of the enemy was used by Republicans in Washington as a reason to abandon a reconciliation attempt. Some Republicans wished to exploit their large majority (most of the congressmen from Southern states had been Democrat) and push through their radical political agenda, most importantly, abolition. Additionally, Republicans saw the war and the connection of “Southerner” with “atrocities,” to exact political revenge and tarnish their opponents’ reputations, the “Slave Power” of the South. The identification of Southerners as barbarous was also a means of encouraging soldiers to enlist, and a reason to fight once on the battlefield. These means of promoting the stories of Southern atrocities was the newspapers, which for months, published and republished the rumors and stories from the First Bull Run aftermath.

Immediately following the battle, Northern newspapers began to publish stories describing the atrocities and the outrages committed by Confederate forces at First Bull Run. On July 26, the *New York Tribune*, when reporting on the aftermath of the battle, included in the sub-headlines “Order to Bayonet Every Wounded Zouave,” “No Mercy Shown The Dying,” and “The Barbarisms of the Rebels to be Punished”.¹² The article contained special dispatches from supposed eyewitnesses, describing the condition of the Confederate forces following the battle. The source was a left-behind sergeant who received his information from two fugitive slaves who claimed that the Confederate quartermaster had issued rations of “corn, for hoe-cakes, pickled pork, and smoked shoulders” for 91,000 men. Following the story of the daring escape and intelligence gathering done by the sergeant were two paragraphs under the sub-headline “Rebel Atrocities,”

The report that the Rebels shelled and burned Sudley Church, which was used as a hospital by our troops, and known to be so used, is confirmed. One of the officers in command of the Rebels that came up the road on which of the wounded lay, for whom there was no room in the hospital, was heard to say, ‘Bayonet every son of a – that wears a red shirt.’ This inhuman order was obeyed, although many a poor fellow, summoning all his strength, begged for his life.

¹² “The War for the Union,” *New York Tribune*, July 25, 1861.

Articles such as these became increasingly more prevalent throughout the rest of the summer of 1861, probably because there were no more major military engagements on which to focus. The Union Army had not only been soundly defeated, a well-prepared horde of 91,000 Confederates were within thirty miles of Washington D.C. And this enemy was, as eyewitnesses reported, capable of “barbarism” and “atrocities” and could potentially defeat the Union Army once more and commit worse depredations. Newspapers also used the word “outrage” to describe the actions of Confederate soldiers against incapacitated Union soldiers immediately following the loss at First Bull Run. After a summary of the battle, the proper burial of the dead and the treatment of the wounded received consideration. However, as the first battle, there was no procedure yet on arrangements for the enemy slain, so bodies remained behind enemy lines, vulnerable to depredations;

No arrangement has yet been made to procure our dead. It is doubtful whether any will be made...[a]uthentic accounts of the grossest and most inhuman outrages committed by the enemy have reached us. Hospitals containing the wounded and dying have been burned to the ground. The throats of wounded men have been cut, and enormities too shameful to relate have been committed upon those of our men who got into the clutches of a barbarous and merciless foe.¹³

There were no official policies regarding the recovery of remains at this point. Usually, individuals or small groups, family or friends, would go to the First Bull Run Battlefield to recover their loved one’s remains.¹⁴ These men were also the sources of many of the stories that circulated about Confederate atrocities and outrages. Other reports of the treatment of the wounded came from soldiers who were left behind to escape back to the Union Army, or by other wounded soldiers who eventually returned. They all had the same thing to say about the Confederates. Again, the enemy was described as inhuman.

¹³ “From Washington,” *North American and United States Gazette* (North American), July 24, 1861

¹⁴ Drew Gilpin Faust, *Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2008)

These stories trended into 1862, but the actions of conventional Confederate soldiers extended beyond the treatment of the wounded and outrageous stories about Confederates unburying and desecrating the dead bodies of Union soldiers. Now, new allegations surfaced, accusing the Confederates of exhuming dead and buried Union soldiers, months after the fact, for the purpose of obtaining grisly trophies. The bones were alleged to have made in to souvenirs,

The skulls were frequent tent ornaments, and were used for soap dishes. Knives and forks, rings, even spurs, were constructed from the bones. Soldiers of the Brooklyn 14th recognized the field of Bull Run, by their red trowsers, comrades who had fallen there, lying unburied and headless. Residents in the vicinity asserted that after the battle the Rebel soldiers passed their houses with what they called, with unseemly merriment, Yankee skulls, on their bayonets.¹⁵

Eyewitness testimony was attributed to a minister, a person who would be considered of impeccable character, and to the brother of a slain soldier. Concerning the former, the account read: “A clergymen in the county in which Winchester, Va., is situated, assured one of our Chaplains, Rev. A. H. Quintz, that ‘Yankee skulls were hawked about the town of Winchester, after the battle of Bull Run, at 310 [dollars] a piece. Spurs were made of jaw bones, and hundreds of bodies were left headless for such purposes’.”¹⁶ After searching the battlefield for his slain brother, Daniel Bixby Jr., finding the body and identifying the clothes, testified, “We found no head in the grave, and no bones of any kind – nothing by the clothes and portions of the flesh. We found the remains of three other bodies all together. The clothes were seen; some flesh was left, but no bones.”¹⁷ The continuation of the Confederate atrocities reinforced the conceptualization of Southerners as the enemy. While some atrocities following a fight can be the result of adrenaline and the heat of battle, for a Confederate soldier to return to the site of a buried Union

¹⁵ “Rebel Atrocities,” *Salem Observer*, March 29, 1862

¹⁶ “Humanity to Prisoners and the Slain,” *Public Ledger*, April 10, 1862

¹⁷ “The Conduct of The War. Joint Committee Report. Shocking Details. Our Dead and Wounded. Horrible.” *Wooster Republican*, May 15, 1862

soldier, months after the battle, signified that not only were Confederates barbarous, they could be devolving further.

Newspapers published stories also attested to the barbarous behavior of women. One Southern woman was reported to have encouraged her sweetheart to commit atrocities and “...concluded her affectionate epistle with the gentle request that the rebel recruit should try to procure ‘Lincun’s skelp,’ and send it to her as a souvenir.”¹⁸ The reporter reasons that if Southern men can commit atrocities, then Southern women were equally capable of depraved actions, “If males could so far forge their manhood as to turn skulls of their fallen foes into drinking cups, we are not surprised that the women’s should become so fare metamorphosed as to desire human scalps to a manufacture into shopping purse.” Although not prevalent, with accounts such as these, Confederate soldiers were not the sole enemy. The entire Southern population was implicated and capable of committing atrocities and outrages. The bloodlust attributed to this Southern sweetheart was also an attack on the womanhood of Southern women. Instead of providing moral support, Southern women were accused of plying promises for war prizes.

That many Confederate soldiers committed such actions is dubious. The doubt even surfaces in print, although the more cautious approach seems to have been in the independent or Democratic Press. One Philadelphia newspaper associated with the Democratic Party, for instance, indicated, “We ought to be very careful lest we exaggerate the accounts of brutality so wretched and debased...[p]robably ninety out of every hundred of the Southern troops would be as much averse to all such brutalities as the soldiers of the North.” However, even this report accepted that atrocities had occurred, adding, “But the fact must ever remain an indelible stigma upon the Southern army at Bull Run.”¹⁹ While it is likely that individual soldiers and groups of

¹⁸ “The Advertiser defend the Barbarities of the Rebels,” *Morning Oregonian (Oregonian)*, May 23, 1862

¹⁹ “Humanity to Prisoners and the Slain,” *Public Ledger*, April 10, 1862

men might have gotten swept away by their own victory and went on to commit “atrocities,” it was unlikely that this was the norm.

As the stories of Confederate atrocities and outrages grew, despite speculation regarding some of the claims, it was a serious enough matter for Congress to investigate and eventually issue a report affirming the allegations. However, despite the incredulousness of these memento-motivated atrocities and outrages, a “...resolution is now before the Senate, instructing the committee on the prosecution of the war, to gather all the facts it can, relative to the atrocities perpetrated by the rebels in defiance of the rules of civilized warfare.”²⁰ Congress’s Joint Committee on the Conduct of War organized a hearing regarding the matter of Rebel atrocities following the First Bull Run. The creation of the committee was the result of the drastic Union losses during 1861, particularly the First Battle of Bull Run and the Battle of Ball’s Bluff in Virginia (October 1861), where Oregon Senator Edward D. Baker—a personal friend of Lincoln—died commanding his regiment, the First California. The purpose of the committee was to investigate the conduct of the war, which meant that they would investigate battlefield defeats by summoning generals and reviewing reports. They also investigated the conditions of soldiers on the front. Naturally, the committee was politically motivated. It was composed of five Republicans and two Democrats. As a result, Democrat generals were targeted more frequently than their Republican counterparts. And as to the matters to be chosen for an inquiry, “[c]ommittee investigations were driven, in part, by allegations published in popular newspapers...”²¹ Since George Washington during the Revolutionary War, American armies answered to civilians. The Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War was formed to investigate matters of the war, and provide explanations, for the northern civilian population.

²⁰ “Our Washington Correspondence,” *Providence Evening Press*, April 5, 1862

²¹ The United States Senate, Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/common/investigations/JointCommittee_ConductofWar.htm

The published report was called “Rebel Barbarities”.²² The stated purpose of the investigation was “...to collect the evidence with regard to the barbarous treatment by the rebels, at Manassas, of the remains of officers and soldiers of the United States killed in battle there”. Numerous witnesses, some of whom had been featured in the newspapers, testified before the committee. Their stories have some common elements. A good deal of the eye witness testimony comes from doctors or pastors. These men are highly esteemed and more likely to be believed. Doctors are also knowledgeable about anatomy, which make them valuable in ascertaining the condition of a body, like which bones are missing. These men found the bodies, but the actual blame for the atrocities was placed on the Confederates by the local Manassas African Americans, none of whom testified before the Committee. These African Americans are never named either, just referred to as a “Negro,” “fugitive slave,” or “colored girl.” The witnesses that testified before the committee cited the African American’s stories as evidence and in detail, but did not remember their names. The use of African American witnesses was necessary in order to have first-hand testimony about the alleged atrocity, but they were also believed to be sympathetic to Northerners. The African American did not have any reason to protect Confederate soldiers. Despite the questionable nature of the second-hand testimony, the committee accepted the evidence.

One of the stories that received considerable coverage in the newspapers involved the search for the bodies of two Rhode Island officers, Colonel Slocum and Major Ballou, of the 2nd Rhode Island Volunteers and was demonstrative of the common themes of the testimony presented to the Committee. Governor William Sprague of Rhode Island also accompanied the search party. The first person to testify before the Committee regarding this story was a doctor, James B. Greeley. It was important that Greeley was a doctor because it added validity to his

²²Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, “Rebel Barbarism,” April 4, 1862.

testimony regarding anatomy. As the party had been digging in the spot where they were told Colonel Slocum was buried, a “colored girl” informed them that “...the Georgia regiment men dug him up some weeks ago, and first cut off his head and then burned his body...” Upon examining the burned remains, Greeley found parts of the femurs, ribs, the pelvis, and of every part of the body but the skull. Fortunately for Colonel Slocum, the Confederates mixed him up with Major Ballou, the true identity of the burned remains.

The Committee, after hearing all the evidence, all of which was testimony, none of it physical evidence, declared the accusations true, that the

...outrages upon the dead will revive the recollections of the cruelties to which savage tribes subject their prisoners...[t]hese disclosures establishing, as they incontestably do, the consistent inhumanity of the rebel leaders, will be read with sorrow and indignation by the people of loyal States. They should inspire these people to renewed exertions to protect our country from the restoration to power of such men.²³

Although the accounts are few and many rely on second-hand knowledge from African Americans in the Manassas area, the Committee found the Confederate soldiers guilty of atrocity. This verdict likely was politically motivated. Foot soldiers had supposedly committed the atrocities, but such actions, according to the Committee, were evidence of the “inhumanity of the rebel leaders.” Such an accusation might have been made as an argument against any reconciliation attempt. If Confederate leaders, most of whom were a part of the United States government prior to secession, were capable of such outrages, they should not be restored to power. The Committee’s Republican majority and verdict made this even more likely.

After the release of the Committee’s report, the findings of the investigation were repeatedly published in various newspapers of the remainder of the spring of 1862. The committee’s described the actions as atrocities and summarized the treatment of some of the

²³ “Rebel Barbarism,” Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War

bodies as general conduct by the Confederate forces. The response of the newspapers was to summarize the reports and reiterate some of the most descriptive of the allegations,

The Committee on the Conduct of the War have completed the examination of witnesses in regard to the alleged atrocities of the rebels at Bull Run. Members of the Committee say it is true that in many cases the graves of our soldiers were opened, and the bones of the dead carried off to be used as trinkets, the trophies for the secession ladies to append to their guard chains. Skulls were also taken for drinking cups. Those of our dead interred by them were placed face down, marred, and in repeated instances buried one across the other.²⁴

Another paper covering the Committee's report said "[t]he barbarities towards our dead are not, it is said, exceeded by anything in history for the last 4000 years."²⁵ The words atrocity and outrage were used again and again. There however, was little commentary on the Committee's findings; they were merely confirming what the newspapers had been publishing for months. But these stories were often just taken verbatim from the nation's big newspapers, most likely because the military campaign season had begun.

Stories such as those spread after the First Bull Run faded as the war progressed, and stories such as these, involving the actions of conventional Confederate troops against (white) Union soldiers were very few. But for the first year of the war, they were headlines of prominent newspapers. The Northern public associated Rebels with atrocities, outrages, barbarism, savagery, and inhumanity. The accounts of Confederate atrocities that circulated prior to the spring of 1862 were validated by the report of Congress's Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. These stories made an impact. In late summer of 1861, Lincoln called for men to serve three-year terms in the army. Such men, willing to devote so much of their time and risk to their lives, demonstrated belief in the cause of the Union, but conversely, it was also an effort to disprove the enemy's cause, that of secession for slavery, a cause with which rebels will defend by committing atrocities and outrages.

²⁴ "Committee; Conduct; Examination," *Vermont Journal*, 4/19/1862

²⁵ "Washington Matters," *Connecticut Courant*, 4/19/1862

Atrocities and Outrages in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania

On several occasions throughout the war, Northern civilians made contact with conventional Confederate forces. Confederates raided and occupied Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, three times, in 1862, 1863, and 1864. Confederate General Robert E. Lee led his army on two invasions in the North, in the fall of 1862 and the summer of 1863, culminating in Antietam and Gettysburg, respectively. All of this occurred after the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War released its report "Rebel Barbarism." However the word atrocity was rarely, if at all, used to describe the actions of the Confederates operating on Northern territory. Although the word outrage was used occasionally in the newspapers, it no longer described violent action against slain soldiers, but instead the violation of individual property rights. Outrage was infrequently used regarding the 1864 retaliation burning of Chambersburg. Campaigning and foraging within enemy territory was a traditional part of conventional warfare. As the war progressed, the Northern public's definition of atrocity and outrage narrowed and conversely, their support in escalating the war continued. The soldiers and the civilians accepted the necessity of hard war. In context, the invasions and occupations of Chambersburg were also part of a larger military action, two of which ended in victories for the Union. These two elements, timing and context, were the reasons that the Confederate actions at Chambersburg were not considered atrocities or outrages

Following his success in pushing back the Union Army in the summer of 1862, commanded by Major General George B. McClellan, General Robert E. Lee led his army on its first invasion of the North. As the Confederate Army neared the Maryland border, south-central Pennsylvania was on high alert. Militia units, commanded by Major General John F. Reynolds, were stationed at Chambersburg, approximately twenty miles north of the Pennsylvania-Maryland border. Reynolds established martial law and stockpiled supplies, via the Cumberland

Valley Railroad, at depots in town. Chambersburg's inhabitants hid their valuable personal possessions, fearing the worst. But these preparations were for naught. McClellan and the Union Army stopped Lee's Army in Maryland. On September 17, the Battle of Antietam remains the bloodiest day in American history, with some 23,000 casualties. It was also considered a strategic victory for the Union Army since Lee withdrew from Union territory back into Virginia. The Northern people breathed a sigh of a relief, but it was premature for the citizens of south-central Pennsylvania and Chambersburg.

After the Battle of Antietam, no army made an attempt to engage the other for the remainder of the fall. The Union Army was settled along the north banks of its namesake, the Potomac. It was well supplied; however, after the fierce fighting of the summer, Lee needed supplies, from food to clothes to arms, to refit his army. His army also needed rest, so Lee developed a plan with a dual purpose. Cavalry general, James Ewell Brown "J. E. B." Stuart was chosen for the assignment, in part because he had experience in riding around the Union Army. His task was to ride north into Pennsylvania and destroy a bridge that was a part of the Cumberland Valley Railroad, lessening the enemy's ability to replenish and recuperate. Stuart was also ordered to capture supplies, rid the countryside of horses, and take government officials as hostages.

Stuart and his cavalrymen rose at 3 a.m. on the morning of October 10, 1862 in the Shenandoah Valley and arrived in Chambersburg after dark. The unsuspecting city leaders had negotiated an unconditional surrender by 8 p.m. "...after assurances for the safety of women and children and the protection of private property..."²⁶ The Confederates then raided the bank and the railroad depots, securing valuable clothes and weapons. The Confederates respected the terms of the surrender and respected the private property of the civilians, and carried out the

²⁶ Ted Alexander, *Southern Revenge!: Civil War History of Chambersburg Pennsylvania* (Chambersburg: Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce, 1989), 57

purpose of their raid: hampering McClellan's ability to supply his army. In his diary entry for October 10, William Heyser of Chambersburg wrote, "This evening [the rebels] entered out town, demanding its surrender. Some 1500-2000 cavalry, with some artillery. They immediately took possession of the bank and telegraph office...[t]hey will be busy stripping our stores and gathering up horses."²⁷ Unfortunately, the railroad bridge that they were instructed to destroy was made of iron, not wood, and the cavalymen lacked explosives. Within twelve hours of arriving in Chambersburg, Stuart and his cavalymen departed.

The Confederate raid caused \$250,000 worth of damage to the Cumberland Valley Railroad and the Federal government. The Federal government owned the captured supplies in the railroad depots, which were burned by the Confederates before they left. Over thirty hostages were taken. These civilians were minor government officials, like the town's postmaster. They were brought to a prison in Richmond and eventually exchanged for civilians held by the Northern government. Around 1200 horses were seized. Stuart's entire raid lasted around three days.²⁸

Despite the unusual direct contact between Northern civilians and Confederate forces, there was little hysteria regarding the raid. In fact, two sub-headlines in one newspaper read, in this order, "The Rebel Raid in Pennsylvania Not Important." "Chambersburg Said To Be In The Enemy's Possession."²⁹ The words "outrage" and "atrocitiy" were never used to describe Stuart's raid. In one article, Pennsylvania's governor, Andrew Gregg Curtin, observed,

To a superficial view the last rebel raid might not seem a very severe matter in a war like the present. It lasted but three days; the rebels stopped long at no one place, avoided Frederick, and every place where there was force enough to bring on even the slightest resistance, and only go back by running faster than our infantry could overtake them. A

²⁷ William Heyser, "Franklin County: Diary of William Heyser (1862 -1863)", October 10, 1862, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-valley?id=FD1004&tag=public&images=images/modeng/F&data=/texts/english/civilwar/diaries&part=0>

²⁸United State Department of War, "The War of the Rebellion: a Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies," vol. 19, pg. 29

²⁹ "The Latest News," *Providence Evening Press*, October 16, 1862

quarter of a million of dollars would probably pay for nearly all the pecuniary damage. If a thousand horses were stolen, worth a hundred dollars a piece, the burnt buildings, stolen stores of shoes and clothing, would make up a sum not much exceeding the rest...so that if the citizens of Pennsylvania were only willing to hold their lives, liberties, and property at the mercy of Southern rebels, matters might be accommodated on not very outrageous terms for the rest.³⁰

Governor Curtin could have been just reassuring his fellow Pennsylvanians. However, it is more likely that by October 1862, the burning of the depots, the loss of federal supplies, and horses was not devastating, when taken into context. Only property had been lost during the Confederates raid on Chambersburg, which was insignificant to the casualties of the Peninsula Campaign in the spring or the Maryland Campaign in the late summer.

Despite the loss of property and the government officials, the raid of the Confederates was viewed as falling within the acceptable conventions of warfare. They had negotiated surrender and, apart from horses, respected private property. They also immediately paroled the wounded Union soldiers, recovering from Antietam, whom they found in the town's care. The Confederates were not accused of any "bayoneting" this time. As the war continued, especially after the hard fighting of the summer of 1862, the Northern public began to narrow their interpretation of "atrocities" and "outrages."

Lee attempted his second and final invasion north the following summer, in 1863. After winning the Battle of Chancellorsville in early May of 1863, he led his army north and for a few weeks occupied south-central Pennsylvania. His purpose was to forage in Northern territory and to win a decisive victory that could sway the public's view about the war. Chambersburg again became a target for Confederates, but instead of twelve hours, the town would be occupied for over two weeks. Lee's second invasion of the North would result in an escalation of the war experience for Chambersburg, for "[d]uring these two weeks before the Battle of Gettysburg, the

³⁰ "Governor Curtin's View of the Rebel Raid," *Public Ledger*, October 20, 1862

grim realities of war came to Franklin County. Merchants were cleaned out by an invading army. Farmers were ‘relieved’ of their harvests and livestock. Chambersburg...would never be the same again.”³¹

On June 15^h, 1863, Confederate Cavalry General Albert G. Jenkins arrived at Chambersburg with 1,500 troops and occupied the town. There was no request for surrender this time. On June 16^h, he spread his men out, scouting for the main body of the Union Army.³² Stores were also ordered to open so his men could buy supplies. The merchants acquiesced and were paid in worthless Confederate bills. At the first signs of Union forces, several buildings in town were taken over to be hospitals. By noon, Jenkins withdrew to Greencastle, further south. Some inexperienced and raw Union soldiers occupied the town then, fortifying its defenses. However, after a skirmish revealed that if the Union forces were to stay they would be surrounded, they were ordered to retreat from Chambersburg. On June 23, Jenkins reoccupied the town. Jenkins then demanded that his soldiers be supplied with provisions. If their demands went unfulfilled, the Confederate troops would be allowed to search for food. The next day, Major General Richard Ewell arrived with his infantry. From the inhabitants of Chambersburg, he also demanded supplies. For example, he demanded 10,000 pairs of horseshoes. Throughout the next week, Lee and other high ranking Confederate generals would pass through Chambersburg, along with tens of thousands of infantrymen.³³ Only at the end of the month, as a battle was developing around Gettysburg, a little over thirty miles away, would the Confederates leave. However, after the battle, the Confederate wagon train of wounded went through Chambersburg, then south through Maryland, and into Virginia. In pursuit, various Union units travelled through and rested at Chambersburg. Spared the battle, Chambersburg suffered, “...the devastation wrought by the tramping of what would amount to more than 100,000 men through

³¹ Alexander, Ted, *Southern Revenge!*, 69

³² U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 26, pg. 211

³³ U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 26, pg. 477

the area left many citizens destitute. Indeed many farmers who had their livestock taken and their crops destroyed would end up leaving for better prospects in the west.”³⁴

The Confederates acted differently during a precise raid and a more long-term invasion and occupation. During the raid, Confederates had fairly specific guidelines when it came to capturing material goods, which in 1862 was only the secondary goal, the first being blowing by the bridge. An invasion and occupation put the civilians and soldiers in direct contact for a longer duration, and as the goal is occupation, soldiers have more idle time, so they have more opportunity to forage. Although similar guidelines were set by the Confederate high command in 1863, they were rarely followed. Prior to his invasion Lee “...issued General Orders No. 72 for the twofold purpose of prohibiting damage or destruction of private property and authorizing only certain officers to seize it...and to pay the market price for whatever they took.”³⁵ What actually happened was nothing like chivalrous Robert E. Lee ordered.

In several entries, William Heyser described the extent of the Confederates acquisition of private property, which violated Lee’s orders and was a marked difference from Stuart’s raid.³⁶ On June 24th, “By now, all of our stores our ransacked...[m]y son’s mill and warehouse suffered much from confiscation for which they gave him \$800.00 in Confederate script.” On June 26th, “Requisitions have been made on all innkeepers for mattresses, blankets, quilts, sheets, etc., for the Rebel sick and wounded. It is expected the like orders will be given to the citizens.” On June 27th,

Every brigade as it passed sent a file of soldiers around to examine the stores and places of business, requiring them to open up...Rev. Schneck was relieved of his gold watch and \$50.00...[r]obberies are now common on the street, particularly where they are unguarded...[t]hey opened up my son William’s store today, and started to help themselves. We are powerless to stop them, and can do nothing but watch and complain

³⁴ Alexander, Ted, *Southern Revenge!*, 85

³⁵ Edwin B. Coddington, *The Gettysburg Campaign: A Study in Command*, (New York: Charles Scibner’s Sons, 1968), 153

³⁶ Heyser, “Franklin County: Diary of William Heyser (1862 -1863), June 24, 26-7, 1863

to the commanding officers. They refer to the same treatment our soldiers gave the Confederacy in Virginia.

Heyser's accounts of the Confederate's actions in Chambersburg documented the escalation of Confederate aggression, when compared to the raid of October 1862. Whereas Stuart's cavalymen limited themselves to the federal supplies in the railroad depot, the infantrymen of 1863 effectively plundered the stores. However, they still respected private property in that they did not raid homes.

Order, predictably, would have been difficult to enforce, especially when compared to the cavalry raid the year before. Stuart commanded 1800 cavalymen, whereas Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was 70,000 strong. Cavalymen were also better equipped than an infantryman, so looting was not as necessary. There was also the scope of time; raids are quicker than invasions of an indefinite duration.

However, what did not differ between how the raid in 182 and the invasion/occupation in 1863 was the lack of the use "atrocitiy" or "outrage" to describe the events. Only in the context of the general plunder of southern Pennsylvania, is the actions of Confederates called an outrage; however, nothing was specific to Chambersburg,

If anything were wanting to unite the loyal hearts of true men in the North, it was the invasion of our own territory. True, the South as well as the North is in a certain sense ours, for over both the Nation claims the right of eminent domain; but the sack and burning of Pennsylvanian cities and hamlets is not merely a recoil of secession upon its inventors, but a new and distinct outrage.³⁷

This article was published on June 18, just as the Confederate army was arriving in Pennsylvania in piecemeal. It was a premature and sensational piece, one meant to inspire patriotism instead of reporting fact. During the actual occupation of Chambersburg or in the aftermath, the words atrocity or outrage were not used. However, in its aftermath, the civilians began to file claims

³⁷ "What does it Mean!," *Daily Eastern Argus (Eastern Argus)*, June 18, 1863

with the federal government for compensation for their losses. Despite the lack of inflaming vocabulary to describe the events, people had still lost material goods and sought some mean to recover a portion of it. Unfortunately, those in 1863 had a hard time with their claims because it was difficult to prove that Confederates had been the transgressors, not the thousands of Union soldiers passing through after Gettysburg.

Additionally, the two Confederate visits to Chambersburg, when taken into context, might also explain the absence of the words “atrocious” or “outrage.” Stuart’s raid, which was limited and within the accepted bounds of warfare, happened less than a month after Antietam, a strategic Union victory, but a battle of devastating cost nonetheless. The experience of Pennsylvanians under occupation was lost after the complete Union victory at Gettysburg. Understandably, the town of Gettysburg suffered more, thousands of wounded and dead on top of property loss, and received more coverage by the papers. Most events surrounding these two battles pale in comparison, especially when comparing property loss to lives lost.

Perhaps the most stunning example of how northern people had come to accept the harder brand of warfare came in 1864 with a more outrageous act taken against the town of Chambersburg. If anything had the potential for being considered an atrocity, it was the burning of the town by Confederate cavalry as a retaliatory measure. The Confederates did not just raid the town or occupy it; they burned it.

In response to Union Major General David Hunter’s actions in the Shenandoah Valley and in Jefferson County, West Virginia, where he burned numerous private properties, Confederate General Jubal Early, “. . . came to the conclusion it was time to open the eyes of the people of the North to this enormity, by an example in the way of retaliation.”³⁸ Early chose General John McCausland to follow through with the plan, demanding 100,000 in gold or

³⁸ Millard K. Bushong, *Old Jube: A Biography of General Jubal A. Early*, 1955

\$500,000 in U.S. currency or the town would be burned. The town chosen was Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.

McCausland and his cavalymen arrived at Chambersburg around dawn on July 30, 1864.³⁹ The demand was presented, but the citizens didn't believe that the Confederates would actually burn the town. Regardless, all the money had been moved from the banks when word of the Confederate raiders arrived. Although McCausland later claimed he gave the civilians as many as six hours to pay the ransom, other eyewitness testimony puts it at less than half that. In addition the burning, there is

“...abundant evidence that chronicles a general disintegration of discipline and an orgy of looting and other misbehavior by the Confederate soldiers...hats, caps, boots, watches, silverware, and everything of value were appropriated from individuals on the street without ceremony...soldiers entered private dwellings prior to setting them on fire and rifled cabinets and bureau drawers in search of money, jewelry, and other valuables.”⁴⁰

In the center of the town, both public and private buildings, those along Market Street and Main (Front) Street, were burned, well over 120 properties lost.⁴¹

However, once more, there was no labelling the burning of Chambersburg as an atrocity or outrage. One article called what occurred an “Outrageous Vandalism” and told of the “horrors” endured by women and children as they watched their homes burn, but the article was part of an aid pitch meant to relieve the devastated town.⁴² The article uses the adjective form of outrage, but it is only used as a part of the title and although what the citizens of Chambersburg experienced was reported, the main drive of the story was to raise money for relief. The focus is less on the barbarism of the Confederates, and more an appeal to other northern civilian's moral decency to help fellow Americans. But again, when taken into context, by the summer of 1864,

³⁹ U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 37, 335

⁴⁰ Alexander, Ted, *Southern Revenge!*, 122

⁴¹ U.S. War Dept., *The War of the Rebellion*, vol. 37, 535

⁴² “Glorious News From Grant: The Siege of Petersburg Opened in Earnest. A Rebel Battery of,” *Hartford Daily Courant*, August 1, 1864

all Confederate forces were being pushed back and Early's advances that summer were the last great offensives of Confederate armies. Additionally, after three years of war, and the progression from a limited, reconciliatory effort to hard war, there were no doubts regarding the defining Southerners as the enemy.

Throughout the war, Chambersburg was the target for Confederate plundering. But conventional Confederate forces did not warrant the label of "atrocious" or "outrage" because each progressive offense was in par with the heightened dedication on both sides to the principal of hard war.

Throughout the war, there is a general progression in the newspapers, and therefore Northern public perception, about what event constituted the use of the word atrocious or outrage. In 1861, the unanticipated loss at the First Battle of Bull Run and the realization that reconciliation would be more difficult than had been expected, led to sensational stories of Confederates committing heinous atrocities and outrages on wounded, dying, and dead Union soldiers left behind on the field. The newspapers' colorful articles were later validated when the Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of War investigated the allegations and proved them to be true in the spring of 1862. With their stories, the newspapers had transformed the Southerners into the enemy, capable of atrocious and outrage. When Congress confirmed this image of the Southerners, it was a shift from the strategy of reconciliation to that of pragmatism. The Northern leadership, soldier, and civilians progressively accepted and supported hard war, the definition of military necessity expanding with time as the goal of unconditional surrender loomed nearer. This acceptance of hard war was seen in the response of the conventional Confederate forces actions in Chambersburg. Chambersburg suffered a raid, invasion/occupation, and a burning at the hands of the Confederates. Suffered in this order, as the acceptance of hard war grew stronger with time, what happened in Chambersburg was never decried as an atrocious or an

outrage in northern newspapers. What was labelled an atrocity or outrage, committed by conventional Confederate forces, was subject to the progression of the acceptance of the policy of hard war.

Chapter 2

Atrocities Committed by Unconventional Confederate Forces

Throughout the Civil War, the Confederacy's practice of unconventional warfare was passionately decried by the Northern public. However, as with the previous chapter discussing conventional warfare, the Northern public proved itself more discerning. The alleged treatment of wounded, dying, and dead after First Bull Run was labeled an "atrocious." But with time, the public perception evolved and refined its definition of these acts. As they had done between First Bull Run and the Confederate aggressions on Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, northerners demonstrated a learning curve in interpreting the activities of irregulars. Some irregulars, such as Virginian partisan John Singleton Mosby, though a nuisance, operated with a tolerable degree of military purpose. The Northern public reserved its worst assessment for irregulars such as the guerrillas of Missouri, who were seen as nothing more than murderers. The Union leadership adopted a severe punishment for those guerrillas captured, no prisoners and swift execution, measures the Northern public condoned. The Northern public's differing viewpoints on the two types of unconventional forces was based on their objective, whether it was to cause terror or scout, and was this objective carried out with a semblance of military discipline, whether or not it was a lawless band or cavalymen.

Unconventional Warfare is routinely a part of civil wars, both past and present. Additionally, early Americans practiced irregular warfare, fighting the British in the Southern colonies during the American Revolution. While the Confederacy organized soldiers into armies to meet their Union counterparts on the battlefield, the government also created and condoned the use and methods of irregulars. Unconventional or Irregular Warfare occurs when soldiers operate

unofficially, outside the military hierarchy and structure and not held to the standard rules of war. This usually leads to heightened suffering and bloodshed, especially in regards to civilians. With less manpower than the Union, in the early years of the war, the Confederacy relied on irregulars and both the Union Army and the Northern civilians had to fight and fathom the complexities unconventional warfare created.

Historian Michael Fellman's publication, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*, renewed interest on unconventional warfare during the Civil War, especially in Missouri.⁴³ *Inside War* argues that Missouri fought its own unique civil war, where ordinary citizens were able to act out their prejudices, grudges, and beliefs in the most violent way possible, and that the regular Union Army, trying to restore order, contributed to the escalation in chaos. More recently, Daniel Sutherland chronicles a history of guerrilla warfare during the Civil War in Missouri and the lower Midwest, describing the situation in the Civil War at a given time to explain the accompanying unconventional warfare.⁴⁴ While both of these works offer the views of the military, irregulars, politicians, and civilians within the affected zones, they only briefly touch upon the Northern public's general perception of unconventional warfare. This chapter will explore how the Northern public, through newspapers, interpreted irregular warfare, tying into the larger themes of this thesis, the Northern peoples' developing sense of what was legitimate within their perceived bounds of warfare. With the Northern public's ability to distinguish and differentiate between conventional soldiers and irregulars, as well as varying types of unconventional forces, they demonstrate a distinct awareness of the military situation that has yet to be attributed to them.

⁴³ Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*. (New York: Oxford UP, 1989).

⁴⁴ Daniel E. Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 2009).

Two of the most common terms to describe irregular soldiers are partisan and guerrilla. Occasionally used interchangeably, the two terms designate two different groups of irregulars. The word partisan is of French origin. Partisans are primarily resistance fighters who operate behind enemy lines, gathering information and practicing sabotage (the “Resistance” in German-occupied France during the World War II). They also coordinated with the conventional army. The term guerrilla is Spanish and means “little war,” and originated from the French occupation of Spain in the early nineteenth century. Guerrillas wage war against a larger force and sympathetic civilians with the objective of persuading their enemy to abandon their efforts (the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War). They are less likely to wear uniforms and are also known to blend into civilian populations between military actions. The Confederacy employed both guerrillas and partisans during the war, by either legislating their creation and use, as with the partisans, or, as with the guerrillas, attempting to coordinate with them during northern offensives or by tacitly condoning their practices by not distancing themselves from the violence. The Northern public believed that all irregular warfare had Richmond’s approval, but were able to distinguish between the necessities of the two. The use of the disciplined partisans was tolerable, while Missouri guerrillas became the perpetrators of “atrocities” during the war’s middle years.

The Confederacy also practiced unconventional warfare on the high seas. Confederate President Jefferson Davis authorized the issuing of letters of marque to privateers, who had the dual purpose of capturing Northern merchant vessels as well as disrupting the Union Navy to allow merchants sympathetic to the South to run the blockade.⁴⁵ The Confederacy reasoned that because the Union had such tremendous naval power and used it to blockade the South without

⁴⁵ Yale Law School, Lillian Goldman Law Library, The Avalon Project, Confederate States of America – Proclamation of April 17, 1861, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/csa_p041761.asp

recognizing its sovereignty, the Confederacy could use of privateers.⁴⁶ In response to Davis's issuance of letters of marque, Abraham Lincoln countered that any privateer that was captured by the Union would be tried as a pirate. A similar mandate would be established regarding the Southern-sympathetic in Missouri; capture meant designation as a guerrilla and execution. Despite the Union's belief in the illegality of the privateer activity and Davis's power to authorize it, the issue of privateers faded as the blockade strengthened and the Union and Confederacy pitched their battles on land. For the most part, the majority of the authorized privateers were more interested in capturing merchant ships up around New England than serving as a nuisance to the Union Navy along the Southern coastline. This upset businessmen in New England greatly, who pressured the United States Department of the Navy, "Mr. Welles replies that the Navy Department has done all it could do under the circumstances to capture the privateers and is now doing all it can; but the country looks upon the matter in a very different light. The Department has no swift steamers building and has not half a dozen afloat fit for the business of capturing the swift privateers..."⁴⁷ Although the privateers were commissioned to act as a quasi-navy for the Confederacy, in reality the privateers preyed on unarmed merchant vessels far from the Southern coast. Those most affected by the privateers, the merchants losing their ships and precious cargo, were more likely to complain about the Union Navy's inability to protect their vessels, and less about the privateers.

The Union Army's High Command differentiated between partisans and guerrillas and as a result, early on in the war, developed narrow definitions and regulations on how Union authorities should treat them. Columbia law professor, Francis Lieber highlighted the distinction

⁴⁶ James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Confederacy, Including The Diplomatic Correspondence 1861 – 1865*, (Nashville: United States Publishing Company, 1906), <https://archive.org/details/compilationofmes01conf>, 283

⁴⁷ "Effect of Privateers Upon Commerce," *Daily Eastern Argus*, November 23, 1863

in a pamphlet, *Guerrilla Parties Considered with Reference to the Laws and Usages of War*.⁴⁸ He described partisans as essentially regular soldiers given specific irregular objectives. These disciplined units would raid enemy territory either to collect information or to sabotage military efforts (like burning a bridge or disrupting supply lines) and then return to their own lines.

However, Lieber defined guerrillas as selfish, greedy, and ruthless, as

...self-constituted sets of armed men, in times of war, who form no integrant part of the organized army, do not stand on the regular pay-roll of the army, or are paid at all, take up arms and lay them down at intervals, and carry on petty war (guerrilla) chiefly by raids, extortion, destruction, and massacre and who cannot encumber themselves with many prisoners, and will therefore generally give not quarter.⁴⁹

Lieber's recommendation for handling these men when they came within reach of the Union Army, distributed as General Orders No. 100, was the immediate execution of guerrillas as robbers or pirates.

The Confederacy willingly used both types of forces and sought to legitimize and standardize the formation and activities of its irregulars. On April 21, 1862, the Confederate Congress passed the Partisan Ranger Act. The legislation did not distinguish between guerrillas and partisans, but instead gave President Jefferson Davis the authority to commission officers for irregular units. The units of these commissioned officers were "...entitled to the same pay, rations, and quarters during their term of service, and be subject to the same regulations as other soldiers."⁵⁰ The act was highly controversial, and top tier Confederate Officers, such as General Robert E. Lee, were skeptical about whether the irregular units would answer to conventional military authorities or that the relaxed discipline offered to irregular soldiers would lure potential recruits away from the Confederacy's conventional forces.

⁴⁸ *Guerrilla Parties Considered with Reference to the Laws and Usages of War*, *Official Records*, ser. 2, vol. 5: 671-82

⁴⁹ General Orders, No. 100, *Official Records*, ser. 2, vol. 5: 676

⁵⁰ "An Act to Organize Bands of Partisan Rangers," *Military Laws of the Confederate States*, April 21, 1862, 65

These fears became reality. In Missouri, far from Richmond, guerrillas fought for the Confederacy in name only, and the state slowly spiraled into chaos. The guerrillas would neither coordinate with the conventional Confederate forces nor take orders from the Confederate authorities. However, for two years, the Confederacy gave tacit approval to the bloody practices of the Missouri guerrillas by not objecting to them. In February 1864, the Confederate Congress repealed the Partisan Ranger Act, but allowed the continued existence of the more disciplined unit of Virginia Partisan, John Singleton Mosby.⁵¹

Although the Confederacy tolerated the use of both partisans and guerrillas, the Northern public perception of irregular warfare was very similar to that held by the Union high command. Throughout the war, the Northern newspapers decried the actions of guerrillas in Missouri, like William Quantrill and William “Bloody Bill” Anderson, as “atrocities” and “outrages.” Quantrill, Anderson, and other guerrillas were Confederate sympathizers who terrorized Missourians and violently persecuted the Unionists of the state. Meanwhile, the practices of Partisan Rangers, like cavalymen John Singleton Mosby, who operated in western Virginia, while upsetting, did not warrant the definition of “atrocities” or “outrages.” Partisans in Virginia were disliked, but they operated with a military purpose, whereas the guerrillas in Missouri who practiced terror and gratuitous violence were abhorred by Northern civilians. Additionally, the vocabulary appearing in Northern newspapers when reporting the actions of partisans and guerrillas also drew distinctions between various kinds of irregular activity. Typically, the word “rebel” was substituted for the “Confederate”. This was done simply because the former is shorter and the two were synonymous. Used in an article concerning military action, “rebel” referred to a Confederate soldier. And although an irregular, John Singleton Mosby was more likely to be described as a “rebel” than the more accurate term “partisan.” However, this was not

⁵¹ Sutherland, *A Savage Conflict*, 100

the case in regards to guerrillas in Missouri. Almost always, the guerrilla was called a guerrilla. By doing so, the Northern newspapers were separating the rebel and the soldier from the guerrilla. Subtly implying such furthers the reasoning that a guerrilla was wholly different, and worse, than soldiers, both conventional and unconventional.

As with conventional warfare, the Northern perception of unconventional warfare was varied and their viewpoint was demonstrated by the vocabulary within Northern newspaper articles. The activities of Partisans like Mosby, which were sanctioned and had strictly military objectives and were carried out by soldiers adhering to a recognizable and acceptable military framework, were disliked because they were committed by the enemy, but were deemed as falling within the boundaries of popular conceptions of legal warfare. However, the guerrillas in Missouri committed “atrocities” and “outrages” throughout the war; they were perceived as conducting savage chaos, operating with no valid military purpose.

Guerrilla Warfare in Missouri

Far from Washington, D.C., and Richmond, the state of Missouri was the site of some of the most violent and heinous actions against both soldiers and civilians of the war. A large part of the depravity can be attributed to Missourians sympathetic to the South and organized into loose guerrilla parties. However, despite the official regulations on how to deal with guerrillas and civilians sympathetic to them, Union soldiers and civilians adapted to their environment and similarly partook in the gratuitous violence. Despite recognizing the problem of irregulars early on in the war, and moving against these brigands with military force and trials before military commissions, the Union Army was slow to quell the guerrilla violence that defined the Civil War for Missouri.

Missouri was one of the four slave states that remained in the Union. As a slave state, Missouri was comprised of competing economic and social groups. Slaveholders felt threatened as the war increasingly raised the issue of slavery and its abolition. Scholars have found that a

majority of guerrillas were the sons of slaveholders whose future inheritance and prosperity was dependent upon slavery.⁵² This, combined with youth and a desire to represent the ideals of masculinity, led the young men to form guerrilla parties to prey on unsuspecting Union soldiers and terrorize civilian Unionists throughout the state.⁵³ What set Missouri guerrillas apart from their eastern irregular counterparts, the Partisans, was their practice of targeting civilians and their fluid movement from armed combatant to civilian life. Missouri guerrillas were also described as more violent and less honorable than Partisans, despite the dislike of unconventional warfare in general. Guerrillas were described as murderers, robbers, barbarians, fiends, savages and were capable for all sorts of deplorable actions. For example, in April of 1863, a steamer, *the Sam Gaty*, was captured on the Missouri River by guerrillas, robbed and murdered those on board. Newspapers often used violently charged words when reporting on guerrillas. For example, “As soon as the party got aboard, the commander gave the order for the slaughter, and it commenced...[b]ut the most revolting feature of the whole affair was the ordering of twenty negroes ashore in a line, and the deliberate shooting of them all, one at a time, one of the rebels holding a lantern in the face of each victim, while the others shot him.”⁵⁴ Another article provided a similar account:

He gave the command, and the work of murder commenced...[t]hey first killed Geo. Meyer by shooting him in the back...[t]he cowardly butchers next blowed out the brains of Wm. Henry...[t]he most revolting act in the bloody drama was the ordering ashore of 20 negroes, drawing them up in line, one man holding a lantern up by the side of their faces, while the murderers shot them, one by one through the head. This inhuman butchery was within three yards of the boat. One negro alone of all that were shot is alive...[w]hen the guerrillas dew their revolvers on the negroes as they stood in line, the women on the boats screamed and cried, and begged them not to kill them, but the work of death went on.⁵⁵

⁵² Mark W. Geiger, *Financial Fraud and Guerrilla Violence in Missouri's Civil War, 1861 – 1865*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2010), 101

⁵³ Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*, corresponding chapters

⁵⁴ “Rebel Atrocities,” *New Haven Palladium*, April 9, 1863

⁵⁵ “The Sam Gady Butchery. Terrible Guerrilla Atrocity. Scenes of Murder and Plunder.” *Plain Dealer*, April 7, 1863

The newspapers, apart from the use of the word “command,” did not liken the guerrillas to soldiers. Additionally, the word “rebel,” was not used to describe the guerrillas. The different degree in identification proved that the guerrillas did not warrant the designation of a soldier. Whereas soldiers fought soldiers on battlefields, guerrillas made spectacles out of death, murdering civilian men needlessly in front of women. Their objective was not simply to win against an enemy, but to terrorize a population. Continuously, newspapers use the words atrocity, butchery, plunder, and murder to report on guerrilla activity in Missouri.

The inflammatory language used in the newspapers to describe guerilla activity generally was extended to reporting the activities of individual guerrilla leaders. Some of the most infamous and ferocious of these were William Quantrill and William “Bloody Bill” Anderson. Quantrill was an Ohio native who travelled extensively before the war. He started as a school teacher, but the meager wages to be earned led him to find other temporary menial jobs, where he either slacked off or gambled his money away as soon as it was in his hands. He eventually settled in Lawrence, Kansas and made a career out of catching runaway slaves for Missourians and his political gradually became staunchly pro-slavery. He later joined some Border Ruffians, men who would cross the Missouri border into Kansas and harass the citizens or vote illegally to keep Kansas from becoming a free state. When the war broke out, he went to Texas and while there, he met some Cherokee Indians, where it is speculated that he learned guerrilla tactics. Quantrill had enlisted in Texas, but he deserted in order to return to raise his own army.⁵⁶ His first followers and his inner circle included Anderson and the Frank and Jesse James, two brothers who organized a gang of robbers after the war. Quantrill used his guerrilla career as continuation of his Border Ruffian past and began a campaign of terror. Instead of guarding pro-

⁵⁶ Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*, 25, 41

slavery farmers from Jayhawkers as a military force, he went on the offensive and subjected Missouri and Kansas to terror.

Quantrill and his men marauded through the countryside with no true military objective. Their purpose was to plunder and terrorize. When they came to a Union farm or town, they demanded money. But it did not matter whether or not the ransom was paid, there would still be bloodshed. To report the guerrilla violence, newspapers relied on provocative language, like “murder” or “butchery,” while at the same time, using a narrative format, casting the guerrillas as the villains. For example, Quantrill and his men raided a town in Kansas and the newspaper reported, “Quantrill, with two hundred and thirty men, dashed into and took possession of Olathe...[f]rom that time until he left, at an early hour in the morning, he and his men were engaged in the work of murder, plunder, and devastation.” After killing several men for “resistance,” pillaging private homes, and trampling the Union flag, Quantrill, “...said when he left that he was going to Paola, and that he should not rest until he had laid the border in ruins.”⁵⁷ The newspapers had a prescribed way of describing guerrilla action, using charged vocabulary and narratives. Additionally, newspapers would paraphrase what the guerrillas would say or make claims of their own, all while using a negative non-military wording. After the town of Lamar, Missouri was burned by Quantrill, one newspaper declared, “That desperado is doing more mischief in Western Missouri and Eastern Texas than all the balance of the rebels combined.”⁵⁸ Quantrill was labelled with “desperado,” a murderer and robber, not a soldier. The Northern perceived guerrillas as self-satisfying and violent bands, not as soldiers, and as such, used inflaming rhetoric and narratives to describe their inhuman actions, different from the reports on conventional Confederate forces.

⁵⁷ “Another Raid in Kansas – The Town of Olathe Sacked – Quantrill in the Field Again,” *Plain Dealer*, September 17, 1862

⁵⁸ “Lamar Burned,” *Weekly Champion Press*, November 11, 1862

Although Quantrill was one of the earliest guerrilla leaders, forming his band at the end of 1861, his infamy and thirst for bloodshed was soon eclipsed by one of his subordinates, William Anderson. “Bloody Bill” became an independent leader after falling out with Quantrill during a winter sojourn in Texas in 1863 and would leave his own legacy of terror.

Anderson hailed from Kentucky, but his family moved to Missouri, and later Kansas, when he was a child. His family did not own any slaves, but considered themselves pro-slavery. As an adult, Anderson began to trade horses, but when the war broke out and the demand for horses skyrocketed, he began stealing horses. The authorities eventually put out a warrant for his arrest, and when the judge, Arthur Baker, a former friend and accomplice, and the constable went to Anderson’s father’s house to arrest the thief, his father resisted and was fatally shot. Anderson fled to Missouri where he continued to steal and eventually returned home to lure the judge into a trap where Baker was murdered. Afterward, Anderson became a guerrilla, although he was sometimes indiscriminate about the political position of his victims, and in early 1863, he joined Quantrill’s raiders.⁵⁹ Anderson published his own position in one of his letters, “I have killed many. I am a guerrilla. I have never belonged to the Confederate Army, nor do my men.”⁶⁰

Anderson later acquired the nickname “Bloody Bill,” for committing particularly violent murders and mutilations. The best example of Anderson’s bloodlust was the Centralia Massacre on September 27, 1864. Outside of Centralia, Missouri, a train was stopped and bordered by Anderson and seventy of his followers. On board were twenty-three Union soldiers on furlough, making their way home. Anderson ordered their sergeant forward. He was captured so he could be traded for one of Anderson’s guerrillas. The rest of the soldiers were stripped, shot, mutilated, and scalped. The newspapers decried this atrocity; if Quantrill was a murderer and a plunderer,

⁵⁹ Aaron Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 2012), 71

⁶⁰ Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*, 136

Anderson was a downright fiend. The narrative, relying on eyewitness testimony, reporting succeeded in portraying Anderson as a coldblooded villain:

As soon as the train stopped, Anderson walked to the platform and ordered the passengers to march out...[H]e ordered the citizens – men, women and children – to march in one direction where they were formed in lines two deep, and those dressed as in soldiers clothes were marched in an opposite direction. In getting off the platform, two soldiers hung back and talked against obeying orders. They were shot by Anderson and tumbled off between the cars...Anderson walked up to them and thus addressed them: “You Federals have just killed six of my soldiers, scalped them, and left them on the prairie. I am too honorable a man to permit any man to be scalped, but I will show you that I kill men with as much rapidity and skill as anybody. From this time forward I ask no quarter... You are all to be killed and sent to hell...” A line of bushwackers, with revolvers, were then drawn up before the soldiers, who cried and begged for their lives, but every man was shot.⁶¹

Like most guerrillas, Anderson made a spectacle of death. However, the newspaper reporters also contributed to this image by going beyond reporting a series of events, but by distributing the facts as a narrative, using inflammatory language and citing Anderson from the paraphrasing of witnesses. Anderson made a speech, accusing the soldiers of a crime that they could not have committed since they were in Atlanta. He then had the soldiers murdered as the civilians stood nearby. When the guerrillas searched the civilians for valuables, Anderson kills anyone who tried to hide something. Also, Anderson not only killed, but scalped his victims. Anderson and his men are reported to have worn the scalps on their saddles and in a society whose history and frontiers were filled with Native American violence, such a scene would have provoked a vivid and very real image. The newspapers continually use words such as “cold blooded,” “mutilated,” and “massacre” to describe Anderson’s activities.

The articles in newspapers were demonstrative of the Northern public perception regarding the conduct of warfare. Through a blunt narrative, descriptors that labelled guerrillas as villains, and the repeated motif of the guerrilla as a criminal, not a soldier, represented the

⁶¹ “The Centralia Massacre More of the Centralia Affair-Statement of an Eye Witness-Horrible Details,” *Sandusky Register*, October 11, 1864

Northern perception of guerrilla warfare in Missouri. What the Missouri guerrillas were doing, their methods, unreasonable violence, and objective-- sheer terror and profit-- put this type of irregular beyond the conceivably tolerable. Another cause for concern was the guerrilla refusal to respect the line between combatant and civilian. The largest attack on a civilian population and the greatest number of civilian casualties in a single instance of the Civil War would be a guerrilla raid on a Union town.

The Lawrence Massacre

The most infamous atrocity carried out by the guerrillas during the Civil War was Quantrill's night raid on Lawrence, Kansas on August 21, 1863. Known as the Lawrence Massacre, Quantrill, along with Anderson and three to four hundred other men, crossed the border and killed around 170 civilian men and boys. The guerrilla claimed that the attack was retribution for a collapse of a woman's prison, which left one of Anderson's sisters dead and another injured.⁶² The survivors of the attack fled to Leavenworth, Kansas and the nearby by Army post, Fort Leavenworth. The guerrillas had robbed the citizens, looted the residences, and burned the town. The first articles merely reported the narrative,

A list of killed and wounded, as far as ascertained numbered some one hundred and eighty, the majority of whom were instantly killed...The houses that remain standing are filled with the killed and wounded, who belong to all classes of society...From the ruins of the burned houses the charred remains of victims are constantly found...Many who were killed instantly were in their own houses, with their wives and children clinging to them, while the murders planted pistols at their breasts and shot them down.⁶³

After the initial facts were reported, the newspapers then switched to the usual use of guerrilla vocabulary, "...a formidable band of mounted guerrillas...stolen therewith at nightfall across the boundary of Kansas, so as to reach just before daybreak, the unarmed and unsuspecting city of Lawrence, and there burned and butchered to their hearts content...it was a surprise to the

⁶² Astor, *Rebels on the Border: Civil War, Emancipation, and the Reconstruction of Kentucky and Missouri*, 115

⁶³ "The Guerilla Quantrell with 800 Men Invades Kansas. Lawrence, Kansas, Burned Nearly Two Hundred," *Connecticut Courant*, August 29, 1863

helpless city.”⁶⁴ In another article, the same tone was utilized, “The city was entirely unprotected; the citizens were taken by surprise, unable to make resistance, and were murdered indiscriminately. The city was sacked and burned...”⁶⁵ The newspapers portrayed the attack on Lawrence as completely unpredictable and unwarranted. And while the savagery of the raid was extreme and unexpected, a raid on the hotbed of Kansas anti-slavery was always a possibility, especially because guerrilla leaders such as Quantrill and Anderson harbored an acute hatred of the city on account of their past as Border Ruffians. Even the citizens of Lawrence expected such. For a time, they had organized the male citizens into militia as a precaution against the threat of a guerrilla raid. However, by the time Quantrill and his men crossed the border, the units had been disbanded due to the lack of guerrilla activity. It was likely that the guerrillas would attempt an offensive against Lawrence; it was an anti-slavery hub both before the war and during and many of the guerrillas had been Border Ruffians during Kansas’s statehood process. The Lawrence Massacre was not a selective military strike. It was used by the guerrillas to settle personal scores.

The Lawrence Massacre was a turning point regarding the Union’s fight against the Southern sympathetic guerrillas. Historian Daniel Sutherland argues,

Nothing so chillingly brutal had yet marred the war, but the Lawrence raid was no aberration. By August 1863, a cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation had deadened human sympathies and heightened tolerance for death and rapine... Efforts to explain or apologize for the brutality came less often, and where guerrilla war was concerned, an unsettling degree of outlawry came to dominate.⁶⁶

One of the ways in which the Union Army responded to the raid on Lawrence was to issue General Orders No. 11.⁶⁷ This military order forced the relocation of all citizens, Unionist or not, from five counties along the Missouri/Kansas border. These counties were a hotbed of

⁶⁴ “The Sack of Lawrence,” *Weekly Champion and Press*, September 9, 1863

⁶⁵ “By Continental Telegraph. Dates To August 27,” *California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences*, August 28, 1863

⁶⁶ Sutherland, *Savage Conflict*, 193

⁶⁷ Albert Castel, “Order No. 11 and the Civil War on the Border”

Confederate sympathy and had provided aid to the guerrillas, serving as a staging point for the raid on Lawrence. Accordingly, the orders also designated special considerations for those who swore loyalty to the Union satisfactorily, such as relocating to a nearby military station instead of vacating the county completely.⁶⁸ Additionally, all grain and hay was to be brought within reach of the Union military as well. The guerrillas were dependent upon civilian support and supplies in order to operate and the Union hoped that by denying the aid to the guerrillas, it would curtail further devastating raids like the Lawrence Massacre.

Overall, as the war progressed, and the Union population, military and civilian alike, became increasingly more tolerant of hard war and simultaneously desensitized to violence, with the exception of the gratuitous and senseless violence of the guerrillas in Missouri. Their actions were never deemed reasonable, even as the war progressed from a limited war to a hard war. In Missouri, the last year of the war saw a decrease in guerrilla activity as it became clearer that the Confederacy was slowly crumbling, but those still dedicated continued their efforts more desperately than ever. However, on October 26, 1864, one guerrilla, the infamous Bloody Bill Anderson met his end; he was shot behind the ear during a charge on Union forces assigned to hunt him down. His body and all his accrements were put on display. The death image of Anderson has him holding a gun in each hand, hair wild, but eyes shut, mouth set in a grim grin. His body was put on display in a courthouse and the photograph was taken as a trophy, for “[r]evenge included shared exhalation in looking upon the bloody body of the fallen enemy. It was pleasurable to see the corpse of your formerly dreaded foe.”⁶⁹ The newspapers reported his death with the narrative format typical of guerrilla reporting,

At the time he was killed, Anderson was riding a handsome and steely gray mare, having the bridle “ornamented” with human scalp on each side of the brow head! At the moment he met the end of his career. He was making a charge on the militia attacking, himself

⁶⁸ “The Raid in Kansas-Retaliatio[n],” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, August 27, 1863

⁶⁹ Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri during the American Civil War*, 186

and his men dashing at full speed and holding the reins of his bridle between his teeth and a loaded revolver in each hand...⁷⁰

The way in which the Northern newspapers reported the demise of the guerrillas was indicative of their attitude toward these irregulars. Part of Anderson's justification for his behavior was the deaths of his own family, but the newspapers dismiss this, even in his obituary, "...Anderson gave us justification for his atrocities, this violent ending of all the members of his family. Whether these statements are true or false, one thing is certain – Bill Anderson's career is at an end."⁷¹ Even in death, Anderson was still villainized. He and the other guerrillas represented a descent into chaos that the Northern public was never willing to entertain. Missouri was beyond the boundaries and protections of legitimate war.

John Singleton Mosby and his Partisan Rangers

In his post-war memoir, former Union general and American president, Ulysses S. Grant, praised the Civil War service of his former enemy, Confederate Partisan leader, Colonel John Singleton Mosby, "There were probably but a few men in the South who could have commanded successfully a separate detachment in the rear of an opposition army, and so near the border hostilities, as long as he did without losing his entire command."⁷² Nicknamed the "Grey Ghost of the Confederacy," Mosby and his partisans operated in Northern Central Virginia, harassing the conventional Union forces. Within "Mosby's Confederacy," the partisans would scout Union positions, conducted sabotage, and captured enemy forces and supplies. Their plunder was divided amongst themselves, but the partisans gained a reputation for fair treatment of their Union prisoners and limiting their aggressions to Union combatants. Mosby, while designated an irregular, still reported to Confederate cavalryman, J. E. B. Stuart and his commanding officer,

⁷⁰ "Bill Anderson the Guerrilla," *New London Daily Chronicle*, November 12, 1864

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Grant, Ulysses S. *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, 1885-6. Despite having ordered the capture of Mosby during the war (OR. Series 1, vol. 43), in 1867, Grant offered Mosby pardon; although he had previously refused and General Henry Halleck was opposed. As a result, Mosby became a Republican and enjoyed a prosperous career as a result of his loyalty.

Robert E. Lee. Additionally, when in combat, the partisans behaved as the conventional cavalry. The fundamentally military way in which Mosby conducted his force led to more favorable perception by the Northern public. Regarding Missouri guerrillas, the only objective that could be interpreted from their criminal actions was terror and greed. In contrast, Mosby restraint and discipline led the Northern public to regard him as a soldier, not a criminal. The stark differences between the conduct of Mosby's Partisans and the Missouri guerrillas demonstrated the guidelines to distinguishing the two categories of unconventional forces,

[f]or Mosby the "guerrilla," called so by scores of contemporaries and reinforced over a century of historical studies, was no guerrilla at all, but the archetype of a partisan leader adroitly described by both Jomini and Clausewitz. Mosby and his companions, unlike the irregular companies prowling the northern Appalachians of western Virginia, were not proto-terrorists or forerunners of the armies of Mao Tse-tung or Ho Chi Minh. Instead, Mosby was a product of nineteenth-century military theory and antebellum Virginia culture, conducting the types of irregular warfare considered acceptable to the combatant powers of the time...⁷³

Despite the Northern newspapers tendency to use the labels "guerrilla" and "partisan" interchangeably, during the Civil War, there was also the ability to discern the different categories of Confederate irregulars, a recognition that Mosby represented a much different, more acceptable figure from the irregulars in Missouri. Unlike the plundering, murdering guerrillas of Missouri, Mosby is portrayed as military minded and virtuous, as a gentlemen and a soldier.

Mosby has inherited a legacy of a romantic cavalier. He and his small band of men, most of who belonged to the privileged classes of Southern society, conducted themselves with discipline and maintained a perceivable decorum of chivalry. In comparison to Quantrill and Anderson, the Northern newspapers utilized more favorable descriptors and reported Mosby's military operations not as criminal, but as successes and adventures. In one article reporting on Mosby's military activities, he and his men are described as laudable underdogs, "small in numbers, but made up in quickness of manoeuvre what it lacked in that respect. Of the most

⁷³ Robert R. Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861 – 1865*, 73

successful of Mosby's many dashing expeditions was the one made into Fairfax Court House during March last, on which occasion he captured General Stoughton while surrounded by his forces."⁷⁴ In another article, describing the overall situation of the Army of the Potomac, it was reported that "Mosby made a dashing guerrilla raid between our army and Washington on Saturday night."⁷⁵ The use of the word "dashing" portrayed Mosby as adventurous, romantic, confident, and attractive. "Dashing" should conflict with the following two words, "guerrilla raid," but the preface of "dashing," diminishes the negating factor. It serves as a sharp contrast with the articles reporting on guerrilla raids in Missouri, where there was no mention of "dashing," and "guerrilla raid" was combined with "butchery" and "plunder." The change in vocabulary was indicative of the Northern public's perception of Mosby. He was not simply a criminal, as were the Missouri guerrillas. Another descriptor that distinguished Mosby from his guerrilla counterparts was the nickname he received, which was used by both the Northern and Southern presses. Whereas Anderson was designated "Bloody Bill" for his fondness of excessive violence, Mosby became the "Gray Ghost." The title simultaneously categorized him as a Confederate and harkened to his ability to move and strike fast and unseen. In comparison, the venerated Robert E. Lee was nicknamed the "Gray Fox," for his ability to outmaneuver his army, pitted against his larger and slower counterpart, the Army of the Potomac. Both Mosby and Lee's nicknames demonstrate the military respect they earned, despite the Union Army's suffering from their frustrating tactics. Articles revealed that the Northern newspapers viewed Mosby more as a virtuous cavalryman not as a depraved guerrilla.

One of the ways in which the North qualified Mosby was his prewar background. In Missouri, the irregulars were smalltime farmers and former Border Ruffians. In contrast, Mosby was from a far more respectable and affluent socioeconomic background. Mosby grew up in

⁷⁴ "Mosby, the Guerrilla Chief," *Portland Daily Advertiser*, September 17, 1863

⁷⁵ "Evening News. From the Army of the Potomac," *Daily Eastern Argus*, October 20, 1863

Virginia on a small farm with slaves. He attended good schools, most notably the University of Virginia. Eventually, he passed the bar in Virginia and became a lawyer, establishing himself firmly in a professional middle class. He married into a well-connected political family from Kentucky.⁷⁶ The obvious respectability of Mosby's antebellum life translated into his Civil War service; there are numerous references to Mosby's prewar profession as a lawyer, and how his overall continence seemed to portray this. After serving as an enlisted man for the Battle of First Bull Run in July of 1861, his talents were appreciated by J. E. B. Stuart, and Mosby received a cavalry commission. Throughout 1862, Mosby established himself as an excellent scout, providing Stuart and Lee with invaluable intelligence information. In early 1863, Mosby received was promoted to captain and was authorized to hand-select choice cavalymen to form his Partisan Rangers. Although he still drew from the Confederate payroll and sent information along to the Confederate High Command, he became an irregular. Prior to the Civil War, both Quantrill and Anderson had been associated with rough and violent groups, like the Border Ruffians. They also had previous trouble with the law. Just like Mosby, their actions during the war were seen as a continuation of their prewar experience: criminals remain criminals, whereas Mosby, the gentleman lawyer, became the gentleman soldier.

When Mosby first transitioned from cavalry officer to partisan in early 1863, the Northern public could not differentiate him from other irregulars. Their experience with irregulars was confined to the category of guerrillas, who were regarded as little more than bloodthirsty criminals. As a result, both the Union Army and the Northern public perceived Mosby as criminal. The Union Army sought to deal with Mosby and his command as if they were typical guerrillas, hunted down and executed for offensives that included terrorizing civilians and murdering Union soldiers. The earliest articles reporting Mosby's partisan career liken him to

⁷⁶ Mackey, *The Uncivil War: Irregular Warfare in the Upper South, 1861 – 1865*, 76

Missouri guerrillas like Quantrill and Anderson through identical inflammatory narratives and provocative vocabulary, "...Captain Mosby visited Centreville with his notorious guerrilla band, numbering about sixty, dressed in Federal uniform...Mosby's men were dismounted, and received our cavalry with a fire from behind fences, which stampeded some of the raw soldiers. The fight soon became desperate. Mosby threatened his men with death if they flinched, and himself wounded Captain Flint five times with his revolver, killing him."⁷⁷

Like the Missouri guerrillas, Mosby was described as "notorious," ruthless, and bloodthirsty. Slowly, this type of language fades, and reports of Mosby's actions became more military in tone. There are numerous occasions when Mosby was falsely reported as mortally wounded or killed, but there is none of the celebration that was evident in the article reporting "Bloody Bill" Anderson's death. He was not a criminal whose death needed to met with spectacle and celebration. There were also occasions where Northern newspapers went beyond describing his operations and chronicled his reportedly superb character. The reports that detailed the depravities of the guerrillas described wild, armed men methodically murdering unsuspecting or unarmed soldiers and civilians alike and stealing anything of worth they might have on their persons. In contrast, the Northern newspapers depicted Mosby as both professional and respectable, despite his irregular status. In one case, two reporters, having been prisoners of Mosby for a time, described him positively, "We soon discovered that the Major [Mosby] was a very different personage from what he is described. In his address and demeanor he is a perfect gentlemen, and his relation to ourselves was highly courteous...By profession he is a lawyer, and with a considerable share of native shrewdness combines the acquired tact of the professional attorney..."⁷⁸ This reports of Mosby's character was a persistent theme among the articles. Earlier, the newspapers, knowing only of Mosby's irregular categorization and sheer

⁷⁷ "Desperate Fight near Dranesville, Va." *Plain Dealer*, April 6, 1863

⁷⁸ "Mosby and a Herald Correspondent," *Portland Weekly Advertiser*, December 19, 1863

effectiveness, likened him to earlier guerrillas. However, this image begins to change as Mosby's continued contact transform from a ruthless cavalrymen to the "perfect gentlemen." There were repeated instances of reporters meeting Mosby, being surprised that he was not the fearsome guerrilla they had come to expect from irregulars,

Somebody has described Mosby as a handsome man in personal appearance, but he is nothing of the sort. Of ordinary hight, his build is good enough, but his face is very commonplace, and his light brown hair, worn unkempt, adds nothing to its attractiveness. Mosby's features and expression would impress you as those of a man resolute and cunning, not captiously honest not viciously cruel, and I suspect that in the stories of his cruelty he has been somewhat belied.⁷⁹

It was the gradual realization that Moby maintained the restraint and discipline that the Missouri guerrillas, as well as character exposé pieces that enabled the Northern public to distinguish between partisans and guerrillas. Mosby's professional conduct and fair treatment came to light; he became recognized as a partisan. Nonetheless, he continued to vex Union operations in Virginia, but his credible character garnered him a respectable reputation, one that greatly differs from that of his Missouri counterparts. Mosby's depiction in the Northern newspapers changes throughout the war, but the evolution of the Northern perception regarding Mosby was demonstrative of the Union ability to discern between the two types of irregulars.

During the Civil War, the Northern perception of unconventional warfare and irregular forces becomes more refined. Early in the war, unconventional warfare was closely associated with "atrocities." This viewpoint was perpetuated by the small-scale Civil War within the Border State of Missouri. Events such as the Centralia Massacre and Lawrence Massacre portrayed the Missouri guerrillas as violent criminals, whose purpose was not to wage war but to create terror, and exploit the situation. When former Confederate cavalrymen, John Singleton Mosby, transitioned from conventional to unconventional warfare, he was at first described as a typical

⁷⁹ "Mosby, the Partisan Leader," *Plain Dealer*, August 3, 1865

bloodthirsty guerrilla. However, later reports of Mosby's military discipline and objectives distinguished a different perception of irregular: partisans. For the Northern public, what led to the discerning view on irregulars, what separated partisans from guerrillas, was their objectives and conduct.

Chapter 3

Race and Retaliation

In the spring of 1864, Confederate Major General Nathaniel Bedford Forrest led a cavalry force into western Kentucky and Tennessee to destroy federal fortifications and capture much needed supplies. Forty miles north of Memphis was Fort Pillow, a small garrison manned by approximately six hundred Union troops, divided nearly evenly between white and black soldiers. On April 12, 1864, Forrest's men surrounded the fort, tucked into the banks of the Mississippi River, and bombarded the fort and its garrison with artillery and rifle fire. Late in the afternoon, Forrest demanded the Union soldiers surrender, but their commander refused. He, along with the men under his command, believed that should the African American soldiers be captured, their fate would surely be death or slavery. Forrest ordered his men to assault and capture the fort. The Union soldiers resisted briefly, before they broke and fell back. Some attempted to cross the river, many of whom were drowned or were picked off by sharpshooters. What happened next is debated still today, but the general consensus of historians, is that after the Union soldiers surrendered, the Confederates massacred their prisoners and when they eventually marched away their prisoners, very few of them were African Americans.

In April 1864, the "Fort Pillow Massacre" incensed the North and the country's media and attention returned to the issue of atrocities committed by conventional Confederate soldiers, especially those suffered by African American troops and prisoners. In order to investigate the allegations of atrocities, the Congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War organized a hearing. The Committee concluded that the Confederate troops had committed atrocities, but that they were not an isolated incident, but rather "that the atrocities committed at Fort Pillow

were not the result of passions excited by the heat of the conflict, but were the results of a policy deliberately decided upon and unhesitatingly announced...that it is the intention of the rebel authorities not to recognize the officers and men of our colored regiments as entitled to the treatment accorded by all civilized nations to prisoners of war.”⁸⁰ The Committee reached the conclusion that the Confederacy would not respect the Union’s African American troops as legitimate combatants. However, the Union’s “colored” regiments had been created, had been fighting, and had been dying for a year prior to the Fort Pillow Massacre. And before Fort Pillow, African American soldiers were denied the recognition as soldiers and were massacred by Confederate forces. The African American community and press had been commenting on the treatment of colored units since the Battle of Fort Wagner in July 1863, the first fight in which African American units from the North participated. Only after the Fort Pillow Massacre did the broader Northern public begin to question the particular treatment of African American soldiers by Confederates. Many newspaper articles and politicians demanded retaliation for the deliberate slaughter, something that the North’s African Americans had been insisting for months. After the Battle of Fort Wagner in late July 1863, there was not a general and public distinction between the specific suffering of African American soldiers, but there was turning point among the greater Northern public’s perception of racial atrocities with the Fort Pillow Massacre in April 1864 and the first demand for retaliation in response.

The racial prejudices of both Southerners and Northerners shaped their perception of the rules of war. Because of a deeply ingrained fear of slave revolts, the Confederacy refused to recognize African American soldiers as legitimate combatants and vowed to kill or return to slavery those that they captured. Initially, the Northern public was skeptical as to whether freedman and escaped slaves could even be soldiers. The recognition only came after African

⁸⁰ United States Congress, Joint Congressional Committee on the Conduct of the War, “Fort Pillow, Battle of, Tenn., 1864,” <https://archive.org/details/fortpillowmassac00unitia>

American troops proved their dedication in hard fights and heavy casualties. This change in perception was gradual, but the intensity of the feelings was demonstrated by the fury that followed the massacre at the Battle of Fort Pillow – a rather insignificant fight. Until April 1864, apart from the African American community, Confederate atrocities committed against African American soldiers did not receive wide media attention. However, following Fort Pillow, significant attention was drawn from all over the Union to the plight of African American prisoners of war and a clamoring for retaliation came from both whites and blacks.

The cry for retaliation, by means of a general Union policy, also distinguishes Northern responses to racial atrocities from guerrilla warfare and acts by conventional forces that were judged to cross the line of lawful warfare. Occasionally, Northerners did raise the prospect of an eye-for-an-eye in handling non-racial acts of barbarity and soldiers on the battlefield might personally seek revenge. But these were not the norm. The Fort Pillow Massacre and the demands for retaliation in its aftermath served as a prelude to the more widespread discussion in Congress that occurred in early 1865 over the treatment of prisoners of war at Andersonville, Georgia. Historian Mark E. Neely confined his discussion of retaliation to the issue of Union prisoners of war and their deplorable conditions in Southern prison camps.⁸¹ Throughout 1864, Union soldiers returned home from the prison camps and their destitute conditions prompted a few congressmen to introduce bills of retaliation in early 1865. What form retaliation would take was hotly debated by Congress. Such measures included providing Confederate prisoners of war with the same levels of food and comfort, or lack thereof, as Union prisoners (prompting starvation), manning Northern prison camps with former Union prisoners (ensuring retaliation), or limiting retaliation to the Confederate officers (who were among the South's elite). The 1865 discussion of an official Union retaliation policy was the result of a culmination of atrocities, with the first general

⁸¹ Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 171 – 197

cry for reprisal rising in the aftermath of the Fort Pillow Massacre. The North's reactions to events at Fort Pillow displayed opening salvos in what should be done to punish the rebels who were not within reach of the law – a possible degeneration into an eye-for-an-eye policy.

On the issue of the Fort Pillow Massacre, scholarship has noticed the impact the Committee on the Conduct of War had bringing the Fort Pillow Massacre to the national spotlight. In his book, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder: The Committee on the Conduct of the War*, scholar Bruce Tap explores the creation of the Committee and its various investigations throughout the war, especially how the Republican majority within the Committee sought to use its inquiries and reports as a means of swaying military policies and political objectives of the war. Tap focuses on the Committee's investigation of the Fort Pillow Massacre, but before there was even the announcement that an investigation was ordered, the Northern public became frenzied over the incident. However, not all of the public was convinced that this was a unique experience: surrendered troops had been shot before, African American soldiers had been killed before. Tap asserted that the Committee's decision to investigate the Fort Pillow Massacre was political. Republicans were doing all in their power to assure that Southerners (predominantly Democrats) would be unable to regain any position of power following the war. By portraying Confederates as the ultimate enemy, uncivilized and capable of barbarity, the Committee's Radical Republicans hoped to push their current agenda and guarantee continued power for years to come. Additionally, Republicans wanted to create support among the racist white public for the use of African American troops in combat. While there may have been political reasons behind the investigation, the Committee did bring to the forefront the discussion of the rights of African American soldiers as legal combatants and the issue of treatment of prisoners of war. It received wide support from the press and public, both of which expressed their horror over the massacre.

The Committee's investigation prolonged the issue of race and retaliation within the media spotlight, making it a battle cry throughout 1864.⁸²

In 1861 and 1862, a few progressive generals attempted to organize liberated slaves in their occupation zones into military units. President Abraham Lincoln countermanded the generals' orders. Additionally, African Americans in the North were denied enlistment. In 1863, African Americans are permitted to join the Union Army, but suffered atrocities at the hands of the Confederates. Although discussion of the issues was wrought with partisanship, the Fort Pillow Massacre was the pivotal event that brought the issues of race and retaliation to the national spotlight.

Before Fort Pillow: Fort Wagner and the 54th Massachusetts

When President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation came into effect on January 1, 1863, it became the official policy to allow African Americans to enlist in the Union Army. There were various responses to this new policy. One was disapproval or outright violence, "The Federal soldiers at Nashville, Tenn., have been manifesting their dislike of negroes and especially of negro soldiers, in a violent way...they attacked every negro found with uniform on, beating them and tearing off their uniforms."⁸³ Some Northerners accepted African American recruitment as long as the soldiers were designated as laborers, thereby freeing the white soldiers for combat, "There can be no doubt that the government could easily have sixty thousand of them...and every colored man so enlisted saves the life and labor of useful white operatives and weakens the laboring force of the rebels...we have so much need of their services everywhere to dig, haul and carry and fight for us."⁸⁴ There was also approval, typically from Lincoln's fellow Republicans. However, some Radical Republicans desired to go beyond the

⁸² Bruce Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder: The Committee on the Conduct of the War*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

⁸³ "All Sorts of Paragraphs," *Boston Post*, October 2, 1862

⁸⁴ "Negro Soldiers," *North American*, January 9, 1863

president's orders and send African American soldiers into combat instead of in the proclamation specified support role. The *Springfield Republican* reported, "There are thousands of our northern colored men who will make good soldiers without much drilling. Many of them are fitted by intelligence and character to become officers, and the southern negroes should be led by men of their own race...and if the business of enlisting and organizing them is entered upon at once by the summer we may have black armies capable not merely of garrison duty...but of carrying on an active campaign through the hot season in the cotton and Gulf states."⁸⁵ This Radical Republican suggestion differs from the Lincoln's guideline that African Americans be an auxiliary force commanded by white officers. And although the writer advocated for African American soldiers in combat, the individual still considered white soldiers as having the leading role in tackling the primary objective of the Confederate capital. The writer also betrayed a commonly held racial bias in suggesting that black troops were better suited for fighting in hotter climates, as well as proposing that African American leadership come from the class of educated Northern freedmen.

The issue of African Americans soldiers was a partisan one. Democrats were generally opposed to any measure that might elevate African Americans, but some War Democrats saw the enlistment of African Americans, whether for auxiliary or combat purposes, as a boon to the war effort. Democrats within the growing peace movement viewed enlisting African American soldiers, as well as emancipation, as a substantial obstacles for negotiating with the Confederacy to end the war. Still other Democrats would reconsider preconceptions when the African American soldiers' military valor came to light. In an article following the institution of the Emancipation Proclamation, the Democrats, bitinglly, agreed to end opposition to African

⁸⁵ "The Negro at War," *Springfield Republican*, January 24, 1863

American soldiers, but insisted that blacks were incapable of any military duty beyond menial labor and unfit to receive commissions. The author ended condescendingly,

This, we trust, will satisfy the most earnest longings of Mephistopheles Stevens. His nigger army will soon be marching along, and will kick up such a cloud of dust as has not been seen for a long time. Let the democrats, therefore, withdraw all opposition, as we now do. Our time is coming, and is not very far off, and we can afford to wait. In the Interim, let the radicals have plenty of rope, and, what they like, plenty of nigger.⁸⁶

The harsh language and mocking tone represented the Democrat's unwanted resignation; they were outnumbered by the Republicans and could do little to halt African American recruitment. Democrats hoped that the issue, combined with the racism of the North, would return to ruin the Republicans in the election year of 1864. There were many different opinions on the recruitment of African Americans; some believed it was intolerable, some accepted the need for the enlistment, but would prefer for the new colored units be designated for necessary military labor, and then the other extreme – Radical Republicans believed that African Americans had the potential to become officers. Despite the obstacles, African American units were trained and fought in traditional military engagements. In time, their military discipline and might was begrudgingly recognized by even their critics. In time, Northerners, inherently racially challenged, considered their slaughter at Fort Pillow as an atrocity.

Beginning in 1863, African Americans enlisted in the Union Army. One of the first units formed as a result of the Emancipation Proclamation, the 54th Massachusetts, recruited from Boston, proved its military prowess and courage when its soldiers valiantly attempted to take a beachhead outside Fort Wagner on an island in Charleston harbor on July 18, 1863. The unit was commanded by a white officer, Boston society son, Colonel Robert Shaw. Little national attention was dedicated to the fate of the African American soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts, some of whom were captured by the Confederates. Additionally, the battle continued after their

⁸⁶ “The Organization of the Negro Army – How This May Best be Done,” *New York Herald*, February 4, 1863

charge; they were but one of the regiments in the fight to take the impregnable beachhead, and the fight continued after July 18, the current battle taking precedent in the media over what soldiers had already been lost. The earliest reports concerning the 54th were about its white colonel, “A private dispatch from Fortress Monroe says – Col. Shaw, of the 54th Mass. colored regiment, was killed on the 18th near Charleston.”⁸⁷ Among the many articles that commemorated the fallen colonel, detailing his pedigree and military history, was this assessment,

In looking for a commander for the first colored regiment from Massachusetts, who should combine the moral qualities and the soldierly accomplishments requisite for a post more than ordinary difficulties, Gov. Andrew chose young Shaw. How well that choice was justified was shown when he marched through Boston at the head of the best disciplined regiment that ever left the State, and the three hundred dead that fell around him at Fort Wagner prove that in the field he had inspired his men with his own courage, and aroused in them that personal devotion and enthusiasm that will face the most desperate duty.⁸⁸

In another article, “The selection of the 54th Massachusetts to lead the charge was undoubtedly made on account of the good fighting qualities it had displayed a few days before on James Island.”⁸⁹ When reporting on the actions and fate of the 54th Massachusetts, Northern newspapers were only able to do so within the context of their venerable commander and his distinguishing capability as a military officer. In this respect, the newspapers were catering to their white audience. Even though the African American soldiers of the 54th fought well, it was purely the result of the martyred Shaw’s gallant leadership. The 54th’s participation in the Battle of Fort Wagner was one of the first tests of combat for Northern-raised African American units, and lack of specifics on the African Americans of the 54th Massachusetts points to Northerner’s disinterest and inherent racism.

If the Northern newspapers paid little attention to the actions of the 54th in combat, less was devoted to fate of the African American soldiers who had been captured. The early

⁸⁷ “By Telegraph To The Evening Press By The American Line. The War. Lee’s Prospects Of,” *Providence Evening Press*, July 24, 1863

⁸⁸ “Col. Robert G. Shaw,” *New York Tribune*, July 27, 1863

⁸⁹ “The Assault on Fort Wagner Morris Island, S. C.,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, July 28, 1863

information reported regarding the African American soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts was gleaned from Southern newspapers and reprinted in prominent Northern papers. More benign commentary simply stated the battle casualties, “We captured fifteen of the Massachusetts negro regiment, and killed and wounded about fifty.”⁹⁰ Other articles reveal the eventual fate of the African American soldiers who died or were taken prisoners by the Confederates, which could have been inferred by the Northern public: “A wounded negro is to be put into every ward of the white Yankees. The latter kicked at the base alliance, but the surgeons have plainly told them that if they put themselves on a par with the negroes as soldiers, the same retaliation must be maintained under all circumstances while they remain in our hands. The negroes are a mongrel of trash, and very fair representatives of the common type of the free Northern negro.”⁹¹ From these Confederate reports Northerners learned the fate of African Americans captured in battle and it became clear that the treatment varied by race. African American soldiers were less likely to be taken prisoners and the wounded were placed among white Union soldiers in order to discomfort their fellow soldiers. The actual fate of the captured African American soldiers was to rot in a Charleston jail while South Carolina and the central government in Richmond fought over the jurisdiction and the fate of the prisoners.⁹²

However, at this time there was very little outrage over these reports and fewer calls for retribution. Northern attitudes had not yet swung. One article described the decimation that the 54th Massachusetts faced in this fashion: “No injustice must be done to Massachusetts or to her soldiers...Unless wounded prisoners of her Fifty-fourth are not forthwith delivered, let rebel

⁹⁰ “Important from Charleston. Four Days Later News through Rebel Sources,” *New York Herald*, July 27, 1863

⁹¹ “Rebel Account of the Assault before a Charleston,” *Boston Daily Advertiser*, July 30, 1863

⁹² Howard C. Westwood, “Captive Black Union Soldiers in Charleston What to Do?,” in *Black Flag Over Dixie: Racial Atrocities and Reprisals in the Civil War*, ed. Gregory J. W. Urwin (Southern Illinois University, 2004), 34- 52

prisoners of rank be instantly shot. The retribution would be at once effectual and historic.”⁹³

With no commentary, the press published Lincoln’s order that for every Union prisoner shot, sold, or enslaved, in violation to the law of war, a “rebel” soldier would also be killed.⁹⁴ This was all reactionary rhetoric. While the fate that potentially awaited the 54th Massachusetts was grim, relatively few newspapers demanded retaliatory eye-for-an-eye measures nor did Lincoln, following his Baltimore speech, ever form any official retaliatory policy. To some degree, the North recognized the potential for atrocity following the capture of soldiers of the 54th, but the time was not right – the Union had won two major victories in early July in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and Vicksburg, Mississippi, so the general mood regarding the war effort was positive – while the Northern people lacked concern or the respect for the new African American soldiers.

By contrast, the African American newspaper, *The Christian Recorder*, published reports from its own sources, witnesses who had seen the 54th Massachusetts before and after the Battle of Fort Wagner and those who had visited the hospital where the soldiers were being treated. In a published letter, the author optimistically wrote, “On last Saturday, 19th of July, scores of these colored heroes were brought into battle and bathed in blood, not less than two hundred arrived: they were soon made as comfortable in the hospitals as circumstances would permit. I have visited them every one, and spoken words of cheer, and asked God to sustain them,” and concluded with an extensive list of the wounded and their specific injuries.⁹⁵ The wounded 54th Massachusetts soldiers at the hospital had this very patriotic visit,

On the second and fourth days after the first I passed through nearly all the wards of the hospital. On the second day a very large proportion of their wounds had not been dressed, and of course they were very painful. Some lay with shattered legs, or arms, or both;

⁹³ “The Attack Upon Charleston. The Captives of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment The Colored Soldiers And,” *Evening Post*, August 3, 1863

⁹⁴ “Important Order by the President Negro Soldiers must me treated as prisoners of War. If,” *Plain Dealer*, August 3, 1863

⁹⁵ “South Carolina Correspondence. Letter From James Lynch,” *The Christian Recorder*, August 22, 1863

others with limbs amputated. Rebel bullets, grape, shell, bayonets have made sad havoc. Standing amidst a large number, I said, "Well, boys, this was not part of the programme, was it?" "Oh, yes, indeed, we expected to take all that comes," said some. Others said, "Thank God, we went in either to live or die."⁹⁶

These accounts, while painting the grim situation that the African American soldiers are in – wounds and hospitals were rarely pleasant, do little to provide commentary on the differences that African American wounded experienced when compared to white soldiers. The focus of the article was informatory, providing casualty listings, while at the same time, providing sentimental fluff for the sake of the reader's morale.

However, a letter to the editor published in the following spring, after the Battle of Olustee in Florida, which included the remaining soldiers of the 54th Massachusetts, signaled a change among African Americans in their interpretation of these events. In his letter, the author blasts the Union for treating captured Confederate soldiers so leniently while African American soldier are being denied the basic rights of prisoners of war, "A flag of truce was sent out to the rebels the other day, and when asked about the negro prisoners and officers, the reply was: "We will hang every d--d negro officer we catch." We can learn nothing of the colored prisoners. It is reported that they were killed on the field. When shall this weakness and folly on the part of our authorities cease? And when shall these atrocities be met with that vengeance and retaliation they so justly merit?" The reporter reminded his readers that the disposition of black prisoners of war captured at James Island, July 16th, 1863, and Fort Wagner on July 18th remained unknown. Similarly, no one was sure of what would happen to the soldiers captured at Olustee. The writer began to create a parallel with Northern treatment of Confederate prisoners, which was obviously intended to earn sympathy. He wondered if "we are pampering and petting rebel prisoners" while "Federal prisoners are hung and enslaved."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ "Charleston – The Storming of Fort Wagner," *The Christian Recorder*, August 1, 1863

⁹⁷ "For the Christian Recorder," *The Christian Recorder*, April 9, 1864

The uncertainty of the fate of the African American soldiers, combined with the Confederate promise to disrespect the rights of African American prisoners and the uncorroborated eye witness testimony, painted a grim reality. In the perceptions of these accounts, if an African American, a soldier faced the potential to be shot or enslaved upon being captured by the enemy. The Confederacy promised such when the Union began enlisting African Americans. Additionally, the confusion regarding casualties following battle and individual instances of Confederate soldiers acting on racial hatred contributed to the idea that African American soldiers could expect no quarter with the enemy. No investigation by the Union was conducted until the Fort Pillow Massacre. And while mainstream Northern press commented little on Lincoln's promise of retaliation, the African American community full-heartedly approved of retaliation. One writer, for instance, endorsed the position of Lincoln who warned Confederate leaders of retaliation on their prisoners for poor treatment of African American soldiers. The columnist cheered, "For every colored soldier murdered by the rebels, a Southern prisoner will suffer death; and for every colored soldier enslaved, a Southern prisoner will be put to hard labor. This, in war, is just and equitable, however hard it may be to the individual."⁹⁸ For the moment, these opinions appeared to be confined primarily to African American writers and newspapers. However, following the Fort Pillow Massacre in April of 1864, much of the Northern public joined the African American community in its clamoring for blood and revenge, for retaliation after the slaughter of surrendering Union African American soldiers.

The Fort Pillow Massacre

The Congressional Joint Committee on the Conduct of War was formed in the aftermath of the Union loss at Balls Bluff (October 1861) and their first major investigation following the allegations of Confederate atrocities at the First Battle of Bull Run as a body of investigation. In

⁹⁸ "Colored Troops No. VI." *The Christian Recorder*, August 15, 1863

1861, the Committee investigated the claims that Confederate soldiers had committed atrocities against wounded and dead Union soldiers. It reached the conclusion that such depravities had occurred. Some of the motivations for this outcome were political; Republicans dominated the Committee and hoped that painting the Confederates as atrocious and barbarous would eliminate the possibility that the Confederates would resume their antebellum status at the conclusion of the rebellion. They hoped to push Lincoln toward a harder brand of warfare that included emancipation of the enslaved. The partisan nature of the investigations continued throughout the war, focusing on individual officers, most notably the conduct of Major General George B. McClellan, a staunch Democrat and anti-abolitionist.

In 1864, the Committee shifted its attention to the treatment of Union prisoners and the alleged massacre that followed the Battle of Fort Pillow on April 12, 1864. As with its report on the First Battle of Bull Run, the Committee sought to define the enemy and sway the Northern public in junction with its investigation. With its investigation, the Committee not only demonized the Confederates, but “may have strengthened the determination of northern soldiers and bolstered the morale of the northern public.”⁹⁹ In the early years of the war, Committee, dominated by Radical Republicans, was guilty of using its power of investigation as partisan political tool by investigating military leadership in the aftermath of unsuccessful military engagements – especially if the general was a Democrat or a conservative Republican. Its investigations in the later war years shifted to the basic conduct of war, such as the treatment of prisoners and giving quarter to surrendering soldiers. While seemingly noble in goal, the Radical Republicans merely shifted from forcing its political enemies before them to testify into investigating a case that would make the opposition look bad should they disagree. The Committee successfully sold the story of atrocity and massacre despite the lack of reports,

⁹⁹ Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder*, 193

exaggerations of witnesses, and the routine racism of the mid-nineteenth century. Prior and throughout the Committee's investigation, prominent national newspapers responded with the inflammatory rhetoric that had been attributed to the conventional Confederate forces during the First Battle of Bull Run, but had since been relegated to reporting on guerrillas. And the white newspapers began to echo African Americans in calling for retribution and retaliation against the Confederates for the atrocities at Fort Pillow. Fort Pillow was a singular incident that sparked a fury that had been steadily growing. In 1863, the prisoner exchange system broke down as the Confederacy refused to recognize the legitimacy of African American soldiers and the Union high command developed a strategy of attrition, which would only work if captured Southerners were not paroled and could not rejoin the Confederate Army. Despite the break-down, Union prisoners returned North and their physical condition and recounting of the deplorable conditions that they had been held under, prompted national attention on the treatment of captured soldiers, like those at Fort Pillow. As the result of the investigation of the Joint Committee on the Conduct of War, the Fort Pillow Massacre incited the Northern public against Confederate soldiers and made them once again question the definition of atrocity.

The Battle of Fort Pillow would have proved merely a footnote if not for the massacre that followed. The Confederate objective was to dislodge the Union soldiers and generally interfere with the Union Army's operations in western Tennessee. However, when the Union officer in command of the fort refused to surrender outright, Maj. General Nathan Bedford Forrest ordered his men to take Fort Pillow. What happened next remains debated, but approximately fifty percent of the Union troops were killed. A disproportionate amount of African American soldiers numbered among the dead. Relatively few of the African Americans were taken prisoner. Pinning down the precise numbers of men stationed in the garrison prior to the battle has been complicated by the commanding officers being killed. But it was generally assumed by the North, given the Confederate declaration to not respect African American troops

as legitimate combatants, that a massacre was precipitated because of the Confederate soldiers' racial hostility.

Immediately following the aftermath, the media interpreted and reported the allegations of "massacre" in several ways. Some articles followed a similar vein as those from the First Battle of Bull Run or those referring to guerrilla activity, filled with provocative descriptors. Others focused on the high number of African American casualties and the racially motivated torture the Confederates put them through. By this time, while Northern racism was still prevalent and routine, there was an understanding that men of all races should be guaranteed certain rights, like being given quarter, as soldiers. There was also a particular focus on the issue of prisoners of war, that those who had surrendered, but the rules of war, were entitled to mercy. Prior to the Committee's investigation, the Northern public was only just beginning to consider all of these different, yet related points.

The earliest reports following the battle exaggerate the numbers; however, the newspapers convey their shock and outrage over the atrocities, "New from the West yesterday brought the startling intelligence of the unfortunate capture of Fort Pillow, and the inhuman massacre of nearly the entire garrison. The first dispatches made the heart sicken, but later news by telegraph from Cairo increases the horror, and makes it one of the most fiendish butcheries ever recorded in the annals of warfare..."¹⁰⁰ In another article with the same provocative language, the same claim was made, that the Fort Pillow Massacre was incomprehensible, "Many and fearful as have been the horrors of the present war, nothing had as yet occurred approaching – in utter, diabolical and almost inconceivable brutality – the recent massacre at Fort Pillow. We have no sort of doubt that this massacre had had, on a small scale, its precedent, that unknown hundreds of brave, though black, Union soldiers have been wantonly butchered in violation of all

¹⁰⁰ "The Massacre at Fort Pillow," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 16, 1864

law of war.”¹⁰¹ All of these strong descriptors – inhuman, horror, fiendish, diabolical, butchery – characterize not only the Fort Pillow Massacre and its aggressors, but all Confederate soldiers on all fronts. Fort Pillow was but a furtherance of the Confederates’ depravity, “Thus the war, as far as the South can affect it, had taken one more step in its degeneration towards mere barbarity. Such transactions as this at Fort Pillow stain the annals of war only as it is waged by men of the lowest in the scale of civilization, and whom there are none of the better qualities of the human race to temper the fierceness of mere brutal rage. The Chinese and the Sepoys have become the chosen models of Southern men.”¹⁰² In the aftermath of the Fort Pillow Massacre, with the inciting rhetoric, the conventional Confederate soldier, as well as Southern manhood, has been unequivocally labeled as barbarous and uncivilized, thus increasing the urgency for their defeat.

The newspaper articles also reported on the particular atrocities the Confederate committed on African American troops. In a telegraph from Cairo, Illinois, “Two negro soldiers wounded at Fort Pillow were buried by the Rebels, but afterwards worked themselves out of their graves...Of three hundred and fifty colored troops, not more than fifty escaped the massacre...the morning after the battle, the Rebels went over the field and shot the negroes who had not died of their wounds...”¹⁰³ In another article, an attempt to quash the rumors that the “massacre” was exaggerated, claimed that the Confederates, “...behaved like fiends. Colored men and women and children were shot *after the surrender*. This is the statement which the rebel General Chalmers himself made to a correspondent of the Chicago Times, which paper says: ‘Negroes were compelled to dig trenches into which they were thrown alive.’ Our informant – an officer in whose probity and moderation we have entire confidence – says he saw the charred remains of

¹⁰¹ “The Fort Pillow Massacre,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 16, 1864

¹⁰² “The Massacre at Fort Pillow,” *New York Herald*, April 16, 1864

¹⁰³ “The Fort Pillow Massacre. Wounded Negroes Buried by the Rebels. They Rise From Their Graves!” *Albany Evening Journal*, April 16, 1864

negroes mingles with the ashes of their tents!”¹⁰⁴ Although popular artwork of the massacre depicted slaughtered women and children, there were most likely neither at Fort Pillow. While there was uncertainty regarding whether this was a definite atrocity or just routine warfare, what was known was that African American soldiers suffered disproportionately high casualties when compared to the white units stationed in the fort. Whether this was coincidental or deliberate on the part of the Confederates was unknown, but their hatred toward armed African Americans was well known. The African American troops were viewed as insurrectionists, not soldiers.

Additionally, mere days after the battle, allegations of atrocity came to light and it was the African American soldiers and their white officers who were subject to individual atrocity. That the Confederates who took Fort Pillow targeted whites as well as African Americans, was representative of the Confederate promise to kill those white men who dared to lead African American troops. One newspaper reported that “but instantly on taking possession of the fort the fiends commenced an indiscriminate butchery of the whites and blacks, including those of both colored who had been wounded. The black soldiers becoming demoralized rushed to the rear, the white officers having thrown down their arms. Both white and black were bayoneted, shot or sabred.”¹⁰⁵ The admittance of African American men into the Union Army had raised considerable objections during its conception; however, the wholesale slaughter of soldier, purely on account of their race, was recognized by the Northern public and was viewed as inherently wrong.

Another reason the Confederates were decried by the press was their reported refusal to adhere to the rules regarding prisoners of war. Beneath the sub-headline, “Prisoners of War Ordered To Fall Into Line And Inhumanly Shot Down,” an article reported that “Many of those who had escaped from the works and the hospitals, who desired to be treated as prisoners of war,

¹⁰⁴ “The Massacre at Fort Pillow,” *St. Albans Daily Messenger*, April 16, 1864

¹⁰⁵ “Important News. Capture of Fort Pillow by the Rebels – Horrible Massacre of the Garrison,” *Salem Observer*, April 16, 1864

as the Rebels said, were ordered to fall into line, and when they had formed, were inhumanly shot down...” and as an explanation, it was reported that a Confederate general told a Federal officer that “...it was their intention to show no mercy to homemade Yankees – meaning Southerners serving in the Union army and negroes; but genuine Yankees would be treated as prisoners of war.”¹⁰⁶ Both the soldiers at Fort Pillow and the Northern public had knowledge of the rules of war and the expected treatment of surrendering troops as prisoners of war. However, when this was violated at Fort Pillow, the Northern public honed in on this as a blatant violation.

Not everyone was quick to label Fort Pillow as a new experience and a unique atrocity. In one article, a critic claimed that the only reason that this outrage was receiving any attention was because of Lincoln’s political scheming. The writer alleged that it took the president three years to begin treating such behavior as atrocities. “With the coolness of a lawyer, he affirms, that, as soon as a ‘case is made up’ – the necessary proof brought out – a retribution will follow. God have mercy on our country and a timid halting “magnanimous” Administration.” The columnist reminded his readers that the Fort Pillow atrocities represented nothing new. Mutilation of the dead began at Bull Run. “From that hour to this, we have been awakened by no earnest, trumpet tone from the White House, in protest. Thousands have suffered, starved, wasted in Libby Prison, and no thunder against barbarism. The dead speak from their graves against such ‘goodness’”¹⁰⁷ Fort Pillow was not the first atrocity of the Civil War; many other atrocities had occurred, with only some of them garnering national attention. Some opponents of Lincoln and the Committee were quick to recognize that the Fort Pillow Massacre, which had already stirred the nation, would be spun as a means to produce support for the war and punish the Southerners. However, the attention paid to it by the government, the press, and the Northern public, made the Fort Pillow Massacre the definition of atrocity in the last year of the war.

¹⁰⁶ “The Fort Pillow Massacre. Wounded Negroes Buried by the Rebels. They Rise From Their Graves!” *Albany Evening Journal*, April 16, 1864

¹⁰⁷ [Montgomery; Ala.; Missouri; Kentucky; Maryland], *Wisconsin Chief*, April 15, 1864

Retaliation was demanded by the Northern public for the wholesale slaughter. It was not unusual to find encouragement for the military, the president, and the Congress to respond to this call for blood. One account noted, “General Sherman has been directed to make an immediate and thorough investigation of the Fort Pillow Massacre with a view to exact retaliation. Public feeling here is deeply excited by the butchery.” Major General William T. Sherman was the overall commander of the Western Theater and was expected to investigate and respond, “Yesterday afternoon about five o’clock, despatches were received here from General Sherman confirming the news of the surrender of Fort Pillow, and the brutal conduct of the Rebels immediately afterwards, which bids fair to be amply retaliated in that quarter in due time.”¹⁰⁸ Even before an investigation had been conducted, the Northern public was confident that the Confederates would be found guilty and that the requisite punishment would be reprisal. Soon, the allegations of a massacre caught the attention of Congress and the Committee was called upon to investigate the matter in Washington. Following the massacre, “Mr. Wilson, of Iowa, [Republican] introduced a resolution, which was unanimously passed, that the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War, or members thereof as the committee may designate, proceed at once to Fort Pillow and examine into the facts and circumstances attending the recent attack and capture of the fort by the rebels, and that they makes as little delay as possible.”¹⁰⁹ As news of the massacre spread throughout the country, public sentiment was quick to condemn the Confederates. The Committee’s Republicans, who had perpetuated the notion of the inhumane and barbaric Confederate in 1862 following the investigation of the First Battle of Bull Run, eagerly capitalized on the atrocity. Its investigation was met with approval in the newspapers, “We are glad to see that this horrible outrage has already attracted the attention of Congress, and

¹⁰⁸ “Interesting from Washington. Washington, April 16, 1864 Mr. Hooper’s Bank Bill,” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 18. 1864

¹⁰⁹ “[No Headline]” *Daily Eastern Argus*, April 18, 1864

that an investigation into the causes of the disaster has been ordered. It should not stop until the affair has been traced to its responsible author. As for the cowardly rebel murderers, no punishment can reach them but retaliation.”¹¹⁰ In an article detailing the news of Congress, it was reported that, “...the Committee on the Conduct of the War was instructed to inquire into the Fort Pillow affair. Various ‘greek-fire’ speeches were made favoring retaliation”¹¹¹ In the newspapers, it was the expectation that the Committee’s investigation would lead to retaliation, “The subject has also been considered worthy of attention by the United States Senate, and the determination expressed to protect our soldiers of every color and to promptly avenge their wrongs by severe retaliation.”¹¹² Again and again, the newspapers, while applauding the Committee for investigating the Fort Pillow Massacre, demanded that the punishment for the atrocity be retaliation. The Committee would eventually conclude that the reported atrocities did indeed occur. Once the investigation had concluded and the Confederate found culpable, the next step was to decide on a response.

The Northern public did not just call for blood, but they were prepared to determine an appropriate reprisal, aimed at the worst of the offenders. One newspaper designated the Confederate officers responsible for the Fort Pillow Massacre to pay with their lives. They believed that either an order was issued by the officers, or the massacre was the result of indifference by the officers, and demanded that those responsible be the target of the retaliation, “As to the manner of it, we suppose that the military commander of the district in which Fort Pillow is situated had, before this, sent to demand the rebel general opposed to him, if any is to be found, the surrender of the officers under whom the massacre was perpetrated. It is upon these

¹¹⁰ “Gleanings,” *Centralia Sentinel*, April 21, 1864

¹¹¹ Greek-fire was an ancient incendiary weapon used primarily in naval warfare for its ability to burn on water. It was a precursor to the modern napalm; “Congress,” *The Daily Age*, April 18, 1864

¹¹² “The Fort Pillow Massacre,” *Centinel of Freedom*, April 19, 1864

miscreants that retaliation can be properly performed.”¹¹³ Some other reprisal proposals leaned toward the quantifying the retaliation measures. It was demanded that for every one Union soldier who was killed at Fort Pillow, two Confederate prisoners should be similarly executed. For instance, one newspaper suggested, “The voice of the whole North should be uttered in tones that can be heard at Washington and Richmond, both in favor of instant and terrible retaliation. For every man that was assassinated at Fort Pillow let two rebel prisoners be hung by the neck until they are dead.”¹¹⁴ In addition to the discussion of official retaliation initiated by the government, the press also reported incidents where soldiers promised to handle the issue themselves. As reported from Memphis, “There is not much said, but there is a general grating of teeth among the officers here, when the massacre of Fort Pillow is alluded to. Have heard several officers say that unless the Government takes retaliatory steps, they shall consider it their duty to shoot every man, under Forrest’s command they meet, taking no prisoners. Soldiers have threatened to shoot Forrest’s men now in Irvin prison, if they could get a chance. This is the general feeling.”¹¹⁵ Some believed that because the Confederates did not hesitate to violate the rules of war during the Fort Pillow Massacre, that the rules should not restrain the Union. African American soldiers, although trained, uniformed, and armed, were not recognized as legal combatants. Given the Confederacy’s past affiliation and tacit approval of partisans and guerrillas, irregulars without uniforms, flags, or rules, the slaughter of legitimate Union soldiers was seen as an affront to everything the Northern public believed to be necessary and reasonable in warfare. Some articles depict that because of racial hatred, the Confederates murdered white and black soldiers indiscriminately. Claiming that the atrocities committed were at the order of

¹¹³ “How Will The President Retaliate!” *Evening Post*, April 26, 1864

¹¹⁴ “The Fort Pillow Massacre,” *Milwaukee Sentinel*, April 16, 1864

¹¹⁵ “News From The Southwest. Rebels Overrunning Western Kentucky. Fort Pillow Completely Demolished. Our Soldiers will,” *Plain Dealer*, April 18, 1864

the Confederate leadership, one article proclaims that "...the slaughter at Fort Pillow will be repeated wherever southern Union soldiers, white or black, fall into the hands of the rebels. It is the means deliberately chosen to intimidate our southern and negro soldiers and drive them from the ranks." In order to combat the Confederacy's policy of atrocity, it should be, "...met by the boldest retaliation. Retaliation may increase the evil for a time, but there is now no other course...it had accepted the services of thousands of southern white men and negroes, and it must compel the rebels to treat them as legitimate soldiers. No matter about the laws of war..."¹¹⁶

Despite the various methods, the Northern public decried the Fort Pillow Massacre and demanded retaliation, a response to the atrocity in equal or greater proportions.

However, conservative Republican and some Democratic newspapers and Northerners recognized that retaliation would not solve anything. Some believed that resorting to retaliation was beneath the North, especially when compared to the South, "President Lincoln has promised that retaliation must follow the act of the rebels in the massacre at Fort Pillow. Every fair minded man must concede that retaliation for such barbarities would be an act of injustice, but there are many grave objections in the way of it. It must be remembered that the perpetrators stand low in the scale of civilization."¹¹⁷ Others believed that retaliation would lead to an endless cycle, particularly if the revenge was dealt by soldiers in the field. One article published an alleged motive for the Fort Pillow Massacre, blaming mistreatment,

We are told, in connection with the capture of Fort Pillow, of the cruelty to the blacks. We cannot believe civilized men guilty of the barbarity described; but it is intimated the treatment the rebel prisoners received while passing up the Mississippi, at Miliken's Bend, where there was a negro brigade, whose officers allowed them to come down to the landing and insult in a gross manner the officers and men who were prisoners, was the provocation of this horrible outrage.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ "Murder Glorified at Richmond," *Springfield Republican*, May 7, 1864

¹¹⁷ "Retaliation," *Salem Observers*, May 7, 1864

¹¹⁸ "The Fall of Fort Pillow," *Boston Post*, April 18, 1864

If the Fort Pillow Massacre was the result of insulting prisoner, what would be the result if the Union executed Confederate prisoners?

The Committee was quick to react to the reports of atrocities at Fort Pillow and less than a week after the battle, Congress had granted them authorization to investigate the matter. In less than a month, they presented their report to Congress, the press, and the nation, a combination of two investigations – one into the Fort Pillow Massacre and the other into the treatment of Union prisoners by the Confederate. Both condemned the Confederates and served the political purposes of the dominating Radical Republicans, “Publishing the reports together made sense because each one painted the Confederacy as vicious and benighted, thereby reinforcing one of the committee’s principal goals of portraying the South as a society in need of radical restructuring.”¹¹⁹ As with the inquiry into atrocities committed at the First Battle of Bull Run, the Committee relied the testimony of witnesses as the sole evidence.

In the end, there was no official retaliation ordered by Lincoln, Congress, or the Union high command. In his second inaugural address, given at the same time that the Congress was investigating retaliation in regards to the treatment of Union prisoners, Lincoln calls on Northerners to reject outright reprisal in favor of mercy and compassion, “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds.” Lincoln would not lead the Union with an eye-for-an-eye policy and instead opted for the moral high ground. From the Emancipation Proclamation until the Fort Pillow Massacre, the African American community was alone in its cry for retaliation for the specific treatment of African American soldiers. With the Fort Pillow Massacre, the greater Northern public also demanded retaliation for the particular suffering of African American troops in the hands of the Confederates. In time, this demand was

¹¹⁹ Tap, *Over Lincoln's Shoulder*, 203

linked to a wider discussion on the treatment of prisoners by Confederates. It went so far as to be introduced as a bill before Congress. However, calmer heads realized that an official policy of retaliation would only escalate the level of violence and possibly prolong the war. In the end, reprisal was limited to the soldiers in the field, particularly African American soldiers, who dealt the retaliation that themselves and the Northern public demanded.

Conclusions

During the Civil War, the Northern public perception of atrocities changed over time, moving through three distinct phases. At first, the use of the word “atrocious” and other negative descriptors like “outrage,” “savagery,” “butchery,” and “barbarity” filled the media when reporting on the activities of conventional Confederate forces following the First Battle of Bull Run. The high point of Confederate condemnation occurred during the investigations of the battle’s aftermath by the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War. This concept of “atrocious,” deployed by a committee consisting primarily of Republicans, played an instrumental role in transforming the Southerners, former friends and neighbors, into the “enemy,” a process that was ultimately necessary for the North to wage a costly and prolonged war. The Republicans on the Committee sought to solidify their newfound power by painting their former political enemies as atrocious. And they hoped to prod the Lincoln Administration toward a harder brand of warfare that included less respect for rebel property, especially the enslaved. Prior to the Civil War, a large majority of voting Southern men were members of the Democratic Party, which was fractured from within in the presidential election of 1860 by the issue of slavery. The party split along the Mason-Dixon Line, which enabled the recently formed Republican Party and its candidate, Abraham Lincoln, to seize victory. During the war, Republicans, especially Radical Republicans, legislated and created support for a harder war by portraying Confederates as barbarians who needed to be conquered, not conciliated. In order to encourage this portrayal of the enemy, the Committee investigated rumored atrocities committed by conventional Confederate forces.

Following the initial broad application, “atrocities” became associated by Northerners primarily with unconventional warfare, specifically the Southern-sympathetic guerrillas operating in the Border State of Missouri. These guerrillas, committing brutal acts of violence – killing without restraint, scalping, and mutilating their victims -- horrified the Northern public, which considered these actions as devoid of any military objective. Guerrillas were seen not as soldiers, but as criminals. The Union’s policy of execution for captured guerrillas—a position articulated in the Code of War prepared by Francis Lieber—was perceived as a proportional response to the guerrilla’s use of gratuitous violence for the sole purpose of invoking terror.

By 1864, the national discussion entered a different phase concerning atrocities. Attention turned toward the treatment of Union prisoners in Confederate hands. The Fort Pillow Massacre in Tennessee on April 12, 1864 introduced the elements of race and retaliation into the discussion. Once more, the word “atrocities” was used to describe conventional Confederate forces. Despite the inherent racism of the Northern public at the time, there was a tentative agreement by many in the North (some Democrats aside) that no matter the color of their skin, Union soldiers were to be granted the rights of prisoners of war. Recognizing the massacre as a blatant violation of the rules of war, the Northern public, Congress, the Union Army, and President Abraham Lincoln debated the idea of retaliation. The Fort Pillow Massacre served as the prelude for the general Northern discussion on the issues of prisoners of war and Union retaliation for maltreatment which continued into the early months of 1865 with legislation introduced in Congress. The discussion began in April of 1864, when the Northern public first heard of the “atrocities” at Fort Pillow and began to consider that, in response to the Confederate policy to disregard African Americans as legal combatants and refuse to give quarter, the Union might be justified in adopting an official retaliation policy.

Despite the widespread clamoring for blood throughout the North, the Union never made retaliation a policy. In the spring of 1865, the Fort Pillow Massacre and the introduction of bills

in Congress attempting to create retaliation legislation, the broad Northern mindset became considerably more knowledgeable on the rules and cost of war. This shift in mindset was the result of contextualization. In early 1864, although battered, the Confederate armies, especially Major General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, were still formidable and posed a serious threat. By spring of the following year, Lee's troops had been pushed into trenches outside Petersburg, Virginia, protecting vital railroads into the Confederate capitol of Richmond. In order to force Lee southward, Union Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant had practiced a strategy of overwhelming the Confederates with manpower, but suffering the worst casualty rates of the war. However, there was a general feeling that the war was almost won. Despite the losses, many men reenlisted after their three year enlistments ended in the closing months of 1864. President Lincoln was reelected over his opponent George B. McClellan. By early 1865, the Confederacy was obviously crumbling under the might of the Union war machine and the Northern public sensed the end was nearing. To blatantly violate the very rules they alleged the Confederates had broken and to institute a policy of retaliation would only strengthen the Confederate resolve. It was not until 1865 that the Northern public acquired this mindset.

As discussed in the first chapter, the Northern civilians, as well as the soldiers, evolved in their psyches from conciliatory measures to coax the South back into the Union to harder warfare that involved seizing civilian property, including slaves. The allegations of atrocity on the part of conventional forces (found true by the Committee on the Conduct of War) were the result of the hysteria following the humiliating defeat at First Bull Run and the startling realization, perpetuated by the Radical Republicans in Congress, that easy defeat of the Confederacy and later reconciliation was impossible. Buckling down to the course of having to defeat the South, the Northern public accepted the increasing cost of the war. Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, was an example. The town was raided, occupied, and later sacked and burned. Yet there was no general outcry over the Confederate actions. By this time, the Northern public

accepted this kind of retaliation by the Confederates as the cost of war. Likewise, when considering retaliation in 1865, all of the Union had to weigh reprisal, which would surely spiral both North and South further into chaos and prolong the war, against a more orderly and earlier end.

Additionally, the allegations of atrocity at the First Battle of Bull Run and the Fort Pillow Massacre provided the Republican-held Congress with political fodder. In both cases, Republicans sought to use atrocities, firmly linking all Southerners to the concept of “the enemy,” in order to protect their political agenda and gains. In 1861, the Republicans, particularly Radical Republicans sought to thwart any attempt at reconciliation between North and South to keep their sound majority so they could pursue their goal of abolition. By 1864, and later the introduction of retaliation bills in early 1865, Radical Republicans were nearly there. Despite the initial response to the two incidents in the media, and attempted political manipulation by those in power, the North, increasingly hardening in their war effort, never degenerated into an official policy of retaliation.

The fact that the Union, despite its demands and discussions, never developed a policy of retaliation in response to the allegations of atrocity by the Confederates, demonstrated that the American Civil War was a limited, yet “hard war,” but never a “total war.” For example, in his overview of the Civil War, historian James McPherson labels the Civil War as a total war and describes the conviction of the Union leadership to the principles of total war.¹²⁰ However, it is problematic to apply modern principles to the past. The term “total war,” emerged in the aftermath of World War I with the concept of air strikes and the stark realization that technology enabled militaries to afflict massive amounts of destruction, both in terms of human casualties and property, on their enemy with little risk or effort. Planes could drop their loads of bombs

¹²⁰ James M. McPherson, “*Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*,” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988).

over a city and never have to face the enemy. The quintessential “total war” broke out a generation later. In World War II, the firebombing of Dresden in Germany and the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the results of warfare without limitations or “total war.” In opposition to McPherson, Mark E. Neely, Jr., argues that the Civil War had limitations to destruction and did not echo the measures deployed in the twentieth century.¹²¹

Even during the most destructive phases of the war, there were still limitations to the kinds of force applied. While in the Shenandoah Valley, General Philip Sheridan burned barns and wheat, but respected homes and other subsistence sources. The objective was to destroy the South’s ability to feed its soldiers and end the war more quickly, producing a “hard war” mentality. The goal was to defeat the South, not destroy it. This restraint kept the North in 1865 from answering the mistreatment and massacre of Union prisoners of war with retaliation. This refusal to retaliate was what made the American Civil War only a “hard war.” In other recent scholarship on the Civil War, considerable emphasis has been placed upon the brutality and destruction that ensued, as well as proposing the pointlessness of the entire conflict. This “New Revisionism” narrative also stresses the atrocious war strategies of the Union.¹²² New Revisionism attempts to interpret the American Civil War with a very modern “antiwar” mindset, conceived from the futility following the recent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which views all war as unnecessary and its participants as without limits. Scholars compare the Union soldiers of the 1860s with the soldiers deployed to the Middle East or the troops sent to Vietnam in the late 1960s. These men waged unnecessary wars ruthlessly, subjecting civilian populations to mass casualties. And while the conflicts in Vietnam and the Middle East are noted for the lack of distinction between combatant and civilian, Union soldiers, for the most part, respected that

¹²¹ Mark E. Neely, *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

¹²² Yael A. Sternhell, “Revisionism Reinvented?: The Antiwar Turn in Civil War Scholarship,” *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 3, no. 2 (June 2013), http://muse.jhu.edu.ezaccess.libraries.psu.edu/journals/journal_of_the_civil_war_era/v003/3.2.sternhell.html

boundary--if not private property, then a civilian's own person. The Civil War was the only one of the three where the casualties of soldiers outnumbered those of civilians. While a reevaluation of the Civil War can be valuable, to apply modern notions and feelings to the Civil War unfairly portrays the North as an aggressor and a villain, while simultaneously making Southerners victims. What the "new revisionism" fails to recognize is that there were limits to the Union's war making and that the Union victory in 1865 achieved both reunification and emancipation, both of which are hardly futile.

As the war progressed, the Northern public perception became more attuned to what was necessary and reasonable in warfare. Confederate cavalryman J. E. B. Stuart's raid of Chambersburg in October 1862 was viewed as limited military action with a specific military goal – capture federal supplies and destroy a railroad bridge in order to prevent other supplies from getting to the Union Army. Later, Confederate incursions against Chambersburg were consistent with the general escalation of the war. Regarding unconventional warfare, guerrillas, like Missouri's William Quantrill and "Bloody Bill" Anderson were seen as bloodthirsty criminals who lacked any military objective. They existed merely to harass the Union soldiers and Unionist civilians and to augment the chaos in Missouri during the war. However, partisans in Virginia, although they fell within the classification of unconventional warfare, enjoyed a different status from guerrillas in the minds of northerners. They were soldiers instead of criminals. Partisan leader John Singleton Mosby was still regarded as the enemy, but the North grudgingly accepted him and his men as a class above Missouri guerrillas. Mosby coordinated with Robert E. Lee and J. E. B. Stuart, conducted his band as cavalymen, and maintained military objectives – scouting, capturing supplies, and sabotage. Lastly, in the final years of the war, the Northern public discussed the Fort Pillow Massacre and the situation of Union prisoners in relation to the rules of war. They recognized that the actions that the Confederates committed were not only immoral, but also were violations of the rules of war. This more sophisticated

approach, viewing the atrocity as an affront to laws as well as morals, was something that the Northern public lacked in 1861.

Throughout the four years of the war, the Northern perception of atrocity narrowed and became more sophisticated. In 1861, it was applied wholesale to Confederate forces. By the middle years of the war, it was attributed to guerrilla violence. Nearing the end of the war, “atrocity” resulted in illegal conventional Confederate actions regarding the rules of war. The subtle reigning in of the word atrocity was a reflection of the North’s acceptance of a national hard war mentality, ultimately leading to the “unconditional surrender” of Confederate forces and ending the war.

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Education

- 2010 – present: The Pennsylvania State University, B.A. in History
- 2010: Graduated from Carlisle Area High School

Association Memberships/Activities

- Penn State's Undergraduate History Roundtable: Social Chair/Webmaster

Professional Experience

- May – August 2011: Visitor and Education Services Intern at the United States Army Heritage and Education Center
 - Assisted with education programs, tours, and with the spring event, Army Heritage Weekend
 - Developed three children's scavenger hunts, Developed two workbooks for the indoor exhibit, and a 'passport' for children to use during the fall event, a Civil War winter camp
 - Worked at the main information desk
- Spring – Fall 2012: Digital Research Assistant for the George and Ann Richards Civil War Era Center
 - Newspaper Index Project (Spring): Categorize and write abstracts for Pennsylvania Civil War Era Newspapers
 - Descriptive List of Deserters Project (Fall): Input information from Pennsylvania's list of Civil War deserts into a searchable spreadsheet
- May – August 2012: Interpretation Intern at Gettysburg National Military Park
 - Conducted research and developed hour long programs for visitors
 - Assisted in the children programs offered.
 - Staffed the information desk at the visitor center.
- May – August 2013: Curatorial Intern at Gettysburg National Military Park
 - Sorted and catalogued the park's photos and negatives
 - Sorted, catalogued, and re-housed the park's central files
 - Helped maintain the park's exhibits and artifacts