

During the 1863 raid, the militia accomplished little on the battlefield. The militia, however, had been politically important to Curtin in allowing civilians productive activity to ease anxiety. To the men who answered their state's call during the crisis, the action seemed big enough—and would grow larger as the years passed and the stories of service were retold many times. By 1892 Pennypacker inflated his experience in the 26th Pennsylvania Militia into “the first serious resistance Lee’s army encountered before the coming of the Army of the Potomac. They were the opening shots of the battle of Gettysburg.”⁵³ He conveniently omitted how the unit had been routed, how some volunteers exchanged uniforms for civilian garb, and how others tossed away rifles and supplies in the rush back to Harrisburg. His later statements differed greatly from his impressions a year after the invasion: “In my opinion there is not the least doubt that in one day [Lee’s army] would have entered Harrisburg.”⁵⁴

Pennsylvania State University

WILLIAM ALAN BLAIR

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The “New” Civil War History: An Overview

IN RECENT YEARS, THE HISTORICAL PROFESSION, slowly yet steadily, has been revising its attitude toward military history. For many years, most professional historians held the study of military history in disdain. They opposed military studies as catering to the public’s craving for violence, and they considered military history at best a peripheral field that tapped into a popular market with rather pedestrian scholarly works. In some respects, they were right. Too many of the tens of thousands of volumes on military subjects are traditional campaign histories, based on spotty research, that tell us little about large military issues or the dynamics of societies at war.¹

Lately, though, military history has achieved an unprecedented level of acceptability as a legitimate field of study. War, after all, is a most cataclysmic event, and its disregard would leave a massive gap in our history. The recent acceptance of military study reflects the shift around the country from military instruction by ROTC departments to that offered in history departments. Eager to attract a new constituency for their classes, history departments have encouraged individuals to prepare courses in the field. Students now benefit by having professional historians teach the subject, and ROTC earns greater legitimacy on campus by having an academic department offer some of its required classes.

The other major reason for the growing acceptance of military history among professional historians is the advent of the “new” social history, which has attempted to give voice to the previously “voiceless” segment of history. Implicit in this approach is the belief that leadership is not the only force that shapes society and life. Actions and sentiments of the masses affect themselves and their leaders more than traditional or “structural” historians claim. “New” social historians draw on both traditional and untraditional sources and employ a variety of methodologies to understand the world of those who were not elites. In military

¹ The more traditional approach of campaign and battle studies will not be covered in this essay, even though the “new” military history also has influenced many of the best of them.

⁵³ John P. Nicholson, ed., *Pennsylvania at Gettysburg: Ceremonies at the Dedication of the Monuments Erected by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (2 vols., Harrisburg, 1904), 2:780.

⁵⁴ Account of action in Pennypacker, *Historical and Biographical Sketches*, 337-55 (p. 357 quotation).

and wartime records, new social historians have found a wealth of information on that voiceless population in history.

Military historians who practice the new social history call this approach the "new" military history, and its basic premise is that the military establishment reflects the society from which it came. Some "new" military historians employ the techniques of social and behavioral scientists that are popular in the new social history field, while others simply rely on traditional research methods. Their goal, however, is the same: to link military history, whether in wartime or peacetime, to broader themes in society. Thus, studies of the new military history relate directly to larger historical issues and trends, and this has enabled military historians to gain a legitimacy in the historical profession and also attract the interest of scholars who would never consider themselves military historians.

No area of military history has benefited more from the new military history than the American Civil War. Always an area of keen interest at home and abroad, it was a war fought by literate people, when censorship did not exist. Its participants, military and civilian, knew they were players in a monumental event—a struggle over the survival of slavery and the direction of a democratic republic—and they made a conscientious effort to preserve much of its documentation. As a result, the Civil War has been a mother lode for these new social history miners.

Despite a new investigative approach, Civil War historians have by no means broken from the past. The new social history extends from the bottom up. But to understand what has occurred at the bottom, historians need a framework, which previous generations of scholars have provided. Thus, with the exception of some studies that address the war's impact on individuals and society, Civil War historians have inherited earlier critical debates and topics. Still central are arguments on why the North won or the South lost, on the success and failure of Civil War armies, and on the lives of the common soldiers.

Since Civil War newspaperman Edward A. Pollard fired the first salvo by blaming Jefferson Davis for the South's defeat, why the North won or the South lost has been the central issue among Civil War scholars. For over one hundred years economic and manpower resources, internal dissensions, and leadership have been the primary

justifications for Union success and Confederate failure.² Through the influence of new military history, scholars have broadened the old debate by examining the problem from fresh perspectives. The resulting arguments are more richly textured but no less contentious than those from previous generations.

Grady McWhiney and Perry Jamieson struck the first blow in 1982 by insisting that cultural underpinnings influence the way armies fight. In *Attack and Die*,³ they posit a new thesis—that the Confederacy lost because its Celtic character compelled its soldiers to attack, even though the advent of rifled muskets had made such tactics prohibitive. The South literally bled to death. McWhiney and Jamieson drew on an assortment of battlefield statistics and a considerable knowledge of Civil War tactics and weaponry to develop the basic thesis that Confederates had a penchant for attacks, especially frontal assaults. Then, in a final and highly controversial chapter, they attempted to demonstrate how these aggressive qualities on the battlefield were part of southerners' Celtic heritage. Whether scholars agree or disagree with either or both halves of the *Attack and Die* thesis, McWhiney and Jamieson have done a great service. They highlight the importance of tactics to the Civil War experience and have raised the important question of how society and its values influence individuals in combat.

One year later, Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones took on the *Attack and Die* thesis directly and indirectly in *How the North Won*.⁴ The book serves a multiplicity of purposes: it is a military text on the Civil War; it offers fresh interpretations of a variety of individuals and events; and it joins the debate on why the North won, while challenging McWhiney and Jamieson. By drawing on extensive knowledge of military history, and in light of the American experience in Vietnam, Hattaway and Jones downplay the importance of specific battles or actions taken by individuals at the height of combat. Rather, their emphasis is on resources. Unlike the argument most recently articu-

² For the historical debates, see David H. Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War* (New York, 1960).

³ Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (University, 1982).

⁴ Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, *How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War* (Urbana, 1983).

lated by Richard Current—that the Union was victorious because of its preponderance of resources (or as Current so colorfully stated, “As usual, God was on the side of the heaviest battalions”)⁵—Hattaway and Jones insist that the key to military success in the Civil War was the effective marshaling, management, and utilization of resources. Although the North had greater resources, it also exhibited greater managerial talents and adapted better to this more modern approach to warfare.

Hattaway and Jones do agree with McWhiney and Jamieson that the advent of the rifled musket gave defenders considerable advantage, but they completely disagree with the argument that it was a part of southern heritage to launch frontal assaults. Throughout the book and in an appendix, Hattaway and Jones insist that the Confederates frequently fought on the defensive and that combative leaders like Robert E. Lee were vigorous advocates of the turning movement. Confederates exhibited no greater proclivities for assaulting entrenchments directly than did Federals. Soldiers on both sides found prospects of attack upon entrenchments unappealing and often ineffective.

In a reversal of the *Attack and Die* thesis, Paddy Griffith in his *Battle Tactics of the Civil War*⁶ argues that rifled muskets had limited effect on battles and that assaults would have been successful if officers had disciplined their troops better and executed these shock attacks fully—in effect, better and more frequent assaults would have won. Griffith attempts to prove that the Civil War was the last Napoleonic war rather than the first modern one. Field fortifications, preference for smooth-bore cannon, and tactics manuals were all representative of Napoleonic warfare. Unfortunately, Griffith hurts his own case with sloppy research (he opts not to look at the *Official Records*⁷), forced arguments based on carelessly assembled statistics, and suspect conclusions.

⁵ Richard N. Current, “God and the Strongest Battalions,” in Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War*, 32.

⁶ Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Civil War* (New Haven, 1989; first published under a different title in Great Britain in 1987).

⁷ The basic source for military operations in the Civil War, 128 volumes, approximately one thousand pages each, of primary source documents published under the title *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880-1901).

Sounder, but also marred by careless errors, is Edward Hagerman’s *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare*.⁸ In disagreement with Griffith, Hagerman sees an alteration in tactics early in the war by a number of officers who fell under the influence of Dennis Hart Mahan, the leading professor at the United States Military Academy at West Point. Hagerman insists that Mahan correctly forecast the effectiveness of the rifled musket and taught his students the value of field fortifications and the limitations of assaults. The problem was that not enough West Pointers heeded Mahan’s advice. Hagerman, like Hattaway and Jones, recognizes the merits of organization and management of resources. Early in the war both sides had great difficulty dealing with the huge size of the armies and the materiel they required. But Hagerman believes that the Union applied civilian organizational practices and altered them with greater success to develop a more efficient war machine. This is why Hagerman considers the Civil War the first modern war.

For McWhiney and Jamieson, Griffith, and many other scholars, victory or defeat was resolved on the battlefield. A number of other talented historians have concluded that the Confederacy lost because its sense of nationalism did not sustain it. The thesis is not new. Nearly a half century ago Charles Ramsdell similarly justified Confederate defeat. What is new is the way historians are explaining the process. Subtly influenced by the Vietnam experience—both the issue of Vietnamese nationalism and the charge that Americans won on the battlefield but lost due to a lack of support at home—these scholars have focused on a variety of internal aspects of the Confederacy and explained defeat as a failure of Confederate will to resist, to endure the sacrifices necessary for victory.

The first post-Vietnam work to focus on Confederate nationalism is Paul Escott’s *After Secession*.⁹ Escott, one of the most perceptive southern historians today, insists that battlefield disappointments only worsened a serious problem—the waning interest of many Confederates to continue the war. In fact, the strong sense of Confederate

⁸ Edward Hagerman, *The American Civil War and the Origins of Modern Warfare: Ideas, Organization, and Field Command* (Bloomington, 1988).

⁹ Paul Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism* (Baton Rouge, 1978).

nationalism that existed early in the war was an anomaly. There were real differences among various segments of southern society before 1861, and support for secession was neither universal nor wholehearted. Escott credits Davis with developing a sense of unity during the early days of the war, but as southerners began to endure all sorts of hardships, and wartime policies appeared either insensitive to their plight or exacerbated difficulties, public opposition to the Davis administration increased and the southern cause crumbled. The war, then, was lost more on the home front than on the field of battle.

Influenced somewhat by Escott's thesis, several scholars joined forces eight years later to articulate a broader view of the failure of Confederate nationalism. In *Why the South Lost the Civil War*,¹⁰ Richard Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William Still extend the nationalism argument while challenging the various other interpretations proposed over the years, including the *Attack and Die* thesis. Beringer and others insist that the statistical evidence does not sustain the *Attack and Die* thesis and that McWhiney and Jamieson simply arrive at their own conclusion on Confederate defeat without building a strong foundation. As a continuation of the premise offered in *How the North Won* that most wars are not resolved on the battlefield, Beringer and his partners seek internal causation and conclude that nationalism and religion dismantled the Confederate war effort. Like Escott, they believe nationalism never really took hold, and wartime hardships ripped society apart. More complex and controversial is their thesis that religion and guilt over slave ownership hurt the war effort. Initial success convinced Confederates of the righteousness of their cause in the eyes of God, but as the war effort turned sour, they began to sense that God was punishing them for the sins of slave ownership. Together, weak nationalism and a growing conviction that God was on the side of their opponents resulted in mass defections from the Confederate cause. The South lost the will to win.

Joining the debate on both religion and nationalism is Drew Gilpin Faust, arguably the finest historian of the South. In an important article, entitled "Christian Soldiers,"¹¹ Faust maintains that revivalism

¹⁰ Richard E. Beringer, Herman Hattaway, Archer Jones, and William N. Still, Jr., *Why the South Lost the Civil War* (Athens, 1986).

¹¹ Drew Gilpin Faust, "Christian Soldiers: The Meaning of Revivalism in the Confederate Army," *Journal of Southern History* 53 (1987), 63-90.

imbued the Confederate ranks with greater discipline while easing the fear of death and helping men to adjust to the highly stratified relations of military service, to which they were unaccustomed in peacetime. Even more intriguing is Faust's suggestion that the conversion experience might have been a device to reduce combat stress. Faust notes that the physical experience of conversion was strikingly similar to the physical reaction to traumatic stress. Revivals may have been a means of bringing out repressed fears and thoughts on combat.

In *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism*,¹² Faust operates from the premise that because nationalism is both self-identifying and self-defining, it can provide us with great insights into the Confederacy. These definers, primarily elites, drew upon evangelical religion and traditional republicanism to establish a conservative view of the Confederacy. The problem, Faust notes, was that republicanism and evangelicalism had both conservative and liberal components. Thus, like Escott, Faust believes that war's demands enhanced prewar social tensions, in this case accelerating the trend toward increased democracy, as elites sought the support of the yeoman class. And like the authors in *Why the South Lost the Civil War*, Faust recognizes the role of religion in the failure of nationalism, but hers is a more subtle argument. Rather than sentiments of guilt over slavery, it was the reforming impulses of evangelicalism that fostered divisiveness in the Confederacy. While elites hoped to preserve a conservative South, clergymen called for change that would win God to their cause. *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism* is a wonderful example of what Thucydides intimated twenty-five centuries ago when he wrote that although people intend to control war, war controls them. War strikes out a path for itself the moment it comes.

What Drew Faust did for the Confederacy, Earl J. Hess has attempted to do, with considerable success, for the Union in *Liberty, Virtue, and Progress*.¹³ Hess argues that the North developed an ideological consensus, based on individualism, egalitarianism, self-government, and self-control, that sustained it through the most har-

¹² Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge, 1988).

¹³ Earl J. Hess, *Liberty, Virtue and Progress: Northerners and Their War for the Union* (New York, 1988).

rowing moments of the Civil War. These core values and beliefs transcended class lines and, interestingly, existed among supporters and detractors of the war. As the Union toughened its approach to war with such measures as confiscation, the draft, and emancipation, opponents and proponents of the war effort insisted that they were the true possessors of these virtues. Doves accused hawks of trampling on the ideological basis to fight the war, while those who advocated a vigorous prosecution of the war insisted that these policies were temporary compromises to protect cherished values in the long term. Hess shows that Abraham Lincoln was able to identify himself and his cause with these core values and beliefs, while his Confederate counterpart, so Escott intimates, was not able to do so. Although his book is a bit too sophisticated for a more popular audience, Hess has placed on the table for debate some interesting and important ideas.

To date, the last word on why the North won or the South lost has come from James McPherson in *Battle Cry of Freedom*,¹⁴ a bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winner. McPherson taps into many of these new studies, injects much fresh analysis, and presents a wonderfully vivid, polished narrative of the period. By bringing together political, diplomatic, economic, and military history in a chronological format, he is able to create a sense of the tension, drama, and complexity of those fateful years. McPherson sees the struggle, at least initially, as an attempt to "preserve the heritage of republican liberty" (p. 310), although the Union invasion swayed Confederate supporters to adopt a more tangible purpose, defense of the home. In fact, he uses Arno Mayer's model to explain secession as a preemptive counterrevolutionary strike. Curiously, in the early stages southerners did not emphasize the defense of slavery for fear of alienating white nonslaveholders, and northerners did not avow slavery as the cause or a goal because of its divisiveness. Slavery, though, is at the heart of *Battle Cry of Freedom*.

McPherson's extensive coverage of military events reveals a keen interest in the war itself. This, no doubt, marks the level of acceptability that military history has gained in the past decade or so. He finds Confederate defeat neither inevitable, nor the explanation of Beringer

et al., in *Why the South Lost the Civil War*, accurate. Arguments posed by Hattaway and Jones and Hagerman—that the Union managed and employed resources better—are more plausible, but not completely satisfactory. McPherson recognizes four critical moments in the war—the summer of 1862, which was a Confederate high point; the fall of 1862, which assured a prolonged struggle; the summer of 1863, which marked a clear shift of power and momentum to the Union; and the spring of 1864, when Lincoln stood by his generals in spite of heavy losses, which sealed the victory. Morale among civilians and soldiers was integrally linked to battles. Union victory, he then argues, was contingent on winning the final three critical stages. Thus, the South lost and the Union won on the field of battle.

Central to the debate over why the North won or the South lost has been the ability and performance of leading military and political figures of that day. In David Donald, ed., *Why the North Won the Civil War*, three of the five essays focused largely on leadership, as did the contrasting essays of Charles Roland and T. Harry Williams in Grady McWhiney, ed., *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals*.¹⁵ In recent years, many scholars have continued that debate. By drawing on social science models and analyses, they have posed new arguments over the strengths and weaknesses of Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee, as well as the wartime leadership of Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis. Fittingly, the first blows came from an author who helped to buoy up the field during the lean years after the Civil War Centennial. During the 1960s and early 1970s, the late Thomas L. Connelly prepared a two-volume study of the other great Confederate command, the Army of Tennessee, along lines similar in approach to Douglas Southall Freeman's *Lee's Lieutenants*. In those books, *Army of the Heartland* and *Autumn of Glory*,¹⁶ Connelly argued that scholars have devoted too much attention to the war in the East, when in fact the Confederacy was lost due to defeat in the West. In a succeeding

¹⁵ Grady McWhiney, ed., *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals: Essays on Civil War Leadership* (Chicago, 1964).

¹⁶ Thomas L. Connelly, *Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862* (Baton Rouge, 1967); and Connelly, *Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865* (Baton Rouge, 1971).

¹⁴ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, 1988).

article, Connelly then attacked Lee directly by blaming him for neglecting war in the West and therefore contributing mightily to Confederate defeat.¹⁷

In *The Marble Man*,¹⁸ Connelly furthers his consideration by tracing Lee's reputation over the past one hundred years and then reassessing his life from a psychological perspective. His volume is a direct challenge to the sanitized version of Lee that Douglas Southall Freeman presented decades earlier. Less controversial is Connelly's study of the formulation of the Lee myth. At the end of the war, Lee was certainly a hero of the South, but so were several others. In the postwar years, Jubal Early, Walter Taylor, and authors in the *Southern Historical Society Papers* converted Lee into a martyr, a Christ-like figure who came to symbolize the war for independence. Over time, Lee the myth began to reflect the honorable nature of the Confederacy, as he came to epitomize self-sacrifice in a noble cause.

Much more provocative is Connelly's psychological interpretation of Lee, which directly challenges Freeman's depiction of Lee as an uncomplicated man. In this portion, Connelly takes some liberties in interpretation in an effort to humanize Lee. Connelly sees a carefree young man from a declining family, who became dissatisfied with his life in the prewar years. His career seemed to be at a dead end, and his family life was unsatisfactory. Despite all his efforts at self-control, he too was subject to temptation and fell short of self-imposed goals. Nor were the war years any easier for him. In later life he was subject to swings of moodiness—he battled extended depression during the war—and Lee was notorious for his temper. Back then, Connelly argues, he was not a marble man.

¹⁷ Thomas L. Connelly, "Robert E. Lee and the Western Confederacy: A Criticism of Lee's Strategic Ability," *Civil War History* 15 (1969), 116-32.

¹⁸ Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York, 1977). Alan T. Nolan, *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill, 1991), extends Connelly's argument, and that of Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy* (New York, 1937), by reassessing all the myths about Lee in light of the record. Regarding Lee's generalship, Nolan finds Lee to have been overly committed to offensive thrusts and blind to larger strategic considerations. Nolan's book appeared too late to be incorporated into my analysis to any great degree, but it echoes my concern that scholars continue to assess the Civil War based on the record rather than looking at it through the misty memory of the Lost Cause.

In *Our Masters the Rebels*,¹⁹ Michael C.C. Adams offers an alternative approach and thesis to explain Lee's success in the East. Adams relies on social scientific theories and places Union and Confederate armies in the context of societies and their values. Based exclusively on published sources that weighed heavily in favor of officers and intellectuals, Adams argues that the North, with its superior manpower and resources, should have won the war much sooner. Adams attributes Confederate success in the East to psychological factors. He insists that most of the troops in the Army of the Potomac came from the East, where industrialization and the shift of power to the Old Northwest had created social uneasiness. To make matters worse, the typical depictions of southerners emphasized their tendencies toward violence. Thus, northerners entered the war with an inferiority complex that early Rebel victories exacerbated. Southerners had put the "skeer" on Federals, and it took a hard man like Ulysses Grant, whose aggressiveness enabled him to cope with this modern world, to turn defeat into victory.

Very different again is Richard McMurry's *Two Great Rebel Armies*.²⁰ This brief, thoughtful book challenges the writings of both Adams and, especially, Connelly, as it attempts to explain why the Army of Northern Virginia performed so effectively and why the Army of Tennessee did not. McMurry, like Freeman five decades earlier, thinks very well of Lee and his principal lieutenants. He accords much of the success of the Army of Northern Virginia to these officers and places much of the blame for failure of the Army of Tennessee in the West on its high-ranking officers (Braxton Bragg, Gideon Pillow, and numerous others). Shrewdly, McMurry does not stop there. He digs deeper into these armies and determines that the Army of Northern Virginia had one other significant advantage. Its officers had more military training than those in the western army. Not only did the eastern army have more West Point graduates, it also had a host of Virginia Military Institute graduates, who occupied key regimental and battery slots. This military training paid great

¹⁹ Michael C.C. Adams, *Our Masters the Rebels: A Speculation on Union Military Failure in the East, 1861-1865* (Cambridge, 1978).

²⁰ Richard M. McMurry, *Two Great Rebel Armies: An Essay in Confederate Military History* (Chapel Hill, 1989).

dividends in the first days of the war when those individuals volunteered, because they already knew how to drill and discipline troops. The Confederate army in Virginia, then, had a great advantage earlier in the war, not only over its western counterpart, but also the Federal command.

Emory Thomas, James I. Robertson, Jr., and William Piston attempt to clarify the picture of the war in the East by employing unusual approaches to offer fresh insights into several of Lee's principal subordinates. In *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart*,²¹ Thomas unmask the Confederate cavalryman of the East by using contemporary literary theories. According to Thomas, this active, intelligent, aggressive, and ambitious young man found a channel for all those qualities as cavalry commander in Lee's army. It was Stuart himself, according to Thomas, who developed his great cavalier myth, yet the myth grew so much that Stuart struggled to live up to it. With each passing day Stuart had to behave a little braver, a little bolder, and a little more chivalrous. In Stuart's eyes the myth had become reality, and excessive exposure to enemy fire resulted in his tragic death.

In *General A.P. Hill*,²² Robertson draws on contemporary medical knowledge to explain the adulthood malady of one of Lee's corps commanders. As a West Point cadet, Hill contracted an unusual strain of gonorrhea. With no treatment available in his day, the gonorrhea caused prostatitis, an excruciating affliction which was killing Hill in the late stages of the war.

One of Connelly's students, William Piston, has followed in his mentor's footsteps by applying the approach in *The Marble Man* to the life of James Longstreet. The resulting book is both an assessment of Longstreet as a Civil War officer and an attempt to place Longstreet in the Lost Cause myth.²³ Piston argues that as a tactician and strategist Longstreet had strengths and weaknesses, but overall was a conscientious and reliable subordinate to Lee. After the war, the reconstructed Longstreet became the target of those who fostered and promoted Lee's

image. These individuals elevated Lee at the expense of Longstreet's reputation, and Longstreet lent credence to the assertions that he had failed Lee by his clumsy efforts to justify his wartime and postwar conduct.

Just as controversial as Connelly's depiction of Lee in *The Marble Man* is William McFeely's *Grant: A Biography*.²⁴ In contrast to the works of T. Harry Williams and Bruce Catton, McFeely characterizes Grant as a man of very modest ability. Although a large part of the biography concerns Grant's Reconstruction and presidential years, the war years offer shrewd insights into the character of an individual who floundered in the peacetime world and excelled during wartime. Like Connelly, McFeely delves deeply into psychology to unmask the man. He shows us a Grant who was an introverted and at times unfeeling individual capable of making some very difficult decisions and living without guilt. McFeely refrains from calling Grant a butcher, but he feels little sympathy for this military commander who sent thousands of young men to their graves. Nor is he deceived by Grant's commonness. Undistinguished physically, and by no means an intellectual giant, McFeely's Grant was at times politically calculating. His common attire and organizational simplicity at headquarters, for example, were clearly designed to appeal to men in the ranks. McFeely's depiction of Grant has aroused much controversy. Years after the book's publication, Civil War historians are still disputing his claims. Nevertheless, McFeely has revived interest in Grant, and for his labors he won a Pulitzer Prize for biography.²⁵

Surprisingly, despite efforts to remove the lustre from Lee and Grant, scholars have done little to diminish the reputations of Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln. In both *How the North Won* and *Why the South Lost the Civil War*, the authors have portrayed Davis as a thoughtful military leader. Although Davis had the unfortunate habit of clinging to unsuccessful officers too long, as in the case of Braxton Bragg, he had a very clear understanding of the problems that confronted the Confederacy and proposed sound policies to cope with them.

²¹ Emory M. Thomas, *Bold Dragoon: The Life of J.E.B. Stuart* (New York, 1986).

²² James I. Robertson, Jr., *General A.P. Hill: The Story of a Confederate Warrior* (New York, 1987).

²³ William Garrett Piston, *Lee's Tarnished Lieutenant: James Longstreet and His Place in Southern History* (Athens, 1987).

²⁴ William S. McFeely, *Grant: A Biography* (New York, 1981).

²⁵ Brooks D. Simpson, "Butcher? Racist? An Examination of William S. McFeely's *Grant: A Biography*," *Civil War History* 33 (1987), 63-83.

Additional support for Davis as a military leader has come from Steven Woodworth in his book *Jefferson Davis and His Generals*,²⁶ which challenges the traditional view that Davis continually interfered with his subordinates and grossly overrated his own military prowess. According to Woodworth, Davis was a very good, but not brilliant, war leader, whose greatest faults were excessive loyalty and indecisiveness.

Lincoln continues to fare very well. In *Why the North Won*, Hattaway and Jones downplay T. Harry Williams's arguments that Lincoln was a military genius, and they discard Williams's thesis that Lincoln formed a modern command system with Halleck and Grant. Yet Hattaway and Jones do recognize Lincoln's uncanny ability to grasp military matters and the efforts of his administration to create a planning and coordinating body to perform the functions of a modern general staff.

Among Lincoln's many great talents, says James McPherson, was his ability to translate grand strategic objectives into military policy.²⁷ After fifteen months of fighting, Lincoln came to the conclusion that reunion demanded the unconditional surrender of the Confederacy, and only total warfare could accomplish that goal. Emancipation was one such weapon in the arsenal of total warfare. The proclamation deprived the Confederates of a huge labor force, converted freedmen into soldiers of the Union, and struck a blow at Confederate society. Moreover, Lincoln astutely recognized that the war was not just over disunion; slavery was also at the heart of the conflict. Reunion and abolition of slavery were inseparable. Thus, Lincoln oversaw the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment to eliminate slavery, converting a means of winning the war into part of the war aim.

Both the new social history and the American experience in Vietnam rekindled interest in the "common soldier" of the Civil War. With its emphasis on giving a voice to the voiceless segment of society, the new social history provided tools and a framework to probe the world of Billy Yank and Johnny Reb. The Vietnam War, too, focused attention

²⁶ Steven E. Woodworth, *Jefferson Davis and His Generals: The Failure of Confederate Command in the West* (Lawrence, 1990).

²⁷ James M. McPherson, *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* (New York, 1991).

on the experiences of the soldier. Both the individual rotation system, which in some respects isolated each person who served there, and the highly publicized adjustment problems of veterans revived interest in the "common soldier" and his wartime and postwar ordeals.

The social history of Civil War participants is nothing new. Almost five decades ago, Bell Irvin Wiley carved out the path with his stunning *The Life of Johnny Reb*, followed nine years later by *The Life of Billy Yank*, which was even better. Based on a wide array of manuscript sources, Wiley told the story of over three million men in uniform during the Civil War. He discussed their attitudes toward the war's cause; the enlistment process; life in the army; health, diet, and medical care; military service; issues of race; homesickness; combat experience; and the war's end. Both books revealed the glory of victory, the depression of defeat, and the heartache of death like never before.²⁸ Wiley also attempted a comparison between the soldier in the Union and Confederate armies to help readers understand how they were similar and how they were different. This, the portion that has come under greatest fire from historians, admits that Billy Yank and Johnny Reb were very much alike, but with certain dissimilarities. Billy Yank, so argues Wiley, was more literate, politically informed, and practical; Johnny Reb was more religious, humorous and fanciful, and committed to his cause. Although Wiley pointed out the direction for other scholars, no one attempted to expand upon those volumes. Wiley's exacting efforts intimidated scholars. He had traveled too widely for his research and had been too comprehensive in his writings to offer openings for his fellow scholars. For decades his work stood unchallenged, and even today remains firmly entrenched as the standard treatment.

Several very different books, however, have inspired scholars to look into the world of the common soldier again. One is John Keegan's

²⁸ Bell Irvin Wiley, *The Life of Johnny Reb: The Common Soldier of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis, 1943), and *The Life of Billy Yank: The Common Soldier of the Union* (Baton Rouge, 1952). My reason for arguing that *The Life of Billy Yank* is a better book is that *The Life of Johnny Reb* shows evidence that Wiley does not understand how an army functions. His knowledge of military history is lacking. During World War II, he served in the Army Historical Office, and *The Life of Billy Yank* benefited considerably.

The Face of Battle.²⁹ In that seminal volume the author scolded scholars for their unrealistic portrayal of the combat experience. Keegan insisted that there were different levels to combat, that the experience of one individual may be quite different from another just a few hundred yards away. That observation was not particularly new. Several other scholars in different areas of military history had attempted to develop just that theme. What was startling about *The Face of Battle* was that Keegan relied on an extensive knowledge of weaponry, tactics, terrain, and army organization to provide the reader with a much fuller and more accurate depiction of the engagements at Agincourt, Waterloo, and Somme, particularly for the mass of participants who left no account.

Oddly enough, another book was a Civil War campaign study. In *Richmond Redeemed*,³⁰ Richard Sommers wrote 449 pages on just four days of fighting. This tome, wonderfully detailed and thoroughly documented, demonstrated to Civil War historians just how much material a committed Civil War researcher could unearth. If Sommers could accrue several hundred sources for four days of a Union offensive, then the possibilities for all sorts of other innovative projects is seemingly endless.

Finally, there was the historical novel. For generations, Stephen Crane's epic *The Red Badge of Courage* stood unmatched in its brilliant depiction of combat. More recently, though, historical novelists have offered historians fresh insights into the battlefield experience. Michael Shaara wrote the immensely popular *The Killer Angels*,³¹ set at the battle at Gettysburg. This book, which has enthralled millions of readers, perhaps has done more than any single volume to rekindle the public's passion for the Civil War. Since then, Tom Wicker's *Unto This Hour*³² has added to the prestige and influence of the historical novel in its depiction of the battle of Second Manassas. Together, these novelists have resurrected interest in the human element in combat and inspired a bevy of scholars to grapple with the complexities

²⁹ John Keegan, *The Face of Battle: A Study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and The Somme* (New York, 1976).

³⁰ Richard J. Sommers, *Richmond Redeemed: The Siege at Petersburg* (Garden City, 1981).

³¹ Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels: A Novel* (New York, 1974).

³² Tom Wicker, *Unto This Hour: A Novel* (New York, 1984).

of soldiers' attitudes and combat experiences in the study of the Civil War.

Far removed from the approach of historical novelists, the first social science models attempted to quantify soldiers' experiences. Peter Maslowski and Michael Barton prepared quantitative studies to test theses of Bell Wiley and gain new insights into the world of the Civil War participant. In an article on morale,³³ Maslowski examined the letters and diaries of fifty Civil War soldiers and compared these findings with those of the famous World War II investigation by Samuel Stouffer et al., *The American Soldier, Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*. Barton, who defined his book *Goodmen*³⁴ as a "quantitative sociolinguistic case study in historical psychological anthropology" (p. 4), also tried to measure character traits and literary style among 400 northern and southern soldiers. The results, interestingly, clash somewhat. Maslowski's findings challenge Wiley's depiction of the differences between Union and Confederate soldiers but coincide with Stouffer's conclusions about the American fighting man in World War II. Barton discovers a distinction between northern and southern soldiers over control—Wiley uses the terms humorous and fanciful—and perceives it as a justification of Union efforts to crush secession. Northerners, so Barton argues, could not tolerate rebellion, whether it concerned their emotions or southerners within the Union.

Although neither Maslowski nor Barton regards his study as definitive, flaws are inherent in their approach. Both attempt to measure, at least in part, concepts that Wiley and others had recognized through impressionistic means. Yet Maslowski and Barton must rely ultimately on impression in deciding what words or phrases to count and how to interpret them. Both scholars, too, have sampling problems. Maslowski's sample is too small for conclusive results, while Barton relies only on published sources, with disproportionate representation among officers and college-educated men. Nevertheless, both scholars, but Maslowski in particular, deserve credit for recognizing an important approach that other historians had all but forgotten in their own research.

³³ Peter Maslowski, "A Study of Morale in Civil War Soldiers," *Military Affairs* 34 (1970), 122-25.

³⁴ Michael Barton, *Goodmen: The Character of Civil War Soldiers* (University Park, 1981).

One major factor that Maslowski and Barton neglected was the change that military service wrought on individual soldiers. My *The March to the Sea and Beyond*³⁵ looked at a single army in the late stages of the war, emphasizing how three or four years of military service affected the attitudes and conduct of military men. Somewhat like Adams and McWhiney and Jamieson, I argue that cultural influences are brought from the civilian world into military life. William Tecumseh Sherman's army, nearly all western men, had qualities of individualism and self-reliance that their extensive wartime experiences fostered. Prior to the Savannah campaign, these troops had marched great distances and fought in numerous major and minor engagements. They were seasoned veterans, the kind Sherman adored, and the very sorts of troops he needed on his campaigns through Georgia and the Carolinas. After years of physical and emotional hardship, Sherman's army had come to the conclusion that the quickest means to end the conflict successfully was for northerners to force southerners to feel the hard hand of war. Sherman unleashed his masses on the Confederate infrastructure, destroying railroads, consuming food supplies, and intimidating the civilian population en route.

This book differs significantly from Adams's analysis of the Army of the Potomac in research and the types of issues it addresses. *The March to the Sea and Beyond* was written from extensive manuscript and published sources of the officers and men, and it also delves into topics that Bell Wiley addressed: attitudes toward the war, blacks, and southerners; camp life; the march; foraging; destruction; and combat. It is, in fact, representative of Wiley's direct influence, although in *The Life of Billy Yank* Wiley tended to focus more on the eastern armies and earlier stages of the war.

More the product of insights from the historical novel, Gerald Linderman focuses exclusively on the battlefield experience in his *Embattled Courage*.³⁶ Linderman sees little difference between Union and Confederate volunteers in the early part of the war. Civil War soldiers prized courage more than any other quality. It was the glue

that held men together, that bonded them and enabled them to endure the rigors of combat. Courage helped them to do their duty when discipline and all else failed. According to social mores, courage was the proper moral behavior for soldiers to exhibit, and it gave them a sense that the individual could make a difference on the battlefield. But as the war dragged on, the mounting losses to combat and disease challenged their belief in courage and forced many of them to discard or alter it. Soldiers had to adopt a harsher approach to warfare, as represented by Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. They had to war against the entire opposing nation, not just its soldiers in the field. The civilian world never knew this. It clung to the old view of courage in battle, creating a dichotomy between actual experience and public perception. In fact, what Linderman has done in *Embattled Courage* is explain very effectively officers' perceptions of leadership. His book is based predominantly on published sources, and virtually all his dramatis personae, or the individuals upon whom he relies most heavily, were officers.

The March to the Sea and Beyond shows the results of several years of difficult military service, while *Embattled Courage* skillfully examines the hardening process, which is the book's greatest achievement. The costs, in lives and personal sacrifice, were so immense that soldiers had to reexamine their support for the cause. Many decided that the price was too great and deserted or found some sinecure that kept them out of battle. Others came to the conclusion that more vigorous steps had to be taken to win the war. Collective courage in the form of renewed commitment replaced individual courage, and harsher means of prosecuting the war, such as viewing the opposing nation as the enemy and destroying the enemy infrastructure, supplanted the code by which most on both sides had fought earlier.

Embattled Courage concentrates on white volunteers on both sides in the major theatres of the war. Linderman specifically excludes guerrilla warfare and military service of blacks. Three other recent books help fill that void.

Phillip Paludan's *Victims*,³⁷ a small yet potent book, takes the murder of thirteen unionists in North Carolina and develops a case that

³⁵ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns* (New York, 1985).

³⁶ Gerald E. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York, 1987).

³⁷ Phillip Shaw Paludan, *Victims: A True Story of the Civil War* (Knoxville, 1981).

helps make understandable the complexities of the power struggle in Appalachia. The affair occurred in an isolated little mountain community called Shelton Laurel, where family, land, and traditions—all concepts stronger among these people than racism—laid the groundwork for the struggle between unionists and secessionists. Confederate efforts to control these regions and enforce unpopular laws on those who did not support disunion led to conflict, violence, and eventually retribution.

Michael Fellman's *Inside War*³⁸ offers a complex approach to the guerrilla struggle in Missouri. Fellman argues that Missouri was in a state of transition, from a more traditional, local-market economy to a more regional one with greater ties to strongly antislavery St. Louis. These were the lines along which warring parties gathered. Although both sides undertook hostilities with the belief that they were defending certain values, the terror and ferocity of the war cut participants loose from those social underpinnings. This enabled individuals on both sides to commit horrible acts and justify them as retribution for past injustices. Murder, looting, and destruction on a massive scale became commonplace as unionists and secessionists sought victory and, more importantly, revenge.

Fellman plays down the role of slavery, even greater than does Paludan, but he devotes more attention to the hardships of the guerrilla war on various participants. Confederate authorities appreciated the efforts of guerrillas but considered their methods unacceptable and uncontrollable. Union officials struggled to design an effective policy to counteract guerrilla activities. By drifting from one approach to another, as did the United States in Vietnam, low-ranking officers and enlisted men actually determined the Federal policy more than department commanders, due to the decentralized nature of the fighting. And civilians, women in particular, suffered abuse from all warring parties.

During the 1950s, Dudley T. Cornish in *The Sable Arm*³⁹ and Benjamin Quarles in *The Negro in the Civil War*⁴⁰ laid the groundwork

for further study of black troops, but for many years only James McPherson's *The Negro's Civil War* (1965),⁴¹ a collection of primary-source documents, followed that lead. Then, in 1982, the Freedom and Southern History Project published its first volume, documenting the black military experience.⁴² This vast compilation of documents from the National Archives provided abundant evidence and direction for a study of the United States Colored Troops from a different perspective than Cornish and Quarles.

Whereas Linderman, Paludan, and Fellman de-emphasize racial factors, I emphasize them in my book on the United States Colored Troops, entitled *Forged in Battle*.⁴³ White officers almost exclusively commanded Federal black soldiers, and the interaction between the two groups is the key to understanding these units. They came together for reunion and the termination of slavery, but had serious doubts about one another. Most whites believed in the inferiority of blacks, and blacks resented this prejudice. Nevertheless, white officers and black soldiers had to overcome this racial obstacle, to a considerable degree, to make these commands effective fighting forces. That they did. Black soldiers fought in 41 major engagements and nearly 450 minor ones, usually quite well; and nearly 37,000 of these men gave up their lives in military service. The combat experience, as well as the prejudice and discrimination that both groups encountered in the war, brought black soldiers and their white officers together in unusual ways, so that by the war's end most officers and men in the United States Colored Troops had a genuine appreciation for one another.

Sadly, when the war ended, the great bond between whites and blacks—seeking a Union victory—was accomplished, and therefore removed. Black soldiers felt they had earned full equality in the postwar world, and when many of their white officers refused to endorse such a policy, the two groups went their separate ways. As the white society turned its back on blacks and even used Civil War

⁴¹ James M. McPherson, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union* (New York, 1965).

⁴² Ira Berlin et al., *Freedom: A Documentary History of Emancipation, 1861-1867*. Series II: *The Black Military Experience* (New York, 1982).

⁴³ Joseph T. Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York, 1990).

³⁸ Michael Fellman, *Inside War: The Guerrilla Conflict in Missouri During the American Civil War* (New York, 1989).

³⁹ Dudley T. Cornish, *The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York, 1956).

⁴⁰ Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the Civil War* (Boston, 1953).

statistics to justify arguments of black inferiority, many white ex-officers also turned their backs on their former comrades-in-arms. Only a small cluster of white ex-officers continued the battle for full equality for all.

Among this massive outpouring of new military history volumes on the Civil War, it is not surprising that several scholars have prepared social histories of Civil War participants. Reid Mitchell's *Civil War Soldiers*,⁴⁴ James I. Robertson, Jr.'s *Soldiers Blue and Gray*,⁴⁵ and Randall C. Jimerson's *The Private Civil War*⁴⁶ hit the bookstore shelves around the same time in 1988. The intriguing fact is that they all have to deal with the ghost of Bell Wiley, the individual whose name is synonymous with the study of common soldiers in the war. Each author treads lightly around the works of the master Wiley by offering some different approach, organization, or topics for discussion and analysis. And all three are fine books, adding to the corpus of Civil War literature in very positive ways.

Influenced, I suspect, by Charles Royster's study of the American Revolutionary war,⁴⁷ Mitchell makes the strongest attempt to divorce himself from the power of Wiley's volumes by adopting a different format and posing original questions on motivations and sentiments for a whole host of issues about the Civil War. Through the use of extensive manuscript sources, Mitchell finds trends of similarities and dissimilarities among men of the two sections, rather than a few unifying themes. Both sides considered themselves successors to the Revolutionary fathers, as both Faust and Hess have argued. They perceived extremists in the other region as representative of that section and also a viable threat to personal liberties. At the heart of the conflict were racial attitudes, which influenced perceptions and the development of society extensively. Federals and Confederates depicted the other as savages, representative of an immoral society, and soldiers on both sides fanned the flames of false perception by spreading untrue tales

⁴⁴ Reid Mitchell, *Civil War Soldiers: Their Expectations and Their Experiences* (New York, 1988).

⁴⁵ James I. Robertson, Jr., *Soldiers Blue and Gray* (Columbia, 1988).

⁴⁶ Randall C. Jimerson, *The Private Civil War: Popular Thought During the Sectional Conflict* (Baton Rouge, 1988).

⁴⁷ Charles Royster, *A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill, 1979).

about the brutality of the other army. And men in both the Union and Confederate armies underwent a similar physical and psychological transformation from civilians to soldiers. Yet Mitchell perceives differences, too. Northerners found southern society woefully inadequate and intended to destroy and remake it in the image of northern free labor. Confederates, however, had societal divisions that affected the war effort, but in the postwar years they created a myth of unity behind a noble cause.

Closest in resemblance to Mitchell's *Civil War Soldiers* is Jimerson's book, *The Private Civil War*. Both Mitchell and Jimerson draw on manuscript sources, although the breadth of Mitchell's research is undoubtedly greater. Like Faust, Hess, and Mitchell, Jimerson sees the war as a struggle over differing perceptions of liberty, although he offers a more simplistic thesis than the others. Southerners perceived northern efforts to terminate slavery as an attack on freedom, while northerners viewed secession as an effort to undercut the system from which that freedom derived. This regional unity, however, did not last. State loyalty, social class, military rank, ideology and patriotism, and morale acted as divisive elements within each section. According to Jimerson, they did not result in defeat, but they did create cracks in the ranks on both sides and made the prosecution of the war more difficult. What makes Jimerson's book different is its attempt to ascertain popular thought by expanding his study to include civilians who experienced the war, as well as soldiers. Thus, Jimerson includes information on a handful of women and men at home. He also has a fairly extensive section on black soldiers and civilians.

More like the Bell Wiley volumes, and rightly so since he was a Wiley student, is Robertson's book, *Soldiers Blue and Gray*. This is by no means a replication or a condensation of Wiley's works, though. Robertson relies heavily on published material, especially more recent vintage. He organizes his chapters differently to highlight newer themes, such as "Mixing the Ingredients," on the hodgepodge that made up Civil War commands, or "The Novelties Wear Off," with its emphasis on the hardening process, both physical and psychological. Robertson does not challenge his mentor directly, but through his organization and emphases, it appears that Robertson is a much greater proponent of similarities among the boys in blue and gray than was Wiley.

Of course, there is a considerable overlap of topics with Wiley. Camp life, disease, recreation, and combat are covered by Robertson and Wiley. This is a credit to both scholars: Wiley for tackling issues so thoroughly and Robertson for not feeling compelled to discard or discount the great strengths of Wiley's work. The lively writing style of both authors, spiced as they are with colorful albeit different anecdotes, gives them a similar flavor. While Robertson's *Soldiers Blue and Gray* does not supplant Wiley's work, and the author insists that is not a goal, it is a fine, readable, and much briefer study that will have a long shelf life.

Where do we go from here? In an enlightening essay by one of the most thoughtful Civil War historians, Gary Gallagher sees several areas for fruitful scholarship.⁴⁸ He calls for more army studies, along the lines of *The March to the Sea and Beyond*. If military establishments do reflect the society from which they came, then will not more soldier and army studies, which enable scholars to rely on the greatest amount of source material, provide us with insights? Essays modeled after Richard McMurry's *Two Great Rebel Armies*, Gallagher suggests, which tackle the issue of whether Lee's or Johnston's strategies were best for Confederate victory, would be particularly beneficial. He hopes for additional biographies, free from the sanitization of Freeman. Mostly, though, Gallagher calls for more work on the home front during the war.

These studies of the home front will not only give us a broader sense of the war and its impact, they also will help to determine the accuracy of the Beringer et al. thesis, espoused in *How the South Lost the Civil War*, that the Confederacy lost the will to win. While scholars have done some wonderful work on blacks in the wartime South and their transition from slavery to freedom,⁴⁹ they have devoted less attention to its other components and the home front as a whole.

To date, the best single study is Stephen Ash's *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed*.⁵⁰ Ash's book deals with a prosperous section of

⁴⁸ Gary Gallagher, "Home Front and Battlefield: Some Recent Literature Relating to Virginia and the Confederacy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 98 (1990), 135-68.

⁴⁹ The recent literature is so extensive and so rich that it merits an essay of its own.

⁵⁰ Stephen Ash, *Middle Tennessee Society Transformed, 1860-1870: War and Peace in the Upper South* (Baton Rouge, 1988). Another good study is Wayne K. Durrill's *War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion* (New York, 1990).

Tennessee, one with a diversified and primarily agricultural economy that anticipated nothing but further prosperity in the 1860s. Instead, war devastated the region, as armies consumed food, trampled fields under cultivation, dismantled barns and fences for firewood, and plundered and destroyed homes. Guerrillas, parties of Union soldiers, and bandits roamed widely and imposed their will on the populace. Longstanding social relationships, within white society and between whites and blacks, dissolved, and the influence of traditionally powerful institutions, such as the church, waned. In the aftermath of war, though, whites wanted to reestablish their prewar relations and institutions, for both comfort and race control, while blacks preferred more separation between the races in living accommodations, schools, and churches. No doubt, Ash's volume lends credence to the Beringer et al. thesis.

One of the many strengths of Ash's book is that it integrates sundry components into its story. Blacks and whites; schools, churches, and courts; occupations and social and economic mobility; patriarchy and independence; and the impact of war all come into play. Daniel E. Sutherland, in a thoughtful essay,⁵¹ calls for a similar study, but one with a community focus. Sutherland suggests that scholars take one county, such as Culpeper, Virginia, and study all facets of life during the war, as the military forces pass through and after they have gone. By limiting the size of the region, a scholar could incorporate a wide range of topics yet still retain the suspense of the campaign narrative.

If Ash's book lacks one critical component, it is the experience of women. Fortunately, George Rable has provided us with a fine overview of women's wartime experiences in *Civil Wars*.⁵² Based on extensive manuscript research, Rable's book shows that women were not the unyielding supporters of the Confederacy that the Lost Cause myth depicts. Wartime hardships, compounded by the absence or loss of males, converted many women into peace advocates, who then encouraged desertion and discouraged enlistment. In addition, economic woes heightened class tensions and convinced many women

⁵¹ Daniel E. Sutherland, "Getting the 'Real War' into the Books," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 98 (1990), 193-220.

⁵² George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana, 1989).

that this was a rich man's war and a poor man's fight. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of Rable's book is his coverage of middle-class and lower-class women. Through some creative research, particularly in governmental records and the papers of community organizations, he is able to give a voice to the literate and semiliterate.

Rable's *Civil Wars* is an excellent start toward understanding the experience of women and family in the war. More work, however, needs to be done in the North and South. Petitions that attempt to redress grievances or recover wartime damage and applications to acquire widows' and orphans' pensions, beyond those that Rable used, hold a wealth of information and may provide an entirely new perspective on the war's impact on women and families. Abundant Civil War materials—letters, diaries, memoirs, and other records at the National Archives and state repositories—are probably the single finest source for nineteenth-century women's and family history, and much of it remains untapped.

Some of the best work has been in the area of ideology and nationalism. Earl Hess has posited a thesis of what bonded northerners together. Further study needs to be done among the "common folk," and also the way Lincoln and his administration conveyed those ideological concepts to the northern populace. By the late stages of the war, Lincoln had come to embody the struggle for reunion. How was Lincoln able to identify himself with the war and all that it represented to northerners?⁵³

From the Confederate standpoint, George Rable, Drew Faust, Paul Escott, and the authors of *Why the South Lost the Civil War* have addressed the issue of nationalism and have noted societal chasms that deepened during the war. Scholars need to explore these divisions and learn more about that extensive middle class in the South, before and during the war. Did wartime hardships unite middle- with lower-class whites against elites? In 1860 southerners had a very high standard of living. How did the wartime hardships and sacrifices affect their commitment to disunion and the development of a new Confederacy? If they compared life in the Union with life outside it, how would that have affected their support for the Confederacy?

⁵³ James McPherson hints at this in one of his essays in *Abraham Lincoln and the Second American Revolution*.

Individuals have often found solace in religion during times of crisis, and throughout history it has been a source of inspiration or justification for war. In a very fine book, *American Apocalypse*,⁵⁴ James H. Moorhead argues that the same obligation that compelled northern evangelicals to oppose slavery also compelled them to fight for reunion. Evangelical Protestantism in the North called for a reformation of society to rid it of sins, in preparation for the millennium. Slavery was one of those sins. The United States was the chosen nation, and evangelicals could not permit slaveholders to separate from the Union and set up their own nation. Millennialism demanded a whole, reformed United States. By allowing southerners to secede, northern evangelicals were turning their backs to sin, rather than seeking its eradication. Others—Drew Faust, Beringer et al., and Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr. (the author of *A Shield and a Hiding Place*)⁵⁵—have all uncovered evidence that religion strengthened and weakened the war efforts of the Union and Confederacy. We need to know more about religion and morale among soldiers and civilians.

While my book *Forged in Battle* studies black units in the Union Army,⁵⁶ William L. Burton's *Melting Pot Soldiers*⁵⁷ tackles the subject of immigrant troops. Burton's goal is to update Ella Lonn's *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* and correct its errors, which he does successfully. Yet Burton's book is not wholly satisfying. By concentrating on ethnic regiments, Burton's approach shortchanges various ethnic groups that did not create ethnic regiments and neglects immigrants who integrated into other regiments. What leaves the reader unfulfilled, though, is Burton's traditional approach to these ethnic regiments. Burton's study is from the top; he fails to draw on the new social history. As a result, the reader never knows what these immigrant soldiers thought, felt, and experienced. There is, then, plenty of room for another study that uses the new social history to depict the Civil

⁵⁴ James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestantism and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven, 1978).

⁵⁵ Gardiner H. Shattuck, Jr., *A Shield and a Hiding Place: The Religious Life of the Civil War Armies* (Macon, 1987).

⁵⁶ Little is still known about blacks in the Confederate Army. By far the best single volume on the prospects of black military service is Robert F. Durden, *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation* (Baton Rouge, 1972).

⁵⁷ William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments* (Ames, 1988).

War experience of immigrant soldiers, in both the Union and Confederacy.

Maybe the most exciting area that the new social history approach has opened to scholars is the study of the impact of the war on society. In an important volume, Phillip Paludan seeks to understand more clearly the effect of the war on the northern economy, society, and government. In "*A People's Contest*"⁵⁸ he determines that the war merely accelerated changes that were already underway in the North. Understandably, government intervention in the economy was greater than many people had anticipated, but Republicans were not adverse to the policy in general. After all, the party platform in 1860 called for a higher tariff and a homestead law to promote economic growth. The war continued to siphon workers from the countryside to the city, and inflation spurred workers to organize more rapidly. Women, who had supported the war effort so valiantly in the fields and workshops, made only minimal gains in the postwar world. Perhaps blacks reaped the greatest benefits from the war—the abolition of slavery—but whites were not so forthcoming with full and equal rights, and in the end true equality eluded African Americans.

Additional studies support the Paludan thesis. J. Matthew Gallman, in his book on Philadelphia during the Civil War,⁵⁹ argues that locals and city officials drew upon their prewar experience for solutions to the unusual problems that the Civil War caused, and continued to do so well after the war. In *The New York City Draft Riots*,⁶⁰ Iver Bernstein uses the draft riots as a means to explain how conscription and the war merely brought longstanding labor and political problems to a head. Elites had failed to deal with existing economic and social evils, and the new draft law was the last straw. Into the leadership void stepped the Tweed Ring, which responded to the needs and complaints of the working class and forged a new alliance that kept it in power until 1871. Along lines similar to Bernstein, Grace Palladino, in her study

⁵⁸ Phillip Shaw Paludan, "*A People's Contest*": *The Union and the Civil War, 1861-1865* (New York, 1988).

⁵⁹ J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁶⁰ Iver Bernstein, *The New York City Draft Riots: Their Significance for American Society and Politics in the Age of the Civil War* (New York, 1990).

of anthracite regions of Pennsylvania,⁶¹ finds that unrest in Schuylkill and adjacent counties during the war was more in response to labor-management disputes than the conscription law, as other scholars had argued. Palladino traces problems between coal miners and owners and also between small and large operators to the years before the war, and she discovers identical responses by miners before, during, and after the war. Owners of large coal operations used the new conscription law to justify military intervention in what were actually disputes between labor and management. Thus, all three authors—Gallman, Bernstein, and Palladino—agree with Paludan and emphasize continuity rather than change.

But how did the war affect individuals, both combatants and non-combatants? Little work has been done here. Linderman, in *Embattled Courage*, argues that the war forced soldiers to alter their prewar notions about courage and combat, while civilians continued to cling to unrealistic and outmoded ideas about the impact of the individual on a "modern" battlefield. When the war was over, soldiers, unwilling and unable to deal with the discord, adopted the civilians' view of the war, with all its stilted baggage. Thus, Spanish-American warriors carried into battle the same convictions about courage—as Linderman pointed out so shrewdly in his first book, *Mirror of War: American Society and the Spanish-American War* (1974).

Both Paludan and I address the cost of the war on specific individuals. In "*A People's Contest*" Paludan concentrates mostly on how death and serious injuries affected soldiers and their personal relationships, but he does deal with adjustment difficulties, including postwar drug and alcohol abuse. In the final chapter of *Forged in Battle*, I discuss the adjustment to civil life of black soldiers and their white officers in considerable detail. While some benefited from the war, either because they saved money that enabled them to receive additional schooling or begin a business, or because they learned skills in military service that were adaptable to the civilian world, others were forced to abandon physical labor due to wartime injuries and illnesses. A considerable number of men, particularly the white officers, never readjusted well.

⁶¹ Grace Palladino, *Another Civil War: Labor, Capital, and the State in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1840-1868* (Urbana and Chicago, 1990).

Divorces, family abandonments, alcohol and drug abuse, and even suicide were not uncommon.

More work on specific topics, extended beyond 1865, may give us a better understanding of the true implications, over and above reunion and emancipation, of the Civil War. Very few scholars have drawn upon the extensive pension records (one million alone at the National Archives, plus hundreds of thousands in various state archives) to examine the long-term impact of the war on the individual ex-soldiers. We know little about combat stress or post-combat stress, which was a closet ailment in the late nineteenth century. Few admitted to these problems and society had little sympathy for its victims, but the evidence of its afflictions is there and begs for further investigation. How did illnesses, disease, and physical handicaps affect former soldiers in the postwar years, and how did society deal with the hundreds of thousands of cripples or amputees from the war? How did society care for veterans and their families in old age, and what problems did they face? How did this care reflect values in society? Civil War material and pension records are, after all, the most extensive resource for studying disease, illness, and medical care in nineteenth-century America.

And what about the positive results that military service provided? Many young men earned enough money to complete their schooling or undertake some sort of business. Others developed new-found confidence in themselves during the war (the thesis that McFeely draws upon in his biography of Grant) that they were able to carry with them to the civilian world. Still many others learned managerial skills, as George Fredrickson proposed in *The Inner Civil War*,⁶² that translated nicely into the private sector. For them, the war changed their lives in very positive ways. And scholars should not neglect the South, either. Even in defeat, Confederate soldiers took back with them lessons from the war that were applicable in the civilian world.

The list of avenues is by no means complete, nor is it intended to be so. Each of these studies is in itself the perception of a new direction, as are projects currently underway. Nonetheless, in some small way it

⁶² George Fredrickson, *The Inner Civil War: Northern Intellectuals and the Crisis of the Union* (New York, 1965).

gives us an idea of how dynamic these "new" Civil War studies are, and how many new doors they have opened for future labors.

Scholars should, however, be aware of one of the great pitfalls of the new military and new social history. While some of these books are refreshing in approach and appealingly written, many of the studies are far too quantitative or topical in structure to attract a large following. Today, Civil War scholars are enjoying a ride on the crest of a popularity wave, mainly as a result of these exciting approaches. But like everything, it will some day crash, and stultifying prose and dense organization will undoubtedly facilitate the decline. Even though scholars may find volumes suitable, the public clearly prefers the insights of the new military history in narrative form. The most obvious evidence of the finicky nature of the popular audience is the relative success of the New American Nation Series—Emory Thomas's *The Confederate Nation*⁶³ and Paludan's "*A People's Contest*"—compared to the Oxford History of the United States series—McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom*. All three are major books, with great synthesis and excellent analysis, nicely organized and clearly written, but McPherson's sparkling narrative and chronological structure placed it on the bestseller list, while the popularity of Thomas's and Paludan's books outside the academic community was decidedly less. Clearly, there seem to be distinct sales differences between a first-rate volume with a narrative approach and two first-rate books with a more topical approach.

For now, we should relish the success Civil War books have achieved, and credit much of this restored popularity to the new military history, with its fresh approaches and colorful quotations from the previously voiceless mass of society. We should also push on, for there is still so much exciting work to do. And when the inevitable bust does come, we can at least boast of having found a few more pieces to that complex puzzle we call the American Civil War.

University of Houston

JOSEPH T. GLATTHAAR

⁶³ Emory Thomas, *The Confederate Nation, 1861-1865* (New York, 1979).